

A nonviolent manifesto

1. All people are equal members of the human race. The fact that we are not treated equally is due to injustice and structural violence. A peaceful world is impossible without an economically more equal world while respecting differences of culture.

2. We will work locally and nationally but we will also have a concern globally and refuse to take the nation state as the most important unit.

3. A violent response to violence and injustice is likely to cause more suffering than a nonviolent response, and is also likely to lead to more repression. We choose to work without violence.

4. Our task is less to decry violence than it is to try to build justice and nonviolent means of struggle. Judging people who are oppressed and use violence is not very helpful; being of solidarity and exploring how they can work and struggle nonviolently is more useful.

5. We see care, compassion and nonviolence as being at the very root of what it means to be human.

6. We see that there are people in every era who have chosen a nonviolent path, even in the most difficult and violent of circumstances.

7. We also seek to build an understanding of nonviolence based on equality which goes beyond traditional understanding of gender roles, including redefining masculinity.

8. Nonviolence is an essential part of our response to what needs done in the world but it is not a panacea in the sense that we will always need to build alliances with other progressive forces.



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9. To be nonviolent we have to be green, which is nonviolence towards the earth. This is a key point since global warming threatens great violence towards billions of people on our globe.

10. To be nonviolent we have to uphold human rights including social and economic rights.

11. Our nonviolence is rooted in our political, philosophical, religious or other beliefs.

12. In addition, our nonviolence is based on a pragmatic understanding of what works. In Ireland, our nonviolence is also based on our understanding of the Irish historical experience and of the divisions in Northern Ireland.

13. We see laws and the rule of law as important and useful where they promote peace, justice and wellbeing but recognise that laws can also be used to promulgate division and injustice. We are therefore willing to regard unfair laws and policies as illegitimate, and to oppose them by nonviolent methods which may be deemed unlawful.

14. We take full responsibility for our role in society and for our actions.

15. We believe in positive change for society and the world to work for a situation where all people can live in peace with fulfilled lives. To this end we will take action on a wide range of issues, large and small. Some issues can be dealt with in a very short time, others may take decades or generations.

16. We need to recognise both our capabilities and limitations while celebrating our successes. We commit ourselves to work for change in the long term; in some cases this may be witnessing to possibilities and to the fact that a different society can be created. We will attempt to model the new and nonviolent society we are seeking in the way we work and live.



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Irish network for nonviolent action training and education
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