



Criminal Libel Act 1819

1819 CHAPTER 8 60 Geo 3 and 1 Geo 4

An Act for the more effectual Prevention and Punishment of blasphemous and seditious Libels. [30th December 1819]

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1 Short title given by [Short Titles Act 1896 \(c. 14\)](#)
- C2 Preamble omitted under authority of [Statute Law Revision Act 1890 \(c. 33\)](#)

1 Court to make order for the seizure of copies of the libel in possession of the persons against whom verdicts shall have been had, &c.

- (1) In every case [^{F1}in Northern Ireland] in which any verdict or judgment by default shall be had against any person for composing, printing, or publishing [^{F2}any blasphemous libel]^{F3}, or any seditious libel tending to bring into hatred or contempt the person of his Majesty or the government and constitution of the United Kingdom as by law established, or either House of Parliament, or to excite his Majesty's subjects to attempt the alteration of any matter in Church or State as by law established, otherwise than by lawful means], it shall be lawful for the judge or the court before whom or in which such verdict shall have been given, or the court in which such judgment by default shall be had, to make an order for the seizure and carrying away and detaining in safe custody, in such manner as shall be directed in such order, all copies of the libel which shall be in the possession of the person against whom such verdict or judgment shall have been had, or in the possession of any other person named in the order for his use, evidence upon oath having been previously given to the satisfaction of such court or judge, that a copy or copies of the said libel is or are in the possession of such other person for the use of the person against whom such verdict or judgment shall have been had as aforesaid; and in every such case it shall be lawful for any justice of the peace, or for any constable or other peace officer, acting under any such order, or for any person or persons acting with or in aid of any such justice of the peace, constable, or other peace officer, to search for any copies of such libel in any house, building, or other place whatsoever belonging to the person against whom any such verdict or judgment shall have been had, or to any other person so named, in whose possession any copies of any such libel, belonging to the person against whom any such verdict

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or judgment shall have been had, shall be; and in case admission shall be refused or not obtained within a reasonable time after it shall have been first demanded, to enter by force by day into any such house, building, or place whatsoever, and to carry away all copies of the libel there found, and to detain the same in safe custody, until the same shall be restored under the provisions of this Act, or disposed of according to any further order made in relation thereto.

Textual Amendments

- F1 Words in s. 1 inserted (E.W.N.I.) (12.1.2010) by [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 182(2)(c), [Sch. 21 para. 65\(1\)\(a\)](#) (with s. 180)
- F2 Words in s. 1 repealed (E.W.) (8.7.2008) by [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 79(2), 153(2)(d), [Sch. 28 Pt. 5](#)
- F3 Words in s. 1 repealed (E.W.N.I.) (12.1.2010) by [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 182(2)(c)(e)(ii), [Sch. 21 para. 65\(1\)\(b\)](#), [Sch. 23 Pt. 2](#) (with s. 180)

2 Copies of libels so seized to be restored if judgment for defendant; otherwise to be disposed of as the court shall direct.

If in any such case as aforesaid judgment shall be arrested, or if, after judgment shall have been entered, the same shall be reversed upon any writ of error, all copies so seized shall be forthwith returned to the person or persons from whom the same shall have been so taken as aforesaid, free of all charge and expence, and without the payment of any fees whatever; and in every case in which final judgment shall be entered upon the verdict so found against the person or persons charged with having composed, printed, or published such libel, then all copies so seized shall be disposed of as the court in which such judgment shall be given shall order and direct.

3 Court of justiciary in Scotland to make order for seizing copies of libels, &c.

Provided always, that in Scotland, in every case in which any person or persons shall be found guilty before the court of justiciary, of composing, printing, or publishing any blasphemous or seditious libel, or where sentence of fugitation shall have been pronounced against any person or persons, in consequence of their failing to appear to answer to any indictment charging them with having composed, printed, or published any such libel, then and in either of such cases it shall and may be lawful for the said court to make an order for the seizure, carrying away, and detaining in safe custody all copies of the libel in the possession of any such person or persons, or in the possession of any other person or persons named in such order for his or their use, evidence upon oath having been previously given to the satisfaction of such court or judge, that a copy or copies of the said libel is or are in the possession of such other person for the use of the person against whom such verdict or judgment shall have been had as aforesaid; and every such order so made shall and may be carried into effect, in such and the same manner as any order made by the court of justiciary, or any circuit court of justiciary, may be carried into effect according to the law and practice of Scotland: Provided always, that in the event of any person or persons being reponed against any such sentence of fugitation, and being thereafter acquitted, all copies so seized shall be forthwith returned to the person or persons from whom the same shall have been so taken as aforesaid; and in all other cases the copies so seized shall be disposed of in such manner as the said court may direct.

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4 F4

Textual Amendments

F4 S. 4 repealed by (E.W.) Criminal Law Act 1967 (c. 58), s. 12, **Sch. 3 Pt. I** and (N.I.) Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 (c. 18), s. 14, **Sch. 2 Pt. I**

5, 6. F5

Textual Amendments

F5 Ss. 5, 6 repealed by the Act 11 Geo. 4 & 1 Will. 4 c. 73, s. 1

7 F6

Textual Amendments

F6 S. 7 repealed by (E.W.) Criminal Law Act 1967 (c. 58), s. 12, **Sch. 3 Pt. I** and (N.I.) Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 (c. 18), s. 14, **Sch. 2 Pt. I**

8, 9. F7

Textual Amendments

F7 Ss. 8, 9 repealed by Public Authorities Protection Act 1893 (c. 61), **Sch.**

10 **Not to alter the law of Scotland in respect to punishment for libels.**

Provided always, that nothing in this Act contained shall be held or considered as in any respect altering the law or practice of Scotland regarding the punishment of persons convicted of composing, printing, publishing, or circulating any blasphemous or seditious libel.

11 F8

Textual Amendments

F8 S. 11 repealed by Statute Law Revision Act 1873 (c. 91)

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