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An Agenda for Social Change



*Readers may recall the CCPA's 2012 calendar, **An Agenda for Social Change**. Paul Orłowski, educator and tremendous friend to the CCPA Education Project, put together a Teacher's Guide to demonstrate how the calendar might be used as a classroom tool to enhance our collective awareness of social justice movements in Canadian history. As the CCPA makes the 2013 version of the calendar available (see the order information in this issue of **Our Schools/Our Selves** or visit policyalternatives.ca), we encourage educators to think of this guide as a template to explore ways of incorporating this content into classrooms and other learning environments.*

Introduction

Most teachers who have studied at the graduate level may have come across the phrase “the social construction of knowledge.” I recall that the first time I heard it I thought to myself, “What the heck does that mean? Knowledge is based on facts — anything else is simply lies and propaganda.” Well, I now understand how naive I was at the time about issues of epistemology. A more accurate statement that describes my understanding of what constitutes knowledge is captured in Plato’s maxim: “Those who hold the power tell the stories.”

For example, how would Canada’s history be understood if the curriculum was designed by First Nations educators, feminists, and labour historians? The CCPA’s *Agenda for Social Change* is a first step in realizing how hegemony works in the collective unconscious. This resource is filled with many important events in Canada’s history that are simply not part of the regular school curriculum. Hence, we have a citizenry that is unaware of the long struggle for equity and fairness for various marginalized groups. This is the effectiveness of using omission as a hegemonic strategy.

The *Agenda for Social Change* is a resource for teachers to rectify this. In other words, its main feature is inclusion as a counter-hegemonic strategy.

The CCPA’s *Agenda for Social Change* contains valuable information about Canadian history that is often overlooked in high school history and social studies classrooms. This Teacher’s Guide has some suggestions for teachers to supplement their pedagogy so that more Canadians can learn about events and trends demonstrating our history as a struggle between conservative and progressive forces. Of course, these suggestions can be tweaked by individual teachers to sharpen the focus of the particular lessons or units to make it relevant to the students they teach.

The Teacher’s Guide includes ideas for small projects for students. The teacher should decide whether the students should work in pairs or in trios. There are six topics covered in this Teacher’s Guide:

- A: Our History & Gender Issues**
- B: Our History & Aboriginal Issues**
- C: Our History & Labour Issues**
- D: Our History & Canada's Social Welfare State**
- E: Our History & Issues Pertaining to Multiculturalism**
- F: Our History and Issues of Sexual Orientation**
- G: Our Legal History & Issues Pertaining to Canadian Rights & Freedoms**

A: OUR HISTORY & GENDER ISSUE

(Note: For high school courses in Social Studies & History)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to women's rights in Canada. Begin the timeline at 1867 and conclude in the current year. (Hint: the first event that focused solely on women took place in 1875.)

The calendar dates to be focused on are:

January 25, January 28 (twice), February 15, February 16, February 18, February 23, February 26, March 4, March 8, April 5, April 14, May 3, May 4, May 13, May 14, May 24, June 25, June 30, August 22, September 1, October 4, October 18, October 27, November 13, November 15, December 2, December 6 (twice)

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened. (Note: in the case of annual events, such as International Women's Day, mark the year that it first took place.)

2. What were the **five most interesting events** pertaining to women in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

a) Which province was the first to grant women the vote? What date and year?

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- b) What date and year did the federal government grant women the vote?
- c) Who was the first female Member of Parliament (MP)? What date and year did this occur? What other accomplishments did this woman achieve?
- d) What was the Persons Case about? What date and year did this occur?
- e) Who was the first woman to lead a federal political party in Canada? What date and year did this occur? What party did she lead?
- f) Who was the first and only female Prime Minister of Canada? What date and year did this occur? What party did she lead?
- g) There are three annual events in Canada pertaining to women. What event takes place on March 8th, on October 4th and on December 6th each year? What connection can you make between these three events?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The struggle for women's equality is older than Canada itself. Use the timeline you created in #1 to make a case that women in Canada have had to fight for their rights.

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that makes the case that women in Canada have had to fight for their rights. Outline major events and dates to make this case.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*):

- a) Find out the circumstances that led to the appearance of Canada's first female Prime Minister. What were the results of her first election as Prime Minister? Why do you think the election results turned out that way?
- b) Is the struggle for equal female representation in Canada's Parliament over? You may want to address the gender composition of the MPs in the current Parliament. What are the percentages of the female MPs of each of the federal political parties?

B: OUR HISTORY & ABORIGINAL ISSUES

(Note: For high school courses in Social Studies, Native Studies, & History)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to the rights of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Begin the timeline at 1867 and conclude in the current year.

(Hint: the first important event that focused on Aboriginal peoples in what is now Canada was the Royal Proclamation of 1763, over a century before the British North America Act. The signing of the British North America Act of July 1st, 1867 should be the first event on your timeline.)

The remaining calendar dates to be focused on are:

January 31 (twice), February 19, February 20, February 26,
 March 31, April 9, April 21, June 11, June 25, June 28, July 11,
 August 30, October 4, November 15, November 16,
 November 25, November 29.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened. (Note: in the case of annual events, such as Louis Riel Day, mark the year that it first took place. This year may have to be found elsewhere.)

2. What were the **five most interesting events** pertaining to Aboriginal peoples in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

- What date and year did the federal government grant status First Nations people the vote?
- Who was the first elected First Nations member of a provincial legislature? What date and year did this occur? What province did this occur?
- What was the Calder versus BC Case about? What date and year did this occur? What eventually was the result of this case?
- What was the White Paper about? What date and year did this occur? Who was the federal Minister of Indian Affairs at the time?

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How did Aboriginal peoples view the White Paper?

e) The original Indian Act of 1876 included the racist Residential School Policy. What event took place in 2008 to acknowledge the trauma brought upon First Nations people with this policy?

f) On November 25th, 2005 the Kelowna Accord was signed. What occurred shortly afterward to lessen the federal government's commitment to this Accord?

g) In 1990 the Oka Crisis erupted. What triggered this volatile event? How might this event be used as support for land treaties to be negotiated?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The struggle for Aboriginal rights is older than Canada itself. Use the timeline you created in #1 to make a case that Aboriginal peoples in Canada have had to fight for their rights.

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that makes the case that Aboriginal peoples in Canada have had to fight for their rights. Outline major events and dates to make this case.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*):

a) In the 1870s the federal government began treaty negotiations with the First Nations of the prairies. Explain why the Indian Act of 1876 indicates that the federal government was not being genuine in the treaty negotiations. What other historical factors have led to a call for these treaties to be renegotiated in the contemporary context?

b) The British North America Act of 1867 stated that the federal government must acknowledge Aboriginal Title and must negotiate Treaties? What province entered Confederation after 1867 but refused to do either? What has transpired since those times to acknowledge the illegality of the position of this province toward important Aboriginal issues?

C: OUR HISTORY & LABOUR ISSUES

(Notes: For high school courses in Social Studies & History; This section is related to the following section on the creation of Canada's Social Welfare Programs.)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to the rights of workers in Canada. Begin the timeline at 1833 and conclude in the current year. (Hint: the first event that focused on labour took place in 1833.)

The calendar dates to be focused on are:

January 16, February 1, February 5, February 14, March 25 (twice), March 28, April 14, April 23, April 28, May 15 (twice), June 3, June 11, June 12, June 14, June 19, June 30, July 23, August 19, September 23, October 3, October 14, October 18, October 31, November 28, December 11.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened. (Note: in the case of annual events, such as the National Day of Mourning for Those Killed in the Workplace, mark the year that it first took place.)

2. What were the **five most interesting events** pertaining to labour (aka, working-class issues) in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

- What date and year did the Winnipeg General Strike take place? What was it about? How did the state respond to this action?
- What date and year did the largest general strike in the history of North America take place? In what province did this major event take place? What triggered this job action?
- What event took place on October 31st, 1996 that demonstrates the progressive politics of the Canadian Auto Workers?
- What event took place on October 3rd, 1988 that signaled serious difficulties for Canada's labour movement?

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e) What event took place in Ontario during 1998 to indicate that the provincial government was upsetting the labour movement? What party was in government at the time?

f) What major event occurred on June 14th, 1872?

g) Name three rights that the labour movement have given all working Canadians, whether unionized or not.

h) There are two annual events in Canada pertaining to labour issues. What event takes place on April 28th, on June 12th and on the first Monday of September each year? What connection can you make between these three events?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The struggle for the rights of workers is older than Canada itself. Use the timeline you created in #1 to make a case that workers in Canada have had to fight for their rights and that they must still continue the fight.

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that makes the case that workers in Canada have had to fight for their rights, a fight that still goes on to this day. Outline major events and dates to make this case.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the *Agenda for Social Change*):

a) Find out how the various provincial and federal governments have treated workers and their unions when they have exercised the right to strike since 1984. What is the party affiliation of governments that have ordered the workers back to work? How many times has this occurred in the province where you live?

b) On May 2nd, 2011, the Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper formed a majority government. Since then there have been several job actions by various unions. What has been the response of the Conservatives?

D: OUR HISTORY & CANADA'S SOCIAL WELFARE STATE

(including Public Healthcare and Education)

(Notes: For high school courses in Social Studies & History; This section is related to the preceding section on Canada's Labour History.)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to the development and partial dismantling of Canada's social welfare programs. Begin the timeline at 1867 and conclude in the current year.

(Hint: The first event regarding social programs took place in 1927. I suggest beginning the timeline in 1867 only to give students the sense of how long it took for Canadians to successfully demand social programs.)

The calendar dates to be focused on are:

February 12, February 20, February 27, May 22 (see entry on February 20), May 28, June 4, June 27, July 1, July 15, July 19, August 7, September 1, October 27.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened.

2. What were the **five most interesting events** pertaining to the Canadian social welfare state that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

a) What province was used as a test-run for family allowance cheques? What was the date and the year? What date and year did this social program become Canada-wide?

b) What province brought in a universal public healthcare program? What was the date and the year of this historic event? What date and year did public healthcare become Canada-wide?

c) What social program was instituted across Canada in 1927?

d) What event took place on July 15th, 1966? Give details as to what this event actually meant.

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- e) What event took place on August 7th, 1940? (Hint: Look at the text entry right above the calendar for August.)
- f) What province instituted a subsidized daycare program? What date and year did this first take place?
- g) Why did the Ontario school teachers wage a two-week strike on October 27th, 1997? What provincial party was in power at the time?
- h) What did federal Liberal Finance Minister Paul Martin do to Canada's social programs in 1995?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The creation of Canada's social welfare state was a victory for middle- and working-class Canadians. Discuss the major victories in this hard-fought struggle. Explain why Canadians have reason to worry about the continuation of many of these social programs.

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that describes the creation of Canada's social welfare state was a victory for middle- and working-class Canadians. Discuss the major victories in this hard-fought struggle. Explain why Canadians have reason to worry about the continuation of many of these social programs.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*):

- a) The Canadian Unemployment Insurance Act was passed in 1940. It was recently re-named the Employment Insurance Act. Check major media websites to determine the current status of this social program?
- b) The Old Age Pensions Act was passed in 1927. Check major media websites to determine the current status of the Old Age Security Program (as it is known today)?

E: OUR HISTORY & ISSUES PERTAINING TO MULTICULTURALISM

(Note: For high school courses in Social Studies & History)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to the rights of people belonging to ethnic, racial and cultural groups other than from French or British ancestry.

(Hint: The first important event was the Upper Canada Abolition Act of 1793. The next relevant calendar entry is not until 1885.)

(Note: This section is not focused on Aboriginal issues. The relevant dates from the section on Aboriginal issues can be included on this timeline.)

The remaining calendar dates to be focused on are:

January 26, February 23, February 24, March 4, March 9, March 14, March 15, March 21, April 17, June 27, July 9, July 10, July 20 (twice), July 21, July 27, July 30, August 16, August 30, September 18, September 20, September 22, October 4, October 17, October 19, November 25.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened. (Note: in the case of annual events, such as National Multicultural Day, mark the year that it first took place.)

2. What were the **five most interesting events** pertaining to Multiculturalism in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

a) What date and year did the Chinese Immigration Act pass? What was this Act intended to do?

b) What date and year did the Canadian government begin Japanese internments? Why did they do this? What year did the internment end?

c) What date and year was Canada's Multicultural Act passed? Who was the Prime Minister at the time? What aspects of social diversity were protected with this Act?

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- d) What date and year was Canada's Federal Employment Equity Act passed? Why is this significant for Canadian racial minorities?
- e) What date and year was Canada's Charter of Rights & Freedoms enshrined into our Constitution? Why is this significant for Canadian racial minorities? Who was the Prime Minister at the time?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The struggle for the rights of people from non-European ancestry living in Canada is older than the country itself. Use the timeline you created in #1 to make a case that Canada has become a more inclusive nation over time. (Conversely, make a case that racial and cultural inclusivity is not expanding.)

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that makes the case that Canada has become a more inclusive nation over time. (Conversely, make a case that racial and cultural inclusivity is not expanding.)

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*):

- a) Most Canadians have heard about the Underground Railway in which Black slaves escaped to Canada. Many of the former slaves went to Nova Scotia and created the community that came to be known as Africville. How has this community fared over time?
- b) Many Canadians view their country as one increasingly based on principles of fairness and tolerance in terms of race and culture. Make an argument in support of this statement or against it. Some events that may help you in your argument are the Vancouver Anti-Asian Riots (1907), Komagata Maru (1914), the Christie Pits Baseball Riots (1933), the experiences of Omar Khadr and Maher Arar, and the current state of life on First Nations reserves. What are some events that indicate Canadians must always be vigilant against an increase in racist attitudes?

F: OUR HISTORY & ISSUES of SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(Note: For high school courses in Social Studies & History)

1. Make a **timeline** for significant events pertaining to the rights of gay and lesbian people in Canada. Begin the timeline at 1967 and conclude in the current year.

Hint: the first event that focused solely on homosexuality took place in 1967.)

The calendar dates to be focused on are:

April 2, May 10, May 17, July 12, August 24, August 28,
October 31, December 1, December 15, December 22.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened. (Note: in the case of annual events, such as International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, mark the year that it first took place.)

2. What were the **three most interesting events** pertaining to homosexuality in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

a) Which province was the first to grant gay marriage? What date and year?

b) What date and year did the federal government decriminalize homosexuality? Who was the Justice Minister at that time? When did it actually come into effect?

c) What province included homosexual rights in their Charter in 1977?

d) What union passed to health benefits to same-sex partners in 1996?

e) What date and year were homosexuals allowed to join the Canadian military?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~750 words): The struggle for the rights of gays and lesbians has only in recent years gained victories. Use the timeline

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you created in #1 to make a case that homosexuals in Canada have gained important rights to make Canada an even more inclusive society.

Alternative Project:

Class Presentation: With your partner(s), make a 15-minute presentation that makes the case that homosexuals in Canada have gained important rights to make Canada an even more inclusive society.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*):

- a) Since the federal election of May 2nd, 2011, some MPs have questioned the notion of gay marriage. Who are these MPs, what party do they belong to, and what are their stated concerns?
- b) How do issues of gay and lesbian rights in Canada compare to the current situation in the United States? What is the most common ideology of opponents of gay rights?

G: OUR LEGAL HISTORY & ISSUES PERTAINING to CANADIAN RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

(Note: For high school courses in Law)

1. Make a **timeline** for laws in Canada that significant events pertaining to the rights of Canadians from various backgrounds. Begin the timeline with the British North America Act of 1867 and conclude in the current year.

The calendar dates to be focused on are:

January 25, January 28, January 31, February 10, February 23, February 24, February 26, March 4, March 8, March 14 (twice), March 15, April 2, April 5, April 15, April 17, April 27, May 3, May 4, May 10, May 28, June 2, June 9, June 14, June 17, June 27, July 9, July 14, July 15, July 20, July 30, August 7, August 10, August 22, (twice), October 14, October 17, October 18 (twice), October 19, October 26, November 25, December 1, December 12, December 22.

Students should find the event for the specified calendar date, and then mark on their timeline a brief descriptor of the event for the actual year it happened.

2. What were the **five most interesting laws** pertaining to rights and freedoms in Canada that you learned from the timeline? Explain.

3. **Short Answer** (Note: all answers can be found in the 2012 *Agenda for Social Change*)

a) What date and year was the Canadian Bill of Rights passed? Who was the Prime Minister at this time? What individual rights were guaranteed with the Bill of Rights? What replaced the Bill of Rights in 1982?

b) What date and year was the Canadian Human Rights Act passed? What did this Act entail?

c) What date and year were the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act passed? What protections did Canadians get from these two Acts? What bill promoted by Conservative Justice Minister Vic Toews in February 2012 shows that the original two acts could be in jeopardy?

d) From the timeline, name three pieces of legislation that demonstrate that women were gaining important rights in Canada. What dates and years did these laws come into being?

e) From the timeline, name three pieces of legislation that demonstrate that Aboriginal peoples in Canada were gaining important rights. What dates and years did these laws come into being?

f) From the timeline, name two pieces of legislation that demonstrating that workers have gained important rights in Canada. What dates and years did these laws come into being?

g) From the timeline, name three pieces of racist legislation. What dates and years did these laws come into being?

h) From the timeline, name three pieces of legislation brought about to rid the state of institutional racism (ie., racist laws). What dates and years did these laws come into being?

i) From the timeline, name two pieces of legislation demonstrat-

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ing that gays and lesbians have been gaining important rights in Canada. What dates and years did these laws come into being?

4. **Mini-Essay** (~1000 words):

Topic #1

The struggle for the rights of Canadians is as old as the nation itself. Use the timeline you created in #1 to make a case that over time Canadians have gained many individual rights and freedoms. As well, include in your case the need for Canadians to be ever vigilant to protect these rights because recently certain social and political forces are interested in taking some of them away.

Topic #2

Use the timeline you created in #1 and your answers to #3 of this section to demonstrate that there has been an ideological struggle to make Canada a more inclusive nation versus a more exclusive nation.

Alternative Project: Class Presentation

Topic #1

With your partner(s), make a 20-minute presentation that makes the case that over time Canadians have gained many individual rights and freedoms. As well, include in your case the need for Canadians to be ever vigilant to protect these rights because recently certain social and political forces are interested in taking some of them away.

Topic #2

With your partner(s), make a 20-minute presentation that demonstrates there has been an ideological struggle to make Canada a more inclusive nation versus a more exclusive nation.

5. **Extra Research** (i.e., Information not included in the *Agenda for Social Change*):

a) The struggle for the rights of Canadians is as old as the nation

itself. Saskatchewan was the first province to pass a Bill of Rights. Since then the federal government has passed several Acts pertaining to the rights of Canadians. Discuss the differences in these various acts: The Canadian Bill of Rights (August 10th 1960), The Canadian Human Rights Act (June 2nd, 1977), and the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms (April 17th, 1982). Why is it important for Canadians to understand what is contained in these Acts?

b) On May 2nd, 2011, the Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper formed a majority government. Since then there have been several job actions by various unions. What has been the response of the Conservatives in terms of legislation?

PAUL ORLOWSKI taught in BC high schools for 19 years. He has been a teacher educator since 1999, and is presently on faculty at the University of Saskatchewan. For a stronger democracy, Paul believes that social studies teachers should focus on the struggles and victories people have made and continue to make in the areas of race, class, gender, and sexuality. He can be read at: <http://northernplainsdrifter.blogspot.ca/>.

(Note: some of the content in the calendar has changed — dates have been added or merged with others. If you would like a copy of the 2012 calendar, please contact the CCPA.)