**Appendix 1: Teaching Strategy Lesson: Solidarity**

**Introduction**

This lesson is intended to be used in conjunction with the Social Studies 11 curriculum and could typically be used as part of a Government and Citizenship unit or as part of a late 20th Century history unit.

**Main Lesson**

To begin the lesson, introduce the topic of “Operation Solidarity” and the Solidarity Crisis of 1983, summarizing the main events of this historical labour-government conflict.  See *Operation* *Solidarity Synopsis* below for a brief overview of these events for the teacher’s information.  Hand out the Solidarity Worksheet (Lesson Activity 1)to the class and instruct them to complete question 1 as they watch the vignette, then play the vignette.

After watching the vignette have the class complete the remainder of the questions.  Following completion of the questions; discuss with the class various aspects of the questions.  Focus on why (or why not) some of the students believe unions are necessary and whether or not conflict in a democracy is a positive force.  The **extension** activity, if chosen will bring this into focus.

**Extension (Optional):**

Begin this section by posing the question: “Do people in this day and age really need unions?  Why should people have a right to unionize, aren’t there enough protections in place already?”  Distribute copies of handout “Resolve the Problem without a Union” (Lesson Activity 2) without the section on the three different possible solutions (pages 2-3).  Have the class complete the first part, “Outline how you would deal with this problem” individually or in pairs.  When the class if finished, discuss some of the options the class came up with, and then disclose what would most likely happen with the three most common ways that have been used to resolve the Val-Mart problem by reading the different solutions provided on pages 2-3.  These scenarios illustrate how difficult it is for individuals to advocate for themselves in large organizations.

Handout the Wal-Mart reading Appendix 3, have the class read all or a portion, and discuss.  The reading gives an example of how difficult it has been for non-unionized Wal-Mart workers to get basic legal worker rights and entitlements in the US.

*Operation Solidarity Synopsis:*

*In 1983 Premier Bill Bennett’s right wing Social Credit government’s main priorities were a program of fiscal austerity, or as they termed it “restraint”, and the promotion of business and free enterprise interests.  To this end, in one afternoon in July, the government introduced 26 separate pieces of legislation, that when passed would severely damage the ability of unions to organize and negotiate on behalf of their members and would strip the province of many regulatory checks that protected worker and human rights interests.  Among the many pieces of legislation introduced some of the bills included ones that would effectively remove the rights of government and public sector unions to negotiate on behalf of their members for standards in wages and almost all working conditions, one that would allow any public sector employee to be fired “without cause”, a bill that would dismantle the BC Human Rights Commission, another bill that would disband the Employment Standards Board and a bill that would effectively allow any employer to lower the wages of its employees if they simply stated they didn’t have an “ability to pay”.*

*In response activist groups banded together with labour unions and began a mass protest movement.  The movement started off by holding a rally with 25 000 people in attendance on the lawn of the BC legislature.  In August, Over 40 000 people booked off work or called in sick on the same day to attend a rally at Empire Stadium, shutting down some government services and impressing the public with the mass movement display.  Protests were held in towns across the province, including traditional Socred strongholds.  Then during the Social Credit convention, 60 000 protesters marched on the convention in downtown Vancouver, surrounding the convention hotel and demonstrating.  This was the largest demonstration in BC history, and still holds the record.*

*When word reached the government that “Operation Solidarity” was discussing the possibility of a General Strike, Bennett finally agreed to meet and negotiate.  Labour leader and then President of the IWA, Jack Munroe was chosen to meet with Bennett.  After a series of tense negotiations, a deal was struck.  Much, although not all, of the proposed legislation was done away with.  Many, especially in labour circles were satisfied, many thought that not enough was achieved.  Regardless, a General Strike was avoided, and union collective bargaining rights were preserved.*

*For a more detailed account of the Solidarity Crisis of 1983 read Rod Mickleburgh  Globe and Mail article  “25 Years Ago: British Columbia on the Brink of a General Strike”. (Appendix 2)*

Rod Mickleburgh, “25 Years Ago: British Columbia on the Brink of a General Strike,”

*Globe And Mail*, November 1, 2008,

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/back-from-the-brink-25-years-later/article20389444/?service=print>