

Talk, Talk; Fight, Fight

By Tom Hayden

LAST SEPTEMBER A NORTH VIETNAMESE friend predicted to me that the war would reach its climax in 1968, not because of the American election, but because of the coming dry season campaigns. In the two dry seasons after the May 1965 arrival of the Marines, the American forces were able to mount large-scale "search-and-destroy" operations throughout the South. NLF representatives have confided that they did not know whether their forces would be able to withstand these U.S. offensives. The campaigns, however, turned out to be disastrous for the United States. Its forces could not be freed for new offensives because the U.S. was never able to build a base of armed and loyal Vietnamese. Thus the Americans failed to surprise and destroy the NLF in its base areas. The NLF kept the tactical offensive, initiating and breaking off most engagements, leaving U.S. troops idled in their forward positions, searching but not destroying.

In "Operation Attleboro" (November 1966) and "Junction City" (February 1967) in Tay Ninh Province, 50 miles northwest of Saigon, more than 30,000 U.S. troops were used in surprise offensives against a small area. In both cases, the guerrillas penetrated U.S. lines, fired mortar shells continuously into the U.S. headquarters, destroyed armored vehicles and helicopters by the score, and so disgraced the Americans that the unit commanders were removed. Reliable American correspondents in Saigon state privately that operations like these were the downfall of General Westmoreland.

By the beginning of the 1967-68 dry season, "stalemate" was the word journalists were using to describe the American situation. The NLF held more territory than ever before, its forces were larger and equipped with better weapons; and it was now the NLF which initiated action on the ground. Even if we grant what the NLF refuses to acknowledge—that there are large numbers of North Vietnamese troops in the northernmost province of South Vietnam—this does not explain their success. The troop strength increase was due to three factors: first, reinforcements of supplies and men from North Vietnam; second, the NLF's ability to recruit more people in the South by liberating new areas; third, the growth of NLF irregulars into more sophisticated regular soldiers.

The entire Marine force of more than 50,000 men was bogged down infantry-style, defending positions along the demilitarized zone, having repeatedly failed in their attempts to open a 100-mile line of "beachheads" around Danang. Thus the Marine defenders were trapped in a 1600-square-mile "area of responsibility" only one fortieth the size of South Vietnam. There was little action in the Central Highlands and almost none in the Mekong Delta, the NLF stronghold where one third of the South Vietnamese people live. While American commanders spread the myth that the NLF was too weak to fight anything but short engagements near its "sanctuaries" in Cambodia and Laos, more and more American troops were being pulled back to defend Saigon and other areas where the

NLF had established strong underground forces. Indeed, then underway was a nationwide NLF offensive which was to climax at Tet.

The mounting NLF offensive was visible by October 1967, the time of the battle at Loc Ninh. U.S. officials first announced a major victory, claiming 106 Vietnamese killed in one day with only one American casualty. But when reporters reached the scene two days later, the story emerged that the "Viet Cong" had held the town for three days. At that time I interviewed an NLF official in Cambodia who remarked with great satisfaction that, after one month of the dry season, the guerrillas rather than the Americans were going on the offensive. He called Loc Ninh a classic battle.

"There were only puppet troops stationed there, but we wanted to wait for the Americans. After a day of bombing by their B-52's, they finally came, three battalions, including tanks and artillery. Because we were occupying the city they had to stay in the forest where there are no fortifications. But we had our principal force hidden in the forest. We attacked with artillery and wiped out their three battalions in night fighting."

The NLF offensive continued through the dry season with the battle for the hilltop of Dak To and then the long siege of Khe Sanh.

The Tet offensive was the culmination of these dry season actions. Attacking 140 U.S. positions at once, the offensive demonstrated a strength of military organization and an incredible degree of both open and secret political support for the NLF within U.S.-occupied areas. What was left of the pacification program was permanently destroyed, and the NLF established new military positions just outside the major air bases and cities. The military and political underground in the cities was strengthened. Surely this was not a last suicide stand as described by U.S. officials, but one of the great achievements in the history of warfare. It confirmed the prediction of my North Vietnamese friend that "South Vietnam as a whole will become a Dien Bien Phu."

AT THE SAME TIME, the NLF was broadening its political program to enlist new support from the Vietnamese middle and upper classes, including Saigon government and military officials whose nationalism was at last offended by what was in effect an American occupation war. In the American-sponsored elections of September 1967, several semi-popular candidates were barred from running, others were thrown in jail, widespread rigging was apparent, and yet the Thieu-Ky ticket could not win a majority even in Saigon.

For the elections, the NLF released its first political program since 1960, promising a "further broadening of the bloc of national union." The NLF program included pledges of reconciliation with patriotic groups outside its ranks, universal suffrage and secret ballot procedures in a free election, estab-

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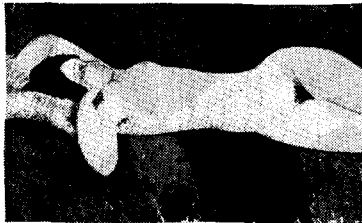
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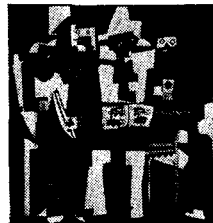
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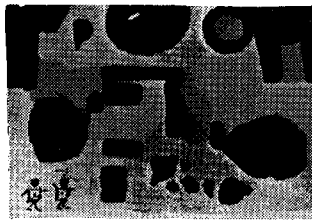
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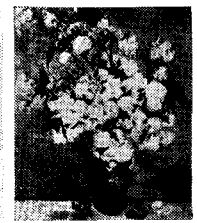
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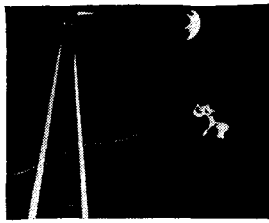
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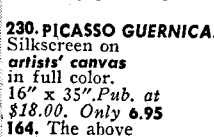
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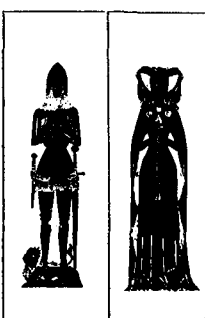
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lishment of a national union government, protection of private property, and further trade and cultural relations with countries like France. The drafting of the program had taken place throughout the previous year, and the timing of its release was designed to take advantage of the growing peace sentiments and anti-Americanism in the cities.

This political broadening reached a new stage during the Tet offensive with the creation of an "Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces" among many well-to-do citizens of Saigon and Hue. The new alliance called for peace, the withdrawal of American troops and negotiations with the NLF. (Independent military units cooperating with the NLF troops have now appeared in several places. In fact, the elements of a national revolutionary administration now exist beneath the shell of American presence.)

Even before the Tet offensive the NLF envisioned a coalition government in the South, with the NLF coalition and its urban allies playing decisive roles. Control of this coalition, the Vietnamese have learned from dealing with the French and the Americans, is necessary for survival; it reflects the true balance of force in South Vietnam. Thieu and Ky represent a weightless clique. The "third force" of noncommunists, intellectuals and religious groups remains a wishful hope of American liberals, for, as an NLF spokesman says, "Before you can be a third or fourth or fifth force, first you must be a force."

Nevertheless the NLF position is flexible. While they are absolutely firm about their "national rights," they have already made key concessions. They have agreed to postpone reunification for several years; there will be an independent South Vietnamese state during the interim period and this state will be neutralist and non-socialistic. Moreover, with the appearance of the "Alliance of Peace and National Forces," the NLF is implicitly softening its claim to be the "sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people."

The NLF also seems prepared to be flexible about the manner of establishing a transitional government between the time of cease-fire and elections in the South. Significantly, they have decided so far not to declare themselves a provisional government or a government in exile, although they are recognized as the equivalent of such by Cambodia and Cuba. One NLF official describes the new program as "a constitution without a government yet." This is their way of remaining open to new elements.

Presumably, the new coalition could begin to form on local, provincial or central levels. It could come into existence as the "caretaker" government charged with holding elections; or it could be formed through the election process itself. One NLF representative has privately expressed favorable interest in the proposal of French scholar Philippe Devillers that the International Control Commission play the major role in arranging a cease-fire, holding elections and transferring power in the South.

IN THE FACE OF THE STRENGTH and the flexibility of the NLF at the moment negotiations are beginning, the American forces can only attempt desperately to improve their position.

The truth is that the American war in South Vietnam is being intensified. Sympathetic journalists inquiring about the possibility of visiting NLF zones are told politely that the war there is "more fierce than ever." Reduction of bombing in the North

freezes American resources to intensify bombing, strafing, harassment and interdiction near the DMZ and in the South. The military budget for the South has been increased. The U.S. military will destroy everything it possibly can in South Vietnam in anticipation of a possible cease-fire. And, if Korea is any example, the U.S. military can be expected to create incidents which threaten to break down the Paris talks. Hanoi's readiness to talk in Paris is a major deterrent to the massive escalation advocated by American hawks, just as the ongoing Geneva talks in 1954 prevented a possible American atomic attack on Vietnam.

It is naive to expect that any Washington administration would abandon South Vietnam after the 20-year commitment of money, arms and blood. Perhaps the U.S. is outgrowing its Korea-inspired view that an anti-communist stronghold can be set up in South Vietnam. But the new view as expressed by Averell Harriman is to withdraw troops by stages until the political evolution in the South accords with American concepts of self-determination. The NLF essentially is being asked to dissolve and disarm, then join the "constitutional process" initiated by the Americans. This is obviously unacceptable for the reason that the NLF partisans would again become as vulnerable to massacre as they were from 1955 to 1959. Even if the U.S. were someday to withdraw, Vietnam would still be encircled by U.S. bases in Laos and Thailand and by the Seventh Fleet.

The feeling among anti-war activists that the Paris talks signal the end of the war could therefore not be more inaccurate. Liberals are relaxing and radicals are drawing away now that the issue of peace seems to have been accepted by most mainstream politicians. But while these politicians seem able to end the anti-war movement, they cannot by themselves be trusted to end the war. Americans should adopt the Vietnamese attitude that as victory comes closer the enemy becomes more irrationally desperate. Washington will have to be pressured into keeping even its most moderate promises, such as the one to "limit bombing." Otherwise, as an NLF representative warns, "The Americans will take with one hand what they give with the other."

The work of anti-war protesters is not complete; and that work will have to take into account the new situation which has led to the peace talks. The slogan "Negotiate Now" is dead; "Stop the Bombing" is becoming irrelevant; "Recognize the NLF" begs the issue of what kind of recognition; only the demand for "Immediate Withdrawal" remains. What is needed additionally is a political demand, naming the kind of Vietnamese settlement the peace movement advocates. "Vietnam for the Vietnamese" or "self-determination" are too vague. The movement must come to terms with the fact that its logic favors a central role for the victorious NLF. The peace movement should catch up with the worldwide feeling that the Viet Cong are the heroes of this war. This is the only position which is radically educational because it poses the possibility that Americans should sometimes support communist-led revolutions.

Tom Hayden aided in the release of three American pilots from North Vietnam and three GI's from the NLF in South Vietnam. He has interviewed U.S., North Vietnamese and NLF officials about peace terms.

Stick 'em up!

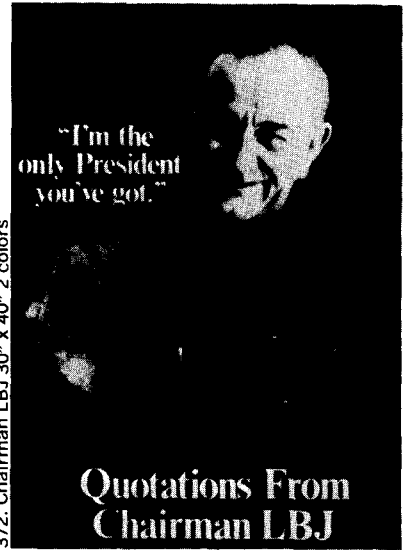
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grad-u-ate (n., adj. graj'03 it, -ät'; v. graj'03 ät'),
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received a degree or diploma on completing a course of
study, as in a university, college, or school. 2. a
student who holds the first or bachelor's degree and is
studying for an advanced degree. 3. a cylindrical or
tapering graduated container, used for measuring.
—adj. 4. of, pertaining to, or involved in academic
study beyond the first or bachelor's degree; *the graduate*
school of business; a graduate student. 5. graduated
(def. 3). —v.t. 6. to receive a degree or diploma on
completing a course of study (often fol. by from):
He *graduated* in 1962. 7. to pass
an exam. 8. to confer a
degree, at the close of
college, or school:
He *graduated* with honors. 9. to
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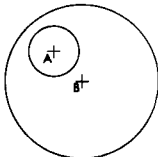
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anti-, a learned borrowing from Greek meaning "against," "opposite of," used in the formation of compound words (*antichine*); used freely in combination with elements of any origin (*antibody*; *antifreeze*; *antiknock*). Also, before a vowel, *anti-*. [ME < L < GK, comb. form of *anti*; akin to *Skt anti*, *L ante*, *E an-* in *answer*. Cf. *ante-*]

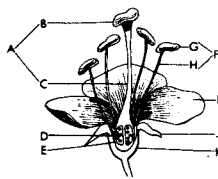
drop-out (drop-out'), *n.* 1. an act or instance of dropping out. 2. a student who withdraws before completing a course of instruction. 3. a person who withdraws from high school after having reached the legal age to do so. 4. *Rugby*, a drop kick made by a defending team from within its own 25-yard line as a result of a touchdown or of the ball's having touched or gone outside of a touch-in-goal line or the dead-ball line. 5. Also called *face-simile*, *highlight halftone*, a halftone negative or plate in which dots have been eliminated from highlights by continued etching, burning in, opaquing, or the like. Also, *drop-out*. [n. use of v. phrase *drop out*]

eccentric (ik sen'trik, ek-), *adj.* 1. deviating from the recognized or customary character, practice, etc.; irregular; erratic; peculiar; odd: *eccentric conduct*; an *eccentric person*. 2. *Geom.* not having the same center; not concentric: used esp. of two circles or spheres at least one of which contains the centers of both. 3. not situated in the center, as an axis. 4. *Mach.* having the axis or support away from the center, as a wheel. 5. *Astron.* deviating from a circular form, as an elliptic orbit. —*n.* 6. a person who has an unusual, peculiar, or odd personality, set of beliefs, or behavior pattern. 7. something that is unusual, peculiar, or odd. 8. *Mach.* a device for converting circular motion into reciprocating rectilinear motion, consisting of a disk fixed somewhat out of center to a revolving shaft, and working freely in a surrounding collar (*eccentric strap*), to which a rod (*eccentric rod*) is attached. Also, *esp. Brit.*, *excentric*. [*L* *eccentricus* (< *Gk* *ekkentros*) out of center (see *ec-*, *center*) + *L* *centrus* -ic] —*ec-cen-tri-cal*, *adj.* —*ec-cen-tri-cal-ly*, *adv.* —*Ant.* 1. normal, ordinary.



Eccentric circles
A, Center of small circle; B, Center of large circle

flower (flou-er), *n.* 1. the blossom of a plant. 2. *Bot.* a. that part of a seed plant comprising the reproductive organs and their envelopes if any, esp. when such envelopes are more or less conspicuous in form and color. b. an analogous reproductive structure in other plants, as the mosses. 3. a plant considered with reference to its blossom or cultivated for its floral beauty. 4. state of efflorescence or bloom: *Peonies were in flower*. 5. an ornament representing a flower. 6. Also called *fleur-de-lis*, *fleur-de-lis*, an ornamental piece of type, esp. a stylized floral design, often used in a line to decorate chapter headings, page borders, bindings, etc. 7. any ornament or adornment. 8. See *figure of speech*. 9. the finest or most flourishing state or period, as of life or beauty: *Poetic drama was in flower in Elizabethan England*. 10. the best or finest member or part of a number, body, or whole: *the flower of American youth*. 11. the finest or choicest product or example. 12. *flowers*, (construed as sing.) *Chem.* a substance in the form of a fine powder, esp. as obtained by sublimation: *flowers of sulfur*. —*v.* 13. to produce flowers, as a plant; blossom; come to full bloom. 14. to come out into full development; mature: *Ideas flower under favorable conditions*. —*v.* 15. to cover or deck with flowers. 16. to decorate with a floral design. [ME *flour* flower, best of anything < OF *flor*, *flour*, *flur* < *L* *flor-* (s. of *flōs*). Cf. *blossom*]



Flower
A, Pistil; B, Stigma; C, Style; D, Ovary; E, Ovary; F, Stamen; G, Anther; H, Filament; I, Petal; J, Sepal; K, Receptacle

gen-i-us (jen-yas), *n.*, pl. *gen-i-us-es* for 2, 3, 8, *gen-i-i* (jen-i-i') for 6, 7, 9. 1. an exceptional natural capacity of intellect, especially as shown in creative and original work in art, music, etc. 2. a person having such capacity. 3. a person having extraordinarily high intelligence, esp. one with an I.Q. of 140 or above. 4. natural ability or capacity; strong inclination: a special *genius* for *pediatric medicine*. 5. distinctive character or spirit, as of a nation, period, language, etc. 6. the guardian spirit of a place, institution, etc. 7. either of two mutually opposed spirits, one good and the other evil, supposed to attend a person throughout his life. 8. a person who strongly influences for good or ill the character, conduct, or destiny of a person, place, or thing: *Rasputin, the evil genius of Russian politics*. 9. Usually *genii*, any demon or spirit, esp. a jinn. [*L*: tutelary deity or genius of a person; cf. *GENOS*] —*Syn.* 4. gift, talent, aptitude, faculty.

grad-u-ate (n., adj. graj-oo-it, -at'; v. graj-oo-at'), *n.*, *adj.*, *v.* —*at-ed*, *-at-ing*. 1. a person who has received a degree or diploma on completing a course of study, as in a university, college, or school. 2. a student who holds the first or bachelor's degree and is studying for an advanced degree. 3. a cylindrical or tapering graduated container, used for measuring. —*adj.* 4. of, pertaining to, or involved in academic study beyond the first or bachelor's degree: *the graduate school of business*; a *graduate student*. 5. graduated (def. 3). —*v.* 6. to receive a degree or diploma on completing a course of study (often fol. by *from*): *She graduated from Sweet Briar in 1962*. 7. to pass by degrees; change gradually. —*v.* 8. to confer a degree upon, or to grant a diploma to, at the close of a course of study, as in a university, college, or school: *Cornell graduated eighty students with honors*. 9. to graduate from: *She graduated college in 1950*. 10. to arrange in grades or gradations; establish gradation in. 11. to divide into or mark with degrees or other divisions, as the scale of a thermometer. [*L* *graduātus* (sup. of *graduāre*), equiv. to *graduātus* (sup. of *graduātus*) + *-ate*] —*grad-u-a-tion*, *n.*

he-don-ism (hed-on-izm), *n.* 1. the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the highest good. 2. devotion to pleasure as a way of life: *The later Roman emperors were notorious for their hedonism*. [*Gk* *hedonē* (s) pleasure + *-ism*] —*he-don-ist*, *n.*, *adj.* —*he-don-ist-ic*, *adj.* —*he-don-ist-ic-ally*, *adv.*

lov-er (luv-er), *n.* 1. a person who is in love, esp. a man in love with a woman. 2. a man amorously involved with a woman not his wife: *paramour*. 3. *lover*, a man and woman in love with each other or having a love affair. 4. a person who has a strong predilection or liking for something, as specified: *a lover of music*. 5. a person who loves, esp. a person who has or shows affectionate regard for others: *a lover of mankind*. [ME, see *LOVE*, -er-] —*lov-er-less*, *adj.* —*lov-er-ly*, *adv.*

lov-er (luv-er), *n.* 1. a person who is in love, esp. a man in love with a woman. 2. a man amorously involved with a woman not his wife: *paramour*. 3. *lover*, a man and woman in love with each other or having a love affair. 4. a person who has a strong predilection or liking for something, as specified: *a lover of music*. 5. a person who loves, esp. a person who has or shows affectionate regard for others: *a lover of mankind*. [ME, see *LOVE*, -er-] —*lov-er-less*, *adj.* —*lov-er-ly*, *adv.*

mug-wump (mug-wump'), *n.* *U.S.* 1. a Republican who refused to support the party nominee, James G. Blaine, in the presidential campaign of 1884. 2. a person who acts as an independent or affects superiority, esp. in politics. 3. a person who is unable to make up his mind on an issue, esp. in politics; one who is neutral on a controversial issue. [*L* *Algonquian* (Massachusetts): lit., great man] —*mug-wump-er-y*, *mug-wump-ism*, *n.* —*mug-wump-i-an*, *adj.* —*mug-wump-ish*, *adj.*

mu-tu-al-ism (myoo-tyoo-ah-liz-izm), *n.* 1. a relationship between two species of organisms in which both benefit from the association. 2. the doctrine that the interdependence of social elements is the primary determinant of individual and social relations, esp. the theory that common ownership of property, or collective effort and control governed by sentiments of brotherhood and mutual aid will be beneficial to both the individual and society. 3. *Social*, the force or principle of mutual aid. [*MUTUAL* + *-ism*] —*mu-tu-al-ist*, *n.* —*mu-tu-al-ist-ic*, *adj.*

O-lym-pi-an (olim-pi-an), *adj.* 1. pertaining to Mount Olympus or dwelling thereon, as the gods of classical Greece. 2. pertaining to Olympia in Elis. 3. of, resembling, characteristic of, or suitable to the gods of Olympus; majestic; aloof; incomparably superior: *a landscape of Olympian beauty*; *an Olympian disregard for everyday matters*. —*n.* 4. an Olympian deity. 5. a contender in the Olympic Games. 6. a native or inhabitant of Olympia. [*L* *Olympianus* (sup.), equiv. to *L* *Olympus* (< *Gk* *Olympos*, deriv. of *Olympos* (OLYMPUS) + *-ianus* -ian)] —*O-lym-pi-an-ly*, *adv.*

Om (om), *n.* *Hinduism*, a mantric word thought to be a complete expression of Brahman and interpreted as having three sounds representing Brahma or creation, Vishnu or preservation, and Shiva or destruction, or as consisting of the same three sounds, representing waking, dreams, and deep sleep, along with the following silence, which is fulfillment. Also, *Aum*. [*< Skt*]

om-pha-lo-skep-sis (om-fa-lo skep-sis), *n.* contemplation of one's navel as part of a mystical exercise. [*OMPHALOS* + *Gk* *skēpsis* act of looking]

peace (pēs), *n.*, *v.*, *peaced*, *peac-ing*, *interj.* —*n.* 1. the normal, nonwarring condition of a nation, group of nations, or the world. 2. an agreement or treaty between warring or antagonistic nations, groups, etc., to end hostilities and abstain from further fighting or antagonism: *the Peace of Ryswick*. 3. a state of mutual harmony between people or groups, esp. in personal relations: *Try to live in peace with your neighbors*. 4. the normal freedom from civil commotion and violence of a community; public order and security: *He was arrested for being drunk and breaking the peace*. 5. cessation of or freedom from any strife or dissension, or freedom of the mind from annoyance, distraction, anxiety, an obsession, etc.; tranquility; serenity. 7. a state of tranquility or serenity: *May he rest in peace*. 8. a state or condition conducive to, proceeding from, or characterized by tranquility: *the peace of a mountain resort*. 9. silence; stillness: *The cawing of a crow broke*

the afternoon's peace. 10. (*cap. italics*) a comedy (421 a.c.) by Aristophanes. 11. *hold one's peace*, to refrain from or cease speaking; keep silent: *He told her to hold her peace until he had finished*. 12. *keep the peace*, to maintain order; cause to refrain from creating a disturbance: *Several officers of the law were on hand to keep the peace*. 13. *make one's peace*, to become reconciled; acquiesce: *He repaired the fence he had broken and made his peace with the neighbor on whose property it stood*. 14. *make peace*, to ask for or arrange a cessation of hostilities or antagonism. —*v.* 15. *Obs.* to be or become silent. —*interj.* 16. keep still! silence! [ME *pes* < OF, var. of *pais* < *L* *pācem*], acc. of *par* peace; akin to *'PACT*] —*peace/less*, *adj.* —*peace/less-ness*, *n.* —*peace/like*, *adj.* —*Syn.* 2. armistice, truce, pact, accord. 3. rapport. 6. calm, quiet. —*Ant.* 6. insecurity, disturbance.

Thoth (thōth, tōt), *n.* *Egyptian Religion*, the god of wisdom, learning, and magic, the inventor of numbers and letters and scribe of all the gods, represented as a man with the head either of an ibis or of a baboon; identified by the Greeks with Hermes.



wom-an-pow-er (wōm-an pou-er), *n.* potential or actual power from the endeavors of women: *the utilization of womanpower during a great national emergency*. [*WOMAN* + *POWER*]

X, 1. an unknown quantity or a variable. 2. *ex* (def. 1). 3. experimental. 4. a sign used at the end of letters, telegrams, etc., to indicate a kiss. 5. a sign indicating multiplication; times: $8 \times 8 = 64$. 6. a sign used between figures indicating dimensions: $3' \times 4'$ (read: "three by four inches"); $3' \times 4' \times 5'$ (read: "three by four by five inches"). 7. power of magnification: *50x telescope*. 8. (used as a signature by an illiterate person). 9. crossed with. 10. out of; foaled by: *a colt by Flag-a-way x Merrybelle*. 11. (used to indicate choice, as on a ballot, examination, etc.). 12. (used to indicate an error or incorrect answer, as on a test). 13. *Math.* (in Cartesian coordinates) the x-axis. 14. *Chess*, captures. 15. a person, thing, agency, factor, etc., of unknown identity.

Yin and Yang (yin' and yang'), *n.* (in Chinese philosophy and religion) two principles, one negative, dark and feminine (Yin), and one positive, bright and masculine (Yang), whose interaction influences the destinies of creatures and things.



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