**The Widening Push for Civil Rights Assignment**

**Using the documents below, read about the American Indian Movement and the push for Latin American rights. For each document answer the following:**

1. Who was involved?
2. What did they want?
3. How did they achieve it?

**Native Americans Demand Equality**

In 1968, 10 percent of the population of Minneapolis was American Indian. However, Indians made up 70 percent of the prisoners in the city's jails. Local activists believed that this imbalance reflected police harassment of Indians. To fight for their rights, Indian activists formed the **American Indian Movement (AIM).** For much of 1968, they monitored police radios and responded to calls that involved Indians, often arriving at the scene before the police. As a result, AIM prevented the unfounded arrests of many Indians. According to AIM, the number of Indians in jail in Minneapolis decreased by 60 percent that year.

Most American Indians [in the 1960s] lived in poverty. They suffered greater economic hardship than any other ethnic group in the country. Unemployment was 10 times higher than the national average and was especially high on reservations. The average annual family income was $1,000 less than for African Americans. Life expectancy was also much lower than the national average.

The federal government had tried to help American Indians, but with little success. In 1968, Congress passed the Indian Civil Rights Act. This law was designed to ensure equality for American Indians. It guaranteed Indians protection under the Constitution, while recognizing the authority of tribal laws. It had few concrete effects, though. In practice, American Indians still lacked equal rights and opportunity in American society, and many were losing patience.

Sources: <http://ufw.org/research/history/ufw-history/>

Hart, Diane, and Bert Bower. *History Alive!: Pursuing American Ideals*. Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2013.

*On November 20, 1969, a group of American Indians seized Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The group called themselves Indians of All Tribes and claimed the land by right of discovery. When government officials came to remove them, Richard Oakes, a Mohawk Indian, presented the officials with the Alcatraz Proclamation, which begins, “To the Great White Father and All His People.”*

**Excerpt from the Alcatraz Proclamation**

We, the Native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery . . .

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four (24) dollars in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man’s purchase of a similar island [Manhattan] about 300 years ago . . .

We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable for an Indian reservation, as determined by the white man’s own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations in that:

1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
2. It has no fresh running water.
3. It has inadequate sanitation facilities.
4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great.
6. There are no health care facilities.
7. The soil is rocky and non-productive; and the land does not support game [animals].
8. There are no educational facilities.
9. The population has always exceeded the land base.
10. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.

Further, it would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

**Excerpt from ufw.org on the History of The United Farm Workers**

Grape pickers in 1965 were making an average of $.90/hour, plus ten cents per “lug” (basket) picked. State laws regarding working standards were simply ignored by growers. At one farm the boss made the workers all drink from the same cup “a beer can” in the field; at another ranch workers were forced to pay a quarter per cup. No ranches had portable field toilets. Workers’ temporary housing was strictly segregated by race, and they paid two dollars or more per day for unheated metal shacks-often infested with mosquitoes-with no indoor plumbing or cooking facilities.

Farm labor contractors played favorites with workers, selecting friends first, sometimes accepting bribes. Child labor was rampant, and many workers were injured or died in easily preventable accidents. The average life expectancy of a farmworker was 49 years.

The National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) was started by a young Chicano named Cesar Chavez in 1962. Chavez, the son of a family of extremely poor farmworkers, had risen through the ranks of the grassroots Community Service Organization (CSO) to become its national director. CSO worked with communities to solve problems through organizing and direct action. But when CSO refused to concentrate its efforts on organizing farmworkers, Chavez left to found the NFWA. From his base in Delano, he traveled for three years from town to town in the central valleys of California, meeting with groups of farmworkers in their homes, tirelessly building an organization he hoped would one day become an effective union. His co-founder was Dolores Huerta, one of the CSO’s farmworker activists.

At the end of summer the grapes were ripening in the fields around Delano, a farm town north of Bakersfield. …At a meeting on September 16, packed with hundreds of workers, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Delano, the NFWA voted unanimously, to shouts of “Viva la Huelga!”, to strike…NFWA set up a system of roving pickets, with different fields picketed each day. Fifteen or twenty cars full of pickets would go to a field where a grower was attempting to use strikebreakers. Striking workers, often harassed by the growers and police, sometimes violently, would try to get the scabs to leave the fields. Remarkably, their appeals were successful much of the time in persuading workers to join the strike.

Shortly after the strike erupted, Chavez called upon the public to refrain from buying grapes without a union label. Union volunteers were sent out to big cities, where they established boycott centers that organized friendly groups-unions, churches, community organizations-to not buy grapes, and in turn to join in publicizing the boycott.

The strikers’ cause was boosted by other events in the nation at the same time. The Civil Rights movement had increased public awareness of the effects of racism, including lowered standards of living for the victims of prejudice in housing, employment, schools, voting, and other areas of daily life. The Civil Rights movement focused attention on the treatment of Blacks in the south. But the situation in the fields of California proved similar enough that the largely Chicano and Filipino farmworkers benefited by the new public understanding of racism. As a result, millions of consumers stopped buying table grapes.

NFWA and [other strikers] merged during the summer. On August 22, the two organizations became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee…Finally, in 1970, grape growers agreed to a historic contract [with UFW] that granted most of the workers' demands, including union recognition and higher wages and benefits. In cities around the country UFW support became stronger. UFWOC, as Chavez had envisioned, had become both a union and a civil rights movement, and this was the key to its success. The dual character of the farmworkers organization gave it a depth of moral pressure and sense of mission felt by members and supporters alike. It seemed as if the farmworkers of California had finally created a union that would last.