



# ZINN EDUCATION PROJECT

A collaboration between Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change

## Spring 2015 Update

### Teaching a Growing Audience



Since January 2015, more than 5,000 teachers have [signed up](#) to access lessons to teach outside the textbook, bringing us to 49,500 registered teachers. This is more than the teacher membership in the national organization for social studies teachers. Our [Facebook](#) page has gained 34,000 new fans, bringing our total to 184,000.

### Challenging Historical Myths

Our [If We Knew Our History](#) articles expose the myths in textbooks and share examples of how teachers are introducing students to people's history. The four articles we shared this spring

have been wildly popular with circulation in the hundreds of thousands through our network, as well as through Common Dreams, Huffington Post, and more.

### 10 Things to Know About Selma Before You See the Film

Published for the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery March and the release of the film Selma, this quickly became the most widely read article on the grassroots history of the voting rights struggle. We highlighted the untold roles of women, teachers, and students—and the fact that the movement began long before iconic leaders came to town. [Read article.](#)

### The Real Irish American Story Not Taught in Schools

Our annual St. Patrick's Day article, exposing the fact that food was exported from Ireland during the so-called potato famine, reached a new audience this year when it topped the charts on IrishCentral, the largest Irish site in North America. [Read article.](#)

### Lying to Children About the California Missions and the Indians

Believe it or not, 4th graders in California are still required to construct a diorama of a Mission. Our article, circulated by the Indian Country Today Media Network, provoked lots of discussion about the brutal treatment of Native Americans that is hidden in this romanticized Mission project. [Read article.](#)

### Rethinking Cinco de Mayo

Another annual favorite, this article helped teachers across the country rethink how they commemorate Latino/a history and culture. In addition to reprints on news outlets, it generated a Twitter storm. [Read article.](#)



The Zinn Education Project lessons help my students understand how the inequities of the past were constructed. They are able to start making the connections to today's inequities in society. It is from this understanding that we can figure out how to change our current world, based on our knowledge of the past. —Benjie Achtenberg, 7th grade teacher, Oakland, CA



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## New Lessons on the Climate Crisis

This spring we added [four new lessons](#) on the climate crisis. As you know, the stakes are higher than ever for the future of our planet, and we must help students understand why and consider ways to respond. The new lessons help students explore environmental justice issues by stepping into the shoes of the people



most affected and by questioning industry talking points. [View online.](#)

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## Teaching the Vietnam War: Beyond the Headlines



"The Pentagon lost the war in Vietnam, but now they are trying to win on the battlefield of memory," explained Tom Hayden at a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the peace movement called Vietnam: The Power of Protest. Many of the speakers, including Daniel Ellsberg, Barbara Lee, Ron Dellums, and Staughton Lynd, spoke about the need to teach the next generation the truth about the war. We were pleased to alert all the participants to the Zinn Education Project [lessons and resources for teaching about the Vietnam War](#) with colorful bookmarks. Hayden concluded his remarks with signs of hope, including the vital role of the Zinn Education Project.

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Thank you for all you do to support the Zinn Education Project so that we can set the historical record straight for new generations and create a future of peace with justice.

Sincerely,

Deborah Menkart  
Zinn Education Project co-director  
for Teaching for Change

Bill Bigelow  
Zinn Education Project co-director  
for Rethinking Schools

P.S. Look out for more information about an organizing project to bring Zinn Education Project teachers together in their local communities.