



# Global link

24a New Street, Lancaster, LA1 1EG, 01524 36201  
info@globalink.org.uk www.globalink.org.uk  
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## Peace Building Edition

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July this year, the world's eyes were turned towards the leaders of the eight richest nations, due to meet in Gleneagles, Scotland for their annual G8 Summit. 250 000 people took to the Streets of Edinburgh to call for a more just and sustainable world and the Live 8 concert meant that millions of ordinary people across the globe were aware about the Summit and its connection with aid, trade and debt. A temporary, non-hierarchical eco-village with a population of around 5000 people was created by protestors on the outskirts of Stirling and a range of political actions were planned for the week, including demonstrations at Faslane nuclear submarine base, Dungavel detention centre for asylum-seekers and Gleneagles itself. The British Summer began with high hopes for the future of the planet.

All that changed, when on the 7<sup>th</sup> July – the second day of the G8 Summit – 4 bombs were detonated by suicide bombers on three crowded tube trains and a bus in London, killing 52 members of the public and injuring 750 more. Then on 21<sup>st</sup> July, news broke of an almost identical planned

attack that failed. The police subsequently announced that those suspected of the bombings and attempted bombings were Muslim extremists. It was also revealed that 4 of them were born outside of the UK and that 2 of them came to the UK as child dependents of asylum-seekers.

The climate of fear, suspicion, Islamophobia and racism that had pervaded Britain since the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, suddenly escalated to new extremes.

*'Hatred is never conquered by hatred',  
The Buddha*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the day after the failed bombings, the London Metropolitan Police shot and killed a man later found to have no involvement with the explosions, and not connected to any criminal group. He was identified as Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian electrician. The tragic event raised questions about new police powers to shoot to kill, under which innocent de Menezes was the first victim. Whilst sympathising

with de Menezes' family, the police defended their actions under the wider fight against terror and much of the general public agreed: "I do not blame him and I do not blame them. It takes only a split second to decide to pull a trigger because it takes only a split second to detonate a bomb" wrote one reader in the Daily Express.

Right-wing newspapers have used the terrorist incidents to perpetuate fear, hatred and misunderstanding, especially of asylum-seekers and Muslims. 'Bombers are all spongeing asylum seekers' ran the Daily Express headline on 27<sup>th</sup> July (in fact, 2 of the attempted bombers were children of asylum-seekers who had grown up in Britain). The lead article focused on claims of huge

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state handouts and included a quote from Tory MP Andrew Rosindell about the 'extraordinary ease with which terrorists are "almost invited to live among us".' Later, political commentator Robin Shepherd writes a full page article entitled: 'How did we let them come in? Tougher border controls are essential to keep out would-be terrorists'. In a separate article, the Daily Express showed an extract from a book called 'Understanding Islam' with a quote from one of the terrorists' neighbours: "He told me he was going to get 80 virgins when he got to heaven if he praised Allah".

A recent study published by the British Medical Journal interviewed over 1000 London residents after the bombings. 31 percent reported substantial levels of stress. Some 55 percent believed their lives were in danger. The study reports that stress suffered by Muslim residents was more than double of that of other London residents. Nearly 61 percent of Muslim commuters surveyed suffered "substantial stress." One of the researchers in the study attributed the findings to Muslim fears of reprisals against them, and at anger and sadness about "the misusing of their religion [to justify] terrorism".

As individuals we have to make an important choice about how we respond to the current situation. Do we want to live our lives in fear, suspicion and hatred or do we want to do what we can to promote peace and understanding?

Fortunately, in Lancaster, the strong community has stood together. On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July, a "Walk against

Terrorism' was organised for people of all faiths and none. The walk was well-attended and was followed by a picnic with shared food. Participants commented on the warm and friendly atmosphere.

At Global Link, we believe that the educational work we do to challenge misinformation, racism and prejudice towards asylum-seekers is more important than ever before. Our exhibition 'Escape to Safety' encourages individuals to think critically about newspaper articles regarding refugees and asylum-seekers and not to close their hearts and minds to their plight because of fear and misinformation. 2 terrorists were children of asylum-seekers but it is necessary to challenge the tabloid conflation of asylum-seeker and terrorist.

And let us not forget the hopes with which the Summer began for a more just and sustainable world. We must remain aware of the actions of the G8, the world bank and the IMF and do what we can to challenge exploitation and injustice and to promote a more equitable distribution of wealth and a responsible use of the world's resources.

## Global Link Membership

Support the work of Global Link by becoming a member, or by encouraging an organisation to join. Anyone from a member organisation is entitled to enrol as an associate member without further payment. Having joined, you have free use of the resources library.





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Ruth Self, Global Link,  
24a New St, Lancaster  
LA1 1EG

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# Welcome to the window on the World's Religions

*by Sara Nobili, Escape to Safety Education Worker*

In this issue I have decided to give a brief descriptive account of the main principles of Islam and its origin.

This faith has been under much scrutiny since 9/11 and the London bombings were attributed to Muslim extremists and I have purposefully avoided treating it differently from the other two faiths previously described in this space. The prominence that Islam has been given in the media, whether in a positive or negative light, can mislead us into thinking that it and its followers are SO different from any other faith.

It is important that we remember that extremism exists within all faiths. For example the Ku Klux Klan are self-declared Christians that promote Protestantism to the exclusion of other religions and the Caucasian race at the expense of all others. Other self-declared Christians bomb and kill doctors to defend the life of the unborn.

So, here it goes as usual. Any feedback is welcome, mainly to polyfill my knowledge gaps in this very much discussed aspect of everyone's lives: religion.

*Islam*, an Arabic word which means surrendering oneself to the will of God and achieving peace and security by doing so, is the world's second most followed religion with over a thousand million adherents, mainly residing in Asian countries. In the UK there are between 1.2 and 2.6 million Muslims which makes Islam the second most popular faith here too. As with most faiths, there are some variations in beliefs and practice between different groups – for example Shia and Sunni Muslims. However, it is commonly accepted that all Muslims are members of one community: the "ummah".

## THE BELIEFS

All Muslims adhere to the central message of Islam that there is no other God but Allah, and that life should be lived in complete submission to the will of Allah. At the heart of Islam there are also the following beliefs: the sanctity of life, property and honour; the Abolition of interest, and of vendettas and private justice; and the better treatment of women. In order to be a good Muslim, one must perform the duties known as the Five Pillars of Islam which are: Shahada, the Muslim profession of faith; Salat, a prayer ritual performed 5 times a day by all Muslims over the age of 10 which helps Muslims remain aware of the importance of their faith, and the role it plays in every part

of life (usually Muslims pray together in a place of worship called a mosque, Arabic for "place of prostration"); Sawm, the practice of abstaining from all bodily pleasures between dawn and sunset each day during Ramadan, the 9th Muslim month which helps Muslims



Mecca is the most holy place for Muslims.

develop self-control, gain a better understanding of God's gifts and greater compassion towards the deprived; Zakat — giving alms to the poor, which is intended to free Muslims from the love of money, reminding them that everything they have really belongs to God; and finally Hajj – originated from the word "Hijrah" which means 'emigration' or 'flight' – which is the pilgrimage to Mecca that all physically able Muslims should make at least once in their life.

Mecca is the most holy place for Muslims as Muhammad (pbuh) took his followers on a journey from Mecca to Medina in 622 when his popularity was seen as threatening

by the people in power in Mecca. They believed in many different Gods and idolatry was common. The event was seen as so important for Islam that 622 is the year in which the Islamic calendar begins.

### THE QUR'AN

Muslims are guided to follow Allah's will by the Qur'an, the Muslim scripture which is regarded as the unaltered word of God. The only authoritative text of the Qur'an is the original in Arabic. Muslims regard "translations" of the Qur'an into other languages as paraphrases or versions of the original.

The Qur'an is an ensemble of revelations made to humanity by Allah through a very spiritual man, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) of Arabia 1400 years ago. He is considered to be the final messenger through whom Allah revealed the faith to the world (there had been earlier messengers, among them Adam, Noah,

Abraham, Moses and Jesus). The first revelation happened one night, while he was meditating in a cave on the mountain, and he was visited by the angel Jibreel who ordered him to "recite". Once Jibreel mentioned the name of Allah, Muhammad (pbuh) began to recite words which he came to understand were the words of God. During the rest of his life Muhammad (pbuh) continued to receive these revelations which constitute the Qur'an.

### FESTIVALS

'Eid Al Fitr': This religious festival marks the breaking of the fast and the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Congregational prayers are held, gifts exchanged, delicious food prepared and new clothes are worn.



The Islamic Calendar follows the moon and so each year, the dates are shifted forwards by about eleven days in the normal calendar.

*For more information on understanding Islam, please contact:*  
*Ms Anjum Anwar,*  
*Education Officer*  
*Lancashire Council of Mosques*  
*Bangor Street Community Centre*  
*Norwich Street, Blackburn BB1 6NZ*  
*Tel. 01254 692521/692289*  
*Fax. 01254 660074*  
*email:*  
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## Terrorist bombings in London - what should we say to children?

It seems such a long time ago now, although many readers will remember clearly, when 'the bomb' had a big presence in our dreams and fears. At that time I was working at the Centre for Peace Studies which was then based at St Martin's College in Lancaster. A frequent issue of concern to teachers – and parents – was how to talk to children about nuclear weapons, or whether in fact we should rather protect children from such frightening information. In an effort to address these questions I sought out what little research was available and eventually carried out my own research using interviews and questionnaires. What follows draws on that work, adapted to the current situation.

The natural impulse of adults to protect children from distressing information may tempt some to avoid the topic of terrorist bombings – or of war at all. All the research shows clearly that this is futile – children from the youngest ages are very sensitive to what the adults around them are concerned about, and of course are exposed to news media like everyone. To pretend that there is nothing going on is

*“To pretend that there is nothing going on is confusing and leaves children to face their feelings alone.”*

confusing and leaves children to face their feelings alone. One result of this may be that they develop their own explanations and fantasies of what has happened – which may be even more frightening than the truth. It is important, then for teachers to publicly acknowledge what has happened in an appropriate way, maybe using assembly or circle time.

In the immediate period following an event such as the London bombings, teachers may still be experiencing strong emotional reactions themselves. It is better to share these with another adult first before opening the subject with children. It is important to be emotionally honest, but it would not be appropriate to expose children to your own intense feelings – nor can you listen properly to children if you are overcome yourself. Many children, especially younger children, over-estimate the risks facing themselves. They will be reassured to know that – even if they live in London – they are extremely unlikely to be the victim of a terrorist incident. It is also important for children to know that the adults around them will always do their best to make sure they are safe. With older students teachers may consider what are appropriate reactions to terrorism – can we accept limits on civil liberties, what are appropriate punishments. With young children it is

enough to know that the police will find the criminals and they will be prevented from carrying out more attacks.

It's also important to remember children are often confused about what's real and what isn't. Most children are exposed to a lot of very realistic but fictional images of death and violence. It may be hard for them to understand that what they see on the news is different from what they see on Casualty – or that the fantasy violence of science fiction is not real. So it is worth checking that children have an accurate perception, as far as is possible, of what has taken place. Very young children will still be developing their understanding of death, and incidents such as the bombings may highlight this. For this reason it is important that teachers use honest and accurate language that is appropriate to the children's age. To say that people have been 'lost' in a terrorist attack, for example is simply confusing.

Some children will be especially vulnerable to these situations. Children who are already bereaved, or who have survived some other form of trauma, perhaps because they are refugees, may experience a resurgence of grief or fear. Teachers who are aware of these special circumstances can be alert to this possibility, and may need to give those children extra time and

# New Resources

reassurance.

A more likely problem is that the terrorist incidents will trigger hostility towards Muslim or ethnic minority children. Unfortunately police authorities around the country are already reporting substantial increases in racial attacks. It is important that teachers promptly and sensitively challenge racism, following their schools' Race Equality policies. When discussing the London bombs, teachers can

children that all religions,

*"A more likely problem is that the terrorist incidents will trigger hostility towards Muslim or ethnic minority children... It is important that teachers promptly and sensitively challenge racism."*

whatever their true teachings, have been abused by people who use them to justify violence. Ask the children how fair it would be if the whole class would be punished

because one member has done something wrong – then ask how fair it is to treat a whole community with suspicion because of a handful of criminals. If there seems to be a high level of stereotyping and hostility, this maybe something that the school needs to address outside the context of thinking about terrorism – it may be a sign that the existing approaches to challenging racism are not working and need to be re- evaluated.

## Further Resources

**[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)**

An online resource primarily for bereaved children and their families but has a very useful section on children's reactions to the London bombs.

**[www.nut.org.uk](http://www.nut.org.uk)**

Advice for teachers, especially on protecting Muslim pupils

**[www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)**

Has an assembly showing what is helpful and unhelpful behaviour during an emergency

**[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)**

US educational psychology site with advice on helping children cope with war and terrorism

**[www.citizenship-pieces.org.uk](http://www.citizenship-pieces.org.uk)**

Tower Hamlets site with advice on helping children cope with the Iraq war.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews)**

The Newsround website is always a good site for children and young people. As well as the current news it has special reports, background information and lots of contributions from young people. Look for the 'hotseat' page where a trauma psychologist from Great Ormond Street, answers children's questions in the immediate aftermath of the London bombs. There is also a permanent page on 'What to do if the news upsets you'.

## Peace Direct - "What makes peacebuilding effective: linking macro and micro"

Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November, Rugby

The central focus for this years conference will be on the different dimensions of conflict: from the personal to the global. The events in London on the 7th and 21st July have clearly exposed the need for interconnections and the actual potential conflict that exists here in the UK. The conference will explore links between conflict resolution and peacebuilding in different settings, with an emphasis on action by individual and groups.

If you wish to attend please contact Peace Direct:

Tel.: 020 7549 0286

Email: [info@peacedirect.org](mailto:info@peacedirect.org)

Web: [www.peacedirect.org](http://www.peacedirect.org)



Please find a list of resources below. This edition's resources cover Peace, Diversity and Equality

*"One World Week - Action Kit 2005"*, One World Week. Theme - Promises, Promises!

*"Children Working for Peace"*, Unicef. Teaching manual to motivate young people to use conflict resolution concepts and skills.

*"The RAM Report"*, Cookson, Rich and Mike Jempson. The Ram report is both an account 'work in progress' and a guide to action for people who believe that a particular social group, namely refugees, asylum seekers and Romas, is receiving unfair, or inaccurate media coverage. It has been produced in response to frequent requests for advice and information from all over Europe.

*"Toolkit for tackling racism in schools"*, Dadzie, Stella. A resource pack to support teachers and others who seek to address the issues of racism and diversity in schools — key issues, strategic/school wide responses, practical checklists, practical classroom activities and staff training activi-

*"Speaking for Ourselves, Listening to Others"*, Leeds DEC. This resource uniquely uses the perceptions of children, not adults, to provide the picture of the place in which they live. That place is Nairobi in Kenya. It is also designed to develop the ways and means by which children learn about other places and people.

*"Homebeats: Struggles for Racial Justice"*, Institute of Race Relations. An exciting multimedia teaching pack, including a CD-ROM and resource sheets, exploring black history, racism, and struggles against racism across the world. Biographies of 50 people are provided. These include Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.

*"Stronger than Fear"*, Light Productions. Short film exploring one young man's emotional journey after a racial attack. From extreme vulnerability outwards into the world, affirming the possibility of racial harmony.

*"Immigration and Asylum - The Facts Behind the Headlines"*, Teichmann, I. Book which clearly defines the issues surrounding migration and asylum seekers in concise easily understood terms. It contains just sufficient statistics and other facts to make its point.

*"Faces of Britain - a cultural guide"*, Avon and Somerset Police Community Trust. Written originally for use by the police this book provides concise guides to the culture of various ethnic groups in the UK and to the beliefs and practices of many worldwide religions.

*"Show Racism the red card"*. Produced as a response to racism in football this Teaching pack covers the issues of racism especially in sport and the workplace. Contains booklet, info. sheets, video and cd-rom

*"The Colour of Home"*, Hoffman M. & Littlewood. A story about a Somali boy who arrives with his family in Britain via a refugee camp. It describes how he adjusts to his new life. However he first has the difficult task of explaining the story of his life before.

*"Roots of the Future - Ethnic Diversity in the Making of Britain"*, Frow, M. This book chronicles how migrations and immigrants to Britain have enriched the economy and culture throughout history. One section is devoted to the part played by immigrants in science, academia and the everyday life of Britain. It looks forward optimistically to the future.

*"All different, all equal (Video pack)"*, N.E.A.D.- (Norfolk Education for Action). Set in mainly in Norfolk, this uses a moving story of mixed race children suffering racial harassment. The pack includes teaching materials.

*"Shades of History"*, Nelson-Rowe, C. Using five African, Afro Caribbean examples this this small pack reveals how the five have played significant roles in world history.

*"Why are People refugees?"*, Senker Cath. A book which explains many of the question surrounding refugees and migration in an interesting and easily understood way. Well illustrated and presented.

*"Threatened Cultures Romanichal Gypsies"*, Acton T. and Gallant D. Centered on individual children and their families this book gives a broad view of the life styles of Gypsies in Britain and compares it with that of gypsies in the USA.

*"Inclusive Schools Society"*, Richardson R, & Wood A. This book is for all interested in raising the achievement of Black and Ethnic Minority young people in schools with a view to making Britain a fairer and better place - a more inclusive society.

*"Throwing Stones - An anti-racist teaching guide and video"*, Network Educational Press Ltd. Supported by local educational institutions and sporting clubs this pack is jointly produced by Leicestershire Constabulary and Leicester Haymarket Theatre . It approaches the issue of racism through the use of drama workshops utilizing a video film made especially for the project.

## EARTH SUMMIT

We have recently developed a new Earth Summit exercise which involves a whole year group in learning about the G8 (Group of eight of the world's economically leading countries).

As with our other simulations, this involves the students working in role in country or special interest groups. In this case the groups are the G8 nations (can you name them??), the IMF, a development NGO and the media.

*“Students and teachers found the simulation to be great fun and useful. They learnt a lot about the G8.”*

The themes of the day are the three themes of the Make Poverty History campaign- debt, trade

justice and aid.



All students are provided with background information on these issues, on the G8, and on their own group. They then have to work together to persuade the other groups to adopt ‘their line’ on the issues- of course each group will have a different outlook. For example, when we trialled this day at Lancaster Girls’ Grammar School, the German government decided to address poverty in Africa and it’s own unemployment problems by sending voluntary workers to Africa. The NGO felt that this was *not* a realistic solution- would unemployed Germans really be happy- or useful- in poor areas of Africa?

Students and teachers found the simulation to be great fun and useful. They learned a lot about the G8, and at the end stated that the main causes of poverty in Africa were debt (96%) and unfair trade (48%). The skills they felt they used most were listening (74%) persuading others (63%) and giving information (58%).

Other topics for Earth Summits are climate change, refugees and tourism/sustainable development. We also offer a day of activities on Fair Trade for upper KS2, which includes a ‘mini summit’.

***If your school is interested in running a G8 simulation, contact Ruth Davies- 01524 36201 or [r.davies@globalink.org.uk](mailto:r.davies@globalink.org.uk)***

## Introducing Charges for Services

From April 2006 we will be introducing charges for some of our services due to the current funding climate. These charges are minimal and do not reflect the actual cost, but will serve as the income generation we require to continue to access funding from our principal funders. Until then, our services are mostly free, so book early!

## Global Link Open Day

**Global Link will be hosting our first open day in our current premises on Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> between 11.00 – 4.00 pm**

**This is an opportunity for people to come view our resources, have a cup of fair trade tea and a fair trade biscuit, meet staff, find out what we do and what we can offer you.**