Has GCHQ spied on you?

PLEASE give your consideration to a petition circulated by Privacy International, who are calling for the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (www. ipt-uk.com) to ask GCHQ www.gchq.gov.uk) whether it has spied on any of the petitioners illegally.

It right. The petition warns you that by signing it, you allow your name to be passed on to GCHQ for the purpose of determining whether they spied on you.

But they probably have your details (and more) already – on the assumption that you have ever made a phone call, sent an email or used the internet. The Freelance would be interested to hear from signatories who ultimately get any kind of result, via spookwatch@londonfreelance.org

DOMESTIC from p 1

said ‘hello’ to us and seemed happy”. At the Mayday 2000 Guerrilla Gardening event in Parliament Square police noted that “Mark Thomas… has a large quantity of cress on rear of bicycle.”

There’s “stuff which is factually inaccurate.” Although “to my eternal shame” Mark has never been on a Class War demo, one police log listed a Class War event at which “the only identifiable protester was general rabble-rouser and alleged comedian Mark Thomas,” a phrase he plans to use on posters for a forthcoming tour.

Among “over 60 items” of “intelligence” Mark discovered, “police are making notes about when stuff I do about nuclear reactors appears on TV; when articles I’ve written appear in Time Out and the Guardian.” It seems that the Met is not just spying on activism but spying on journalism.

“We believe there are other NUJ members who are being monitored by the police. If you have covered the police, it is important that you put in a Subject Access Request and find out whether you are a Domestic Extremist – and if you are, join the court case.”

Jules did a FOIA request to the Met and was “told by way of refusing that request” there were over 2000 records on the Domestic Extremism database with keywords such as “journalist”. It would “cost too much” to find out exactly how many records on journalists they have. Jules also found a Powerpoint slide showing his name and photo, with the words “no trace PNC” [Police National Computer, so no criminal record]… pain in the arse.”

We also heard from photographer David Hoffman, who despite having no criminal record found a policeman’s notebook had recorded that “Hoffman has a conviction in the late 80s for assaulting the police.” Where does this inaccuracy come from? “There is no trace of this information in any police system,” the police said.

Environmental photographer Adrian Arbib found himself a labelled a “domestic extremist” following a police stop near Heathrow. “I was doing an article on the death of the English apple orchard,” he said, still puzzled. For Jason Parkinson’s and Jess Hurd’s testimony on their domestic extremist files, see www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1502xtw.html. Mark said the judicial review under Human Rights Act Articles 8 and 11 (privacy, association, freedom of expression) comes to court “soon”, and “it is my legal opinion the Met are fucked”.

CONTRACTS from p 1

Parliament had instructed the government to intervene in another area where contracts are unfair: between landlady of his local pub and the “pubco” that owns it. Horwood observed that the pubco got to own it because of a previous attempt to deal with the issue, by separating the breweries from the freeholds. “You did that to try to avoid dealing with the root issue – the contracts.” Mike said: “this time, you have to do it right”.

The European Commission is organising surveys of the contracts that creators, including journalists, work under. The EFJ has pushed to make this happen and hopes it will produce quantitative evidence on the economics of unfair contracts. Journalists in the UK will be invited to complete it: when you are, please set aside 15 or 20 minutes to make sure your experience is represented.

Please continue sending details of unfair contracts put before you to unfair@londonfreelance.org – for the campaign it is particularly useful to have details of:

• Occasions on which your client put it in writing (paper or email) that the contract they were “offering” was non-negotiable; and

• Contracts that claim to incorporate other contracts that are not shown to you;… but all unfair contracts are interesting. All such communication will be anonymised and dealt with in the strictest confidence.

More online:

• French court calls Facebook to heel

• and updates as they come in

All at: www.londonfreelance.org/fl

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The suspicious proximity of this “Audio Surveillance Zone” on the wall of a street in Whitechapel to the London Met Cass School of Art leads us to believe it is to be the work of art students

Photo: © Matt Salusbury

L to R: Jules Mattson, Jason Parkinson, Adrian Arbib, David Hoffman and Mark Thomas

Photo © Hazel Dunlop