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## Unit 18: Civil Rights and Social Movements in the Americas

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This Unit focuses on the origins, nature, challenges and achievements of civil rights movements after 1945.

### Lesson 18: 1 The U.S. civil rights movement

#### Objective:

- Understand the U.S. civil rights movement.

#### Topics:

- Background to the movement.
- The nonviolent movement.
- The movement becomes militant.
- The results of the movement.

#### *Background to the Movement*

To understand the U.S. civil rights movement two things must be kept in mind. First, the United States' population has always had strong racist elements in it. Second, Americans generally believe in the creed of equality. These two contradictory factors constantly played upon each other during the black drive for social, economic, and political equality and they account for many of the ambiguities in the white response. As bigoted as some Americans can be, most Americans tend to respond to pleas to alleviate social injustices. Racism, homophobia, sexism, ethnic prejudices, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism have significantly declined in American society since the 1960s. Presently, Indians, Asians, African-Americans, and Hispanics have full political rights. The discrimination that still exists is societal (*de facto*), not legal (*de jure*).

The United States is not unique in its racism or more racist than other countries, but when the African-American movement for equality came about in the late 1950s, ingrained racism would deeply affect not only the enemies of black equality, but also its friends. The Kennedy and Johnson presidential administrations had to serve constituents that were diametrically opposed to each other. Since World War I Southern blacks had been moving north. They tended to settle in urban industrial areas like New York City, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles that were located in key Electoral College swing states. Thus, their votes counted heavily in national elections. For example, the black urban vote effectively counterbalanced the white Southern vote that Truman lost to the Dixiecrats in the 1948 election. As long as the civil rights movement was confined to the South it had, in general, Northern white support. But, as Northern blacks began to also demand equality through affirmative action and school integration, many Northern whites began to oppose the movement. The

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Republican Party took advantage of this white dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction is a significant reason why it was able to control the presidency, with the exception of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton; from 1968 to 2003. (Carter and Clinton are the exceptions that prove the rule. Even though they are Southerners, more Southern whites voted against them than for them. But, enough Southern whites did vote for them to allow them to carry some Southern states with a combined black-white vote.)

After Reconstruction legal segregation had been instituted in the South. The Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) upheld the constitutionality of “separate but equal” facilities for blacks and whites. Yet, Southern black facilities were not equal. Blacks had separate schools, water fountains, hospital and bus waiting rooms, and bathrooms (often gasoline stations did not have bathrooms for blacks, if they did, they were usually unisex). They were not allowed to swim in public swimming pools, attend the local movie theater (or if they did they were segregated to the balcony), or use the public library. Restaurants and motels were for whites only. While segregation was total in the South, it was not confined to it. Las Vegas, Nevada, for example, refused to allow blacks to stay in its hotels or gamble in its casinos. Legality was the difference between Southern and Northern segregation. If a black person tried to use a Southern public facility he had broken the law, not just a custom. In the North segregation was preserved through segregated housing and social pressure.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded by, among others, W.E.B. Du Bois, had been working for black rights since the early 1900s. By the 1950s the NAACP believed the time was ripe for an all-out attack on segregation. Many blacks had gone into World War II with the idea of a “double V for victory”—victory over the Axis and victory over segregation. The successful integration of the armed forces during the Korean War proved that blacks and whites could work together. The Cold War made segregation an embarrassment to the national government in its fight against communism. This embarrassment was especially true in the fight for the “hearts and minds” of the newly independent peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa. The movement of blacks from the South, where they were disfranchised, to the North, where they could vote, gave them increased political power.

The NAACP challenged school segregation in the courts, and in May 1954 The Supreme Court, under the leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren, in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* voted unanimously to reverse the *Plessy* decision, stating “that in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.” The Court was correct in its statement that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” The state of Mississippi was a prime example. Although blacks comprised over 50 percent of the school age population, in the 1960-61 school year the state spent \$46 million on white education versus \$26 million for black education. Nine counties in Mississippi did not even have a black high school. As late as 1950, Mississippi employed over 700 black teachers who had not completed high school. Ten years after the *Brown* decision, a black teacher in Mississippi with a bachelor's degree made \$350 a year less than a white teacher with identical

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credentials. Mississippi, like most Southern states, required a literacy test to register to vote. And, as the U.S. Civil Rights Commission reported in 1965: "The quality of education afforded Negroes has been so poor that any test of educational skill as a prerequisite to voting would necessarily discriminate against them." In 1964, only six percent of Mississippi's eligible blacks were registered to vote.

The Court ordered school districts to integrate with "all deliberate speed" and the first test of the order came in 1957 in Little Rock, Arkansas. When nine black students attempted to attend the local white high school, Governor Orville Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to prevent their enrollment. Although President Eisenhower had done nothing to enforce the *Brown* decision up to this point, he would not allow a direct challenge to federal authority. After negotiations with Faubus failed, Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and sent in troops from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division to escort the students to school. Gradually the Border States moved toward compliance, but the Deep South states refused to obey the court order. Since the South's "massive resistance" to desegregation meant that Southern school districts had to be forced to desegregate through court orders one district at a time, in 1964, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina still had less than one percent of their school age blacks in school with whites. It took a 1968 Supreme Court decision before the Court finally declared that "all deliberate speed" meant "at once."

### *The nonviolent movement*

In September 1955 fourteen year old Emmett Till, an African-American from Chicago, was visiting relatives in northwest Mississippi. After picking cotton all day, Till and several other black youths went to purchase some soda and candy at a store that primarily catered to local black sharecroppers. What actually happened in the store is still in dispute, but Till was probably dared by the other boys to flirt with the 21 year old white Mrs. Bryant who, along with her husband, owned and ran the store. Some accounts say Till "wolf whistled" at Bryant; others say he grabbed her hand and asked her for a date; still others claim all he did was say "Bye, baby" as he left the store. In any case, Till had violated a basic taboo of the South—while it was acceptable to white men to (discreetly or covertly) have sex with black women, it was absolutely not acceptable for black men (no matter what their age) to indicate any desire for a white woman. Three nights later Mrs. Bryant's husband and his half-brother went to the house where Till was staying, abducted him, severely beat him and then shot him in the head. A 75-pound cotton gin fan was tied to Till's neck with barbed wire to weigh down his body, which they then dropped into a nearby river.

Till's body was found three days later. After taking the body back to Chicago for burial, Till's mother insisted upon an open casket so that "the world would see what they did to my baby." The image of Till's mutilated body circulated widely and had a profound impact on a generation of black leaders. Despite overwhelming evidence of guilt (including eye witness testimony) it took an all white jury only sixty-seven minutes to find the Bryant and his brother not guilty of kidnapping Till. After their trial, safe from further prosecution because of

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the double jeopardy provision of the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, the two murderers were paid \$4,000 by *Look* magazine to tell their story and they confessed to the crime.

Using the *Brown* decision as a catalyst, blacks began to work actively for the right to vote in the South and the right to use public facilities. In December 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man and move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama city bus. After the police arrested Parks for her actions, under the leadership of the twenty-six-year-old Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks boycotted the Montgomery segregated public bus system. King ensured that the national media came to Montgomery to cover the story and the presence of so many reporters made it difficult for whites to intimidate the boycotters. In November 1956 the Supreme Court upheld lower federal court rulings that Alabama racial segregation laws for buses were unconstitutional.

When the boycott succeeded King went on to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and lead other attacks on segregation and, until his April 1968 assassination, he was the movement's most influential spokesman. (King's philosophy and tactics are fully explained in **Motivation 18:1 "Letter from Birmingham City Jail"**.) After the election of John Kennedy to the presidency the movement picked up momentum, and as black discontent grew (Kennedy's rhetoric for black rights far outpaced his actions), there was a comparable increase in Southern resistance. The Civil Rights Commission reported in 1963 that "[black] Citizens of the United States have been shot, set upon by vicious dogs, beaten and otherwise terrorized because they sought to vote." Less dramatic than violence, but even more effective, was economic intimidation against blacks who worked for civil rights. Since the vast majority of jobs in the South were controlled by whites it was easy for Southern racists to ensure that blacks who attempted to register to vote or who were active in the desegregation movement lost their jobs.

Kennedy needed the support of Southern congressmen to pass his legislative agenda. Federalism, and the belief of the Kennedy Administration that the courts, not the streets, were the place to solve the nation's racial injustices, meant that blacks became more and more frustrated over the pace of civil rights. Beginning in the early 1960s black students in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began sit-ins at Southern lunch counters trying to force integration in public accommodations. In 1961 the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), under the leadership of James Farmer, used Freedom Riders in attempts to end segregation in facilities serving interstate bus passengers. A white mob destroyed a Freedom Ride bus in Alabama and beat-up Attorney General Robert Kennedy's personal representative at the scene. When Southern officials refused to end the violence, the Kennedy Administration dispatched federal marshals to protect the Freedom Riders, and in September 1961 the Interstate Commerce Commission began enforcing the ban against segregation in interstate bus and railroad terminals.

Reluctantly, the Kennedy Administration had formed an alliance with the civil rights movement. Fearing that Southern white claims that some of Martin Luther King's advisers had

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communist affiliations might be true, Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to wiretap King's telephone in 1963. At the University of Mississippi ("Ole Miss") President Kennedy sent in 400 federal marshals and 3,000 troops to enable the school's first black student, James Meredith, to enroll over white protests. In August 1963 a quarter of a million blacks and whites marched on Washington, DC demanding black equality. At a rally at the Lincoln Memorial they were electrified by Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Yet, the violence continued. In June 1963, Medgar Evers, the president of the Mississippi NAACP, was assassinated. In September 1963 an explosion in a church in Birmingham, Alabama killed four black girls. During the summer of 1964 white Northern students joined with blacks to work for voting rights in Mississippi during the "Freedom Summer Project." One black and two white civil rights workers were murdered during the summer and local all-white juries refused to convict the whites accused of the crime (the federal government was able to later get convictions for civil rights violations). Early in 1965, a voter registration project in Selma, Alabama resulted in several deaths and the beating and tear gassing of civil rights workers. The publicity of these events, especially on television, enabled President Lyndon Johnson to get Congress to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act that forbade discrimination in public accommodations and the 1965 Voting Rights Act which ensured African-Americans the right to vote. In 1964 the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution made the poll tax illegal.

### *The movement becomes militant*

A major goal of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project was to organize a "Freedom Democratic Party" (FDP) that could challenge the regular Mississippi Democrat Party at the National Convention to be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey in August. On August 22, the FDP told its story before the Democrat Credentials Committee in its attempt to be seated as the Democrat Party's representatives for Mississippi. The meeting was nationally televised. It was an emotional scene in which several Mississippi blacks, most notably Fannie Lou Hamer, testified about the intimidation and coercion that existed in the state when blacks attempted to register to vote. Fearing a party split along North-South lines, President Johnson decided not to seat the FDP. In return, the regular Mississippi delegation would have to take a party loyalty oath and pledge to not discriminate against African-Americans in the future. Only three of the regular Mississippi delegates signed the loyalty oath; the rest walked out. Many young black civil rights workers saw the refusal to seat the FDP at the Convention as one more example of the white power structure's lack of commitment to the black struggle for equality in America. If a particular incident could be pinpointed that was the genesis for the "Black Power" movement the 1964 Democrat Convention was likely it. At Atlantic City black radicals lost faith in the American system.

Even though legal discrimination had ended in the United States after the passage of the 1964 and 1965 civil rights acts, economic and social discrimination continued and led to divisiveness within the civil rights movement. Five days after President Johnson signed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, blacks, enraged over police brutality caught on television, rioted in Watts, a black neighborhood of Los Angeles. Thirty-one blacks and three whites were killed,

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more than 1,000 people injured, and hundreds of buildings burned and destroyed. The Watts riots introduced a new phase of the civil rights movement—increasingly marked by belligerent confrontation, focusing on Northern cities, led by radical spokespersons, and often aimed not at interracial cooperation but at black separatism. Many young blacks, frustrated by what they believed was a lack of true equality, turned away from nonviolence and integration and toward militancy and “Black Power.” With legal equality assured with the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts the movement began to attack the *de facto* discrimination of the urban North.

Malcolm X was the brilliant and charismatic leader of the Black Muslims and an important spokesperson for this new group of activists. Born Malcolm Little, Malcolm converted to Islam and changed his surname to publicize his lost African identity in white America. Malcolm X advocated black separatism and spoke against the “blue-eyed white devils.” (During the 1990s, Islam was among America’s fastest-growing religions and had about two million African-American converts.) His emphasis on self-sufficiency and armed defense greatly influenced other blacks who were dissatisfied with the non-violent approach of Martin Luther King, Jr. In early 1965 Malcolm X was assassinated by rival Nation of Islam gunmen. The very phrase “Black Power” (coined by Stokely Carmichael, one of the founders of SNCC), disturbed many white supporters of integration and civil rights. The term itself divided the African-American community. Some advocates of Black Power insisted that the term meant just what it said, that blacks should have social, political, and economic power, especially in their own neighborhoods. Other African-Americans, recollecting previous Black Nationalist movements like that of Marcus Garvey in Harlem during the 1920s, emphasized the separate nature of African-American society. They promoted “Afro” hairstyles and dress, discarded their names for new African ones, and demanded black studies programs in colleges and universities.

In October 1966 Huey Newton and Bobby Seale created the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California after an unarmed young black man was shot by a San Francisco police officer. The Panthers advocated that blacks should use weapons to defend themselves from police brutality and its leaders espoused a militant Marxist philosophy. They demanded immediate equality, including increased and fair employment opportunities, exemption from fighting in the Vietnam War, and equal health care and educational opportunities for all blacks. In May 1967 Newton, Seale and thirty armed supporters marched on the California state capitol to protest a bill that would have made it illegal to carry concealed weapons.

Both Panthers and police died in violent confrontations. By 1970, 34 Panthers had died as a result of police raids, shoot-outs and internal conflict, and the Panthers had killed eleven police officers and wounded others. The Party eventually fell apart in the early 1970s because of its rising legal costs (In 1969 alone, 348 Panthers were arrested for a variety of crimes), internal disputes, and the growing belief in the black and white communities that violence was a counter-productive technique in attempting to gain civil rights and protesting police brutality.

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Black frustration and violence reached a peak in 1967-68. Riots in Newark, Detroit, and Los Angeles killed over 68 people and destroyed millions of dollars of property, almost all of it in black neighborhoods. The assassination of Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968 led to even more riots, burning, and looting that cost over forty lives. The increased militancy of the movement created a white backlash that the Republican Party took advantage of (frustration with court ordered school integration in the North ["forced busing"] was a major cause of the backlash). In November 1968 Richard Nixon, the Republican presidential candidate, used the concern of many Americans with anti-Vietnam War protestors and African-American violence, to represent the "Moral Majority," and win an extremely close election over Vice President Hubert Humphrey. With Nixon's victory the civil rights movement lost its momentum and fizzled out.

### *The results of the movement*

The introduction of chemical weed killers in the early 1950s permitted the economical use of tractors and mechanical cotton pickers on Southern plantations. Southern black hand labor was no longer needed and millions of uneducated, unskilled blacks were thrown off the plantations and many of them moved north. At the same time that blacks were moving north, whites were moving out of the cities into the suburbs and blacks and other minorities replaced them as the occupants of the inner cities. In the 1950s segregation still existed in the North and the black ghetto was vertically integrated. Blacks of all classes and level of education and achievement lived there—doctors, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, persons of strong religious feeling, as well as lower-income groups. Ironically, black gains in integrating housing killed this situation. Few in the black middle class still live in the inner city and many in the stable working class are moving out as rapidly as possible. This situation means that there were few positive role models in the black ghetto for young African-Americans to emulate. Although the majority of blacks are doing markedly better economically than they were before the civil rights movement, one-third are still below the poverty line. For a core group of two million to 3.5 million chronically poor and alienated inner city and Southern rural blacks, no improvement seems to be in sight. This group at the bottom—an underclass—has not been reached by existing social programs. Its plight can be captured by statistics: 1) In 1950, sixteen percent of children born to blacks and other minorities had unwed mothers; by 2000, 68.5 percent of all black infants were born to unwed mothers, compared with 22 percent of whites and 43 percent of Hispanics. 2) In December 2007, blacks had an unemployment rate of 9 percent, compared with 4.4 percent for whites, and 6.3 percent for Hispanics. 3) The majority of all persons sent to prison are black; most of the victims of their crimes are black. More black males are in prison (mostly for illegal drug activity) than are attending college. 4) The black infant mortality rate is almost twice that of whites (19.2 deaths per 1,000 live births versus 9.7 deaths per 1,000 live births). 5) Black median family income in 2000 was \$29,470 as compared to the white median family income of \$46,305. Hispanic median family income was \$33,565. On the other hand, one should not paint too bleak of a picture. The civil rights movement did end legal discrimination in the U.S., and the election of Barack Obama as President in 2008 illustrates the many positive changes in race relations that have taken place in the U.S. since World War II.

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### 18:1 Motivation: Homework—Letter from Birmingham City Jail

In this homework assignment students read and analyze Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*. This letter is the clearest and most heartfelt explanation of King's philosophy of civil disobedience. You may want to have your students discuss the letter and their response to it after they have turned their homework assignment into you. A good way to begin the discussion is to ask the students about their opinions on civil disobedience. When do they think it is appropriate and when is it, if ever, not appropriate? Students may have a tendency to confuse the reactions by the authorities to civil disobedience and the actions of protestors who do not believe in *civil* disobedience, and you may want to spend some time clarifying exactly what actions would fall under Reverend King's definition of civil disobedience. The overarching theme here is the nature of dissent in a democratic society and you could go down that road as far as you feel comfortable.

### Lesson 18:2 Feminist Movements in the Americas

#### Objectives:

- Understand the post World War II feminist movement in the U.S.
- Understand the post World War II feminist movement in Latin America.

#### Topics:

- The post World War II feminist movement in the U.S.
- The post World War II feminist movement in Latin America.

#### *The post World War II feminist movement in the U.S.*

American women increased their demands for equality in the 1960s. Inspired by the black civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, and economic factors that caused the number of working wives to increase from 30 to 40 percent during the decade, women began to agitate for equal pay for equal work, and the removal of the "glass ceiling" that existed in most business firms. Betty Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* articulated the frustration that many women felt, and helped lead to the 1966 formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW). As women increased their economic security, the fight over access to birth control and abortion became major feminist issues. The poorest group in the Americas is still single women with children.

The U.S. feminist movement began with two major factions. One group, led primarily by older professional women, and best exemplified by NOW, attempted to achieve its goals by working within the political system. NOW advocated an equal rights amendment to the Constitution, equal employment—both in job opportunities and pay, maternity leave, having government subsidize child care, and abortion rights. Younger women often rejected NOW's moderate approach and used the tactics of the civil rights movement—mass protest, direct action, and political theater—in their attempts to achieve women's equality.



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In 1972 Title IX of the Higher Education Act became law. Title IX bans discrimination “on the basis of sex” in “any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” In 1972 Congress also passed and sent to the states a constitutional amendment that stated that “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” Congress set a seven-year deadline for ratification by the required three-quarters of the state legislatures (38 states). While initially popular, opposition to the proposed amendment grew. Opponents claimed that women would have to register for the draft and serve in combat. They argued that abortions would have to be treated as any other medical condition (requiring, for example, the government or insurance companies to pay for them), and that same sex marriages might be legalized. Critics also maintained that the ERA would prohibit single-sex schools, sport teams or even restrooms. Businesses were worried that if a woman made less than a man doing the same job they would be open to legal action. These fears led to a strongly organized opposition and only 35 states ratified the proposed amendment within the seven year period. Five of these states later rescinded their ratifications. In 1974 the Equal Credit Opportunity Act made it unlawful for any creditor to discriminate against any applicant, with respect to any aspect of a credit transaction, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, or age. Prior to this act married women were often denied credit cards in their own names.

In January 1973 in *Roe v. Wade* the Supreme Court ruled that a woman had a constitutional right to an abortion. According to the Court the Fourteenth Amendment, which prohibited states from denying “liberty” to anyone without “due process,” established a “right of privacy” that was “broad enough to encompass a woman’s decision whether or not to terminate the pregnancy.” The Court stated that during the first trimester of a pregnancy there should be no restrictions on the right to abort. During the second trimester, up until the point of fetal viability, the states could establish limits on the right to an abortion. In the final trimester the states could prohibit an abortion except where necessary to preserve the mother’s life or health.

The feminist movement caused significant changes in education and the workplace. After 1990 more women than men graduated from college. By the 1980s, 25 percent of new graduates of law, medical and business schools were women, up from only 5 percent in the late 1960s. Yet, women were still at a disadvantage when it came to pay—the 1995 annual median earnings of women working year round, full time were \$22,497, while the median earnings for corresponding men were \$31,496.

### *The post World War II feminist movement in Latin America*

The legal status of women has improved significantly since World War II in Latin America. Women received the vote in every country (in 1961 Paraguay was the last country in the hemisphere to grant women suffrage). Women serve as political leaders. For example, in

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Argentina, the roles of Eva and Isabel Perón have been previously mentioned, and in December 2007 Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was elected president. During the 1990s many Latin American countries adopted laws that required a political party have a certain percentage of women candidates. In Peru and Argentina, for example, thirty percent of a party's candidates must be women. In Argentina, after the quota law entered into force, the proportion of women in the lower house of parliament rose from 5.4 percent in 1991 to 35.4 percent in 2005, and in the Senate from four percent to 43 percent over the same period.

In education, the gap between men and women has been reduced in all the Latin American countries, and in some countries like Brazil, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Argentina, Nicaragua and Colombia the level of education achieved by women is superior to that achieved by men, because girls enrolled more than boys in school and boys drop out more to help to support their families. However, during economic crises, parents take girls out of school first.

Yet, the growth of women's legal, education, and political equality has not brought about a significant improvement in social and economic conditions. The concept of *machismo* is still strong in Latin America. Class and racial differences make it difficult to form multi-class feminist alliances. About one-third of Latin American women are in the labor force and this number has been increasing. Despite the trend toward increasing female participation, a large proportion of women of child-bearing age continue to withdraw from the labor force, presumably to care for their young children and, unlike many women in the United States, do not re-enter employment once their children are in school. In the late twentieth century in all Latin American countries except Costa Rica, men, on average, earned more than women, even when women had the same education and work experience. The size of the male pay advantage differed significantly across countries; in Mexico and Colombia, the advantage was small (around 16 percent), but in Argentina, Bolivia, and Ecuador, it was more than 40 percent.

Traditional cultural patterns and the influence of the Catholic Church make abortion illegal in every country in Latin America except Cuba. A few other countries (Argentina for example) permit it for extreme circumstances, mostly when the mother's life is at risk, the fetus will not live or the pregnancy is the result of rape. Even when pregnancies do qualify for legal abortions, women are often denied them because anti-abortion local medical officials and priests intervene, the requirements are unreasonably stringent, or women do not want to incur the public shame of reporting rape. The Latin American abortion rate is far higher than the United States with an estimated four million abortions every year across the region. Colombia—where abortion is illegal even if a woman's life is in danger—averages more than one abortion per woman over all of her fertile years. In Peru, the average is nearly two abortions per woman over the course of her reproductive years. Up to 5,000 women die each year from abortions in Latin America, and hundreds of thousands more are hospitalized.

During the 1970s women played important roles in fighting the military dictatorships of Nicaragua, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. Because trade unions and opposition political

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parties were banned and thousands of male activists were arrested or murdered by the government women often filled the gap. In 1977 fourteen women marched into the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, in spite of a government ban on public gatherings, to demand an accounting from the government concerning their missing children. Because the demonstrators were “only” women the military junta at first did not take “*Las Madres*” seriously and the group was not suppressed. Once the junta realized its mistake, the movement had grown large enough that repression could not destroy it, although thirteen members of the group, including the group’s president, were sent to the government’s death camps. As previously mentioned in Unit 15 the *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo* played an important role in forcing Argentina’s military junta from power.

### Lesson 18:3 Native Americans and Civil Rights

#### Objectives:

- Understand the movement for civil rights by Native Americans in the U.S.
- Understand the movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Canada.
- Understand the movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Latin America.

#### Topics:

- The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in the U.S.
- The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Canada.
- The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Latin America.

*The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in the U.S.*

The black civil rights movement stimulated other minority groups to seek equal civic rights and economic justice. Native Americans, long the poorest minority in the U.S., formed the American Indian Movement (AIM) in 1968 and began to move more aggressively in the courts to protect rights and money—especially for the extraction of raw materials on Indian land—that had been promised to them in treaties with the national government. AIM publicized the high unemployment and the poor housing and health care that existed on most Indian reservations. They spoke out against the racist and stereotypical views that many Americans held toward Indians.

According to the 2000 census Indians made up only 1.5 percent of the U.S. population. Because of their small number, and because Indians were scattered across the U.S., politicians tended to discount legitimate Indian grievances. The founding members of AIM believed that only working within the political system was not an effective tactic and that direct action was a better way to achieve Indian interests. In an attempt to draw media attention to Indian grievances, Indians seized a replica of the Mayflower on Thanksgiving Day 1970. In November 1971 AIM organized the Trail of Broken Treaties march on Washington, D.C. About 1,000 Indians took part in the

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march. The march ended with Indians occupying the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) headquarters for a week. The protesters took large amount of files from the BIA offices and caused over \$2 million in damages. To end the occupation peacefully, the government gave the protesters \$66,000 in transportation money, and agreed to appoint a Native American to a BIA post.

On February 28, 1973 about 200 AIM activists under the leadership of Russell Means seized the trading post, post office, and Catholic church at Wounded Knee, on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation. Wounded Knee had great symbolic value in the plan to publicize Indian grievances since it was the location of the last armed conflict between Indians and whites in the nineteenth century. Dick Wilson, the local Oglala Lakota tribal chief, opposed the occupation since he considered AIM a radical organization that would not help his tribe in the long run. In return, AIM members accused Wilson of corruption and mismanagement. As with the black civil rights and the women's movements, the Indian rights movement was not monolithic and divisions often appeared within the Indian population on the movement's goals and tactics. When FBI agents attempted to remove the AIM occupiers, a standoff ensued that lasted 71 days. During the siege two people were killed and twelve wounded. The face-off ended when the government agreed to treat the activists fairly and that the federal government would conduct a fair review of several Indian treaties. The Indian activists were brought to trail, but the charges against them were ultimately dropped when illegal actions by the FBI were revealed to the court.

Indians protested the use of Indian caricatures and demeaning names as mascots for sports teams, such as the Atlanta Braves, the Chicago Blackhawks, the Cleveland Indians, and the Washington Redskins. Many Indian activists opposed the celebration of Columbus Day and Thanksgiving because they believe that these holidays commemorate the destruction of Indian culture.

In response to Indian demands Congress passed the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975 and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act in 1976. These two laws strengthened tribal sovereignty. As a result, all tribes now provide at least one or more of their own health programs and some operate their entire health delivery system. Scholarships were provided to Indians who wish to pursue a career in health. American Indians have long experienced lower health status when compared with other Americans. Lower life expectancy and the disproportionate disease burden exist perhaps because of inadequate education, disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, and cultural differences. These are broad quality of life issues rooted in economic adversity and poor social conditions. American Indian infants die at a rate of 8.5 per every 1,000 live births, as compared to 6.8 per 1,000 for the U.S. all races population (2000-2002 rates). American Indians die at higher rates than other Americans from tuberculosis (600% higher), alcoholism (510% higher), motor vehicle crashes (229% higher), diabetes (189%

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higher), unintentional injuries (152% higher), homicide (61% higher) and suicide (62% higher). Safe and adequate water supply and waste disposal facilities are lacking in approximately 12 percent of American Indian homes, compared to 1 percent of the homes for the U.S. general population. Thus, while the plight of U.S. Indians was dramatically publicized by AIM and other Indian activists, there was little change in the overall economic well being or status of the average Native American in the U.S.

### *The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Canada*

While the terms Indian or Native American are acceptable for use in the U.S., Canadians tend to use these terms to refer to the indigenous people of the U.S. and not to the indigenous people of Canada. In Canada the original inhabitants who are not Métis or Inuit are most often referred to as the First Peoples or the First Nations. According to the 2006 census, aboriginals comprise 3.8 percent of the Canadian population. Following World War II provinces began to grant indigenous people the right to vote, but it was not until 1960 that the national government guaranteed all First Peoples the right to vote in federal elections.

Although the aboriginal people of Canada had many of the same grievances that bothered U.S. Indians—discrimination, poor health care and schools, lack of economic opportunity—a unified indigenous movement like the American Indian Movement did not develop in Canada. Several local conflicts between native peoples and the government did occur, the first significant one being the Oka Crisis. The crisis developed as a dispute between the town of Oka, Québec and the Mohawk community of Kanesatke. The Mohawk nation had been pursuing a land claim that included a burial ground and a sacred grove of pine trees near Kanesatake. This claim brought them into conflict with the town of Oka, which was developing plans to expand a private golf course and build condominiums on the land. The Mohawks had previously filed a claim for the land with the Canadian Office of Native Claims but the claim had been rejected in 1986. When Oka began to go ahead with its plans to develop the land the Mohawks erected a barrier blocking access to the disputed land. On July 11, 1990 the mayor of Oka asked the Québec Provincial Police (The *Sûreté du Québec* or SQ) to intervene. When the police attacked the barricade with tear gas and flash-bang grenades firing broke out (who fired first is not known) and a SQ officer was shot and killed.

The Kanesatake Mohawks were joined by Indians from across Canada and the U.S. and Québec authorities established a blockade around Oka and Kanesatake. In sympathy to the Mohawks under siege at Oka, other Mohawks blocked the Mercier Bridge and three other major highways leading to massive traffic jams. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were brought in to help, but the situation remained out of control. Ten constables were injured and in early August the federal government invoked the Emergencies Act and 2,500 Canadian Army troops arrived in the area. On August 29 the Mohawks blocking the Mercier Bridge agreed to end their

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blockade and once traffic was flowing again on the Mercier Bridge, the Québec government rejected all further negotiations. On September 26 the Mohawks abandoned their guns and their positions around Oka and attempted to infiltrate back to Kanesatake. Many of them were detained and arrested. The golf course expansion, which had originally triggered the situation, was cancelled. The Oka Crisis help precipitate the development of Canada's First Nations Policing Policy in 1992. This policy created an aboriginal police force that is responsible for public order on the First Nations reserves located throughout Canada.

The Oka Crisis helped lead to the formation of the 1991 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Commission published a final report of 4,000 pages with many recommendations, most of which were not adopted by the Canadian government. One highlight of the report was the publicizing of the 1953-1955 forcible relocation of many Inuit to the High Arctic to help assert Canada's sovereignty over the region. The Inuit were taken from northern Québec to barren areas on Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands (Grise Fiord, population 145, on Ellesmere Island is currently the northernmost community in Canada). The Inuit were promised homes and game to hunt but the relocated people discovered no buildings and very little wildlife. Eventually, the Inuit learned the local beluga whale migration routes and were able to survive in the area. After the release of the Relocation Report by the Commission the Canadian government paid \$10 million to the survivors of relocation and their families, but as of 2007 has yet to apologize.

First Nations peoples face a number of problems to greater degrees than Canadians overall. They have higher unemployment, rates of crime and incarceration, alcohol and drug abuse, health problems, and lower levels of education. Suicide rates are more than twice the gender-specific rate and three times the age-specific rates of non-Aboriginal Canadians. In 2001, First Nations life expectancy was estimated to be 8.1 years shorter for males and 5.5 years shorter for females than for non-Aboriginal Canadians.

### *The post World War II movement for civil rights by Native Americans in Latin America*

An estimated 33 to 40 million indigenous people live in Latin America and the Caribbean. The approximately 400 different indigenous groups in the region have different languages, social organizations, economies and modes of production adapted to the ecosystem in which they live.

There are indigenous people in every country in Latin America, with the exception of Uruguay. About 90 per cent of indigenous people are sedentary subsistence farmers, descendants of the pre-Columbian Inca, Maya and Aztec peoples. They are generally located in the least hospitable areas. About 90 per cent of them live in the arid mountainous regions of the Andes and Central America, while about 10 per cent live in dry forests or the remote tropical rainforests of the Amazon and Orinoco basins

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and Central America. Five countries (Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia and Ecuador) account for almost 90 per cent of the indigenous people in the region. Peru and Mexico have the largest indigenous populations.

Indigenous people often are excluded from development programs, and they are more vulnerable to poverty than non-indigenous people. In Mexico, in municipalities with a large indigenous population, poverty is almost four times greater and extreme poverty is twenty times greater than in mainly non-indigenous municipalities. Gender issues further aggravate poverty among indigenous people. In Guatemala a non-indigenous man can earn fourteen times more than an indigenous woman.

The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) was formed in November 1986. CONAIE believes in direct action to increase indigenous rights. It wants to convert Ecuador into a multi-nation state with twelve autonomous indigenous "nations," that would be controlled by "popular parliaments." In 1992, during the 500 year anniversary of Columbus' arrival to the Americas, CONAIE organized a march of indigenous people to the Ecuadorian capitol of Quito to protest government policies and to force the government to negotiate Indian rights and grievances. After talks, the government granted about 10,000 square miles (16,000 square kilometers) of land to indigenous organizations. In 1994 a CONAIE march on Quito forced the Ecuadorian government to cancel plans to sell communally held land to individuals.

CONAIE helped bring about a new Ecuadorian constitution in 1998. The constitution defined Ecuador as a multiethnic and multicultural nation and many new rights were granted to indigenous groups including "the right to maintain, develop, and fortify their spiritual, cultural, linguistic, social, political and economic identity and traditions." The new constitution gave indigenous communities the right to give prior consent before development can take place on their lands. Unfortunately for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, violations of the constitution are commonplace. For example, the Arco Oil Company was sold communal land in the Amazon without the tribes involved being consulted. The struggle for indigenous rights in Ecuador continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, EZLN) was formed in November 1983 in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Chiapas borders Guatemala and is one of the poorest states in Mexico. The socialist program of the Zapatistas focuses on the indigenous people of Mexico controlling their own resources, particularly the land on which they live and farm. The EZLN program demands autonomy from Mexico for Chiapas so that the resources of the state can benefit the indigenous people of the region.

On January 1, 1994, the day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, EZLN members opposed to globalization occupied several

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communities and participated in armed conflict. Twelve days of combat ensued between the Zapatistas and the Mexican Army until a cease-fire was finally signed on January 13, 1994. Since then, the EZLN has periodically clashed with the Mexican government, including a massacre of 45 people by government associated paramilitary forces in the town of Acteal in 1997. Nevertheless, the EZLN has managed to maintain a certain level of autonomy from the Mexican government.

### **Lesson 18:4 Youth culture and protest of the 1960s and 1970s**

#### **Objectives:**

- Understand the youth culture of the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s.
- Understand the youth culture of Mexico during the 1960s.

#### **Topics:**

- The youth culture of the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s.
- The youth culture of Mexico during the 1960s.

#### *The youth culture of the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s*

The postwar baby boom greatly increased the number of young people in America. In 1965, 41 percent of all Americans were under the age of 20, and college enrollments increased from 3.6 million in 1960 to 7.9 million in 1970. In the 1950s “Beat” authors began to criticize American materialism and conformity. The writer Jack Kerouac coined the term “Beat” to express his “weariness with all the forms of the modern industrial state.” The Beats advocated sexual freedom and drug use as the road to liberation from what they viewed as an oppressive society.

By the early 1960s, the Beat message had gained popularity among many college students and formed the foundation of the burgeoning counterculture movement. In search of spiritual liberation the counterculture rejected what they viewed as the tenets of traditional America: greed, hard work, sexual repression, and conformity. Drug use was part of the new culture. By 1969 more than 30 percent of all college students in the U.S. had smoked marijuana. Experimentation with LSD and other psychedelic drugs became a major component of 1960s counterculture, influencing philosophy, art, music and styles of dress. The idea of “free love” was enhanced by the 1960 introduction of the birth control pill. With the fear of unwanted pregnancies greatly reduced, premarital sexual activity increased. Coed dormitories on college campuses are one outgrowth of the “free love” movement.

In October 1964 the Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley attempted to enforce university regulations prohibiting political fundraising for any political group except the Democrat and Republican Parties. When the campus police attempted to arrest Jack Weinberg, a former graduate student who was raising money for CORE, a large group of students surrounded the police car that Weinberg was put



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in and refused to let it move. The university later dropped charges against Weinberg, but this incident started the Free Speech Movement. The movement quickly spread to other campuses and focused on many causes, from national issues like the Vietnam War to local issues like college dress codes, curfews for coeds, and tenure decisions. There was a conservative backlash to the Free Speech Movement. In 1966 Ronald Reagan won the governorship of California in large part because he campaigned on a slogan to “clean up the mess in Berkeley.”

The Vietnam War and the civil rights movement strongly influenced the desire of many young people to challenge the established political and cultural order. In March 1965 students at the University of Michigan organized the first anti-Vietnam War teach-in with the goal of encouraging students to oppose the war, and this form of protest spread to other campuses. In January 1966 President Johnson ended automatic draft deferments for college students and protests against the war reached new highs. While television broadcasts helped nourish the popular perception that the vast majority of college students were protesting the war, in actuality only 20 percent of college students participated in antiwar demonstrations between 1965 and 1968.

The hippie movement grew out of the “Beat” scene. The word hippie is derived from hip or hipster, meaning someone who is “with it.” Like other words associated with the counterculture, the word hip probably comes from the drug scene—when smoking opium a person would often lay on his hip. (Also, the concept that something is “cool” is probably derived from the fact that smoking marijuana in a bong cools the smoke.) In the summer of 1967 as many as 100,000 young people journeyed to the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco to celebrate the “summer of love.” Upon their return home the “flower children” helped spread the counterculture values of challenging authority, enjoying “psychedelic music”, advocating communal living, championing “free love,” protesting the Vietnam War, supporting civil rights, and backing illegal drug use. While the hippie movement had an important influence on the popular culture of the late 1960s-early 1970s, less than one percent of Americans were self-described hippies by the end of the 1960s.

During the 1970s rock and roll went from being the anthem of the youth rebellion of the ‘60s to mainstream music. The fashions of the 1960s—like long hair and casual dress—became the norm. Traditional sexual values continued to loosen. In 1973, 74 percent of women saw nothing wrong with premarital sex, a view that was up from 53 percent in 1969.

### *The youth culture in Mexico during the 1960s*

In 1968 student protests broke out all over the world. Television and popular music helped many students believe that they had much in common with students in other countries and that their actions could help overturn perceived injustices. Like

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students in the U.S., Mexican students were influenced by the Vietnam War, drugs, rock and roll music, the civil rights movement, and the sexual revolution. In addition, Mexico City was the host city for the October 1968 Summer Olympics. As the first developing nation to host the Olympics the Mexican government believed that it was especially important to make a good impression to the world. Students from several universities around Mexico City, influenced by the world-wide protests during the spring and summer of 1968, and realizing that the Olympics would give them a world stage, began protesting the lack of political freedoms and demanding more governmental accountability. They also called for the firing of the Mexico City police chief and the release of political prisoners.

In an attempt to stop the student demonstrations the Mexican President, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, ordered the army to occupy the campus of the National Autonomous University, Mexico's largest university. The occupation did not stop the protests and on October 2, only ten days before the Olympics were scheduled to start, and after nine weeks of student demonstrations, 5,000 students from various universities gathered in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco, Mexico City for a rally against the Olympic games (many in the crowd believed that the money spent on the games could be better spent on social services) and for radical political change. As the sun set armored vehicles and police surrounded the plaza and began firing into the crowd. It is unclear how many people were killed, although most historians place the number somewhere between 200 and 300. Some of the victims of the massacre were not involved in the protest; they were simply passing through the plaza.

The massacre ended the Mexican student movement. A native hippie movement known as *jipitecas* developed afterward that helped lead to a new wave of Mexican music that combined Mexican and foreign music with images of political protest. This movement was called *La Onda Chicana* (the Chicano wave or Chicano soul), and it culminated in September 1971 with a three-day "Mexican Woodstock" (*Festival de Avándaro*) which attracted over 200,000 people. One result of the concert was that the government suppressed rock music for the next twenty years.

The Tlatelolco Massacre is often referred to as "Mexico's Tiananmen Square" and is still a powerful subject in Mexican life and politics. It played an important role in increasing Mexican's distrust of their government, and it was a factor in the PRI political party losing control of the government with the 2000 election of Vicente Fox as president of Mexico.