

The Ministry for Peace campaign wishes to see:

- The creation of a Ministry for Peace
- The promotion of peace and non-violence education in schools
- The funding of peace workers to transform conflict in all areas of society
- The active promotion of a Culture of Peace in the UK
- The development of a 'Programme for a Peaceful City' by every UK city

Manifesto for Peace

Learn more and join the campaign - turn to the back page

www.ministryforpeace.org.uk

For a less violent Britain and a less violent world

A fifteen-year-old girl is stabbed to death at a birthday party. It makes the news one weekend, then we all move on. A man is beheaded outside his London home; the nation is, briefly, horrified. It makes the news and then we all move on. Two footballers, team mates, fight each other in front of a full stadium; their manager's disapproval is clear but his sanction is mild. They return to play the following week and we all move on. We live in violent times.

According to Home Office figures, violent crime increased by six per cent over the year to September 2004, with a 22 per cent rise in sex offences, a 12 per cent rise in offences against the person involving injury and a five per cent rise in gun crime. Domestic violence accounts for 16 per cent of all violent crime and claims the lives of two women each week. Even hospital A&E staff are now routinely assaulted.

In our schools, too, violent behaviour is on the rise. An increasing number of children arrive at school with knives and, in some cases, guns - 40 per cent of schools have reported pupils bringing weapons into the playground or classroom. Politicians will argue about the data, but violence is a part of our society's culture, in a way that is both damaging and unsustainable.

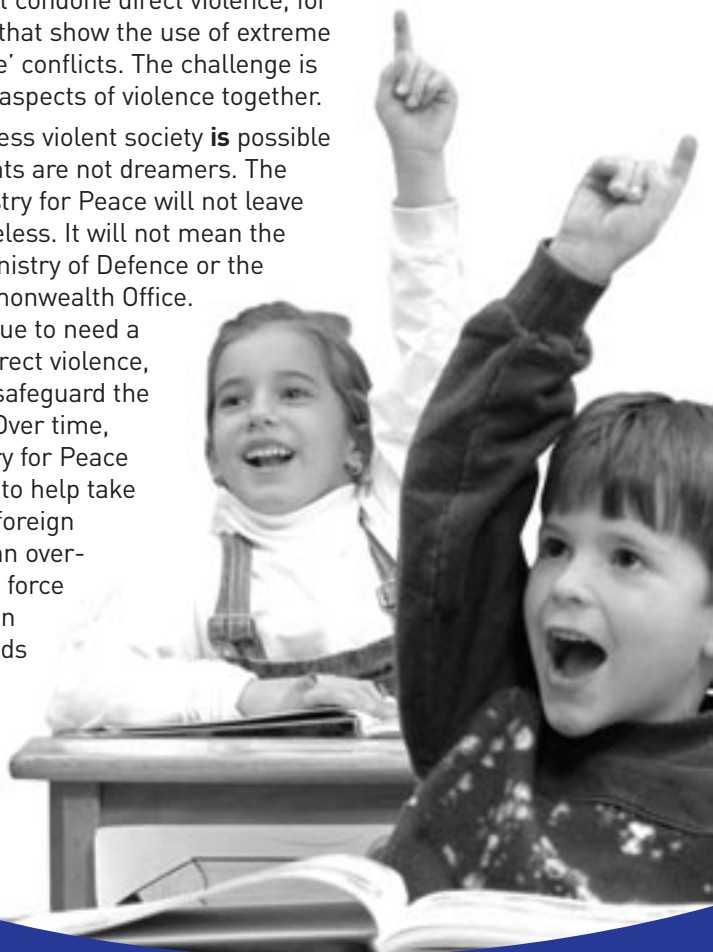
And yet the extent of violent behaviour is no less troubling than our response to it - we are becoming numb to violence. It is not enough to blame others - to tolerate a society in which such actions are increasingly the norm is tacitly to condone its guiding values. It is time to begin the arduous task of bringing about a different reality - a better reality.

Violence takes many forms - from the physical damage of bombs and beatings to the blood and guts of video games. The *ministry for peace* campaign identifies three related aspects of violence. **Direct** violence is physical or verbal violence, of a type most people recognise. **Structural** violence refers to political, social and economic structures that repress, harm or kill; examples include dictatorship, racial discrimination and global poverty. **Cultural** violence is the name given to those aspects of a culture that normalise violence - religions and ideologies that condone direct violence, for example, or films that show the use of extreme violence to 'resolve' conflicts. The challenge is to tackle all three aspects of violence together.

The creation of a less violent society **is** possible - and its proponents are not dreamers. The creation of a Ministry for Peace will not leave our nation defenceless. It will not mean the abolition of the Ministry of Defence or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The UK will continue to need a defence against direct violence, and diplomacy to safeguard the national interest. Over time, however, a Ministry for Peace can be a resource to help take both defence and foreign policy away from an over-reliance on armed force and towards proven non-violent methods of managing conflicts.

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Enough warm words – now is

You'd never guess we are currently half way through the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

According to UNICEF, in the last decade alone, more than 2 million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict, and more than three times that number have been permanently disabled or seriously injured. On the domestic front, at least one British child dies every week at the hands of a parent or carer. According to the NSPCC, one in six children suffers serious maltreatment by parents.

Another United Nations body, UNESCO, has also identified the need to promote a **culture of peace** internationally. At the centre of this is an educational mission: to persuade, to win over, to reform violent behaviour. Under this vision, peace would no longer be seen as the passive absence of conflict but as an active, continuous endeavour. Dialogue and respect for human rights would replace violence; inter-cultural understanding would replace 'enemy' images; the free flow of

The four principles of non-violent education and development

The Commission on Children and Violence convened by the Gulbenkian Foundation has drawn up four principles for parents, childcare workers and teachers, as well as children themselves. The focus on children is vital because what happens in their early years is influential in determining attitudes to violence in later life. Not only should we learn in schools the largely hidden history of peace and non-violence, we should be taught the basic skills of conflict transformation, ideally from an early age. The four principles are:

- 1 Expectations of children to realistically reflect their maturity and development
- 2 Children to be taught pro-social behaviour including non-violent ways of resolving conflicts
- 3 Non-violence to be clearly and consistently preferred and promoted
- 4 Adults to take responsibility not only for protecting children from violence done to them, but also for preventing violence done by them



information would replace secrecy; and egalitarian partnerships and full empowerment of women would succeed male domination.

In recent years two UN resolutions have been passed on these lines, including the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace – agreed by all countries in October 1999. This called for everyone – governments, civil society, the media, parents, teachers, politicians, scientists, artists, NGOs, the UN – to assume responsibility for taking action. But where are the results?

...we are calling for the establishment of a Ministry for Peace dedicated to reducing violence in all its forms...

The scale of the task is immense. For the past thousand years, the people of this country alone have been engaged in war, on and off, for 50 years in every 100. But there is no point simply shrugging our shoulders, let alone signing up to noble statements of intent that we have no intention of fulfilling. What is needed is concrete action, at every level.

The goal of *ministry for peace* is to reduce violence in all its forms and to convince people that the use of direct violence as a means to achieve ends is uncivilised and counter-productive. Our programme is educational, not party political. It is designed to foster a culture of peace and to embed non-violent methods and approaches into all our public institutions.

While it is true to say that a culture of peace cannot be imposed from the top-down and that the movement against violence has to be a bottom-up effort – winning the argument one step at a time – government can do a great deal to help encourage and promote it.

That is why we are calling for the establishment of a Ministry for Peace dedicated to reducing violence within the UK and to working with other countries to build peace throughout the world. The Ministry for Peace would be staffed by individuals skilled in helping others understand the efficacy of non-violent communication and in resolving conflicts non-violently.

Its work would assist rather than replace that of other government departments. It would help the Home Office on matters of violent crime and

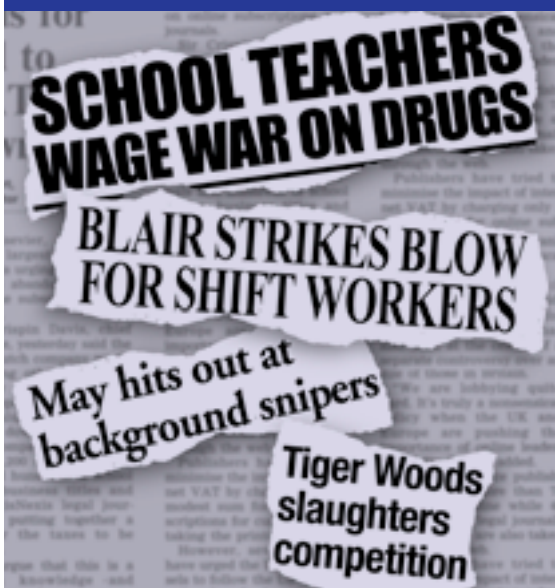
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the time for action

Violence in the Media



The British media's tendency to describe every disagreement in the language of direct violence – landing punches, striking blows – has an insidious effect on attitudes. In some cases, reality requires such terminology. But far more often the media resort to this vocabulary because they are seeking to exaggerate and intensify such disputes.

The way the media acts to support the normalisation of violence is best seen in military conflict. What is the function of the media at such times? Should it report objectively? Or should it always back Britain, in the spirit of 'my country, right or wrong'? Some people argue that the media is never an objective observer and always has an agenda. Conflicts must be simplified to fit TV news; arresting images are given preference over more considered items; coverage is toned down to avoid antagonising the authorities.

ministry for peace supports journalists who consciously adopt an agenda for peace, believing it to be the only alternative to an agenda for war. 'Peace Journalism' maps the pre-violence conflict, and aims to open up unexpected paths towards dialogue and peace-making. Peace journalism humanises all sides of the conflict and is prepared to document peace initiatives as well as deceit and suffering from all parties.

reforming the criminal justice system. It would assist the Foreign Office in its efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes. And it would help the Department for Education and Skills in finding new ways of building such insights into the substance of what our children learn at school.

Its mission would be, in short, to transform conflict. This is not merely a bureaucratic solution. The work of a Ministry for Peace would not have to wait for Whitehall to be restructured. It could start with the appointment of a Minister in, say, the Cabinet Office, with the remit to champion and implement a peace and non-violence agenda; or even with a Conflict Transformation Unit in the Cabinet Office dedicated to pursuing this strategy.

We are proposing a Ministry for Peace not as an end in itself. Rather, it is one step towards ensuring that the presumption in our society is always in favour of non-violent ways of managing conflicts, and the conviction that all aspects of violence can be transformed.

Governments of all political hues will find this a challenging agenda. Cultural change is hard to achieve. That is why our campaign aims to build the broadest possible coalition for change to encourage politicians to act to make violence history. Together, we want to define policies for a less violent society that every party can sign up to. Because peace must belong to everybody.

We are proposing a Ministry for Peace not because we believe any of the UK's political parties are opposed to peace or resolving violence within the UK. We recognise and support many of the initiatives that this government has introduced.

Our argument is that a Ministry that embodies the skills, methodology and strategies of non-violent communication and conflict resolution would provide government with a theoretical and practical framework to assist it in developing and prioritising policies in the UK – and across the world – that are desperately needed if we are to avoid this century being as bloody and destructive as the last.

At the start of the 21st century, Britain is in a position to lead the way. Join us.

Peace@school

Problem

■ 50% of schools think 'gang behaviour' among feuding groups is a recurring issue. About 40% of schools reported pupils bringing weapons into the playground or classroom at least once a term

Proposal

- Proven methods of non-violent communication to be taught in schools
- Violent Crime Reduction Bill to ban supply of weapons to under 18s and create Peace Zones banning their sale within a mile of schools

Peace@home

Problem

- 45% of women have experienced some form of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking
- One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute

Proposal

- Extend women's refuges and counselling nationwide
- GPs to prescribe anger management and stress reduction to families at risk
- Tough enforcement of agreements forbidding violence against neighbours and housing officers

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Problem

■ The National Criminal Intelligence Service has seen a dramatic rise in violent incidents of well-organised hooliganism in recent seasons

■ 2003/4 Home Office figures show that there has been a substantial increase in the number of football banning orders - up from 1,794 in 2003 to 2,596 in 2004

Proposal

■ Football banning orders to include remedial provisions such as completion of a course in non-violent communication

■ Sports authorities should demonstrate their rejection of violence in sport by treating it similarly to drug abuse

Peace@thewheel



Problem

■ BBC News Online says nine out of 10 UK drivers have been road rage victims at least once

■ A Gallup poll conducted in Summer 2004 indicated that Britain was the leading country in the world for road rage

Proposal

■ Driving Standards Agency Theory Test to include road rage management techniques

Join the campaign

The campaign for a Ministry for Peace has already taken a series of significant steps in its efforts to make Britain a less violent place, both in political circles and in building public support.

Founded in July 2003, the campaign's first success was securing cross-party support in Parliament. Conservative MP John Randall, Welsh Nationalist MP Elfyn Llwyd and Scottish Nationalist Party leader Alex Salmond MP all lent their support to Labour MP John McDonnell when he introduced a Ten-Minute Rule Bill in October 2003 aimed at creating a Ministry for Peace in government.

The Bill was passed unopposed before falling for lack of time at the end of the Parliamentary session. If its provisions had taken effect, there would now be a Minister for Peace advising other ministers on non-violent ways of resolving disputes and advising the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary on non-violent alternatives to military conflict. The Minister would be working with the Education Secretary on how best to teach non-violence in our schools. It is satisfying to note that none of the UK's elected representatives deployed any arguments against this plan.

Though the Bill was crucial, there have been other successes. Our 'Open Meetings', held every month in the Grand Committee Room at the Houses of Parliament, have included topics such as: peace education; the UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace; the psychological dynamics of conflict; communicating in a non-violent way; towards a non-violent economy; and strategies for effective peace-building for governments and the citizen. Our conference in April 2004 argued that Britain's role in the 21st century should be that of a 'peacebuilder'.

As a result of successful outreach work by **ministry for peace**, our supporters now include the Dalai Lama, the Rt Hon Tony Benn MP,

Moderator of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Prince Hassan of Jordan, Friends of the Earth executive director Tony Juniper and Labour peer Lord Ahmed.

We believe things can change – and are changing. The Government has implicitly recognised the need for an organisational response to the issue of excessive violence internationally by forming the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool. Set up in April 2001, these are an attempt to co-ordinate the efforts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development and the Treasury to prevent costly overseas conflict.

The creation of the Pools suggests that government thinking is developing along the integrated, 'joined-up' lines that are vital to tackling the problem of violence. So does the new Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act, covering protection, support and the rights of victims and witnesses. But it would be even more effective for the Government to have a coherent vision and an ambitious programme to tackle direct, structural and cultural violence **together**, and to involve the whole community in making Britain – and the world – a less violent place.

So there is no room for complacency – there remains a huge job to do in addressing the issues raised in this paper – and you have a chance to make your contribution. The real struggle of the 21st century will not be between civilizations, nor between religions. It will be the struggle between violence and non-violence. Help non-violence win.

Make a donation - download our full manifesto - join the campaign - learn more about it - register your support.

Visit www.ministryforpeace.org.uk today

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