

Global Transformation (1750 through the 21st Century)

Some historical events or movements take on actual or symbolic significance far beyond the initial impact of the original developments. An example in recent years is the influence of the 9/11/01 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on United States politics, foreign policy, civil liberties, attitudes toward immigration, and other domestic concerns. This issue of *Social Science Docket* (6.2) examines Global Transformation between 1750 and the start of the 21st century with a particular focus on events and movements that have had broad and long lasting impacts on the history of the period.

The opening article is about transforming the curriculum as well as the world. It focuses on the integration of women's lives into the standard historical narrative as a way to make female students more aware of the possibilities for their own lives, challenging the gender norms held by male students, helping all students become more sensitive to social issues, and as a corrective to the imbalance in the way the past is ordinarily reported. It includes teaching ideas for units on "Women's Rights around the World"; "Women and Islam"; and "Tradition and Change in Mexico." The article was originally presented as a paper at the Thirteenth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Sin Fronteras: Women's Histories, Global Conversations," held at Scripps College in Claremont, California, June 23-25, 2005. It was part of a panel "*Teaching Teachers to Teach Women's History: One State's Perspective*" organized by Dr. Delight Dodyk, formerly of Drew University, Dr. Ferris Olin, Rutgers University, and Dr. Margaret Crocco, Teachers College, Columbia University. Dodyk and Olin are founding members of the Women's Project of New Jersey, the organization responsible for the groundbreaking publication, *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Syracuse University Press, 1996) and its electronic companion, the New Jersey Women's History website (<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/njwomenshistory>).

The second article discusses the campaign to abolish the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Great Britain. It also involves students in an examination of historical explanation as they weigh the impact of different factors that led to the campaign's success. The consequences of the Great Irish Famine are examined in an article on the impact of the potato blight on the Irish countryside. Study of the Great Irish Famine allows students to explore a number of essential social studies questions related to the causes of events and the responsibility of government to respond to them. No one knows exactly how many people died in Ireland's Great Famine of 1845-52, but in a population of more than eight million people, the death count reached at least one million. Another million and a half people emigrated. This human disaster occurred within the jurisdiction of Great Britain, the richest and most industrially advanced empire in the world at that time. The New York State Great Irish Famine curriculum is available at on-line at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyssa/gif/curriculum.html>.

One article in this thematic section examines the construction of the Suez and Panama Canals, which expanded trade possibilities, supported the expansion of British and American empires, and symbolized the impact of technological innovation on human accomplishment. Another looks at the expansion of European imperialism in Africa in the 19th century and its impact on that continent with accompanying lesson material on the Congo.

In the twentieth century, a number of events and issues came to symbolize major global transformations. An article and document-package on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima presents the horror of war and of technology unleashed, while material on the launching of Sputnik shows a world awakened to the possibilities and dangers of space travel. The section on Hiroshima includes a mock trial of President Harry Truman for crimes against humanity. The Berlin Wall was the enduring symbol of both the Cold War in the second half of the 20th century and the struggle for human freedom, while Dien Bien Phu and Soweto came to represent the ability of oppressed people in the third world to overthrow their oppressors.

In the 21st century, environmental degradation has become a major concern. An article on the Aral Sea introduces important geographical concepts and an inquiry-based method for teaching adapted from science classrooms. One article uses art as a tool to understand world events. It provides images and testimony from victims of genocide in Darfur. An article designed for elementary school classrooms looks at children's literature that examines the transformation of Native American culture following the Columbian Exchange. The thematic section on Global Transformation ends with a series of reviews of books that teachers can use as supplementary materials and to expand their own understanding of contemporary issues. – Alan Singer