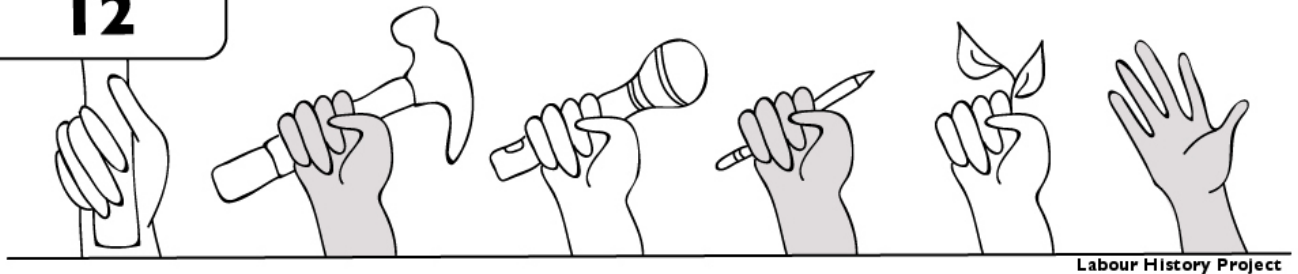




Lesson 9: Labour Leaders



Lesson Summary: Students analyze the labour interests of well known social justice leaders, then study the stories of BC labour leaders.

Time: One period

Essential Question: How do labour issues connect to the broader struggle for social justice? What contributions have labour leaders and labour groups made to the struggle for social justice?

Summary of the Lesson Activities

1. Brainstorm names of leaders who have made a difference in social justice. They may name Martin Luther King Jr, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Gloria Steinem, etc. Discuss: what is the role of individuals in achieving social justice? Do we need leaders? What can leaders offer? What makes a great leader?
2. Explain that many of the leaders associated with well known causes were also proponents of labour rights. Distribute **Handout #9a Martin Luther King Jr and the Labour Movement** or show on the overhead. Discuss MLK's view of social justice and labour.
3. Discuss Gandhi and MLK's contributions to social justice particularly with an overview of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Provide **Handout #9 b: Social Justice Leaders and Workers Rights**. Have students read the articles on Martin Luther King and the sanitation workers strike of 1968, then on Gandhi and textile workers in Ahmedabad and Lancashire. Have a class discussion on the readings based on the questions provided.
4. Brainstorm names of LABOUR leaders who have made a difference in social justice. Students may or may not be able to name any. Discuss: why do we know so few labour leaders compared to other fields of social justice?

5. Lesson on some well known social justice leaders from BC. Provide students with **Handout #9c BC Labour Leaders and Social Justice**. These are biographies of Helena Gutteridge, George North, and Raj Chouhan. Also provide **Handout #9d BC Labour Leaders Student Questions**.

Option A: divide the room into three sections. Have each section work on one article. Students could read individually, in pairs, or small groups to answer the questions attached and share in a class discussion.

Option B: Have students read all the biographies individually and answer the discussion questions.

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will be exposed to selected leaders from the labour movement and the struggle for social justice. They will understand that many leaders from the human rights and civil rights movement were also concerned about workers rights and economic rights. Labour issues are connected to the broader struggle for social justice in other areas such as the women's movement, anti racism, and anti-colonialism.

Materials and Resources Needed

Handout #9a Martin Luther King Jr and the Labour Movement (quotes)

Handout #9b Social Justice Leaders and Workers Rights

Handout #9c BC Labour Leaders and Social Justice: Biographies

Handout #9d BC Labour Leaders: Student Questions

Note: many of Martin Luther King Jr's speeches, including the one emphasized here to sanitation workers in 1968, are easily obtainable online. It would enrich the experience to show to the class. Additionally, the BBC covered Gandhi's visit to England thoroughly and all kinds of newsreels are available with a simple online search.

Extension Activities

Have students write a short biography of one of the following individuals from labour history:

Mother Jones, Cesar Chavez, Crystal Lee Sutton, Joe Hill, Slim Evans, Big Bill Haywood, Jimmy Hoffa

For each, the student should find:

- A picture
- A quote
- Achievements
- Short background
- A decision: is the individual a good example of a social justice leader? Why or why not?