

## If I can only side with the 'other' by registering with...

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I suspect many readers will have noticed the furore about this scheme, publicised [by the Home Office after Christmas on Twitter](#):

The actual [scheme details are here](#).

I discussed this scheme with someone of my acquaintance yesterday, who is as appalled by it, as I am. "Why," she asked, "is it necessary?"

My explanation was straightforward. It is necessary as the precursor for discrimination. Unless 'otherness's is created how can anyone be sure who the 'other' they are meant to despise is?

And you can be sure that this scheme will in not too long a due course lead to the need for identity cards. That will be for everyone, of course. After all, how can papers be requested from those who are 'other' if papers are not required from those who are 'us' who might otherwise, all too easily, and quite understandably, be confused with those who are 'not us'.

I despise this scheme. The suggestion that the last time registration of this sort was required was by fascist states seems all too obvious, and glaringly true, an observation. And too worrying a precedent to be ignored.

But I do not need to make that comparison to loathe all that this registration means. It requires that my friends, colleagues, neighbours and so many others I acquaint with must now register and pay a fee that some cannot afford - even for their children - to do something that has been theirs as of right - which is simply to live and work in this country, to which they have added enormously, not least as far as I am concerned by being my friends, colleagues, neighbours and acquaintances.

I hate to be divided from all these people.

Which is why I will be applying to be registered.

First, if enough of us do this the system will be messed up.

Second, we show our solidarity by doing so.

Third, it costs nothing to do.

But it is a form of protest. And it is one I intend to pursue. If I can only side with the 'other' by registering with them then that is what I will do.