

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 5:30 pm

To [slightly misquote a poem](#):

*First they came for the Quakers, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Quaker.*

Except I am a Quaker, and I share this, [issued by the Quakers in Britain](#), of which I am indirectly a member:

Quakers in Britain strongly condemned the violation of their place of worship which they say is a direct result of stricter protest laws removing virtually all routes to challenge the status quo.

Just before 7.15pm on 27 March more than 20 uniformed police, some equipped with tasers, forced their way into Westminster Meeting House.

They broke open the front door without warning or ringing the bell first, searching the whole building and arresting six women attending the meeting in a hired room.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023 have criminalised many forms of protest and allow police to halt actions deemed too disruptive.

Meanwhile, changes in judicial procedures limit protesters' ability to defend their actions in court. All this means that there are fewer and fewer ways to speak truth to power.

Quakers support the right to nonviolent public protest, acting themselves from a deep moral imperative to stand up against injustice and for our planet.

Many have taken nonviolent direct action over the centuries from the abolition of slavery to women's suffrage and prison reform.

Paul Parker, recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, said: "No-one has been arrested in a Quaker meeting house in living memory.

"This aggressive violation of our place of worship and the forceful removal of young

people holding a protest group meeting clearly shows what happens when a society criminalises protest.

“Freedom of speech, assembly, and fair trials are an essential part of free public debate which underpins democracy.”

A Labour government permitted this.

It allowed those committed to peace to be forcibly arrested and detained, all because they opposed the use of violence in this world.

They did so to support the genocide that is being pursued in Gaza.

They did so by entering the premises of an organisation that has a [Nobel Peace Prize](#).

They got that prize for trying to find pathways through conflict.

The arrests were made because a peaceful protest was being discussed, with such protest being an essential element in a functioning democracy.

It is easy to spot the demise of democracy in the USA right now. But is there much of a democracy left in the UK right now?

Is the aim to create a deliberate climate of fear?