

U.K.: 'Teachers to ban armed forces from classrooms'

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Teachers vowed yesterday to stop military recruitment campaigns in schools that promote pro-war "propaganda".

The National Union of Teachers voted to back staff who resist armed forces publicity drives and urged "education for peace" to be embedded in the curriculum.

Delegates at the NUT's annual conference in Manchester called for a campaign to undermine efforts to enlist teenage recruits.

The union backed a motion committing the NUT to "support teachers and schools in opposing Ministry of Defence recruitment activities that are based upon misleading propaganda."

Paul McGarr, a delegate from east London, said: "Personally, I find it difficult to imagine any recruitment material that is not misleading.

"We would have material from the MoD saying 'Join the Army and we will send you to carry out the imperialist occupation of other people's countries.

Join the Army and we will send you to bomb, shoot and possibly torture fellow human beings in other countries. Join the Army and be sent - probably poorly equipped - into situations where people try and shoot you and kill you because you are occupying their countries'.

"When I see the MoD putting out recruitment material saying that, then maybe I won't have a problem with using it in school.

"Until then, I think that all recruitment material is misleading and should be opposed."

He continued: "They want to recruit in our schools because they have got a problem. Young people, who have been at the forefront of campaigning against these illegal and immoral wars, are not signing up."

The NUT will campaign for pupils to hear from speakers "promoting alternative points of view" and to have "education for peace embedded in the curriculum". Stefan Simms, a delegate from Ealing, west London, said young troops were being used as "cannon fodder for the profits of oil companies.

"I would be personally gutted after years of putting time and professional effort into the students I teach, helping their education and preparing them for adult life, to find out that some of them have said 'I decided to join the Army'."

The MoD hit back at the delegates' vote, denying that it actively ran recruitment campaigns in schools.

Brigadier Andrew Jackson, Commander of the Army Recruiting Group, said: "The single-Service schools teams visit about 1,000 schools a year, only at the invitation of the school.

"Their aim is to raise the general awareness of the armed forces in society, not to recruit.

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