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Title of presentation: Reasons to be a Gay Unionist in the 1970s: "Scotland gets a nibble of the English loaf"

Abstract

Throughout the 1970s, despite being governed by the same parliament, the countries of the United Kingdom had different laws concerning homosexual acts. In 1967, homosexuality was decriminalized in England and Wales, and for the next thirteen years, gay rights activists advocated for the law to extend to Scotland. During the same period, Scottish nationalists pressured the UK government to create a separate legislative assembly for Scotland. How did these political issues interact with each other? How did the gay community relate to this constitutional question? By examining gay newspapers and reaching out to community members I have found that some gay men rejected the possible legislature because they saw the English law being used in Scotland to protect gay men from prosecution. This research brings sexual identity into the discussion about Scotland's political relationship with the United Kingdom to further historical understanding of the various ways people experience national identity.