

IDENTITY CARDS

1. The simplistic argument that if one has nothing to hide then one has nothing to fear ignores the infringement of civil liberties that the imposition of Identity Cards would represent and totally overlooks the practical problems implicit in administering the system.
2. It is well known that any form of documentation from a Passport to a 100 Euro note is obtainable from counterfeiters and it is improbable that forged ID cards will not also be available, in spite of the use of 'state of the art' technology.
3. On the admission of no less a person than Patricia Hewitt, whilst Secretary of State for Trade & Industry, some 15 million National Insurance numbers cannot be accounted for. In the realms of Agriculture the British Cattle Movement Service lost 93,000 identities in one year alone (2003) in spite of having been established only 6 years previously in purpose built accommodation equipped with the very latest in computerised systems. Examples of where Government run any service efficiently and effectively are difficult to identify. That they will administer ID cards any more efficaciously is extremely doubtful.
4. Government claim that ID cards will help to stamp out illegal immigration, organised crime, terrorism, stolen identity and social security fraud. The reality is that the introduction of ID cards will impose a burden upon millions of bona fide law abiding British subjects (i.e. the majority) whilst failing to tackle the underlying problem which is that, for whatever reason, the army of civil servants that we are employing and who, in the main, are answerable to the Home Office and the Department of Health & Social Security are failing to discharge their functions in a satisfactory way. Instead of concentrating upon improving the performance of the departments for which it alone is responsible Government, as always, tries to shift the spotlight elsewhere, hence ID cards as the panacea for ills.
5. Even without ID cards it is practically inconceivable that a bona fide British subject would have difficulty establishing his or her identity (birth certificate, driving licence, passport, pension book, utility bill, National Insurance number, NHS number etc. etc.). On the other hand an illegal immigrant armed with a forged ID card would instantly acquire a legitimacy to which he was not entitled and which he would not otherwise have.
6. There is little or no evidence to demonstrate that in countries with ID cards the incidence of offences in the categories highlighted by Government are any less. Identity cards in both countries did nothing to prevent the 9/11 bombing of the Twin Towers being planned in Germany nor the explosions on passenger trains in Spain.
7. Inevitably there will be huge cost implications associated with the introduction of ID cards – figures in the region of £3bn centrally + £93 per person have been bandied about – and the view might reasonably be taken that this money would be better spent strengthening the forces of law and order rather than on a project of dubious benefit.
8. The strong suspicion remains that the real reason why the Home Secretary is pushing for ID cards, just as Michael Howard did whilst Home Secretary in the last Conservative government, is to satisfy the European Union.
9. By the creation of a National Database the power of the state over the individual subject is increased immeasurably.

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