

Background Information

"Tester" Examples of Nationalism and Ultrationalism

Sort the following as examples of nationalism and ultrationalism

Space Race

During the 1950s and 1960s, both the United States and the Soviet Union invested heavily in their space programs. Each country represented opposing sides in the Cold War which pitted communism against liberal democratic capitalism. Nuclear weapons had made war between the superpowers unthinkable (a concept often referred to as Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD). So, instead of war, the superpowers competed in other ways—one of which was the space race. The Soviet launch of the first satellite in 1957 spurred the Americans to develop their own space program. In 1969, the Americans became the first country to put humans on the moon.

World Cup of Soccer

Every four years, thirty-two countries are selected to participate in the World Cup of Soccer. For the month of the World Cup, millions of people follow their country's progress as they chase world supremacy in soccer. The Canadian team rarely makes it to the World Cup yet flags from many different countries can be seen fluttering from cars and in the hands of exuberant school children. In Canada, the World Cup reveals peoples' competing loyalties as Canadians cheer wildly for the country with which they most closely associate.

The Oka Crisis

In July 1990, a violent crisis that had been building in Québec for years erupted between the town of Oka and the Mohawk community of Kanesatake. In 1961, the town began building a golf course on land that the Mohawk nation had claimed for centuries as ancestral land that was unlawfully taken from them in 1717 when the governor of New France gave the land to the Church. The land included an Aboriginal burial ground and a sacred grove of trees. In 1977, the federal government rejected the Mohawk band's formal claim to the land because the claim did not meet its criteria. When the town resumed construction of the golf course, members of the reserve erected a barricade to prevent access to the site. A dangerous standoff lasted for almost three months between the Québec police and the Canadian armed forces on one side and the Mohawk people and sympathetic Aboriginal groups from across North America on the other side. Tense negotiations eventually led to a dismantling of the barricades. The disputed land was eventually purchased from the city by the federal government so that no further development would occur. But the Mohawk nation still does not control the site which it claims is rightfully theirs.

Internment in Canada

As a result of the onset of the First World War, Canada, a British colony, found itself at

war with Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The Canadian government swiftly passed the War Measures Act in 1914. This resulted in about 8000 “enemy aliens,” most of whom were Ukrainians of Austro-Hungarian citizenship, being forcibly relocated to internment camps or work sites across Canada from 1914 to 1920 in the name of “Canadian security.” Many people who were interned on these primitive and isolated work camps lost their homes and personal belongings to the government. They were expected to perform manual labour for the government, such as digging ditches, building roads, clearing land and repairing buildings. Internees often had no protection from those officials who abused them or recourse for improving harsh living conditions as they had lost any civil rights while the War Measures Act was in effect. Following the 1941 Japanese attacks on Hong Kong and Pearl Harbor, Canada was at war with Japan. Many Canadians who had concerns about the country’s security called for restrictions on Japanese-Canadians. As a result of the passing of the War Measures Act by the federal government, more than 22 000 Canadians of Japanese descent, many of whom were living in areas along the Pacific Coast of British Columbia, had their property confiscated and sold by the government, and were forced to live and work in primitive and harsh internment camps in the BC Interior.

Credits: Event summaries created by The Critical Thinking Consortium for use by Alberta teachers.