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Surveillance continues to have sinister and secretive overtones for many of us. We need look no further than our well-thumbed copies of Orwellian fiction and the all encompassing eyes and ears of Big Brother to satisfy our paranoid anxieties about the intrusive state. We feel threatened, even more so now that much fictional imagery appears to have become practical reality, routinised and part of the everyday. From the massive growth in the use of Closed Circuit Television Cameras in towns and shops to the use of private security personnel in leafy suburbs, developments in surveillance continue to raise our anxieties about who is controlling whom.

Yet should we feel anxious about such developments? To some extent, certainly, as **David Garland** suggests. *'Given the routine abuses of power that occur and the clear divergences of interest between state authorities and those over whom they exercise control, most of us have a lot to be paranoid about'*. For example, despite our antipathy to covert activity, undercover policing has become as **Dick Hobbs** suggests, a normalised activity in particular areas and for particular actions such as the control of football spectators, while for **Clive Norris** some recent technological developments in algorithmic surveillance may mean the intensification and expansion of the surveillance gaze of routine operational policing duties along with an unintentional reduction in officer discretion.

However it is not only in the sphere of policing that developments in surveillance cause concern. Citing evidence from America which questions its operational effectiveness, **Dick Whitfield** charts the re-emergence of the intended electronic tagging of offenders in

British criminal justice policy; **Nic Groombridge** narrates a cautionary tale concerning the introduction and the effectiveness of the use of closed circuit television cameras; while **Nigel South** questions the impact some new developments within the private security industry may have on our everyday lives. With the latter in mind, **David Kidd-Hewitt** went catalogue shopping and reports on the surveillance devices available to any apprentice spy over the counter.

It is little wonder then, as **David Garland** suggests in the opening article, that surveillance is a worrisome idea in Anglo-American culture which raises numerous civil liberties and human rights concerns. This is an issue never more clearly witnessed than in recent government plans for a national I-D card. In her contribution **Liz Parratt** dismantles many of the arguments in favour of such a scheme before concluding that it is a solution looking for a problem.

However, not all surveillance is necessarily repressive nor is a widening net of social control necessarily unwelcome. As **Garland** goes on to suggest it may be worth trying to view surveillance as an essential characteristic of social life, rather than merely as an attribute of social control. In this line of thinking **Bart Hofstra** for example highlights the beneficial impact a scheme of city wardens has had on the social and economic aspects of urban life in the Netherlands, while technological developments implemented by British Telecom and the introduction of positive vetting in social care by Faircheck provide further indication as to the more positive developments in the world of surveillance and control.

**Peter Francis & Julia Braggins**