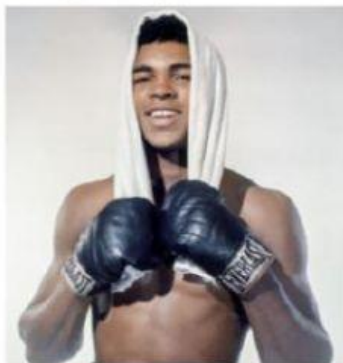


Muhammad Ali and Vietnam

On March 9, 1966, at the height of the war, Ali's draft status was revised to make him eligible to fight in Vietnam, leading him to say that as a black Muslim he was a conscientious objector, and would not enter the U.S. military. "My conscience won't let me go shoot my brother, or some darker people, or some poor hungry people in the mud for big powerful America," he said at the time. "And shoot them for what? They never called me nigger, they never lynched me, they didn't put no dogs on me, they didn't rob me of my nationality..."

His refusal led to Ali's arrest and eventual conviction though he stayed out of prison while his case was appealed. His license to box was suspended in New York the same day, and his title stripped; other boxing commissions followed. Ali was unable to obtain a boxing license in the U.S. for the next three years.

The remarks and actions were even more controversial than the former Cassius Clay's conversion to Islam in 1964. The Vietnam War was popular at the time in the U.S., and the sight of a man, especially a black man, who not only refused to serve (but did so eloquently) incensed



the sporting, media, and political establishments. Ali instantly became a national pariah, perhaps the most hated man in the country, as can be evinced in this monologue from David Susskind, the American television host, who was addressing Ali: "I find nothing amusing or interesting or tolerable about this man. He's a disgrace to his country, his race, and what he laughingly describes as his profession. He is a convicted felon in the United States. He has been found guilty. He is out on bail. He will inevitably go to prison, as well he should. He is a simplistic fool and a pawn."

Nor was Susskind the only man, nor whites alone in opposing Ali's actions: Jackie Robinson, the first black man to play in the major leagues, said Ali's stand was hurting African Americans who were, unlike him, fighting in Vietnam.

Ali, though, didn't see it that way: "I would like to say to those of the press and those of the people who think that I lost so much by not taking this step, I would like to say that I did not lose a thing up until this very moment, I haven't lost one thing," he said. "I have gained a lot. Number one, I have gained a peace of mind. I have gained a peace of heart."

Krishnadev Calamur, theatlantic.com, June 4, 2016

Tick the right answer.

- 1) Muhammad Ali refused to
 - * serve in the Afghanistan war
 - * pay for his license to box
 - * serve in the Vietnam War
- 2) What were the consequences of that decision?
 - * His license to box was suspended.
 - * He went to war just the same.
 - * He obtained a boxing license for the next three years.
- 3) What did David Susskind(TV host) and many people think of M. Ali?
 - * He thought that he was an incredible person.
 - * He thought that Muhammad Ali was a great champion and an example to everyone.
 - * He thought that M. Ali was a disgrace to his country.
- 4) Muhammad Ali told the press that
 - * he regretted everything that he said about war
 - * he didn't regret anything and he gained a peace of heart
 - * he gained a peace of heart because he fought the war in Vietnam.