

Bar journal publishes biased article (Unpublished letter to *Counsel*)

On its contents page *Counsel* describes itself as the Journal of the Bar in England and Wales (though "in" should be "of"). Above everything, the Bar prides itself on being independent – especially of Government. So why in the July 2004 issue did you publish a lengthy article on the contentious Sexual Offences Act 2003 which was written by a Home Office minister who had piloted the Bill, Baroness Scotland?

Lady Scotland's article is simplistic Government propaganda. It does nothing but praise the Act, and her Government which drove it through Parliament. As a member of the Bar of more than 50 years' standing I consider it wrong that you published this sort of biased contribution rather than commissioning an article on the Act from an independent commentator.

It did not improve matters that you also published a second article on the Act by Martin Bowley QC, who helped in preparing it and is also an ardent supporter.

You should have reported that there was much public opposition to various provisions of the Act, and the way it created a large number of new criminal offences. I followed its progress through Parliament, and wrote a short book and several articles against it. [Details of these are on my website.](#)