

THE ACT THAT MADE US CANADIAN

Introduction

Focus

This CBC News *in Review* story focuses on the 60th anniversary of an important milestone in Canada's long road to independence from Britain, the act that introduced the category of Canadian citizenship, and how it has evolved over the decades since it was first established.

Did you know . . .

Paul Martin Sr. made two unsuccessful bids for the Liberal leadership: in 1958 (losing to Pearson) and in 1968 (losing to Trudeau). His son was more successful and became both Liberal leader and prime minister of Canada.

On July 1, 2007, Canada Day, Governor General Michaëlle Jean presided over an important ceremony at Rideau Hall, her official residence in Ottawa. Forty-nine people from various parts of the world were being officially sworn in as Canadian citizens. For Jean, herself originally an immigrant from Haiti, the ceremony had great personal significance. But it also commemorated a major event in Canadian history that had occurred 60 years before. On January 1, 1947, the Canadian Citizenship Act came into effect, just months after it had been passed by Parliament. It meant that from that time forth, native-born Canadians and newcomers who met the requirements were to be recognized as citizens of Canada. Before this act, there was no such thing as a "Canadian citizen." Instead, everyone either born in Canada or living here for a certain period of time was regarded as a "British subject resident in Canada."

Unlike the United States and other countries that were once British colonies, Canada took a long time to sever all of its ties with the mother country. Like the adoption of the Canadian flag and national anthem and the patriation of the Constitution in 1982, the Canadian Citizenship Act was a major step forward in this country's long road to full self-government. But to many Canadians today it probably comes as a surprise to learn that, within living memory, Canadian citizenship did not exist. In taking this step in 1947, Canada became only the second country in the British Commonwealth, the association of former British colonies, to create its own independent citizenship category. The Irish Free State had done so a decade before.

The move to establish Canadian citizenship was inspired by this country's sacrifices in the two world wars of the 20th century, in which thousands of young Canadians had given their lives. Touring the military cemetery at Dieppe, France, shortly after the war, where hundreds of Canadian troops had been killed a few years before, Paul Martin Sr., a senior member of the federal cabinet noticed that the gravestones identified the dead as "British subjects." But to Martin, these brave young people were actually Canadians, either by birth or by immigration to this country, and he felt it was only fitting that they be recognized as such. Upon returning to Canada, Martin sponsored a bill that would establish Canadian citizenship as a category separate from that of British subject and succeeded in having it passed by Parliament on June 27, 1946. To Martin, it was a major step forward for Canada. As he stated at the time, "for the national unity of Canada and for the future and greatness of this country, it is of utmost importance that all of us, new Canadians or old, have a consciousness of the common purpose and common interests as Canadians, and that all of us are able to say with pride and meaning, 'I am a Canadian citizen.'" Decades later, his son Paul Martin Jr., a former Liberal prime minister, would recall that the adoption of the Canadian Citizenship Act was one of his father's proudest political achievements.

Two days after the Canadian Citizenship Act came into effect, the first 26 people were presented with their citizenship papers at a ceremony in Ottawa, presided over by then prime minister Mackenzie King. They came from many countries, including places

that had been devastated by the Second World War, such as Poland, Russia, Romania, Norway, and Yugoslavia. One of them, a young photographer from Armenia named Joseph Karsh, would later become famous for his portraits of major political figures. Another was Naif Azar, from Palestine, whose daughter, researcher Donna Caron, discovered her father's presence years later in the official photo taken on that day, much to her surprise and pride. King himself received the citizenship certificate number 0001 in recognition of his position as prime minister. Sixty

years later, in a similar ceremony, others followed in their footsteps. Canadian citizenship is a concept that has evolved and been broadened considerably since it was first introduced in 1947, but it remains a prized possession for native-born and new Canadians alike. This is especially the case for those who have come to live in this country after leaving their homelands because of political, economic, or religious problems they had to face there.

Source of Paul Martin quote: "On this day: The first officially Canadian citizens," <http://archives.cbc.ca>

To Consider

1. Why was the passing of the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947 such a major milestone in Canada's road to self-government from Britain?

2. What influence did Canada's role in the two world wars play in the creation of the concept of Canadian citizen?

3. Why do you think that many new Canadian citizens seem to value their citizenship more than those who receive it automatically by being born in this country?

4. How important is your Canadian citizenship to you personally? Why? Explain fully.

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Viewing Activity

Further Research

To read the full text of the Canadian Citizenship Act, go to the Web site of the Department of Justice at <http://laws.justice.gc.ca>.

Watch the video and answer the following questions.

1. What two important anniversaries did Canada observe in 2007?

2. What is the name of the Governor General of Canada?

3. Who was the first official citizen of Canada in January 1947? Why did this person receive this distinction?

4. Before 1947, what was the legal term used to define Canadians?

5. Who was the political figure mainly responsible for introducing the legislation that would create the category of Canadian citizen? What was his reason for doing this?

6. Who was the Prime Minister of Canada at the time the Canadian Citizenship Act became law?

7. Why were Joseph Karsh and Naif Azar among the more memorable people who received their Canadian citizenship in January 1947?

8. How many people have been granted Canadian citizenship since 1947?

9. How much did Canada's population grow from 2001 to 2006?

10. Of this figure, how much is accounted for by a) natural increase (people born in Canada) _____
and b) immigration? _____
11. Describe your own feelings about being Canadian.

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Timeline of Canadian Citizenship

Here is a timeline of the major events in the development of the concept of Canadian citizenship. Select those you think were most important and be prepared to explain your choices.

1867 The Dominion of Canada is established on July 1 with the enactment of the British North America Act. All people born in Canada are still regarded as British subjects.

1910 The federal government passes the Immigration Act to regulate the influx of new settlers arriving in Canada. It recognizes the status of British subjects living in Canada after five years of continuous residency in this country if they came from a country other than Britain or its colonies. For other British subjects, no such requirement is necessary.

1914 The Naturalization Act is passed, setting out the requirements for new Canadians of non-British origin to become British subjects resident in Canada.

1921 The Canadian Nationals Act creates the separate status of “Canadian nationals” for those already considered British subjects resident in Canada, and also their wives and any children who have not yet landed in Canada.

1931 The Statute of Westminster recognizes Canada as a fully self-governing member of the British Commonwealth and no longer a colony. The role of the monarchy in Canada’s government system is reduced, but the category of “British subject” remains unchanged. At this time, Canadians receive two types of passports, a blue one for Canadian nationals and a burgundy one for other British subjects.

1944 Under the terms of PC 7318, a ruling of the Privy Council of Canada, a woman who is not a British subject obtains that status by marrying a

Canadian serviceman fighting abroad in the Second World War. This is important for the “war brides” who come to Canada with their husbands after 1945. The same right applies to any of their children and comes to be interpreted as meaning that every foreign-born child of a Canadian soldier automatically receives the same status as his father. It becomes an issue in the 2006 case of Taylor v. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in which a child born out of wedlock to a Canadian soldier in the Second World War seeks citizenship.

1945 Shortly after the end of the war, Paul Martin Sr., a senior member of Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s Liberal government, tours the military cemetery at Dieppe, France, and determines to introduce a bill establishing Canadian citizenship as a separate category from that of British subject.

1947 On January 1, the Canadian Citizenship Act comes into effect. Under its terms, the concept of Canadian citizen is established, and citizenship is conferred upon the following groups of people living in Canada: British subjects born or naturalized in Canada, British subjects who have lived in Canada for five years prior to that date, British subjects whose father meets one of the previous requirements, women who are British subjects married to Canadian men, and all Aboriginal people living in Canada.

1949 On April 1, Newfoundland joins Confederation as Canada’s 10th province. The Citizenship Act is amended to confer Canadian citizenship

on that province's residents, who had previously been British subjects.

1977 The Citizenship Act is amended to broaden the concept of Canadian citizen by reducing the number of years immigrants are required to reside in Canada before they can apply for citizenship from five to three. Preferential treatment for non-Canadian British subjects from the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries is abolished. Discrimination on the basis of nationality and gender is removed, enabling prospective applicants for citizenship from any country to apply. Instead, education and professional skills, rather than country of origin, become the key criteria for prospective citizens. Dual citizenship is also permitted, enabling Canadian citizens to remain citizens of one or more other countries.

1985 Parliament confers honorary Canadian citizenship posthumously on Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who risked his life to save thousands

of Hungarian Jews during the Nazi Holocaust. Since then, two other living individuals, former South African President Nelson Mandela and the Tibetan Buddhist leader the Dalai Lama, have also received this honour.

1992-2006 Rulings in a number of federal-court cases extend the right of Canadian citizenship to children born to or adopted by Canadian citizens.

2002 The federal government tables a new citizenship act that would modernize citizenship rules and processes, address gaps and inconsistencies in the current legislation, and establish clear, fair, and objective criteria for receiving Canadian citizenship. One of its more controversial proposals is a revised citizenship oath, requiring new citizens to swear loyalty to Canada's democratic values.

Source: History of Canadian nationality law, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Canadian_nationality_law, and Canada and the World Backgrounder on Citizenship, December 2006

Inquiry

1. Why were Canadians of British and non-British origins treated so differently with regard to their status as citizens prior to 1947?

2. What important changes in the concept of citizenship resulted from the amended Citizenship Act of 1977?

3. Why do you think Raoul Wallenberg, Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama have been awarded honorary Canadian citizenship?

4. Identify any other international figures, living or dead, you feel could also be considered for this honour. Explain your choice.

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Citizenship Profiles

Here are some profiles of new Canadians from among the approximately six million people from different countries of origin who have been granted citizenship since 1947. All of them participated in the special 60th anniversary citizenship swearing-in ceremony held in Ottawa in February 2007. They come from various parts of the world and left their homelands for a number of reasons. But they all agree on one thing: Canada is where they want to live and raise their families.

Ali Modir Rousta and Sepideh Nafasi

Ali Modir Rousta, a chemist, his wife Sepideh Nafasi, a medical doctor, and their daughter Hilary lived a very privileged life in Teheran, the capital city of Iran, their homeland. They enjoyed a high income and status, a big house, and the company of friends and close family members. But they were living in a constant state of fear under the harsh rule of the Islamic fundamentalist regime in power in that country. Nafasi's father had served as an army colonel during the time of the Shah, who had been overthrown in 1979. After that, he was jailed and was lucky to have survived. While in Iran, the family lived a double life, following Western customs in their home while adhering to the strict religiously based code of conduct the regime imposes on all Iranians in public. For example, Nafasi and Hilary were both required to wear the hijab when they went outside, and listening to Western music was discouraged.

In 2002, the family left for Canada and originally settled in Toronto. It was difficult for them at first, since neither Rousta nor Nafasi could speak English, making it impossible for them to practice

their professions. Nafasi worked as a cashier in a store in order to pay for the medical qualifying examination she needed to pass before being permitted to practice medicine. They now live in the small community of Carbonear, Newfoundland, where Nafasi is a family doctor and Rousta is completing a PhD.

Hilary, who changed her name from Sahar in honour of teen pop star Hilary Duff, is delighted to enjoy life as a typical Canadian teenager. According to her mother, it was probably for her sake that they made the difficult decision to leave Iran for Canada. As she states, "we decided to come here because of our child. We had everything, but we weren't able, with the money, to provide whatever we wished for her. Money wasn't enough. You want freedom. You want to have options. You want to have opportunity. And you want to say your opinion." And as her husband comments, "I don't care about what I lost, you know. I just care about what I gained. At this point . . . I'd say it's worth it, you know, moving to this country and being a citizen of Canada. . . . I don't feel that I'm a Canadian, but a citizen of the world, because Canada makes me feel like that."

Quotations from CBC documentary, *Citizen Iran*

Victor Munoz

Victor Munoz and his two children—Natalie, aged eleven, and seven-year-old Victor Jr.—came to Prince Edward Island from the war-ravaged South American nation of Colombia four years ago. For Munoz, the difficult decision to emigrate to Canada was made even more painful by the fact that in doing so he was leaving his wife behind. Years before, she had left the family to help the FARC,

one of the main left-wing guerrilla forces battling Colombia's government and allied far-right paramilitary groups. Because of his wife's choice, Munoz and his children found themselves in extreme danger and were forced to pay bribes to both left- and right-wing organizations in order to save their lives. Finally, Munoz could take no more and decided to stop paying this form of extortion to protect himself and his children from harm. He spent six months in a safe house in Bogotá, the Colombian capital, before the International Red Cross helped him to contact the Canadian Embassy and arrange for him and his family to immigrate.

Prince Edward Island represented a very new way of life for the Munoz family. As a single parent with limited English skills, Munoz faced many challenges in earning a living, despite his background as a successful and prosperous businessman and restaurant owner in his home country. Eventually he found work sorting potatoes at one of the many farms that dot the island. Taking advantage of his background as an entrepreneur, Munoz began to help local farmers market their products to Latin America, a region he knew well. However, Munoz is anxious to acquire a Canadian passport, which he feels will open more doors for him in that continent than his previous Colombian nationality will.

Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, has not traditionally been known for attracting large numbers of immigrants. In 2003, only 153 new Canadians settled there, but by 2006 that number had risen to 565. Most move to Charlottetown, the island's capital and largest city. However, Munoz chose instead to settle in the small community of Slemon Park, where he and his family are among a very small number of Spanish-speaking people. Already his children are starting to forget their

past life in their war-torn homeland but are still aware of the fact that they are different from their Canadian-born friends. Despite all the hardships Victor Munoz has faced in adjusting to life in his adopted country, he has no doubt that his decision to immigrate to Canada was for the best, especially for his children's future.

Vincent Dobson

It is a very long way from the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago to Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut. But for Vincent Dobson, who left his tropical homeland 35 years ago, life in the Canadian Arctic is a daily adventure. Dobson, a mechanic, was given the opportunity to emigrate to Canada after fixing the ambassador's car one day in Port of Spain, Trinidad's capital city. The ambassador was so impressed with his work that he encouraged Dobson to settle in Montreal, where he lived for almost 20 years. He then decided to relocate to the Far North, where he met his wife, Mylia. Eight years ago they had a baby daughter, Sasha. Dobson worked for many years as a mechanic but switched jobs and now works with the local branch of the Salvation Army.

Dobson is very proud of his Trinidadian heritage and grew up with the sound of steel drums being played in his back yard. He continues to play the island's famous calypso music to this day, performing every year at Caribana festivals in Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa. But he delayed applying for his Canadian citizenship until after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when obtaining a visa to enter the United States with his Trinidadian passport became too difficult. Now he is able to travel to Boston to participate in musical events there.

Dobson is delighted to have made his belated decision to obtain Canadian citizenship after living for more than

three decades in this country. He says that the main reason for his choice was his family. “I have kids in Montreal, grandchildren in Montreal. Now, my wife and kid are here. So, you know, I need to be around for them, and being around as a Canadian we can all celebrate.”

Quotations from CBC documentary, *Citizen Trinidad*

Matilda Kumara

Matilda Kumara is a single mother raising her two children, 12-year-old Cheryl and 15-year-old Alfred, in Edmonton, Alberta. The country she left, Sierra Leone, has been recently classified by the United Nations Human Development Index as the worst place to live on the planet. By contrast, Canada regularly tops the list as the most desirable nation. Kumara attributes her ability to cope with the chaos and heartache she left behind in Freetown, the capital of that troubled country, to her deep religious faith. Seven years ago, she and her children fled the violent civil war that was then raging in the country. Her husband, James, was abducted by rebel forces in 1999 and Matilda has had no word of his whereabouts ever since. She does not even know if he is still alive, but fears the worst. Forcible abduction of adults and even children was a common practice in Sierra Leone’s civil war, which only ended a few years ago.

After fleeing her homeland, Kumara and her children spent two years in a United Nations refugee camp in neighbouring Ghana, where she earned a living by creating beautifully decorated traditional Sierra Leonean fabrics. Officials at the camp assigned her to immigrate to Canada, and she checked the map many times to find out where her new home was located. Upon arriving in Edmonton, Kumara faced many challenges, the main one being a severe form of culture shock. She was baffled by Canadian food, and it took her some time to adjust to a new diet and way of life. She now works as a cleaner and is studying full-time, with the goal of obtaining a degree in social work. With that and her first-hand experience, she hopes to find work counselling new immigrants and assisting them in their new lives.

Kumara was very concerned about what to wear to the ceremony where she received her Canadian citizenship. She wanted to wear a traditional Sierra Leone dress that her mother made for her. But even more important, she was excited that she was to receive a Canadian passport. “It’s so big, it’s so huge, you are so happy,” she said. “Everything about it, you just can’t find a word that exactly will suit because with the Canadian passport . . . I live in a better world now. I am very, very grateful.”

Quotations from CBC documentary, *Citizen Sierra Leone*

Activities

1. Read the profiles of the new Canadians above, and for each of them indicate: a) country of origin, b) new home in Canada, c) how long they have lived in this country, d) reasons for immigrating to Canada, and e) challenges and difficulties they have faced since arriving in Canada.
2. What similarities and differences do you notice in the background and experience of the four immigrant families described above? Which do you think are the most significant of these? Why?

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Could You Pass the Citizenship Test?

One of the requirements for obtaining Canadian citizenship is the passing of a test on basic information about this country. The questions on the test are taken from a booklet called “A Look at Canada,” published by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and distributed to applicants for citizenship. The test includes questions dealing with Canadian politics, government, economy, geography, and history. In addition to these general questions, there is also a section with more specific questions relating to the

region where the new citizen will be living.

For native-born Canadians, no such test is required, and frequently those who must pass it express doubt that many of their fellow citizens who were born in this country would be able to pass it. For your information, here is a selection of questions from the different parts of the test. See how well you would do on it and how much you know about Canada! (Note: the questions selected are not among the most difficult ones appearing on the test).

1. What are the three main groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada?
2. Where did the first European settlers in Canada come from?
3. Who were the United Empire Loyalists?
4. What does the term *Confederation* mean?
5. Who was the first prime minister of Canada?
6. What part of the Canadian Constitution legally protects the basic rights and freedoms of all Canadians?
7. What does “equality under the law” mean?
8. What are the two official languages of Canada?
9. Which province is the only officially bilingual province?
10. Which animal is the official symbol of Canada?
11. What is the tower in the centre of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa called?
12. What three oceans border Canada?
13. Which mountain range is on the border between Alberta and British Columbia?
14. What country is Canada’s largest trading partner?
15. Which region is known as the industrial and manufacturing heartland of Canada?
16. Who is Canada’s official Head of State?
17. What are the three levels of government in Canada?
18. How many electoral districts are there in Canada?
19. Name the prime minister of Canada and the party he leads.
20. Name the premier of your province and the party he/she leads.

Answers

1. Inuit, First Nations (Indians), Métis
2. France
3. British settlers who arrived in Canada following the American Revolution
4. The union of the former British colonies of Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to form the Dominion of Canada in 1867
5. John A. Macdonald
6. Charter of Rights and Freedoms
7. Everyone is entitled to a fair trial, irrespective of race, gender, national origin, or sexual orientation
8. English and French
9. New Brunswick
10. Beaver
11. Peace Tower
12. Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic
13. Rockies
14. United States
15. Central Canada (Quebec and Ontario)
16. Queen Elizabeth II
17. Federal, provincial, municipal
18. 308
19. Stephen Harper (Conservative)
20. Depends on which is your home province

Source: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Web site, www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/look/look-22.asp

Discussion

1. Do you think new Canadians applying for citizenship should be required to study for and pass a test on their knowledge of this country's economy, society, history, and political system? Why or why not?
2. Do you think it is fair that native-born Canadians are not required to pass a similar test on their knowledge of this country? Why or why not?
3. What other questions do you think might be helpful for a citizenship test? Explain your suggestions.

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Citizenship: Background and Current Issues

The concept of citizenship has a long history from ancient times to the present day. Although most people living today are citizens of one of the planet's almost 200 nation states, their citizenship rights and responsibilities differ markedly. In democratic countries like Canada, the rights of citizens are clearly stated in documents such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition to their rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to vote, have a fair trial, and practice one's religion, citizens also are expected to fulfill a number of responsibilities. These include obeying the law and paying one's taxes. Citizenship is a notion that actually means something in democracies, but in dictatorships or totalitarian states, most of the rights Canadians take for granted are practically non-existent. For instance, in a country like North Korea it would be impossible for a citizen to criticize the government or its leader, and doing so could likely result in harsh punishment or even death. Unlike democracies, where citizenship entails a mixture of rights and responsibilities, dictatorships demand total loyalty to the leader or regime and offer very little in the way of rights to the people they rule.

Although the concept of citizenship first emerged in ancient societies like Greece and Rome, it reached its fullest modern form during the era of the French Revolution, from 1789 to 1799. Prior to that world-shaking event, people living under the rule of absolute monarchies that prevailed in France and other European countries were not citizens of a nation state, but subjects who owed their loyalty and obedience to the king. The French Revolution swept away the pillars of what was called the "old

regime" in Europe—absolute monarchy, an established church, and hereditary nobility. In addition it created the concept of "citizen" to define all those living in France and entitled to certain rights. These rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, had long been championed by radical political thinkers during the Age of Enlightenment, which provided the inspiration for the revolution. The leaders of the French Revolution even included the king himself, Louis XVI. As a citizen he was indicted for treason as "Citizen Louis Capet" and executed under the blade of the guillotine in 1793. Henceforth, all French people proudly took on the same designation. The term *citizen* entered the revolutionary vocabulary as the highest possible honour the new government could bestow on its people.

During the course of the 19th century, many countries saw the birth of modern democratic citizenship rights as people were inspired by the ideals of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" first proclaimed in France. Movements to extend the right to vote to workers and women, and demands for greater political and social equality, grew in intensity as the century progressed. By the early 20th century, most countries in Western Europe and North America had extended citizenship rights to previously excluded or marginalized groups such as workers and women, who saw their economic, social, and political position in society markedly improve. According to the sociologist Thomas Marshall, whose groundbreaking book *Citizenship and Social Class* was published in 1950, the period from the 18th to the 20th centuries could be viewed as progressing through three distinct phases of citizenship. Each

Further Research

To learn more about the case of Omar Khadr, consult the September 2007 issue of *News in Review*.

of them broadened and deepened the category. During the 18th century, the concept of civil citizenship—meaning equality before the law, personal liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and the rights to own property and sign contracts—became recognized. In the 19th century, this process was extended to include political citizenship. More people gained the right to vote and run for political office. By the 20th century, citizenship was broadened even further to encompass social citizenship, which refers to the right to enjoy a certain standard of living and social welfare. The modern welfare state, which was born in Canada and other Western democracies after the Second World War, is a good example of this.

All of these phases of citizenship, and the extensions of rights they brought with them, took place within the confines of the nation state, the dominant form of political organization in the world from the time of the French Revolution up to today. But as the 21st century begins, many people believe that the concept of citizenship is extending beyond the boundaries of individual nations and that a new idea of “global” citizenship is beginning to emerge. One example of this is the fact that more and more people in Canada and other countries where it is permitted are opting for dual citizenship in order to have the right to vote in more than one country. This can sometimes have significant consequences. For example, in the Italian election of April 2006 the narrow result was decided by the votes of Italian citizens living in other countries, including Canada, who had the right to elect their own representatives to that country’s parliament.

In today’s world, where more and more people are travelling to other countries, an important aspect of citizenship is the right to be protected

from arbitrary arrest or mistreatment while abroad. Canadian citizens carry their passports with them while travelling and may contact the embassy in the country they are visiting should they find themselves in any difficulty. However, this right does not absolve them of the duty of obeying the laws that apply in that country. For instance, the harsh laws against soft drug possession in a country such as Singapore, which could include the death penalty, cannot be appealed by the local embassy should a Canadian travelling there fall victim to them.

The case of Omar Khadr, the young Canadian of Pakistani origin who is the only Canadian citizen currently being held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, raises this issue very dramatically. Khadr was only 15 years old when he was charged with involvement in terrorist activities in Afghanistan. Legal experts in Canada and elsewhere have strongly questioned the validity of his confinement in Guantanamo under international law. This is partly because of his age, and also because the category of “unlawful enemy combatant,” which the U.S. authorities are using to define those being held in their custody, has no legal authority. Khadr is not someone for whom most Canadians would feel much sympathy. He and his family strongly support the objectives and deeds of the Al Qaeda militants who drove airplanes into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. But the concept of citizenship is intended to apply to everyone and not only to those who adhere to the values of the mainstream culture in Canada. For this reason, the Canadian government’s reluctance to take up the cause of Omar Khadr has been sharply criticized. As author Erna Paris comments, “by refusing that Omar Khadr be returned to Canada and tried here, the Harper government makes Canadians complicit with the Bush administration’s contempt

for established law. The Kahdr case is being noticed. Our international reputation as a law-abiding nation that protects its citizens is at risk.”

Source: Canada and the World Backgrounder on Citizenship, and “Why the Khadr case is an affront to the rule of law,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 25, 2007

Activities

1. What do you think were the main reasons why the concept of citizenship has been broadened and deepened to include a greater range of rights from the time of the French Revolution up to today?
2. Do you think that people holding dual citizenship should be permitted to vote in national elections of the country in which they are not living? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree with Erna Paris that the Canadian government should be doing more for Omar Khadr, even though he holds views that most people in this country would find totally unacceptable? Why or why not?

