

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM WILLIAM BOLTON

Please note my comments below-

The Scottish Government has embarked down a very dangerous road with the use of the law to prosecute "Hate crimes".

America has the first amendment to protect their right to free speech. Even their right to offend is accepted as just that, their right; so why does the Scottish Government intend to do exactly the opposite?

Why do Scottish politicians think that the Scottish people are so uniquely fragile and vulnerable that we can't be allowed to hear what others truly feel about us? This proposed bill is an attack on the truth and by that I mean the truth of how others really feel and what they really believe.

If someone hates me for my colour, my religion, my sexuality or for any other personal trait then what good do the government think they are doing by forcing that person not to express their opinions using the language that best illustrates their feelings? How can you possibly understand another's point of view if they are too afraid to express it?

The matter of human sensitivity to criticism is so personal and so subjective that the law cannot be used effectively or efficiently. Some pressure groups may use their alleged hurt feelings to push for legislation against their political opponents but why does the Scottish government need to reward such manipulation in this way?

No politician ever stood on a manifesto that said, "We will introduce measures to criminalise crude jokes, the expression of sectarian thoughts and racist feelings" yet that is what you are attempting to do. Suppression is not a cure.

In a country that continues to practice religious apartheid on its children from their earliest years by sending them to Catholic or Non Catholic schools it is utterly hypocritical for its politicians to pursue such a course.

Who is to say what is deemed "insulting"?

We live in a world of mass migration. The Scottish government encourages migrants to come to our country from all cultures around the world. It should be obvious to any sensible person that integration and mutual understanding should be the focus, not punishment for thought crimes.

The government is laying down the foundations for a massive confrontation between interest groups who all claim the right not to be offended. Fundamentalist religious practitioners who hate homosexuality against LGBT rights activists, Orange Parades against Irish Republican activists, Loyalists UK scots against Nationalists. Do you seriously think that you should try to use the law to control how these people think and how they express their thoughts?

Nationalist could easily end up in court charged with hate speech against the Queen or against the UK. Now wouldn't that be interesting?

Please stop this juvenile, inconsistent approach to the law, you are embarrassing the country.

William Bolton
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