

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM KIRSTY MACFARLANE

Comments

I have been called a “teuchter” all of my life; my mother tongue, Gàidhlig, is insulted regularly in the Scottish media; and the church I was baptised into, the Free Church of Scotland, is the butt of jokes whenever it is mentioned. I don't recall that there has ever been much censure in Scotland of the behaviour which gives rise to this kind of disrespect. Nor have I heard any reference to putting a stop to these attacks in all the discussion I have heard about this Bill.

This behaviour, which is by and large rooted in the Central Belt of Scotland, is caused by ignorance, bad manners and tribalism, none of which appears to be dying out. At the same time, discipline in schools, in the home, in public and in our relationships has deteriorated. Our Christian morality seems to be a thing of the past as virtually all aspects of worship have been expunged from Scottish daily life.

However, I very much doubt whether attitudes could or should be changed through legislation. This bill (and existing law) would punish not just actions but thoughts, and that is an incredibly dangerous line to cross. That is totalitarianism. Rather than adding to an already established system of state control over free thinking, all such legislation should be scrapped and effort focused on education, improving discipline and setting proper standards for good manners. A bit more Christian morality would not go amiss.

At the same time, the SNP Scottish Government needs to stop encouraging people to hate certain groups (with impunity) whilst being willing to destroy the principles of free speech and free thought on behalf of other favoured groups. The First Minister cannot say the word “Tory” without a look of hatred on her face and a sneering tone to her voice. The Justice Minister should be taken to task for recently inciting racial hatred against white people in the Scottish Parliament. He was completely out of order. What sort of examples are these? And there are countless more on social media which politicians are content to believe represent the new politics.

CONCLUSION

Despite a lifetime of insults directed at me and my culture, I am totally opposed to this Bill. There are other ways to tackle these difficulties.

Kirsty MacFarlane

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