

Mia Cares

I listened in their entirety to the presentations of Dr. Veronica Evelyn, a qualified Sociologist and seasoned lawyer, Mrs. Davida Maynard-Holligan, as they made their presentations to the **Joint Select Committee** on their findings, relative to the Child Protection Bill. In both presentations (on different dates), the analysis highlighting proposed failings, loop holes, dangers, gray areas and mis-aligned priorities in the bill seemed to be consistent between the two presentations. I noted also that the main argument of the Chief Parliamentary Council (CPC) tended towards the UN conventions which Barbados had signed unto in the 1990's. While these two qualified and experienced ladies laid their hours of research and analysis at the disposal of the committee, it appeared to be a waste of their time, both by the posture and rebuttals of the CPC and the chair and in one instance by Senator John King. It leaves me to conclude or rather to suspect that these meetings are mere formalities and that the track record and experience of our professionals, far, far less average Barbadians, are really not taken seriously...maybe not taken...period. Then again, they say, the apple don't fall too far from de tree. The Child Protection Bill itself makes it very clear, whom it intends to please as per Section 3.1a cited below under **Purpose**. The below is not part (d) or (e), but is given highest ranking or mental priority.

Purpose

*3.(1) The purpose of this Act shall be to ensure compliance with the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**; the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**; and all **other international instruments** to which Barbados is a party with special regards to those which afford a child the necessary protection and assistance so that he can assume his eventual responsibilities within the community and for the full and harmonious development of his personality and to grow up in a family environment imbued with happiness, love and understanding;*

To rub salt in the wound, MP Edmund Hinkson, cemented this position of Government when he stated as per the Nation News of October 9th, that Bajans in the DLP, those who march, which is a very wide cross-section and these 2 noted ladies "...have the right to talk **foolishness** and I protect their right to **talk foolishness**, but you must give me the chance to answer **their foolishness**. Note he didn't say correct or educate their foolishness...but to answer or rebut...very similar to what we heard in the Committee presentations. What gross disrespect.

So by now, it must be very clear to Bajans that neither Prime Minister Mia Mottley nor her 30 MPs care about this nation called Barbados. Maybe we are too small to really matter and there is more bang for the buck outside...all part of the "brain drain". Where does that leave us...not to fend fah we-self?

Oh, I nearly forgot one small but significant spark. MP Trevor Prescod had this to say at the summation of one presentation. "...I think at some time we have to deal with the **sociological** implications of the legislation itself; that has to be **allowed**, otherwise this committee seems to be avoiding the reality that we seem to be facing..." (<https://youtu.be/16klWvmcrVg>). But then Dr Evelyn is a trained and qualified sociologist, so are we going around in circles or are Bajans being offered an olive branch? Opposition...grab it, stand up and speak out.

Written by Dave Weekes