

Name: _____

45. ~~Peace revolution~~. U.S. government conduct of the Vietnam war revealed that America is not a democracy.

46. ~~Peace revolution~~ of Southeast Asia and identity the following: North and South Vietnam, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), Saigon, Hanoi, Cambodia, Laos, the border between China and North Vietnam.

Directions

Read the packet and answer the questions @ the back.

* Always look up unfamiliar words/terms to ensure you understand AND put the responses to the questions in your own words as well.

Source: A People's History of the United States, Howard Zinn.
The New Press

Chapter 19

Surprises

Helen Keller had said in 1911: "We vote? What does that mean?" And Emma Goldman around the same time: "Our modern fetish is universal suffrage." After 1920, women were voting, as men did, and their subordinate condition had hardly changed.

Robert and Helen Lynd, studying Muncie, Indiana (*Middletown*), in the late twenties, noted the importance of good looks and dress in the assessment of women. Also, they found that when men spoke frankly among themselves they were "likely to speak of women as creatures purer and morally better than men but as relatively impractical, emotional, unstable, given to prejudice, easily hurt, and largely incapable of facing facts or doing hard thinking."

It seems that women have best been able to make their first escape from the prison of wifeliness, motherhood, femininity, housework, beautification, isolation, when their services have been desperately needed—whether in industry, or in war, or in social movements. Each time practicality pulled the woman out of her prison—in a kind of work-parole program—the attempt was made to push her back once the need was over, and this led to women's struggle for change.

World War II had brought more women than ever before out of the home into work. By 1960, 36 percent of all women sixteen and older—23 million women—worked for paid wages. But there were nursery schools for the children of only 2 percent of working mothers. The median income of the working woman was about one-third that of the man. And attitudes toward women did not seem to have changed much since the twenties.

In the civil rights movement of the sixties, the signs of a collective stirring began to appear. Women took the place they customarily took in social movements, in the front lines—as privates, not generals. Ella Baker, a veteran fighter from Harlem, now organizing in the South, knew the pattern: “I knew from the beginning that as a woman, an older woman in a group of ministers who are accustomed to having women largely as supporters, there was no place for me to have come into a leadership role.”

Nevertheless, women played a crucial role in those early dangerous years of organizing in the South, and were looked on with admiration. Women of all ages demonstrated, went to jail. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper in Ruleville, Mississippi, became legendary as organizer and speaker. She sang hymns; she walked picket lines with her familiar limp (as a child she contracted polio). She roused people to excitement at mass meetings: “I’m sick an’ tired o’ bein’ sick an’ tired!”

Around the same time, white, middle-class, professional women were beginning to speak up. A pioneering, early book, strong and influential, was Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*. “Just what was the problem that has no name? What were the words women used when they tried to express it? Sometimes a woman would say ‘I feel empty somehow... incomplete.’ Or she would say, ‘I feel as if I don’t exist.’”

Friedan wrote out of her experience as a middle-class housewife, but what she spoke about touched something inside all women. The “mystique” that Friedan spoke of was the image of the woman as mother, as wife, living through her husband, through her children, giving up her own dreams for that. She concluded: “The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own.”

In the summer of 1964, in McComb, Mississippi, at a Freedom House (a civil rights headquarters where people worked and lived together) the women went on strike against the men who wanted them to cook and make beds while the men went around in cars organizing. The stirring that Friedan spoke of was true of women everywhere, it seemed.

By 1969, women were 40 percent of the entire labor force of the United States, but a substantial number of these were secretaries, cleaning women, elementary school teachers, saleswomen, waitresses, and nurses. One out of every three working women had a husband earning less than \$5,000 a year.

What of the women who didn’t have jobs? They worked very hard, at home, but this wasn’t looked on as work, because in a capitalist society (or perhaps in any modern society where things and people are bought and

sold for money), if work is not paid for, not given a money value, it is considered valueless.

The women who worked in the typical “woman’s job”—secretary, receptionist, typist, salesperson, cleaning woman, nurse—were treated to the full range of humiliations that men in subordinate positions faced at work, plus another set of humiliations stemming from being a woman: gibes at their mental processes, sexual jokes and aggression, invisibility except as sexual objects, cold demands for more efficiency.

But times were changing. Around 1967, women in the various movements—civil rights, Students for a Democratic Society, antiwar groups—began meeting as women, and in early 1968, at a women’s antiwar meeting in Washington, hundreds of women carrying torches paraded to the Arlington National Cemetery and staged “The Burial of Traditional Womanhood.”

In the fall of 1968, a group called Radical Women attracted national attention when they protested the selection of Miss America, which they called “an image that oppresses women.” They all threw bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs, and other things they called “women’s garbage” into a Freedom Trash Can. A sheep was crowned Miss America. More important, people were beginning to speak of “Women’s Liberation.”

Poor women, black women, expressed the universal problem of women in their own way. In 1964 Robert Coles (*Children of Crisis*) interviewed a black woman from the South recently moved to Boston, who spoke of the desperation of her life, the difficulty of finding happiness: “To me, having a baby inside me is the only time I’m really alive.”

Without talking specifically about their problems as women, many women, among the poor, did as they had always done, quietly organized neighborhood people to right injustices, to get needed services. In the mid-1960s, ten thousand black people in a community in Atlanta called Vine City joined together to help one another: they set up a thrift shop, a nursery, a medical clinic, monthly family suppers, a newspaper, a family counseling service. One of the organizers, Helen Howard, told about it:

The way we got this playground: we blocked off the street, wouldn’t let anything come through. We wouldn’t let the trolley bus come through. The whole neighborhood was in it. Took record players and danced; it went on for a week. We didn’t get arrested, they was too many of us. So then the city put up this playground for the kids....

In 1970, Dorothy Bolden, a laundry worker in Atlanta and mother of six, told why in 1968 she began organizing women doing housework, into the National Domestic Workers Union. She said: "I think women should have a voice in making decisions in their community for betterment."

Women tennis players organized. A woman fought to be a jockey, won her case, became the first woman jockey. Women artists picketed the Whitney Museum, charging sex discrimination in a sculptors' show. Women journalists picketed the Gridiron Club in Washington, which excluded women. By the start of 1974, women's studies programs existed at seventy-eight institutions, and about two thousand courses on women were being offered at about five hundred campuses.

Women's magazines and newspapers began appearing, locally and nationally, and books on women's history and the movement came out in such numbers that some bookstores had special sections for them. The very jokes on television, some sympathetic, some caustic, showed how national was the effect of the movement. Certain television commercials, which women felt humiliated them, were eliminated after protest.

In 1967, after lobbying by women's groups, President Johnson signed an executive order banning sex discrimination in federally connected employment, and in the years that followed, women's groups demanded that this be enforced. Over a thousand suits were initiated by NOW (National Organization for Women, formed in 1966) against U.S. corporations, charging sex discrimination.

The right to abortion became a major issue. Before 1970, about a million abortions were done every year, of which only about ten thousand were legal. Perhaps a third of the women having illegal abortions—mostly poor people—had to be hospitalized for complications. How many thousands died as a result of these illegal abortions no one really knows. But the illegalization of abortion clearly worked against the poor, for the rich could manage either to have their baby or to have their abortion under safe conditions.

Court actions to do away with the laws against abortions were begun in over twenty states between 1968 and 1970. In the spring of 1969 a Harris poll showed that 64 percent of those polled thought the decision on abortion was a private matter.

Finally, in early 1973, the Supreme Court decided (*Roe v. Wade, Doe v. Bolton*) that the state could prohibit abortions only in the last three

months of pregnancy, that it could regulate abortion for health purposes during the second three months of pregnancy, and during the first three months, a woman and her doctor had the right to decide.

There was a push for child care centers, and although women did not succeed in getting much help from government, thousands of cooperative child care centers were set up.

Women also began to speak openly, for the first time, about the problem of rape. Each year, fifty thousand rapes were reported and many more were unreported. Women began taking self-defense courses. There were protests against the way police treated women, interrogated them, insulted them, when women filed rape charges.

Many women were active in trying to get a Constitutional amendment, ERA (Equal Rights Amendment), passed by enough states. But it seemed clear that even if it became law, it would not be enough, that what women had accomplished had come through organization, action, protest. Even where the law was helpful it was helpful only if backed by action. Shirley Chisholm, a black congresswoman, said:

The law cannot do it for us. We must do it for ourselves. Women in this country must become revolutionaries. We must refuse to accept the old, the traditional roles and stereotypes.... We must replace the old, negative thoughts about our femininity with positive thoughts and positive action....

Perhaps the most profound effect of the women's movement of the sixties—beyond the actual victories on abortion, in job equality—was called "consciousness raising," often done in "women's groups," which met in homes all across the country. This meant the rethinking of roles, the rejection of inferiority, the confidence in self, a bond of sisterhood, a new solidarity of mother and daughter.

For the first time, the sheer biological uniqueness of women was openly discussed. One of the most influential books to appear in the early seventies was a book assembled by eleven women in the Boston Women's Health Book Collective called *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. It contained an enormous amount of practical information, on women's anatomy, on sexuality and sexual relationships, on lesbianism, on nutrition and health, on rape, self-defense, venereal disease, birth control, abortion, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause.

More important even than the information, the charts, the photos, the candid exploration of the previously unmentioned, was the mood of exuberance throughout the book, the enjoyment of the body, the happiness

with the newfound understanding, the new sisterhood with young women, middle-aged women, older women.

The fight began, many women were saying, with the body, which seemed to be the beginning of the exploitation of women—as sex plaything (weak and incompetent), as pregnant woman (helpless), as middle-aged woman (no longer considered beautiful), as older woman (to be ignored, set aside). A biological prison had been created by men and society. As Adrienne Rich said (*Of Woman Born*): “Women are controlled by lashing us to our bodies.”

Rich discussed the training of passivity in women. Generations of schoolgirls were raised on *Little Women*, where Jo is told by her mother: “I am angry nearly every day of my life, Jo; but I have learned not to show it; and I still hope to learn not to feel it, though it may take me another forty years to do so.”

Male doctors used instruments to bring out children, replacing the sensitive hands of midwives, in the era of “anesthetized, technologized childbirth.” Rich said childbirth should be a source of physical and emotional joy.

For many women the question was immediate: how to eliminate hunger, suffering, subordination, humiliation, in the here and now. A woman named Johnnie Tillmon wrote in 1972:

I'm a woman. I'm a black woman. I'm a poor woman. I'm a fat woman. I'm a middle-aged woman. And I'm on welfare.... I have raised six children.... I grew up in Arkansas.... worked there for fifteen years in a laundry.... moved to California.... In 1963 I got too sick to work anymore. Friends helped me to go on welfare....

Welfare's like a traffic accident. It can happen to anybody, but especially it happens to women. And that is why welfare is a women's issue. For a lot of middle-class women in this country, Women's Liberation is a matter of concern. For women on welfare it's a matter of survival.

She and other welfare mothers organized a National Welfare Rights Organization. They urged that women be paid for their work—housekeeping, child rearing. “No woman can be liberated, until all women get off their knees.”

In the problem of women was the germ of a solution, not only for their oppression, but for everybody's. The control of women in society was ingeniously effective. It was not done directly by the state. Instead, the family was used—men to control women, women to control children, all to be preoccupied with one another, to do violence to one another when

things weren't going right. Why could this not be turned around? Could women liberating themselves, children freeing themselves, men and women beginning to understand one another, find the source of their common oppression outside rather than in one another?

Perhaps then they could create nuggets of strength in their own relationships, millions of pockets of insurrection. They could revolutionize thought and behavior in exactly that seclusion of family privacy which the system had counted on to do its work of control and indoctrination. And together, instead of at odds—male, female, parents, children—they could undertake the changing of society itself.

It was a time of uprisings. If there could be rebellion inside that most subtle and complex of prisons—the family—it was reasonable that there be rebellions in the most brutal and obvious of prisons: the penitentiary system itself. In the sixties and early seventies, those rebellions multiplied. They also took on an unprecedented political character and the ferocity of class war, coming to a climax at Attica, New York, in September of 1971.

The prison had arisen in the United States as an attempt at Quaker reform, to replace mutilation, hanging, exile. The prison was intended, through isolation, to produce repentance and salvation, but prisoners went insane and died in that isolation. By mid-nineteenth century, the prison was based on hard labor, along with various punishments: sweat boxes, iron yokes, solitary. The approach was summed up by the warden at the Ossining, New York, penitentiary: “In order to reform a criminal you must first break his spirit.” That approach persisted.

There had always been prison riots. A wave of them in the 1920s ended with a riot at Clinton, New York, a prison of sixteen hundred inmates, which was suppressed with three prisoners killed. Between 1950 and 1953 more than fifty major riots occurred in American prisons. In the early 1960s, prisoners on a work gang in Georgia smashing rocks used the same sledgehammers to break their legs, to call attention to their situation of daily brutality.

In November 1970, in Folsom prison in California, a work stoppage began which became the longest prison strike in the history of the United States. Most of the two thousand four hundred prisoners held out in their cells for nineteen days, without food, in the face of threats and intimidation. The strike was broken with a combination of force and deception, and four of the prisoners were sent on a fourteen-hour ride to another

prison, shackled and naked on the floor of a van. One of the rebels wrote: "...the spirit of awareness has grown.... The seed has been planted...."

The prisons in the United States had long been an extreme reflection of the American system itself: the stark life differences between rich and poor, the racism, the use of victims against one another, the lack of resources of the underclass to speak out, the endless "reforms" that changed little. Dostoyevsky once said: "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons."

It had long been true, and prisoners knew this better than anyone, that the poorer you were the more likely you were to end up in jail. This was not just because the poor committed more crimes. In fact, they did. The rich did not have to commit crimes to get what they wanted; the laws were on their side. But when the rich did commit crimes, they often were not prosecuted, and if they were they could get out on bail, hire clever lawyers, get better treatment from judges. Somehow, the jails ended up disproportionately full of poor black people.

In 1969, there were 502 convictions for tax fraud. Such cases, called "white-collar crimes," usually involve people with a good deal of money. Of those convicted, 20 percent ended up in jail. The fraud averaged \$190,000 per case; their sentences averaged seven months. That same year, for burglary and auto theft (crimes of the poor) 60 percent ended up in prison. The auto thefts averaged \$992; the sentences averaged eighteen months. The burglaries averaged \$321; the sentences averaged thirty-three months.

Judges had enormous discretion in the handing out of sentences. In Oregon, of thirty-three men convicted of violating the draft law, eighteen were put on probation. In southern Texas, of sixteen men violating the same law, none was put on probation, and in southern Mississippi, every defendant was convicted and given the maximum of five years. In one part of the country (New England), the average sentence for all crimes was eleven months; in another part (the South), it was seventy-eight months. But it wasn't simply a matter of North and South. In New York City, one judge handling 673 persons brought before him for public drunkenness (all poor; the rich get drunk behind closed doors) discharged 131 of them. Another judge, handling 366 persons on the same charge, discharged one person.

With such power in the hands of the courts, the poor, the black, the odd, the homosexual, the hippie, the radical are not likely to get equal treatment before judges who are almost uniformly white, upper-middle-class, orthodox.

Anyone trying to describe the reality of prison falters. A man in Walpole prison in Massachusetts wrote:

Every program that we get is used as a weapon against us. The right to go to school, to go to church, to have visitors, to write, to go to the movies. They all end up being weapons of punishment. None of the programs are ours. Everything is treated as a privilege that can be taken away from us. The result is insecurity—a frustration that keeps eating away at you.

Another Walpole prisoner:

I haven't eaten in the mess hall for four years. I just couldn't take it any more. You'd go into the serving line in the morning and 100 or 200 cockroaches would go running away from the trays. The trays were grimy and the food was raw or had dirt or maggots in it. Many a night I'd go hungry, living on peanut butter and sandwiches.

Communication with the outside world was difficult. Guards would tear up letters. Others would be intercepted and read.

The families suffered. One prisoner reported: "During the last lock-up my four-year-old son sneaked off into the yard and picked me a flower. A guard in the tower called the warden's office and a deputy came in with the State Police at his side. He announced that if any child went into the yard and picked another flower, all visits would be terminated."

The prison rebellions of the late sixties and early seventies had a distinctly different character than the earlier ones. The prisoners in the Queens House of Detention referred to themselves as "revolutionaries." All over the country, prisoners were obviously affected by the turmoil in the country, the black revolt, the youth upsurge, the antiwar movement.

The events of those years underlined what prisoners already sensed—that whatever crimes they had committed, the greatest crimes were being committed by the authorities who maintained the prisons, by the government of the United States. The law was being broken daily by the president, sending bombers to kill, sending men to be killed, outside the Constitution, outside the "highest law of the land." State and local officials were violating the civil rights of black people, which was against the law, and were not being prosecuted for it.

Literature about the black movement, books on the war, began to seep into the prisons. The example set in the streets by blacks, by antiwar demonstrators, was exhilarating—against a lawless system, defiance was the only answer.

It was a system that sentenced Martin Sostre, a fifty-two-year-old black man running an Afro-Asian bookstore in Buffalo, New York, to twenty-five to thirty years in prison for allegedly selling \$15 worth of heroin to an informer who later recanted his testimony. The recantation did not free Sostre—he could find no court, including the Supreme Court of the United States, to revoke the judgment. He spent eight years in prison, was beaten ten times by guards, spent three years in solitary confinement, battling and defying the authorities all the way until his release. Such injustice deserved only rebellion.

There had always been political prisoners—people sent to jail for belonging to radical movements, for opposing war. But now a new kind of political prisoner appeared—the man, or woman, convicted of an ordinary crime, who, in prison, became awakened politically. Some prisoners began making connections between their personal ordeal and the social system. They then turned not to individual rebellion but to collective action. They became concerned—amid an environment whose brutality demanded concentration on one's own safety, an atmosphere of cruel rivalry—for the rights, the safety of others.

George Jackson was one of these new political prisoners. In Soledad prison, California, on an indeterminate sentence for a \$70 robbery, having already served ten years of it, Jackson became a revolutionary.

His book *Soledad Brother* became one of the most widely read books of black militancy in the United States—by prisoners, by black people, by white people—perhaps this ensured he would not last. He knew what might happen: "Born to a premature death, a menial, subsistence-wage worker, odd-job man, the cleaner, the caught, the man under hatches, without bail—that's me, the colonial victim. Anyone who can pass the civil service examination today can kill me tomorrow... with complete immunity."

In August 1971 he was shot in the back by guards at San Quentin prison while he was allegedly trying to escape. Shortly after Jackson's death, there was a chain of rebellions around the country.

The most direct effect of the George Jackson murder was the rebellion at Attica prison in September 1971—a rebellion that came from long, deep grievances, but that was raised to boiling point by the news about George Jackson. Attica was surrounded by a thirty-foot wall, two feet thick, with fourteen gun towers. Fifty-four percent of the inmates were black; 100 percent of the guards were white. Prisoners spent fourteen to sixteen hours a day in their cells, their mail was read, their reading material restricted, their visits from families conducted through a mesh screen,

their medical care disgraceful, their parole system inequitable, racism everywhere.

When Attica prisoners were up for parole, the average time of their hearing, including the reading of the file and deliberation among the three members of the parole board, was 5.9 minutes. Then the decision was handed out, with no explanation.

At Attica, an inmate-instructed sociology class became a forum for ideas about change. Then there was a series of organized protest efforts, and an inmate manifesto setting forth a series of moderate demands, culminating in a day of protest over the killing of George Jackson at San Quentin, during which few inmates ate at lunch and dinner and many wore black armbands.

On September 9, 1971, a series of conflicts between prisoners and guards ended with a group of inmates breaking through a gate with a defective weld and taking over one of the four prison yards, with forty guards as hostages. Then followed five days in which the prisoners set up a remarkable community in the yard.

A group of citizen-observers, invited by the prisoners, included *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker, who wrote (*A Time to Die*): "The racial harmony that prevailed among the prisoners—it was absolutely astonishing."

After five days, the state lost patience. Governor Nelson Rockefeller approved a military attack on the prison. National Guardsmen, prison guards, and local police went in with automatic rifles, carbines, and sub-machine guns in a full-scale assault on the prisoners, who had no firearms. Thirty-one prisoners were killed.

The first stories given the press by prison authorities said that nine guards held hostage had their throats slashed by the prisoners during the attack. The official autopsies almost immediately showed this to be false: the nine guards died in the same hail of bullets that killed the prisoners.

In the weeks and months after Attica, the authorities were taking preventive action to break up organizing efforts among the prisoners. But prisoners continued to demand change, trying to get prisoners to care for one another, to take the hatred and anger of individual rebellion and turn it into collective effort for change. On the outside, something new was also happening, the development of prison support groups all over the country, the building of a body of literature about prisons. There were more studies of crime and punishment, a growing movement for the abolition of prisons on the ground that they did not prevent crime or cure it, but

expanded it. Alternatives were discussed: community houses in the short run (except for the incorrigibly violent); guaranteed minimum economic security, in the long run.

The prisoners were thinking about issues beyond prison, victims other than themselves and their friends. In Walpole prison a statement asking for American withdrawal from Vietnam was circulated; it was signed by every single prisoner—an amazing organizing feat by a handful of inmates. One Thanksgiving day there, most of the prisoners, not only in Walpole but in three other prisons, refused to eat the special holiday meal, saying they wanted to bring attention to the hungry all over the United States.

Prisoners worked laboriously on lawsuits, and some victories were won in the courts. The publicity around Attica, the community of support, had its effect. Although the Attica rebels were indicted on heavy charges and faced double and triple life terms, the charges were finally dropped. But in general, the courts declared their unwillingness to enter the closed, controlled world of the prison, and so the prisoners remained as they had been so long, on their own.

In 1978 the Supreme Court ruled that the news media do not have guaranteed rights of access to jails and prisons. It ruled also that prison authorities could forbid inmates to speak to one another, assemble, or spread literature about the formation of a prisoners' union.

It became clear—and prisoners seemed to know this from the start—that their condition would not be changed by law, but by protest, organization, resistance, the creation of their own culture, their own literature, the building of links with people on the outside. There were more outsiders now who knew about prisons. Tens of thousands of Americans had spent time behind bars in the civil rights and antiwar movements. They had learned about the prison system and could hardly forget their experiences. There was a basis now for breaking through the long isolation of the prisoners from the community and finding support there. In the mid-seventies, this was beginning to happen.

It was a time of upsurge. Women, guarded in their very homes, rebelled. Prisoners, put out of sight and behind bars, rebelled. The greatest surprise was still to come.

It was thought that the Indians, once the only occupants of the continent, then pushed back and annihilated by the white invaders, would not be heard from again. In the last days of the year 1890, shortly after Christmas, the last massacre of Indians took place at Pine Ridge, South Dakota,

near Wounded Knee Creek. When it was over, between 200 and 300 of the original 350 men, women, and children were dead. The twenty-five soldiers who died were mostly hit by their own shrapnel or bullets, since the Indians had only a few guns.

The Indian tribes—attacked, subdued, starved out—had been divided up by putting them on reservations where they lived in poverty. In 1887, an Allotment Act tried to break up the reservations into small plots of land owned by individual Indians, to turn them into American-type small farmers—but much of this land was taken by white speculators, and the reservations remained.

Then, during the New Deal, with a friend of the Indians, John Collier, in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there was an attempt to restore tribal life. But in the decades that followed, no fundamental change took place. Many Indians stayed on the impoverished reservations. The younger ones often left. An Indian anthropologist said: "An Indian reservation is the most complete colonial system in the world that I know about."

For a time, the disappearance or amalgamation of the Indians seemed inevitable—only 300,000 were left at the turn of the century, from the original million or more in the area of the United States. But then the population began to grow again, as if a plant left to die refused to do so, began to flourish. By 1960 there were 800,000 Indians, half on reservations, half in towns all over the country.

The autobiographies of Indians show their refusal to be absorbed by the white man's culture. One wrote:

Oh, yes, I went to the white man's schools. I learned to read from school books, newspapers, and the Bible. But in time I found that these were not enough. Civilized people depend too much on man-made printed pages. I turn to the Great Spirit's book which is the whole of his creation....

Chief Luther Standing Bear, in his 1933 autobiography, *From the Land of the Spotted Eagle*, wrote:

True, the white man brought great change. But the varied fruits of his civilization, though highly colored and inviting, are sickening and deadening. And if it be the part of civilization to maim, rob, and thwart, then what is progress?

I am going to venture that the man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the universe of things, was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization....

As the civil rights and antiwar movements developed in the 1960s, Indians were already gathering their energy for resistance, thinking about how to change their situation, beginning to organize.

Indians began to approach the United States government on an embarrassing topic: treaties. The United States government had signed more than four hundred treaties with Indians and violated every single one. For instance, back in George Washington's administration, a treaty was signed with the Iroquois of New York: "The United States acknowledge all the land within the aforementioned boundaries to be the property of the Seneca nation...." But in the early sixties, under President Kennedy, the United States ignored the treaty and built a dam on this land, flooding most of the Seneca reservation.

Resistance was already taking shape in various parts of the country. In the state of Washington, there was an old treaty taking land from the Indians but leaving them fishing rights. This became unpopular as the white population grew and wanted the fishing areas exclusively for themselves. When state courts closed river areas to Indian fishermen, in 1964, Indians had "fish-ins" on the Nisqually River, in defiance of the court orders, and went to jail, hoping to publicize their protest.

Some of the Indians involved in the fish-ins were veterans of the Vietnam war. One was Sid Mills, who was arrested in a fish-in at Frank's Landing on the Nisqually River in Washington on October 13, 1968. He made a statement: "I am a Yakima and Cherokee Indian, and a man. For two years and four months, I've been a soldier in the United States Army. I served in combat in Vietnam—until critically wounded.... I hereby renounce further obligation in service or duty to the United States Army."

Indians fought back not only with physical resistance, but also with the artifacts of white culture—books, words, newspapers. In 1968, members of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne, on the St. Lawrence River between the United States and Canada, began a remarkable newspaper, *Akwesasne Notes*, with news, editorials, poetry, all flaming with the spirit of defiance. Mixed in with all that was an irrepressible humor. Vine Deloria Jr. wrote:

Every now and then I am impressed with the thinking of the non-Indian. I was in Cleveland last year and got to talking with a non-Indian about American history. He said that he was really sorry about what had happened to Indians, but: "After all, what did you do with the land when you had it?" I didn't understand him until later when I discovered that the Cuyahoga River running through Cleveland is inflammable. So

many combustible pollutants are dumped into the river that the inhabitants have to take special precautions during the summer to avoid setting it on fire. How many Indians could have thought of creating an inflammable river?

In 1969, November 9, there took place a dramatic event which focused attention on Indian grievances as nothing else had. On that day, before dawn, seventy-eight Indians landed on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay and occupied the island. Alcatraz was an abandoned federal prison, a hated and terrible place nicknamed "The Rock."

This time, it was different. The group was led by Richard Oakes, a Mohawk who directed Indian Studies at San Francisco State College, and Grace Thorpe, a Sac and Fox Indian, daughter of Jim Thorpe, the famous Indian college football star and Olympic runner, jumper, hurdler. More Indians landed, and by the end of November nearly six hundred of them, representing more than fifty tribes, were living on Alcatraz.

They called themselves "Indians of All Tribes" and issued a proclamation, "We Hold the Rock." In it they offered to buy Alcatraz in glass beads and red cloth, the price paid Indians for Manhattan Island over three hundred years earlier. They announced they would make the island a center for Native American Studies for Ecology: "We will work to de-pollute the air and waters of the Bay Area...restore fish and animal life...."

In the months that followed, the government cut off telephones, electricity, and water to Alcatraz Island. Many of the Indians had to leave, but others insisted on staying. A year later they were still there, and they sent out a message to "our brothers and sisters of all races and tongues upon our Earth Mother":

We are still holding the Island of Alcatraz in the true names of Freedom, Justice and Equality, because you, our brothers and sisters of this earth, have lent support to our just cause.

We have learned that violence breeds only more violence and we therefore have carried on our occupation of Alcatraz in a peaceful manner, hoping that the government of these United States will also act accordingly....

We are Indians of All Tribes! WE HOLD THE ROCK!

Six months later, federal forces invaded the island and physically removed the Indians living there.

In the late 1960s, the Peabody Coal Company began strip mining on Navajo land in New Mexico—a ruthless excavation of the topsoil. The company pointed to a "contract" signed with some Navajos. It was remi-

emotions that I stand here to share my thoughts.... The Pilgrims had hardly explored the shores of Cape Cod four days before they had robbed the graves of my ancestors, and stolen their corn, wheat, and beans.... Our spirit refuses to die.... We stand tall and proud and before too many moons pass we'll right the wrongs we have allowed to happen to us...."

In March of 1973 came a powerful affirmation that the Indians of North America were still alive. On the site of the 1890 massacre, on Pine Ridge reservation, several hundred Oglala Sioux and friends returned to the village of Wounded Knee to occupy it as a symbol of the demand for Indian land, Indian rights.

Within hours, more than two hundred FBI agents, federal marshals, and police of the Bureau of Indian Affairs surrounded and blockaded the town. They had armored vehicles, automatic rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, and gas shells, and soon began firing.

After the siege began, food supplies became short. Indians in Michigan sent food via a plane that landed inside the encampment. The next day FBI agents arrested the pilot and a doctor from Michigan who had hired the plane. In Nevada, eleven Indians were arrested for taking food, clothing, and medical supplies to South Dakota. In mid-April three more planes dropped twelve hundred pounds of food, but as people scrambled to gather it up, a government helicopter appeared overhead and fired down on them while groundfire came from all sides. Frank Clearwater, an Indian man lying on a cot inside a church, was hit by a bullet. When his wife accompanied him to a hospital, she was arrested and jailed. Clearwater died.

There were more gun battles, another death. Finally, a negotiated peace was signed, in which both sides agreed to disarm. The siege ended and 120 occupiers were arrested.

The Indians had held out for seventy-one days, creating a marvelous community inside the besieged territory. Communal kitchens were set up, a health clinic, and hospital. A Navajo Vietnam veteran:

There's a tremendous amount of coolness considering that we're out-gunned.... But people stay because they believe; they have a cause. That's why we lost in Viet Nam, cause there was no cause. We were fighting a rich man's war, for the rich man.... In Wounded Knee, we're doing pretty damn good, morale-wise. Because we can still laugh.

Messages of support had come to Wounded Knee from Australia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, England. One message came from some

of the Attica brothers, two of whom were Indians: "You fight for our Earth Mother and Her Children. Our spirits fight with you!" Wallace Black Elk replied: "Little Wounded Knee is turned into a giant world."

After Wounded Knee, in spite of the deaths, the trials, the use of the police and courts to try to break the movement, the Native American movement continued. *Akwesasne Notes* continued to publish. On its poetry page, late autumn, 1976, appeared poems reflecting the spirit of the times. Ila Abernathy wrote:

I am grass growing and the shearer of grass,
I am the willow and the splinter of laths,

* * *

I am the burr in your conscience:
acknowledge me.

In the sixties and seventies, it was not just a women's movement, a prisoner's movement, an Indian movement. There was general revolt against oppressive, artificial, previously unquestioned ways of living. It touched every aspect of personal life: childbirth, childhood, love, sex, marriage, dress, music, art, sports, language, food, housing, religion, literature, death, schools.

Sexual behavior went through startling changes. Premarital sex was no longer a matter for silence. Men and women lived together outside of marriage, and struggled for words to describe the other person when introduced: "I want you to meet my...friend." Married couples candidly spoke of their affairs, and books appeared discussing "open marriage." Masturbation could be talked about openly, even approvingly. Homosexuality was no longer concealed. "Gay" men and "gay" women—lesbians—organized to combat discrimination against them, to give themselves a sense of community, to overcome shame and isolation.

All this was reflected in the literature and in the mass media. A new literature appeared to teach men and women how sexual fulfillment could be attained. The movies now did not hesitate to show nudity. The language of sex became more common both in literature and in ordinary conversation. All this was connected with new living arrangements. Especially among young people, communal living arrangements flourished.

In the cultural change of the sixties there was greater informality. For women it was a continuation of the historic feminist movement's insistence on discarding of "feminine," hampering clothes. Many women

7. Why might Radical Women call "bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs and other things" "women's garbage"?

8. Why would a woman say, "To me, having a baby inside me is the only time I'm really alive"?

9. According to Helen Howard, how did the people of Vine City get their government to build a playground for their kids? Why were petitions insufficient? (Is this incident a microcosm of the struggle between the American people and their government over Vietnam? Explain your answer.)

10. Why could women not seek legal action before 1967 if they had been discriminated against because they were women?

11. Why is abortion perceived as a feminist issue and not a medical or civil rights issue? (What is a feminist issue? Is it different from a human rights or civil rights issue?)

12. Match the evidence with the interpretation.

- Women organized to gain some control over their work lives.
Women fought to enter occupations previously denied them.
Women fought to be judged by their work and not by their sex.
Women fought to gain credibility for their own culture.
- a. A woman fought to be a jockey.
 - b. Women tennis players organized.
 - c. Women journalists picketed the Gridiron Club in Washington.
 - d. Dorothy Bolden organized women into the National Domestic Workers Union.
 - e. Women's history became a legitimate academic field of study.
 - f. Women successfully protested for the elimination of certain television commercials humiliating to women.
 - g. Feminists established the NOW Legal and Education Defense Fund.
 - h. The National Welfare Rights Organization was founded.

13. "Women are controlled by lashing us to our bodies." What might Adrienne Rich have meant by this?

14. ~~"We have a little traffic accident." What did Johnson mean by this?~~

15. "In the problem of women was the germ of a solution." Could this be applied to other groups as well?

16. How does "breaking his spirit" reform a criminal?

17. ~~In the early 1960s, prisoners on a work gang in Georgia smashing rocks used the same leaded hammers to break their legs, to call attention to their situation of daily brutality." What might the state of "brutality" have been?~~

18. ~~Why did prisoners go on strike, fast, and riot?~~

19. ~~"I feel that you were more likely to end up in jail." What evidence does Zinn support this argument?~~

20. ~~There had always been prison riots...the prison rebellions of the late sixties and early seventies had a distinctly different character than the earlier ones." Why?~~

21. ~~How was George Jackson an example of a new kind of political prisoner?~~

22. ~~What was it like to be a prisoner in Attica in 1971?~~

23. ~~What incident provoked the Attica rebellion? How did the label "riot" end?~~

24. ~~How can you account for the racial harmony among prisoners, given the discriminatory manner in which they were treated?~~

25. ~~What did the Supreme Court determine in 1978 regarding prisoners and their ability to communicate with the outside world? What lesson did prisoners draw from this decision?~~

stopped wearing bras. The restrictive "girdle"—almost a uniform of the forties and fifties—became rare. Young men and women dressed more nearly alike, in jeans, in discarded army uniforms. Men stopped wearing neckties, women of all ages wore pants more often—unspoken homage to Amelia Bloomer.

There was a new popular music of protest. Pete Seeger had been singing protest songs since the forties, but now he came into his own, his audiences much larger. Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, singing not only protest songs, but songs reflecting the new abandon, the new culture, became popular idols. A middle-aged woman on the West Coast, Malvina Reynolds, wrote and sang songs that fit her socialist thinking and her libertarian spirit, as well as her critique of the modern commercial culture. Everybody now, she sang, lived in "little boxes" and they "all came out just the same."

Bob Dylan was a phenomenon unto himself: powerful songs of protest, personal songs of freedom and self-expression. In an angry song, "Masters of War," he hopes that one day they will die and he will follow their casket "in the pale afternoon." "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" recounts the terrible stories of the last decades, of starvation and war, and tears, and dead ponies, and poisoned waters, and damp, dirty prisons—"It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall." Dylan sang a bitter antiwar song, "With God on Our Side," and one about the killer of the black activist Medgar Evers, "Only a Pawn in Their Game." He offered a challenge to the old, hope to the new, for "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

The Catholic upsurge against the war was part of a general revolt in side the Catholic Church, which had for so long been a bulwark of conservatism, tied to racism, jingoism, war. Priests and nuns resigned from the church, opened their lives to sex, got married and had children—sometimes without bothering to leave the church officially. True, there was still enormous popularity for the old-time religious revivalists, and Billy Graham commanded the obedience of millions, but now there were small swift currents against the mainstream.

With the loss of faith in big powers—business, government, religion—there arose a stronger belief in self, whether individual or collective. The experts in all fields were now looked at skeptically: the belief grew that people could figure out for themselves what to eat, how to live their lives, how to be healthy. There was suspicion of the medical industry and campaigns against chemical preservatives, valueless foods, advertising. By now the scientific evidence of the evils of smoking—cancer, heart

disease—was so powerful that the government barred advertising of cigarettes on television and in newspapers.

Traditional education began to be reexamined. The schools had taught whole generations the values of patriotism, of obeying authority, and had perpetuated ignorance, even contempt for people of other nations, races, Native Americans, women. Not just the content of education was challenged, but the style—the formality, the bureaucracy, the insistence on subordination to authority. This made only a small dent in the formidable national system of orthodox education, but it was reflected in a new generation of teachers all over the country, and a new literature to sustain them.

Never in American history had more movements for change been concentrated in so short a span of years. But the system in the course of two centuries had learned a good deal about the control of people. In the mid-seventies, it went to work.

Exercises

1. "By 1960, 36 percent of all women sixteen and older—23 million women—worked for paid wages. But there were nursery schools for the children of only 2 percent of working mothers." What is the point of pairing these two statistics together?
2. How did World War II cause the modern feminist movement?
3. Why did women in the civil rights, student, and antiwar movements become feminists? (Are there any parallels to the radicalization of feminists in the 1840s?)
4. "The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own." Why would a working-class woman not be inspired to become a feminist by such a statement?
5. By 1969, "One out of every three working women had a husband earning less than \$5,000 a year." What is the significance of this fact?
6. What was the double bind that working women were in?