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Introduction

In the summer of 2015 when this Handbook went to press, terrorism occupied global news headlines on a daily basis. As the brutality of terrorism is experienced by more communities across more countries, the multiple challenges that it poses have rarely seemed more intractable. Community and school leaders, parents and teachers are expected to contribute to prevention efforts within the framework of government policies that, inevitably, are driven by the need to attain achievable goals in the lifespan of electoral cycles. As regards terrorism, such goals can be elusive. Our approach in writing this book is to take a step back and to take a longer and broader view: to strip terrorism down to its component parts, to look at its origins – in anger, hatred and perceived injustice – and to study the past for insights into the present. We even provide some optimism for the future.

This Handbook provides a reliable and objective resource for classroom use that enables lower secondary school teachers to tackle the complex issues of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism with confidence. It is a teacher-led journey through political violence, viewed in the context of a debate on citizenship, human rights and respect, civil and political engagement and forms of protest.

Teachers can use this Handbook to explain what terrorists do and why they do it; how to differentiate between the *reasons*, *goals* and *methods* of terrorists; how to explain the complex pathways that lead to involvement in violence; why the media and terrorism are inextricably linked; how and why terrorism starts and, crucially, what factors bring a cycle of terrorism to an end. By stimulating debate, role-play and critical thinking, this text provides a forum for pupils to explore grievances, analyse and put forward moral arguments, consider the nature of protest and its relationship to violence and to engage in wide-ranging discussions of major issues affecting their own and the global community.

Why is this Handbook needed?

This resource text is structured around several premises. The first is that children from the age of 11 will have heard the word ‘terrorism’ used with some frequency at home, on television and through social media, but have at best a vague understanding of what the term signifies. In the United States since 9/11 and in the UK since the London bombings of July 2005, young people have been aware that something called ‘terrorism’ is not necessarily a remote event in a far-off country but can happen on their doorstep. Some may have been directly affected by terrorism, or have had friends or family who were. Teenagers across Europe know that hundreds of their peers, some as young as 15, have been recruited to fight alongside terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, but are confused as to how and why. Terrorism has become one of the most widely used but least understood terms in everyday language.

Secondly, many adults, whether parents or teachers, are also unclear about what terrorism is and find it difficult to respond to questions on the subject from children. There is a great deal of confusion in the public at large as to the meaning of the terms terrorism, extremism and radicalisation, yet there are few resources available that

enable the teaching profession to explain these complex and controversial issues in the school classroom, especially to this younger age group.

Thirdly, just as teaching professionals require a reliable and objective resource text to use in classroom discussions, so equally do pupils. Young people are well aware that their habits, interests and online behaviour have become a target for suspicion and scrutiny. In the period from 2007 to March 2014, 153 children under 11, a further 690 aged 12–15 and 554 aged 16–17, primarily from Muslim communities, had been referred to the UK government's *Channel* programme to be assessed for the risk of being drawn into terrorism.¹ Radicalisation and terrorism are problems that school pupils find deeply troubling. They need help to extricate meaning from the confusing terminology, facile slogans and loose jargon that dominate headline-driven news items. What every secondary school should now offer is a debating space, carefully constructed and with impartial leadership, where these important issues are discussed and where pupils' concerns can be addressed.

Fourthly and finally, the UK government has made it imperative to fill this resource gap in the education curriculum. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act of February 2015 delivered a new range of statutory responsibilities for which many teachers, as well as others within the 'specified authorities' designated under the Act, feel ill prepared. In addition to their regular teaching duties, school staff, governors and leaders are now obliged to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' with responsibility to 'establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of radicalisation.' According to guidelines published in March 2015² they 'need to know what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it.' They have a duty to ensure that schools are 'safe places in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas.' After training, teachers should have 'the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups.' These are onerous responsibilities indeed.

The UK is far from alone in having to face the challenges of youth radicalisation in different forms. Many countries across the world are struggling to protect their young and vulnerable populations and to build up their resistance to extremist narratives based on fear and hatred. The emphasis on Islamist terrorism in western government policy and in public perceptions of violence may have contributed to a neglect of other forms of religious and racial hatred. Since 9/11 white supremacists, anti-government fanatics and other non-Muslim extremists in the US carried out almost twice as many attacks as radical Muslims; right-wing extremism and attacks on religious minorities have grown steadily in many West European countries in the last five years, with at best a lukewarm policy response from national parliaments. This Handbook's wide-ranging geographical coverage ensures its relevance and applicability to educators in other countries seeking a resource book with which to introduce modern conflict studies.

What does this Handbook cover?

The core study area of the Handbook examines the multiple processes that lead to terrorism and the effects of terrorism on individuals and communities. However the approach is indirect, and teachers reach this core from different angles. Entry points include a consideration of familiar violent behaviour such as bullying, a debate on violence and non-violence centred on Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Martin Luther King Jr, and a discussion of the struggle – sometimes violent – for women’s rights and universal suffrage led by the Suffragettes. Deriving in each case from a perceived injustice or grievance, the paths converge on the process of engagement in terrorist violence and how perspectives on violence change with time and circumstances. The question of whether former South African president Nelson Mandela was a ‘terrorist’ or a ‘man of peace’ is used as illustration.

Violence is inseparable from terrorism, and how terrorists use violence is key to understanding the phenomenon. Individual pathways into terrorism vary widely and may also differ between males and females. The process may be mediated through peers, kinship groups, a powerful or influential communicator, by access to Internet and social media sites preaching violence or, more likely, by a combination of these factors.³ The decision to engage in violence may evolve gradually from influences absorbed actively or passively over months or years, or may explode in a sudden and imperative need to act. It calls into question the nature of identity, how individuals perceive themselves and the means by which they identify with others. Four widely differing case studies illustrate in greater detail the causes and consequences of terrorism in different regions around the world. Fictional storylines and classroom activities are provided to stimulate critical thinking and interactive participation.

An important Unit of the book introduces the role of the mass media and social networks in terrorism, including in recruitment and propaganda. Pupils reflect on the role that fact, opinion and bias play in media messages, and how misleading or distorted messages can change the way a story is presented. A greater awareness of the risks of bias and media manipulation may encourage pupils to challenge pro-violence messages and to adopt a more critical approach to online source evaluation. While it is never possible to protect pupils entirely from the proselytising effects of violent discourse, teachers can use this text to build resilience and create counter narratives that will strengthen pupils’ defences against them.

The last Unit of the Handbook examines the factors that bring a cycle of violence to an end, and introduces the principles of reconciliation and restorative justice. The notion of ‘Courageous People’ is introduced – those who put their lives and reputations at risk in helping to resolve conflicts. Programmes for the rehabilitation of young fighters from conflict zones are discussed, with possible relevance for the present day. The Unit concludes with brief summaries and questions on what has been learned and (for older classes) tackles the problem of reaching a definition of terrorism, a term which is value-laden and subjective, and about which there is no international consensus.

A classroom questionnaire, distributed at the start and at the end of study, provides a measure of what has been learned.

Does the Handbook reach any conclusions?

History suggests that terrorist violence rarely achieves its goals, and is destructive of both those who practise and those who suffer it. Even if individuals have genuine and unresolved grievances, the use of violence against unarmed civilians (as terrorism is most commonly defined) is more likely to lead to further violence and suffering than to any lasting peaceful solution. The Handbook concludes that terrorism can and does end if there is enough will to do so and if principles of human rights, equality of treatment and fairness before the law are respected. Terrorism is 'man-made' and therefore can be ended by 'man', although peace has a better chance if women are involved in the process.

This Handbook is intended not only as a resource text on radicalisation and terrorism but also as a means to involve classes in a much broader discussion of diversity and identity, conflict resolution and the difficulties of human relations in which everyone, including pupils as young as 11, can participate.

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