



Egale Canada

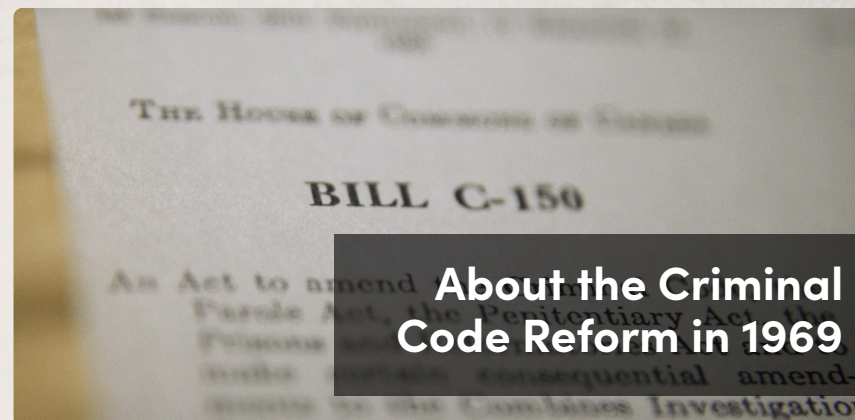
Post Screening Discussion Questions

A) Bill C-150 received Royal Assent on June 27, 1969. The offences of buggery and gross indecency were still being enforced, however the new act introduced exemptions for married couples, and any two consenting adults above the age of 21 regardless of gender or sexual orientation, provided the acts took place in private. Upon reflecting on the 1969 reforms to the criminal code, many of the activists and scholars interviewed in the film complicate the popular idea that this legislation marked the total and complete decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada.

- Before screening the film, what knowledge, if any, did you have regarding the history of the supposed decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada? Where did you learn about this?
- Have any of your impressions changed after screening the film? In what ways?
- Review and discuss some of the positions from the film that speak to the limitations of the '69 reform in terms of advancing justice, liberation and human rights for LGBTQI2S people in Canada.

B) Many popular accounts of the 1969 reform to the criminal code suggest that this initiative was proposed and handed down by a progressive and benevolent government in a vacuum, without considering the broader historical, social and political context.

- Name and discuss 4 or 5 key social, cultural, political and/or historical factors, trends or events that directly or indirectly influenced the eventual passing of Bill C-150.



C) Despite some shortcomings discussed in the film, many still consider the passing of Bill C-150 to be a defining moment and key turning point in the movement toward LGBTQI2S justice, liberation and human rights in Canada.

- In what ways was Bill C-150 influential in making gay rights organizing, activism and community building more possible than it had been before?

D) Using Bill C-150 and its after effects as a case study, and considering the varying positions presented in the film.

- Reflect on the relationship between legal/policy reforms and broader social and cultural change.
- How important is one in giving way to the other?
- Can you think of other examples from LGBTQI2S social movement history to help demonstrate your point?

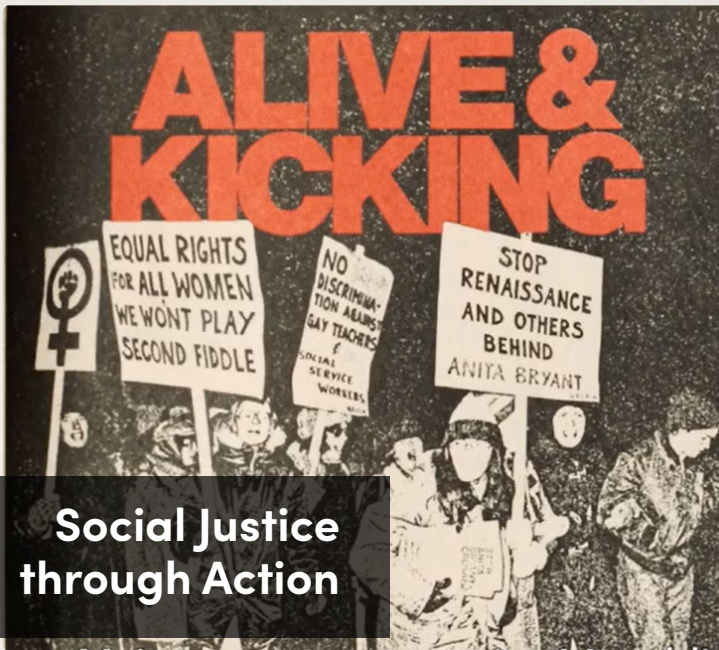


Building Communities, Affirming Identities

A) Parts of the film examine how the 1969 criminal code reform helped create conditions that enabled gay and lesbian community-based organizing to flourish in ways that had not previously been possible. The burgeoning of gay and lesbian groups, spaces and organizations in the years following the omnibus bill addressed the community's need for activism, cultural production and social activity while helping to increase gay and lesbian visibility.

One particularly noteworthy and influential organization, by and for gay community, was The Body Politic, one of the largest and earliest gay centered publications in Canada, running monthly issues from 1971-1987. Dedicated to a particular kind of liberation politics, the publication gave people a place to engage with the meaning of their identities and communities. It was also a space to create culture and archive their own histories in order to document and find commonality in shared experiences of discrimination, and to agitate people to action.

- As a way of paying tribute to the ongoing work and legacy of community building, name and discuss 4 or 5 of the many spaces, groups, organizations, publications, writings, or arts and cultural productions that have contributed to building and shaping the LGBTQI2S community in Canada that we see today. You may wish to discuss examples ranging in scale from a small zine that made you feel seen to a nation-wide campaign, from those that have touched your life personally, to those that you simply have heard of would like to learn more about. Your discussion may also encompass examples not explicitly named in the film.
- In what ways have the examples you named contributed to LGBTQI2S history in Canada?
- What do the examples that have in common? What makes them unique?
- What specific intersection of identities, experiences and communities within the broader LGBTQI2S umbrella do they engage?
- To what extent do they address notable historical gaps in LGBTQI2S representation?



Social Justice through Action

A) Activism in all forms, from public gatherings, marches, and rallies to stand-ins and kiss-ins, to legal battles tried and won, have been integral to the recognition, safety, and visibility of the LGBTQI2S communities in Canada. Many different activities are often seen as a protest. For many minoritized sexual and gender identities across Canada, even everyday survival constitutes a form of protest.

The film explores many forms of protest and activism.

- Name and discuss the range of activist activities and strategies featured in the film.
- What do you think counts as activism? What doesn't count?
- Who or what determines the need for activism?
- How does that play a role in predicting the success of the activism?

B) In the 50 years that followed the 1969 legislation, many battles were waged and won to gain recognition and rights for LGBTQI2S people across Canada. However, these gains have often been portrayed as singular and universal experiences.

In the following quotation from the film, writer, educator and artist, Kim Katrin, reflects on why human rights work that fails to work in solidarity across broad but overlapping anti-oppression movements is ultimately limited. She says that, “activist movements can sometimes function in ways that fight for the rights of some people with the idea that they can come back to get everyone else’s later. And I don’t think that works.”

If we are to be successful in moving towards social justice in Canada, it is paramount that we strive to do better in order to create meaningful spaces for the voices of groups within the LGBTQI2S community who continue to face marginalization in unique ways.

- Name and examine examples, in which specific identities that overlap or intersect make some people and groups particularly vulnerable to the rights violations that broad LGBTQI2S activism aims to address. For example, people who live at the intersections of being trans, non-binary, gender nonconforming, Indigenous, racialized, undocumented, incarcerated, sex workers, poor, disabled, elderly, etc. You may discuss identities of either those discussed in the film or those from your own knowledge and experience.

Reflecting on some of the ideas presented in the film on this theme

- Why is it so important to apply an intersectional¹ lens, as a tool of analysis, advocacy, organizing, movement building and policy development?
- Are there groups, organizations or activists that are doing this particularly well?
- What strategies and tactics do they use in their organizing efforts and what can we learn from them?
- What struggles or barriers do they continue to face in their fight for space, inclusion and acknowledgment in the scaffolding of LGBTQI2S rights movements?

¹ Intersectionality: A concept which recognizes how each person simultaneously exists within multiple and overlapping identity categories. An intersectional analysis recognizes that no individual's experience of identity based oppression or privilege can be viewed solely within the context of any one single element of their identity. See the Terms & Concepts document for more information.



Queering Histories, Queering Futures

A) Much of the public historical record on homosexuality prior to 1969 was written from the perspective of institutional authorities and limited to a discourse of deviance, criminality and pathology. The landmark legislation in '69 empowered gay and lesbian Canadians to archive their own lives and experiences, from their own voices and standpoints in ways that had not been previously possible. Today, LGBTQI2S Canadians, continue to push back urgently and fight against their own historical erasures both from Canadian history broadly, and from dominant accounts of gay history, which have largely centred white, male, cisgender stories.

The film names a number of groups and communities whose histories have been sidelined, obscured or outright excluded from the “gay archive”, including people who are Two Spirit, intersex, trans, non-binary and gender variant, as well as queer and trans people who are Black, Indigenous, of faith, and/or otherwise racialized.

- What are some of the dangers and real consequences of being conspicuously “written out of history”?
- Discuss some of the ways that diverse and intersectional LGBTQI2S groups and communities are boldly reading and writing themselves into the historical narrative? Why do you think is this work so valuable?
- What can the theme of historical erasure teach us about the work of fostering a rich and intersectional queer and trans archive into the future?
- What are some concrete ways you can help promote this work, in your schools, workplaces, families, and communities?

B) Several speakers in the film suggest that as much as the 50th anniversary of Bill C-150’s passing may offer a chance to collectively celebrate the human rights achievements, it also presents an opportunity for Canadians to take a critical look at the entrenched history of state-sponsored discrimination against LGBTQI2S communities well after 1969 and into the present.

- To what extent do you agree that even histories that are not entirely celebratory, which are dark and painful and perhaps even a source of shame, are important for Canadians to learn about and to engage with?
- What value can this knowledge offer us, and how can it be constructive?
- Discuss concrete ideas for how to engage in this learning in ways that build toward positive change in the present and future.

C) Despite major human rights achievements for LGBTQI2S people in Canada, queer and trans people continue to live in a society that is not free from violence or discrimination. The activists and scholars featured in the film name a number of key areas in which the struggle for safety, visibility, protection, and justice for the LGBTQI2S community across Canada and around the world, continue to demand our collective attention. (Notably, they echo many of the same issues and concerns raised by activists during the “We Demand” demonstration for gay liberation on Parliament Hill in 1971).

Commemorating 50 years of LGBTQI2S activism in Canada presents an opportunity for reflection, not just on the past 50 but on our hopes and dreams for the next 50 years.

- Considering some of the ongoing human right struggles named by speakers in the film, as well as those you are personally dedicated to, share and discuss your own hopes, dreams and visions for justice for LGBTQI2S people in Canada.
- Share ideas for 3 action items you can commit to in the next week, month and year to help move toward this vision in some meaningful and transformative way.