



Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Active Citizens: Global issues

Assembly

More than a moan

Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider the persistence of anti-war protestor Brian Haw

Introduction

Having a moan

Have you ever felt like having a moan about something? Maybe someone has annoyed you or failed to keep their promise to you. Maybe some product you bought has broken or you've found the same item at a much cheaper price elsewhere and you feel your consumer rights have been infringed. Maybe it's more serious: you may feel you've been wrongly accused and punished or that someone is spreading malicious rumours about you. Who did you complain to and, more importantly, how long did you continue complaining?

Looking Deeper

The Parliament Square Protest camp

On June 2nd 2001 Brian Haw left his Worcestershire home in order to complain. He travelled to Parliament Square in London, right outside the Houses of Parliament, because his complain was against the Government's sanctions against Iraq. He felt that the Government's refusal to allow trade with that country was hurting the weakest Iraqi people, the elderly and the children, rather than Saddam Hussein, the country's leader. He sat in the square, praying and going without food, in order to show his complaint. At first he was one amongst many but his protest outlasted all the others. He set up camp on the square,



Image <http://en.wikipedia.org>

erecting banners and voicing his complaint through a cheap megaphone to anyone who would listen, MPs, tourists and members of the public in general. He stayed there for almost 10 years.

Not everyone agreed with Brian's protest. Some disagreed with what he stood for, especially when his protest expanded into opposition to the invasion of Iraq and then to opposition to war in general. He was attacked physically, suffering a broken nose at least twice. He was heckled, laughed at and his possessions were moved by the Police. In 2003 his wife divorced him and he rarely saw his seven children, something that hurt him deeply. His camp was seen as an eyesore on an important tourist site. The local council tried and failed to remove him. Parliament even included a section in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act attempting to make his protest illegal, but Brian Haw would not budge.



Image <http://en.wikipedia.org>



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Brian Haw died on June 18th from the effects of lung cancer. He stayed in his camp on the pavement until March of this year and only left when his health began to fail. His commitment to campaigning for peace was the same right to the end as was his puzzlement at the way people in general were prepared to moan for a day about their concerns but couldn't sustain the protest. After the day-long Stop The War march in 2003 he commented that the effect would have been far greater if 100,000 people had come to Parliament Square and stayed for a week.

Brian Haw's persistence stands as an example to each one of us when we feel like giving up in the fight to ensure that good overcomes evil.

Reflection

What do I consider needs to change because it is unjust, hurtful and wrong:
In me?
Locally?
In the world?
What am I prepared to say and do in order to make a difference?

Prayer

I confess that my moans are usually about trivial matters
May I think about the big concerns of the world and be committed to doing something significant to change them
Amen

Thought of the day

Moaning is easy,
protest costs more but could change the world

Keywords

Brian Haw
peace campaigner
Parliament Square
protest