

Consultation on petition P-03-262 Wales Peace Institute  
Response from Nick Jewitt

Nicholas Jewitt

Petitions Committee  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Committee Members,

### **Petition for a Wales Peace Institute**

*I support of the proposal for a Wales Peace Institute.*

I believe this proposed body should have statutory powers to audit or to investigate the implications for Wales of any policies or legislation from any source regarding the arms trade, aerospace projects, military training and personnel policy, security and public safety issues, foreign policy and asylum issues, human rights and questions of social justice.

The Institute should be mandated to investigate and advise on Welsh Assembly Government policy, UK Government policy where relevant to Wales (and, possibly in conjunction with other similar bodies, policies of the European Parliament and its related bodies); this should include the implications of commercial projects and transactions in the above fields. The Institute would have the right and obligation to present a report or results of research to the Welsh Assembly (and other government or Parliamentary body where appropriate), with an obligation on the receiving body to consider such a report or research and to make public its deliberation.

The Institute could be constituted by all-party consensus. It would ask for input such as academic research from the following bodies and types of bodies:

- Welsh universities (e.g. departments of international law, economics, planning, etc. as appropriate);
- lawyers and legal bodies;
- industry;
- trade unions and professional bodies;
- county councils and other local/regional authorities;
- the Welsh Centre for International Affairs;
- non-governmental organisations such as Christian Aid and Oxfam, faith-based and humanist groups, community groups, etc.
- international link organisations such as Wales-Nicaragua-Cymru and Dolen Cymru-Lesotho;
- campaigning organisations such as CND Cymru and the Welsh Peace & Justice networks.

The above groups and organisations (essentially all sections of civil society) should also be consulted about the membership of the Institute. The Institute could operate with a very small staff and call in expert advice as necessary.

*Why is the Peace Institute necessary?*

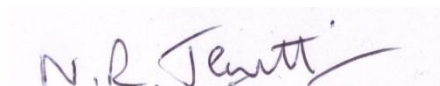
Wales is already heavily involved in the defence industry and in various projects and endeavours affecting issues of peace, justice and international security. Democratic accountability is too often overridden by commercial and political concerns and PR lobbying, which is too often accepted without question. An auditing body such as the Peace Institute would ensure that our elected representatives and the electorate themselves have access to the relevant facts, as distinct from propaganda. It would encourage transparency, accountability and democracy. It is these last three ideals which are being demanded increasingly by populations around the world. As a relatively recently founded political foundation, the Welsh Assembly has the chance of breaking the mould and standing up for a better system which could be admired worldwide.

Although foreign policy might not yet be a devolved matter, policies made or implemented in Wales do have international repercussions which deserve consideration by the Welsh Assembly. The promotion of peace and justice issues is a longstanding tradition in Wales, one leader in the field being Henry Richard MP (1812–88).

Like many others, I am impressed by the work of other peace institutes in nations and territories around the world. Nelly Maes of the Flanders Peace Institute makes a compelling case for its work. Can we afford *not* to have such an institute here in Wales, with the hitherto admirable record of the Welsh people in support of peoples around the world seeking peace and justice in their own nations? Is there yet peace in this troubled world?

I make this representation as a concerned individual. I worked for 20 years in East Africa; some my work concerned the difficulties facing peoples which could have been avoided had there been different and better policies emanating from 'Western' countries. Since moving to Bangor more than six years ago I have been a member of the Bangor & Ynys Môn Peace & Justice Group, which seeks to promote policies contributing to international understanding and conflict resolution, and to influence decisions on current affairs and topical social issues. A Wales Peace Institute would have to engage with all sectors of civil and political society to be effective, credible and useful.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "N.R. Jenett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light pink rectangular background.

12 December 2011