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Tools for Building Justice, January, 2003

Unit on Peace with Justice since 9/11¹

Purpose: *To apply the model of “building justice”—oppression, resistance and alliance—to analysis of the “War on Terrorism,” enabling students to strategize actions for peace with social justice*

Session outline:

Session 1. Since 9-11

This session reviews events in the United States since the 9-11-01 attacks in New York and Washington and the subsequently-declared “war on terrorism”: what students have learned, and how they have been affected, and not affected.

Session 2. What is Terrorism?

Students analyze the concept of terrorism, examine three facets of the “war on terrorism” and brainstorm actions they can take in each area to resist the effects of the “war.”

Session 3. Terrorism and the Isms

Students apply the concept of terrorism to differential treatment for people by race, class, age and other differences in the United States, and close by brainstorming actions they can take to resist the effects of the “war.”

¹ Developed in consultation with Boston Mobilization. Portions of this unit quote the Boston Mobilization Youth for Peace Curriculum.

Session 1. Since 9-11

Aims: To introduce the unit on the “war on terrorism” and its effects in the United States
To identify who are most likely to be affected by the war on terrorism

Skills: Students will

Review events in the United States related to the war since the September 11, 2001 attack
Make preliminary distinctions between root causes of the war on terrorism and symptoms of the war

Preparation

You will need 5 poster-sized pieces of paper, labeled as in “some themes” below, and 5 - 10 markers. On each poster, write one of the term-pairs across the top, and draw a line down the page, separating it into two columns, one for each term.

Session Description: This session reviews events in the United States since the 9-11-01 attacks in New York and Washington and the subsequently-declared “war on terrorism”: what students have learned, and how they have been affected, and not affected.

Session Agenda

1. To Begin

Introduce the focus of this unit: having students talk about life in the United States since the events of 9/11/01: the attacks in New York and Washington, the call for the “war on terrorism,” the subsequent wars and conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and changes in civil rights protections in the United States. Explain that the purpose of this time is to have students reflect upon and talk about what happened and how it may affect them. Remind them of the agreements.

2. What Happened

a. Read out the following statements in turn, asking students to explain each statement and give any details they know about what happened

[THIS MAY BE A PLACE TO USE PHOTOS IN CONNECTION WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. SOME PHOTO POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

IMAGES OF 911 ATTACKS
AFGHAN BOMBING
RACIAL PROFILING AIRPORT SHOT
SECURITY/METAL DETECTORS AT HIGH SCHOOL/IN AIRPORT
THE EXISTING ARAB/WHITE STUDENT PHOTOS]

On 9/11/01 men flew planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, destroying the former; over 3,000 people were killed.

- What happened?
- Who were the immediate victims?
- Why do you think it happened?
- How did people in the U.S. respond?
- How did the government respond?

On 9/14/01 U.S. President Bush called for an international “War on Terrorism”

- What did he mean by terrorism?
- Who do you think were meant to be the targets of the war?

On 10/7/01 the U.S. began bombing Afghanistan. In the course of the following two months, 3,000-5,000 Afghan people were killed, both soldiers and civilians, and many times that number threatened with starvation because food supply distribution was halted by the bombing. In the last two decades, 1.5 million Afghani men, women and children have been killed as part of a U.S.-backed war against the Soviet Union

- Why did this new bombing campaign happen?
- Who was being attacked?
- Who were the immediate victims?

On 10/26/01 the President signed the “Patriot Act,” enabling the government to detain noncitizens indefinitely on secret charges, and to monitor and spy upon legal, political and religious organizations across the United States without securing a warrant (obtaining legal permission from a judge). By December 2001 1,147 Arabs and Arab-Americans were detained.

- Based on this description of the Patriot Act, what is it about?
- Why do you think it was passed?
- Who are “noncitizens”?
- Why reasons have been given for detaining Arab people and Arab-Americans?
- Who is likely to be affected by increased and more widespread surveillance of legal, political and religious organizations?

In the early months of 2002, a number of nations, some with a history of financial support and arms supply from the U.S.—e.g. Russia, Colombia, Israel, India, and the Philippines,—joined the U.S. in announcing that they were also conducting “wars on terrorism.” The groups they were attacking in each case were dissenting groups of people from within or near their borders, some of whom were performing individual acts of violence—“terrorist acts”—, against them, and whom they wished to overcome.

- Why do you think these nations made these announcements at this time?
- How might some governments, in order to achieve more power over people, be using the phrase “war on terrorism”?

In June 2002 President Bush announced that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) will have as an official mission the task of killing Saddam Hussein, the President of the Middle East nation of Iraq, by any means necessary. The justification is that the Iraqi government is said to be giving support to anti-U.S. terrorists. For the same stated reasons the U.S. has been attacking and blockading Iraq since 1991; the blockade of food and medicine has been said to result in the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi infants and children.

- What does the statement say about who is being affected the most by U.S. actions against Iraq?
- What does “killing by any means necessary” mean? What other words might describe what the CIA is supposed to do?

- If the CIA did kill the Iraqi president, do you think the U.S. be safer from terrorist attacks, or in more danger of being attacked? Why?

b. Break students into dyads or triads. Have students take 1 minute each in their group to talk to other students, answering the questions:

- Any way I've noticed that my family, friends and/or I have been affected by what has happened since 9/11
- Anything we did (e.g., bought a flag, or went to a prayer service, or went to a peace march, &.)
- Any way I've noticed that we have not been affected

Close by bringing the class back, having students volunteer what they said (without reporting what their dyad/triad partners said).

3. Some themes

a. Explain that the class will now look at some themes connected to the above. Have students assist in mounting five posters around the room, each with one of the following 2-column-heading pairs:

War/Terrorism
Justice/Revenge
Security/Civil Rights
Patriotism/Dissent or Disagreement
Symptoms of 9-11/root causes of 9-11

Move from poster to poster to draw attention to each of the poster terms, defining the terms briefly as needed.

b. At the final poster, take a few minutes to distinguish “symptoms” from “root causes,” using the following questions:

- What is a symptom that shows that you're sick? (Ans. *A fever*)
- What could be a cause of that symptom? (ans. *A cold, an infection, and so forth*)
- So what is an example of a “symptom”—what you can see on the surface—of what happened on 9-11? (Ans. *The attack on the “twin towers” in New York*)
- So what might be a cause of the attack? (Ans. *The people who did it were angry with the U.S.*)
- Now, when you look at this cause, what might be another cause behind it—a *root cause*? For example, why might they be angry with the U.S.? (Ans. *They want the U.S. out of the Middle East, &c*)

Explain that the questioning could go on: for example, students could ask why is—the root cause why—the U.S. in the Middle East? One answer might be, to control oil. And why does the U.S. want to control oil? The root cause there might be that the U.S. is dependent upon, and uses much or most of the world's oil. For the exercise that follows, ask students when they get to this poster to spend time trying to find “root causes,” the causes that are behind all the other causes.

c. Divide students into 5 groups, and have each group gather around a different poster with their own marker. Students will have 3 minutes to write words into the columns; then they will rotate to different posters and repeat the process, rotating until all students have had a chance to put their responses on all of the posters. Students may pick one of their group members to write up their responses.

As the groups stand at the first poster, repeat the following:

- Look at the words at the top of your poster. Think about each word in terms of itself, in terms of the word next to it, and in terms of September 11 and the War on Terrorism. And think about it in terms of your own experience. What do these words mean to you? How do they relate to each other? What are examples of each you can think of?
- What might be common or the same about the two words? What might be different about them?
- Now have your recorder write, on the poster under each column, what comes to mind: images, definitions, thoughts, stereotypes, impressions, words you've heard or seen in the media. Write up what is different about the two terms, and what might be the same.
- Make sure that everyone in your group gets to respond; make time for any who haven't responded.

Have students begin to record. Time them, and at three minutes have them finish writing, stop, and rotate to the next poster. When they are assembled, have them look at what has been written so far. Then repeat the same four statements, and have them continue.

Repeat the process until each group has been to each poster.

d. Reconvene class. For each poster, have one student volunteer to review what the poster displays—the “findings” of the class—, and have several students summarize what has been said, adding in the following as appropriate:

- *War is waged by governments, terrorism by small groups. Both kill lots of people.*
- *Justice is a fair/legal process aimed at righting a wrong, while revenge is retaliation based on anger and an eye for an eye mentality.*
- *Security is safety/a guarantee of protection; civil rights should include the right to be safe, but also the right to privacy and to not be detained secretly or because of the color of my skin, &c.*
- *Patriotism is the love of one's country; you can love your country and still disagree with it or protest things you don't think are fair.*
- *Root causes explain why something happens, while symptoms are the results of root causes. Some symptoms of 9-11 are the attacks and their victims, anthrax scares, Arab-looking people being stereotyped and detained; some causes might be anger at U.S. policies or corporations, U.S. training of and arms sales to foreign countries, impoverishment of people in different parts of the world, and so forth.*

4. Targets

Invite students to sit back for a moment, reflecting upon the posters and what's been said so far. Have them think in silence about the following question:

- When you think about the 9-11 attacks, the war on terrorism, the bombing of Afghanistan, threats against other countries, the Patriot Act increasing surveillance in the United States, and the other things we've talked about, who do you think are most affected by these things—the people who have been or are most likely to be targeted, hurt, deprived of resources or life? Think of as many people or kinds of people as you can.

Have students respond, listing who is targeted. Make sure to include both victims of the 9-11 attacks and victims of the bombing in Afghanistan.

Then have students reflect one more time, on the following question:

- If these are the people being targeted, who are the people doing the targeting? Think of people, or groups of people, or institutions. And when you have thought of them:
- Why are they doing what they're doing?

5. Closure/Conclusion

Close by having students volunteer responses to the last questions. Explain that in the next session students will look more at what terrorism is, and how the war on terrorism is affecting people in the United States, including students themselves.

Session 2.

Aims: To develop a working definition of terrorism
To examine the effects of the war on terrorism in the United States

Skills: Students will

Understand a broadened definition of the concept of terrorism
Identify effects of the war on terrorism in security, military spending and military recruitment in the United States

Preparation: Display posters developed in the previous session. You will need appropriate handouts and paper and markers for each of the three working groups.

Session Description Students analyze the concept of terrorism and examine three facets of the “war on terrorism,” applying it to differential treatment for people by race, class, age and other differences in the United States.

Session Agenda

1. To Begin

Remind students of agreements, and have them volunteer briefly to review the last session, referring to posters they produced

2. What is Terrorism?

a. Write the word “terror” on the board, and ask for definitions. Ask students, referring to the discussion from the last session (the 9/11 attack, bombing in Afghanistan, anthrax scares, the Patriot Act, detaining citizens)—to give some obvious examples of people who were terrorized—were frightened, scared, terrified or worse. What are some obvious examples of people who terrorized these people?

b. Write the word “terrorist” on the board and ask for definitions. In the class discussion so far:

- Who have been most frequently identified as the “terrorists”? Individuals, groups of people, or governments?
- What are some reasons you have heard why individuals act as terrorists? How might individual terrorists themselves give for their actions?

c. Write the word “terrorism” on the board; the next exercise is to think about what terrorism means: who uses “terror” to hurt someone else and why they do it.

Have students volunteer to read out the following scenarios, one by one. After each, ask students the same questions.

Scenarios

- a school bully daily hits up younger students for things like jackets, chains or money,
- a boyfriend is very jealous, and continually follows his girlfriend, asks her where she’s been and who she’s been with; he’s getting more and more angry and she is getting scared

- c) a person detonates a bomb in a government building to protest that government's actions, killing hundreds of people
- d) a company in an American town wants not to pay taxes to the city government; it tells the city and the labor union it's planning to close its plant to move its factory to Mexico, laying off 5,000 workers, unless the city cuts its taxes and the union allows wages to be lowered
- e) a police anti-gang unit picks up a young man in the neighborhood, drives him around conspicuously, releases him, and puts the word out that he spoke to police about gang members in the community; in several days he is shot.
- f) a district attorney's office that prosecutes death penalty cases has an unwritten policy of challenging and attempting to keep African-Americans off juries
- g) a battered wife is killed by her husband after reporting his threats and abuse 22 times to police in 1½ years, while the police take no action. (Subsequent studies show that 40% of police in the United States admit to at least one incident/year of domestic violence in their own relationships.)²
- h) people in country 1 occupied and governed by country 2, who live in continual poverty because government policies keep them in poverty, decide the only way to fight back is by individual acts of violence—bombings in public places, kidnapping, and so forth
- i) a government which is pursuing “terrorists” in another country tells that country that if it does not surrender the terrorists, it will be considered terrorist and attacked and bombed
- j) a government of country 1 which is pursuing “terrorists” from another country 2, whose citizens are generally of a different ethnicity than country 1, instructs police departments throughout its own country to call in its citizens who are men of that ethnicity for questioning.

For each scenario, ask:

- Who is the target of the action here?
- What kind of action is being done?
- Is the action mistreatment?
- What is the effect of the action on the people receiving it?
- Who is doing the action?
- What is their underlying purpose—what do they get out of doing this?

Ask the students, based on the scenarios they have just considered, to develop a working definition of terrorism, with the following questions:

- What kinds of actions in the scenarios do we think of as “terrorist”?
- Is terrorism a crime?
- Who gets hurt, or terrorized, when there is terrorism?
- Can an individual be a terrorist? A group of people? A business? A government?
- In the last session students found that “war is waged by governments, terrorism by small groups. Both kill lots of people.” Is it possible that a government can also perform terrorist acts?

² *Maria Teresa Macias v. Sonoma County Police Department*, a lawsuit on behalf of the victim's family, San Francisco, CA, 2002.

- What is the purpose of an individual, or a group, or a business, or a government committing an act of terror?

Use their answers to construct the working definition, including the following elements:

- a) a crime,
- b) violence, whether physical or economic,
- c) directed at civilians or at a government,
- d) using intimidation, economic pressure, coercion, kidnapping, or assassination
- e) to gain institutional political power and/or economic advantage.³

Summarize by citing the definition of terrorism established by the U.S. Congress in 1984: “Terrorism is the use of coercive means aimed at civilian populations in an effort to achieve political, religious, or other aims.”⁴

Close by returning to the opening question about perpetrators and victims of terrorism:

- Obviously individual people have acted as terrorists in the events of 9/11 and since. Under this definition of terrorism, is it possible that the U.S. and other governments and their military forces have also acted as terrorists, even if they were not called terrorist?
- How does this make you feel about the U.S. and other governments stating that they are going to conduct a “war on terrorism”?

3. Terrorism in the U.S.

Explain that students will now take a further step in exploring terrorism, turning to examine what is happening inside the United States when there is a “war on terrorism.” How is the U.S. conducting the “war on terrorism,” and how are we affected by its actions? Students will look at three aspects of U.S. preparations for the “war”: security, military spending, and military recruitment.

Break students into three working groups for this drawing and brainstorm exercise. Assign a topic, with a handout, markers and paper to each group. The task of the group will be to discuss the opening questions, complete the drawings and do the closing-question brainstorm.

Conduct the exercise for 15-20 minutes, giving students a five-minute warning toward the end. At the close, reconvene students to display their new posters and report on their discussion.

4. Closure/conclusion

³ item e) is David Ludlow’s formulation, adapted from Bill Bigelow, “What is Terrorism? Who are the Terrorists?” *Rethinking Schools*, Winter 2002.

⁴ US Code Congressional and Administrative News, 98th Congress, Second Session, 1984, Oct. 19, vol. 2; par. 3077, 98 stat.2707. The full quote is: “An act of terrorism means any activity that a) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State, and b) appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping.” Quoted in Noam Chomsky, *9-11*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 2001, pp. 16, 57.

Thanks students for their work. Ask for closing reflections. Explain that in the next session students will look at the war on terrorism in relation to “isms”—mistreatment of people based on their membership in certain groups based upon race, gender, and so forth: what are the connections with terrorism, and what students can do to “build alliances”—*build justice*—to stop terrorism of all kinds.

Handout for Group 1: **Security**

1. Draw a large box on the paper. Along each of the four walls, write words that stand for what security means now, in the “war on terrorism,” as if the words themselves were part of the wall.
2. With a different color marker, write words for examples of increased “security” that you have heard or know of or have seen: in airports, government buildings, school, at the U.S. borders, &c., adding these to the words supporting the “walls.”
3. Who is the security supposed to protect? Who are is more likely to be the people protected by “increased security”? Write your answers inside the box.
 - Government officials or civilians?
 - Rich people or poor people?
 - College-educated people or non-college-educated people?
 - Supervisors and CEOs and bosses or workers and poor people?
 - Older adults, or younger people?
 - Native-born Americans or immigrants?
 - People of European-American background or people of African- or Asian- or Latin- or Arab-American or Native American background?
4. Of the above, which people are more likely to be arrested, detained? Who is more likely to be made less “secure”? Write your answers outside the box.
5. BRAINSTORM: How could increase security be increased for ALL citizens in ways that don’t restrict civil liberties? Write your answers on the other side of the paper.

Handout for Group 2: **Military spending**

1. What does “military spending” mean? (Answer: *money the government uses for the military*)
2. In the U.S., about half of the money the government has is spent on the military, six times larger than any other country’s. Below is how much money goes to the military and how much to other things the government pays for:

Draw a huge circle on your paper. Make a “pie chart,” in which the whole pie represents the total budget of the U.S. government. Using either of the two sets of figures below, “slice up” the pie showing how big a “slice” each of the parts of the U.S. government receives from the taxes people pay to the government.

a. Year 2000 income taxes:

- **Defense 48 %**
(includes 25% for past military expenses, like veteran’s benefits; 23% current military)
- **Human resources 32%**
(education, health/human resources, housing, food stamps, labor, Social Security)
- **General government 15%**
(legislative, depts. of justice and state, international affairs, treasury, personnel, national debt, civilian portion of space exploration budget)
- **Physical resources 5%**
(agriculture, commerce, energy, HUD, interior (national parks and forests, Bureau of Indian Affairs), transportation, environmental protection, Army Corps, FCC)

b. **Defense 49.2 %**

Education and social services 9.9%

Health 6.2%

Science, space and technology 3.3%

Natural resources 4.0%

Transportation 2.4%

Community Development 1.5%

Income security 6.6%

Veteran’s benefits 3.6%

Justice 4.5%

General 2.2%

Other 3.1%⁵

3. Currently, the United States spends ten times more on the military budget than the education budget; 1 F-22 fighter costs \$187 million, with that amount, the U.S. could build 16 new urban schools.

On the other side of the paper, draw a large pie, representing the amount of money spent on the military budget, and a small pie, representing 1/10 of that amount spent for education. Under the

⁵ Figures from National Priorities Project, quoted in Elizabeth Martinez, “Who Will Pay the Bill,” *War Times*, 1, February 2002, and War Resisters League

pies, draw a picture illustrating that one fighter plane is the equivalent of 16 schools. Under these drawings, write answers to the following questions.

- What do these figures show about the value currently placed on military expenditures and the value placed on education?

Now discuss the following questions:

4. What kinds of things does the government spend money on when it spends money on the military?
5. Where does the money the government uses come from?
6. What is the military system supposed to protect?
7. Of the groups below, which are MORE likely to have their interests protected or defended by the military? Write your answers inside the “Defense” pie circle in question 3 above.
 - Government officials or civilians?
 - Rich people or poor people?
 - College-educated people or non-college-educated people?
 - Supervisors and CEOs and bosses or workers and poor people?
 - Older adults, or younger adults and young people?
 - Native-born Americans or immigrants?
 - People of European-American background or people of African- or Asian- or Latin- or Arab-American or Native American background?
8. Which groups are LESS likely to have their interests defended by the military? Write your answers outside the “Defense” pie circle in question 3 above.
9. If money is taken from the other categories and put into the military budget, who is most likely to suffer from this? Write your answers outside the “Defense” pie circle in question 3 above.
10. BRAINSTORM
What should be done to balance defense spending with money for education and social services? For the other categories? For humanitarian aid to other countries? What reasons would you give to justify this change?

Handout for Group 3: **Military recruitment**

1. Draw a large picture of a military tank, to represent the U.S. military forces.
2. Who of the groups below are more likely to be recruited into the military? Write your answers inside the “tank.” people
 - Government officials or civilians?
 - Rich people or poor people?
 - College-educated people or non-college-educated people?
 - Supervisors and CEOs and bosses or workers and poor people?
 - Older adults, or younger adults and young people?
 - People of European-American background or people of African- or Asian- or Latin- or Arab-American or Native American background?

2. Here are some statistics about people of color (Asian-, African-, Arab-, Latino-, and Native-American) recruited into the military:
 - People of color = **24%** of the population
 - People of color = **54%** of the people enrolled in Junior ROTC (military officer training in high school)
 - **48%** of Latino/Chicano/Hispanic-American youth leave or are pushed out of high school before completing
 - **37%** of recent U.S. Marines Corps recruits in California are Latino/Chicano/Hispanic-American.

What are some reasons you can think of for the high enrollment of people of color in the military?

3. Why is the military likely to be a choice for the people you picked out above?
4. From your experience, how does the military recruit the groups you picked? What do its ads say, and what does it promise?
5. On the reverse side of the page, make a new drawing labeled “**military combat.**” Divide the page into an upper and lower segment, labeling the upper segment “command post” and the lower segment “the frontlines.”
 - a. Once in the military, which of the groups below are more likely to be officers in the command post? Who is less likely to be exposed to danger? Who is less likely to perform “unskilled” work or “menial” labor? Write your answers into the command post segment.
 - Rich people or poor people?
 - Supervisors and CEOs and bosses or workers and people who are unemployed or on welfare, etc.?
 - College-educated or not?
 - Older adults, or younger adults or young people?
 - People of European-American background or people of African- or Asian- or Latin- or Arab-American or Native American background?

b. Who is more likely to see front-line combat? Who is more likely to be exposed to danger? Who is more likely to perform “unskilled” work or “menial” labor? Write your answers into the frontline combat segment.

7. BRAINSTORM: How could the military be organized to make sure it recruited equally from all parts of the population? How could it be organized to ensure that both unskilled work and dangers of combat were shared more equally by all parts of the recruited population?

Session 3. Terrorism and the Isms

Aims:

To apply the concept of terrorism to unequal treatment of people in the U.S. based on race, class, age and other differences

To strategize actions to intervene against the effects of the war on terrorism

Skills: Students will

Make connections between the concept of terrorism and differential treatment of people in the United States

Brainstorm youth activist approaches to intervening in the effects of the war on terrorism

Preparation:

For the “Ism” discussion, you will be introducing—or reviewing—concepts from the “foundation sessions” of *Building Justice*. Tailor this section according to whether students have already been exposed to the “alliance-building” model presented in those sessions.

Session Description

Students apply the concept of terrorism to differential treatment for people by race, class, age and other differences in the United States, and close by brainstorming actions they can take to resist the effects of the “war.”

Session Agenda

1. To Begin

Explain that in this session the class will look more closely at the “War on Terrorism,” to find connections between the war and the concepts of oppression, resistance and alliance—the ways people are separated from each other by race, class, and so forth in the United States, and the ways they figure out how to find each other across the differences.

2. Targets of Terrorism

Briefly review scenarios from the last session:

Scenarios

- a) a school bully and younger students
- b) a jealous boyfriend and his girlfriend
- c) a person bombing a government building
- d) a U.S. company threatening to close its plant and move to Mexico
- e) the police anti-gang unit and the young man from the neighborhood
- f) a district attorney’s office that tries to keep African-Americans off juries
- g) a battered wife is killed by her husband while the police take no action.
- h) people living in poverty in an occupied country 1 commit individual acts of violence against the ruling government of country 2
- k) country 1 pursuing “terrorists” in country 2 threatens to attack and bomb country 2
- l) a government instructs police departments throughout its own country to call in its citizens who are men of a certain ethnicity for questioning.

Ask students to remember who were targets of terrorism in the scenarios—who are “intimidated or coerced,” in order for someone “to gain institutional political power and economic advantage.”

Explain that you are now going to have students think about terrorism from the larger perspective of how people become separated by race, gender, age, money and other differences in the United States, with some people having more and some less. Remind them of the groups of people they thought about in their working groups in the last session:

- who is more likely to be protected and who is less likely to be protected in U.S. “security” measures
- who is more likely to benefit, and who is more likely to lose out when a lot of money is put into military spending rather than education and other social services
- who is more likely to be recruited into the military and see front-line service, and who is less likely

For the following, write up the pairs of categories on the board in two columns.

- What groups of people, generally, may be actually hurt—targeted—by terrorism? When you think about the kinds of terrorism we have been talking about and the people actually hurt by this terrorism—the attack that affected people in the World Trade Center, the majority of victims in the bombing of Afghanistan, victims of “suicide bombers” and military responses to “suicide bombers,” the actual targets of the new security laws in the United States—who *are more likely* to be hurt by these things...more likely to be victims? And who are less likely to be targets?
- Government leaders or civilians
- Rich people or poor people
- Supervisors and CEOs and bosses or workers and poor people
- Adults or youth and elders
- Native-born Americans or immigrants
- People of European-American background or African-, Arab-, Asian-, Latin- or Native American background

Label the column of groups that is more likely to be targeted “target”, and the other group “nontarget.”

Have students examine the two columns and decide which column represents people who now have, in general, more “*institutional power and economic advantage*,” and which column represents people who have less.

Label the columns appropriately. Remind students that you are not talking about which groups are powerful people, in the sense of people who have or manifest personal power, but rather are talking about people who, in general, are allowed to have more resources, more privilege, more institutional back-up—more “institutional power and economic advantage” in the United States. Allow for disagreements, and invite students, as per the agreements, to “try on” looking at power in this way.

Nontarget: More power

Target: Less power

Government leaders
Rich people
Supervisors and CEOs and bosses
Adults
Native-born Americans
European-American background

Civilians
Poor people
Workers and poor people
Youth and elders
Immigrants
African-, Arab-, Asian-, Latin-, or Native
American background

3. Isms

Introduce the term “Ism.” Explain that you are using the word “ism” to stand for how these groups of people can be separated, as in “racism” and “sexism.” Conduct the following discussion, writing up italicized words, explaining them, and asking for examples:

- In the United States people are separated from each other in a variety of ways, by skin color, language, gender, and so forth.
- Some groups are enabled to have more resources, and others less.

(You may wish to add the following to the chart as examples of groups that become separated, with some groups elevated and others pushed down (these represent some isms addressed elsewhere in Building Justice)).

Nontarget (more power)

Men
English-speaking
Heterosexuals

Christians/Gentiles
Christians
Physically/mentally abled

Target (less power)

women
first language other than English
lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered
People, queer

Jews
Muslims
living with physical/mental disability

Continue:

- The process by which the “have less” groups are day-to-day discriminated against and mistreated is called *oppression*—the mistreatment or control over one group of people by another. Oppression is the “ism,” e.g. racism, sexism and so forth. What are some examples of target groups being discriminated against or mistreated?
- People have always *resisted* oppression. What are some ways you can think of that these target groups have resisted being mistreated?
- But, one result of the oppression on the targeted group is: they learn to feel “less than,” or mistreat each other or themselves, “*internalizing*” the oppression. What are some examples of the ways people on the target side may sometimes feel less than, or mistreat each other of themselves?
- The process by which the “have more” groups are put into their elevated position day to day is by possessing some privileges, and by *conditioning*—learning stereotypes about the “have less” groups and learning, often unwaresly, to pass on mistreatment. What are ways nontarget groups have heard misinformation about, or been conditioned to feel different from or afraid of “target” people?

- But they have also always resisted this separation of groups, and have acted as *allies* to “have less” groups, backing them up against mistreatment. What examples can you think of in which nontarget people acted as allies with people directly across the line from them? E.g., an adult being an ally to a young person?

Finally, return the discussion to “terrorism.” Ask:

- Is it possible for target groups to do acts of terrorism against nontarget groups?
- What kinds of things might they do? Cite any examples from the scenarios.
- What would be the purpose of doing these things? (Ans. *To get some power, to fight back, to express rage or despair*)
- Why might they do these acts? (Ans. *To be heard, to retaliate, powerlessness, hopelessness, anger.*) What might these acts have to do with being in a “have less” position?
- Given who you said are usually the victims of terrorism—civilians, poor people, and so forth—will these acts really work in the long term to stop people from being targeted?

Continue:

- Is it possible for nontarget groups to do acts of terrorism against target groups?
- What kinds of things might they do? Include individual acts, and ways they might act through institutions like government, banks, workplace policies, the educational system, and the criminal justice system. Cite any examples from the scenarios.
- What would be the purpose of doing these things? (Ans. *To keep control, to keep power.*)
- What might these acts have to do with being in a “have more” position?
- As long as there is inequality between targets and nontargets, with nontargets having “physical or economic advantage,” is there likely to be peace—a chance for people to live together sharing resources and making the world safe for new young people to come into it?

4. Testimonies against terrorism

Invite students to look back at the “scenarios of terrorism” outlined at the beginning of the session. For the following exercise, have each student silently pick a scenario that especially touches or moves them in some way.

Explain that one form that “resistance” takes is for people to point out the mistreatment that is happening, speaking back to the people who are carrying out the mistreatment. Especially where the people doing the mistreatment are part of a nontarget group, this kind of speaking has been called *speaking truth to power*. Ask students to say, in their own words, what “speaking truth to power” means as you have described it.

In the scenario each student has picked, have her/him imagine she/he is the person targeted in the scenario. Explain that they are going to speak as this person. Invite them to take on the roles with respect for the person they are speaking for, and to avoid using any stereotypes in speaking for that character.

For 2-5 minutes, have each student write, in the first person, in the voice of the person targeted in the scenario she/he picked:

- Write down what you would say, as the person targeted in this act of “terrorism,” to the person or group of people or business or government that is terrorizing you. What would you want them to know, and what would you want them never to do again?

At the close of the writing, stop the exercise. Have students who volunteer one at a time to stand and speak the “truth” of the character they picked.

After several responses, close the entire exercise by having students post their “voices” all together in a prepared place on the wall, taking a few moments when all are posted to notice silently the “truths” that have been spoken.

5. Activists for peace

How can we work to build the world where there is justice and safety? Explain that students are now to become “activists” to work for their communities, against all forms of terrorism, to create a world where people can live together.⁶

Ask students to say, in their own words, what they understand “activist” to mean, and examples they can give of people from history and from the present day who have been activists working for their communities. Ask them especially to think of young people who have organized in history and/or in your local community for positive change.

You may wish to give some examples:

In the last thirty years, young activists have:

- in the United States, organized against the war in Vietnam and against building and spreading of nuclear arms around the world
- in South Africa, organized to stop “apartheid,” the segregation and targeting of the black majority of Africans by the white minority
- in China, organized for human rights and a democratic government in Tiennamen Square
- in the United States, organized to stop the process of a small group of agencies, including the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, from making decisions about world trade and finances that impoverish many people in the world for the benefit of a few.

Have students return to the groups they formed in the last session for the final brainstorm:

- As young people and students: part of the people who live in the United States and want to have some say in what happens at school, in the community, in the country, and in the world, what you can do as students to bring about some of the solutions you want on this issue? What can you do:

In the school?

In your community?

In the country as a whole?

- Make a new poster and write your answers. Find answers that you can actually do, no matter how small or local.

⁶ Adapted from Vasquez, Myhand, and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends*, Hunter House, 2002.

6. Closure/Conclusion

Have students put up their posters around the perimeter of the “truths” and take few moments to read them. Reconvene students for closing circle. Invite volunteers to report something they learned today, or actions they would like to take.