

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM MARK SNEDDON

Dear Justice Committee,

My grievances with the proposed Hate Crime and Public Order bill are as follows:

- Part 2 Section 3 in regard to, 'Stirring Up Hatred', is vastly ambiguous in it's language, but more importantly, the idea of it being an offence to communicate ideas, of any nature, and face up to 7 years imprisonment or a fine, if convicted, is utterly horrifying and draconian.

- The use of the word, 'likely', as seen throughout section 3, in the repeated statement, 'as a result, it is likely that hatred will be stirred up against such a group.' I don't see any mention on how this will be determined and personally feel it will be a slippery slope to innocent people being accused of being an 'offender'.

- Then there is section 5, 'Offences of possessing inflammatory material', which frankly I could not believe even as I was reading it. The proposition of making it an offence to own materials, of any nature, that certain people may find, 'inflammatory', is akin to dictatorial China, but then to have no specific system in the bill to measure and specify the intent of having those materials is a great error.

For example if I were to post a picture of someone else's World War II Nazi memorabilia on Instagram, from my understanding after reading section 5, that person would then be accused of possessing inflammatory materials and then be taken to court and have to prove his innocence and lack of malicious intent behind owning aforementioned memorabilia, all because of a picture published on Instagram.

In conclusion, I could go on about the other attributes of the bill that I wholly disagree with, but will just say that this bill is completely unnecessary, unwarranted, offensive and in certain instances destructive in nature, designed to suit the few and silence the many.

Best regards,

Mark Sneddon
09 July 2020