

Fists of Freedom: An Olympic Story Not Taught in School

By Dave Zirin

It has been almost 44 years since Tommie Smith and [John Carlos](#) took the medal stand following the 200-meter dash at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City and created what must be considered the most enduring, riveting image in the history of either sports or protest. But while the image has stood the test of time, the struggle that led to that moment has been cast aside.



PHOTO FAR-LEFT: Olympic Project for Human Rights button, worn by activist athletes in the 1968 Olympic games, originally called for a boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games. PHOTO RIGHT: This iconic photo appears in many U.S. history textbooks, stripped of the story of the planned boycott and demands, creating the appearance of a solitary act of defiance.

When mentioned at all in U.S. history textbooks, the famous photo appears with almost no context. For example, Pearson/Prentice Hall's *United States*

History places the photo opposite a short three-paragraph section, "Young Leaders Call for Black Power." The photo's caption says simply that "...U.S. athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised gloved fists in protest against discrimination."

The media—and school curricula—fail to address the context that produced Smith and Carlos' famous gesture of resistance: It was the product of what was called "The Revolt of the Black Athlete." Amateur black athletes formed OPHR, the Olympic Project for Human Rights, to organize an African American boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games. OPHR, its lead organizer, [Dr. Harry Edwards](#), and its primary athletic spokespeople, Smith and the 400-meter sprinter Lee Evans, were deeply influenced by the black freedom struggle. Their goal was nothing less than to expose how the United States used black athletes to project a lie about race relations both at home and internationally. OPHR had four central demands: restore Muhammad Ali's heavyweight boxing title, remove Avery Brundage as head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), hire more African American coaches, and disinvite South Africa and Rhodesia from the Olympics. Ali's belt had been taken by boxing's powers that be earlier in the year for his resistance to the Vietnam draft. By standing with Ali, OPHR was expressing its opposition to the war. By calling for the hiring of more African American coaches as well as the ouster of Brundage, they were dragging out of the shadows a part of Olympic history those in power wanted to bury. Brundage was an anti-Semite and a white supremacist, best remembered today for sealing the deal on Hitler's hosting the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. By demanding the exclusion

of South Africa and Rhodesia, they aimed to convey their internationalism and solidarity with the black freedom struggles against apartheid in Africa.



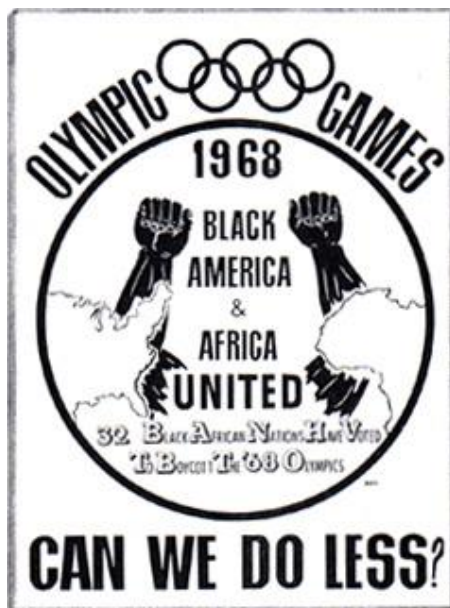
Dr. Harry Edwards led the Olympic Project for Human Rights, calling for the boycott of the 1968 Olympics.

The wind went out of the sails of a broader boycott for many reasons, partly because the IOC re-committed to banning apartheid countries from the Games. The more pressing reason the boycott failed was that athletes who had spent their whole lives preparing for their Olympic moment simply couldn't bring themselves to give it up.

There also emerged accusations of a campaign of harassment and intimidation orchestrated by people supportive of Brundage. Despite all of these pressures, a handful of Olympians was still determined to make a stand. In communities across the globe, they were hardly alone.

The lead-up to the Olympics in Mexico City was electric with struggle. Already in 1968, the world had seen the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, demonstrating that the United States was nowhere near "winning the war"; the Prague Spring, during which Czech students challenged tanks from the Stalinist Soviet Union, demonstrating that dissent was crackling on both sides of the Iron Curtain; and the April 4 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the urban uprisings that followed—along with the exponential growth of the Black Panther Party in the United States—that revealed an African American freedom struggle unassuaged by the civil rights reforms that had transformed the Jim Crow South. Then, on October 2, 10 days before the opening ceremonies of the 1968 Olympic Games, Mexican security forces massacred hundreds of students and workers in Mexico City's [Tlatelolco Square](#).

Although the harassment and intimidation of the OPHR athletes cannot be compared to this slaughter, the intention was the same—to stifle protest and make sure that the Olympics were "suitable" for visiting dignitaries, heads of state, and an international audience. It was not successful.



On the second day of the Games, Smith and Carlos took their stand. Smith set a world record, winning the 200-meter gold, and Carlos captured the bronze. Smith then took out the black gloves. The silver medalist, a runner from Australia named Peter Norman, attached an Olympic Project for Human Rights patch onto his chest to show his solidarity on the medal stand.

As the stars and stripes ran up the flagpole and the national anthem played, Smith and Carlos bowed their heads and raised their fists in what was described across the globe as a "Black Power salute," creating a moment that would define the rest of their lives. But there was far more to their actions on the medal stand than just the gloves. The two men wore no shoes, to protest black poverty as well as beads and scarves to protest

lynching.

Within hours, the IOC planted a rumor that Smith and Carlos had been stripped of their medals (although this was not in fact true) and expelled from the Olympic Village. Brundage wanted to send a message to every athlete that there would be punishment for any political demonstrations on the field of play.

But Brundage was not alone in his furious reaction. The *Los Angeles Times* accused Smith and Carlos of a “Nazi-like salute.” *Time* had a distorted version of the Olympic logo on its cover but instead of the motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger,” it blared “Angrier, Nastier, Uglier.” The *Chicago Tribune* called the act “an embarrassment visited upon the country,” an “act contemptuous of the United States,” and “an insult to their countrymen.” Smith and Carlos were “renegades” who would come home to be “greeted as heroes by fellow extremists,” lamented the paper.

But the coup de grâce was by a young reporter for the *Chicago American* named Brent Musburger who called them “a pair of black-skinned storm troopers.”

But if Smith and Carlos were attacked from a multitude of directions, they also received many expressions of support, including from some unlikely sources. For example, the U.S. Olympic crew team, all white and entirely from Harvard, issued the following statement:

“We—as individuals—have been concerned about the place of the black man in American society in their struggle for equal rights. As members of the U.S. Olympic team, each of us has come to feel a moral commitment to support our black teammates in their efforts to dramatize the injustices and inequities which permeate our society.”



*In 2008, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were given the Arthur Ashe Award for possessing strength in the face of adversity, courage in the face of peril and the willingness to stand up for their beliefs no matter what the cost.
From espn.go.com/espys/arthurasheaward.*

Smith and Carlos sacrificed privilege and glory, fame and fortune, for a larger cause—civil rights. As Carlos says, “A lot of the [black] athletes thought that winning [Olympic] medals would supersede or protect them from racism. But even if you won a medal, it ain’t going to save your momma. It ain’t going to save your sister or children. It might give you 15 minutes of

fame, but what about the rest of your life?”

The story of Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics deserves more than a visual sound bite in a quickie textbook section on “Black Power.” As the [Zinn Education Project](#) points out in its “[If We Knew Our History](#)” series, this is one of many examples of the missing and distorted history in school, which turns the curriculum into a checklist of famous names and dates. When we introduce students to the story of Smith and Carlos’ defiant gesture, we can offer a rich context of activism, courage, and solidarity that breathes life into the study of history—and the long struggle for racial equality.



Human Rights Glossary

This glossary comes from the RFK Center's [Speak Truth To Power program](#)

ADVOCACY

A political process consisting of actions designed to transform citizen or popular interests into rights; a process aimed at influencing decisions regarding policies and laws at national and international levels; actions designed to draw a community's attention to an issue and to direct policymakers to a solution.

APARTHEID

A system of racial segregation and discrimination imposed by the white minority government of South Africa from 1948 until its abolition following the 1994 national election.

ASYLUM

Any place offering protection or safety.

BULLYING

Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behavior in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally. It necessarily implies an intention to harass or act arrogantly toward a colleague, particularly in the school, either in a direct way (disturbing physically or psychologically) or indirectly (excluding and isolating.) Today there is more attention regarding the issue, especially because of the potentially harmful consequences it can have on character development and well-being of young people. Recent incidents of cyberbullying, the use of the Internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person, have resulted in deaths and caused authorities to take note and try to address the dangerous trend.

CENSORSHIP

The monitoring and restriction of speech and publication, as well as telecommunications. Censorship is usually done through review and approval mechanisms to ensure compliance with policies of the government in the name of traditional values, national security, or morality of the community. Self-censorship is done by press or telecommunications industries in order to conform to government ideologies.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Civil and political rights are a class of rights and freedoms that protect individuals from unwarranted action by government and private organizations and individuals and ensure one's ability to participate in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination or repression. These rights are included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and are outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Civil rights include the ensuring of people's physical integrity and safety; protection from discrimination on grounds such as physical or mental disability, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, national origin, age, immigrant status, etc; and individual rights such as the freedoms of thought and conscience, speech and expression, religion, the press, and movement.

CRIMES OF APARTHEID

The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid declares apartheid a crime against humanity resulting from the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination, and violating the principles of international law, in particular the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and constituting a serious threat to international peace and security.

CRUEL OR INHUMAN PUNISHMENT

Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Cruel Punishment is one of the central concerns around the world and is also related to the issue of the death penalty, for claims that prolonged delay before executions constitutes inhuman treatment.

CULTURAL RIGHTS

Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, including not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. Rights to culture are mentioned frequently in international human rights instruments, often in conjunction with economic and social rights.

CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW

When there is a broad consensus among states about a norm, it becomes internationally binding, and thus a source of international law.

DUE PROCESS

Primarily a U.S. term that refers to whether or not a legal proceeding conforms to rules and principles for the protection of the parties' rights. Although the term is not generally used in international human rights instruments, those instruments generally protect the human rights of those who are brought before courts.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Economic, social and cultural rights are socio-economic human rights, distinct from civil and political rights. Economic, social and cultural rights are included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and outlined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Examples of such rights include the right to food, the right to housing, the right to education, the right to health and the right to an adequate standard of living.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Violence committed against a victim because of his/her gender, for example violence against women such as rape, sexual assault, female circumcision, dowry burning, etc.; violence against women for failing to conform to restrictive social and cultural norms. The Vienna Declaration specifically recognized gender-based violence as a human rights concern.

GENOCIDE, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, WAR CRIMES AND CRIME OF AGGRESSION

These are the crimes recognized as the most serious ones. Crimes that threaten peace and security. The International Criminal Court (ICC) was created to prosecute these crimes. The ICC, however, does not exercise jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. Genocide is defined as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. Crimes against humanity are attacks or violent acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack. War crimes are crimes committed in large scale as part of a plan

or policy, involving serious violations of the Geneva Conventions. The crime of aggression is defined as "planning, preparation, initiation or execution by a person able to exercise effective control or direct the political action and a military State, an act of aggression which, by nature, gravity and scale, constitutes a clear violation of the UN Charter.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The dissemination of information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through knowledge and skills, and the molding of attitudes directed to: the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the full development of the human personality and a sense of its dignity; the promotion of understanding, respect, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, indigenous people and racial, national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups; the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society; the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the Maintenance of Peace.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

People who are original or natural inhabitants of a country.

INDIVISIBLE

Refers to the equal importance of each human rights law. A person cannot be denied a right because someone decides it is "less important" or "non-essential."

I.N.S.

Acronym for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (now called U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services).

INTERDEPENDENT

Refers to the complementary framework of human rights law. For example, the ability to participate in your government is directly affected by the right to self-expression, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

Organizations formed by people outside of government. NGOs monitor the proceedings of human rights bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights at the UN and are the "watchdogs" of the human rights that fall within their mandate. Some are large and international; others may be small and local. NGOs play a major role in influencing UN policy.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

Rights that afford citizens the ability to freely participate in the political processes of a country, which include the right to vote, and freedom of political expression, assembly, and association. Political rights are protected by international law as stated in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

REFOULEMENT

When a person is forcibly returned to the home country where his/her life or freedom would be threatened; also called forced repatriation.

REFUGEE

A person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution.

RULE OF LAW

Closely tied to the liberal state and the liberal political tradition of the Western nations, rule of law mandates some minimum degree of separation of government powers for the protection of individual rights. An independent judiciary is indispensable in a democratic and pluralist state. Distinguished from "rule by law," a tool used by authoritarian rulers to maintain order without necessarily honoring human rights.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Determination by the people of a territorial unit of their own political future, free of coercion from powers outside that region.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Used to denote the direction of emotional attraction or conduct. This can be toward people of the opposite sex (heterosexual orientation), toward people of both sexes (bisexual orientation), or toward people of the same sex (homosexual orientation).

STALKING

A pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Stalking is against the law in every state. Stalking across state lines or in federal territories is illegal under federal law.

TORTURE

The infliction of intense pain, either physical or psychological, generally to punish or to obtain a confession or information, or for the sadistic pleasure of the torturer. Torture is prohibited by the UDHR and the ICCPR and remains impermissible even as a response to terrorism or as a means to investigate possible terrorists. The prohibition of torture is viewed as customary international law and peremptory in nature, and as such is considered an international crime punishable by domestic or international tribunals.

TRANSGENDER

Refers to people who experience a psychological identification with the opposite biological sex which may be profound and compelling and lead some to seek "gender reassignment" through medical procedures. This is generally regarded as an issue concerning a person's gender identity.

TREATY

A formal agreement between states that defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations. Used synonymously with convention and covenant.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

This term is frequently associated with Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, which have been established throughout the world to provide public forums for victims and perpetrators of crimes to reveal

the violence and abuses that were committed during tyrannical regimes and conflicts. It encourages transparency in the process of recording an accurate history of events that is critical to promoting healing and eventual societal reconciliation.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A "common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations," drafted by the UN Commission on Human Rights and approved by the General Assembly in 1948. Though not legally binding, it has inspired constitutional bills of rights, human rights treaties, and other mechanisms for international protection of human rights.

XENOPHOBIA

A fear or contempt of that which is foreign or unknown, especially of strangers or foreign people.

Human Rights and the Olympics – Five Human Rights stories you probably didn't know about

By Amnesty International

For each story identify the human right that has been violated.



Bolivia

Survivors of human rights violations – including torture and enforced disappearances – committed during the military and authoritarian regimes (1964-1982) and their relatives have been sitting in front of the Ministry of Justice in La Paz for nearly a year.

They complain that the authorities are denying them full reparations, including economic compensation, for the abuses they or their loved ones suffered in the past.

In March 2004, a law was passed regarding the victims' right to be compensated for the abuses suffered. According to official information, of the 6,000 applications received, only 1,714 people were qualified as beneficiaries. All other applications were rejected.

Survivors of abuse and their relatives complain that conditions imposed by the authorities to claim any compensation have been extremely restrictive. Authorities would request, for example, medical certificates from torture sufferers, death certificates and other documents which would be difficult or impossible to obtain.

On 8 February this year, a man attacked Victoria López, one of the victims sitting in front of the Ministry. He shouted at her, complaining about the presence of the crowd on the street and hit her with a stick. The man was handed over to the police, who then released him without interrogation.



Guinea Bissau

Ten months after a military coup in April 2012 imposed repressive measures to stifle criticism of the new authorities, attacks on human rights and the suppression of fundamental freedoms are still commonplace in this West African country.

Demonstrations remain banned, journalists are hassled, harassed or arrested, and extra-judicial executions from the time of the coup have not been investigated while their perpetrators are still at

large.

Last October freelance journalist António Ali Silva fled the country after soldiers went to his house and reportedly threatened to kill him. Silva had previously been arrested and beaten for writing about the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in his blog.

As well as violations of civil and political rights, the economic and social situation has deteriorated sharply in Guinea Bissau following the coup, leading to a precarious humanitarian situation. Food is scarce and expensive, schools have been closed and hospitals lack essential medicines.



Macedonia

Being Roma in Macedonia is not easy, and for Romani women, the situation is even harder as they face high levels of discrimination when trying to access education, find a job or receive health care.

The female student drop-out rate is very high, which Amnesty International believes is due to, amongst other things, the fact that stereotypes about how Romani parents fail to value girls' education weigh heavily on teaching staff's expectations of Roma schoolchildren.

The authorities have done very little to improve the situation – international pressure has only led to half-hearted measures that have never been effectively implemented.

In January 2013, Amnesty International published a briefing on the Macedonian government's failure to take special measures to guarantee the rights of Romani women and girls. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is reviewing its findings.



United Arab Emirates

Hidden beneath the United Arab Emirates' glittering façade of lavishly appointed skyscrapers, and the assured smiles of the country's human rights officials lies a shoddy track record on human rights.

In the UAE of today, torture is carried out with near-impunity and opposition activists including prisoners of conscience are routinely detained and held – some for many months – without charge or trial. In 2011, five dissidents were sentenced to prison terms.

Foreign workers, including female domestic workers, continue to be denied substantive rights.

Women are discriminated against in law and practice and the death sentence continues to be imposed. In January 2013, the UN Human Rights Council scrutinized the UAE's human rights record, after it pledged in 2008 to make significant progress. The night before, 94 activists were put on trial for criticizing the government. The coincidence of these two events highlights, so far, promises that are barely skin deep.



Viet Nam

Largely off the media radar, Viet Nam is turning into one of South East Asia's largest prisons for human rights defenders.

Over the past two years, the government has intensified its crackdown on freedom of expression, imprisoning dozens of bloggers, peaceful political activists, writers, lawyers, business people and even songwriters.

Human rights defenders often face decade-long prison sentences following trials that are far from fair and transparent. The courts use Orwellian-sounding charges, including "conducting anti-state propaganda" or "activities aimed at overthrowing the government", despite freedom of expression being guaranteed in the Vietnamese Constitution.

On 24 September 2012, for example, three Vietnamese bloggers were sentenced to between four and 12 years in prison for "spreading propaganda against the state". Nguyen Van Hai, Ta Phong Tan and Phan Thanh Hai, co-founders of the Free Vietnamese Journalists Club in 2007, had been campaigning for a free press and other pro-democracy issues.

The trial lasted only a few hours, while several of the bloggers' supporters and relatives were arrested to stop them from attending the proceedings.

Which human right(s) was violated?

Bolivia:

Guinea Bissau:

Macedonia:

United Arab Emirates:

Viet Nam:

Source: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/five-human-rights-stories-you-probably-didn-t-know-about-2013-02-26>

Human Rights and the Olympics – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Articles

- 1 When children are born, they are free and each should be treated in the same way. They have reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a friendly manner.
- 2 Everyone can claim the following rights, despite
 - a different sex
 - a different skin colour
 - speaking a different language
 - thinking different things
 - believing in another religion
 - owning more or less
 - being born in another social group
 - coming from another countryIt also makes no difference whether the country you live in is independent or not.
- 3 You have the right to live, and to live in freedom and safety.
- 4 Nobody has the right to treat you as his or her slave and you should not make anyone your slave.
- 5 Nobody has the right to torture you.
- 6 You should be legally protected in the same way everywhere, and like everyone else.
- 7 The law is the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all.
- 8 You should be able to ask for legal help when the rights your country grants you are not respected.
- 9 Nobody has the right to put you in prison, to keep you there, or to send you away from your country unjustly, or without good reason.
- 10 If you go on trial this should be done in public. The people who try you should not let themselves be influenced by others.
- 11 You should be considered innocent until it can be proved that you are guilty. If you are accused of a crime, you should always have the right to defend yourself. Nobody has the right to condemn you and punish you for something you have not done.
- 12 You have the right to ask to be protected if someone tries to harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.

- 13 You have the right to come and go as you wish within your country. You have the right to leave your country to go to another one; and you should be able to return to your country if you want.
- 14 If someone hurts you, you have the right to go to another country and ask it to protect you. You lose this right if you have killed someone and if you, yourself, do not respect what is written here.
- 15 You have the right to belong to a country and nobody can prevent you, without a good reason, from belonging to a country if you wish.
- 16 As soon as a person is legally entitled, he or she has the right to marry and have a family. In doing this, neither the colour of your skin, the country you come from nor your religion should be impediments. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and also when they are separated.
Nobody should force a person to marry.
The government of your country should protect you and the members of your family.
- 17 You have the right to own things and nobody has the right to take these from you without a good reason.
- 18 You have the right to profess your religion freely, to change it, and to practise it either on your own or with other people.
- 19 You have the right to think what you want, to say what you like, and nobody should forbid you from doing so. You should be able to share your ideas also—with people from any other country.
- 20 You have the right to organize peaceful meetings or to take part in meetings in a peaceful way. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.
- 21 You have the right to take part in your country's political affairs either by belonging to the government yourself or by choosing politicians who have the same ideas as you.
Governments should be voted for regularly and voting should be secret. You should get a vote and all votes should be equal. You also have the same right to join the public service as anyone else.
- 22 The society in which you live should help you to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) which are offered to you and to all the men and women in your country.

- 23 You have the right to work, to be free to choose your work, to get a salary which allows you to support your family. If a man and a woman do the same work, they should get the same pay. All people who work have the right to join together to defend their interests.
- 24 Each work day should not be too long, since everyone has the right to rest and should be able to take regular paid holidays.
- 25 You have the right to have whatever you need so that you and your family: do not fall ill or go hungry; have clothes and a house; and are helped if you are out of work, if you are ill, if you are old, if your wife or husband is dead, or if you do not earn a living for any other reason you cannot help. Mothers and their children are entitled to special care. All children have the same rights to be protected, whether or not their mother was married when they were born.
- 26 You have the right to go to school and everyone should go to school. Primary schooling should be free. You should be able to learn a profession or continue your studies as far as wish. At school, you should be able to develop all your talents and you should be taught to get on with others, whatever their race, religion or the country they come from. Your parents have the right to choose how and what you will be taught at school.
- 27 You have the right to share in your community's arts and sciences, and any good they do. Your works as an artist, writer, or a scientist should be protected, and you should be able to benefit from them.
- 28 So that your rights will be respected, there must be an 'order' which can protect them. This 'order' should be local and worldwide.
- 29 You have duties towards the community within which your personality can only fully develop. The law should guarantee human rights. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.
- 30 In all parts of the world, no society, no human being, should take it upon her or himself to act in such a way as to destroy the rights which you have just been reading about.

Human Rights and the Olympic Games – Headlines

The 1936 Olympics are hosted by Nazi Germany

The 1936 Olympics took place amidst the rise of the Nazi party and Hitler tried to use the games as a platform to prove Aryan superiority over other races. German Jewish athletes were denied participation in the games. Sports legend and African American Jesse Owens proved the Third Reich wrong when he won four Olympic gold medals in track and field.

In 1964 South Africa participation in the Olympics is suspended due to apartheid policies

South Africa had a system of institutionalized racial segregation, called apartheid, that ensured power was held by the white minority while the black majority was treated like second class citizens or worse. In 1964, the IOC decided to take a stand against apartheid in South Africa and suspended them from the games.

10 days before the 1968 Olympics an organized protest led by students turns into a massacre in Tlatelolco, Mexico

Around the world young people clashed with old over new ideologies and Mexico was no different. When Un-armed students and organizers met in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas to rally for a revolution they were attacked by the military and many died.

The 1972 games were largely overshadowed by the Munich massacre in which eleven Israeli athletes and coaches by Palestinian Terrorists

During the 1972 Olympic games in Munich, Germany 11 Israeli athletes were taken hostage by the Palestinian terrorist group Black September. Although officials tried to end the standoff without bloodshed all 11 men were killed as well as a German police officer.

African Nations boycott Olympics in response to the International Olympic Committee allowing the New Zealand athletes to participate after visiting South Africa for a rugby tournament

By 1976 most countries around the world agreed that South Africa's apartheid system was a serious human rights violation and boycotted them through political and economic sanctions. South Africa was still unable to compete with the Olympics, and African countries demanded that New Zealand also be banned after their rugby team travelled to South Africa for tournaments. Nearly all African nations boycotted the Olympics in protest of New Zealand's participation.

U.S. boycotts Moscow Olympics after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

The U.S. and dozens of other countries boycotted the Moscow Olympic games in response to the Soviet invasion of the country of Afghanistan. During the war the United States provided billions of dollars in support and weapons. The war would last nearly ten years and the Soviet Union would go home empty-handed.

The world watched as allegations of human rights violations threatened to mar the 2008 Olympics in Beijing

The Chinese government battled allegations of human rights violations ranging from religious persecution to political suppression to the unlawful occupation of Tibet. During the Olympics tight security was enforced to quell the civil strife and terrorist threats.

Human Rights and the Olympics – The Olympic spirit and history

From the BBC

Origins

The Olympic Movement is named after the city of its origin: Olympia. The Games were one of the many ways that the Greeks worshipped their gods. Olympia was one of the oldest religious centres in Ancient Greece, and played host to all the ancient games. Vitally, it was easily accessible by sea as athletes travelled from Greek colonies in Spain and the Black Sea to compete in the Games.

The origins of the Olympics are shrouded in myth and legend. The first record of an Olympic Games dates from 776 BC, although the games could have taken place long beforehand. Running was the only event at the first 13 recorded Olympic Games, but further events were added over the years and eventually included jumping, discus, wrestling, boxing, pankration (a primitive martial art), horse riding and chariot racing. The main event of the ancient games was the pentathlon.

The Olympic Truce was established in Ancient Greece with the signing of a treaty between three kings. The truce prohibited combat between the Greek city states allowing athletes and others to travel safely to and from Olympia for the Games.

The ancient Olympic Games reached their zenith in the sixth and fifth centuries BC before petering out as the Romans grew more influential. Olympian Games were sporadically revived from the late 18th century onwards. A French baron, Pierre de Coubertin, was inspired by the Much Wenlock Olympian Society to revive the Olympics as an international spectacle. He founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894. Two years later Athens hosted the first modern Olympic Games.

Be the best you can be

De Coubertin believed that 'The important thing in life is not to triumph, but to compete,' and encouraged everyone to compete against themselves. His sentiment was institutionalised in the Olympic motto which challenges each individual to become the best they can: 'Citius, Altius, Fortius' (Faster, Higher, Stronger).

Spirit of fair play

The Olympic Charter, established by de Coubertin, states that 'The practice of sport is a human right'. Everyone should be able to play sport 'without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.'

At heart de Coubertin was an educationalist. He hoped that sport would contribute to a peaceful and better world. He wanted sport to push people to become the best they can and help others to do the same. Crucially, he wanted sport to be available to everyone in a spirit of fair play. A medal for sportsmanship has been named in his honour.

The ancient traditions of the Olympic Games have not been lost. The IOC revived the Olympic Truce, aiming to protect the interests of the athletes and sport, and to encourage peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the conflicts around the world. Observance of the Olympic Truce during the 1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games offered an opportunity to seek a diplomatic resolution to the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

Olympic Symbolism

Designed to reflect the core values of Olympism, the iconic symbol of five rings represents the universality of Olympism. Each ring on the flag is a different colour (blue, yellow, black, green and red) and displayed on a white background. These six colours represent all nations.

The rings are interlocked signifying the spirit of respect shown in the gathering of athletes from all over the world during the Olympic Games. The flag was first used at an Olympic Games in Antwerp 1920, just after the culmination of the First World War.

The Olympic flame is lit in Olympia by the sun's rays and travels around various countries in the months prior to the Olympic Games. Along its route, the flame is passed between many torches and relay runners and conveys a message of peace and friendship. The highlight of the opening ceremony of an Olympic Games is the entry of the flame into the stadium where the final relay runner lights the cauldron. The flame in the cauldron, symbolising friendship, remains alight for the duration of the Games.



Sport for everyone

The Olympic Movement is always developing to adapt to the changing world. Women were allowed to participate in the Games for the first time in the Paris Olympics of 1900, but only in golf and tennis. Female participation in all sports grew throughout the 20th century. Rome 1960 saw the beginning of the Paralympic Games and the first Youth Olympic Games will take place in Singapore in 2010.

The spirit of the Olympic Movement remains throughout all its work, bringing people together in peace and friendship to play sport.

Source:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/raiseyourgame/sites/dedication/2012/pages/olympic_history.shtml

Human Rights and the Olympics – Written assessment

Choose two of the three following written components to write about in well constructed written text.

- *Informative* - Describe what happened, what the context was and what human right(s) was/were violated. You may chose to briefly discuss more than one article that was violated or choose one and write about it in more depth.

- *Narrative* - Imagine that you are at the Olympics(during the date of your choice) and write about your experience from both a person whose human rights were violated and the person who violated the human rights of others. Make sure to capture the emotions that you felt from both sides and your internal thought process that led you to be able to either violate the rights of others or feel that your rights have been violated.

- *Argument* - Imagine that you are a human rights advocate and your job is to identify the alleged human rights violations that are occurring at the Sochi Olympic Games. After you have identified the violations, make an argument to the world about how things should be changed so no one's rights are being infringed upon. Additionally, propose ways that both spectators and athletes can protest without being expelled from the games.

