

Players or Pawns?:
Student-Athletes, Human Rights Activism, Nonviolent Protest and Cultures of Peace
at the 1968 Summer Olympics

by

Christopher William Hrynkow

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Doctoral Program in Peace and Conflict Studies
Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice
Saint Paul's College, University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

July, 2013

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Abstract

The image of two US athletes with black glove-covered fists raised on the podium at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics is iconic. However, despite a number of academic studies, articles, books, lectures and films addressing this moment, the deeper story behind that student-athlete protest at Mexico 68 is little known. It was far from being a merely spontaneous or violent action. In fact, the protest was part of a concerted and largely peaceful effort to highlight several systemic injustices of the late 1960s by a group named the Olympic Project for Human Rights. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, it follows that the deeper story of the student-athlete protests at Mexico 68 are ripe with significance from both: (1) a Peace Studies perspective, focussing on structural injustice, and (2) a Conflict Resolution Studies viewpoint, which upholds value in the constructive settling of disputes. Employing a Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) lens, which keeps both sets of concerns in view, and undertaking descriptive and analytical approaches that bring the voice of the athletes to the fore as much as possible given the limitations of this study, allows for a discussion of remarkable student-athletes interacting not only within the competitive structure of their sport at the Olympics, but also amongst social, institutional, and political contexts. This approach becomes foundational for the conclusion that the athletes involved in protests at Mexico 68 were players (i.e., agents) and not pawns, in relation to complex socio-political forces, which sought to manipulate and oppress them. Moreover, this PACS approach allows for twelve concrete lessons flowing from the stories of the athletes to be delineated for their contemporary relevance in a world where far too many injustices remain. In short, the main protest is herein presented as an awe-inspiring moment, simultaneously as a compass and a key, which

when integrated with a PACS perspective serves to guide us towards a fuller understanding of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and its goals, unlocking what is revealed in this study to be a potentially important moment in the history of cultures of peace.

Specifically the general findings, or twelve concrete lessons relevant to PACS, that emerge from this study are: (1) a single iconic and significant image can hold the key to unlocking a number of stories; (2) the Olympic Games are political; (3) cross-cultural solidarity can be present in activist events where it is not immediately obvious or emphasized; (4) breaking status quo behaviour codes can allow oppressed groups to reclaim spaces granted to them by establishment figures so as to make creative and lasting nonviolent statements; (5) faith can inform activism for social justice in subtle but important ways that can be obscured in an overly secular analysis; (6) a loose association of people can offer the chance for even the busiest individuals who have differing views on righteous violence, to come together and craft effective nonviolent actions; (7) when the media spotlight is upon them, student-athletes can make an impact within limited public spaces; (8) the privilege of being an athlete does not negate one's human rights; (9) a silent gesture can speak volumes; (10) a raised fist can be a symbol of peace; (11) pacifist actions need not be passive, they can be courageous and confrontational; and, (12) events, like the Mexico 68 protests, generally assumed to belong to the history of violent confrontation, may have elements and actors whose stories accord with the "hidden" face of history, and support cultures of peace.

Personal Ethnographic Statement¹ and Acknowledgments

I have been fortunate that, with the support of my thesis committee, I was able to choose a topic that sustained my thesis work in a positive and creative tension due to the way it has been able to draw on aspects of my personal context, including my time as a former university track and field athlete, as someone who is keenly interested in nonviolence and social equity and as a beginning Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS)² scholar. In all of these endeavours, I have been far from perfection. However, I have had enough experience in each of these areas to appreciate the significance of that moment on the podium at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. In basic terms, I simply see so many things coming together on that dais. Amongst these factors are: the training, ability, and dedication necessary to win an Olympic medal, the courage to throw oneself on the “wheel of history”³ and the power of a statement made on one of the greatest performance stages the world has known in contemporary times.

In the pages that follow, I write of these three streams coming together, but in a crucial sense words cannot adequately capture full insight into the remarkable nature of

¹ In preparing such a statement, I am attempting to synthesize an insight harvested from my ethnographic research methods class, namely that as Druckman put it, each and every day the new and familiar may be difficult to distinguish for any researcher. See Daniel Druckman, *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 234. Hence, though not quite Druckman’s point, situating yourself as a researcher becomes important. For me, as I understand myself as a person embedded within a series of relationships, such a personal ethnographic statement organically flows into my acknowledgement section. As such, what may be two sections in many theses are combined here.

² Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) combines concerns of structural injustice associated with peace studies and a goal of the amicable settling of disputes associated with conflict transformation studies. See section 2.9 for a brief note on a PACS perspective and its connection to the critically normative goal of fostering substantive peace and justice.

³ I borrow this phrase from N.T. Wright, a leading New Testament scholar and former Anglican Bishop of Durham.

that moment on the podium. To have the concentration to win a closely-contested competition, and the focus to plan a creative protest at the same time, is awe-inspiring for anyone who has attempted either feat. But to reflect in a concerted manner, upon how the track and field athletes who were part of the Olympic Project for Human Rights¹ were able to run that fast and make such a significant statement, leaves me literally without words. This thesis tries to fill that void as a way to, in a sense, enter into the mystery that lies at the centre of the student-athletes' multi-dimensional achievement. However, much as is the case in a theological project, a thesis can never fill and define the mystery. Rather, a piece of writing can only enter into the mystery temporarily in search of understanding of its principal subject matter. In line with the awe-inspiring moment at the centre of this story, there will always be for me a place of mystery where my only reaction is a feeling of deep respect for the significance of that moment on the podium at Mexico 68.

Employing the language of theological ethics in which I was trained and now work, it seems fair to say, as will become clear in the pages that follow, that this story is an example of the virtue of fortitude personified. It is a testament to the promise and wish that PACS holds for the positive transformation of relationships, in line with the principles of substantive peace and justice, that the field makes room for stories such as the one underlying the Olympic Project for Human Rights as the subject of thesis work. Because this work fits so well with my interests and helped to foster the person-in-

¹ The main activist group studied in this thesis, the Olympic Project for Human Rights, as this thesis will show at multiple points below, is arguably best described as a loose association of student-athletes and their supporters who came together in order to make a statement about systematic injustice. As will be unfolded in the pages that follow, the specific nature of its programming was understood differently by the individuals involved.

relationship which I am becoming, I dare say it has made me more completely human. Indeed, this process started when I was admitted to the PhD program in PACS at the Arthur V. Mauro Centre. Studying in this environment has alerted me to a range of issues surrounding substantive peace and justice. In a more poignant sense than the obvious, this thesis would not have been possible without my course work. The latter changed me by providing a whole new outlook on the world and academia. It was from being at the Mauro Centre that this thesis emerged almost organically. At the beginning of my doctoral studies, I would never have guessed that my thesis would be dealing with the student activism of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. However, by the time it came to submitting a topic proposal, it became clear that this project flowed naturally in terms of where I was coming from as a person and as an apprentice academic. Both these sides of my humanity were fostered during my doctoral studies, hence my risk in stating that my PhD course work and now my thesis writing have made me more human. Notably in this regard, when I compare this experience with that of some of my friends and acquaintances who have described their doctoral work, and their thesis in particular, as a dehumanizing enterprise, an absolute misery, or view it as merely one in a series of hurdles to career success, then I most certainly can justify my feelings of being fortunate and blessed to study such an important topic, employing the contextually cogent methodological lens of PACS and working with a very supportive committee. In what I consider an extension of this feeling of blessedness (rather than an affliction), it is becoming increasingly impossible for me to consider any story or set of events without reflecting upon its implication for and from a PACS perspective.¹ Indeed, I carry this

¹ See section 2.9.

perspective forward in my work at Saint Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan, where, amongst other duties, I am privileged to teach a course on Social Justice and the Common Good.

I owe a great debt to several people for seeing this project through to completion. My advisor, Dr. David Creamer, S.J. was helpful beyond the call of duty. Dr. Sean Byrne, Director of the Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, was always quick with feedback and he suggested a multitude of resources to enhance this project. Dr. Melanie Gregg, Associate Professor of Kinesiology at the University of Winnipeg, was generous with her time at a busy stage in her career and life generally. Special thanks go to Dr. Kevin Wamsley, Professor of Kinesiology at Western University, whose suggestions precipitated changes that greatly improved the quality of this thesis.

It is also the hope for a better world implicit in a PACS perspective that has sustained me in my endeavour to both author this thesis and fulfill my duties as a new parent to my sons, Samuel and Jacob, to whom this thesis is dedicated. Much of the initial writing of this thesis took place in Ottawa, during my year as a full-time caregiver to Samuel. It was also during this time that I was able to meet with Bruce Kidd, Canadian Olympian and Member of the Order of Canada—an experience I will never forget. I remain thankful to my family: Wilma, my partner and wife, and to my parents for their continued support without which none of this would be possible. Also during this time my children, Sam (now four years old) and Jacob (now 22 months) have been a constant source of motivating energy. Their growth has been contemporaneous with the life course of this project. They both, for example, have slept on my chest as newborns while I wrote some of the words the reader will find below. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank

my coach, Stephen “George” Tanner, who has provided guidance and support at both difficult and happy times in my life and instilled the passion that drove my limited athletic success.

In another memorable happening associated with this project, when I spoke with Charles Korr at a late stage in the writing process he said: “This is not the type of topic you can leave behind at the office at five o’clock.”¹ He was correct. Much like the persistence of the PACS lens that is now fused with my worldview, this subject matter—in particular, the stories and achievements of the athletes—will remain with me forever.

¹ Charles Korr. Interview conducted by Christopher Hrynkow via Skype, November 17, 2011.

Chapter One—Introduction: Multiple Remarkable Things at Mexico 68

1.0 Introduction

Violence, I was beginning to understand, is assisted by silences. To stop violence, silences have to be broken.¹

At the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City two remarkable things happened in relation to the men's 200 metres final. In terms of a noteworthy athletic performance, three men prepared so effectively and displayed such focus on the day that they ran the fastest 200 metres in history. Taking the gold medal in the race was Tommie Smith, his result was a blistering 19.83 seconds, and set the US, Olympic and World records.² Second was Peter Norman, setting an Australian national record of 20.06 seconds, which has stood the test of time.³ Third was the pre-Olympic favourite, John Carlos, who crossed the line in 20.10 seconds.⁴

The times they ran that day would still rank them as world class today. For instance, both Tommie Smith's and Peter Norman's results would have earned them a gold at the Sydney Olympics.⁵ Norman's achievement is even more remarkable because

¹ Rebecca Ann Parker, "Tiamet's Tears," in *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us*, Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 108.

² Smith's Olympic record lasted until 1984 when it was broken by Carl Lewis' 19.80 seconds for 200 metres at Los Angeles. When Lewis wrote his autobiography in 1990 he made no mention of Smith despite the fact that he was chasing his record, preferring instead to link himself to the legacy of Jesse Owens. See Lewis with Mark, 83. This may be indicative of Smith's continued marginal status in 1990.

³ Australian Olympic Committee Staff. "Peter Norman: Athletics." <http://corporate.olympics.com.au/athlete/4767/Peter+Norman>. Accessed August 26, 2009.

⁴ Sporting Heroes Staff. "1968 Olympics Games: Men's Results." http://sporting-heroes.net/athletics-heroes/stats_athletics/olympics/1968_m.asp. Accessed August 26, 2009.

⁵ Greece's Konstantinos Kenteris won the 200 metres at the 2000 Sydney games in a time of 20.09 seconds. From BBC Staff. "Athletics Men's 200 m."

the Australian team had not done any high altitude training before arriving in the rarefied air of Mexico City. Further, Norman had never run on a (faster) synthetic surface prior to arriving in Mexico.

Of course, relatively few people remember the world record that was set that day. That is because of the second event that has largely overshadowed the race. It was the Mexico 68 men's 200 metres awards ceremony that gave birth to one of the most famous images of the twentieth century, when the two US athletes raised their black-glove covered fists in protest against human rights abuses in their homeland and other unjust situations in the world at the time. As we shall see in this thesis, there is much more to this image than meets the eye. It was far from unplanned or spontaneous. Indeed, the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which fostered that moment in an effort to highlight and change systemic discrimination both in the US and worldwide, is ripe with significance from both (1) a Peace Studies perspective, looking at structural injustice, and (2) a Conflict Resolution Studies viewpoint, which asserts a value in the constructive settling of disputes.

1.1 Sport, the Olympics and 1968

Nineteen sixty-seven was the first year I was proud of my skin being Black.¹ -
Lee Evans²

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport/hi/english/static/in_depth/olympics/2000/results_schedule/olymp_res_athl_mens_200_m.stm. Accessed August 31, 2009.

¹ Lee Evans, 400 metres Olympic Gold Medalist at Mexico 68, summarizing his experience as a student at San Jose State during the 1967-68 school year. From Lee Evans quoted in Kenny Moore, "A Courageous Stand." (05 Aug. 1991). *Sports Illustrated*. Available from

<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1139998/1/inex.htm>. Accessed November 21, 2011.

² For the purposes of this thesis, I will only place names below such opening quotes in the main text if they represent the voices of athletes involved in the Olympic Project for

Sport has an interesting relationship with both peacebuilding efforts and human rights regimes. For instance, John Carlin posits that the international sporting ban was instrumental in exposing the harshness of the Apartheid regime in South Africa,¹ while the 1995 Rugby World Cup served as a unifying agent, greatly aiding Nelson Mandela's "rainbow" nation-building efforts.² In terms of world sport, an event often accorded greater prestige than the Rugby World Cup is the Olympics. The ancient Olympics functioned as a platform for peace in that participants and spectators were granted safe passage and truces were called amongst the Greek city-states for the duration of the festival of the god Zeus at Olympia. The event carried on into Roman times, before being suppressed in the year 394 CE by Emperor Theodosius I, within the context of an officially Christian Byzantine Empire. In the end, the games were proclaimed illegal due to their associations with the figure of Zeus, specifically, and paganism, generally.³

The contemporary Olympics are firmly associated with world peace. Symbols of doves and olive branches have been present at each Olympiad since 1896. The modern

Human Rights because they are the voices that are meant to come to the fore in this study.

¹ John Carlin, *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game that Made a Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008). A side note here: Clint Eastwood read this book (after I wrote these lines in my initial proposal for this project) and it provided the inspiration for his film *Invictus*. As the film and book show, it is a particularly remarkable transformation that a team (the Springboks) which symbolized Apartheid and minority colonist rule (to the extent that Black South African fans cheered for the foreign team playing "the Boks") could help unite the country in 1995. This transformation was a part of deliberative and carefully crafted attempt by Nelson Mandela to build a "rainbow nation" (see the following note).

² For a comment on the ideal of the "rainbow nation" as put forward by Nelson Mandela, see Reggie Finlayson, *Nelson Mandela* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2006), 6.

³ Perseus Project Staff, "Frequently Asked Questions about the Ancient Olympic Games." Available from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Olympics/faq11.html>. Accessed December 13, 2009.

games' founder, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, held peace and harmony amongst the youth of the world as the games' key foundational principle. Despite this orientation, the modern Olympics have rarely been free of conflict. The athletic contests are too often pursued with such vigour that athletes have been caught cheating through the use of performance enhancing substances.¹ Beyond this violation of the rules, those same athletes have, in a significant sense, been used as pawns in political terms. As an example, the 1980 boycott of the Moscow Olympics by over sixty countries, including Canada, China, and the US, protested the Soviet Union's action in Afghanistan in 1979.² Undoubtedly, it is also true that the Olympics do not occur in the context of substantive peace. For example, as will be unfolded more fully at various points below, the story of Hitler and Jesse Owens in Berlin (1936), the African (1976) and Cold War boycotts (1980 and 1984), the Munich Massacre (1972) and the instance of the silent gesture after the sprints in Mexico City (1968), all demonstrate that international and societal conflict is never far from the surface in any given Olympic year.

This point is grounded with reference to the athletic event that is the central focus of this thesis. In this regard, as the Summer Olympics are arguably the world's premier

¹ The prime example in the Canadian context is Ben Johnson being stripped of his gold medal in the 100m at Seoul 88. His first-place performance had galvanized the nation, the results of Johnson's doping test and his sanction left the 11-year old me, amongst others, dumfounded.

² As illustrative of the impact of this boycott, I met a number of people who coached during my time as an (aspiring) athlete in Canada who still speak of "losing their Olympics." In contrast, during my time in Britain, I become cognisant of the fame of Steve Ovett and Lord Sebastian Coe, a fame which was formed in significant sense by their status as 1980 Olympic Champions. In Coe's case that fame was carried forward when he served as chairman of the organizing committee for London 2012. The 1980 Moscow Olympics also provided hope that the great Irish middle distance runner, Eamon Coughlin, might medal in 5000 metres but he only managed to match his result of 4th from Montreal 76.

sporting event, and because track and field is often considered the crowning discipline of the games, focusing on the experiences of runners, jumpers, and throwers helps to provide some interesting insights into social and political relationships. More specifically, a study of track and field, as a mostly individual sport, also serves to uncover some diverse perspectives on human rights regimes.

The calendar year in which these events occurred is also of great significance for those concerned with peace and justice. In 2008, Matthew McCann Fenton chose the subtitle “the year that changed the world” for his retrospective on 1968.¹ Writing three years earlier on the same subject matter, Mark Kurlansky opted for “the year that rocked the world.”² The tone of these sub-titles demonstrates the significance of 1968 for contemporary history. Let us pause to consider some of the events that took place that year and their relevance to the subject matter of PACS: the Tet Offensive and the accompanying anti-war protests in the United States and Australia;³ the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy;⁴ César Chávez’s fast against exploitive California grape growers;⁵ the takeover of Columbia University by its students;⁶ the student and workers strikes in France;⁷ the “Prague Spring” uprising in Czechoslovakia;⁸

¹ McCann Fenton.

² Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Random House, 2005).

³ See James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁴ McCann Fenton, 38-43; 72-77.

⁵ See Fredrick John Dalton, *The Moral Vision of César Chávez* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003).

⁶ See Jerry L. Avorn, *University in Revolt: A History of the Columbia Crisis* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1969).

⁷ See Hervé Bourges, *The Student Revolt: the Activists Speak* (London: Cape, 1968).

⁸ Kurlansky, 238-250.

the anti-poverty protests in Mexico during the run up to the Olympics;¹ the first meeting of the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Latin America;² the Chicago riots at the Democratic convention;³ Muhammad Ali's "time in the wilderness;"⁴ and tennis great Arthur Ashe's protest against Apartheid after being denied a visa to attend the South African Open.⁵ It is in this context, and most definitely not apart from this social environment, that the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests took shape. Indeed, it is important to highlight the point that without the larger context of the late 1960s they would make little sense.⁶

1.2 Selected General Research Questions

My main focus in this thesis will be on a meta-analysis of the insights of student athletes involved in the protests both at and leading up to Mexico 68, which were organized by the Olympic Project for Human Rights in an effort to highlight systemic injustice. Within these contextual boundaries, in general terms, this thesis will seek to answer the following question: what are student athletes': (1) perceptions of and (2)

¹ See Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 104-122.

² The significance of this event, from which the liberation theology movement is said to have emerged, is discussed in greater depth below in section 2.2.

³ Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁴ Significantly, Muhammad Ali did spend a good deal of his time in the public spotlight in 1968 at peace rallies. In this activism, he was sustained by his Islamic faith. See Muhammad Ali and Hana Ali, *The Soul of a Butterfly: Reflections on Life's Journey* (New York: Bantam, 2004); Michael Ezra, *Muhammad Ali: The Making of an Icon* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009). Ali's example will be discussed further below. In particular, see section 4.1.

⁵ McCann Fenton, 103.

⁶ From 1924 until 1992, winter and summer Olympics were held in the same calendar year. The winter Olympics of 1968, having taken place in Grenoble, France during February, preceded the summer games (held in October) and largely escaped any socio-political controversy.

authentic responsibility towards human rights regimes? My analysis will also delve into how these understandings may have shifted since 1968. As such, this study centres on assessing the role of student athletes in relation to emerging human rights regimes in the late 1960s and how they have recalled and unfolded those responsibilities in the interim. In general terms, this role will be explored also within the dichotomy of the ‘structure’ versus ‘agency’ debate as represented in the main title of this project, “Player or Pawns?” The goal will be to provide a well-supported assessment of the agency of student athletes with regards to human rights activism as represented by the multifaceted question: were these athletes “used” by social and political forces beyond their control or were they and/or have they continued to be instigators, supporters, and advocates for such forces? Moreover, as my overarching question, I will be asking: ‘How does this all relate to emancipatory consciousness, nonviolence, and the history of cultures of peace?’

Furthermore, I am interested in the role of Christian faith in the exercise of student athlete agency. In the athletes’ writings, along with clips of interviews and speeches on the Internet, all three of the main protagonists speak, in passing, of their devotion to Jesus and God as part of their motivation for participation in the protests. More specifically-focused questions are delineated in Chapter Three of this thesis dealing with methods. These questions are part of a broader focus to access the student-athletes’ personal narratives and understanding of the events surrounding the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests,¹ so as to bring together and develop principally the emic but also the etic dimensions of the protests by the competitors at Mexico 68.¹

¹ For commentary on the appropriateness of personal narrative as an aid for forming peaceful solutions to conflict see Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne, “From Violence Toward Peace: The Role of Storytelling for Youth Healing and Political Empowerment

1.3 Significance of Study

The study of sport and its relationship to conflict has been under-explored in the field of PACS. This research contributes to filling that gap in the field by entering into a multidisciplinary exploration and analysis of the interaction between human rights regimes and student athletes with reference to a particularly relevant historical event: the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests. In line with a key feature of a PACS approach to the analysis of events, this thesis explores both perception and action. Such a methodological approach allows for a discussion of what happens when the agency of student athletes (and track and field competitors, in particular) interacts not only within the competitive structure of their sport, but also amongst social, institutional, and political contexts, as well as other markers of social justice and dispute resolution mechanisms. As such, as much as possible within the confines of an academic thesis and the limitations of the study, this project makes a concerted effort to emphasize the stories and the voices that emerge from the experiences of the student athletes, themselves, as they worked for and reflected upon their efforts to help bring about a more just world. An effort is then made to tie together that understanding with notions of courageous nonviolence, emancipatory consciousness, and the history of cultures of peace.

after Social Conflict,” in *Troublemakers or Peacemakers? Youth and Post-Accord Peacebuilding*, edited by Siobhan McEvoy-Levy (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 235-258 and Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2004).

¹ For more on the distinction between the emic (self understanding relevant to an actor, located within a culture) and etic (social analysis applied by a scholar) to this study, see section 3.1, which includes references to this distinction as delineated by Druckman and Avruch.

1.4 A Synopsis of This Thesis

This thesis grows from my learning and life journeys. As such, it is no accident that, above, I merged the section of this thesis giving a personal ethnographic statement with my acknowledgement section. Particularly, that strategy gave me a chance to emphasize how I, despite all the commentary and data which follows, approach the protest with a sense of wonder and awe.

Hence, Chapter One, the formal introduction to this thesis, starts by emphasizing the remarkable nature of the athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. As we will see in this chapter, multiple noteworthy events happened at Mexico 68 because of these actors. Here, I also unfold my general research questions, which give insight into how I approach this remarkable conflux of athletic ability and creative nonviolent activism. As well, I note briefly, how sport has been a relatively unexplored area in the PACS field. This helps to make the agency of student track and field athletes a suitable case study for a thesis in a PhD program located in a centre dedicated to peace and justice. I end Chapter One by noting how this case study is particularly appropriate because it touches on issues at the forefront of both peace studies and conflict resolution studies,¹ the two named constituent disciplines that are invoked in the PACS nomenclature, academic literature for other disciplines, and media directed towards a popular audience.

Chapter Two surveys PACS literature that is relevant to this project. I also go outside of the reading lists for my PhD studies and draw on theological thinkers and representatives of other disciplines who address issues of substantive peace and justice in

¹ Additionally, this study helps bring into focus issues relevant to the study of human rights and human diversity.

their work. As such, this chapter should be understood as related to my earlier ethnographic statement as it reflects my learning journey and reading in the areas of peace, social justice, and conflict, with only a few minor exceptions, since being admitted to the doctoral program in PACS at the University of Manitoba. Moreover, I briefly situate the “PACS perspective” as a critical approach concerned with fostering substantive peace and justice before offering suggestions pointing toward how this thesis might be considered unique. Furthermore, even those minor exceptions, such as my earlier study of Bernard Lonergan, are recast in light of my learning in the PACS program at the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice.

The overarching theorist whose work informs this discussion is Dom Hélder Câmara, the former Roman Catholic Archbishop of Olinda and Recife in north-eastern Brazil. Two years after the Mexico City Olympics, in 1970, Câmara was first nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize¹ and published *Spirale de Violence*.² His example is employed in this role because of the value his short book had in showing the connectivity amongst interdependence, violence, and nonviolent activism. Next, theoretical concerns are unfolded in light of the concept of praxis to show how this case study is appropriate to consider with reference to the “structure” versus “agency” debate in the academic world and in terms of issues like consciousness raising, courageous nonviolence and the history of cultures of peace. It is also helpful in pointing toward lessons for best practice in conflict resolution work and theory. The rest of the theoretical discussion corresponds to

¹ Brian Darling, “Introduction,” in *The Spiral of Violence*, by Hélder Câmara. 1-24 (Denville: Dimension Books, 1971), 2.

² The following year, his text was translated and English readers were first introduced to the concept of a “spiral of violence.” That is to say, Câmara introduced a term that is now used, for example, by Girardian thinkers analysing issues at the intersection of religion and violence.

the way the main data sections of this thesis are organized. For example, there is a discussion of theoretical considerations surrounding racism, militarism, and violence that informs the reporting and selection of excerpts from the athletes' statements on the context surrounding the protests at Mexico 68.

Although methodological considerations are addressed at numerous places in this thesis, Chapter Three takes method as its principal subject matter. Here, I discuss some methodological influences and considerations that informed the research and writing that are the foundations of the project. In this regard, I explicitly note that I have been substantially, though not wholly, influenced in my approach by the humanities side of PACS, rather than the social science side of the interdisciplinary field.¹ I also discuss my informed choices for categorizing elements of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

With Chapter Four, I begin dealing more explicitly with the athletes' perception of the elements of the story. Throughout this and the next three chapters, I focus on the emic in the opening sections as I seek to fulfill my goal for this project and bring the athletes' voices to the fore as much as possible within the confines of an academic thesis and the limitations of this study. For example, when Chapter Four addresses the context of racism, militarism, and violence in the US, Australia and Mexico, it does so by focussing on the athletes' perception of these contexts.

¹ This distinction between humanities and social-science approaches to the field was first raised for me by the *Peace and Change* editor and peace historian Robbie Lieberman in the context of an article review during April 2008. The distinction itself references scholars who bring humanities training centred on analytical, critical and/or speculative methods (as opposed to social scientific methods focussed on qualitative or quantitative research) to the field. I return to this distinction in Chapter Three below.

Chapter Five continues this emphasis on the athletes' voices and perspectives. Here, I explore the path to Mexico 68 in terms of both athletic and politico-intellectual journeys. This chapter also recounts the moment of the crowning protest, emphasizing the viewpoint of those involved. After that section is a similarly-styled exploration of other lesser known protests, which were also carried on at Mexico 68 after Smith, Norman, and Carlos made their famous statement on the podium during the awards ceremony for the Men's 200 metres final. As is the case for the next two chapters as well, this chapter ends with an extended commentary and analysis of the athletes' perceptions as they relate to the subject matter of each of the first four sections.

Chapter Six takes a step back from this iconic moment to look at the athletes' perceptions of solidarity, faith, and nonviolence as they relate to this case study. Here the issues surrounding the choice made by the athletes not to boycott the games are also discussed in a dedicated section. Chapter Seven continues in a similar light, exploring the immediate reaction to the protest, the rather abrupt ways for addressing the conflict resolution considerations emerging from the event, the penalties the athletes paid for taking their stand, and a focus on the legacy of the protests.

Chapter Eight, the conclusion, returns to the issues surrounding the structure versus agency debate¹ to argue that the athletes involved in the Olympic Project cannot be considered as pawns for either the groups' organizers or for the Olympic establishment in the late 1960s. This chapter also includes a summative statement outlining twelve important general findings flowing from the data presented in this thesis,

¹ The "structure versus agency debate" addresses whether agency or structure is primary in shaping human behaviours and social contexts. It is a term which refers to ongoing arguments in the humanities and social sciences. For more on Galtung's perspective on this debate see, in particular, Chapter Two of this thesis.

along with a discussion of suggestions for future research and practice in the PACS field. With reference to *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History*, one of the last works of Elise Boulding (published in 2000), I end with a general conclusion that highlights a sense in which the Mexico 68 protests can be considered as contributing to the history of cultures of peace.

1.5 Conclusion

The image of two American athletes with black glove-covered fists raised on the podium during the awards ceremony for the 200 metres event at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics is iconic. However, the deeper story behind that moment is little known. It was far from unplanned or spontaneous. Indeed, as will be explored in this thesis, the so-called “Revolt of the Black Athlete,” which fostered that moment, is ripe with significance from both: (1) a Peace Studies perspective, looking at structural injustice, and (2) a Conflict Resolution Studies viewpoint, which asserts a value to the constructive settling of disputes. Keeping both sets of concerns in view, and by invoking a model that recognizes the agency of athletes, this thesis explores both perception and action.

Such a methodological approach allows for a discussion of what happens when the agency of track and field athletes interacts not only within the competitive structure of their sport, but also amongst social, institutional, and political contexts. Each of these latter areas also provide their own intrigue and nuance as they relate to markers of social justice, creative nonviolent protest, emancipatory consciousness, and the history of cultures of peace. This thesis seeks to present that discussion in a substantive form that is well-grounded in the experience and voice of the athletes themselves. As the reader turns these pages (or scrolls down through them) he or she should always keep in mind the

mystery of that crowning protest. It was an awe-inspiring moment, simultaneously a compass and a key, which when integrated in this thesis with a PACS perspective serves to guide us towards a fuller understanding of the protest's significance and unlocks what is revealed as a key moment in the history of cultures of peace.

Chapter Two—Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Another approach would take as the point of departure the extent to which direct violence is rooted in structure and culture, and then remove the factors that seem to be conducive to violence.¹

Theorists can provide a guide to help understand and navigate the complexity of life, bringing relevant issues into our collective horizon.² In this chapter, I give a flavour for the themes that will arise in the body of the thesis by first highlighting relevant literature from the PACS field and then offering a survey of literature from other fields dealing with my case study. Also in the chapter, I discuss how this thesis might be considered unique and situate my use of the conflict transformation and peacebuilding typology connoted by “a PACS perspective” along with its variants.³ In short, I unfold some of the distinctive features of my interpretative lens, which grows from my interaction with PACS literature and theorist-practitioners over the past eight years. I do so by delineating some of the interdisciplinary theoretical constituent parts of that perspective inclusive of: (1) the theoretical and practical contributions of Dom Hélder Câmara; (2) the importance of creative minorities; (3) striving for best practice in conflict resolution; (3) theoretical issues revolving around racism, militarism, and violence; (4) academic reflections on human rights and development of consciousness; (5) theories addressing solidarity, transformational politics, faith, and nonviolence; and, (6) analytical treatment of conflict resolution and transformation. This portion of the literature review

¹ Johan Galtung, *Human Rights in Another Key* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 140-141.

² See, for example, David Creamer, *Guides for the Journey: John Macmurray, Bernard Lonergan, James Fowler* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996).

³ See, in particular, section 2.9.

will later to be used to help frame the material presented in chapters four, five, six, and seven.

One sharp point that alerts us to the realm of PACS concerns is that we often assume that violence is located beyond our sphere of influence or takes place in far-off places or, at the very least, “somewhere else.” Yet, this perspective encourages us to discern our own levels of participation in overt and covert violence. With such a theoretical lens, the insight that repressive forms of social organization are themselves a form of “structural violence”¹ can emerge and be grounded in our consciousness. This term also relates to Galtung’s distinction between “negative” and “positive” peace:

By making a fundamental distinction between personal and structural violence, it can be seen from two angles. Indeed, this is exactly the same as peace, which is understood as the absence of violence. A more expansive concept of violence leads to a more expansive understanding of peace: peace defined as the absence of personal violence and the absence of structural violence. These two forms of peace are referred to as negative peace and positive peace.²

As will become more evident in the pages that follow, applied to the political conflict in the United States, Australia, Mexico, and the rest of the world in 1968, the theoretical concept of “structural violence” exposes interesting hermeneutical circles of meaning.

¹ Dieter Nohlen offers the following (relatively concise) definition of the term: “[Structural] violence is built into the social system and expresses itself in the unequal distribution of power and, as a result, unequal opportunities (i.e., inequality in the distribution of income, education opportunities etc.). As far as Galtung is concerned, structural violence is synonymous with “social injustice.” Galtung’s analysis is similar to criticism of capitalism in developing countries [e.g., the dependencia theorists]. This criticism legitimates the struggle against socially unjust systems (guerrilla etc.), even when these systems largely forgo the use of oppressive measures.” Quoted in Ragnar Müller, “Violence Typology by Johan Galtung (direct, structural and cultural violence).” Available from <http://www.friedenspaedagogik.de/content/pdf/2754>. Accessed September 6, 2009.

² Johan Galtung quoted in Müller.

When navigating such hermeneutical circles of meaning, aspects of my own identity that I bring to this project, beyond my experience as a former university athlete, include my training in religious studies and theology along with a type of outlook onto the world associated with holding an academic appointment and teaching PACS subject matter in a Religion and Culture department at a Catholic college within a large secular university. Growing from the concomitant experiences associated with these layers of identity, religious thinkers are used in this thesis for their insights addressing substantive peace in a style that resonates with my own background but that does so in a manner that contributes to the PACS project. So, for example, I find particular resonance in the work of people like (1) Heather Eaton, who trained as an ecofeminist theologian and started her academic career in that area but is now a full professor of Conflict Studies at Saint Paul University, (2) Walter Wink, by trade a biblical theologian, but also a peace activist and United States Institute of Peace scholar and (3) Dom Hélder Câmara, who wrote contemporaneously with the events that form the central subject of this thesis and whose own contextual reflections provide important insights about the interconnections amongst different forms of violence. This orientation will be evident, too, in some of the choices of thinkers presented in the literature review. Further, I am also well-disposed to appreciate how a religiously-literate lens helps to highlight a series of elements in this story, elements which are important to PACS due to the manner in which they point to a specially flavoured external motivation for peace activism.¹ The presence of some of the literature on peace and violence produced by religious thinkers which is presented below also helps to reveal and navigate that faith-based aspect of the story of the Olympic

¹ See, in particular, section 6.3.

Project for Human Rights. My overarching motivation for exploring these issues is based on the following line of reasoning. This incident was reported on to such an extent that the photo became iconic. Yet, it is particularly problematic (knowing everything the athletes were risking with their statement) that the athletes' voices do not come through to any enduring extent in the reporting from the time or even in the way the story is most often understood today. If the athletes understood that they were, in fact, undertaking a creative nonviolent protest to bring into focus human rights abuses associated with racism and militarism, then their self-understanding ought to have been reported to a much greater extent. From a PACS perspective, when the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights is fit into violent preexisting media scripts, the problematic nature of this misunderstanding is further compounded.

2.1 Overarching Theoretical Background

The athletes involved in the activism of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were seeking more than “peace through economic justice.”¹ Rather, they were speaking on a fundamental level about justice and dignity. As we have seen, these were also central concerns of Dom Hélder Câmara who introduced the concept of a “spiral of violence” into discussions about substantive peace and justice.²

Considering that Câmara's book on the subject is dedicated to two important figures for PACS, Mohandas Gandhi³ and Martin Luther King Jr., it is not surprising that

¹ For more on the stance implied by the term, “peace through economic justice,” see David Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 270.

² See section 1.4.

³ Gandhi spoke about “being the change we seek.” Specifically, in the area of nonviolent activism for positive social change, which will be discussed below (particularly in section 6.4), it is interesting to note that Gandhi wrote: “Nonviolence is a power which can be

Câmara's monograph is essentially a description of a methodology for nonviolent political action based on love. *Spiral of Violence* takes its contextual motivation from experiences under a military dictatorship in Brazil during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Throughout this oppressive period of Brazilian history, the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church were able to exert "a certain clerical advantage" and raise dissenting voices to critique the regime.¹ Câmara, however, realized that the troubles then afflicting his pastoral charges did not all originate with the military government. Indeed, Câmara wrote about common sources of injustice around the world, based upon what he discerned as the seven capital sins of the modern world: racialism, colonialism, war, paternalism, pharisaism, alienation, and fear.² These seven sins are buttressed by violence. However, in Câmara's thought, as in Galtung's analysis, violence is not conceived as being only related to phenomena such as hydrogen bombs and people shooting each other. Instead, the bishop spoke of another explosive reality plaguing the planet: the "poverty bomb."³ Through such language, Câmara was able to demonstrate effectively how violence marks all forms of injustice.

Câmara distinguished three types of violence that mark the modern world. He termed these types of violence No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, the actions of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were multidimensional,

wielded equally by all—provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When nonviolence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts." From Mohandas K. Gandhi, "Ahimsa, or the Way of Nonviolence," in *A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-Violence and World Order*, eds. Joseph J. Fahley and Richard Armstrong (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 174.

¹ Câmara quoted in Darling, 19.

² Hélder Câmara, *The Spiral of Violence* (Denville: Dimension Books, 1971), 77.

³ Câmara, 29.

seeking to respond to all three forms of violence. For Câmara, violence No. 1 is based on the simple truth that poverty kills as surely as the bloodiest war.¹ The mechanisms through which poverty wounds are not only physiological, but these aspects of violence are also psychological and moral.² Thus, the current structure of the global political economy is a major cause of violence because it treats too many people as sub-human.³ Below, we will see how the domestic political economy of the US in the 1960s can be viewed as guilty of a similar mistreatment of people. Indeed this will be a sub-plot in a number of the athletes' stories. As those examples will highlight, viewing the world from Câmara's perspective, which connects violence and oppressive political economy, it becomes difficult to claim that any country is truly developed, because even the economically-richest countries have internal inequalities supported by repressive systems, which, in turn, rest upon fractured relationships.⁴ Such fractured relationships lie at the centre of violence No. 1.⁵

All too often, the result of this most basic form of violence is revolt. This response provides the nexus for violence No. 2.⁶ When faced with injustice and a repressive system that fails to recognize their human dignity, young persons are particularly apt to take the option of violent revolt.⁷ Like Martin Luther King Jr., who provided direction, support and inspiration for the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Câmara argued passionately that the use of violence by those seeking social transformation was folly.

¹ Câmara, 25.

² Câmara, 28.

³ Câmara, 28, 30.

⁴ Câmara, 29.

⁵ Câmara, 30.

⁶ Câmara, 30.

⁷ Câmara, 50.

Specifically, the bishop wrote that when violence is embraced as a means of liberation, it only gives the entrenched regime an excuse to use the coercive power of the state against the rebels. In this situation, we witness the emergence of violence No. 3. Such state-sanctioned violence groups all dissidents together in order to provide an erroneous justification for a large range of repressive and dehumanizing acts, such as torture in the name of anti-communism.¹ As a result of his insight, Câmara viewed all three of these forms of violence as interconnected examples of violence begetting violence.² The implicit danger of leaving the interplay among violences No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 unchecked is that the entire world would fall into a spiral of violence.³

In this light, Câmara continued, Gandhi is best considered a prophet. As the participants in the Olympic Project for Human Rights were only too aware, modern incarnations of warfare and structural violence show a nonviolent methodology to be the only sustainable and practical way forward for groups seeking positive social change. For Câmara, this is also true on a more micro level, where political forces, which additionally hold a monopoly on legitimate violence, coalesce to maintain discriminatory institutions and practices. In line with the principles of PACS (and on a more macro level) it is also true, as Câmara recognized, that nonviolence is to be preferred in a context where nuclear war amounts to suicide and even so-called localized wars, such as the Viet Nam conflict, extract a heavy toll in terms of human lives, money, and resources.⁴ The conflict in South East Asia during the late 1960s figures in the story that will be explored in this thesis⁵

¹ Câmara, 32-34.

² Câmara, 34.

³ Câmara, 40.

⁴ Câmara, 54.

⁵ See, in particular, sections 4.1 and 4.2.

and, in the present context, we might see the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan in a similar light. It follows that meeting violence with violence threatens to send the world into a downward spiral.

Once this danger is more fully recognized, the true answer to violence becomes having the courage to take action to address the poverty, inequity and discrimination associated with violence No. 1,¹ in line with creative nonviolent initiatives such as the one undertaken by the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This Gandhian insight marked the genesis of Câmara's agenda to end both domestic and international socio-economic inequality in all its forms.² His ensuing liberatory campaign was called "Action for Justice and Peace."³ Its driving concept was that the peace- and justice-oriented nonviolent transformative programme would, in contemporary parlance, "think local and act global." In this regard, Câmara argued that a solidarity based on common humanity would empower every region to find better ways of establishing forms of living together that avoided the entrapping allure of a false peace.⁴ Accordingly, any lasting peace would have to be a just peace.

Such peacebuilding projects must be recognized as a great struggle because injustice is so prevalent in this world. Therefore, it is not just contemplation but also action that is required to transform oppressive structures and relationships.⁵ As such, Câmara concluded that ending injustice and stopping the spiral of violence at its origins means working toward a world where love would mark all human interaction. For

¹ Câmara, 55.

² Câmara, 63.

³ Câmara, 56.

⁴ Câmara, 58-59.

⁵ Câmara, 56.

Câmara, this could only mean loving everyone on this planet according to the dynamics of a caring family. If a particular brand of ideology, religion or nationalism would cause a diversion from that goal, then it could be characterized as contributing to the continuation of the spiral of violence.¹ In the end, an integral transformation of relationships would be marked by the moment when the former oppressor realised that violence was no longer tenable and was welcomed to march in solidarity with those whom he/she had repressed.² Through such means, what I will call below (employing Bernard Lonergan’s language)³ a “creative minority,” inspired by what Câmara termed “Abrahamic hope,” could be established. People marked by such hope in this creative minority would end destructive injustice by recognizing and breaking the spiral of violence at its root in violence No. 1.⁴ In Câmara’s estimation, with the power of youth and other like-minded individuals striving for a more peaceful and just future on its side, this “Abrahamic minority” would then act as a catalyst through which nonviolent love and hope could be enabled worldwide.⁵ As we shall see below,⁶ elements of this vision of a creative minority motivated by hope for a better possible world are present in the student athlete activism that is the focus of this thesis.

2.2 Câmara’s Praxis or Evidence that He Was More than Just a Theorist

In keeping with the recommendations from *Spiral of Violence*, Câmara made systemic transformation of injustice a goal in his own life. This goal is reflected in both his global and local activism. In the latter regard, Câmara engaged with issues of poverty

¹ Câmara, 62-63.

² Câmara, 57.

³ See section 2.3.

⁴ Câmara, 69.

⁵ Câmara, 77-83.

⁶ See, in particular, section 6.1.

at the “ground level” in his own archdiocese. However, at the same time, he also sought to address structural violence and injustice. Sharing his insights about poverty on the macro-level, in turn, motivated his travels around the world to spread a message of love. Câmara was a strong advocate for the principle of a “preferential option for the poor.” He lived this principle in his pastoral work. For example, after being appointed Archbishop, he sold the bishop’s palace in Recife and moved into a three bedroom house behind a church near the city’s ring road.¹ Further, despite the right wing government’s military presence, Câmara produced daily radio programmes, published newsletters, and fostered other media to work for an authentically progressive social change.² He even reformed the seminary programme in the Archdiocese to allow the formative education of priests to revolve around pastoral work with the poor. Additionally, Câmara gave away Church lands to provide settlement areas for the poor, established a credit union and hitched rides instead of operating an official car.³ As a consequence of Câmara’s struggles against systemic injustice, his house was sprayed with right-wing graffiti and he received numerous death threats.⁴ His status saved him from injury, but several of Câmara’s closest colleagues were tortured and even killed by the regime’s agents because of their supposed communist views.⁵

Seeing such events as more than simply local issues, the analysis presented in *Spiral of Violence* also looks at the effects of structures on people and the prospects for

¹ Francis McDonagh, “Obituary: Hélder Câmara,” *The Tablet*, 253, no. 8298 (1999): 1209.

² Jean Toulat, *Dom Hélder Câmara* (Paris: Centurion, 1989), 50.

³ McDonagh, 1209.

⁴ As we shall see below, members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights faced similar consequences. See, in particular, section 7.3.

⁵ Toulat, 59. Also in this regard, see Câmara’s famous quote in section 3.0.

substantive peace. In the Latin American ecclesiastical context, this type of structural analysis is often said to originate in the 1968 meeting of the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELEM). Câmara had a founding role in CELEM, which was the first regional conference of Roman Catholic Bishops in the world.¹ This group laid the foundations for liberation theology and the accompanying transformation of aspects of the Latin American Roman Catholic Church. CELEM's efforts eventually helped bring structural analysis of injustice into both mainstream Catholic social thought and Christian theology in general.²

Employing structural analysis in a hierarchical church opened up the possibility that the institution itself might come under scrutiny, just as the Olympic Project for Human Rights seemed destined to conflict with the interests of Avery Brundage and the Olympic establishment in 1968. Dom Hélder Câmara's reflection in *Spiral of Violence* seems to encourage such a possibility implicitly, but he was explicit, on several occasions, about what ought to be the peace witness of the church on Earth. For instance, previewing former United States Institute of Peace scholar Walter Wink's point that nonviolent action can be confrontational,³ Câmara once suggested that the Pope, in order to live

¹ Marie-Jo Hazzard. *Prier 15 Jours avec Dom Hélder Câmara* (Montrouge: Nouvelle Cité, 2003), 15.

² Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History Politics and Salvation* (St. Albans: SCM Press, 1973), 73. The development of Liberation Theology, in turn, influenced other Bishops in Latin America to undertake transformative projects similar to Câmara's work in Brazil. Notable in this regard is the work of Dom Sergio Méndez Arceo in the Mexican state of Morelos. See Robert Sean MacKin, "Becoming the Red Bishop of Cuernavaca: Rethinking Gill's Religious Competition Model." *Sociology of Religion* Vol. 64, No. 4 (Winter, 2003), 499-514.

³ Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: A Theology for The New Millennium* (New York: Galilee Doubleday, 1999), 111. Wink is a former Peace Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, Methodist biblical scholar, and nonviolent activist. For comment on the value of disciplined and focused action for overcoming injustice, see Ronald J. Sider,

humbly as the Bishop of Rome, should sell the Vatican and all its art and give the proceeds to the United Nations for its work with the poor.¹ This kind of statement may not have endeared him to everyone holding hierarchical positions in the Roman Catholic Church. In broad terms, there are many parallels to be made with the struggle that engaged Câmara in north-eastern Brazil during the late 1960s and the forces of institutional discrimination, poverty, injustice, and racism that the then Olympic Project for Human Rights concerned itself with during the same period. Hence, Câmara's praxis-laden work represents a particularly appropriate theoretical lens to use for this thesis.

2.3 A Creative Minority: Shifting the Terms of the Structure versus Agency Debate

Gaining impetus from meetings taking place in the late 1960s, the athletes' reactions and protest against such structural injustice also invokes aspects of the "structure versus agency debate." As will be further evidenced in the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, clearly the efforts of the athletes imply a belief in an active link between structure and agency. However, there remains a tension here with the overwhelming weight and restrictions on agency represented by the virulent forms of racism and poverty that provide the backdrop to this case study. Moving beyond the commonplace notion in academia that structure is objective and agency merely subjective,² I suggest it is helpful to examine the role of the Olympic Project for Human

"God's People Reconciling," in *Proceedings: Mennonite World Conference, XI Assembly, Strasburg, 1984* (Lombard, IL: Mennonite World Conference, 1985): 224-260. Wink's point here will be fleshed out in section 2.7 with reference to his concept of "the myth of redemptive violence."

¹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "On the Front Lines of Faith," *Sojourners*, 28, no. 6 (1999): 24.

² Margaret S. Archer, *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

Rights and its supporters when they are understood as a creative minority. To do so reinvigorates Câmara's notion of hope. As Bernard Lonergan notes, "every. . . historical movement, however great, profound and lasting it may be, begins with a 'creative minority:' it is the minority that questions, thinks, understands, decides and takes the lead, the majority are taught, persuaded and led."¹ Anthropologist Margaret Mead, who was active in the civil rights movement, expressed a similar sentiment when she counselled those concerned with positive social change to: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it was the only thing that ever has."² Motivated by a sense of injustice, this potentially transformative creative minority can effectively shift oppressive situations and foster a more just world. Such a theoretical framing may prove valuable when seeking to more fully understand the impact of the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests.

2.4 A Case Study Pointing towards Lessons for Conflict Resolution Theory and Best Practices

In terms of conflict resolution theory and best practices (seeking to facilitate the substantive peaceful outcomes in conflict situations) the ways in which athletes were dealt with by their organizing and sanctioning bodies may provide interesting data for this case study. There are numerous ways to support this claim. However, at its root, a simple exploratory question helps reveal this possibility: were the athletes treated with appropriate dignity and due diligence?

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *De Scientia atque Voluntate Dei. Supplementumschematicum*, Primary document, 1950 (English translation held at The Jesuit Centre for Catholic Studies, University of Manitoba), # 24. Original Latin available from <http://agora.metaphysica.skaut.org/lonergan.htm#t2>. Accessed December 13, 2009.

² Mead quoted in The Institute for Intercultural Studies, The Institute for Intercultural Studies. "Margaret Mead: 1901-1978." (2007). Available from <http://www.interculturalstudies.org/Mead/biography.htm>. Accessed September 4, 2009.

In this regard, Mennonite conflict transformation practitioner, theorist, and Kroc Institute for Peace faculty member at the University of Notre Dame, John Paul Lederach notes that sustainable results are only possible when truth, mercy, forgiveness, and peace meet and are balanced within an integrative peacebuilding framework that is aware of structural issues and takes a long-term view.¹ Building on Lederach's family of peace analogy, which images the "voices of Truth, Mercy, Justice, and Peace as social energies that are alive and present in any conflict,"² this dynamism allows efforts at conflict transformation to harness these social energies and work towards a situation of balance and health between the adjectives, which would be marked by symbiotic relationships. Such a dynamic balance would help move the parties in any given conflict towards what Lederach characterizes as exercise of the moral imagination in support of constructive social change: "the pursuit of moving relationships from fear, mutual recrimination and violence towards those characterized by love, mutual respect and proactive engagement."³ This dynamic balance represents obtainable, fair, and lasting solutions to conflict. As this thesis will more fully bring to light, such an exercise of the moral imagination did not, however, take place in the aftermath of 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protest. Below, this observation is explored for its insights as they relate to best practice in conflict transformation work.⁴

¹ See John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D. C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997).

² John Paul Lederach, "Civil Society and Reconciliation," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (Washington, D. C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2001), 848.

³ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.

⁴ See, in particular, section 7.2.

2.5 Racism, Militarism and Violence¹

Turning to confluences with my (now Summer Session) teaching in the subject matter of Cross-Cultural Education at the University of Manitoba regarding racism, militarism and violence, I am drawn to the director of York University's Centre for Education and Community, Carl James', discussion presented in *Seeing Ourselves*. He highlights how the term "race" has changed over time and has had varied meanings in different cultural settings. James specifies that, in his writing, "race" is used not as a scientific term but, rather, as a socially-constructed classification imposed by human beings on members of their own species. He goes on to argue that an individual's race is determined by social and psychological factors, not biology.²

James' conceptualization of race as a social construct is one that I share with PACS theorists like F. James Davies who will be referenced below in this section. However, before exploring race as a social conception, it is first important to take a deeper look at the idea of race as a scientific or biologically-determined classification of human beings.³ This is because it was once a broadly-accepted perspective that helped to shape contemporary societies and, furthermore, this form of biological essentialism remains influential in the present day.⁴ Too often tied to notions of distinct and well-

¹ This section helps to frame the material presented in chapter four.

² See Carl James, *Seeing Ourselves: Exploring Race, Ethnicity and Culture* (Toronto: Thompson Education Publishing, 2010).

³ For a discussion of how these factors coalesce with theological and religious categories see section 6.3 and the discussion of William R. Jones' concept of "divine racism", in particular.

⁴ Compare, for example, Brian Rice. "Relations with Human and Non-Human Species and how they Apply Toward Peacebuilding in Indigenous Societies." In Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne, eds. *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice and Pedagogy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 199-216 and Hamdesa Tusso, "Indigenous Processes of Conflict Resolution" In *Critical Issues in Peace*

defined “races” of human beings is the idea that some races are or were thought of as being less advanced both culturally and intellectually. Such a hierarchy of peoples helped support the political and economic domination of a large portion of the world by an array of colonial powers, which coalesced to fuel the idea of White European and American superiority in the West. The hierarchical classification of human beings by race also resulted in the racialization of societies,¹ which, in turn, often served to justify the continued domination of one group over the other as in the case of the African-American experience of slavery so closely related to the subject matter of this thesis. In its extreme manifestation it was also foundational for eugenics and “the final solution” programming of Nazi Germany.²

In the academic world, for a significant portion of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, race was deemed a valid anthropological and scientific concept. That is, it was thought that different human races existed and that these “races” were geographically determined and were further characterized by marked differences in biological features.³ In general terms, PACS seeks to correct such a notion.⁴ This effort at an alternative and more substantively peaceful understanding is representative of a reality in the contemporary academic context where the idea of race as a valid and useful way of

and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice and Pedagogy, eds. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 245-270.

¹ See two paragraphs below.

² See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “The Biological State: Nazi Racial Hygiene, 1933-1939.” (11 May 2012). Available from <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007057>. Accessed April 3, 2012.

³ See Alan Robert Templeton, “Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective,” *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (1999): 632-650.

⁴ For instance, recalling James’ point made at the beginning this section, F. James Davis argues that race, particularly in the US, is a social construction. See F. James Davis. *Who is Black?: One Nation’s Definition* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

classifying humankind for scientific or anthropological purposes is no longer accepted in mainstream scientific circles. First, it is broadly accepted that physical traits such as facial form, tooth size, skin colour, eye colour, etc., vary greatly among and within any group. Second, recent genetic research conducted through the human genome project and related efforts have pointed to the fact that there is much less genetic variation than previously thought. That is to say, from a genetic perspective, humans share more similarities than differences.¹

However, in a society that has a long history of “racialization,” the idea of biologically-defined races is still a powerful force that reaches into all aspects of life, including sport and social justice concerns. In fact, as per the cogent example of the colonial experience of African-Americans, it is often the case that racialization is closely tied to racism, inequity and militarism. For example, in the US of the 1960s it would appear the lot of Black Americans was improving. Yet despite the fact that federal law provided assurance that discrimination and racism were wrong, true equity has not yet been obtained—even “desegregation seemed painfully slow.”² Câmara and Galtung also help demystify this connection amongst racism, inequity and poverty. Further, both scholars help us to see that racism, poverty and inequity are harmful in terms of prospects for substantive peace. Câmara does so by effectively demonstrating the links and

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). “The Race Question.” (1950). statement on race available from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001282/128291eo.pdf>. Accessed September 9, 2011 and UNESCO. “Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice.” (1978). Available from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13161&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html. Accessed September 9, 2011.

² F. James Davis, *Social Problems: Enduring Major Issues and Social Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 329.

interlocking tensions amongst violence No. 1, violence No. 2, and violence No. 3.¹ Galtung does so as part of his general discussion dealing with direct, cultural and structural violence. For example, he offers a broad definition of violence which encompasses both racism and militarism: “Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.”² In so doing, he specifically argues that “an extended concept of violence is indispensable” lest peace be understood merely as the absence of physical violence,³ the latter outcome representing an impoverishment of the quest for peace in a holistic sense.

Delineating a further connection here, Ho-Won Jeong notes that when hierarchical values are accepted, they help sustain the operations of oppressive systems. Under such conditions, the cessation of structural violence needs to be accompanied by social and cultural transformation.⁴ Hence, there was a need for the type of activism on display in the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. In support of such a sentiment, Jeong argues that: “If human beings are denied decent education, housing, opportunities to work and freedom to express themselves, they become marginalized.”⁵ The reality of racism as it affected the lives of even elite student athletes in these areas will be unfolded below.⁶ In this regard, it is also instructive to note Rubenstein’s comment that: “The most destructive forms of social conflict, in fact, seem to occur when multiple sources are at play: oppressive class relationships, threatened group identities,

¹ See section 2.1.

² Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, No. 3 (1969), 168.

³ Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” 168.

⁴ Ho-Won Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction* (London: Ashgate, 2000), 6.

⁵ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 21.

⁶ See, in particular, Chapter Four of this thesis.

and clashing worldviews.”¹ In terms of the athletic contest central to the thesis, it is important to remember that class has repeatedly impacted upon the Olympic Games. Bruce Kidd, for example, notes that for a good portion of the twentieth century the Olympics were rightly characterized as “the bosses’ games.”² Furthermore, class animosity was so strong prior to the Second World War that workers felt the need to organize their own sporting associations and games. The most successful of these was arguably the second Workers Olympiad held in Vienna, Austria in 1931, which was attended by over 80,000 athletes and a quarter of a million spectators, numbers which far outshone the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles.³

In a related manner, though focussed in more general terms, Galtung’s concept of structural violence highlights the possibility that persons can be negatively harmed by social institutions and structures even when no moral actor intentionally harms them.⁴ This theoretical construction points to the way that social injustice shares a connection with Galtung’s concept of structural violence. Indeed, Galtung goes so far as to make the terms almost shorthand for each other. He writes: “In order not to overwork the word

¹ Richard E. Rubenstein, “Sources” in *Conflict*, 59. This point of Rubenstein’s may be fruitfully considered with a multidimensional view of social conflict such as the one offered by social cubism. The “social cube of conflict” denotes “six interrelated facets or forces: history, religion, demographics, political institutions and non-institutional behavior, economics, and psychocultural factors.” These factors are understood to combine in different ways in different socio-political conflicts and, as will be evidenced below, are certainly all active in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. For more on social cubism see Sean Byrne and Neal Carter, “Social Cubism: Six Social Forces of Ethnoterritorial Politics in Northern Ireland and Quebec.” *Peace and Conflict Studies* 3, no.1 (1996): 52-72.

² Bruce Kidd, interview conducted by Christopher Hrynkow. Ottawa and Gatineau, March 9, 2011.

³ Kidd Interview.

⁴ Trudy Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” *Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 40, no. 2 (2008): 65.

violence we shall sometimes refer to the condition of structural violence as social injustice.”¹ In opposition to Galtung’s original framing of positive peace as the absence of structural violence and negative peace as the absence of interpersonal violence,² Govier suggests that “we might charitably amend the concept so that positive peace amounts to the absence of *both* interpersonal *and* structural violence.”³ This suggestion fits with Galtung’s own observation that personal and structural violence often appear “to be coupled in such a way that it is very difficult to get rid of both evils.”⁴ This point is also in harmony with Câmara’s reflection and serves to illustrate the multi-layered challenge facing the student-athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

2.6 Awareness of Human Rights and Development of Consciousness⁵

I’m strongly in favour of civil rights. I don’t think it should be discarded at a track meet.⁶
-Tom Waddell.

In the area of Cross-Cultural Education for equity, so closely aligned to the Peace Education field, which draws heavily upon the work of people like Brazilian educator Paulo Freire,⁷ the last five decades have been a period when there has been significant attention to human rights issues. Indeed, on a more macro scale, developments in human rights consciousness, policy and law in the West have had an influence both on public institutions and the general ways that cross-cultural groups relate. In the United States, for example, it has resulted in court challenges regarding schools and equity issues. Both

¹ Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” 171.

² See also section 2.0 for more on Galtung’s distinctive terminology around violence.

³ Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” 14.

⁴ Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” 185.

⁵ This section helps to frame the material presented in chapter five.

⁶ Dr. Tom Waddell, US athlete who finished sixth in the decathlon at Mexico 68. From Tom Wadell, quoted in Edwards, *Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 110.

⁷ For Freire’s most influential treatment of this subject matter see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1999).

during and in the aftermath of the US civil rights movement, not only court challenges¹ but also activist actions have served to focus attention on disparities in educational achievement and systemic discrimination.² In many cases, such tests of the status quo brought unjust forms of social organization into disrepute and forced significant change.

A prime example of such a transformation is found in the person of Martin Luther King Jr. In particular, this shift can be witnessed in King's transition near the end of his life from a civil rights to human rights framing for his activism. In terms relevant to the title of this section, this shift in language may also be related to a shift in consciousness, owing to the more universal and less state-dependant nature of a human rights framing. As we shall see repeatedly below,³ King is a significant figure to many of the student-athlete actors mentioned in this thesis. As such, his life's example is worth unfolding in greater depth at this point.

After attending segregated schools in the southern US, King entered Morehouse College where he earned his BA at the age of 19. He went on to study at Crozer Theological Seminary and, following in his father's footsteps, became an ordained Baptist minister. Between 1951 and 1953, he completed his doctoral residency requirements at Boston University. Having already entered the active ministry, King

¹ The prime example here is *Brown versus Board of Education*, which led the US Supreme Court to declare the *de jure* separation of Black and White students, grounded in the principle of "separate but equal" public schools, was unconstitutional. That decision was handed down in May, 1954. See Howard A. Glickstein, *The Continuing Challenge: The Past and Future of Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: Integrated Education Associates, 1975).

² See, for instance, John A. Kirk, *Redefining The Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

³ In particular, see sections 6.2, 6.4 and the conclusion.

graduated with a PhD in Systematic Theology in 1955.¹ That same year, the now Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. entered the public spotlight for the first time when he joined the famous Montgomery bus boycott during which Rosa Parks was arrested. Soon after, he was elected head of the Montgomery Improvement Association, effectively becoming the spokesperson for efforts to end discriminatory racial policies on the public transportation system in the city. The struggle for such equality lasted 382 days before the US Supreme Court ruled that the segregationist policy on buses was unconstitutional. During that time, King delivered a series of stirring speeches on justice and equity, gave many interviews, had his house bombed, was arrested, cheered and jeered and received a number of death threats.² All of these experiences were foundational for the content, form and tone of his subsequent activism.

In early 1957, King brought the lessons he learned in Montgomery to help coordinate the growing number of bus boycotts spreading throughout the southern United States. At a series of meetings in Atlanta, the Southern Leadership Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration was formed. By February, King was elected as its first president. The organization remains active today as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King may be credited with ensuring that the activities of this group remained nonviolent during the 1950s and 1960s.

This outcome is reflective of the way in which King was always careful to emphasize that non-resistance to evil (passively permitting evil to run its course) and nonviolent resistance (actively getting in the way of violence) are two very different

¹ See Marshall Frady, *Martin Luther Jr.: A Life* (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

² See Martin Luther King, *Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (Boston, Beacon Press, 2010).

strategies for responding to racial oppression. King's basis for the resultant philosophy of active nonviolent resistance for social change came from two people integral to the PACS project: Henry David Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi. King first learned about Gandhi's methodology while studying at Crozer and in 1958 had already presented his own reflection on the power of direct nonviolent action in *Stride Towards Freedom*.¹ This reflection shared the successes of the Montgomery boycott with a wide audience and was influential in advancing the civil rights movement. King's faith in the power of nonviolence as a means of overcoming the evil experienced by oppressed people was further buttressed by a month-long pilgrimage to India in 1959.² Meanwhile, in America, nonviolent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and "freedom rides" to break down colour barriers on public transportation spread throughout the American South.³

His campaign in Birmingham during the spring of 1963 marked King's first effort to organize a nonviolent protest that was not in response to an immediate crisis but, rather, sought to create a crisis of legitimacy in relation to unjust laws and customs. The SCLC-supported direct action crafted to achieve specific goals such as the desegregation of downtown businesses, employment equity and the establishment of a multi-racial board to integrate Birmingham's schools. The reaction to the direct action was intense and gave the civil rights movement two of its iconic moments: (1) the images of fire hoses and police dogs deployed against children, which helped to illustrate the violence

¹ See King, *Stride Towards Freedom*.

² See Martin Luther King with Clayborne Carson, *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York: Warner Books, 1998), 121-137.

³ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

of racism for the American public¹ and (2) the celebrated Easter “Letter from Birmingham Jail” in which King wrote of the interconnection among all people and the moral urgency for positive social change. The latter was his response to several Birmingham area religious leaders who felt that he was part of a movement “directed and led in part by outsiders” and that his brand of nonviolent activism was too confrontational, “unwise and untimely.”²

Events during the summer of 1963 further proved the timeliness of King’s message. In the aftermath of unsuccessful attempts to lobby the Kennedy administration for greater speed in passing civil rights legislation, King helped organize “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” in August of that year. King had used the “I have a dream” phrasing many times previously³ and on that day, looking out on the National Mall packed with an eager audience, he went against the counsel of his advisers to use it again. The speech masterfully combined theological, biblical and American political references to documents such as the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation. In this manner, King was able to invoke strong images of equality, justice and freedom,⁴ which provided significant direction to the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This speech is considered by many to be amongst the finest political speeches of the twentieth century.

¹ For instance, several members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights cite this set of images as consciousness-raising (see below in sections 4.2 and 6.1).

² See Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” in *A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-Violence and World Order*, eds. Joseph J. Fahley and Richard Armstrong (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 114-128.

³ See Clarence B. Jones and Stuart Connelly, *Behind the Dream: The Making of the Speech That Transformed a Nation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

⁴ See Martin Luther King. “I Have a Dream Speech.” (28 August 1968). Available from <http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>. Accessed September 10, 2011.

In 1964, King's growing profile and the validity of his cause were internationally recognized when he became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite the passage of the *Civil Rights Bill* by the Johnson administration that same year, there was still much work to be done in the US against overt racism, inequity and discrimination. In what became the final phase of his career, King changed his focus to a more expansive human rights framing and turned his attention to address concomitant political rights and social justice issues nationwide. This change of consciousness reflected his insight that basic equity was owed to all people, not by the state, but simply due to each person's status as a human being. In this period, King also undertook a crusade against the war in Viet Nam and, as we shall see below,¹ was also involved in the activities of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. More prominently, during 1967, he started to organize "The Poor People's Campaign," working towards the passage of an Economic Bill of Rights for the US as part of a general vision for substantive equity in the country.² In March of 1968, in line with the goals represented by the new campaign, King journeyed to Memphis, Tennessee, in support of a nonviolent and socially-progressive solution to a sanitary workers' strike.³ There, he gave his eerie, "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, which many take as previewing his death at the hands of those who opposed his vision for a just and integrated socio-economic and political environment in the US.⁴ On

¹ See section 6.4.

² See Martin Luther King, *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) and Martin Luther King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

³ See American Experience (PBS) Staff. "Citizen King." (2004). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVz-lz5QN8s>. Accessed September 10, 2011.

⁴ See Martin Luther King, "I've Been to the Mountaintop." (Speech, 3 April 1968). Available from http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/ive_been_to_the_mountaintop/. Accessed September 11, 2011.

April 4, 1968, the day after giving that speech, as King was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, he was fatally shot by a sniper. His death triggered riots in a number of cities across the US¹ and, as we shall see below,² personally affected many of the student-athlete activists involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

As is the case with narratives about the Olympic Project for Human Rights, it is sometimes forgotten when telling the story of King's life that he in fact worked cross-culturally to respond to racism, social injustice and militarism. A grounded link in this regard can be found in the person of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972). Like King,³ Heschel's life and times were interwoven with three phenomenon that are of concern for the field of PACS, all of which are addressed by the athletes' voices that come to the fore in this project as much as possible within the confines of an academic thesis and the limitations of this study: the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust in Europe, the Viet Nam War and the virulent White supremacy that made the US Civil Rights movement necessary. In response, Heschel crafted a spiritual peace witness that addressed the context and content of some the great injustices of the twentieth century. Specifically, Heschel discerned the need for a mobilization of heart, intelligence and wealth for the

¹ See Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

² See section 4.1

³ As was the case with Heschel, King took some of his motivation in this regard from Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932) and correspondence he had with the theologian. See Stanford University's Martin Luther King Jr. and the Struggle for Global Freedom Project. "Niebuhr, Reinhold (1892-1971)." Available from http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_niebuhr_reinhold_1892_1971/. Accessed April 3, 2013. This connection involves friendship flowing in multiple directions. For example, Heschel was not only friends with King but also with Niebuhr. See Ursula M. Niebuhr. "Notes on a Friendship: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Reinhold Niebuhr." (May 16, 1983). Lecture, College of St. Benedict. Available from <http://www.onbeing.org/program/moral-man-and-immoral-society-rediscovering-reinhold-niebuhr/feature/notes-friendship>. Accessed April 21, 2013.

purpose of love and justice in an environment where “Some are guilty; all are responsible.”¹

In a prophetic manner, both before and during the 1960s, Heschel questioned the normative post-war consensus in his adopted homeland, which understood the United States to be a bastion of freedom and a land of equal opportunity. Speaking to his co-religionists, he resisted a trend in the American Jewish community whereby the urgency of the call for justice both at home and abroad was muted in the favour of a privatized expression of a suburban Jewish identity that viewed the synagogue merely as what we would now call a place for social networking. Furthermore, against other trends in North America, Heschel refused to self-identify as a Reform, Orthodox or Conservative Jew. In both religious life and the wider society, he longed to see the kind of commitment to equality, vital spiritual life and prayer he felt in the Hassidic community in Poland as a youth. Indeed, as he made cross-cultural links in the United States, he came to view the Black Churches, with their emphasis on spiritual and social emancipation, as key examples of that prophetic voice in the American context. That insight merged with Heschel’s activist association with King, Jesse Jackson and their supporters, so that, in 1965, when Heschel marched in deep spiritual solidarity with mistreated Blacks in Selma, Alabama, he returned to New York to excitedly report, “I felt my legs were praying.”² Heschel also urged the Jewish community to support controversial affirmative action programs in the early 1970s. In another expression of their mutual concern, King, mere days before his assassination, went to the Catskills with Heschel to speak to an assembly

¹ Abraham Joshua Heschel and Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Essential Writings* [Modern Spiritual Masters Series] (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), 85.

² Heschel and Heschel, 137.

of Rabbis about the importance of American support for Soviet Jews who were facing intense discrimination and, often, persecution at this time. Heschel was also supportive of King's late-life campaign against poverty, believing that economic and social injustice were linked. Notably, Heschel counseled King to follow his informed conscience and speak out against the Viet Nam War, despite the worry that such a stance might damage the civil rights movement. For Heschel, who in various ways coupled social justice and peace, speaking out against such militarism was fully in accord with King's later focus on human rights principles.

Indeed, it was Heschel who, in 1967, introduced King at Riverside Church in New York when the Christian minister finally publicly expressed his dissent against the war in South-East Asia. In his introduction, Heschel emphasized a solid basis for an anti-war position invoking two closely-related themes that feature prominently in his writings, both echoed in the activism of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, human dignity and social justice. According to Heschel, universal and intrinsic human dignity flowed from all persons being made in the image of God. Therefore, he concluded, all people should be treated like "the King of Kings."¹ The equality issues important to the civil rights movement, the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union, the realities of militarism and poverty in the US and the privatization of faith were for Heschel all too reminiscent of a Nazi Germany that laid the foundations for the Holocaust as it silenced prophetic voices. Interestingly, both Heschel and King described each other as prophets. Neither ever allowed issues of local and global solidarity along with just and lasting peace to slip

¹ Heschel and Heschel, 71.

outside of their consciousness. That focus is symbolized by the poignant question that silenced Heschel's rabbinical students, "Are nuclear weapons kosher?"¹

In line with the prophetic example of King and Heschel, Jeong asserts the importance of human rights for PACS in a manner that accords with the story presented in this thesis: "Sustainable peace cannot be obtained without the existence of a civil society that guarantees human rights. Differences in political systems and cultural traditions cannot be used to impede the universal application of human rights standards."² Jeong further argues that: "Until some form of serious challenge is made either violently or nonviolently, those benefiting from the status quo have little incentive for taking the issues raised by the underprivileged seriously."³ This statement recalls the contributions of another prominent figure from mid-twentieth century America who is generally understood to have focused on the development of a specifically Black consciousness to challenge the unjust status quo: Malcolm X.

Malcolm X was one of the most significant and polarizing figures in the struggle for Black rights in America during the 1950s and 1960s. His vision for social change in the face of racial inequality is often contrasted with Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent activism. Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, leaving behind a contested legacy that reflects the different political and religious views he held during his lifetime.

Malcolm X was born as Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska. His parents had met through their involvement in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Malcolm experienced racial discrimination and violence

¹ Heschel and Heschel, 35.

² Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 208.

³ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 32.

throughout his formative years. In fact, in his posthumously published *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which many of the members of the Olympic Project of Human Rights read prior to Mexico 68,¹ he implies that his father's death was at the hands of White supremacists. Malcolm also writes that his promise as a successful, young student aspiring to a law degree went unrealized after a White teacher advised him that such an aspiration was unrealistic for a "nigger."²

By the time he was 21, Malcolm had been, amongst other things, a junior high school dropout, a foster child, an intercity passenger railroad worker and a convicted thief sentenced to 8-10 years in prison. It was during his incarceration that Malcolm learned of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and overcame his hostility toward religion, joining the Nation of Islam. It was by reading extensively while in jail, even after "lights out," he damaged his eyes and acquired his trademark glasses.³

This period of study and discernment in prison gave Malcolm a new perspective on what he came to understand as cycles of violence, greed and oppression that characterized his relationship with White "devils." Malcolm's conversion was further marked by the replacement of his "slave name" with a Muslim "X," representing an irretrievable African family name which "Little" had usurped. After parole and further training, Minister Malcolm X was soon put into the service of the Nation of Islam.⁴ He was instrumental in raising the profile and numbers of Black Muslims in the US. It was during this period that Malcolm made some of his most controversial speeches. On

¹ See, for example, section 5.2.

² See Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1965).

³ See Robert E. Terrill [Ed.], *The Cambridge Companion to Malcolm X* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴ See Malcolm X with Haley.

several occasions he advocated a separatist Black nationalism and argued for the need to respond in kind to White aggression.¹

By 1964, however, Malcolm's developing consciousness had served to change his political and religious views. This latter period of his career challenges many of the stereotypes that are held about him. Malcolm left the Nation of Islam in the wake of: (1) being disciplined for controversial comments he had made after the first Kennedy assassination, and (2) learning of Elijah Muhammad's multiple sexual indiscretions that were in conflict with Black Muslim teachings.² In what became the final phase of his life, Malcolm began supporting a human rights framing for the struggle for Black equity in the US. As will be unfolded more fully below, it was this vision and delineation of the struggle for equity that inspired the Olympic Project for Human Rights' name. As we saw above, this framing was also a preference held by Martin Luther King and Abraham Joshua Heschel in the later stages of their careers.

For Malcolm's part, during the closing years of his life, he returned to the Pan-Africanism that had inspired his parents. On one occasion he even worked in partnership with Dr. King. He also made several high profile transatlantic trips and embraced Sunni Islam.³ While undertaking the Hajj in fulfilment of the fifth pillar of Islam, he experienced a culturally diverse group of people united for a common purpose and found

¹ See Michael Eric Dyson, *Making Malcolm: The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

² See Malcolm X with Haley.

³ Lewis V. Baldwin and Amiri YaSin Al-Hadid, *Between Cross and Crescent: Christian and Muslim Perspectives on Malcolm and Martin* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002).

a new source of inspiration in that experience.¹ On February 21, 1965, in New York City's Audubon Ballroom, while he was expressing the vision of solidarity and racial equality that accompanied these changes in his consciousness and his life, Malcolm was hit with sixteen bullets fired by several gunmen.² This quick end to the final phase of his career may help explain why he is often better remembered for his earlier views, even by some of the actors in the story that anchors this thesis.

Malcolm's return to a Pan-Africanist position³ can be taken as indicative of the importance that the shift to human rights marks in terms of linking the struggle of Black Americans for equity with other liberationist moments directed against global manifestations of racism and colonialist projects, in Africa, Latin America and Asia in particular. These concerns about different manifestations of global racism and colonialism were important to members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and are also reflected in the PACS literature through key figures who have also become important in the field like Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Edward Said and Paulo Freire.

Fanon contributes an understanding of the similarity between colonialist and other forms of racism, which has been applied to a variety of contexts and academic

¹ See Malcolm X. "Interview on Front Page Challenge" (5 Jan 1965). CBC Archives. Available from <http://archives.cbc.ca/dossier.asp?IDClip=13070&IDDossier=2717&page=1&s=entrevue>. Accessed September 10, 2011.

² See Terrill.

³ Manning Marable, notes that Malcolm's drive to link the struggle for Black liberation in Africa and the US also included a unique set of third and fourth dialogue partners in the Caribbean and Asia. Had he lived, Marable posits, Malcolm may have had the charisma to unite these four points of struggle into a single "unprecedented coalition". See Manning Marable. *Living Black History: How Reimagining the African-American Past Can Remake America's Racial Future*. (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2006), 176.

disciplines.¹ In fact, in a book first made available in English as the Olympic Project for Human Rights was planning its actions, he goes so far as to assert that all forms of racism are, at their core, “no different.”² They tend toward binary oppositions wherein “Black” is viewed as a poor opposite of “White,” which in turn underlies violence against the marginalized grouping.³ Drawing on psycho-analytical tools, as a response to racism and pressure towards “whitening,” Fanon advocated a solution that resonated well with what the student athletes were planning and hoping to achieve with their activism:

What emerges then is the need for combined action on the individual and on the group. As a psychoanalyst, I should help my patient to become *conscious* of his unconscious and abandon his attempts at a hallucinatory whitening, but also to act in the direction of change in the social structure.⁴

Dealing with similar subject matter, Said has been a towering figure in post-colonial scholarship. Working from an interdisciplinary perspective informed by literary criticism, he argues that orientalism, a fascination with a misrepresented and racialized other, can support colonialism and other aspects of segmented interest.⁵ Memmi’s contribution, informed by a psychoanalytical perspective, had earlier highlighted the contradictions and oppression inherent in colonialism and argued that the only way the resultant malaise of exploitation could be overcome by the colonized was as they invariably took on the violent habits of the colonizer and turned to revolt for liberation.⁶

¹ See Nigel C. Gibson [ed.], *Living Fanon: Global Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

² Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 88.

³ See Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Paris: Edition La Découverte, 1985).

⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 100.

⁵ See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993). See also Edward W. Said. *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

⁶ See Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (New York: Orion Press, 1965).

In Câmara's reflection, based on the Latin American context presented above,¹ we saw that the knock-on effect of racism and colonialism often resulted in crippling poverty. Yet, Câmara rejected the option of the violence of revolt.² His approach accorded with that of Paulo Freire,³ who worked on "conscientization" as an educative process in precisely this context. Conscientization is a process whereby people come to identify problems within their lived reality, enter into dialogue with each other, and come to recognize that they have "knowledge" and can be actors in (nonviolent) processes of change.⁴ For John Paul Lederach, conscientization is something akin to the exercise of the moral imagination, which he discerns as a catalyst for building peace.⁵

Also within the terms central to the PACS field and remarkably in accord with Malcolm's later vision, Galtung points out a special role for peace research in helping to raise the level of consciousness about the phenomenon of structural violence by revealing its hidden, accepted or even "natural" character.⁶ The danger here is closely related to accepting the "givenness" of certain repressive forms. This danger may be compounded when our only conception of violence (which is generally held to be a bad thing) is too closely tied together with Galtung's "negative peace." As Galtung himself notes, when peace is only understood in its negative sense as being associated with direct personal violence, "then too little is rejected when [negative] peace is held up as an ideal. Highly unacceptable social order would still be compatible with peace. Hence, an extended

¹ See sections 2.1 and 2.2.

² See section 2.1.

³ See the opening of this section.

⁴ See Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

⁵ See section 2.4 for a discussion of the creative nature of the moral imagination, helping to vision transformative alternatives. On this point, in particular, see Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 124.

⁶ Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research", 173.

concept of violence is indispensable.”¹ Of course, the development of consciousness can help precipitate conflict as people become aware of structures, systems and other individuals who are oppressing them. In this light, it is telling that Morton Deutsch remarks: “The question is *not* how to avoid or suppress conflict, doing so usually has harmful or stagnating consequences. Rather, the question is how to create the conditions that encourage constructive, enlivening confrontation of the conflict.”² For the most part, the elements of the actual story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights presented below come together to meet the criteria of Deutsch’s seemingly simple but lofty challenge. Notably, in this light, the student-athletes’ activism that forms the principal subject matter of this thesis confronts an unjust status quo. In this regard, a PACS perspective helps to show how this activism served to open a path for people in the late 1960s. The Olympic Project for Human Right’s example encourages us to consider today how social justice contributes to a more substantive peace.

2.7 Solidarity, Transformational Politics, Faith and Nonviolence³

Helping us to sort out the difference between principled (associated, for example, with Gandhi and King) and pragmatic (associated, for example, with Gene Sharpe) nonviolence, Jeong offers the following summative definition of nonviolent activism which, as we shall see, is relevant to Tommie Smith’s understanding of his involvement in the Olympic Project for Human Rights: “Nonviolent action translates courage, dignity and assertiveness into an effective form of struggle. Nonviolent struggle is non-military, decentralist and participatory but revolutionary in its comprehensiveness of the changes

¹ Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research”, 168.

² Morton Deutsch, “Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice” in *Introduction to Conflict Resolution Studies*, 77.

³ This section helps to frame the material presented in chapter six.

sought.”¹ During his discussion of nonviolence, Jeong adds: “Nonviolence has a broad definition of what causes and constitutes violence; it takes the initiative against the system of dominance and privilege and gives conscious attention to the building of an alternative social structure.”²

Adding another dimension to Galtung’s reflection, Trudy Govier reminds us that, “What has been called nonviolent action is action that may have elements of manipulation and coercion (and thus, arguably, psychological violence) but avoids *physical violence*.”³ Additionally, Govier identifies one possible tension associated with the acceptance of expansive definitions of violence such as the one contained within Galtung’s concept of structural violence, wherein “the definition of violence has become so expansive as to leave no space for *nonviolence*.”⁴ As we shall see later on in this thesis, many have misinterpreted the protests that took place on the podium at the 1968 Summer Olympics as a violent action or at the very least in terms of violent symbolism.⁵ In this light it is interesting to consider Trudy Govier’s assertion that: “if one endorses a broad definition of ‘violence,’ the history of nonviolent action will be diminished accordingly.”⁶

From a PACS perspective, it is, of course, important to take a stand in the face of direct violence and employ nonviolent action to do so.⁷ However, against Govier’s point, one can assert that an expansive definition of violence does not so much trivialize the

¹ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 320.

² Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 327.

³ Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” 62.

⁴ Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” 66.

⁵ See section 6.4.

⁶ Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” 62-63.

⁷ See Sean Byrne and Jessica Senehi, *Violence: Analysis, Intervention and Prevention* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012).

history of nonviolent activism as it requires a broad and integrated approach to peacebuilding. This conclusion is supported by Câmara's context-based reflection on the spiral of violence discussed above.¹ For another example, consider the case of Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), who have a highly-differentiated view of violence in accordance with integral peace and buttressed by theological ethics and yet are at the same time able to work within an invitation dynamic to plan effective nonviolent actions.² Some of my previous research argues that, despite the ambiguous role of religions in conflict and systemic violence, CPTers, by practicing their version of the politics of peace, are participating in a "dialogue of life," wherein people from different communities come together to work on joint projects of violence intervention and prevention. Further, that research notes that CPTers' participation in this dialogue of life is marked by a commitment to integral justice characterized by respect of social, cultural, and biological diversity.³ This application of differentiated nonviolence seems not to diminish but rather enhance the history of nonviolence. It is also indicative of how faith

¹ See section 2.1.

² For a developed discussion of nonviolence see Iain Atack, *Nonviolence in Political Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

³ See Christopher Hrynokow, "Christian Peacemakers Teams, Solidarist Nonviolent Activism and the Politics of Peace: Peace Witness that Challenges Militarism and Destructive Violence," *Journal of Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 40, No. 1 (2009): 111-134. A much more established scholar in the field, Patrick Coy, has recently used Christian Peacemaker Teams as part of a comparative study on protective accompaniment. See Patrick C. Coy, "Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment: Comparative Analyses of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the International Solidarity Movement." *The International Journal of Human Rights* 16, No. 7 (October 2012): 963-981.

can inform nonviolent action and social justice activism.¹ In the latter regard, a telling contribution to the field of PACS has been made by Clinton Bennett.

Informed by his university teaching, work with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), theological training for the Baptist ministry, and experience as a peace activist, Bennett's *In Search of Solutions* presents three contemporary case studies centred on conflicts generally associated with religious violence.² Bennett is best known for his scholarship on Islam³ and so it not surprising that Muslim examples abound as he unfolds his argument. However, because in the West, Islam is often associated with religious violence, he purposely starts with a case study dealing with the intra-Christian dimensions of the conflict in Northern Ireland.⁴ Bennett selects Bosnia as another example because, in that conflict, Muslims were often victims, thus challenging the stereotypical connection between Islam and aggressive violence. Israel-Palestine was chosen as the final case study because of his long time interest in the Middle East along

¹ As an example from someone who modelled this connection in his own life with his famous "return" to Christian Pacifism, see A. J. Muste, *Non-violence in an Aggressive World* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940).

² See Clinton Bennett, *In Search of Solutions: The Problem of Religion and Conflict* (London: Equinox, 2009).

³ Other relevant works from scholars of Islam include: Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said, *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008); Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islamic: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2003) and Amr Abdalla, "Principles of Islamic Interpersonal Conflict Intervention: A Search within Islam and Western Literature." *Journal of Law and Religion* 15 (Fall 2000) 151-184.

⁴ For an accessible comment on both sectarianism and the place of Christianity and its peacebuilding potential in terms of the Northern Irish conflict see Johnston McMaster, "The Role of Religion in Making Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland." *Madang Journal* 6 (September 2007). Available from http://madangjournal.com/bbs/view.php?id=issues&page=3&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select_arrange=hit&desc=asc&no=43. Accessed September 25, 2012.

with the way the region invokes (to an even greater extent than the example of Northern Ireland) the notion of a promised land belonging to a divinely-chosen people.¹

The almost paradoxical goal of the methodology used by *In Search of Solutions* for exploring the history and faith-based dimensions of these violent conflicts is to demonstrate how religions can positively contribute to peacebuilding. Bennett contends that it is too reductionist to assert that religion is the cause of the conflicts he discusses. He argues that, quite simply, if religion could somehow be removed from any of these three contexts, that deletion alone would not have resulted in the full resolution of the conflict, if other divisive issues such as power, clashing nationalisms and wealth distribution went unaddressed.

Bennett buttresses this aspect of his argument by pointing out that there are conflicts that rage on, absent of any significant religious cleavages. Nonetheless, he fully acknowledges that religion has been mobilized to fuel the animosity correlated with destructive violence, most especially when “the other” in any given conflict is demonized with supposed divine sanction. Following upon this acknowledgment and wishing to affirm a revealed element to religious scriptures, Bennett suggests that believers should read all sacred books using the Golden Rule as “hermeneutical key.” Such a lens will serve to discern the manner in which “scriptures, correctly understood, . . . point to a

¹ A parallel can be made here with the work of well-known political scientist, Anthony D. Smith on the intersection of nationalism and religion. See, in particular, Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Compare Izzeldin Abu-Elaish, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity* (New York: Walker & Company, 2012).

peaceful and just world as the only future that is wholly consistent with God's plan.”¹ As we shall see more fully in this project, such an understanding of divine justice and prerogative motivates a number of the actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.²

In addition, to help counter the divisiveness of both contemporary nationalist ideologies and the current structure of the nation-state, Bennett proposes political reform emanating from civil society and devolved local government actors' efforts to reach across frontiers, with the goal of bringing about a global democratic future. Connecting the UN's Millennium Development Goals to the eschatological visions in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures, Bennett holds that bringing religions into the service of peace, so that they might help in this political transformation, requires a non-exclusivist religious response to pluralism focused on positive inter-faith relationships. In addition, these positive relationships, Bennett asserts, need to recognize the possibility of truth in other traditions and be geared towards improving all human life through the “ethic of the higher principle” manifest in nonviolence, love and justice. He understands such an approach to faithful living as not only violence *intervention* but also as violence *prevention* because as humanity matures and more people come to endorse such peace-affirming understandings of religion, “the few” will find recruiting for the cause of violence increasingly difficult. As a result, Bennett is able to at once deconstruct reductionist notions of the roles of religion in conflict, while also acting as an internal voice that challenges people of faith to provide an indication of the continuing relevance of their religious traditions by affirming the value of diversity, nonviolence and justice

¹ Bennett, 29.

² See, in particular, section 6.3.

for all peoples.¹ As we shall see below,² it is religious conviction in this sense that supported many of the student-athletes at the Mexico City Olympics in their activism for social justice and equality.

When acting on a stage as significant as the first satellite supported live televised Olympics, it was the transformational nature of the moment of protest, which took on political overtones. In general terms, from a PACS perspective, one of the key issues at stake in transformative politics is the provision of adequate critical spaces for multiple dialogues amongst people of varying cultural, religious, class, gender, social and ethnic identities in a society.³ As Jeong notes during his discussion of the sources of social conflict:

The absence of social space for facilitating dialogue between diverse identities and values facilitates violent struggles. To prevent unrestrained violence against innocent victims, members of different communities need assistance in recognising shared interests in survival and long-term prosperity. Solutions to the conflict would eventually have to be grounded in structural arrangements that respect cultural and political autonomy of different members of society.⁴

Jeong's analysis, in this instance, points to a role for peacemakers in facilitating such dialogue. Also, the lack of such dialogical space in 1968 may point to one of the key reasons violence boiled over onto the streets in the US and other locations in the world during that year.

¹ See Bennett.

² See, in particular, section 6.3.

³ For a grounding of this statement in terms of the Northern Irish context, see Sean Byrne, "Transformational Conflict Resolution and the Northern Ireland Conflict," *International Journal on World Peace* XVIII, no. 2 (June 2001), 10-11.

⁴ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 74.

In order for such transformational¹ political spaces to change exclusionary practices in a society, in a manner that is effective in the service of peace and justice, those spaces will also have to be solidarist in nature. As part of her discussion of power, and raising an interesting point related to the nature of solidarity, Govier writes: “You can control and influence only with the consent of other people, although you don’t need their consent to destroy them or their property.”² However, influence is redefined when it is realized that interdependence is a moral category. In Roman Catholic social thought, this category for substantive peace and justice is firmly established in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, where John Paul II writes of the “perspective of universal interdependence.”³ In social justice terms, this means that when inequity is prevalent, the common good has been adversely affected. As a result, a crucial solidarist sense emerges in which all members of society suffer due to social injustice. In this light, interdependence makes inequity a problem for the entire body politic.

This position does not, however, imply that any given case of inequality should necessarily be turned over to the state to be dealt with in a rational and abstract manner. Indeed, the structures of the state may be contributing to the problem. Rather, while the state can play a facilitative role and ought to be oriented towards providing the necessary structures so all its citizens can meaningfully participate in deliberations, this is the exact time when people should stand together, as communities of interdependent individuals, to

¹ The language here recalls John Paul Lederach’s preference for the transformation of systems (moving towards more positive and substantively peaceful relationships), rather than their destruction. See section 2.4.

² Trudy Govier, “Power” in *Introduction to Conflict Resolution Studies*, 130.

³ John Paul II. “*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.” (12 Dec 1987). Available from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html. Accessed September 17, 2011, #9.

work out a solution that both heals and builds towards the future. In the current geopolitical situation, this stance may be creating a space for such standing together, for as *Gaudium et Spes* points out: “One of the most striking features of today's world, and one due in no small measure to modern technical progress, is the very great increase in mutual interdependence between people.”¹ The realisation of such interdependence is at once central to a substantive vision of justice and representative of the truth of solidarity. From Paul VI’s perspective, “there can be no progress towards the complete development of the human person without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity.”² Like Câmara’s theory, these words were written contemporaneously with the lead up to the 1968 Olympics. Yet, there remained in the world, as there regrettably still does today, significant inequity compounded by the forces of racism and oppression. Hence, the story that forms the main subject matter of this thesis remains both relevant and poignant.

A person whose work unites each of the themes of faith, solidarity and nonviolence in ways that can inform our understanding of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, is Walter Wink. This former Peace Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, Methodist biblical scholar, and nonviolent activist, sought to respond to the dearth of inequity compounded by the forces of racism, violence and oppression in

¹ Second Vatican Council, “*Gaudium et Spes*: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, edited by David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), #23.

² Paul VI, “*Populorum Progressio*: On the Development of Peoples,” in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), #43.

the world. Indeed, without having read his corpus, over the past few years,¹ I would not understand the makeup of substantive peace as I do today. A good entry point into Wink's corpus is his concept of redemptive violence.

Wink's view on redemptive violence can be summarized quite simply in the following statement: redemptive violence is a myth, one with dire consequences for everyone and everything on this planet. This gives an anthropological (i.e., human) location for violence² and suggests that a more nuanced understanding of Wink's use of the myth of redemptive violence is arrived at when we consider the myth's role within the larger schema of his thought. Accepting such a differentiated understanding, this thesis will now introduce the reader to aspects of Wink's work which will be drawn upon in later chapters.

In order to appreciate the nuances in his work, it is important to grasp the nature of Wink's approach to issues of religion and violence.³ He does not shy away from making normative judgments, somewhat unfashionable in the contemporary academic context. For those experiencing a form of post-modernist fatigue, a thinker who is

¹ This process was kick-started by a book review assignment in one of my PACS classes, which motivated me to read a monograph that had been sitting on my shelf for months. For that assignment, submitted to Dr. Sean Byrne for PEAC 7040 Violence Intervention and Prevention, Winter Term 2008, I focused on Wink's *The Powers That Be: A Theology for the New Millennium*.

² Wink's anthropological location for violence recalls a Girardian perspective. Compare Vern Neufeld Redekop, *From Violence to Blessing: How An Understanding of Deep-rooted Conflict Can Open Paths to Reconciliation* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2002). For a discussion of what might be termed an anthropological location for peace see Douglas P. Fry, *The Human Potential for Peace: an Anthropological Challenge to Assumptions about War and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³ Even mentioning the field of religion and violence recalls the work of René Girard. Wink employs several Girardian ideas. Further, reflections on the sources of social conflict and the mitigation of chaotic violence are at the heart of both Wink's and Girard's thought. For Girard's most famous book see René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979).

unafraid of coming to clear conclusions may be refreshing. However, it is also important to note that Wink is engaged in a form of “critical normativity.”¹ His firm convictions on moral issues were informed by a lifetime of creative nonviolent activism and his faith as a Christian.²

It is upon such foundations that Wink came to discern and write about a spiritual dimension to violence and suffering in this world. Wink’s path towards these issues is his discussion of “the Powers.” Within Wink’s framework, comprehending the true nature of the Powers requires accepting the premise that all things—organizations and people amongst them—have both a spiritual and a physical dimension. The ancient worldview within which the bible was written recognized this as truth.³ According to Wink, because of the presence of this worldview, chapter ten of the book of Daniel speaks of the angels of entire nations being present in the heavenly court. Such corporate angels give insight into the foundational period of the Christian faith wherein Paul of Tarsus addresses some of his epistles to the angels of the congregations to whom he is writing.⁴

Specifically, in the Judaism of Jesus’ time, this view of spirituality was represented in the form not only of angels but also of demons. For the ancients, these angelic and demonic characteristics showed how there was both a visible and invisible aspect to all reality.⁵ What is significant here is the manner in which this spiritual dimension was extended, not only to people, but also to organizations, objects and nations. In a move that previewed corporate culture theory by two millennia, the ancients

¹ For a discussion of “critical normativity,” see section 8.3.

² Wink passed away during an editing stage of this thesis on May 10, 2012.

³ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 39.

⁴ Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 3-4.

⁵ Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 105.

recognised that human organizational forms take on a certain quality that is intangible and is more than the sum of its parts. For the ancients, this reality was firmly part of the spiritual realm, in contrast to most contemporary corporate culture theory that tends to work out of a materialist worldview.

According to Wink's analysis, Jesus' teachings recognize the profound consequences of this spiritual point of view. Jesus was born in Galilee, a backwater of the Roman Empire. The *Pax Romana* into which he was born was by no means a just peace. It was built on the toil of women, slaves and labourers. As a result of practices of the empire such as tax farming and exorbitant interest rates, Galilean peasants were the victims of forces beyond their control. These individuals were Jesus' kin. As a practical consequence, this meant that less wealthy Jews were losing control of the land.¹ Diseases such as leprosy and what today would be termed mental illnesses afflicted those to whom Jesus ministered.² In terms of theodicy, these misfortunes were seen by some to be the result of personal sin or the unfaithfulness of the Jewish people to God.

For the early Christians, Jesus stood in opposition to such an interpretation of events, without ever denying a spiritual reality to this multi-dimensional suffering.³ To those experiencing the forces of empire, he preached love for enemies and stood in solidarity with the oppressed. Jesus invited women, foreigners, the poor, the destitute, and those who were considered sinners and outcasts, to eat with him. This scandalized

¹ Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 18.

² Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 47.

³ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in A World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 314.

some elements in the very communities that shared Jesus' faith tradition.¹ Wink posits that the survival of the table fellowship stories in the canonical Gospels shows their profound importance for the earliest followers of Jesus. In these narratives, Jesus is giving testimony to the way that God's divine love shines and rains down equally upon everybody.² Such a spiritual interpretation did not mean that love for one's enemies ought to result in the acceptance of systems of domination. Yet, if everything had a spiritual reality and everything belonged to God, it did mean that everything had a purpose that was subservient to God's love. However, in the face of the demonic powers of empire, whether consciously or not, most people in Jesus' time seemed to respond to repression in one of two ways: passivity or violence.

The first option, passivity, meant submitting to these forces—in colloquial terms, recognizing that the Powers are “bigger than you” and “making do” as best you can. The second response, violence, meant armed rebellion—a willingness to both fight and die for freedom from such repression. In the Jewish context, the violent option resulted in revolt against the Roman Empire. Defeat in 70CE saw the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the scattering of the people of Israel. With this background in mind, the early Christians argued that those who lived by the sword opened themselves up to the vengeance of the sword and were, furthermore, likely to precipitate the deaths of innocents.³

¹ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 129. See also Luke (15:1-2): “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them’” (ESV).

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 165.

³ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 114.

Crucially for Wink, this early Christian witness provided a challenge to centuries of ingrained and socially replicated “fight or flight” responses to conflict—people had always either coalesced with the Domination System or sought to overcome it with violence.¹ Taking either of these options meant that the logic of the Domination System itself remained unchallenged. According to Wink’s reading of human history, such a repressive logic has its roots in the all too pervasive myth of redemptive violence.

It follows for Wink, that those exercising the unjust control of the Domination System use the myth of redemptive violence in an etiological manner to explain how things become the way they are. Such an etiological analysis allows Wink to conclude that the myth of redemptive violence ought to be considered the original religion of the status quo.² The myth’s roots run deep, as does the belief in its central exhortation that the victory of order over chaos is achieved by means of violence. The message to all adherents of the religion of redemptive violence is that combat brings order and “might makes right.” From this mythical perspective, violence becomes the path to salvation when it holds out the possibility that war will bring a lasting peace.

Wink traces this discourse back to the earliest creation story we know, the *Enuma Elish*, (c.1250 BCE). According to this Babylonian creation myth, it was violence that preceded the good. In killing Tiamet, the mother goddess who gave birth to all the gods, Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, finds the building materials needed to make the cosmos in her dead corpse. The *Enuma Elish* is literally a story of blood and guts, employing this graphic imagery to extol the principle that violence is necessary for

¹ Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence*, 88.

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 48.

order.¹ Wink holds that this story is the self-replicating prototype for the many violent TV shows and Hollywood movies that are popular today.² Moreover, the elements of this story, wherein a male god residing in the sky defeats a female deity from the abyss, are widespread in human societies.³ In this manner, Wink synthesized his research and reflection to discern a typology of the creation story that implicitly justifies the type of violence that is needed to form and maintain an imperial order.

For Wink, however, this Babylonian expression of the myth of redemptive violence is a story “type” that stands in contrast to the narrative found in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. The opening pages of the bible remove violence from creative actions and assert that God and the natural world are good.⁴ This is a particularly important contrast given the current scholarly consensus that Genesis chapter one was written in Babylon during the Jewish captivity.⁵ This contextual data lends textual support to Wink’s assertion that the biblical texts, and Genesis in particular, can be called upon to assert that the cosmic order does not require, as per the Babylonian imperial example, the subjugation of women to men, or of people to a ruler. In the *Enuma Elish*, the entire natural world is the product of deicide—horrific violence was needed for human beings to come into existence. For the ever-present threat of chaos to be overcome, the myth of redemptive violence leads us to believe that we are in need of order from above. Salvation is found in the political order. The state is supreme marker of

¹ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 14-17.

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 45.

³ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 46.

⁴ Walter Wink, *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of Man* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 28. See, for example, Genesis (1:31): “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (ESV).

⁵ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 46.

the good. However, this is a world in which men rule over women, priests control the laity, the peasant toils for the aristocrat, and masters repress slaves—all with supposed divine sanction.¹ This creation story typology too easily supports a form of political realism which views both human nature and wilderness as in need of control from segmented interests with sufficient power to keep chaos at bay.²

In significant contrast to that oppressive typology, Wink continues, the biblical example sources most forms of violence in human action. This anthropological location for violence provides a space for the Domination System to be overcome by human actions and solidarity. The myth of redemptive violence, in contrast, is fully supportive of the idea that violence is ingrained in human ways of being.

In the present age, according to Wink, the myth of redemptive violence transfers easily into a discourse that supports the security state because of the dynamics of military nationalism. As such, this myth continues to foster spirals of national and international conflict. In this worldview, there is no place for cosmopolitan solidarity of the kind witnessed amongst the athletes at Mexico 68,³ because when the state is made absolute then there can be no gods before your country.⁴ In his own national context of the United States, Wink writes of his own witness of these dynamics at play in the case of the Cold War mentality, which fostered an attitude of “you are either with us or against us.”⁵ This mentality was most certainly active in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights as we will see at many points below.

¹ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 47.

² On a related point, see Byrne and Senehi’s discussion on political realism and human nature in *Violence: Analysis, Intervention and Prevention*.

³ See section 6.1.

⁴ Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 87.

⁵ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 57.

In terms of domestic politics elsewhere, the myth of redemptive violence was enacted in places like Chile, South Africa and El Salvador when national security systems were mobilized fully against the peoples of those countries.¹ In these situations, the personal security of dissidents was deemed expendable while the security of the unjust status quo and its state government was not. No higher allegiance is admitted when nationalism is expressed in this fashion. Therefore, any expression of religion that moves beyond mere cultural inheritance is suppressed in such a militaristic context.² Further, any form of faith that survives with state sanction may have given itself over to the replication of an unjust status quo.

Under these conditions, the myth of redemptive violence has become absolute. Nationalism then stops listening for the divine voice and begins to position itself as speaking for God.³ In this situation, the divine is called upon only in parallel with the goals of the Domination System. As a result, the possibility of radically prophetic judgement is eliminated from the religious dynamics of the repressive system to the degree that the myth of violence saturates political life in the state.

Such a mimesis⁴ of the imperial order of old is also further buttressed by our contemporary entertainment industry. Wink cites many examples of the media's role in this regard (such as *X-Men* comics, *Popeye* cartoons and the *Jaws* movies) through which

¹ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 27. Compare Byrne and Senehi's discussion of political realism in *Violence: Analysis, Intervention and Prevention*.

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 58.

³ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 61.

⁴ Unfolding an analysis of the connection amongst, society, violence and the sacred, Girard famously brings the concepts of mimetic imitation and a potential violent contagion to the fore. See René Girard, "The Mimetic Theory of Religion: An Outline," in *2000 Years and Beyond: Faith Identity and the 'Common Era'*, ed. Paul Gifford (London: Routledge, 2003), 88-105.

the entertainment industry perpetuates the myth of redemptive violence.¹ The end result is that, even if countercultural groups like the Olympic Project for Human Rights are trying to offer a real nonviolent alternative in media-saturated cultures, their peacebuilding task becomes very difficult. As part of his contribution on this point, Wink asserts that children today are socialized into the myth of violence throughout their maturation process. He cites the statistic that the typical American is estimated to have watched some 36, 000 hours of television by age eighteen, viewing some 15, 000 murders. Wink retorts that it would take more than a few bland children's sermons to overcome such an influence.²

Transferred into adulthood, Wink argues that this belief in the saving power of violence is so pervasive as to merit the label of an addiction, one every bit as destructive as those associated with mind-altering substances. Civilization itself, he argues, suffers from this addiction to the myth of the power of redemptive violence.³ Indeed, Wink adds, it is the myth of redemptive violence, not faiths like Christianity or Islam, which deserves the title of the world's dominant religion.⁴ The myth's hold is so powerful that people need help to break the cycle of violence through creative acts just like the protests orchestrated by the student-athletes competing at Mexico 68. For both Wink and many of the actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights,⁵ it follows that divine aid is required to emerge from the grip that social injustice and the false belief that "violence saves" currently have on human civilization.

¹ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 18-24.

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 54.

³ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 142.

⁴ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 42.

⁵ See section 6.3

According to Wink's analysis, recognizing the powerful hold that the myth of redemptive violence has on people and their organizations, Jesus' teachings offered another option. This "third way" was centred on the idea that the entire system, both friends and enemies along with both repressors and repressed, belonged to God. Wink is quick to assert that this does not mean that the divine sanctioned repression. Rather, it meant that there was something more important than the empire itself, an idea which was revolutionary in Roman times. Citizens of the empire were meant to give their total allegiance to the empire's vision of order. The figurehead of the system, the emperor, was worshiped as a god in the Roman world. When the earliest Christians refused to burn incense to Caesar's image, they were demonstrating that their ultimate allegiance lay beyond imperial policies.¹

In terms of Gospel teaching in this area, Wink brings a contextual analysis to Matthew 5:41: "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles." For Wink, this verse comments on imperial policy that permitted Romans soldiers to press civilians into carrying their military packs one mile. Allowing or forcing someone to go beyond a single mile exposed the soldier in question to severe penalties. Under normal conditions a soldier would have to conscript someone at the roadside to render this one-mile service, encountering a civilian willing to carry the pack another mile would have figuratively thrown a soldier off balance—perhaps, even making a legionnaire, fearful of discipline from his superiors, plead with a Galilean peasant who embraced Jesus' creative nonviolent methodology to give him back the pack. Here, according to Wink's analysis,

¹ Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 101.

“going the extra mile” takes on a whole new meaning; it was a creative response to a situation of repression.

In this light, it was not a command to submit to the forces of empire that is invoked in this passage. Rather, it recalls a teaching moment in the life of Jesus, which helped bring those who heard these words towards a realization that, in ultimate terms, even imperial policy was not absolute because everything, even Caesar’s rules, belonged to God.¹ A similar sentiment is expressed by many of the actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.² For Wink, emphasizing that the system belongs to God has profound implications. It means that the Powers are good (like we are), the Powers are fallen (like we are) and the Powers are redeemable (as we are).³

Wink’s biblical analysis is significant from a PACS perspective because it allows one to conclude that all human ways of organizing our world are, ultimately, subject to a final authority that is beyond the sum of the parts of those systems themselves. Similarly, systems or aspects of systems that departed from divine purpose became an issue for the early Christians. Repression and the myth of redemptive violence could no longer be seen as tenable because the divine had shown itself in the self-giving love of Jesus.⁴ Put into practice, this difficult teaching meant that the early Christians had to work hard in order to fulfil their mission of confronting the Domination System in all its forms.

Embracing nonviolent methodologies for social change, people like Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr., who influenced a number of the actors in the story of

¹ Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence*, 22-26.

² See section 6.3.

³ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 10.

⁴ Wink, *Unmasking the Powers*, 105.

the Olympic Project for Human Rights,¹ took up the task of confronting the Domination System in a creative manner.² For Wink, that challenge is still present today. This imperative calls on theists, who seek to follow the path of nonviolence, to do their best to bring everything back towards its divine purpose. In practical terms, this means recognizing that all objects, every person and the world's ecological systems have a spiritual dimension that allows for the possibility of participation in an all-inclusive divine love.³ Wink holds that this form of love must be the true nexus of redemption. Violence has no part to play therein.

Fully grasping and incarnating what Wink desires to extol in this regard is difficult for even the most ardent peace activists, who may slip into the error of defining their identities in opposition to those with whom they are engaged in struggle. Embracing the methods of the oppressor and/or the repressive system and hating the enemy or employing violence is folly because it merely mimics that which it opposes.⁴ Such mimesis fails to break the very cycles of violence and oppression that are the source of

¹ See section 6.5.

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 111.

³ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 267.

⁴ Consider here the Girardian notion of the “imitator paradox.” Girard summed up the imitator paradox “mechanism” nicely with one of his typical (rather gendered) analogies in a 2001 interview with CBC’s *Ideas* program: “you do everything to not imitate your model. If he wears a blue tie, you wear a red one, but you still imitate him madly in the sense that you desire everything that he desires. If you’re my model and I fall in love with your wife, or your daughter, we’re going to be rivals. Period. And this rivalry will play both ways because probably you are no longer in love with your wife because you’ve possessed her securely for many years. And my desire is going to revive yours. Therefore, you’re going to become imitator as well as my model and everything will move both ways in perfect identity, finally, but always interpreted in terms of difference.” From René Girard, *The Scapegoat: René Girard’s Anthropology of Violence and Religion*, ed. David Cayley (Toronto: CBC Ideas Transcripts, 2001), 4.

suffering.¹ For Wink, the only sustainable alternative in the face of the all-pervasive myth of redemptive violence is the third way, a manner of proceeding that abhors both passivity and violence.²

In opposition to the ideas that nonviolence only works in select contexts or with certain civil repressors (like the British in India), Wink responds that nonviolence works where violence would work and nonviolence does not work where violence would not work.³ Nonviolence, however, is always to be preferred because it confronts the myth of redemptive violence itself by viewing the transformation of the self and the world as real possibilities invoked by nonviolent responses to situations of conflict.⁴ In this light, it should be remembered that aggression operating according to the dynamics of the myth of redemptive violence requires a loser, one who is often dead or permanently injured as a result of a destructive engagement. Winks adds that, even when it does fail, nonviolent action achieves a measure of victory because it stands as testimony to the divine promise that God's system will someday prevail over violence and the win/lose dichotomy may be overcome.⁵ In this regard, for Wink, embracing a methodology of nonviolent structural change is related to a fundamental choice about what kind of world we wish to live in and leave for future generations.

According to Wink's analysis, we are the first generation of humans with the option of choosing a worldview.⁶ He argues that what we need today is to recognize the

¹ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 201

² Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 111.

³ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 177.

⁴ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 200. Compare Kenneth E. Boulding, *Three Faces of Power* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1989).

⁵ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 239.

⁶ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 22.

need to engage in the struggle to free the Powers on this planet within an integral worldview.¹ This is the worldview of Aboriginal spirituality and the truth contained within the ancient Chinese Yin-Yang symbol, which acknowledges a divine presence in all things.² Such movement is absolutely necessary because of the way the integral worldview sees a crucial connection between (1) all things, (2) every living being and (3) past, future and present generations. Knowing that this global system can be transformed through the building of more integral relationships leaves all peoples with an enormous challenge to realize such a condition of love. Accepting Wink's interpretation of the biblical narrative brings this challenge from Jesus' time into present day struggles to emulate divine love and transform contemporary incarnations of repression and empire.³ In this manner, Wink takes insights about the social and political implications of the Gospel to a whole new level, recasting the Matthew 5:48 exhortation to "be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect" as a challenge to love, as God does, all that exists.⁴

Through these means, Wink counters the idea that Christians ought to be warriors⁵ for God's kingdom by arguing that the witness of Jesus' ministry on earth calls all those who wish to follow his example towards a third way, that of creative nonviolent action in resistance to systems of domination.⁶ Wink's work, of course, is unapologetically Christian, aimed at challenging those who take Jesus' teaching and the

¹ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 184-185.

² Walter Wink, "The New Worldview: Spirit at the Core of Everything." In *Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System*, eds. Ray C. Gingerich and Ted Grimsrud (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 21-24.

³ Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 277.

⁴ Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 165-166.

⁵ Compare this point with Harry Edwards' use of "Black warriors". See the body of the main text and footnote in section 6.2.

⁶ Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence*, 28.

Bible seriously to actively seek to destroy the foothold that the myth of redemptive violence maintains in this world by embracing a transformative nonviolent struggle against repressive forces in all their forms, inclusive of social injustice and race-based discrimination.¹ In a significant sense, as we shall see below, a number of the actors involved in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights take up Jesus' challenge much as Wink understands it.

The student athletes take up this challenge courageously, a point that I develop further in the conclusion.² For now, it is sufficient to note that: (1) Wink's understanding of Jesus' peace witness as it relates to the student athletes' worldview; (2) what it meant to be a Black man taking control of his identity in the late 1960s; and, (3) the virtue of courage are intertwined in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Wink's Christocentric analysis offers an important series of concepts that aid in understanding the motivations of the athlete activists at Mexico 68. However, courage is, of course, not the preserve of Christians. Further, the field of PACS is open to insights from various religious traditions. In light of the above and by way of an example, a significant point about the virtue of courage can be made here with reference to Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan (1890-1988), often called "The Frontier Gandhi."³

¹ Consider how different this perspective is to the more pragmatic notion put forward by William Ury of a "third side," where different peacemaking roles are taking on in response to different conflict situations. See William Ury, *The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop* (New York Penguin), 2000.

² See section 8.1.

³ What follows combines material from: (a) Adnan Majid, "Hudaybiya: Islam's Victory by Nonviolent Resistance," *Muslim Peace Fellowship Blog* (10 July 2012). Available from <http://mpf21.wordpress.com/2012/07/10/hudaybiya-islams-victory-by-nonviolent-resistance/>. Accessed February 20, 2013; (b) Gayatri Srinivasan, "Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan," *Security Research Review*. Available from <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/SRR/Volume11/gayatri.html>. Accessed February 20, 2013; and (c) Sayed

Khan was a Pashtun born in British Colonial India. His people were split into two large groups by the Durand Line (1893), separating what today is the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region and considered by many to be the most violent region on Earth. Pashtuns are mostly followers of Sunni Islam but prior to the coming of Islam had been Hindus and still retained elements of the caste system. Khan refused to participate in the directly retributive justice system that too often marked the Pashtun experience.

Further, Khan chose not to take a rare offer (perhaps in part motivated by his 6'3" stature) of a commission in the British India Army directly out of high school because he did not want to (continue) be treated as a second class citizen. He also considered going to university in London but, at the request of his mother who did want to "lose" another son to the British, he opted to stay in the North West Frontier province.

Meanwhile, the British had passed a law, *The Frontier Crimes Regulation*, that allowed persecution for crimes without the usual rules of evidence, essentially allowing for persecution at the colonial administration's will. The resultant conflict dynamics helped to unite Pashtuns, who were often divided along tribal lines, in mutual hatred of the regime in British India. Khan effectively taps into this unity to found a number of organizations in the 1920s including, most prominently, the Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God). These red-shirted revolutionaries grew into an "army" of 100,000 men dedicated to achieving independence without spilling British blood.

Wiqar Ali Shah, "Abdul Gaffar Khan," *Baacha Khan Trust Article Series*. Available from <http://www.baachakhantrust.org/AbdulGhaffarKhan.pdf>. Accessed February 20, 2013.

In response to those who were surprised to hear of a Muslim nonviolent movement at the time, Khan responded: “There is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan [Pashtun] like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence. It is not a new creed. It was followed fourteen hundred years ago by the Prophet all the time he was in Mecca.”¹ In the 1920s he also formed an alliance with Gandhi and the Congress Party, which lasted until partition in 1947. He engaged in several dialogues with Gandhi. Here is one famous exchange that will be relevant to my conclusion² (Khan is the first speaker):

Gandhiji, you have been preaching non-violence in India for a long time now, but I started teaching the Pathans non-violence only a short time ago. Yet, in comparison, the Pathans seem to have grasped the idea of non-violence much quicker and much better than the Indians. Just think how much violence there was in India during the war in 1942. Yet in the North West Province, in spite of all the cruelty and the oppression the British inflicted upon them, not one Pathan resorted to violence, though they too possess the instruments of violence. How do you explain that?

Gandhi replied: “Non-violence is not for cowards. It is for the brave and the courageous. And the Pathans are more brave and courageous than the Hindus. That is the reason why the Pathans were able to remain non-violent.”³

This point connecting courage and identity within a principled nonviolent framework is, in my view, a fine place to end this section.

2.8 Conflict Resolution/Transformation⁴

Rubenstein discusses three processes that he holds are essential to conflict resolution. As we shall see below,⁵ all three of these processes were conspicuously absent in the dispute between members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the

¹ Khan quoted in Majid.

² See section 8.1.

³ Khan and Gandhi quoted in Srinivasan.

⁴ This section helps to frame the material presented in chapter seven.

⁵ See, in particular, section 7.2.

International Olympic Committee. This lack of substantive conflict resolution may be because of the conflict's factious nature:

Where the conflict is dissensual, technical matters cannot usually be negotiated until the parties have dealt with more fundamental differences. Conflict resolution thus requires processes designed to help the parties *analyse* the reasons for the breakdown of their relationship, *envision* methods of creating or re-creating a legitimate system, and *evaluate* the potential of alternative courses of action to restore normative consensus.¹

Rubenstein's argument continues: "Moreover, developing adequate options for these [dissensual] conflicts means helping the parties generate options that will permit a *restructuring* of the failed system."² In the case of the dispute involving the Olympic Project for Human Rights, the restructuring required was on a monumental scale because both social and economic inequity, along with other factors, combined to make manifest a significant power differential between the Olympic establishment and the activist actors.

As such, one of the meta issues in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights to be explored below,³ revolves around basic equity. Jeong argues that: "Serious conflict is embedded in an inequitable social and economic system, reflecting prolonged exploitation supported by coercion."⁴ Sport as a reflection (or as a microcosm) of society is not immune to such inequities and in many cases may reproduce them. Sporting associations may also be particularly prone to having underdeveloped conflict resolution mechanisms.

¹ Rubenstein, "Institutions," in *Conflict*, 169. Emphasis in the original.

² Rubenstein, "Institutions," in *Conflict*, 172. Emphasis in the original.

³ See, in particular, Chapter Five.

⁴ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict*, 31.

In a talk at the Arbitration and Mediation Institute of Ontario Annual Luncheon, which confirms many of Bruce Kidd's observations and recommendations shared below,¹ Graeme Mew focused on the way that disputes were resolved in amateur sport. Overall, he noted that there is a lack of clearly defined dispute resolution processes in amateur sport. Further, Mew commented: "Quite often even when there are procedures, they do not meet some of the basic criteria of natural justice or fairness."² In his considered opinion, one of the main barriers preventing the establishment of such procedures is the notion that defined dispute resolution mechanisms undermine leadership and effective decision making in sport-related matters. In the face of disputes appropriate specifically to culture in athletics, Mew suggests a guiding criterion for solving disputes in sport whereby: "What is fair will vary depending on the situation and on the issues at stake and the possible repercussions of the decision; the greater the impact of the decision the more the procedural safeguards of fairness."³

Looking at the more macro scale, as a part of a solution to the problem of fairness in this regard, Govier suggests:

Disadvantageous and unjust social conditions need not be labelled as instances of "violence" in order to merit study by peace researchers. Conditions such as poverty and social inequality can be studied as contributory causes of physical violence or as unjust and undesirable in their own right.⁴

One can safely suggest that the subject matter of this thesis centres on themes that can qualify as peace research, through either of Govier's suggested routes. In this regard, it is

¹ See, in particular, section 7.2.

² Graeme Mew, "From Little League to Ben Johnson: Alternative for Resolving Sports Disputes." (6 May 1999). Centre for Sport and Law. <http://www.sportlaw.ca/articles/other/article7.html>. Accessed March 29, 2008.

³ Mew.

⁴ Govier, "Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions," 66.

also informative to note that Jack Duvall and Peter Ackerman suggest that there exists such a thing as nonviolent force. They assert that nonviolent force “works by identifying an opponent’s vulnerabilities and taking away his ability to maintain control.”¹

Such force, further evidenced below,² can contribute positively to transforming conflict, especially in the case of large power differentials such as the one that existed between the International Olympic Committee (unfettered by a formal conflict resolution policy in 1968) and the student athletes in this story. Jeong posits that in conflict situations, power differentials “are based on the ability to mobilize both material and symbolic resources that are critical to determining the outcome of the conflict. The actors do not have the same resources as revealed in various economic and social relationships.”³ In this regard, one key point that Govier makes about nonviolent action, in contrast to physical violence, centres on the way nonviolence allows (even when it is coercive) for “human” responses to conflict:

When physical force is “great,” intense and startling, escape or resistance is difficult or impossible. In the absence of physical violence, a human response is possible; deliberation, choice, autonomy, and a variety of actions remain open to an agent. It is this point, I suggest, that has moral significance and argues against the use of physical violence and in favour of nonviolent action.⁴

Along similar lines, Jeong submits that: “In order to achieve the goal of structural transformation, conflict intervention may be geared toward promoting a dialogue and

¹ Peter Ackerman and Jack Duval, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2000), 494.

² In this regard, consider Bruce Kidd’s observations about the importance of due process, in particular, as reported in section 7.2.

³ Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 31.

⁴ Govier, “Violence, Nonviolence and Definitions,” 79.

educational process to change positions of those entrenched in maintaining dominant interests.”¹

Bringing this way of human knowing to the fore, in *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, PACS theorists Cheryl Picard, of Carleton University’s Centre for Conflict Education and Research and Kenneth Melchin, of Saint Paul University’s Conflict Studies and Theological Ethics program, propose a model of “Insight Mediation” based on what they term “Insight Theory” and a model of conflict as learning. Potentially overcoming some of the association of mediation with elite efforts to maintain unjust power differentials, Melchin and Picard see Insight Mediation as “a learning-centred model that builds upon the twin pillars of practice and theory.”² Insight Mediation is centred on a form of reflective practice focussed on our personal acts of understanding,³ which are verifiable within the realm of our experience.⁴ As such, in a space beyond mere interests⁵ an “aha” moment emerges as new with regards to understanding feelings, perspectives and relationships⁶ of “the other.” The relevant illustrative parallel from Lonergan’s *Insight: A Study Into Human Understanding* is that monograph’s recounting of the eureka moment, when Archimedes jumped naked out of

¹ Ho-Won Jeong, “Structure” in *Conflict*, 163.

² Kenneth R. Melchin and Cheryl A. Picard *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 48.

³ Melchin and Picard, 51.

⁴ Melchin and Picard, 23.

⁵ Such a space of encounter on the human level beyond interests was sorely missing in the way the International Olympic Committee representatives “handled” members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. See, in particular, section 7.2.

⁶ Melchin and Picard, 4.

the bath after previously scattered data came together, allowing him to formulate his famous principle based on the displacement of water.¹

Applying something akin to the five steps delineated by Melchin and Picard² to the macro-justice issues that concerned the student athletes who were human rights activists in the late 1960s, it may also be helpful to note Rubenstein's point that conflict resolution has a deeper purpose when it comes to the repairing of fractured relationships: "The purpose of conflict resolution, in other words, is not just to help solve disputes by using alternatives to accepted legal or political procedures, but to help conflicting parties repair, reconstruct, or create new normative systems."³ The tension represented here, amongst: (1) mutually enhancing relationships; (2) a longed for equitable social reality; and, (3) conflict resolution's teleological purpose and outcome will be a recurring feature of many aspects of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights presented in this thesis.

2.9 A Typological Note on "a PACS Perspective"

This thesis will frequently mention a phrase like "from a PACS perspective" as a way to mark points of comment, analysis and divergence. This is not an empty phrase. Rather, it represents a deliberate invocation of a conflict transformation and peacebuilding typology inspired by Câmara and informed, in large part, by theoretical reflections surveyed above on: (1) racism, militarism, and violence; (2) awareness of human rights, and development of consciousness; (3) solidarity, transformational politics, faith, and nonviolence; and, of course; (4) conflict resolution/transformation. In this

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 27-28. This volume was first published in 1958.

² See section 2.8.

³ Rubenstein, "Institutions" in *Conflict*, 169.

manner, at its root “from a PACS perspective” and its variants invokes my considered interpretation¹ of the aforementioned fields of Peace Studies, concerned with social justice and Conflict Resolution Studies, which is praxis centred and in the transformative shading of Lederach² tries to shift the energies in a situation of conflict toward positive outcomes and solutions. Up to this point in the thesis, we have begun to get a feel for the types of concerns that fall within the interdisciplinary scope of the field of PACS. These concerns and their accompanying support in the PACS literature will continue to be unfolded, delineated with additional citations, and differentiated as the reader proceeds through the thesis. It is these concerns and commitments, as pointed to in the example and praxis of Câmara and the themes listed as the subject headings of the above sections which are invoked with the phrase “from a PACS perspective” as used in this thesis. This notion of concern and commitment may seem odd or misplaced from the perspective of avowedly neutral and/or objective disciplines. Yet, in another light, what a PACS doctoral program brings to the academic table when studied at a centre for peace and justice is carefully formed commitments that remain open to revision when met with new information and insights but nonetheless retain a focused goal (or *telos*) of fostering and

¹ Compare this with other attempts to sort out what remains a dynamic and emerging field of PACS. For example consider the following recent works: Charles Webel and Johan Galtung [Eds.], *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (New York: Routledge 2007); Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk and I William Zartman [Eds.], *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (Sage: London, 2009); Dennis J. D Sandole and Ingrid Sandole-Staroste. “Epilogue: Implications for Theory Practice Research, and Teaching.” In *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, eds. Denis J. D. Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Sandole-Staroste and Jessica Senehi, 531-534 (London: Routledge, 2009); Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi and Sean Byrne [Eds.], *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice and Pedagogy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011); Roger Mac Ginty [Ed.], *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding* (New York: Routledge, 2013) and Graig Zelizer [Ed.], *Integrated Peacebuilding: Innovative Approaches to Transforming Conflict* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013).

² See section 2.4.

building substantive peace in this world. Below,¹ I will suggest that this can be associated with a quality of critical normativity inherent in the PACS field and especially in the Peace Studies component of the field, which is particularly relevant to the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

For the moment, however, it is sufficient to note that phrases like “from a PACS perspective” when used in this thesis can be taken as invoking a set of concerns and commitments emerging from my doctoral coursework and contemporaneous reading since being admitted to the PACS program that are relevant for those devoted to building and otherwise fostering the conditions for achieving substantive peace. These include, but are not limited to, the main features pointed to in the title of this thesis, which place value on: (1) the fostering of and exercise of agency (particularly when oriented towards social justice and peace); (2) strong commitments to nonviolence and human rights; (3) the notion there is significant worth in student-athletes participating in activism for positive

¹ See the main text and its companion footnote in section 8.3 for a discussion of the concept of critical normativity and its applicability as a characteristic of Peace Studies. There is a rough parallel to be made here with Bernard Lonergan’s notion of “authentic subjectivity,” which rests on the realization that “[g]enuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.” From Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 292. From this typology, it follows that to remain both authentic and objective, the results of any inquiry must forever be mediated by a recognition that emergent information may require the updating of any or all previously drawn conclusions. It is important to further note that it is within the dynamic of openness to new information that Lonergan located both objective and authentic human knowledge: “before we have [such authentic] judgements there is an accumulation of insights, acts of understanding; and the insights arise upon experiences.” From Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 235. Thus, the act of updating the conclusions that generate systematic foundations for praxis-based action grows out of experience-inspired insight. Further, this updating becomes essential to personal and, by extension, systematic authenticity. It follows that any knowledge set emerging out of insight, to remain objective and authentic, must always be held tentatively, in that the results of the curiosity-inspired concrete connections that give rise to concepts must remain open to revision when necessitated by those same dynamics.

social change; and, (4) the premise that cultures of peace are worth naming, celebrating, fostering and incarnating in different contexts. In this sense, “from a PACS perspective” is a value-laden phrase.

2.10 Literature Dealing with the Case Study from Other Academic Disciplines

This thesis is the first piece of sustained writing to address the case of the Olympic Project for Human Right from a PACS perspective. However, due to its limitations¹ this study owes a great deal to popular and academic writing dealing with the case study. In the next section, I will comment on some of the popular sources. Here, I would like to briefly review and acknowledge my debt to and appreciation of the scholarly contributions in the area.²

There are two principal academic monographs analysing the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.³ They share similarities in that both were written by American academics who are now full professors at their respective institutions. Each of these monographs also have their origins in doctoral dissertations. And both authors were unable, as is the case with my research, to interview the principal actors. I have employed these monographs mostly to bring to the fore aspects of the student-athletes’ stories that were not available to me from other sources. Although I recognize Bass and Hartmann’s contributions, their theoretical analysis was not my main concern because I initially read

¹ See Chapter Three for more on the limitations of this study.

² Readers of this thesis may find it helpful to refer at this point to the list of 18 key figures related to the story of student-athlete activism at the Mexico City Olympics found in Appendix A.

³ These two monographs are: Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympic and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) and Douglas Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

their monographs looking to recover and selectively harvest aspects of the athletes' stories. As will be more fully developed below in my "Note on the Uniqueness of this Thesis,"¹ the focus of my project is quite different. Instead of employing their favoured social and cultural theories, I was aiming to tie my findings back into the PACS literature and PACS areas of concern. Further, because I read their work *after* I had already interacted with the majority of the other sources available to me, Bass and Hartmann's monographs were most helpful in filling a few gaps in the story. Yet, reviewing these two books and other academic treatments of the case study is important for an understanding of their perspectives on the relevant issues. This act of reviewing also helps to differentiate their work from my own, so as to situate the distinctive contribution of this thesis (a task undertaken most concerted below).²

Amy Bass is currently full professor of History at the College of New Rochelle, New York. *Not The Triumph but the Struggle* (2007) was her first book. It helped launch her career and also initiated an association between Bass and NBC—she has acted as the TV network's chief researcher during the Olympic Games on a number of occasions. A first thing to note about her monograph is the cover, which reproduces a picture without Norman, indicating a general lack of international cross-cultural concern in the piece. Though not her focus, that element of international solidarity within the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights (as invoked by the person of Norman), adds an important dimension to the events at Mexico 68. Bass does tell that story in a fairly full manner given the resources that were available to her. She surveys a good deal of the

¹ See section 2.11.

² For more on the uniqueness of this thesis, with some contrast made to Bass and Hartmann, see section 2.12.

relevant academic literature in the areas of historical, social and cultural theory in this monograph and brings some useful perspectives to the fore. For example, she notes that the games were the largest sports media event in the history of the world at the time¹ and argues that they helped to solidify the “Black athlete” as a political category.² Moreover, she suggests a way in which the protest provides a way for us to think about human rights in the context of global citizenship. Bass concludes with a telling socio-political comment contrasting the figures of Smith and Carlos with the commercialism of celebrity-athletes like Michael Jordan which, she argues, helps to complete the project of Reaganism.³

Douglas Hartmann is now full professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. As noted above, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete* (2003) is a reworking of Hartmann’s doctoral thesis, for which Bruce Kidd (who contributes immeasurably to my thesis work) acted as the external examiner.⁴ In relation to Bass’ work, Hartmann brings much the same type of material to bear on this story though, arguably, he does a finer job of weaving it together. Unlike Bass, Hartmann includes interview data and generally approaches the subject matter through more differentiated and robust sets of theoretical lenses, many of which would be recognizable to those who have studied sociological and cultural theory. He also seems to raise the interesting possibility that the rehabilitation of key figures in the Olympic Project for Human Rights has served to mute their social message.⁵ Hartmann, in a similar manner to Bass, argues that Smith and Carlos helped to introduce “Blackness” into the mass

¹ Bass, 100. I will cite a number of her points as they fit organically into my research.

² Bass, xx, 239. I will develop this point in a different direction below. See, for example, section 7.4.

³ Bass, 348.

⁴ Kidd Interview.

⁵ I will offer an alternative reading on this point. See sections 7.4 and 7.5.

American culture.¹ I also get the sense that he delved deeper into Smith, Carlos and Evans' stories than did Bass. Norman, however, only receives three mentions in the main text. That said, Hartmann did not have access to all the resources I did, which helped to make that process more complete. On the whole, his volume is also much more technical than Bass' work. Further, beyond the case study material, Hartmann does have an interesting normative and methodological component that seems to be geared towards lending a sort of social-scientific validity to his social policy recommendations. That feature of his work may be interesting to some in the PACS field.

Other academic researchers have addressed the case study in different forms. For example, Kevin Witherspoon, a historian, has recently looked at the 1968 Olympics in light of several socio-political events and contexts that came together in Mexico City in October. *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (2008) offers an analysis that is more global than Bass and Hartmann and thus less US centric; although Witherspoon still clearly remains, from a Canadian perspective, embedded in a US context.² We learn, for instance, about the status of sport in Mexico in the decades leading up to the games and both the political manoeuvring and joy that accompanied the first time the Olympics was awarded to a less economically-developed country. This monograph also emerges from Witherspoon's PhD work, yet it is arguably more readable than either Bass or Hartmann.

¹ He develops this point in an interesting direction, which I address and then build on in section 7.5.

² See for, example, his description of Mexico City. Interestingly from a post-colonial perspective, he points out that the Mexico 68 official performances of culture included much European and American content (Witherspoon, 76-77).

Witherspoon also shares that Smith and Carlos are what drew him to these Olympics (as was true in my case as well). However, where he delved into the history and practice of international relations in a quite holistic sense that included local context, I used this story as a way of refining and developing a PACS perspective that I have been dialoguing with on a fundamental level since 2006. Hence, in Witherspoon we get more on Mexico and the student massacre in the Plaza las Tres Culturas, more on the Cold War and more on the Olympics from a global perspective and more on the games' characteristics as an international relations phenomena.¹ These areas are certainly of interest from a PACS perspective. Indeed, Witherspoon effectively shows that the events at Mexico 68 certainly represented a turning point in Olympic History.² However, I have chosen to focus on the student-athletes' voices as much as possible. On a more theoretical note, I have sought to highlight how their original views of the protests and their ongoing process of conscientization, can place the Olympic Project for Human Rights within the history of nonviolent protest and cultures of peace.

Another dissertation, this time unpublished and written in the field of Education (with a focus on sport history), by Maureen Smith, is also relevant to my study. In "Identity and Citizenship: African American Athletes, Sport, and the Freedom Struggles of the 1960s" (1999), Smith previews the point that both Hartmann and Bass make about "Blackness" coming into its own as category at the 1968 Olympics. She, however,

¹ For example, early on in Witherspoon's monograph we encounter the theme of how winning and presenting the games relates to Mexico's ambition to join the category of "modern" nations. See Witherspoon, 6.

² Witherspoon, 157. Kevin Wamsley also notes that Mexico 68 and, in particular, the various crises that IOC president Avery Brundage had to deal with in the run up to the games help to show the political significance of sport in broader framework of international relations. See Kevin B. Wamsley, "The Global Sport Monopoly: A Synopsis of 20th Century Olympic Politics" *International Journal* 57, No. 3 (Summer, 2002), 403.

demonstrates a more complete genealogy for the idea, unfolding it in chapters addressing: (1) the “revolt of the college athlete;” and, (2) Tommie Smith and John Carlos in a line of argument giving greater proportional weight to other happenings in sports like boxing and baseball.¹ Although not allowing for subtleties or nuanced analysis in Smith and Carlos’ case, these two chapters overlap with my main research focus. I must emphasize that these chapters are very impressive in terms of the number of newspaper articles cited, particularly those written in the Californian context in which Smith and Carlos were (in 1967-68) and are now resident. She also raises some important points about the prestige of sport in the US at the time and how this prestige provided spaces for African-American athletes to contribute to the civil rights movement.

Further, and of relevance to this thesis, is that Dr. Smith recently wrote an interesting article about the statue group at San Jose State. Therein she argues that the statue group (a student-driven initiative) is a kind of weak reparation to honour those who did not receive their properly deserved praise in 1968-69. Moreover, she maps a certain reworking of the facts in this case, offering a differentiated analysis concerning: (1) the lack of reporting on what she characterizes as an essentially negative² legacy of Tommie Smith and John Carlos’ time at San Jose State and (2) on a new inscription near the statue

¹ Maureen Margaret Smith, “Identity and Citizenship: African American Athletes, Sport, and the Freedom Struggles of the 1960s” (Thesis—Ohio State University, 1999). Note that Ohio State University is the same institution for which Jesse Owens had competed in the 1930s.

² I will problematize this characterization in section 7.1. Here, I refer to support from the university president for Smith and Carlos, on at least a rhetorical level.

group, which places them firmly within the university's community as "San Jose State University¹ student athletes . . . [who] stood for Justice, Dignity, Equality and Peace."²

Another important figure in the area of sports historiography who has written about the case study explored in this thesis is David K. Wiggins. His most pertinent work in this regard is *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (1997), which brings together a series of articles that he had published to that point in his career—adding an introduction and a previously unpublished essay.³ The effect is an incremental view, organized in three parts, of the experience of Black athletes in America from the time of slavery to the end of 19th Century. In part one of the book,⁴ we learn about how, even under the conditions of slavery and before the civil right era, sport afforded some measure of dignity for African Americans. Two figures, the jockey Isaac Murphy and the Saint Croix-born Australian boxer Peter "Black Prince" Jackson, help to show how the colour line actually became most entrenched in the post-civil war period of the late 1890s. Part two of the collection, "Civil Rights and the Quest for Equality," includes chapters entitled "The Future of College Athletics is at Stake: Black Athletes and Racial

¹ "University" is also anachronistic here. In 1968 the institution was called "San Jose State College."

² Maureen Margaret Smith, "Frozen Fists in Speed City: The Statue as Twenty-First-Century Reparations," *Journal of Sport History* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 393-414. The statue inscription is reported upon and analysed on page 407. The presence of "peace" as placed there by the students and the university lends at least a small measure of validity to my thesis' conclusion.

³ David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

⁴ Part one takes its main title, "From Plantation to Playing Field," from a previously published review essay, "From Plantation to Playing Field: Historical Writings on the Black Athlete in American Sport." The article offers a fine survey of the body of literature dealing with Black people and sport in the US context that had been written by the mid-1980s. See David K. Wiggins, "From Plantation to Playing Field: Historical Writings on the Black Athlete in American Sport," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 57, No. 2 (1986): 101-116.

Turmoil on Three Predominantly White University Campuses, 1968-1972”¹ and “The Year of Awakening: Black Athletes, Racial Unrest and the Civil Rights Movement of 1968.”² These two chapters are the most relevant part for this thesis as they include a discussion of activities undertaken by members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, and help situate these activist efforts with trends on college campuses and within the larger US society at the time.

Part three of the collection addresses questions of theory and method associated with sport history. It includes a chapter focussed on the educational administrator and pioneer of writing and analysis of African-American experiences in sport, Edwin Bancroft Henderson. Another chapter penned by Wiggins, this time as part of a textbook entitled *The African American Athlete's Experience: Racism in College Athletics* (2000), accomplishes much the same feat as the first two sections of *Glory Bound* taken together. In the case of the textbook, Wiggins' accessible but well-referenced style comes together in the form of the lead essay, “Critical Events Affecting Racism in Athletics,” in a volume surveying the Black experience in not only college but also in professional contexts. Within the chapters (and main text's) title, “athletics” refers not to track and field specifically but rather to sport in general. As implied by that distinction, this chapter surveys a wide range of experiences and includes important notes about gender, equality and justice as they relate to issues and realities for Black athletes in the US. As such, for example, students are introduced not only to the idea of a Black boycott at the 1968

¹ Originally published as David K. Wiggins, “The Future of College Athletics is at Stake: Black Athletes and Racial Turmoil on Three Predominantly White University Campuses, 1968-1972.” *Journal of Sport History* 15, No. 3 (Winter, 1988): 304-333.

² Originally published as David K. Wiggins, “The Year of Awakening: Black Athletes, Racial Unrest and the Civil Rights Movement of 1968.” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 9, No. 2 (August 1992): 188-208.

Olympics and why such an idea was advocated in the run up to Mexico 68 but they are also given an introduction to the dominant role of white sports agents at the turn of the century context.¹

An additional collection worth mentioning here is *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change* (2000), edited by Michael Lomax. This volume examines the racial divide not only in terms of Black athletes but also Latino sportspersons. Several contributors note a contrast between today's well paid athletes who seemingly avoid politics (an issue I will discuss from a different perspective below at several points²) and the likes of Muhammad Ali and Roberto Clemente (the baseball great who did charity and relief work in the off-season). Also included are discussions that focus on the intersections of gender, race and sport, such as Sarah K. Fields' contribution addressing Title IX.³ Her contribution highlights how including "country club" sports for women at the college level might serve to exclude minority girls from sporting opportunities in a post-secondary context. Two chapters in this book address aspects of the case study of this thesis.⁴

"Bedazzle Them with Brilliance, Bamboozle Them with Bull: Harry Edwards, Black Power and the Revolt of the Black Athlete Revisited" by Michael Lomax is centred on a re-examination of Edwards' role and influence in the Olympic Project for Human

¹ David K. Wiggins, "Critical Events Affecting Racism in Athletics," in *The African American Athlete's Experience: Racism in College Athletics*, eds. Danna Brooks and Ronald Althouse, 15-36. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, 2000.

² See, for example, section 7.5.

³ Title IX is the US civil rights legislation requiring federally funded educational institutions to provide equal access programming to those who identify as male and female.

⁴ Michael E. Lomax. [ed.]. *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi Press, 2008).

Rights. Lomax brings into question the premise that Edwards' much discussed revolt ever came to fruition. Lomax concludes that the athletes did not so much aspire towards a revolution as for better treatment.¹ I too will revisit the role of Edwards and the athletes' perspectives on their participation in the Olympic Project for Human Rights at numerous points below, offering some alternative readings of these important issues raised by Lomax.²

“The Black Panther Party and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: Sport and Revolutionary Consciousness” by Ron Briley shows how *The Black Panther*, the journal of the party of the same name, interacted with sporting events in the 1960s and early 1970s, notably seeing much of their own “revolutionary” philosophy in the figures of Tommie Smith and John Carlos on the podium. He uses this point to contrast courage and the revolutionary consciousness of the likes of Smith, Carlos, Hank Aaron, Roberto Clemente and Muhammad Ali with the monetarily rich minority professional athlete—Carlos Delgado of the New York Mets is held up as an example. Briley argues, convincingly, that the integration of sport figures in their literature points to a certain taming of the Black Panthers' revolutionary philosophy towards embracing the value of changes within the existing society (this seems somewhat contradictory in relation to his framing of revolutionary consciousness, unless the moment of protest at Mexico 68 coincided exactly with the beginning of that shift). Further, he fails to check his conclusions and the implications of the student athletes' views on their activism by

¹ Michael E. Lomax, “Bedazzle Them with Brilliance, Bamboozle Them with Bull: Harry Edwards, Black Power and the Revolt of the Black Athlete Revisited,” in *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change*, ed. Michael E. Lomax, 55-89. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi Press, 2008.

² See, in particular, sections 7.4, 7.5 and 8.3.

showing a firm connection in that direction of the equation.¹ While I certainly agree that Smith and Carlos display courage, this thesis will show how the athletes understood their act of protest as different from one that could be fit into the Black Power and liberation paradigms as put forward by the Black Panther Party in the period leading up to Mexico 68.²

To close this section, we come to a contribution from Ben Carrington, a Sports Sociologist from England who now teaches at the University of Texas at Austin. Carrington appears in a number of media clips, giving comment on the case study of this thesis.³ Prior to his departure from the University of Brighton to the US, he also wrote an article, “Sport, Masculinity and Black Cultural Resistance,” (1998) which raises some interesting issues relevant for a study centred on the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Although Carrington’s central case study focused on cricket in the North of England, he invokes some thought provoking points about constructing Black masculine identity in an empowering manner, on both individual and community levels. Moreover, he notes in his study a phenomenon that is palpable to Black players whereby predominately White teams will put in an extra effort to beat the mostly Black Caribbean Cricket Club of Leeds. Carrington ends his article by concluding that sport can offer a (limited) place of

¹ Ron Briley, “The Black Panther Party and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: Sport and Revolutionary Consciousness,” in *Sports and the Racial Divide: African American and Latino Experience in an Era of Change*, ed. Michael E. Lomax, 90-104. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi Press, 2008.

² See, in particular, section 6.5.

³ See the next section for comment on these sources.

Black cultural resistance.¹ We shall see how that tempered conclusion also rings true in the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights at many points below.

2.11 Notes about Other Books Important for the Case Study Written for a Popular Audience

My debt of gratitude for materials compiled by others extends beyond the academic world to sources I have used that were either written for or presented to popular audiences. These include books, magazine articles, internet postings, on-line videos, documentary films, newspaper articles and television interviews. Given the limits of this study in terms of direct access to the main actors, without these sources this thesis would not have been possible. In this section, out of sense of gratitude for their contributions to the narrative I have pieced together below, I feel compelled to review seven books that were particularly helpful in terms of my research.

The first two books I would like to highlight in this regard were written by Harry Edwards. As we will see more fully,² because of his student-athlete and academic background, along with a considerable personal presence, Edwards claimed and executed a leadership role in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Accordingly, his two books, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969) and *The Struggle that Must Be* (1980), become something of yardstick for understanding the activist group and its goals. However, this case study exploring the perspectives of the members of the group who were Olympic (and, indeed world beating) calibre at the time, casts some doubt on the veracity of the claims made by Edwards, particularly in the 1969 volume. Any lingering view that the 1969 work by Edwards should be taken as the last word on the Olympic Project for

¹ Ben Carrington, "Sport, Masculinity and Black Cultural Resistance," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 22 (August 1998): 275-298.

² See, in particular, section 5.2.

Human Rights is laid to rest in this thesis. In fact, he will emerge as someone who was key in the formation of the group, and a person who certainly benefited in his sport consulting and also controversial academic career as a result of his association with the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Nonetheless, he may be claiming too large a role in the project and making too harsh a judgment on his fellow group members, most especially in his 1969 monograph.

That said, this thesis would certainly be very different had these two books not been written. In *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, Edwards poignantly captures the struggle of Black athletes to claim their identity in an empowering way and describes some of the roadblocks that mitigated against such empowerment at institutional, organisational, community and social levels. Further, Edwards reproduces a number of pieces of original Olympic Project for Human Rights correspondence, which shed light not only on his own goals and motivations for participation in the activist group but also the motivations of other actors. Additionally, certain claims and judgments that Edwards makes about the group, some of its members, and those seen to oppose their goals, combine to set a certain benchmark from which other actors in the story respond in kind. These responses sometimes provide quite different interpretations of events and the motivations underlying them.¹ Such dynamics of response were active for a decade prior to the writing of *The Struggle that Must Be*. Further, the inclusion in Edwards' 1980 book of more primary documents (inclusive of US government intelligence obtained through

¹ Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

freedom of information request), also meant that it¹ was an important resource for this thesis.

The next book I would like mention is *Something in the Air* (2009) by Richard Hoffer, a senior sports writer at *Sports Illustrated* for a number of years. Hoffer's concomitant accessible style was very helpful for highlighting and connecting events of defiance amongst different American athletes. He not only explores the stories of some track and field Olympians who receive limited mention in other sources but also offers narratives related to other members of Team USA at Mexico 68. Notably, I appreciate his research on the US boxing team. The stories he collected about George Foreman and the famous boxer's understanding and experience of the aftermath of the track and field athlete's protests² are particularly valuable for the narrative I present below.

Indisputably, the most valuable popular books for this thesis have been a series of works which explain events surrounding the track and field protests at Mexico 68 from the perspective of one of the medalists in the men's 200 metres or 400 metres events. In particular, four books focusing on the entry and exit points, respectively of John Carlos, Tommie Smith, Lee Evans and Peter Norman, were essential parts of the narrative presented below. The first two books share the common feature of being co-written by the student-athletes named in the preceding sentence. The third was penned in consultation with Evans and with access to his diary. The fourth was co-written with Matt

¹ Harry Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1980).

² Richard Hoffer, *Something in the Air: The Story of American Passion and Defiance in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009).

Norman (who is Peter's nephew), employing research undertaken for the film *Salute* (2009).¹

John Carlos' co-authored book (with former Los Angeles school teacher, C. D. Jackson) is in some ways the most raw of the above-mentioned four books. Within the pages of *Why?* (2000), there are some mistakes, such as the incorrect rendering of Tommie Smith's name as "Tommy," which are seemingly inexcusable in the information age. Yet, the raw character of the prose tends to let Carlos' passionate and sharp style filter through to the reader. This important feature, combined with the presence of a number of expletives and religious references that a more mainstream press may have shied away from, means that *Why?* reads, on a number of levels, as the most honest in the series of books considered in this section.² Additionally, I am heartened to report that despite extensive research carried out by Bass and Hartmann, neither of them came across this resource.³ As such, this thesis appears to be the first focussed treatment of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights to have access to a book length treatment of John Carlos' life written from his own perspective. Though Smith does address certain points raised in Carlos's book, a similar point holds true in relation to the books written from the perspective of Evans and Norman. This gives me a certain advantage over Bass and Hartmann, especially with regards to my goal to let the voices of the athletes come to fore as much as possible within the parameters of this study.

¹ Matt Norman, *Salute: For the Record, The True Story of an Unsung Australian Hero*. [Film]. Sydney: The Actors Cafe, 2009.

² John Carlos with C. D. Jackson. *Why?: The Biography of John Carlos* (Los Angeles: Mulligan Books, 2000).

³ *Why?* is also absent from Witherspoon's reference list in his fine 2008 book. See section 2.10 for more on that volume.

For similar reasons, it follows that I am also grateful that Tommie Smith came together with the sports columnist, David Steele, to write *Silent Gesture* (2007). Access to the autobiographies of both American sprinters in the iconic photo of the protest after the 200 metres final has been invaluable for this thesis. Particularly, *Silent Gesture* was helpful for sorting out Smith's emic understanding of his positioning *vis a vis* the example of Martin Luther King Jr. As the reader of this thesis will see, Smith's participation in the loose association that was the Olympic Project for Human Rights can be legitimately understood as belonging to what Elise Boulding shades as the hidden side of history, the story of cultures of peace.¹ This is another meaning for the iconic photo that is by no means apparent in terms of how the story is normally received. Indeed, Smith's stories in these pages about encountering the image of his protest for sale on T-Shirts and hearing ill-renderings of the significance and outcome of that moment, motivated his participation in writing *Silent Gesture*.² This book, in turn, shows the continued need to research and tell this story in different ways. It is a misunderstood event in history that Smith seeks to set within a more narrow range of peaceful and solidarist interpretations that comes through when this autobiography is read from a PACS perspective.³

Setting a misunderstood story within a narrower range of more positive interpretations is also the apparent goal for Frank Murphy's project, *The Last Protest* (2006), which (as mentioned above) received a good deal of cooperation and support from Lee Evans. The former even shared both his contemporaneous diary of the events

¹ See, in particular, section 8.3.

² Tommie Smith with David Steele, *Silent Gesture: The Autobiography of Tommie Smith* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).

³ See, in particular, section 8.3.

and his time for a series of interviews. Frank Murphy was a teenager at the time of Mexico 68. In the pages of *The Last Protest*, love for his sporting heroes at the time comes through. Yet, also present are his well-supported judgments in a number of passages that (though rendered in an accessible style) provide something akin to a telling academic analysis. These passages effectively communicate the significance of a series of key events over the course of Lee Evans' life, including the defining moments of 1968 that would mark that life indelibly.¹ In the end, Murphy produces the next best thing to an autobiography with a prose style and accessible analysis that ranks amongst the best in the literature employed in this thesis. As such, I remain grateful on a number of levels for his work on *The Last Protest*.

As alluded to in the preceding section, Bass and Hartmann do not include very much material about the participation of Peter Norman in the protest on the podium after the 200 metres at Mexico 68, nor do they share a great deal about his life much before or after that moment. However, Norman's participation, as will be demonstrated below, holds a great deal of significance from a PACS perspective as it shows that issues of cross-cultural solidarity were active not only amongst US athletes but also on an international scale. Norman is a significant part of this story, yet the extent of his role has generally been absent from its telling. As such, Damian Johnstone and Matt Norman's *A Race to Remember* (2008) is a significant resource for this thesis. The fact that the Matt Norman, who is well known for his role on the television day-time drama *Neighbours* both in Australia and the UK, was willing to mortgage his house to see this project

¹ Frank Murphy, *The Last Protest: Lee Evans in Mexico City* (Kansas City, Missouri: Windsprint Press, 2006).

through even after the older Norman passed away during the research and filming, gives an indication of how important his uncle's legacy of cross-cultural solidarity and equality is for the younger Norman.

Something of Matt Norman's passion for the film and book is indicated by the fact that he took the time to personally write me back after I ordered the film and book prior to its North American release from his website. The book also arrived signed by Matt Norman with advice to "stand against injustice" scribbled in his own hand. That he chose to include a book in this project (along with the film and educational material geared for school children) has been particularly helpful for my research. The book is on some levels more informative than the film. It shows Peter Norman to be a complex character, by no means a saint but a regular moral person, with an exceptional ability to run fast, that used the space afforded by the former to express his heartfelt convictions about issues like racial equity. The project as a whole seems a genuine effort at getting an important part of the story out in the public realm. Because of Matt Norman's close relationship with his uncle, and the latter's full participation in the project until his death, *A Race to Remember*¹ can quite easily be considered the next best thing to an autobiography. It is thus a much appreciated aid in this dissertation's goal of allowing the voices of the athletes to come through as much as possible given the limitation of the study and the boundaries implied in university thesis work.

¹ Damian Johnstone and Matt Norman, *A Race to Remember: The Peter Norman Story* (Docklands, Victoria: JoJo Publishing, 2008).

2.12 A Note about the Uniqueness of this Thesis

While it is certain that this thesis would not have been possible save for the actions of the student athletes and those who have written about and made documentaries dealing with the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, there are numerous factors that contribute to making this thesis unique and, therefore, worthwhile from an academic perspective. As a starting point in justifying this statement it may be worth noting that it was a couple of unique features of PACS, as it is incarnated at the University of Manitoba, which led me to choose the Olympic Project for Human Rights in the first place. The first of these was that due to composition of committee rules at the University for my program, in order to retain my advisor (a professor in both the Faculties of Arts and Education) and have a representative from the PACS professors,¹ I was required to have someone on my internal committee who was from neither Arts nor Education. It became apparent that a professor from Kinesiology would fit the bill nicely.

Thereafter, with encouragement from my committee, I sought out an acceptable thesis topic at the intersection of sport and PACS. I soon became interested in the Olympics, initially something more general like “The Olympics, Peace and Conflict” was to be my thesis topic. But as I read more about the stories of Tommie Smith, Peter Norman and John Carlos, in particular, it became apparent that this was an excellent case study to both ground and inform the PACS literature. Their stories and the stories of others involved with, or opposed to, the activism of the Olympic Project of Human Rights accorded so well with the themes of Peace Studies concerned with structural injustice and efforts to remove such injustice, but also with issues of the conflict

¹ PACS professors are housed in the Faculty of Graduate Studies but are considered to be Arts professors for University of Manitoba graduate committee classification purposes.

resolution/transformation aspect of PACS, as connected to the treatment of the athletes in the aftermath of the protest. Although most of my fellow doctoral students seemed to be studying subject matter that had a central focus within either Peace Studies or Conflict Resolution theory and practice, I felt I had come across a case study that would allow me to integrate both aspects of the field without intellectual machination. In sum, PACS was, in a crucial sense, my entry point into this story.

It follows that, in contrast to Bass or Hartmann,¹ as I read through the student-athletes' stories I was looking for important PACS themes such as: (1) the nature of the conflict resolution techniques employed by the various actors; (2) the creative and transformative qualities of their activism; (3) how the student-athletes came to discover their voice and agency; and, (4) as will be evident in my conclusion, how aspects of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights can be understood as contributing to the history of cultures of peace.² In short, this is the first study in the PACS field to explore this case study in depth. Uniquely within my thesis, PACS acts as a compass (giving direction to the material in terms of the categories that form the chapter headings) and a key (unlocking other layers of significance as highlighted in the conclusion).

¹ Reference is being made here and elsewhere in this section to Bass' and Hartmann's academic work as their contributions are most comparable in terms of scale and scope to this thesis. See section 2.10.

² Additionally, I have the advantage of the four books listed above in section 2.11, which provide lengthy considerations of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the key Olympic medalists' life stories from their own perspectives. These are examples from a series of resources available to me that allow me to focus on the athletes' motivations and interpretations of the events in a way other than these two impressive academics who wrote their dissertations a decade earlier.

Another element drawing me to this story was my own experience as a student athlete in track and field at the University of Manitoba.¹ Although, I was certainly nowhere near the calibre of any of the student athletes in this story, my own attempts to balance training, work, family life and academic study, gave me a somewhat unique appreciation of their achievements. In this light, I have a heartfelt sense of just how good they were and also their incredible psychological fortitude. These personal characteristics allowed them to not only plan the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests but also be amongst the best athletes in the world in one of the most competitive and far reaching sports.

Moreover, I feel something of an insider/outsider relationship with this story. I have competed in England, the US and Canada on some of the same tracks that these athletes raced and have also run against athletes from some of the same universities that they raced against. Yet, I was never part of the NCAA scholarship system nor was I an international representative athlete, though I have raced against people from both categories. This somewhat unique situation gives me both an empathetic understanding and also some critical distance from the story. I view my Canadian identity in a similar light. Specifically, this thesis brings something of a Canadian perspective to the story, offering a different cultural position from that of Bass or Hartmann, from which to explore the stories of the student-athletes. Most substantively it does so by drawing out Bruce Kidd's connection to this story.

¹ See the personal ethnographic statement at the beginning of this thesis.

2.13 Conclusion

When asked the larger academic question, “why write about it again (with so much material out there)?”, I can answer that my project addresses a misunderstood event in American History (still misunderstood in the sense of being narrowly understood, something of a frozen moment that needs revisiting).¹ It also relates to both the components of PACS and brings other issues to the fore not previously emphasized, for instance a “religion and nonviolence” connection.² In this sense, even though the larger story has been told many times before, it is told in a new way here (even in the “descriptive” sections). That new way is related to my situation as a beginning PACS scholar coming to the field from theology, a former competitive runner and a Canadian (in a sense both an outsider to, and in a number of ways entangled in, the plot) shade my telling and emphasis of aspects of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. As a direct result of these features of my own identity, I have been guided towards an approach to telling and analysing the story of student-athlete activism around Mexico 68 that in a number of ways leads to an end product that meets the academic quality of uniqueness so important to proper thesis work. In addition to areas of divergence mentioned above, Bass and Hartmann theoretically ground their research and analysis of “the revolt of the Black athlete”³ respectively: (1) on the motivations and impact upon those athletes involved; and, (2) an analysis of the symbolic role of sport in contemporary American life.⁴ While these are certainly aspects of the materials presented below, even these areas are treated quite differently. In contrast, my goal is to focus on several events

¹ See section 5.5.

² See section 6.3.

³ Here, they are following Edwards framing. See section 2.11.

⁴ Hartmann, 275.

and sentiments from the athletes' perspective and bring those narratives into dialogue with the PACS literature as it pertains to the theoretical categories listed above in this literature review section and other insights unfolded in the body of this thesis.

In this sense, though Bass and Hartmann's contributions are certainly valuable in relation to my project, this thesis has undertaken a rather different task. For example, even our respective titles point to how my focus is not so much on triumph and struggle as it is about agency exercised in solidarity and how that relates to substantively just peace, not so much about revolt as it is about activism and consciousness raising that helps to build cultures of peace. In this regard, I seek to bring to the fore important dimensions of the stories surrounding the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This loose association of remarkable people used the spaces afforded them by a dominant cultural context¹ to raise awareness about cycles of exclusion and poverty that extended well beyond an athletics track or Olympic podium. It is this confluence of themes that I offer up to the field of Peace and Conflict Studies, and the academy generally, as an original contribution. Moreover, I hold that this methodological approach allows for the analysis of significant elements of a generally misunderstood statement at Mexico 68 in a manner that both diverges from and compliments Bass and Hartmann's respective contributions.

¹ From Galtung's peace research perspective, this cultural context is an example of structural violence. See sections 2.0 and 2.5.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

3.0 Introduction

This thesis, in most basic methodological terms, seeks to apply a PACS lens to a significant event in the history of social justice and activism in the 1960s. I do so in a way that draws mostly (though not exclusively) on the humanities, rather than the social sciences,¹ side of the interdisciplinary field.² As such, this chapter reflects a humanities-styled interdisciplinary approach to PACS, while also briefly discussing my more social-scientific way of approaching the interviews.

More specifically in regard to method, this project takes its broad inspiration from liberation theology's³ discussion of the relationship between theory and practice, which has its parallels in the PACS literature.⁴ At this juncture, a rereading of Antonio Gramsci's notion of praxis becomes key to the liberation project as analysis informs practice in significant ways. This approach can cause controversy within human communities. Perhaps this controversy arises because liberation praxis seeks to address the root causes of repression and suffering, as captured poignantly in Dom Hélder

¹ See the brief discussion on peace historian Robbie Liebermann's perspective on this distinction as footnoted in section 1.4.

² In regards to the social scientific side of the field, Druckman's *Doing Research* is a fine resource. However, in terms of the subject matter of this thesis and the methods used to explore it, Druckman provides little guidance. That said, Druckman's work would be useful in designing some possible future research projects described in the concluding chapter of this thesis. See section 8.2.

³ For a discussion of how contextual theologies (of which liberation theology is one) can inform PACS, see Christopher Hrynkow, Sean Byrne and Matthew Hendzel, "Ecotheology and Inculturation: Implications for Theory and Practice in Peace and Conflict Studies," *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 35, No. 2 (April 2010): 295-327.

⁴ This point is referenced in the next paragraph. Also see John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Câmara's telling phrase, "When I give food to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor are hungry they call me a communist."¹ By looking to the roots of suffering in this manner, Câmara is asserting that social and political injustices are issues that ought to be of concern to everyone.

The resultant praxis-based methodology takes the form of Marxist analysis, both in term of structure (e.g., dealing with unjust organizational forms) and humanism (e.g., applying concepts such as alienation). In a manner that coalesces well with a PACS notion of reflective praxis,² it employs this methodological lens in an almost utilitarian manner to shed light on the plight of the poor and oppressed in this world. However, in contrast with a number of PACS perspectives,³ although taking its inspiration from Karl Marx's view of history and conflict but without accepting any form of total material determinism, such a Marxist methodology is premised on the view that all hitherto and

¹ Hélder Câmara, quoted in Alastair McIntosh. "Thought for the Day - BBC Radio Scotland." (1 Aug. 2006). Glasgow: BBC Scotland. Available from <http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2005-thought-for-day.htm#Spiral%201%20Aug%2006>. Accessed September 4, 2009.

² For an example of the revision of theory in light of practice (and vice versa) see Bernard Mayer, *Beyond Neutrality: Confronting the Crisis in Conflict Resolution* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2004). I consider this to be a notable and important feature of the PACS field with parallels in other related fields. For instance, in the afore-mentioned area of cross-cultural educational studies for equity, which take its inspiration from people who resonate with the PACS field like Paulo Freire, to explicitly set out to foster reflective teaching practice that holds moral neutrality in classroom is not possible and makes deep equity a normative goal.

³ Compare, for example, Fry; Marc Howard Ross, *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Marc Howard Ross *The Management of Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "Seville Statement on Violence, Spain, 1986." Available from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3247&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html. Accessed September 25, 2012.

currently existing societies are founded upon violence. Given this presupposition, as was the case for many of those involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Latin American Liberation theologian Segundo Galilea notes that analysis takes on a special form of authenticity when it is undertaken by those who are engaged in the struggle for liberation.¹ Furthermore, according to Galilea, it is precisely because of this focus on liberation that praxis becomes a crucial reflective locus.²

It follows that, within a methodology of liberation, the task of legitimate praxis is to help determine the forces that are acting in the service of repression and invoke the agency of the oppressed, seeking to transform the oppressor and the oppressive structure in order to work to erase human-induced alienation from this world. From this methodological perspective, the very nature (or “species-being,”³ if you will) of the hermeneutical circles amongst theory, context, and practice means that they are engaged most effectively by an embedded theorist—the agent who lets contemplation, abstraction, and the theorizing of others inform his or her work, rarely losing sight of both context and those in need of liberation. Thus, in a certain relevant sense, this thesis is wholly methodological, seeking to better understand the hermeneutical circles that are present as certain kinds of human knowing geared toward creating a mutually enhancing set of relationships in global and local societies, which, in turn, inform acts of resistance to

¹ Compare Muste and Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932).

² Segundo Galilea, *Liberation Theology and the Vatican Documents* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1984), 32.

³ Karl Marx did not like to write of “nature” in an essentialist manner, as we commonly do when invoking the term “human nature.” Instead, he adapted Feuerbach’s idea of “species-being” to write of a state that was at once manifested as being and knowing. See Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 116.

racism and oppression. As a result of this character, my discussion of “method” in this thesis, in both a broad and a narrow meaning of that term, often unfolds organically in a number of the sections that precede and follow this specialized chapter.

To set the context portion of this dialogue in a substantive manner and provide an historical perspective, textual research¹ was undertaken about the history of the 1968 Olympics, track and field in general and possible connections to human rights regimes. This is a recognized limitation of the study. Given the best possible world in this regard, I would have liked to have had the monetary and time resources to interview every person still living with a connection to this story. However, as a form of compromise, I have tried to be as thorough as is reasonably possible, within a humanities framework,² for a study that is meant to represent my first sustained piece of academic research.

To this end, I have attempted to make numerous relevant connections to theoretical and practice-oriented material I have gathered since entering the PACS program at the University of Manitoba in January 2006. A few links are also made to materials from prior to that time. However, most significantly, numerous books, journal articles, magazine stories and newspapers were carefully read for insight into the nature of the events surrounding the student athlete protest at Mexico 68. Further, this thesis made extensive use of video resources both on the World Wide Web³ and through DVDs,

¹ Textual research here includes an understanding of texts as books, magazine articles, internet postings, on-line videos, documentary films, newspaper articles and television interviews. The methods for analysing these resources are described below in this section.

² See section 1.4.

³ For a suggestion for a methodology facilitating research on YouTube see Chirag Shah, “Supporting Research Data Collection from YouTube with TubeKit.” Conference paper presented at YouTube and the 2008 Election Cycle in the United States, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA (April 2009). Available from <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/jitpc/2009/1/>. Retrieved September 25, 2012.

which presented the athletes' and other actors' view on these events. I also used a significant number of texts that reproduced direct quotes from the athletes. Along with the Kidd interview, these have been the sources harvested for the athletes' perspectives on these events. My approach to these "texts" (broadly conceived) was borrowed from historical criticism, the methodology used to assess biblical texts in light of the social, cultural and political contexts in which they were written. In particular, I am interested in the type of historical criticism that takes the "new history," as described by Osborne,¹ seriously, seeking to discern the social context and marginalized voices in texts edited by others. My principal model for this feature of my method was Philip P. Esler's *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (2003).² All the while, I was selectively harvesting this material in an effort to bring the athletes' voices to the surface as much as possible given the acknowledged limitations of this approach. Thankfully, due to the remarkable nature of the protest at the time and with the fortieth anniversary of the 1968 Olympics (coinciding with an Olympic year in 2008), a wide variety of print and other media dealing with the subject matter of these protests were available during the writing of this thesis.

Additionally, with the help of my knowledgeable committee, I crafted a qualitative instrument to use as an aid in interviewing former athletes involved in this

¹ See section 3.1.

² Using this contextual historical model, Esler is able, for example, posit that the early Christ-followers in Rome met in sociopetal space. Such an environment encouraged the faithful to share the same space amicably when they gathered in the *insulae* (Roman apartment buildings) and evoked the name of Christ. That is to say, their cultural geography, particularly meeting in the tenements of ancient Rome encouraged a practical equality. Esler then explores reading the text of the letter to the Romans in light of that insight. See Philip P. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

story. The open ended and semi-structured questions I asked each participant are found in Appendix B. I also developed a list of discussion-starting prompts to use in the event the research participants were unable to answer the questions as they were posed. My intention in this regard was to proceed without these discussion-starting prompts as much as possible so as not to lead the interviewee. My overall goal for each interview was to have as an organic conversation as possible and, in practice, this was successful. My interview conversations began with a list of semi-structured¹ questions, a copy of which was given to each of the respondents in advance for his² consideration. When it came to the interviews, the fact that the questions had already been considered by the participants helped the process greatly.

3.1 A Note on my General Approach and the Problem of Categorizing Elements of the Story

A word about my method for this thesis may be helpful here. Humanities inform my principal approach to the study,³ in this case drawing on historical, integrative, exploratory and holistic methods⁴ to weave together elements of the story of the Olympic

¹ This follows Creswell's council for an approach to interviews, notably the advice that a small number of semi-structured general questions can be advantageous for allowing a participant's voice to come through in an interview and possibly guide further research design. Roughly, in line with this point, a mixed method approach (qualitative interview data and to a much larger extent historical and textual data in this case) was chosen out of necessity (see below in this section). For more on mixed methods research, especially as it combines both quantitative and qualitative data, and more on semi-structured questions in academic research, see John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008).

² In my case all of the respondents were male, pointing to another limitation of this study.

³ See also section 1.4 on the humanities approach in PACS.

⁴ In terms of methodology, compare here Allen Mills' fine study of the life of the pacifist parliamentarian, J. S. Woodsworth. See Allen Mills, *Fool For Christ: The Political Thought of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

Project for Human Rights activism from the perspective of the athletes.¹ Jeong notes that a segment of the field of peace research includes work by historians who look at the dynamics of movements, which are opposed to war.² Building upon that approach, this thesis also benefits from my own methodological training and experience as a high school history teacher in that the goals of the student athletes under consideration in this thesis were connected to the issues surrounding the Viet Nam War at the time as well as issues of human rights and equity as they applied in both the US and globally.

In particular, I am grateful for the insights of scholars who have contributed to contemporary understandings of historical method. Their contributions combine to shape historical method as it is employed in this thesis. The first of these scholars to make an impression on me was E.H. Carr. Initially, his *What is History?*³ and *The Twenty Year's Crisis*⁴ left me bewildered for what I now understand as their classical realist approach to historical method and international relations respectively.⁵ In fact, in *The Twenty Year's Crisis*, Carr repeatedly attacks those who might be considered proto-PACS scholars for

¹ My chief inspiration here is the fact that the athletes stated reasons and understanding of the symbolism has not often come forward in the telling of the stories of protest at Mexico 68. This is a point a return at numerous places in this thesis, including in section 8.3.

² Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 43.

³ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1961).

⁴ E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Year Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Perennial, 2001). This listing of the monographs represents the order in which I read them. Their original publication order is reversed. I did not read *The Twenty Years Crisis* in full until entering the Mauro Centre program. As such my current description of that volume's argument in this section is somewhat revisionist, naming something I found problematic but did not understand in those terms until they were named for me in this manner as result of being enrolled in the PACS doctoral program.

⁵ For example, the claim to be reporting the world as it "really" is (and not as it ought to be) contains its own epistemological direction that I would argue is limiting in terms of both the social and moral imaginations and, thus, for the prospects for substantive peace.

their utopianism.¹ It seemed to me there was another approach to history that could be more supportive of the validity of emancipatory discourse and efforts while avoiding submitting to a paradigm that views direct violence as necessary. Alternative approaches to history more supportive of holistic citizenship and peacebuilding came with my personal exposure to Ken Osborne and Elise Boulding respectively.

In the area cross cultural education for equity there is a prevalent critique of a potential multicultural focus on the 3Fs (food, festivals and famous men) to the exclusion of more substantive issues.² These critiques are said to point to deficient views of culture. For instance, bell hooks,³ whose work was part of the curriculum in the PACS program at the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, explains that best practice in cross-cultural studies “calls attention to race and similar issues and gives them renewed academic legitimacy.”⁴ The vision of the “new history” put forward by Osborne addresses all of the points touched upon by hooks in this formulation. Unfolding that statement will give insight into relevant issues of historical method in terms of this thesis.

During my first five years at university, I trained to be a history and geography teacher. It was my good fortune (although I did not fully appreciate it at the time) to have Ken Osborne as my Curriculum and Instruction teacher. His textbook on world history, for Grade Eights in Manitoba and Grade Sevens in British Columbia, includes a surprisingly large section on method. As a junior high student, Osborne’s text was also my first introduction to the subject of history in the English language and was still in use

¹ Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*.

² See, for example, Elizabeth Coelho, *Teaching in Multicultural Schools: An Integrated Approach*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

³ bell hooks intentionally writes her name in lower case.

⁴ bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990), 124.

when I started my first teaching job in Winnipeg. Osborne, now grounded in my post-Mauro Centre entry learning, inspires the discussion that immediately follows in this portion of the thesis. I feel it is no coincidence that Osborne names peace education as one of his teaching areas, probably it was from him that I first learned the term. The “famous men” category of the “3Fs” is something that is particularly important here for the new history. Namely, in his expansion of the content of this category, Osborne makes the assertion that history should be about more than just over-achieving males, where over-achievement is defined in very narrow power categories.

In this light, what I now understand as “modern” history used to be written by a certain type of men and geared for others who were very much like those writing the history. History written in this vein was the story of “great men and great battles.” When women were part of the story, they were set in militaristic male-like roles (e.g., Joan of Arc) or in subservient roles (e.g., the supportive wife). The new history, in contrast, both validates and tells the story of women, of common people and the like who do indeed matter.

Such social history would look at issues surrounding the daily life of the people in various positions within society. For example, a social history of Montreal would look at not just the story of Aboriginal governance in Hochelaga giving way to French and then British rule but would concern itself with what living was like for “average” people during each of those periods. There is a difficulty here because the historical record is often not as complete for “common people” but other disciplines like archaeology can provide extra “data.” No longer then do individual men or great battles prove to be the only “turning points” in history. In this way, history comes to embrace a deeper

conception of diversity and citizenship, casting the moral net of who matters wider. As a result, new and diverse stories have emerged. In the educational context, this is significant because the diversity of stories makes space for a diversity of success for learners with varied and layered cultural identities. Referring to the general advantage of moving beyond the 3Fs, Elizabeth Coelho argues that the new approach helps students “reach their academic potential, learn the skills for living in a multicultural society and develop the global awareness that is essential for future citizens of the world.”¹ It is such an emphasis on participatory citizenship that brought Osborne’s ideas to life for me.²

Elise Boulding, to whose work I shall return in the main conclusion to this thesis,³ brings such insights into the PACS field. Her work posits that one of the key problems with what I have identified as “the great men and great battles” approach is that it obscures a deeper reality of history, namely that the overwhelming content of human history has a lot more to do with regular people living together and finding ways to cooperate than it does with kings winning glorious battles. In fact, emphasizing stories like the latter, in a sense, promotes a culture of violence in that it makes events such as war normative within the human consciousness. An alternative history would focus on the stories of creative and everyday innovation that serve to buttress cultures of peace. In line with the liberatory praxis envisioned by the contextual theological method of the liberation theologians, Osborne and Boulding show how moving beyond great men and great battles can serve the cause of integral peace. Hence, they form the inspiration for an

¹ Coelho, 196.

² For more on Osborne’s ideas see Ken Osborne, “Democratic Citizenship.” *Teaching Today* 14 (Winter 2000): 2-16.

³ See section 8.3.

integral historical approach in this thesis, one centred on the athletes' views and used to explore the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

As hinted at above, there was another dynamic in play that caused me to choose such an historical approach. It centred on the fact that my opportunities to collect interview data (despite repeated attempts to make connections with US-based former student athletes) were far more limited than I would have liked. The principle actors in this story routinely request large amounts of money to be personally interviewed. I believe that this request is understandable, especially given the way they were treated in the aftermath of the events at the 1968 Olympics. However, without funding for this research, I was unable to provide such compensation. I also tried contacting Harry Edwards, now Professor Emeritus at Berkley, but only received a reply from his departmental administrator (who assured me he passed along my request) and I could not connect with Dr. Edwards himself. Also, an idea presented at the thesis proposal stage to interview present-day track and field athletes at San Jose State was also a non-starter because the track and field programme at San Jose State, despite its many successes, was cut (some suggest this discontinuation is connected to the events that unfolded at Mexico City in 1968).

Furthermore, it was no longer possible to interview Peter Norman and some of the other actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights as they had passed on. Nonetheless, I had an extremely rich interview with the prominent Canadian Olympian, Dr. Bruce Kidd, in Ottawa and Gatineau.¹ Kidd was intimately involved in the events of

¹ With Dr. Kidd's permission, I recorded this interview with a hand held digital recorder. I then transcribed the interview. Dr. Kidd remains a very busy person and was in the National Capital Region to launch a healthy living through sport initiative. So,

Mexico 68 and subsequently in drafting the conflict resolution rules for the International Olympic Committee. Also, I was privileged to speak about the Olympic Project for Human Rights with another student-athlete who also went on to become a professional academic sports historian, Charles Korr. Dr. Korr began his teaching career, contemporaneously with the lifetime of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and was on university campuses as these events unfolded. He graduated with a PhD in History with distinction from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1969 and had an academic career that roughly paralleled that of Harry Edwards (in terms of start dates and length). Dr. Korr agreed to speak with me via Skype¹ at a later stage in my thesis writing.

undertaking a research methodology reflective of his continued desire to maximise life and interaction when travelling, I met him at the Ottawa airport and then travelled with Dr. Kidd to Gatineau where we had lunch together in a small restaurant near the Sport Canada offices in the Hull district of Gatineau. The recording device worked well at all stages of this journey, both inside a vehicle, during our meal in the restaurant and outdoors. In something of a snowball sampling-like phenomenon, Dr. Kidd also suggested I get in touch with Charles Korr. At a time, when I was the principle caregiver for our young son in a city without extended family, my wife took a day off from work to permit the original interview with Dr. Kidd to take place.

¹ Although the face to face interview with Bruce Kidd was an amazing experience and one that is certainly preferable to any barrier between researcher and interview participant, there is a lot of potential in terms of Skype interviews for future research. I would definitively use this medium again. I was able to download a Skype recording device and transcribe the interview data from an audio file. Being able to see Dr. Korr as we talked provided a level of interviewer-participant interaction that would not have been possible with a phone conversation. As I borrowed a webcam, biked to the office for the interview and Dr. Korr spoke to me from his home, this was also low intensity research. That is to say, avoiding an irony within many of the projects presented in my environmental research methods class at the University of Manitoba, very little carbon was burned to harvest insightful interview data from Dr. Korr. For a methodological discussion of using Skype for interviews from a Management Studies perspective see Catherine Bertrand and Laurent Bourdeau, "Research Interviews by Skype: A New Data Collection Method," *Proceedings of the 9th European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management Studies* (June 2010): 70-79. My fellow doctoral students

Thankfully, as noted in the preceding chapter, the principal US and Australian-based actors have now told their stories in various forms on the internet, as well as in other media interviews, articles, and books. Even with a large budget for this research, given the patterns evident in the way they routinely share their experiences in various media, I doubt I would have learned much more about their stories. In any case, crucial to the integrity of this thesis is the reality that the historical research and variously recorded statements of the actors themselves provide answers to my interview questions. Moreover, they provide a number of other nuances. As such, I have a sufficient mass of case study data in relation to the student athlete protests at Mexico 68 to comment on the implications of these events for Peace Studies theory and Conflict Resolution Studies practice.

My approach to the problem of “sampling” was essentially one of selective harvest with regard to the above-mentioned resources, interacting with every available resource that gave the athlete’s perspective on the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Like the opening statement of this thesis, this approach was inspired from an insight gleaned during my ethnographic research methods course at the University of Manitoba. Namely, I decided to focus on emic¹ (as rendered in these [sometimes edited] media) and only as a second step, or when another commentator’s or scholar’s analysis poignantly moved in that direction, onto the etic. As such, with the exception of materials gathered in the proposal, the initial writing for this thesis was informed by Robert

(who are now PhDs) Katerina Standish and Olga Skarlato also used Skype in their research.

¹ For Druckman’s discussion of the emic, see *Doing Research*, 249-250. On this distinction see also Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998).

Emerson's, Rachel Fretz's, and Linda Shaw's *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.¹ In practice, this meant that I began with a number of chunks of quotations or summary statements regarding the athletes' views on a number of issues transcribed from print and audio sources. These were later supplemented by my interview data to form the emic content.

As both Osborne and Elise Boulding bring to the fore, contemporary historical research often concerns itself with context. My approach is also contextual in that it concerns the social context that accompanies any moment within the story of the human project.² This includes not only the stories of great men and great events but also the lives of everyday people, most notably, in this case, filtered through the lens of the athletes' perceptions in terms of how cultural minorities live in relation to social, political and religious institutions, as well as with each other and in societies.

There is an obvious overlap between the categories I have crafted below with which to filter and organize the athletes' stories when moving from the emic to the etic. With regard to this research, given that some of the emic elements have been preselected by the actors themselves, as well as by the editors of the media from which they were selectively harvested, I doubt that this tension can be resolved. If one thinks of these categories as starting points for exploring a significant set of events, then the overlap can be justified in the context of doctoral work.

¹ See Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

² For a parallel insight see Jessica Senehi, "Building Peace: Storytelling to Transform Conflicts Constructively." In *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, eds. Denis J. D. Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Sandole-Staroste and Jessica Senehi, 201-214. London: Routledge, 2009.

3.2 Conclusion

Although divisions have to be made for filtering information and then in presenting it in the form of an acceptable PhD thesis, I acknowledge that the very act of categorization causes fragmentation. However, reading the thesis as a whole will help address some of that fragmentation. Additionally, in rough parallel to a key point in theological method, it is important to note the mystery and awe that lie at the centre of the crowning protest, as emphasized in the personal ethnographic statement that forms part of the prologue to this thesis. I have also strived to authentically apply theory relevant to the study of peace, social justice and conflict to the stories of the athletes. I have made a concerted effort to make this application of theory dialogical, in order that the stories of athletes can help bring us insights about PACS.

Also, this approach allows for the possibility that the PACS lens can enrich our understanding of the athletes' stories. I hope that my methods for organizing and presenting the data will produce a unique lens on the athletes' stories. To the best of my knowledge, no one has previously approached the study of the Olympic Project for Human Rights with the same or even a similar method for considering the athletes' stories. On a more substantive level, I am further encouraged by Galtung who holds that because peace research is aimed at understanding, reducing and preventing violence, it is "an effort to promote the realization of values."¹ As such, my dialogical approach to the mainly historical data should accord well with the field as it unfolds aspects of the story of a group of elite student athletes who, themselves, sought to use the stage afforded them

¹ Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," 190.

by the Olympic Games to promote the realization of a more just and egalitarian reality amidst a sometimes paralysing atmosphere of racism and militarism.

Chapter Four–The Athletes’ Perception of the Context: Racism and Militarism in the US, Australia and Mexico

4.0 Introduction

I could read the Constitution; I could compare the writing of this land with its reality.¹ -Tommie Smith

Rather than writing a chapter that provides the meta-context of the 1968 Olympics from broadly-based historical sources, this chapter lays out the athletes’ understanding of major events, particularly in terms of how equity issues were affecting them in 1968.² There are many good books dealing with the events of 1968, including that by American award-winning author, Mark Kurlansky. At this point, there is no need to supplement the survey presented above³ and further abridge general histories of that year. Instead, in accord with this thesis’ goal of allowing the voices of the athletes themselves to come to the fore, context will be taken as a tool to explore the larger forces acting upon these actors in 1968, along with the legacy of the burden of events associated with racism and militarism that were so often in the news that year. Throughout 1968, people worked intensively for social justice in the US and abroad to such an extent that the prominent sports historian Charles Korr even describes the connection between social justice activism and 68 “as almost something of a cliché:”⁴

Whether it is the Democratic Convention, the murder of Bobby Kennedy, the Olympics, the murder of the Mexican students, you can probably fill most of those bookshelves behind you [gesturing to the

¹ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

² Readers of this thesis may find it helpful to refer at this point to the list of 18 key figures related to the story of student-athlete activism at the Mexico City Olympics found in Appendix A.

³ See section 1.1.

⁴ Charles Korr, interview conducted by Christopher Hrynkow via Skype, November 17, 2011. From this perspective some of these clichés concerning 1968 are presented in section 1.1.

books in my office] with books just about what 1968 meant.¹ In some respects it does a disservice to the historical record. I mean there was also the Prague spring, the French students, you do have a kind of movement for social justice that goes around the world. But part of it, I think, you just have things that were brewing. I mean the civil rights movement here [in the US] is at least a decade old by 1968. If 1968 is as important as people say then you would almost have to think that things disappear in 1969. It [1968] is a flashpoint but it is not a beginning or an end.²

Considering this profound point and in line with a key goal throughout this project, this chapter seeks to bring the athletes' voices to the surface as much as possible in the larger context of the protest, while always keeping in mind that the events at the Olympics were intimately linked to multi-generational experiences of discrimination and racism that did not either wholly emerge before or disappear after 1968. This approach allows for a longer term view, spanning aspects of the athletes' earlier and later lives, which would not be possible if the focus were solely upon the well-known events of 1968.³

It is not an overstatement to point out that the athletes under consideration in this thesis discussed the situation of racism and militarism in the US most frequently. This result is not surprising given the focus of the Olympic Project for Human Rights on the oppressive conditions facing Black people in the US in general and, more specifically, the conditions facing a pre-games group of student athletes based at colleges in the US. Bruce Kidd explains the successes of the Olympic Project for Human Rights as partially

¹ 1968 was also an important year in the story of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. See Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990). The "Free Derry" movement was modelled on the "Free Berkley" movement. See Adrian Kerr, *Free Derry: Protest and Resistance* (Derry: Guildhall Press, 2013).

² Korr Interview.

³ A timeline chart has been provided to help navigate key events that extend in both directions from October 1968. This chart is located in Appendix C.

arising from the larger oppressive conditions for Black student athletes in the US: “Some of it [the success of the Olympic Project for Human Rights] was that they did have strong bonds and the material and social conditions pulled them together. The United States was and is a crazy place because of that.”¹

Kidd also notes that this “craziness” of racism and discrimination, which fostered bonds amongst marginalized athletes, was also mixed with visions of patriotism and social roles that he describes as particularly focused and potent for US student athletes in the late 1960s.² It follows that the athletes’ points of view on racism and militarism in the US makes up the vast majority of the material presented in this context chapter. However, it is still important to note how the athletes perceived the state of racism and militarism in other specific contexts. Mexico and Australia are chosen for this purpose because the 1968 games were held in the former country and Australian racism and militarism became part of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights after Peter Norman’s solidarist participation in the protest after the 200 metres final.

4.1 Racism and Militarism in the US

Our nation [the US] is moving toward two societies, one Black, one White—separate and unequal.³

Jesse Owens’ four gold medals famously trumped Hitler’s snub at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Even when I was growing up and attending elementary school in Montreal during the 1980s, I recall learning that Owens’ feat was a victory for freedom and a major challenge to the heinous racial beliefs of the Nazis. However, that narrative of the events at the 1936 Olympics was problematic for many of the athletes who were

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Kerner Commission (1968) quoted in McCann Fenton, 32

actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. For example, Peter Norman was well versed in the real facts of Jesse Owens' life and athletics career. Reflecting on meeting Owens, the legend of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, on the night before the 200 metres final in Mexico City, Norman recalls:

I knew how when he was starting out in college athletics the whole college team would go to some faraway meet, and all the White athletes would go through the front door of the hotel, while all the Black athletes would go through the tradesmen's entrance at the back, and then sleep six to a room.¹

This single point shows how Owens was a victim of discrimination even as he made his path towards the 1936 Olympics. Norman's reflection also hints at the relevance of the figure of Jesse Owens to this story in a number of ways.

Owens was involved in the conflict resolution process with Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968. Then, as even today, his story of standing up to Nazism and disproving the theory of the superiority of the Aryan race through his victories is often told in the media and classrooms. However, it was not only in college that Owens faced racism and discrimination in the US. Smith counts learning more about the complexity and irony of Owens' life as one of the key pedagogical moments in his interaction with Harry Edwards:

Harry is the person who taught me the lesson about Jesse Owens. As far as I knew, from what I had learned as a student and as a sprinter who idolized him, the great Jesse Owens became great because he showed the world how wrong Nazism and Hitler were, right to Hitler's face in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, with his four gold medals and four world records. America latched on to that story, because it proved that the American way was better than the Nazi way, that freedom would win over tyranny, that Hitler was rotten and so was everything he stood for, especially his beliefs about a master race. But Jesse Owens, that Black man, still returned to his country as a second-

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 25.

class citizen, unable to eat in certain restaurants or hold certain jobs, and reduced to racing horses for money. That's history. . . .But that sure isn't something that is taught to children when the story of Jesse Owens' is told. . . .And in the long run, Jesse Owens' athletic supremacy did him no good when measured against his Black skin in this society.¹

Bruce Kidd confirms something of the irony here: "Jesse Owens participated in this debate. He was against rocking the boat. . . [despite the fact that] what happened to him was one argument that many people used to justify their activism."² Harry Edwards was unequivocal in arguing that the model Owens provided was no longer tenable: "You can no longer count on the successors of Jesse Owens to join in a fun-and-games fête propagandized as the epitome of equal rights so long as we are refused those rights in White society."³

In broader terms, Peter Norman understood that the situation in the US was not congruent with how it was presented in the mass media based upon his personal contact with Black athletes from that country. Commenting on the racial turmoil in light of the principles of human rights and the problematic nature of systematic injustice, he said:

It was in all the papers. You couldn't watch television newscasts without seeing what was going on. The footage wasn't pretty; it was damn ugly. From an outsider's point of view, it didn't show Black America in a very good light because that was the way they wanted to show it. They wanted to show it as blaming African-Americans for what was going on. The reports weren't saying that they were standing up for what they believed in, for their rights as Americans, for the right to be humans. They said they were fighting the system and not doing the right thing by the country. White was right. That was the way they put in on the television and in the paper. I always had my views on racial tolerance. I couldn't see why anyone would dislike or hate someone simply because they were of a different colour. Colour doesn't matter. Nationality doesn't matter. I'd been involved with

¹ Smith with Steele, 120.

² Kidd interview.

³ Harry Edwards quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

African-American athletes for a long time before Mexico and they were just buddies. They were competitors you would go out to dinner with, go to a Jazz club with or go to breakfast with on the way home. You liked someone because you liked them not because of their colour. I was interested in civil rights but not from a political association. I was probably more interested in people. I think it is the Aussie tradition of giving everyone a fair go.¹

Of course, reflecting on social injustice, there is irony in Norman's remarks due to the very real presence of racism in Australia, particularly towards Aboriginal people.² Nonetheless, it remains significant that Norman understood himself as challenging the discourse. He raised this challenge on the basis of a knowledge set that ecumenists associate with "a dialogue of life,"³ which itself arises from personal daily contact amongst humans. Furthermore, as will be noted below,⁴ Norman was also concerned about the mistreatment of Aboriginal people in Australia and other manifestations of racism in society.

For John Carlos, growing up in Harlem at a time when White people were leaving the area for the suburbs, racial discrimination was all around him. He remembers the way White police officers treated inebriated persons sleeping on the street so as to move them along. The dozing Whites received gentle nudges until they came to, while for Black people the police pounded the nightstick on the ground and if they did not receive a reaction they lined up the bottom of their feet with the nightstick and then hit them on the soles of their feet. Such an action caused a sleeping person to jump up, due to the trauma. He also remembered that if the fire department was called to a Black home, even for a

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 40-41.

² For more on the Australian context in this regard see, in particular, section 4.2. Here we you see that Norman also expresses solidarity with the indigenous peoples of Australia.

³ See section 2.7.

⁴ See, in particular, section 4.2.

small incident such as a stove-top fire, the firemen axed all the furniture and appliances and threw them out into the street. As Carlos says:

These people whose furniture they chopped up were my friends, were my classmates who I grew up with with. And it was a thing to go home or go back to school and say, 'man your house was just on fire and they threw everything you had into the street'. These things set a fire inside of me. Something is wrong with society. I didn't even know about society but I knew something was wrong with society. As a whole, something is broke you got to fix it.¹

Such discrimination did not end with athletic success. In a letter published in *Track and Field News*, while the idea of a boycott was still being bandied about (see the next chapter), Bruce Kidd commented on the situation of Black athletes in America during the 1960s, with a number of references that invoke the thought of Martin Luther King:

Sports can never be divorced from the environment in which it is conducted. Trackmen are citizens too. The violent repression of the American Negro has been well documented for some time (so well documented that glib comments about "high crime rates and low work reliability" are myopic to the point of being racist) but few efforts have been made by whites to change these conditions.

The treatment of the "privileged Negro athlete" hasn't been much better: the Negro may be the star of the playing field but he's rarely considered even a human being the other six days of the week. What is the Negro expected to do? Wait another 200 years? Or just until after the next Olympics? To expect the exploited to accept his fate in a society which boasts about its democratic equality of opportunity is to be naive in the extreme. A Negro boycott of the Olympics is perfectly justified. For years Americans have prided themselves on the fact that they have Negroes on their Olympic team and that they give Sullivan awards to Negroes. And for years Americans have been ignoring the

¹ John Carlos, "You Got 48 Hours," *Socialism 2007: Socialism for the 21st Century Chicago* (16 June 2007) Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jJm-nh-2w>. Accessed September 27th, 2010.

conditions in which they've forced Negroes to live. Tommie Smith is simply refusing to be part of the lie.¹

Adding to these points in explaining his motivation for participating in the protest after the 200 metres in Mexico City, Peter Norman offered a telling description of the treatment of athletes in Australia that nonetheless afforded them more privilege than their racialized fellow competitors across the Pacific Ocean. Invoking an image of agency, or more precisely the lack thereof accorded to track and field competitors, Norman said that “down under,” athletes were often treated as children, but that was nothing compared to the discrimination faced by Black American athletes in 1968.²

In addition to and in connection with these daily issues of racism, Tommie Smith was also aware of the tensions associated with the Viet Nam War.³ He initially feared being drafted if his average slipped below 2.0 and he lost his scholarship, something that almost happened during his first year at San Jose State when a professor missed reporting one of his grades. Smith was particularly concerned for his college education in 1964-1965 when grades and eligibility no longer mattered in terms of being exempt from the draft. Smith did not want to fight in South East Asia before earning his degree. He recalls:

I had worked hard to get where I was, and I didn't want anything to interrupt it, including a war that hadn't even been declared to bring democracy to a place that didn't want it. Particularly when the very country exporting democracy hadn't even bothered extending it to its

¹ Bruce Kidd, “Letter to the Editor.” *Track & Field News*, January 1968. Available from http://www.trackandfieldnews.com/display_article.php?id=2354. Accessed October 16, 2011.

² Peter Norman summarized in Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

³ Connections between the athletes’ views and Muhammad Ali’s conscientious objection stance are explored at a number of points in this thesis including below in this section.

own citizens yet. Some things never change. . . now this country is the same thing today, and never really stopped doing it in between.¹

John Carlos explained his motivation for protesting in Mexico City in a way that also connected militarism, racism and a failure to recognize Black achievement adequately. During a ceremony at San Jose State in 2006 he stated: “I don’t want to just be the guy to win the war for you and shed my blood and give my life. I don’t want to be the guy who wins the gold medal for you and then when I come home you don’t talk to me or do anything with me until it is time to go to war or go back and win another medal.”²

Smith, himself, was eventually drafted and immediately joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) as a way to fulfill his military obligation and continue his education at San Jose State.³ He soon learned firsthand of the history of racism and segregation in the US military. In particular, he was struck by the then recent history of the treatment that Muhammad Ali received for his conscientious objection stance. Smith formed the conviction that had he not already joined, he would have followed a similar path to Ali’s.⁴ Ali’s famous quote, “I ain’t got no quarrel with them Viet Cong. . . they never called me nigger,”⁵ resonates well with the points that the members of Olympic Project for Human Rights were making at the time.

Given the layers to Muhammad Ali’s identity and the high profile nature of his “time in the wilderness” as a result of his conscientious objection stance in 1968, it is not surprising that Ali was an important figure for the Olympic Project for Human Rights

¹ Smith with Steele, 90-91.

² John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 41minutes.

³ Smith with Steele, 91.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 93.

⁵ Muhammad Ali quoted in McCann Fenton, 107.

generally. Their programmatic goals included a demand for his title to be restored and the committee even organized a demonstration at the boxing match that was held to give away his title in March, 1968. In this regard, Edwards notes: “Special mention is due to Muhammad Ali. *For in a very real sense he is the saint of this revolution in sports.*”¹ As part of his consideration of the story of Ali and the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Bruce Kidd specifically emphasizes the profundity of the discrimination that was present in athletics during the late 1960s: “It is hard to recreate the racism that existed throughout Canadian and American sport then. It was open. It was unapologetic.”²

Kidd’s analysis is confirmed in the person of John Carlos, whose initial experience of the Jim Crow variety of racism came during his first year of inter-collegiate athletics at East Texas State University (ETSU). Carlos had been lured to Texas on an athletic scholarship and the promise of a job for his wife that would help them support their two-year old daughter. He was not prepared for the racism he was about to encounter. The team travelled to track meets in a series of station wagons. Often, in line with a segregationist tradition, the Black athletes had to change for the meet in the car. Additionally, they often ate in the cars while the White athletes dined inside restaurants. On one occasion, at a meet in Austin, Carlos overheard his coach make a bet with another coach based on the expressed premise that “my niggers could outrun your niggers.”³

Carlos was so upset by these comments that he told the coach he would not run in the mile relay, which had been the subject of the bet. As a form of punishment, the coach told him he did not have to run at all. So Carlos and the school reporter and the varsity

¹ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 89. Emphasis in the original.

² Bruce Kidd Interview.

³ Carlos with Jackson, 129-130.

paper's photographer went into downtown Austin to have a beer. The two men he was with were White; when they ordered three beers the bartender only served two. Asked to account for himself, the bartender said that he did not serve "niggers." Carlos remembers saying to himself, "Not only am I running for ETSU, but I am running for the state of Texas and I can't even buy a beer because my skin is the wrong color in the White Texan's eye."¹ Around this same time, the head coach called him many derogatory names, including a "nigger," when Carlos had refused to complete a gruelling workout prior to the state championship meet.² Smith remembers an even earlier experience with the "n" term, while he was attending grade school in California:

School was integrated, and it was my first look at White folks in any number. I remember the most amazing thing. One day my mother gave me a *nickel*. And I bought an ice-cream cone. And this White kid, Wesley, knocked it out of my hand and said, "Niggers don't eat ice cream." I didn't know *what* to do. I went home and pondered it in my heart.³

Such experiences⁴ were replicated in the stories of far too many Black athletes in the US during the late 1960s. Smith and other San Jose State athletes did not have to look far from home to see the effects of racism. As an example, in the area of housing, Smith recalls the well-known difficulties he and his fellow student athletes faced (note the gendered language use):

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 131.

² Carlos with Jackson, 134.

³ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

⁴ It may be informative to consider how Carlos' might add a dimension to Jean-Paul Sartre's famous "nervous condition" phrase: "The status of 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonized people *with their consent*." From Jean-Paul Sartre. "Preface to Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*" (1961). Available from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/1961/preface.htm>. Accessed April 5, 2013.

Even though my roommate St.¹ and I did get an apartment off campus, I'm sure that the athletic department had some control over it, since it was only 100 metres from the gym on the south side of campus. Every other attempt to rent an apartment did nothing but show the overt racist tendencies in that city. The Black athletes who did not get apartments were housed in a motel near campus. One time, I saw a "For Rent" sign on the lawn of a house right down the street from where I lived, so I walked up to the front door and as I did I saw some curtains close. I knocked on the door; long and hard, got no answer, and finally left. A light popped into my head, and I asked a White girl I knew in one of my classes to help me out. She went and knocked on the door; the door flew open, she asked about the apartment, and the landlady said, yes, we do have one available. My friend left, and I walked up again—and the curtains closed again, no one answered the door.²

Such racism was manifest not only in the city but also on campus and in the classrooms. In this regard, and very much in contrast to a Peace Education approach, Bruce Kidd remembers an event following Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I've been to the Mountaintop Speech"³ rather vividly:

The day before Martin Luther King was shot, he gave a tough speech in Memphis. The next morning, on the very day he was shot, the professor in one of my courses at the University of Chicago graduate school came into the classroom and said, "The nigger is going to get it." Right in the classroom! I never went back to that class. Fortunately, I had enough credits so that I could graduate. (I had over-enrolled so I had enough credits to graduate). . . This was a professor in the area of Education.⁴

The day after Dr. King was shot in Memphis, Larry James of Villanova University was completing a warm-up run outside the stadium at the University of Tennessee. Someone in a pickup truck slowed down and started driving his pace and then yelled "run, nigger run." James stopped running and started walking. Thankfully, the

¹ Smith's roommate's name was St., that is, "Saint." St. was another San Jose State student-athlete.

² Smith with Steele, 158.

³ See section 2.6.

⁴ Kidd Interview.

pickup eventually drove off. Back in the stadium, James ran his 440 yard race in 45.2 seconds, third fastest on the all-time list.¹ That race was one event on the road that led him to the podium for the 400 metres in Mexico City. Not being eligible for intercollegiate competition in 1967-68 because of NCAA transfer rules, on that day John Carlos was on an American Athletic Union (AAU) trip to Trinidad with, amongst other athletes, Leon Coleman, who would place fourth in 110 metres hurdles at Mexico 68. News of King's assassination reached the athletes just as one of the meets was about to start. Prior to the races the Trinidadians had organized a flag-raising ceremony. All of the other nations only raised their flags to half-mast out of respect for Dr. King. The US manager refused to lower the flag, saying that King was not a president, nor a dignitary nor a hero for the United States of America. Carlos interpreted this as racism and proceeded to take matters into his own hands. Leon Coleman remembers:

John and I felt compelled to do something about the fact that the manager did not want to lower the flag at half-mast. John and I immediately agreed it had to be lowered. So while John lowered the flag, I broke into a martial arts stance to make sure that no one messed with John as the flag was lowered. The next day there was an article about the event in Trinidad's newspaper with a photo of me breaking down in the martial arts stance. After everything was said and done, the people from Trinidad and other countries thanked John and I for taking a stand to lower the American flag.²

John Carlos recalls the manager being very upset and threatening to write him up and submit a formal complaint to an AAU committee. Carlos, however, was defiant in relation to the threat:

If you touch this flag, I will kick your ass! All of the countries represented here—the Trinidadians, British, Germans, Australians and other countries—had made known their sentiment for Dr. King, and

¹ Murphy, 192-193.

² Leon Coleman quoted in Carlos with Jackson, 161.

you mean to tell me that you don't want to allow the American flag to stand at half-mast for an American. As I said, Leon and I are ready to kick your ass about messing with this flag.¹

As perhaps indicated by the image used in the above quotation, Carlos had been hardened in his emerging lack of tolerance for injustice mainly as a result of his time spent in Texas. Consequently, he formed a renewed commitment to address the lack of due recognition accorded to Black people by the dominant US society. By way of example, when Carlos was at ETSU, his experience with racism even extended to an exchange of gunfire at a house party:

I couldn't say how long we were into the party, but after a while, the junior Klan arrived in their super fast sports cars. There were about eight or ten cars there. They got out of their cars shouting racial slurs. They called us Niggers, apes, coons, and all kinds of ungodly things. Everyone in the party was checking them while they were talking trash. Then a couple of them took their shotguns out and they shot the windows out. Everyone hit the floor. Luckily, no one got hit. Me and my partners got out our shotguns and waited. The Klan didn't know that we had guns too. So when they finished shooting and got back into the car, me and a couple of friends stepped outside the door and blew the back window out on a couple of their cars.²

Racism and militarism frequently collided with Carlos during his time at ETSU. After the 1967 track season, it was clear that he was a strong Olympic prospect. He gave an interview, first to the school paper and then to several Texas newspapers, about why he supported the idea of an Olympic boycott. In the interviews, he decried the treatment of amateur athletes in the US and condemned racist tendencies in sports and the society at large. In reaction to these interviews, the ETSU administration called a meeting for all Black athletes (apparently seeking to address the conflict by holding them all responsible

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 160-161.

² Carlos with Jackson, 136.

for the action of one from their constructed community).¹ Carlos remembers the athletic director, Jesse Hawthorne, who was also on the United States Olympic Committee, coming into the meeting and saying: “If any of you niggers don’t like it here you can leave.”²

In response, Carlos raised his hand and was ignored by Hawthorne. Nonetheless, he managed to assert that he would leave ETSU. Carlos was safe from the draft at that point because he was married and had a child. However, his colleagues had to consider additional factors that mitigated their ability to take a stand. If they left ETSU, not only would they lose their scholarships they would also most likely be drafted.³ These powerful intertwined realities of racism, militarism and discrimination kept Black athletes at ETSU in line even as they had their human dignity attacked.⁴

This lack of recognition of human dignity also extended to the corporate world. The multinational 3M Company chose San Jose State as the place to craft its first functioning tartan track. It chose the San Jose area because of the “Speed City” phenomenon, of which Lee Evans and Tommie Smith were the showcase athletes. Once the track was completed, the 3M Company decided to film a series of commercials to

¹ For more on the problematic value of such constructions see James.

² Carlos with Jackson, 140.

³ Carlos with Jackson, 140-141.

⁴ This point recalls, for me, the contribution of Professor of Conflict Studies at Saint Paul University, Heather Eaton. From an ecofeminist perspective, she is well poised to discern what she labels “interlocking layers of oppression,” which in terms of structural violence and militarism, mark not only the natural world, but, along with other forces such as patriarchy, coalesce to suppress marginalized humans such as people of colour, the poor, women, children, and the elderly. In this case, the interlocking patterns of oppression are buttressed by issues of race, class, gender (male being disadvantageous in terms of the draft in 1968) and militarism. For Dr. Eaton’s delineation of these issues see Heather Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 114.

promote the new surface. Yet, despite the fact that the vast majority of “Speed City” athletes were Black, these commercials were not representative of a construction of racial diversity. Carlos, who had by then transferred from ETSU to San Jose State, recalls his reaction:

I told the 3M Company that if there were no Blacks in the commercials, two things would occur. The first thing that would happen is that the team would not endorse the track. Secondly, I went on to tell them that if no Blacks were in the commercial we would tear the track up and make them get the hell out of our school. They knew that I meant business, and they agreed to hire Blacks and place them in the commercial. The 3M Company really had nerve to come into our school and disrespect us like that. But I put their asses in check real quick! They got what they wanted and we got ours.¹

In light of such patterns of discrimination, Harry Edwards describes the initial reasons why the group that would morph into the Olympic Project for Human Rights chose to protest on the San Jose State Campus:

The segregation was awful. You couldn't live in approved housing if you were Black because they were afraid White students would move out. There were restaurants we couldn't eat in. Blacks didn't have access to the recreation hall on campus. If you went to a dance, you almost always danced with White women because there were virtually no Black women on campus. But the minute you did that you could be in big trouble. I knew athletes who believed their scholarships were taken, who were kicked off campus, because they were accused of dating a White woman. Blacks faced academic inequities. If Blacks wanted to major in something outside of social welfare, physical education or criminology, they had to go through all kinds of changes. In order to major in sociology, I had to petition. The basic wisdom was that Blacks were natural athletes so we could cut it in physical education. Blacks could study social welfare or criminology, because we were always going to be criminals and welfare recipients. But we weren't allowed the same freedom to enrol in sociology, a more academically challenging and less “applied” field. Black athletes were not graduating. There were about 70 Blacks on campus, out of 22,000 students, and 60 or so were athletes, or former athletes trying to finish

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 154.

their degrees. I think I was the first [Black] athlete since 1951 to graduate within the period of his athletic eligibility.¹

Another important issue at the time was the reaction of police forces and government officials when students and other concerned citizens protested such systematic injustice. If there was any doubt that government officials and police forces were too often prone to militaristic framings of conflict, even outside of the deep South of the United States, one need look no further than the police-protest crowd relationship breakdown that occurred at the 1968 Democratic Convention² held in Chicago.³ Bruce Kidd, who acted a volunteer ambulance driver while completing his graduate degree at that time, reports on the follies in planning and an orientation towards militarism that precipitated heinous violence against the protestors:

I don't know if you know the history of the protests but the cops went bezerk. They keep all the seasoned cops, the ones that had dealt with protest and with big parades, behind. They told them, "go home" and "don't show up." And in their place [put] all the young testosterone-charged guys on the front line and they said: "Crack heads." And that is what they did. It was just horrible. Those protests were not only by those against the war but also those who were concerned about civil rights.⁴

¹ Harry Edwards interviewed by Leonard.

² In the aftermath of this breakdown the "Chicago Eight" (later seven), inclusive of Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, were famously put on trial for conspiracy to start a riot. See Marty Jezer, *Abbie Hoffman: American Rebel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

³ This reality of relational breakdown within the whole decade is captured by William O'Neill, who, in fact, paints a picture of many cases of opportunities lost to heal such breakdown. See William F. O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (New York: Time Books, 1971).

⁴ Kidd Interview.

It was this type of orientation that permitted the setting of dogs against Black protestors in places like Alabama.¹ Vince Matthews, for instance, recalls a conversation with his mother after seeing such images on television when he was nine years old: “I asked my mother why those dogs were biting those Blacks. She said, ‘They don’t want them going to the same school as Whites.’”²

In considering the summative effects on racism and militarism in the US as a motivation for protest, Charles Korr comments:

In this case they are very much a product of their times. They were young enough to be affected by what was going on in Selma and Montgomery. They were old enough to remember to have seen the fire hoses and police dogs. They were aware enough to see in San Jose, [as per] Lee Evan’s [experience] going to rent an apartment that has a sign “vacancy”, that when a Black man shows up suddenly the place had been rented. They were smart enough to know that these are not just coincidences. The question then becomes when the society, or so many people in society, are trying to beat you then you beat them by using the skills that you have. The skills that they had were enough to get them on television.³

As we shall see more fully, the Olympic Project for Human Rights members made full use of that limited space, on the podium and in the glare of the media spotlight, which was accorded them by the dominant society.

4.2 Racism and Militarism in Australia

In 1968, the famous US Civil rights activist, Angela Davies, described the official policies of the Australian Government as second only to South Africa in terms of levels

¹ An infamous case of dogs being set against protestors occurred under the direction of the Birmingham Commissioner of Public Safety, “Bull” Connor, during the Southern Christian Leadership Conference campaign in Birmingham during 1963. See section 2.6.

² Vincent Matthews with Neil Amdur. *My Race to Be Won* (New York: Charterhouse, 1974), 173.

³ Korr Interview.

of racial discrimination.¹ In this regard, consider the fact emphasized by Johnstone and Norman that Australian Aborigines were not acknowledged in the national census until 1967.² In relation to the analytical category of militarism, Australia was also active in the Viet Nam War during this time, including the deployment of conscripted soldiers in the latter stages of the conflict in 1966.³ Additionally, Australia, since the time of federation (1901) until 1973, had developed an immigration policy that sought to ensure that new residents of the country were White by limiting migration from certain countries and other discriminatory measures.⁴ It was against this background of militarism and racism that when asked why he chose to participate in the protest, Peter Norman cited, amongst

¹ Angela Davies quoted in Norman, at 6 minutes.

² Johnstone and Norman, 1.

³ The Australia Government Information Site on the subject explains their system of the national draft as follows: “Under the National Service Scheme, twenty-year-old men were required to register with the Department of Labour and National Service (DLNS), they were then subject to a ballot which, if their birth date was drawn, meant the possibility of two years of continuous full-time service in the regular army, followed by three years part-time service in the Army Reserve. As part of their duty, national servicemen on full-time duty were liable for ‘special overseas service’ including combat duties in Vietnam. As the number of men eligible for call-up far exceeded the number needed for military service, the bi-annual ballot determined who would be considered for national service. The ballot resembled a lottery draw, even to the extent, in the case of the final five ballots, of being fully televised. Numbered marbles representing birthdates were chosen randomly from a barrel and within a month men whose numbers had been drawn were advised by the DLNS as to whether they were required for participation in the scheme or not. Those failing to register without an acceptable explanation were automatically considered for call-up as well as being liable to a fine.” In a sidebar the site also explains that “15,381 [people] served in Vietnam [under the National Service Scheme]. Some 200 national servicemen lost their lives in Vietnam.” From Australian Department of Veterans Affairs. “Australia and the Vietnam War: Conscription.” (2011). Available from <http://vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au/conscription/birthday-ballot.php>. Accessed November 21, 2011.

⁴ National Communications Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Canberra. “Abolition of the ‘White Australia’ Policy.” (Nov 2010). Available from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm>. Accessed November 23, 2011.

other reasons, this “White Australia” policy, which he specifically described as the “Keep Australia White policy.”¹

In analyzing the immediate reporting of the protest after the 200 metres men’s final, Gary Osmond notes that the *Australian*, Rupert Murdoch’s national broadsheet newspaper (only four years old at the time):²

published the protest image on its front page and emphasized the political protest. At the same time, it merged sport politics and sport performance in the image headline: “Black Power wins 200 metres.” While the story ostensibly highlights “Black Power,” the photograph caption promotes Norman’s role: “Peter Norman, an Australian Salvation Army officer, wore a civil rights button on his tracksuit when receiving his silver medal after the Olympic 200 metres final. The Negro runners, Tommie Smith (U.S.), who won the race, and John Carlos, who came third are giving the Black Power salute.”

The story headline confirmed Norman’s complicity: “Australian joins racist [*sic.*] protest.” Unlike the stories in the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, this article infers correctly that Norman was partially motivated by a personal opposition to the White Australia Policy (WAP) of the Australian Government that racially discriminated against Indigenous Australians and other “non-whites.” In hindsight, the connection made by Norman between the medal dais protest and the WAP, which was not fully abandoned until 1973, made his support and statements particularly courageous. In 1968, however, press reports linking Norman’s support directly to an Australian domestic political agenda tainted the image. The tone of the article is subtly critical of Norman, suggesting that his involvement in the demonstration “might have rubbed the lustre off his silver medal.” In line with this, the headline of the sport story, located on page 20, announces his win with the ambiguously worded: “Norman hits out at Australian tracks after silver medal win.” While acknowledging his performance, and commenting on the parlous state of Australian cinder tracks in comparison to American tartan ones, the headline manages to portray Norman as a malcontent.³

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

² See Maxwell Newton, “It Was a Wild Idea, a Mistake, a Dream of Such Compulsion. A Once-in-a-Lifetime Chance,” *Australian*, 15 July, 1989.

³ Osmond, 127.

Since Mexico 68, the connection amongst “malcontents,” racism and Australian sport has resurfaced several times. This phenomenon was particularly evident at the 1994 Commonwealth Games and again, but to a lesser extent, at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, when Cathy Freedman ignited controversy by taking her gold medal victory laps with both the Aborigine and Australian flags. Norman supported her in these moments despite their controversial nature. Freedman’s original victory laps in 1994 after the 200 metres and 400 metres finals are often cited as landmark moments in the history of the Aborigine flag. In the aftermath of the controversy, the Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, made the then twenty four year old flag an official national flag in 1995. Later the flag was also chosen to officially represent the Torres Strait Islanders. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, as a result of a sustained campaign by the National Indigenous Advisory committee, the local organizers of the games announced that the Aborigine flag would be flown at all Olympic venues.¹ After both Freedman “incidents,” in line with his support for Australian aboriginal people in terms of human rights, Peter Norman stated his belief that: “Catherine was born Australian. She was born Aborigine. So the two flags are synonymous with her. Fair enough the Aborigine flag hasn’t always been part of Aborigine tradition, but the colours and design of the flag symbolize Aborigine tradition and therefore she’s got the right to carry two flags. They are both Australian.”²

4.3 Racism and Militarism in Mexico

John Carlos first went to Mexico City in 1967. He recalls being confronted with injustice upon his arrival in the Mexican capital:

¹ Carroll and Richardson. “History of the Aborigine Flag.” (2010). Available from <http://aboriginalflag.com.au/history.html>. Accessed November 19, 2011.

² Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 276.

When I got off the plane on my first visit, I could see poverty right outside of the airport. So I knew about the conditions of the people in terms of Mexico having slums and ghettos. There were no middle-class people. The economic situation was that the rich had all the money while the majority of the people lived in poverty. Mothers breast-fed their babies on the street while begging money for them. Children ran around begging for money. And when one would ask and you reached into your pocket to give him or her money, at least 10 to 20 more would come from nowhere with their hands out. Many people were sleeping on the hard sidewalk because they had nowhere else to go. Prostitution, drugs and alcohol were commonplace. There were some of the most beautiful women you've ever seen that would ask you to have sex with them for a few dollars. The situation was quite disturbing.¹

In summing up the aftermath of the student massacre in the Plaza de Las Tres Culturas in the run up to the 1968 summer games, Richard Hoffer quips: "As Mexican officials had hoped, the massacre was public enough to have effectively ended the student movement, yet underreported enough that the Olympics would not be stopped on its account."² Carlos builds upon this analysis to add a lens reflective of systemic injustice by commenting on the similar patterns of oppression in the form of discrimination, poverty and hidden suffering active in Mexico that were also present to him in the US:

I think the Mexican people had more love for us than any hatred. They might have been fighting the same demon we were fighting. In terms of saying that America is doing certain things we are not enchanted about but relative to the athletes it was no concern. And those numbers they are talking about, people who died, close to 2000 people died. And when they first started talking about it, oh 30 people died. But God as my witness closer to 2000 people lost their lives. Merely because those people said, "how are you bringing these games to this country and you are not going to do anything for the poor people of this country." I recall when we got off the plane. . . I am looking around, I am looking at all the people coming from all over the world, who come to watch these games and I saw this mesh fence in the back of the airport. And in back of that fence was the slums of the city. Mothers are back there with their babies, eating out of the gutter and

¹Carlos with Jackson, 171.

²Hoffer, 116.

sleeping with newspapers on them. The United States and Mexican government were so coy about what they did that they did not want people to see this when they came off the plane. So what they did, they took Olympic posters and put them all up and down the fence. I walked up there and looked between those posters and I could see the slums of the city. And it hurts. And I understood why those people died. And that was my first day there [in 1968].¹

4.4 Conclusion

In reviewing the athletes' perspectives on the context in which they were immersed, we not only get a more grounded view of many of the challenges facing social health in the US, Australia and Mexico at the time of the protests, we also begin to get an insight into aspects of their personalities that generated a deep concern for human rights and social justice. By 1968, building about their own life experiences, the athletes had come to see real problems in play—racism, militarism and injustice in particular. Their experiential insights, as we shall see in the next three chapters, provide a series of motivational forces that serve to direct the orientation of these elite athletes toward activism. As an example, it is poignant to see how someone like Carlos who felt the full brunt of racism, discrimination and militarism was able to discern similar patterns of oppression in Mexico upon his arrival there to compete. These themes and aspects of connectivity amid the local context of oppression are re-invoked at multiple points below.

As stated more fully in its introduction,² the main purpose of this chapter is to give the reader insight into the context of racism and militarism that marked the Olympians and the year 1968. It underlies their perspective as athletes and global citizens oriented toward human rights activism. Yet, here it may be helpful to pause and consider the significance of the athletes' actions in the face of militarism and racism in the US,

¹ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 31 minutes.

² See section 4.0.

Mexico and Australia before we turn our attention to what is perhaps the key subject matter of this thesis, the journey that led to that moment in Mexico City on October 16, 1968.

As will become evident as the reader moves through this thesis, these two aspects of the story are intertwined. The context provided both push and pull factors leading to the protests. Notably, as the reader may be beginning to see, racism and militarism were not abstract concepts for the American student-athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights; they felt them keenly as real forces at various points in their lives. The marginalizing context in which they lived partly explains the activism that will be described below. In another sense, that activism is even more remarkable when it is considered that the athletes had the fortitude to carry out their statement in Mexico 68 despite the forces conspiring to keep them down.

As Lederach's work implies,¹ seeking to transform structure in this manner, despite the context of oppression, requires an active moral imagination. One factor that may be in play here is the imagination of the elite athlete, which requires an ability to image and enact remarkable skill sets.² A rough parallel here is the notion of "possible worlds." Here, for instance, Leonardo Boff's vision for another possible world incarnating the core virtues of hospitality, co-living, respect, tolerance, and communality helps foster a truly sustainable culture of peace.³ At Mexico 68, with the help of various consciousness raising social activists like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Harry Edwards, the athletes were able to dream of something better. This is truly an instance

¹ See section 2.4.

² For a dovetailing point on imaging see section 5.3.

³ See Leonardo Boff, *Virtues for Another Possible World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

where the dream drove the action; the vision gave a *telos* for another possible world. As people primed to put their dreams into action, the elite athletes navigated various socio-political codes, structures and situations to: (1) make the 1968 Olympic team, (2) earn a place on the podium and (3) use those advantages to make a definitive, if often misunderstood or missed, series of statements. In this way, the athletes became part of the remarkable story of the year 1968. Rarely today can one find a list of events or a photographic essay on 1968 that does not include a mention or picture of the protest on the podium after the men's 200 metres final at Mexico 68. At that moment, the same men, who as boys and university students had been discriminated against and felt the brunt of racism and militarism in their bodies, now became part of the poignant stories in one of the defining years of the twentieth century. Always cognisant of this dialogical relationship with context and student-athlete activism, it is to that moment and the athletic and political journey that got social conscious athletes onto the podium at Mexico 68 to which I now turn.

Chapter Five—Development of Consciousness, Human Rights and the Moments of Protest: Getting there Athletically and Politically

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on unfolding the path to the Mexico City Olympics in terms of both the athletic and politico-intellectual journey of the main actors in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This chapter also recounts the crowning moment of protest, emphasizing the viewpoint of those involved. Further, it undertakes a similar exploration of other, lesser known, athlete-initiated protests that occurred at Mexico 68. These protests took place after Smith, Norman and Carlos made their famous statement on the podium during the awards ceremony for the Men's 200 metres final. In its conclusion, this chapter exits the athlete-centred narrative for a moment in order to offer an analytical comment on the events described to this point in the thesis.

5.1 Getting there Athletically

Future gold medalist Tommie Smith did not come from a privileged background. He describes a “typical” 24 hours at Lemoore High School, in California, as follows:

I would go to my first class at around 8 in the morning, and after school I went to football practice from 3 to 4:45. I'd rush to shower, if I had time, then rush to catch the late bus by 5, and hope that the bus driver wouldn't be late. I'd get home at 5:30, and my father would be waiting for me on the front porch. We'd jump in the old pickup and go to the field, about eight miles away, to start work by 6, because that's the time the hands change on the 12-hour shifts. And I'd work in those fields all night, 12 hours, and get home and have to be ready to be back at class at 8 in the morning, which meant I might get some sleep and I might not.¹

Under such conditions, it is extremely remarkable that Smith made it to San Jose State on a full athletic scholarship. However, he was by no means short of offers from post-

¹ Smith with Steele, 31-32.

secondary schools, having run 47.7 seconds for the 440 yards as a high school Junior and then 47.3 seconds as a Senior. One of the main reasons he chose San Jose was because it was just far enough away from home that he knew he would not be expected to go home to work in the fields on the weekends.¹

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, prior to the 1956 Olympics² being held in his home town of Melbourne, Peter Norman had been involved in Athletics mainly as a way to get out of having to attend class. However, it was when skipping school to work at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) during the Summer Games that his passion for the sport was ignited:

I had no idea of the magnitude of the Olympics back then but I waggged school and made something like ten shillings and nine selling pies in the old Southern stand at the MCG. I did that till I got caught. I saw about three days of track and field but didn't sell many pies. I guess that's when I decided I really wanted to have a go at this track-and-field business.³

After the games were over, Peter and his friend Kevin Berry were part of a wave of youngsters who joined Collingwood Harriers. One of their main motivations in joining was to see who could beat who in the high jump.⁴ After failing to win selection to a competing team in either the high jump or the triple jump for a whole season, Peter, quite by accident, joined a relay trial. He was placed last in the running order (which is sometimes where you put a slow runner when you cannot make a complete competitive team to give the first three runners a good race). Although his team was well down,

¹ Smith with Steele, 70.

² It was at these Olympic that Ron Delany, the great Irish miler, beat John Landy in the 1500 metres. See University College Dublin. "Ireland's most famous Olympian, Ronnie Delany honoured by UCD." (05 December 2006). Available from http://www.ucd.ie/news/dec06/120506_ronnie_delany.htm. Accessed April 5, 2013.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 84.

⁴ Johnstone and Norman, 85.

Norman made up ground and won the race. The next week the club secretary phoned him and on Norman's telling: "He [the secretary] said, 'You're running the C-grade 100 m.' So I became a sprinter fairly well by accident."¹

Norman stayed with Collingwood for four seasons, helping to win an 'A' grade inter-club title, and in the process, setting numerous club records. He then requested a transfer to East Melbourne Harriers in order to access coaching and a faster cinder (as opposed to grass) track.² Norman trained through the winter of 1962, initially thinking he was there to aid Gary Holdsworth in making the Commonwealth Games, which were to be held in Perth that year. However, the training paid off and Norman began to beat Holdsworth in races. He eventually came fourth in the trials and since the games were in Australia was selected to represent his country. As Norman notes: "I made an Australian team before representing my state at senior level, which is something of an unusual thing."³ Peter finished sixth in the semi-final at the games.⁴ He missed selection to the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 after hurting his ankle in a basketball game a week before the trials.⁵ He made the 1966 Commonwealth Games team, an experience more notable for being exposed to the violence of Kingston, Jamaica, than for his sixth place quarter-finals finish in the 100 yards, his sixth place semi-final placing in the 220 yards and earning a bronze medal in the 4 x 110 yards relay.⁶

Despite a poor start, Peter Norman won the 1968 Australian 200 metres championships with a national record performance of 20.5 seconds on ES Marks Field, a

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 85.

² Johnstone and Norman, 108.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 111.

⁴ Johnstone and Norman, 113.

⁵ Johnstone and Norman, 118.

⁶ Johnstone and Norman, 135.

cinder track held together by used sump oil. Norman had never run on a tartan (synthetic) track before arriving in Mexico.¹ Earlier, as noted above,² he switched Athletics clubs partly because the change afforded him a chance to train on a quicker surface. The tartan tracks in Mexico City excited him. Recalling the impact of the surface on his performance he commented:

In Australia, I was running on grass and cinder tracks. The synthetic track was just made for me because I was very much a power runner. . . . Every time I put my foot down on the tartan it reacted the same as the last time. Every stride I took was lengthened by about four inches, which makes you a lot faster. I couldn't believe what was happening.³

Even with a slightly injured hamstring, Norman ran 20.2 seconds in a warm-up meet on the University of Mexico's synthetic track.⁴

The man who finished third in the 200 metres at Mexico 68 had contrasting experiences of life and athletics to those of Smith and Norman. The grandson of two people who were themselves born as slaves on his paternal side,⁵ John Carlos was from Harlem, New York. He literally got his start in athletics by running from the police. Carlos and his friends, inspired by a cinematic rendering of the story of Robin Hood,⁶ broke into freight cars sitting in the rail yard by Yankee Stadium and then run across the 155th Street Bridge to distribute the spoils to people in the neighbourhood.⁷ Carlos and his friends did this for two years without ever being caught.⁸ Carlos even says that his decision to join the New York Pioneer Club was motivated by a pair of police officers

¹ Johnstone and Norman, 3.

² See the beginning of section 5.1.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 19.

⁴ Johnstone and Norman, 20.

⁵ Carlos with Jackson, 16.

⁶ Carlos with Jackson, 58.

⁷ John Carlos quoted in Hoffer, 9.

⁸ Carlos with Jackson, 63.

roughing him up and then taunting him with the idea that if he thought he was so fast then he should run track.¹

On their paths to Mexico 68, Carlos beat Smith at the US Olympic trials in a world record time of 19.7 seconds, which was not ratified due to the former running in “brush spikes.” Carlos still has a sense that he was denied the record and felt it was an attempt to suppress his agency motivated by his emerging activist stance: “Officials were out on the track before I’d come to a stop, telling me it wouldn’t count. They *loved* telling me that. I always used to say, we ain’t windup toys. We don’t hop out of the closet and perform. I’m a man unto myself. That never seemed to penetrate.”²

The above quotations show how those involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights were competitors on and off the track. This competitive spirit included elements of what today would be called “trash talk.” As an example, in the semi-final when John Carlos beat Peter Norman in a time of 20.1 seconds, Norman turned to Carlos as they were finishing and said: “You have this one John. I’ll have the next.”³ Prior to the race, Carlos repetitively let Norman know his intentions, by telling any Australian athlete he encountered to take a racialized message to Peter, “You tell that White boy I am going to kick his ass.”⁴

Even getting to the final was a perilous enterprise for Smith. The death threats he received prior to and even during the Mexico City games as a result of his activism made him extremely nervous, so much so that the pain he felt when pulling a major muscle as he slowed down at the semi-final brought its own sense of relief:

¹ John Carlos quoted in Hoffer, 10.

² John Carlos quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 26.

⁴ Johnstone and Norman, 18.

To give you an idea of what was on my mind during the heats, when I pulled the abductor muscle in the semis, it was a very sharp pain unlike any other pain I had felt before, and I had pulled a few muscles before. I honestly thought that I had been shot. I looked down and there was no blood, so I was happy that I had pulled a muscle, that I had pulled something on the inside rather than have something pierce me on the outside.¹

Smith's initial relief at being bullet-free turned into horror when he realized that pulling his abductor muscle meant that he might not be able to earn a medal in the 200 metres. The only solutions available to him at the time were ice and prayer.² Smith recalls the magnitude of the moment as he lined up in the blocks: "It's all or nothing now. The proposed boycott, the training, lost my job, wife need clothes, Kevin [his infant son at the time] needs milk, cotton fields, all this was here [and Smith points to his legs]."³

Having grown up the son of a sharecropper, Lee Evans, 1968 Olympic gold 400 metres medalist, comments "Running was easy having been on my feet for 10-12 hours [a day]."⁴ Evans was an exceptional high school athlete. He tied for third in the 440 yards at the California State championships in a time of 48.2 seconds. In his senior year, he was planning an assault on the national record of 46.1 seconds after running 46.9 seconds on a sub-standard track earlier in the season. However, he pulled a series of muscles in the semi-final.⁵ His time still earned him the attention of recruiters. Southern University in Baton Rouge, one of the major centres of quarter mile running at the time, was very interested in having Evans attend. He was, however, not keen to go to Louisiana, given

¹ Smith with Steele, 35.

² This faith-based language and this specific moment is explored more fully below in section 6.3.

³ Tommie Smith quoted in Geoff Small, *Black Power Salute* (London: Tigerlilly Films, 2008), at 43 minutes.

⁴ Lee Evans quoted in Small, at 4 minutes.

⁵ Murphy, 58-60.

the political climate there. In any case, San Jose, where his family now lived, was becoming “Speed City” and Evans felt he needed some time to learn to study so he enrolled at San Jose City College.¹ After winning the 400 metres US championships and helping to set world records in the mile relay on a team that included Tommie Smith, Evans accepted a scholarship to San Jose State.²

Evans won another US championship in 1967 as well as the 400 metres gold medal at the Pan American games in Winnipeg that same year. The race in Winnipeg, on the University of Manitoba campus,³ was the first time he ran on tartan, the same type of surface that excited Norman and was also laid at the Olympic Stadium in Mexico. Evans loved his first experience on an artificial surface for the way it kept him on his toes and used the resultant 44.9 seconds 400 metres race⁴ as a model for future performances employing the label “Winnipeg Tip” as a psychological device to remember and reproduce the feeling of speed he experienced in Manitoba.⁵ In 1968, the top 15 fastest 400 metres runners in the world were vying for the three spots on the US team in the 400 metres at the Mexico Olympics and very little separated them. The “Winnipeg Tip” served Evans well on his path to becoming an Olympic champion, allowing him to win the US Championships again, then the first trial, the final (male only) trials at altitude in Lake Tahoe and successfully navigate the gruelling heats and finals at the Olympics. In

¹ Murphy, 61-65.

² Murphy, 84-88.

³ Other athletes who competed at the venue during the Pan Am Games and feature in this thesis are: John Carlos (Gold in the 200 metres), Ralph Boston (Gold in the Long Jump), Bob Beamon (Silver in the Long Jump), Wyomia Tyus (Gold in the 200 metres) and Vince Matthews (Silver in the 400 metres).

⁴ This result has proved enduring. Evans still holds the Manitoba open record for the 400 metres, meaning that in winning the 1967 Pan Am Games he ran the fastest ever 400 metres by anyone in the history of the sport in the province.

⁵ Murphy, 120.

particular, with only six lanes¹ on the track at Lake Tahoe, the qualifying was fierce but again Evans managed to win a close race in what would have been a world record of 44 seconds flat, except for the fact that he had worn the illegal Puma brush spikes. Larry James was second in 44.1 seconds, Ron Freedman was third in 44.6 seconds, and Vince Matthews, who had broken the world record with a 44.4 second result in a warm up meet, placed fourth in what, in any other context, would be a highly impressive time of 44.8 seconds.²

During this period in Lake Tahoe, Evans remembers the Olympic Project for Human Rights meetings started up again with new vigour after the Black athletes received a warning letter from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that told them that if they stepped out of line they should expect severe consequences.³ This point reminds us that it is something of an artificial disconnect to separate categories of “getting there athletically” and “getting there politically.”⁴

5.2 Getting there Politically

What I did grew directly out of my education as an American.⁵ -Tommie Smith

For many of the athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights, retreat from the larger realities of racism and discrimination was not an option. John Carlos remembers being suspended from grade school several times for organizing

¹ Normally there are eight, and sometimes even nine lanes, on an athletics track used for high standard competitions.

² Murphy, 245.

³ Lee Evans quoted in Small, at 30 minutes.

⁴ This point is further developed in section 5.5.

⁵ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.” Moore also reports that even by 1991 other athletes recognized the importance of Smith’s stand. For instance, he notes a signed photo of the exceptional hurdler, Edwin Moses, while describing Smith’s office in Santa Monica inscribed: “To Tommie, national hero, from a protégé!”

students around issues of equity and the representation of Blacks on TV and in curricula.¹

Upon reflection, he now sees how this exclusion from both the school curricula and the wider society had the effect of adding a structural barrier to academic achievement and success by Black students as it reproduced White privilege:

In order to teach a child properly in education, it is imperative that he learns about his group's contribution in history. One needs to see someone who looks like him in order to identify with self. In school, Blacks had no heroes. Personally, I had several of them, namely my father, Earl Carlos, Paul Robeson, Frederick Douglas, Adam Clayton Powell (I attended his church), John Brown, Bill Robinson, and many others. We never discussed them in school, and it was forbidden to do so at the time. Nonetheless, the White children saw images that looked like them all the time. Jesus, angels, presidents, governors, mayors, senators, judges, the media, billboards, material in textbooks, and every phase of society represented people who looked White. One can't miss feeling proud, self-reliant, intelligent, and beautiful after seeing people who have done the important things in society look like him.

The authorities knew this! The curriculum was designed with White superiority in mind. And by keeping the truth suppressed about Blacks' contribution in mathematics, science, ancient astrology, architecture, medicine, theology, health, nutrition and other related subjects, the authorities could systematically keep us disinterested in school. One must be able to identify with self in order to learn. I understood this concept early and was crucified by the authorities for sharing the truth with my fellow students. And just like the system was designed to do, my friends and I were turned off, because we could not identify with the White teachers or the characters in the curriculum that did not look like us.²

A key figure in encouraging Smith, Carlos and Evans to become involved in human rights issues, thereby raising their consciousness, was Harry Edwards. Edwards, a self-described "activist-scholar,"³ is now professor emeritus at Berkeley. In the 1960s, he was a student-athlete at San Jose State who played basketball and was also a member of

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 37-39.

² Carlos with Jackson, 41.

³ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 350.

the athletics team. Smith and Edwards first met when the latter was one of a group of student-athletes dispatched to meet the former when Smith first deplaned at the San Jose airport.¹ Smith estimates that when he arrived at San Jose State there were about 20,000 students. Only 20 to 30 were Black students and 95 percent of those were student-athletes.² Despite his resultant rarefied minority status, it was this environment that served to foster Smith's lifelong political and intellectual development:

In my first two years in college I learned more than I did in my elementary and high school academic tenures combined. I was like a plant taken from a small pot and planted in a bigger pot; it blossoms, the roots grow, and as long as it gets fed and watered, it will keep growing. I took root in the bigger landscape and began to blossom, and I have not stopped.³

As we shall see below,⁴ the role played by Edwards in this intellectual development is not as fixed and clearly set as some might think. Nonetheless, there are a number of reasons to cast him as the main protagonist in this story. Edwards is certainly an imposing figure, with an air of leadership. He is a large person, at 6' 8" inches and, as is evident in the film *Black Power Salute*, speaks with authority. In an interview for that film, Linda Huey, one of the student-athletes at San Jose in the late 1960s, describes Edwards in no uncertain terms as one who terrified and fascinated her as an instructor.⁵ While acknowledging the almost inherent conflict within "a loose association of people, many of whom had egos as big as houses. . . and had a gazillion people trying to play

¹ Smith with Steele, 74.

² Smith with Steele, 75.

³ Smith with Steele, 76.

⁴ See, in particular, section 6.2.

⁵ Linda Huey quoted in Small, at 6 minutes.

them off against each other,”¹ Bruce Kidd sums up the stature of Edwards succinctly in a similar light: “He was a big man with big ideas.”²

After earning his Master’s degree at Cornell, Edwards came back to San Jose State to work as an instructor. What is certain is that by this time he was politically active. He helped to organize the students around issues of segregation, questionable recruitment practices geared towards Black student athletes, substandard housing, low levels of academic achievement for Black athletes, discrimination in sororities and fraternities and the under-representation of Black athletes in certain positions on collegiate teams.³ Edwards eventually based his academic and consulting careers on these themes. Eventually, he became noted not only for his activism but for the way he was granted tenure at Berkley only after the state governor intervened in the process, when his application had been refused at all levels of the University of California governance system.⁴

In a work that would help make his name in academia, Edwards penned a monograph, which has as its central subject matter the Olympic Project for Human Rights. In *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969), Edwards claims a definitive role for himself in the movement. Summing up this claim, the jacket cover of that monograph asserts that Edwards struggled against the establishment “virtually alone.”⁵ Smith speaks of Edwards’ influence on him sparingly, noting only that Edwards was responsible for aspects of his intellectual and political development:

¹ Bruce Kidd Interview.

² Bruce Kidd Interview.

³ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, ix-30.

⁴ Hartmann, 21.

⁵ This claim is found on the jacket cover of the original 1969 edition of the book, which I now own having bought a used copy that was discarded by a major US public library.

Harry brought a different perspective. It was up to us, he said, to understand how the system is constructed, the rules and regulations that govern our place in the system. Most important, he said, we have to take more of a stand on how it affects us, to use those rules to our advantage instead of letting them take advantage of us. Nowhere, he said, is this need more obvious than in our situation, as highly visible athletes with a measurable impact on society, and as Black students in a place where we are not numerous, welcomed or encouraged.¹

Smith also emphasizes that after an initial interaction that was very much one way, he became aware of his own agency and areas of disagreement with Edwards.² This conclusion confirms Bruce Kidd's point that Harry Edwards, while certainly a key figure in these events, is not the whole measure of the story. Kidd sources the origins of the ideas that drove the protest to earlier questions of student athletes' identities and how those identities were constructed in relation to dominant and oppressive forces: "Harry gets all the credit. . . but it was also in the milieu of the debates we were having about how to be an athlete and they predated 1967-68 by quite a bit."³

Nonetheless, Edwards was instrumental in bringing together many of the student athletes who are the protagonists in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. In his National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) career, Carlos had originally been an East Texas State athlete. He did not like the treatment he received in the Lone Star State and considered giving up on inter-collegiate athletics all together and returning to New York. However, Edwards convinced him that this would be foolish. Even prior to meeting Edwards, Carlos remembers reading in *Track and Field News* about the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the idea that they might organize a boycott of Mexico 68. He was sympathetic to the cause and felt that the injustices they were working against

¹ Smith with Steele, 120.

² Smith with Steele, 121.

³ Kidd Interview.

resonated well with his life experiences. Back in New York, Edwards invited Carlos to one of the meetings at the Americana Hotel with Dr. King. Carlos was very impressed by the minister and his courage in the face of death threats. According to Carlos' recollection, when he asked the preacher why he would return to Memphis if he knew there was extreme danger to his personal safety, Dr. King replied, "I've got to stand up for those who won't stand and I have got to stand up for those who can't." ¹

After the meeting with Dr. King, Carlos decided to transfer to San Jose State. He had to sit out a year of NCAA competition in accordance with the athlete transfer rules, but Carlos remembers being keen to revitalize his track career in "Speed City" and to work on the social justice issues with Edwards. ² Reflecting on King's words gave Carlos the courage to conclude: "In Mexico City we had to do something that was big, prestigious, respectable, poignant, shocking and revealing." ³

By many measures, the athletes were ultimately successful in meeting those targets. Bruce Kidd points out that:

The US government and the state department, over and over again, in tours, in taking athletes abroad, in publications, in films, used the victories of Black US athletes in earlier games to proclaim the myth about American democracy. Obviously, the protests were to transform the day to day existence of Black people in the US, to change the life of Black people, to stop the lying about what life was like for Black people in the US and the use of athletes as examples of integration. ⁴

In considering his own development of consciousness in regards to lack of integration, Tommie Smith credits two other professors, Dr. Bruce Ogilvie and Dr.

¹ Martin Luther King Jr. quoted in Carlos with Jackson.

² John Carlos quoted in Hoffer, 156.

³ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 58 minutes.

⁴ Kidd Interview.

Thomas Tutko, a sport psychologist and a sport sociologist respectively, as being two important teachers in a process akin to what Paulo Freire labels as conscientization:¹

Who will always stand out in my mind as men who helped shape me when I needed shaping most. . . . Dr. Ogilvie in particular was special. I took his class as a junior, and in that and in personal conversations with me, he truly made me understand that I was not dumb. At that time, convincing me of this took some doing, because of my own background and the campus culture. He was amazing. But besides those exceptions, I cannot honestly tell anyone that the administration has ever made me feel welcome—back, home, or in any other way. Not until the movement to commemorate us began, with the students.²

When he arrived at San Jose State as a student, Lee Evans' interest in social justice issues, which had been fostered by personal reading, including *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, when at the city college,³ grew. A catalyst for this growth was his involvement with a group called the United Black Students for Action. Harry Edwards was also a part of this group as were Tommie Smith and Ken Noel, who had a career as a middle-distance runner. Noel was to become the chief organizer of the Olympic Project for Human Rights but was then a half-miler for San Jose State and Evans' good friend.⁴ Evans and Smith soon also became friends. This process was aided by the fact that Lee Evans' early life shared many similarities with that of Tommie Smith. Evans' family had moved to California from Louisiana, essentially as political migrants, due to the Jim Crowe laws.⁵ Working with his parents and siblings, he spent a great deal of time in the fields around Fresno.¹

¹ See section 2.6.

² Smith with Steele, 18.

³ Murphy, 65.

⁴ Murphy, 111.

⁵ The Jim Crowe system was most closely associated with a set of laws passed in the wake of the 1883 supreme court ruling that the civil rights act of 1875 did not apply to acts of personal discrimination. In a movement known as "Restoration", a series of

In addition to these bonds between the athletes, one person who served as an important contrast for the political activities of the Olympic Project for Human Rights was Avery Brundage. Indeed, as was mentioned above,² his response to efforts to organize a boycott or protest at the games helped stimulate group cohesion and activism among the athletes. Brundage was the long serving president of the IOC (1952-1972). According to Frank Murphy's summative analysis: "In his years, Brundage built a record consistent with the characterization of him as an anti-Semite, an isolationist, a bigot, an elitist, and a person with a chronic inability to understand the opinions of other people or to credit them appropriately."³

Another notable event during his tenure as a member of the IOC was a speech Brundage gave in October 1936 to the German-American Bund in Madison Square Garden. He stated: "We can learn much from Germany. We, too, if we wish to preserve our institutions, must stamp out communism. We, too, must take steps to arrest the decline of patriotism."⁴ Even as late as 1967 and 1968, when people were questioning the lack of diversity on the USOC, it was reported that Brundage maintained membership in a number of clubs which excluded Jews and people of colour. He even owned one such

segregationist laws were passed through legislatures in the Southern states between 1883 and 1910 that, for example, required separate schools, prohibited interracial marriage, made racially mixed seating on trains illegal and mandated a series of segregated drinking fountains, swimming pools and even parks. These efforts were bolstered by a "separate but equal" doctrine, which was rarely representative of the actual lived reality of the Black experience of discrimination in the Southern US. See Davis, *Who is Black?*, 52-53.

¹ Murphy, 22.

² See Section 5.1 and also section 6.2 below.

³ Murphy, 130.

⁴ Avery Brundage quoted in Murphy, 133.

club.¹ Brundage saw no problem with the club operating according to such policies, arguing that if a club was formed “to accept only red-haired barbers for members, I think it’s their right.”²

There were, however, White athletes who were in solidarity with the Black student-athlete activists. Notable in this regard was the Harvard rowing team, whose men’s eight made up the US team during this period. Two moments of building solidarity for the Harvard Eight happened at the Pan American Games in Winnipeg in 1967. On the plane journey to the competition, they were travelling with the members of Tennessee State’s all-Black Tigerbelles, then amongst the best women athletes in the US. In Winnipeg, the Harvard Club invited the eight to a dinner theatre event to be held in their honour. The cox, Paul Hoffman, asked if they could bring dates, they did and the Tigerbelle women took over the evening with joyous laughter and dancing. Later in Winnipeg, the USOC held a picnic for all the athletes the day before the eights final. Addressing the crowd, USOC president, Doug Roby, focussed on the Harvard men and told them that no matter how they placed they had better beat the Cubans. Not wanting to be associated with such jingoism, the crew promptly all looked at each other, stood up and left in silent protest. The next day they won the race.³

The next year, after they won the Olympic trials at Long Beach, Paul Hoffmann and his team mate, Cleve Livingston, travelled north to Livingston’s parents’ home in Sacramento. Motivated by Harry Edwards’ growing profile in the service of ending racial discrimination, they sought an appointment with the activist scholar. Happy with the

¹ Murphy, 133.

² Avery Brundage quoted in Murphy, 133.

³ Paul Hoffman quoted in Hoffer, 63-64.

promise shown in the meeting, each party resolved to form an alliance and later that summer Edwards came to the boathouse at Harvard for a press conference announcing their involvement.

For their stance, the entire crew of nine men faced the ire of the USOC Rowing committee. Eventually, they were told to sign a statement promising not to protest in Mexico City in support of any disadvantaged people in the US. Despite this climate emanating from the administrators in their sport, select members of the Harvard crew began writing letters to other athletes, asking them to support the Olympic Project for Human Rights.¹ After he joined the Olympic Project for Human Rights as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, Bruce Kidd also started writing “a ton of letters,” several of which were published in newspapers and magazines, partly owing to his high status as a successful distance runner.² Eventually five of the nine members³ of the Harvard crew, including the captain, resolved to conduct a sustained letter writing campaign to other athletes on the US Olympic team. They wrote these letters to each member of the team, as soon as they were selected for Mexico 68.⁴ The Harvard crew explained the origin of their commitment to solidarity (although in gendered terms) in the opening paragraph of the letter:

We—as individuals—have been concerned with the place of the Black man in American society and his struggle for equal rights. As members of the United States 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. This commitment had led us to initiate conversations with the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Our initial contacts have

¹ Paul Hoffman quoted in Hoffer, 66-67.

² Kidd Interview.

³ The cox (Paul Hoffman) was the ninth team member in the Harvard men’s eight.

⁴ Paul Hoffman quoted in Small, at 26 minutes.

reaffirmed our conviction that the White majority cannot afford to ignore the voices of oppressed minorities and that the struggle for racial justice is not simply a Black struggle but one in which every man who counts himself free must be involved.¹

They go on to affirm their commitment to solidarity and dialogue on the issues of human rights and discrimination by citing a threefold purpose to their involvement with the Olympic Project for Human Rights:

1. To help the White athletes selected for the Olympic team obtain information about the reasons for and goals of the Black demonstrations.
2. To stimulate an open-ended discussion of the issues between White and Black athletes, and
3. To discuss means of voicing our support at the Olympic Games.²

This portion of the story also points to the nature of the Olympic Project for Human Rights as a voluntary organization and loose association that benefited from the high status of sport, and athletics in particular, in the United States and abroad in the late 1960s. Notably, during that period, this status provided track stars opportunities for political engagement that were not present in team sports. As Bruce Kidd points out:

The Olympic Project for Human Rights was a very loose network. It was focused on track and field but it also should be remembered it was a much bigger sport in the United States than it is now. You would have long outdoor and indoor seasons with prominent sponsors. Again, this is hard to recreate but these athletes were well known. Track and field was a front page sport. The Olympic Project for Human Rights focussed on track and field because, first of all, of Harry Edwards and the coming together of that group. Secondly, track and field is an individual sport. So there are far fewer constraints on athletes speaking out than there are in team sports but thirdly, because

¹ Curtis Canning, Paul Hoffman, Cleve Livingston, Scott Steketee and Dave Higgins quoted in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 108-109.

² Curtis Canning, Paul Hoffman, Cleve Livingston, Scott Steketee and Dave Higgins quoted in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 109.

of the prominence of track and field internationally for the United States. I mean, when you think of US athletes who were known internationally in the late 1960s, [there were] a few tennis players, a few golfers but it was really track and field athletes, and to lesser extent, swimmers. You know basketball, football, baseball were so insular in the US that they called their own national championship the world championship; that is all they cared about. I am sure you have heard the observation that during the Cold War if the Soviet Union did not exist many Americans would have been unaware of any other countries existing in the world. That was certainly true in the sports world. The international sports stars like Tommie Smith are certainly important because they were the face of US sport abroad.¹

It was this status and its corresponding opportunities that got Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Peter Norman “there” politically and also gave them a stage for lasting action in that moment.

5.3 The Moment

I cannot say what I remember most about that night in Mexico City because I remember everything. How could I possibly forget anything about it?² -Tommie Smith

The first inkling of an actual protest at the games for those outside of the Olympic Project for Human Rights came from an unlikely source. Jim Hines was the first Black American athlete to win a medal at the 1968 Olympic Games. Prior to coming to Mexico City, Hines had refused to participate in any discussion of a boycott, most likely because he had signed a contract to play in the NFL for the Miami Dolphins after the Olympics. Brundage thought the awards ceremony would provide a good photo opportunity for him as he personally presented the medal to Hines and shook the sprinter’s hand. Given Brundage’s reputation, Hines made it known that if Brundage came to the infield to present he would not accept the medal. Brundage backed down on that occasion, but

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Tommie Smith, on perhaps the definitive evening of his life. From Smith with Steele, 20.

Smith and Evans became worried that he might try to present their medals without warning.¹ This fear was the origin of the famous black-coloured gloves. Smith asked his first wife, Denise, who had accompanied him to Mexico City,² to buy the gloves so that if Brundage tried to shake their hands they could slip them on so that he only came in contact with black leather.³

Not all of the US 100 metres runners were on side with the Olympic Project for Human Rights activist orientation. Charlie Greene, the bronze medalist at Mexico 68 explains his motivation for participation in the games as being centred on patriotism: “I thirsted for glory and I wanted the US to be better than every other country. I loved that.”⁴ Yet, even Greene did not want to receive his medal from Brundage.⁵ Arguably, the male athlete with the biggest claim to being called both an activist and a patriot amongst the 100 metres runners was Mel Pender. He was a loyal army man who, on the surface, seemed an unlikely candidate to protest on the podium. Additionally, he had done a tour of duty in Viet Nam and had experienced combat, earning the Bronze Star. Yet, because of these experiences he was also keenly aware of racism in the military.

Pender had campaigned vocally for the Olympic Project for Human Rights in the run-up to the games. Lest he be tempted to demonstrate, the army sent down a Colonel to meet with him prior to the start of the competition. Pender recalls the Colonel’s threats of a second tour of duty in Viet Nam and his further words of warning: “Mel, you could really ruin your career. You could be court-marshalled, you could even go to Fort

¹ Murphy, 254-255.

² Smith with Steele, 139.

³ Murphy, 256.

⁴ Charlie Greene quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

⁵ See section 5.5.

Leavenworth [the notorious military brig].”¹ Pender further recalled that the Colonel contrasted this outcome with the possible rewards for continued loyalty to the US army: “I understand you’re supposed to go to flight school in February. When you get back you will be ready to go.”² Despite a stellar start in the 100 metres final, Pender did not make it to the podium in the individual 100 metres, but he was on the dais for the 4 x 100 metres relay awards. Looking back on the events in 2009, he wished he had used the platform for something other than strict compliance to normative Olympic ritual. This wish is especially pointed when he considers that “behaving” did not bring him the promised reward of flight school training but rather another assignment to Viet Nam, ironically, one of the sanctions he had been warned about should he step out of line.³

In terms of Smith and Carlos’ specific protest, Dr. Kirk Clayton, a former “Speed City” athlete who feels he could have competed at Mexico 68 had he pursued this option, instead opted to boycott at an early stage. In an interview with C. D. Jackson (who helped to write John Carlos’ biography), Clayton recalled that he planted the seeds for the form the actual protest took in Mexico City:

I took Tommy [*sic.*] and John into my room and I showed him [*sic.*] a picture of a fist on my wall that was painted by a friend of mine named Henry Smothers. I told them that if I was to go to the Olympics and I made it to the victory stand, I would make a gesture with a fist. The cargo handlers at the airport lost the picture of the fist that I had on the wall. I was very disappointed about the loss. Tommy [*sic.*] and John may not remember the incident but it did happen!⁴

Explaining his motivation and speaking in the company of Carlos, Norman and Edwards, Tommie Smith recalls the sentiment driving that famous action at the time of

¹ Mel Pender quoted in Hoffer, 149-150.

² Mel Pender quoted in Hoffer, 150.

³ Mel Pender quoted in Hoffer, 240-241.

⁴ Kirk Clayton quoted in Carlos with Jackson, 163.

the protest: “When the time came, everyone that needed to stepped up to the plate. And it so happens, you see the four people at the table here, we had to step up to the plate because we were asked: what [do] you believe?”¹

The buttons that Smith, Carlos and Norman wore to express their beliefs fit into a general mode of expressing socially progressive views in the period. McCann Fenton points out that in the late 1960s, prior to the popularity of bumper stickers and t-shirts serving a role as billboards, the button represented the way to express one’s tastes and political leanings.²As for the famous gesture that accompanied the wearing of the Olympic Project for Human Right buttons, one of the main controversies surrounding the events after the Mexico 68 200 metres final hinged on whether or not the athletes had performed a Black Power salute. According to Tommie Smith, it was “a silent gesture shown around the world. We didn’t say a word. A picture is worth a thousand words.”³ Until 1968, the print media was the principle source for Olympic coverage. However, the spread of the fame of the silent gesture at Mexico 68 was aided by the fact that the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), with the aid of satellite technology, was providing the first complete and live coverage of the games.⁴ Nonetheless, as implied in Tommie Smith’s comment immediately above, it was not only the TV images but the still photographs printed in newspapers and magazines around the world, destined to reappear in the contemporary and latter periods on posters and t-shirts, which marked the moment.

¹ Tommie Smith quoted in Norman, at 42 minutes.

² McCann Fenton, 29.

³ Tommie Smith quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 44. Kevin Wamsley also picks up on this language of “silent” gesture, succinctly explaining: “Tommy Smith and John Carlos, led *silent* protests on the medal podium in Mexico City in 1968 against poverty and the lack of rights for black citizens around the world, they were sent home.” See Wamsley, 402. Emphasis added.

⁴ Bass, 100-103.

For example, commenting on the iconic image of the men's 1968 Olympic 200 metres medal presentation, Gary Osmond writes: "The photograph of Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Peter Norman on the medal dais at Mexico City is undoubtedly one of the world's most famous and enduring sports images."¹ Charles Korr calls the photograph an event in and of itself, most especially for people like him who did not see the protest live in person or on television.²

However, that iconic photograph might not have come to be. Even Peter Norman who had used his agency to ask for a role in the protest, remained uncertain as to whether Smith and Carlos would follow through with their plans for the podium. Vince Matthews was unsure if there would be any protest by Black athletes at Mexico 68. In the event, he was shocked by the spontaneity of the event on the dais after the 200 metres, "Wow," his only reaction.³ Even Norman recalls:

I still wasn't sure if they would go through with it. A guy up in the stand used to sing the American national anthem every time it came up. When we turned to face the flags, both Tommie and John were behind me, so I couldn't see what was happening. But I knew they'd actually gone through with it when the voice from up in the stands got about four bars into the national anthem and then faded out to nothing. The stadium just went quiet, I immediately thought, "they've done it. Good on 'em!"⁴

Norman's own participation was a post-competition development, worked out in between the race and the medal presentation. However, this exercise of his agency would stay with him for a lifetime. After the 200 metres final had been concluded, Norman approached Carlos with his congratulations and all the trash talk was soon forgotten:

¹ Gary Osmond, "Photographs, Materiality and Sport History: Peter Norman and the 1968 Mexico City Black Power Salute." *Journal of Sport History* 37, no. 1 (2010): 121.

² Korr Interview.

³ Matthews with Amdur, 196.

⁴ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, ii.

“Down in the dressing rooms, Carlos and I made our peace by shaking hands and embracing and we have been firm friends ever since.”¹ As Smith put it: “And Peter Norman, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were sitting there. I know Tommie Smith and John Carlos was afraid because we had received so many death threats. And we [were] talking about, now what are we going to do the moment we get out there.”² Then, in the relative seclusion of the dressing room under the stands of the Mexican Olympic Stadium, they went about planning the form the protest was going to take. Carlos remembered their time in that dressing room when speaking on a panel with Smith and Norman in 2006:

We don't really have a whole bunch of time to sit down and discuss what we were going to do. We knew we were going to do something but in terms of us saying we laid it out, we had a blueprint. No we didn't have any of that. Actually 20 minutes before we went out or less we got there, we concocted what we were going to do. This is why we knew what to do and no one sitting on planet Earth knew what we were going to do except the two people with me here now.³

In a telling of this aspect of the story that invokes the skills of imaging⁴ so crucial to quality athletic performance⁵ but now redirected towards activism, Norman recalls the lead up to his participation in the protest as grounded in a moment of simple connection:

The most important thing I did that day was shake John's hand⁶ after the race. That made me part of what he and Tommie were about to do.

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 38.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Norman, at 54 minutes.

³ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 53 minutes.

⁴ These skills are also important to peacebuilding generally. See, for example, Elise Boulding, “The Challenge of Imaging Peace in Wartime,” *Conflict Resolution Notes* 8, No.4 (April 1991): 34-36.

⁵ For more on effective imaging in a track and field context see Melanie Gregg, Craig Hall and Sheldon Hanton, “Perceived Effectiveness of Heptathletes' Mental Imagery,” *Journal of Sport Behavior* 30, no. 4 (2007): 398-414.

⁶ Notice the contrast here with origin story of the gloves, as presented earlier in section 5.3. In the latter case, the possibility of a handshake with the personification of the

They knew they could trust me. We were on our own during the preparations for the medal ceremony. There were a couple of officials floating around but they weren't taking much notice of us and we weren't taking much notice of them. The ceremony was well rehearsed before we went out. We discussed it and went through the actions that were going to take place and the possible ramifications. We didn't go through a physical rehearsal. It was rehearsed in our minds. I wasn't nervous about the demonstration that was about to take place. I was probably more nervous about being out there as an Olympic medalist.”¹

The button that Norman was to wear came from the Harvard cox. In 2008, Paul Hoffman recalled his thoughts as his badge was plucked from his chest to allow for Norman's participation: “If this Australian wants my badge, then by God he's gonna have it! I'm glad I was able to give it to him. I know the guys on the stand were tremendously pleased to have his support.”²

According to Norman's recollections, fear did not enter into the equation as these events were unfolding on the day of the protest. Rather, Smith and Carlos appeared cool and relaxed when planning and enacting the protest: “I didn't feel as if there was any sort of urgency to it. I hadn't encountered racial hatred of this sort of intensity before. The guys did a good job of covering up their fear or perhaps it was just that they were so committed to it that it didn't matter.”³

Tommie Smith remembers participating in the protest and praying, his petitions invoking the hope that no one had managed to bring a firearm into the stadium to carry through on the death threats he received:

oppressor was something to be avoided while in the above quotation that same gesture served to build cross-cultural solidarity.

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 38.

² Paul Hoffman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 39.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 40.

On the night of October 16, 1968, I had stood on a platform on the infield of the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City, with a gold medal around my neck, Black socks on my feet, and a glove on my right hand that I thrust into the air. My head was bowed, inside that bowed head I prayed—prayed that the next sound I would hear, in the middle of the Star Spangled Banner,¹ would not be a gunshot, and prayed that the next thing I felt would not be the darkness of sudden death. I knew there were people, a lot of people, who wanted to kill me for what I was doing. It would take only one of them to put a bullet through me from somewhere in the crowd of some 100,000, to end my life because I had dared to make my presence—as a Black man, as representative of oppressed people all over America, as spokesman for the ambitious goals of the Olympic Project for Human Rights—known to the world.²

Upon reflection, even the placing of his shoes on the podium held significance for Smith, who had sold products he received gratis from Puma to help buy Similac (baby formula) for his young son Kevin:

I wore them when I won the gold medal, and they were sitting in the victory stand that night³—I had taken them off, of course, as part of the silent protest. But it was important that I have them on the stand,

¹ “Star Spangled Banner” is here referring to the US national anthem, which itself emerged out of a poem about a Star Spangled Banner (i.e., a flag) in the context of the war of 1812. The actual flag that inspired the poet, Francis Scott Key, during the conflict is in the Smithsonian Collection. See Star Spangled Banner Project Staff. “Star Spangled Banner and the War of 1812.” (November 2004). Available from http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmah/starflag.htm. Accessed July 20, 2012.

² Smith with Steele, 1.

³ Although the Puma shoes presence on the stand, in the context of the notorious “shoe war” with Adidas provoked a very negative reaction in a *Sports Illustrated* article published the following year (note also the description of the protest itself and Smith’s apparent initial denial that the presence of the shoes on the podium held any significance): “After the notorious Black Power demonstration by Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who each carried a Puma shoe to the victory stand, word got around that an investigation was brewing at last. Smith denied there was any significance in the shoe. He said that he and Carlos just wanted to go up there in their Black socks and didn't want to leave the shoes lying around for somebody to steal. Nonetheless, the demonstration was eagerly interpreted as a shill for Puma. Coupled with other payoff rumors, it was enough to stir U.S. and Olympic officials into talk of action.” From John Underwood. “No Goody Two Shoes.” (10 March 1969). *Sports Illustrated*. <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1082162/4/index.htm>. Accessed December 25, 2011.

because they helped me get there, during the race and long before. They were as important as the Black glove and the Black socks.¹

5.4 The Last Protests

With Harry Edwards at home in the US, John Carlos relished taking on the role of an “unrelenting” presence with the media.² During this same time, Lee Evans’ race in the 400 metres took place amidst the reaction to the events on the podium after the 200 metres (which are discussed below).³ In some ways, as Smith recognizes, Evans had more pressure when seeking to fulfil his potential of breaking the 400 metres world record and winning the top place on the podium than any of the other members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.⁴ Evans was in a tough situation. Taking into account the 4 x 400 metres relay, he had a real chance at two gold medals and two world records and, although prior to coming to Mexico 68 Carlos’ commitment to the project had wavered, Evans was one of the main student-athletes involved with the Olympic Project for Human Rights from its foundational moments. Additionally, topping what Smith and Carlos had done when making their statement would be difficult.

Considering all these factors, Evans remembers thinking that the only way to top their gesture would be to burn the podium down, “Jimi Hendrix style.”⁵ Repeating Smith and Carlos’ gesture would almost surely mean he would not get to run in the 4 x 400 metres relay. Mulling over it too much might cost him the race in the individual 400 metres. After Smith and Carlos had been asked to leave the village, Evans thought that

¹ Smith with Steele, 87.

² Murphy, 257.

³ The multiple protests by the American 400 metres runners at Mexico 68 in their individual and relay team medal ceremonies is described in this section. The reaction to these protests is specifically addressed in section 7.1.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 157.

⁵ Lee Evans quoted in Hoffer, 188.

perhaps he should leave with them in a gesture of solidarity. His teammates from San Jose told him to run.¹ Run he did. Despite the turmoil around him he won the qualifier and then his quarter final and semi-final, the latter with a new Olympic record of 44.8 seconds.² The final was blisteringly fast. From lanes six, two and one, the American athletes swept the medals. Evans won in a world record time of 43.86 seconds, Larry James was second and Ron Friedman came third.³

The athletes wore berets to the podium but took them off for the playing of the US national anthem. It was only after the patriotic music ended that they raised their fists in the air with jubilation while they smiled.⁴ Evans explains his choice of facial expression in pragmatic terms: “Someone said they was going to shoot at us on the victory stand, so I figured it would be hard to shoot at a guy with a smile on his face. I had my biggest smile because I was scared to death.”⁵ This protest, which may have been considered radical if it had occurred prior to Smith, Carlos and Norman’s action, only served to alienate Evans from some of the other supporters of the Olympic Project for Human Rights due its perceived docile quality. This alienation was compounded by the fact that Evans had been so instrumental in the activities of the Olympic Project for Human Rights to that point. While Tommie Smith is very conciliatory to and supportive of Evans’ protest, Harry Edwards does not mince his words in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, denying the very fact of the long sprinter’s action, writing that after the 400

¹ Murphy, 267.

² Murphy, 269.

³ Murphy, 285. Evan’s record stood for twenty years.

⁴ Murphy, 285.

⁵ Lee Evans quote in Small, at 60 minutes.

metres: “There was no sign of protest. Evans had disappointed his people.”¹ Bruce Kidd offers a different interpretation of this malaise: “Well, Lee had it tough. He has always been a hero of mine, for what he did in 68 and, of course, everything else.”²

Despite the singularity of protest implied by Edwards’ rhetoric, solidarity, in fact, extended in many directions after the action on the dais by Smith, Carlos and Norman. Other podium-based protests took place. The 400 metres final start had been delayed due to an overwhelmed Bob Beamon running out onto the track in disbelief.³ In the presentation ceremony after Bob Beamon’s incredible 8.90 metres long jump, both he and the bronze medalist, Ralph Boston, made a gesture of support for Smith and Carlos and human rights in general. Boston went barefoot on the podium and Beamon pulled up his track pant legs to emphasize that he wore black socks. As Smith argues, there was no need to replicate the specific protest that took place after the 200 metres and these gestures of protest and solidarity were greatly appreciated.⁴

The final event on the track at Mexico 68 was the 4 x 400 metres relay. On paper the US team appeared to have the potential to smash the world record. They had three medalists and Vince Matthews, their starter, was no standard “fill in” athlete. Matthews was not entered in the individual 400 metres because of his fourth place at the second trials but had improved his form to set the world record earlier in the year before Evans broke it (officially⁵) at the Olympics.¹ They were aiming for a time of 2:55 but ran a new

¹ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 105.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Murphy, 282.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 174.

⁵ Recall here that Evans had a “would have been world record” result of 44.0 seconds disallowed at the Lake Tahoe US Olympic trials because his footwear was declared illegal. See section 5.1.

world record of 2:56.1. Evans and Matthews had run slower than expected. As Vince Matthews recalls, on the way to the podium the team performed the relatively small gesture of hiding their Black gloved fists in their warm-up suits and then revealing them to the crowd with a salute once they received their medals.² This gesture was met with boos and hisses, which the men greeted with smiles.³

Following Peter Norman's lead, the West German 4 x 400 metres bronze medalist and anchor, Martin Jellinghaus, wore an Olympic Project for Human Rights button on the podium in a gesture of solidarity.⁴ Focussing mostly on the US athletes, Harry Edwards, was also not impressed with the 400 metres runner's demonstrations. Writing in 1969, Edwards described the action by Evans as a wholly inappropriate attempt "to stand up and be counted on both sides of the fence at once."⁵

There was another podium action at Mexico 68 that followed upon the activities of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Perhaps indicating her understanding of the inter-relationship amongst different forms of violence and repression, Smith and Carlos inspired the Czechoslovakian gymnast, Vera Caslavská, to protest against the Soviet invasion of her country. Prior to coming to Mexico City, she signed the *Manifesto of Two Thousand Words* denouncing the Soviet action. A mere two months before the Olympics, as the Soviets were consolidating their power over Czechoslovakia, she fled to the countryside and trained on tree trunks and in a meadow in an attempt to simulate the apparatus and floor exercises. She only went to the Olympics after receiving assurances

¹ Murphy, 291.

² Matthews with Amdur, 204-205.

³ Murphy, 293-294.

⁴ Bass, 267.

⁵ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 105.

for her safety from the government. When she tied for gold with the Soviets in two of her events she bowed her head while their anthem played. With poise and posture, she thus enacted her own career-ending silent gesture.¹ At the same time, the removal of Warsaw pact countries (owing to their actions in Czechoslovakia) was called for by the Czech Olympic track and field great Emile Zatopek who, although a Colonel in his national army, also earned a reputation for running amongst the Soviet tanks distributing leaflets protesting the invasion.²

5.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 5.1

There are a number of noteworthy points worth commenting on in regards to the selection of the stories related to the competitors' athletic journeys to Mexico 68. First of all the athletic journey is interesting as a standalone story in itself. For it points to lives of passion and discipline geared towards developing excellence in sport which seemingly has a broad appeal to a large number of people in our North American society.³ In this regard, another stunning thing to highlight is the sheer skill and fortitude of these individuals. For example, Tommie Smith's ability to run 47.7 for the 440 yards as a high school junior while working twelve hour shifts, running on a natural surface and playing multiple sports is extraordinary. Smith's daily schedule in his youth points to how the Olympians who joined the Olympic Project for Human Rights were remarkable people

¹ Hoffer, 224-225.

² Anna van Os and Frantisek Bouc. "The Olympians." *The Prague Post*. (25 Aug 1999). Available from <http://www.praguepost.com/archivescontent/30596-the-olympians.html>. Accessed November 19, 2011.

³ A rough parallel to consider here is just how many Canadians, whether hockey fans or not, find something memorable and noteworthy in Walter Gretzky building a backyard rink so that a young Wayne, the future "great one," could shape his skills for excellence.

with remarkable energy. This aspect of the story, along with John Carlos' start in the sport as literally running from the police in Harlem, show the realities of the structural factors mitigating against athletic success stacked against the Black actors who became part of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

We also see, in Peter Norman's example of skipping school to work at the MCG during Melbourne 56, that athletics and the Olympic spirit can be infectious, giving an outlet for excellence. Something that resonates with me as someone coming to the sport later in life was the experience that both Norman and Lee Evans shared of first stepping onto a synthetic surface in competition. Indeed, I was out on the track at the University of Manitoba campus the night before first writing these words and, in line with Charles Korr's sentiment that this type of research changes you, I cannot look at that track any more without thinking of Lee Evans' mental image of the "Winnipeg Tip" and, by extension, the story of the student-athletes at Mexico 68. Although the track has been resurfaced twice since the Pan Am games in 1967, it remains in the same location. Yet, I wonder how many Manitoban student-athletes even know that Evans ran the fastest 400 metres ever in provincial history, let alone the socio-political activism he stood for at the time. As we saw, Evans had chosen to attend San Jose State over Southern University, despite the latter being a 400 metres hot spot, because of his worry that living in Baton Rouge and running for Southern would have represented a confluence of structures negatively affecting his human dignity.

Further, in line with such socio-political awareness and a hunger to develop it further, the athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights used the travel opportunities associated with being an elite track and field athlete to experience and

interact with the local context. We saw this above in relation to my analysis of the Carlos' comment on the state of affairs in Mexico after his arrival in 1968.¹ It is also evident in the fact that Norman remembered his Commonwealth games experience more for his exposure to violence and racial tensions in Kingston than for his bronze medal performance as part of the Australian 4 x 110 yard relay team. Here we see that a bi-product of travel for athletes at this time was not merely improved competition opportunities but also consciousness-raising via interaction with the local context.

When it came to competition at Mexico 68, it is noteworthy how human these superb athletes actually were. Consider the “trash talk,” for example, between Carlos and Norman, which quickly turned to solidarity after their event was done. Also remarkable in illustrating their human vulnerability is the real fear that entered their bodies because of the death threats received so that when Smith pulled his abductor muscle in the semi-finals of the Olympic Games, he was simply relieved that the pain he felt was not from being shot.²

The very fact that Smith thought that he had been shot in the first place shows the imprint of the death threats on his psyche.³ As such, the threats had certainly not, in any sense, been forgotten or compartmentalized. His ability to focus on the race and win the semi-final under such conditions remains a stunning accomplishment. That Smith then went on to set a world record in the finals defies explanation in a number of senses. The flawed US collegiate sports scholarship system had given these Black student-athletes a

¹ See section 4.4.

² This fear was compounded by the fact that the relatively lax stadium security was the responsibility of boy scouts. See section 5.5.

³ Consider this reaction in light of a reinterpretation of Sartre's “nervous condition.” See section 4.1.

chance to get to the Olympic level of competition, even if it did not always ensure a good education. But the magnitude of the moment of winning in Mexico should not be underplayed. These were people with remarkable psychological as well as physical ability. Hours of training and preparation were necessary to even get close to becoming a champion on that scale. The members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights made a habit out of constantly beating the odds. It is easy to see how this orientation for excellence and achievement could finally, in “world beaters” like Smith, Evans, and Carlos, translate into a situation of not allowing a racist and militaristic society to beat them down.¹ This represented an affirmation of the dignity of the athletes as agents and persons, not pawns used to legitimate a system as Jesse Owens seems to have been. Further, it lies at the origins of Carlos’ assertion made at the time that he was more than a windup toy that could be taken out of the closet to perform—he was a man. This latter sentiment is a clear, if gendered, assertion of his agency.

In this light, the point about the meeting of the Olympic Project for Human Rights athletes at Lake Tahoe being stimulated by official resistance to their human rights agenda accords well with an observation made by Charles Korr. With reference to his subsequent research on unionization in sport, Korr offered his reflection that the type of threats that IOC President Avery Brundage and like-minded officials issued to the Olympic Project for Human Rights members were unlikely to produce the desired compliance. In addition to their amazing ability to devote emotional time to the cause of social justice, and in line with my analysis presented above, Korr noted another factor that allowed the student-athletes to balance their training and activism:

¹ Compare this approach to the story of Jesse Owens. See section 4.1.

but the other thing is something we tend to forget. I did a book a few years ago, the history of the Major Leagues Player Union. And one of the things that the owners thought every time they negotiated with the players was that they (the players) would cave in. And they forgot something. The qualities that coaches and managers prize the most in an athlete: first of all, it is their talent. And secondly it is their absolute dedication to winning. And the owners never figured out that if the players want so much to win on the playing field they probably want just as much to win at the bargaining table. And I think that partly accounts for the way that Lee Evans and Smith and Carlos wanted this whole thing. When they decided that they were being screwed by society. When they decided they weren't getting the support they needed from their coaches for what they thought were self-evident injustices. I don't think it was a conscious decision, but when they decided they were taking on an issue therein the DNA of a quality athlete had as its main component the competitive desire to win. I think they probably approached this in the same way they did when getting into the starting blocks. Once they decided it was a fight worth making, a stake worth making, it was worth winning. And winning in this case meant making the statement.¹

This insightful analysis can serve to demonstrate how, for many of the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, the categories, of “getting there athletically” and “getting there politically”, are actually intricately connected. This confluence can point to another way to reflect upon how the personal can be political.² So that egging on competitive people by top-down directives that seemingly seek to restrict their agency in relation to a just cause, as was done by the IOC at Lake Tahoe, is revealed as an ineffectual strategy for suppressing what Lederach categorizes as the energies alive in a conflict.³ Applied to this group at this time, indeed it appears to have had an effect opposite from what was intended by the IOC, in that it provided an increased incentive

¹ Korr Interview.

² For a reflection that considers how peace can supplant violence through a responsive orientation, see Harold E. Pepinsky and Richard Quinney, *Criminology as Peacemaking* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

³ See section 2.4.

and momentum for the Olympic Project for Human Rights to make a statement at the Mexico City games.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 5.2

Balancing political activism with high-level athletics and social activism is something of a rarity today. Yet, it was a natural combination for many of the athletes whose stories are explored in this thesis. Reflecting on the political motivations of the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Charles Korr comments:

These are people who had a sense of social justice but more properly had a strong firsthand knowledge of social injustice, or lack of justice. They were smart enough to understand that if they were ever going to be able to do anything on their own, they would have to take their status of athletes and use it. And they were not burdened, thankfully, by this notion that being an athlete carries this privilege that somehow negates your rights as a citizen and is somehow supposed to neuter you from being involved for causes for social justice.¹

The wider context of the events in the year 1968 also served to raise the political consciousness of many of the athletes. In something of an overview of the material on context presented above,² Bruce Kidd recalls some of the momentous events of that year: “68 was the year of protest around the world in Czechoslovakia, in Paris and in Chicago.”³ Later in the interview Kidd added: “It was a year of great care and concern for justice and equity in our destructive societies.”⁴ He then went on to offer a comparison between the political realities of Canada and the United States at that time: “You know, in Canada, I think Pierre Trudeau, whose philosophy was certainly convergent with and rode it [the hunger for justice and equality] instead of opposing it, had this famous victory

¹ Korr Interview.

² See, in particular, chapter four.

³ Kidd Interview.

⁴ Kidd Interview.

in the 1968 election. But in the United States there was a much more complicated and much more divided society.”¹ In this regard, Marable Manning posits that it was in the 1960s that “independent Black consciousness,” bolstered by both Martin Luther King Jr.’s and Malcolm X’s examples, first came to the awareness “that ‘race’ was the fundamental contradiction of the American state.”²

In this light, although actually occurring abroad, the podium protest on October 16, 1968, principally took place within the context of this complicated and divided society in the US. In short, the protest did not arise out of a vacuum but was representative of, and yet still only one aspect of, a year and half of planning and student activism by the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. But to use the platform for their group, Smith knew he had to win the race, otherwise the exercising of their voice might not have been anywhere near as effective.³ As I mentioned above,⁴ the ability to balance human rights activism and Olympic success boggles the mind. Charles Korr, for instance, is astonished that the Olympic Project for Human Rights members found the energy to organize a protest and still achieve the highest level of athletic success, as evidenced by his comment: “I am quite amazed they found the emotional time, not physical time but the emotional time.”⁵ However, for people like Bruce Kidd, the two areas flowed together nicely. He comments:

A word about then and now. Then, while there were coaches who wanted you to focus on just sport and there were the conservative leaders of the Olympic movement who preached that sport and politics do not mix, the way Avery Brundage did, there was also a current

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Marable, *Living Black History*, 15.

³ Smith with Steele, 36.

⁴ See my personal ethnographic statement at the beginning of this thesis.

⁵ Korr Interview.

among many clubs and coaches that sport was about life. It wasn't that it was sport for just sport's sake. It was about life and the two should be connected. You know one of my heroes, against whom I ran, was Martin Hyman who was a British distance runner. And Martin was a leader in CND, the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament.¹ So Martin would protest in those huge rallies in London, coming down from Cambridge, where he was a student, and then he would go off and win a European championship. And that was an ideal which was not shared by everybody but which was a current. It was a current, in which I, as a young amateur athlete in Canada grew up. You made a point of not being just an athlete. You know, you took a full load of classes and you wanted to get first class in all those classes. When you travelled, you did not lie in your room and stare at the ceiling visualizing your race. Instead, you went to plays and galleries and talked to people and all of that. And that was an ideal of engagement and we tried to live that. I can tell you one story that really emphasizes that. In the summer of 1962, for reasons that I cannot remember, I started to train twice a day, adding a morning run to my interval workouts in the afternoon. And after a meet in the UK at a banquet afterwards, I shared this with some Brits and others against whom I ran and particularly with Martin Hyman and he said, "Don't do it. That is the road to professionalism. That is the road to becoming a full time athlete. And the life that we lead of training and competition, and an intellectual life and a political life and a community-based life will become harder and harder and harder. Two times a day will lead to three times a day and then four times a day and there will be no room for life." And I disagreed with him at the time.

I thought he was just trying to get me to slow down so that I didn't beat him. But how prophetic. Now there were people who were basically professional athletes at this time but I was part of this other current. As I went on in life it became more and more of a tension. There were people in sport who would say: "Why are you wasting time with politics?" and there were people in politics who would say: "Why are you wasting time with sport?" And there was a very painful few years, where things got quite heated, where I had people I loved on both sides who told me to choose one or the other. And they knew which one I should choose and they told me I was wasting my life in one or the other. But the current that I stuck with, and I hope that in

¹ Interestingly, it was these CND protests (often disrupting London's routine with massive rallies focussed on a number of peace issues in the 1960s) that can lay claim to inventing the contemporary peace symbol, combining in stylized circular form the maritime flag signal letters "N" and "D" (for nuclear disarmament). See Robert Bucholz, *London: A Short History of the Greatest City in the Western World*. (Chantilly, VA: The Teaching Company, 2009).

my academic life to have enlarged, is the current that says that politics is not only embedded in sport, sport is constituted by politics. And to be ignorant of that is to be less of a person, less of an athlete.¹

Another sense in which this blending of sport and politics did not grow out of a vacuum is related to how “independent Black consciousness”² and/or an inclination towards activism was already present in the future Olympians even when they were young. An example from section 5.2, which brings that point to the fore is Carlos’ recollection of organising actions geared towards achieving racial equality. He had been inspired in this activism by a number of Black thinkers (including his father), encountered through extra-curricular reading and dialogue. Much like Carlos’ early races served to prime him for his latter life achievements as an elite athlete, in his school-age activism we can discern a certain priming for activism on the Olympic stage. Carlos can be understood as using the stage afforded him in school as a springboard for activism in line with the way he would later use the space he earned on the podium at Mexico 68 to make his points about the ultimately untenable nature of racial injustice.

Carlos’ activism dovetails with peace education theories and several cross-cultural education initiatives that insist schools need to be welcoming of all people culturally. This highlights the importance of the type of minority representation in curricula that Carlos advocated for and why initiatives like Black history month are so important for those working for substantive equity in the North American context. Noteworthy, in this regard, is the presence of theology on Carlos’ list of school subjects in which Black contributions had been ignored by segmented interests intent on teaching a curriculum

¹ Kidd Interview.

² See above in this section.

that ultimately “was designed with White superiority in mind.”¹ To show how the multilayered nature of this reproduction of White privilege marginalizes visible minorities, it may be informative to turn to the work of a Womanist theologian from Carlos’ own Catholic background, Dianna Hayes.

Hayes, now professor emerita of Theology at Georgetown University, recalls in a 2002 piece for *The National Catholic Reporter*, a shift in the Catholic Church in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), which took place contemporaneously with the activism of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Hayes’ work calls attention to new spaces being opened up for women in the public sphere² and the aforementioned rise of “independent Black consciousness” that would combine to make her career possible:

The changes that the council brought about were many and continue to be discussed and debated For me, however, the greatest change was in the church’s opening its doors, finally, to women, both religious and lay, in areas where they had previously been restricted When I accepted God’s call and moved to Washington, I found that I was the first laywoman and African-American woman to enter the pontifical degree program in sacred theology at The Catholic University of America. It was shocking to me to discover how few women were studying theology and the many difficulties we met as we journeyed together. On the one hand, women were no longer required to sit in the hallway to listen to lectures as they had initially, but on the other hand, I found professors who could not and would not accept the validity of my vocation and did not want me, or were uncomfortable with me, in their classes Despite all the obstacles and challenges, I, like a growing number of women, persevered in my goal of becoming a Catholic theologian. Reading about the changes that took place in the church as a result of Vatican II opened my eyes to the miracle of my being able to study theology. The council fathers’ recognition of the

¹ These are Carlos’ words as cited in section 5.2.

² Concern for the situation of women, as we shall see below, was something the main actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights now regret not having integrated more fully into their activist programming. See in particular, section 6.1.

myriad voices and peoples present in the church helped to lay the path that I am now treading, as I attempt to develop, encourage and document the presence and contributions of Catholics of African descent in the church since the first century, as well as the challenging but inspiring task of attempting to articulate a Black Catholic theology that is both liberating and womanist. At the same time, Vatican II has encouraged and affirmed my efforts and the efforts of others to inculturate the gospel message into the culture and traditions of persons of African descent, and vice-versa.¹

Looking back to the same moment in time, Smith remembers that he was also very much in the minority on a White campus. In his case, as with Hayes, it was a struggle to carve out his own academic turf, a struggle that eventually saw him earn a master's degree² but only after he came to realize, through the work of gifted instructors, that he was not "dumb" and had something to contribute to society. Important here, from a peace education perspective, is the way that professors like the Canadian-born pioneering sports psychologist, Bruce Ogilvie,³ created space for diverse student success and valued different knowledge sets.

At the same time, Smith's experience lends credence to the idea that, for the most part, the presence of Black students on campus was akin to being a gladiator or mercenary fighting for the athletic pride of a White institution. It was the alternative space that Smith was able to find at San Jose State, in the form of activism and a sphere of academic learning, that made him realize the value of his own human dignity. He saw this process as a continuing cycle of growth, marking the moment of protest and his

¹ Diana Hayes, "Doorway to Conversion and Theology," *National Catholic Reporter* (Oct 4, 2002). Available from http://www.natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives/100402/100402h.htm. Accessed February 14, 2013.

² Hayes also went on to earn a doctorate in theology from the Catholic University at Louvain.

³ Recall that Smith lists Ogilvie as an instructor who inspired him to realize that he was intelligent and could contribute to the larger community.

whole life. For Smith, this important development of political consciousness came to represent a vision of human dignity that is mirrored in Hayes' liberationist thought.

In this light, we can see that Smith's activism dovetails with a number of emerging emancipatory trends in the late 1960s. For instance, as Bruce Kidd notes, it is often Harry Edwards who gets a lot of the credit for the events around the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Yet, as we saw in section 5.2, athletes were talking about equity issues and discrimination in sport before Edwards joined the conversation.¹ Indeed, it seems that Smith and Evans become friends partly because they had experienced similar patterns of oppression in their lives and had both been reading consciousness-raising literature. Learning to read the signs of the times through such literature led many to conclude that the moment for more emancipatory cross-cultural equity had come to America. Remember in this regard that Carlos first learned of the Olympic Project for Human Rights not from Edwards but through the mainstream sports media via coverage in *Track and Field News*.

As Câmara shows,² figure-heads are not the whole story of a movement. This insight points to the significance of the Olympic Project for Human Rights as a loose association of people committed to working for human rights but coming at the issues and being primed for activism related to equity from many different perspectives. As will become more evident as the reader moves through this thesis, such intra-group diversity allowed group members to hold different views concerning the acceptability of righteous violence. But it further meant that aspects of the activism and agenda might have diverse

¹ The role of Edwards in the movement will be discussed at numerous points below. See, in particular, section 6.4.

² See sections 2.1 and 2.2.

influences and outcomes even within single agents. So, for example, while Carlos may find Malcolm X's example more appealing than the legacy left by Martin Luther King, he still names the spirit of Dr. King as present with him in a special way on the podium. Moreover, the Olympian was nonetheless impressed by the latter's courage. Carlos came to this impression when he personally heard King express a desire to go to Memphis, despite death threats, to stand in solidarity with oppressed municipal workers in Tennessee. Indeed, it was reflecting on his interaction with King that gave Carlos a grand impetus to achieve common athletic and social justice goals. It was this desire for dovetailing that eventually gave him the courage to help craft his activism. The resultant protest challenged many of the shallow narratives about freedom held by some US citizens along with the image of racial equality that the United States government was trying to project abroad during the Cold War. This bit of analysis takes on a particular significance, as Bruce Kidd highlights in section 5.2, when we consider the US government's methodology of using Black athletic success at various games as a means to legitimate America's status quo power both at home and abroad.

For the student-athletes, this unjust status quo was represented in the person of Avery Brundage. In particular, the IOC boss personified how the political goals of the Olympic Project for Human Rights extended through sport into other areas of injustice and discrimination in society. For example, as head of the Olympics' governing body and as a member of clubs with ethnic-based exclusionary policies¹ Brundage was representative, in the eyes of the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, of the unjust establishment. This orientation extended across several of the governing bodies

¹ As we saw above, he even owned one such club which excluded Blacks and Jews.

for sport in the US and internationally. For instance, we saw that members of the 1968 Olympic rowing team from Harvard were in the cross hairs of the USOC rowing committee for their activist stance. Yet, they continued their letter writing campaign, appealing to a sense of shared identity and solidarity amongst US Olympians, to garner support for one another in the struggle for true freedom.

That they would exercise such solidarity in the run up to Mexico 68 is not surprising, given the delightful stories of this same rowing team at the 1967 Pan Am Games in Winnipeg. Here, they refused to participate in jingoistic nationalism, confronted unjust policies of the establishment and celebrated with the Tigerbelle women at the Harvard Club. The stories of the rowers' activities in Manitoba, not only excites me as someone who has rowed and raced on the Red River but also because it points to a manner in which, despite a context of racism and militarism in the US,¹ a major games can translate into a coming together of athletes, generating spaces for relationship building on intertwined social and political levels.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 5.3

Perhaps the most obvious issue of concern in terms of conflict resolution practice related to the stories of the American 100 metres runners at Mexico 68 are those associated with Mel Pender, sixth in the individual final and part of the gold medal winning relay team. Pender, it would seem, suffered the weight of the military, sports and patriotic establishments coming together in the form of the Colonel's stick (threatened court marshal) and carrot (reward of flight school) technique. The false promises of the establishment and their connection with militarism are nowhere better represented than

¹ See section 4.1.

when Pender “behaved” and did not receive the promised flight training but rather another possible sanction named by the Colonel; a second tour of duty in Viet Nam.

In a related element of interaction with the establishment, as the story about Jim Hines seems to imply, professionalism serves a limiting factor in relation to athletes exercising their agency to participate in status quo challenging activist activities. A connection here is with the role of sponsorship money in dampening elite athletes’ inclination to activism. Sponsored and professional athletes may be choosing to avoid activist actions so as not to endanger endorsement contracts. It would seem to follow that prior to professionalism and overt sponsorship, athletes would have been freer to take up activist projects. Even in track and field during the 1960s, still in the era of official amateurism when sponsorship was under the table,¹ the conditions of sponsorship would have been much looser, allowing for activist action of the kind we witnessed at Mexico 68.

Yet, the potential career trajectory of Hines, who signed an NFL contract with the Miami Dolphins to start after the games, meant that the famous photo did not occur after the 100 metres men’s race (as is sometimes assumed), despite the rough parallels—Hines winning gold in world record time with American runners placing first and third (split by a commonwealth citizen) in the event. Indeed, on the surface level the Jamaican silver medallist, Lennox Miller, having attended the University of Southern California on an athletic scholarship, would have been more likely to be open to podium protest than Peter Norman. Nonetheless, as history unfolded, the 100 metres medalists retain a claim to mounting the first student-athlete protest at Mexico 68 (even if it is not depicted in an

¹ This is evidenced by the shoe company scandal that touched members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. See Underwood.

iconic photo), in the sense that all three of them made it known that they would not accept their medals from Brundage if he tried to present the awards.¹ The actions of the 100 metres athletes can here be interpreted as denying Brundage a symbolic moment.

In this sense, their experience helped shape the final form of that famous photograph. The 100 metres medalist alerted other members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights of the importance of the medal ceremony as a place that political statements could be made. It was to prevent Brundage from having a symbolic moment at the 200 metres and 400 metres finals that Smith and Evan's wives purchased gloves in the first place. As we saw in 5.3, the gloves were intended to change the symbolism around if either of the student-athletes were forced to shake Brundage's hand. Yet, as events unfolded, even though Brundage was absent for the 200 metres medal ceremony, Smith's set of gloves would help to produce what was almost certainly a more lasting symbolic moment.

In many ways, the cliché that “a picture is worth a thousand words” is the most relevant comment in relation to the actual moment of protest. In this regard, it is informative to consider the media dynamics at play here. Certainly, the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights is an instance where media helps to shade the reflection of these events. Even today, this dynamic remains active, as I can confirm from

¹ See Jeremy Lerner and David Wolf, “Amid Gold Medals, Raised Black Fists,” *Life Magazine* (November 1, 1968). Available from <http://faculty.atu.edu/cbrucker/Amst2003/Texts/GoldMedals.pdf>. Accessed February 12, 2013. It is significant that this article does a reasonably good job of giving the athletes' perspective of these events. In many ways, if this *Life* story had been more fully received in the popular understanding of American history, this thesis would have a very different shape.

using the iconic image of the 200 metres podium protest in a lecture¹ and then hearing back from students about their parents' negative view of the protest. This experience resonates with research by Sean Byrne and Loreleigh Keashly. As part of their analysis of the work of Warren Strobel, undertaken while constructing a multi-modal approach to working with ethno-political conflict, Byrne and Keashly note that "The media can be critical. . . [in historical reeducation] in the portrayal of the main parties and what activities and events they choose to focus upon."²

Further, looking more closely at the image, we see that there was certainly an element of creative artistry and timeliness to the protest on the podium. Charles Korr offers an overview of the power of the symbols of the protest and the fortuitous manner in which they came together:

It is the picture. It's the bowed head. It's the black socks. I think if they had both remembered, I think it was Carlos who didn't have his gloves, so they had to split the two. I think if they had both worn two gloves, it would have had nowhere near the symbolic resonance that it did. It is the one raised fist and the one black glove that gives it so much. And also the bowed head. If they had just stood up there it would not have been the same. And by the way this is also why what they choreographed for Peter Norman was perfect. They have their heads bowed and he is staring straight ahead. I mean if you look at the expression on his face, you almost think it is as if he has been transported to another world. That he is having an out of world experience. What they were consciously trying to do was make sure that he did not detract from anything they were doing. So, in the truest sense of the word, he makes a very important statement but it is a silent statement.³

¹ Here, I am referring to my use of some of the material in this thesis as the basis for a lecture in RLST 284, *Religion and Nonviolence*, in the Winter 2012 term at St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan.

² Sean Byrne and Loreleigh Keashly, "Working With Ethno-Political Conflict: A Multi-Modal Approach," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 1 (2000): 103. Cf. Warren Strobel, *Late Breaking Foreign Policy: The News Media's Influence on Peace Operations* (Washington, D. C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

³ Korr Interview.

The conviction that underlined this silent statement is intense. We see from Smith's comments in 5.3 that it was in response to what he believed was a *duty* to protest. Additionally, in a point that is worth highlighting here but that is further developed in the conclusion, Smith thought of the raising of the fist as a "silent gesture" and *not* as a "Black Power" salute in the sense associated with some directly violent expression of Black empowerment. Moreover, the nature of this particular gesture implies a nonviolent protest.¹

In summing up the confluence of events on that eventful night in Mexico City, Bruce Kidd concludes: "it was a moment of glorious improvisation that had been percolating for a long time."² Yet, we saw in 5.3 that in many senses the 200 metres protest might not have happened. Even Norman who had sought out a partnership in the protest was unsure that Smith and Carlos would go through with what they had planned. However, even though the actual protest emerged from a rather vague blueprint in a short 20 minute interval between the world record breaking race and the men's 200 metres awards ceremony, Smith, Norman and Carlos were primed for their participation in that iconic moment by a lifetime of experiences. These experiences (rendered in this and the preceding chapter) will be further unfolded for the reader in the next two chapters.

In light of this material, the improvised creativity of the moment of protest on the podium during the men's 200 metres award ceremony at Mexico 68 can be understood as a long-brewing human response³ to deep issues of structural violence⁴ that played a far

¹ See sections 8.1 and 8.3.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Consider here the discussion of human knowing in section 2.8.

⁴ See section 2.5 on structural violence.

too active role in the athletes' lives. Hence, it is not surprising that the symbols captured in the iconic photograph, like good symbols in general, have multiple sets of significance, pointing to many meanings. Part of the advantage of the material collected in this thesis is that it can serve as a way to navigate these meanings and, as per my conclusion, highlight how an authentic interpretation of sets of the events at Mexico 68 can bring aspects of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights into the history of cultures of peace.¹

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 5.4

The key point to note in this section is the way that other athletes tried to make their own political statements. Simply put, the story of social protest at Mexico 68 was about more than just that one photograph. Yet, these other protests seem to have been almost completely forgotten in the common telling of the story of athlete protest at Mexico 68. Of note, in this regard, is the pressure faced by Lee Evans, who had been involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights from its beginning. His event followed the 200 metres and so he felt pressure from both the officials and student-activists in relation to any political statement he would or would not make. As is highlighted by his reference to Jimi Hendrix, Evans had to deal with the pressing issue of what could be accomplished after the ice had already been broken in terms of podium protest at the Games. Rather than leaving the Olympics in solidarity, after dialoguing with his teammates and personal coach, Evans chose to run and make a symbolic statement after his victory. On Edwards' telling, it was no statement at all, a disappointing attempt to be counted on both sides of the fence. Edwards' interpretation of the 400 metres protest stuck to Evans and, as we shall see more fully below, left him in

¹ See section 8.3.

something of an in-between place, where neither the establishment nor a number of his activist friends were happy with him.¹

In addition, the story of Martin Jellinghaus shows that cross-cultural solidarity with the Olympic Project for Human Rights (in terms of podium protests) spanned three continents. Furthermore, the protest of Vera Caslavska, demonstrates how inspiration, or a positive contagion² of nonviolent protest, spread from the track and field athletes to other sports at the games. This spreading of socio-politically minded protest, may be associated with a certain cross-fertilization of ideas amongst the athletes themselves.

Summing up the legacy of the 1968 protests by athletes some twenty years on during the run up to the 1988 games in Seoul, Norman asserted that “the only thing wrong with the demonstration is that more athletes did not go out of their way to commend the Black men who stood on the victory stand.”³ In contrast to a chastising Australian official at Mexico 68 who felt compelled to share with Norman that Smith and Carlos were examples of what was wrong with sport, Norman asserted that the two American sprinters were, in fact, teaching people about what could be right and good in sport.⁴

As a result of all the protests at the games, the organizers were determined to limit participation of the athletes in the closing ceremonies to small delegations consisting of a flag bearer and no more than six other athletes from each country. However, there was now a sufficient spirit of dissent in the air that this policy proved impossible to enforce. An American athlete started the rebellion by rushing the boy scouts who were providing

¹ See section 7.3.

² Compare Girard’s notion of contagion described in section 2.7.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

⁴ Peter Norman summarized in Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

the infield security. The resultant flood of athletes could not be held back by the boys and the athletes took over the infield for half of an hour of dancing and revelry, creating what can be interpreted was a status quo challenging nonviolent celebration.¹

Focussing on events prior to the revelry, Bruce Kidd relates great joy in the lasting power of the Olympic Project for Human Rights protests to overcome certain myths about the US told by government agencies during the period:

I think that the symbols of the protest worked to achieve the purpose of disassociating their victory from US propaganda. I mean the US State Department, I am willing to say, never sent the photo of that protest around the world, saying that: “these victories symbolize the full integration of Black people in American society.” I am willing to bet that that never happened. And that did the trick!²

As we consider the deeper narratives of oppression and liberation, it is appropriate to pause and reflect upon the significance of the events described to this point in the thesis, as illustrative of the idea of consciousness transformation.

In this regard, if Bob Beamon’s action came as a surprise after he had crossed the picket line in New York City,³ consider also that he was suspended from the track team at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) after exercising his agency to protest their insistence on scheduling a meet against Brigham Young University (known for its overt racial discrimination based in a Mormon theological premise that has since shifted) and the fact that he was reportedly walking around the Olympic Village in a Nigerian tunic

¹ Hoffer, 239-240.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Beamon had competed at the New York Athletic Club meet that members of the Olympic Project of Human Rights had boycotted in a largely successful action. This boycott served to increase awareness of their organization and its cause (see section 6.4 below for an extended discussion of this meet-specific boycott).

prior to his astonishing jump.¹ In summary, Beamon's Nigerian attire and his suspension may be called upon as evidence of his then emerging Pan-African solidarity-focused consciousness.

On a more macro-level of consciousness transformation, consider the relatively small number of individuals who obtain success in professional sport and the fact that this route is one of the few that is held out as a means of success for Black youth (as was the case particularly during the late 1960s in the US). In this light, one of the factors at play in the larger sphere of White-Black relations at the end of the 1960s in the US was associated with “[a]n intolerable gap between anticipated reality and the manifest reality of life conditions serves as a precondition for widespread unrest.”² This phenomenon, as described by Jeong, lies at the root of both the activism of the student-athletes and of a general unrest because of the inability of most people to achieve the so called “American dream,” wherein hard work is meant to result in economic success. In terms of the academic work I completed for this degree, this disconnect is most poignantly and concretely marked in *Ain't No Making It* (1995). In that monograph, which works from the perspective of embedded sociology, Jay MacLeod³ provides numerous examples of systemic violence, including a largely co-opted (i.e., status quo supporting) schooling system that does not allow individuals to break out of cycles of class-based poverty and discrimination. Accordingly, liberation is further impeded and this disconnect widens for

¹ Hoffer, 184.

² Jeong, *Peace and Conflict*, 69.

³ Interestingly, Jay MacLeod, a former Rhodes Scholar and Sociologist, opted for ministry and the study of Divinity at Oxford after penning *Ain't no Making It*. He is now an Anglican priest in Bedford's lower income Queen's Park area. In this manner, MacLeod displays, in his person, a link between the transformative discourse and theologically-based ethics.

people who had accepted the “achievement ideology.” This false ideology tends to leave its mark on individual consciousness in the United States of America.

In MacLeod’s rendering, the achievement ideology states that those who are at the bottom of the social and economic ladder in the United States deserve to be at that level because of their own lack of academic achievement and failure to seize other bountiful opportunities on offer. As a result of this ideology permeating human consciousness in North America, individuals from the “lower classes,” with the aid of so-called social institutions, are controlled and their class consciousness is fragmented. In short, the achievement ideology breeds an inequality of opportunity, while serving to divide people within the lower classes along individualistic, sexist, racist and relational lines. Such segmentation tends to negate the possibility of collective action.¹ In that a disproportionate number of Black athletes both today and in the late 1960s managed to use up all of their years of their inter-collegiate athletic eligibility without obtaining their college degrees, we can see how the “achievement ideology” and its correlate, the “American dream”, are particularly problematic manifestations of consciousness that may too often serve to cripple the moral imagination² of Black student athletes.

The frustration that some members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights express with today’s successful Black athletes may point to the fragmentary nature of the achievement ideology as it is manifest in sport today. As an example, these similarities allow Anthony Prior to write and speak of manifestations of slavery in the current state of professional and amateur American football (gridiron) in the US. Most athletes, and

¹ Jay MacLeod, *Ain’t No Making It: Aspirations and Attainments in a Low-Income Neighbourhood* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

² See section 2.4.

Black athletes in particular, are treated as commodities and dreams of long term professional careers that serve to validate such treatment are rarely obtained.¹

The preceding theoretical reflection points to the deep need for solidarity to extend in many directions if equity is ever to be achieved in a society. People can be successful against great odds and the force of oppressive structures, yet that does not mean that these exceptions can be legitimately mobilised as part of the justification for oppressive systems. What emerges from this insight is a space for peace education to challenge the status quo story in so much as the status quo contributes to structural violence and oppression.² In peace education terms, the marked challenge in this space is to re-craft these social narratives in such a way that they truly leave no student behind (where student is defined in broad terms associated with an integral understanding of peace education).³ Such an understanding of peace education also connects to the themes of chapter six: solidarity, transformational politics, faith and nonviolence. Each theme will be explored for the way it seeks to challenge and transform the structural violence and oppression that is never far from the surface in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

¹ Anthony Prior. "The Slave Side of Sunday." (26 July 2011). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa2iJ2UwpZc>. Accessed November 23, 2011.

² For those pursuing such a challenge, Jessica Senehi offers an informative perspective, which makes an important distinction between destructive and constructive forms of stories and storytelling. See Jessica Senehi, "Building Peace: Storytelling to Transform Conflicts Constructively."

³ For such an integral understanding, see Edmund O'Sullivan, *Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Chapter Six—Solidarity, Transformational Politics, Faith and Nonviolence

6.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the story of student-athlete activism at Mexico 68 as it might be related to the areas of solidarity, transformational politics, faith, and nonviolence. However, before delving into the specifics of solidarity as the principle is reflected in the Olympic Project for Human Rights case in particular, it is important to note that in the late 1960s there were a variety of links across cultures amongst people sharing a concern for justice and equity. As Bruce Kidd recalls, these links extended both to and from the sporting community, often through complicated and sometimes controversial loose associations:

Sports people then were linked, never as well as they should be. . . . Harry [Edwards] made connections with the larger civil rights movement. In different communities there was nothing formal but certainly alliances. You know in Chicago, Ted Hayden¹ always had good relations with the Black community, good relations with a famous or infamous gang, the Blackstone Rangers, which was in the adjacent community, which was a youth gang, which on the one hand shook merchants down, but on the other hand ran soup kitchens and recreation programs. Ted worked with them, and certainly that influenced those of us in the [track and field] club. I know that both the Medical Committee for Human Rights² and the people at

¹ Ted Hayden was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. His father taught social gospel theology at the University of Chicago. After a career as a varsity athlete, Ted became a store front social worker and continued coaching, eventually taking over the head coaching job at the University. He also started a track club based at the university's athletic facilities. In contrast to wealthy downtown clubs that generally provided the only real options for athletes wishing to continue training after their collegiate careers were over (or never started), the club based at the university admitted Jews and Blacks. "We do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or talent," Hayden often said. See David Diego Rodríguez, "Ted Hayden". (Reproduced from an *Illinois Runner* article published in June 1985). Available from <http://davidrodriguez.us/docs/haydon.html>. Accessed November 20, 2011.

² See section 7.2 for Kidd's description of this group.

Operation Breadbasket¹ knew about what was happening in sport and supported our efforts to change that. These are very informal but everybody made the same connections. It was all part of the same struggle. This wasn't just about sport at all.²

In this latter regard, and dealing specifically with the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Harry Edwards states in his 1980 autobiography:

The OPHR had four major aims: (1) to stage an international protest of the persistent and systematic abuse of Black people's human rights in the United States; (2) to expose America's historical exploitation of Black athletes as political propaganda tools in both the national and international arenas; (3) to establish a standard of political responsibility among Black athletes vis-à-vis the needs and interest of the Black community; and (4) to make the Black community aware of the substantial hidden dynamics and consequences of their sport involvement.³

Despite these central and crucial claims of Edwards, he did not hold final authority on all the goals and aims of the loose association in the late 1960s, nor is he so effective a gatekeeper as to control all understanding of the legacy of the Olympic Project for Human Rights today. Indeed, other key players in the project see the solidarist commitments invoked by the project as necessarily extending across cultures and communities. For example, reflecting on the Olympic Project for Human Rights definitive moment of protest, Tommie Smith remains adamant that what happened that day in October 1968 was not about Black Power. In this regard, Smith maintains that:

the reason John Carlos and I were even on the track in Mexico: [was] the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Read that name again, very closely, and put aside what you thought you knew about what happened on the victory stand in Mexico City that night. This was not a Black Power movement. To this very day, the gesture made on the victory stand is described as a Black Power salute; it was not. Nor was it only about Black athletes talking about boycotting because they

¹ See section 6.3 for Kidd's description of this initiative.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 217.

don't like what's going on. It was the Olympic Project for *Human Rights*. It was more than civil rights; that's why it was called human rights.¹

6.1 Solidarity

Such solidarity and its concomitant concept of human rights is related to Norman's understanding of his participation in the protest on the podium as well: "I believe in human rights, the fact that we were on different teams and that our skins were different colours didn't make that much difference."² Carlos concurs, expressing his understanding of the protest in similar universalistic human rights terms, involving the language of "the human race":

We didn't stand there with disrespect. We stood there to say, 'hey man, I am American.' I am your son. I am wounded. I'm not wounded for me because I am one of your heroes, I am in the Olympics. I am wounded for my race and I am not talking about the 200 metres, I'm talking about the human race. That is why I went to Mexico City.³

This solidarity was evident in a similar (though not identical) way to Harry Edwards, who also stated in his 1980 autobiography that it was the general intention of the Olympic Project for Human Rights to take advantage of an international platform to frame "the oppression of Black Americans not as a domestic civil rights issue, but as a violation of *international human rights laws and principles*."⁴

For his part, Australian 200 metres dash record holder, Peter Norman, never begrudged his participation in this moment of solidarity:

It has been said that sharing my silver medal with that incident on the victory dais detracted from my performance. On the contrary! Getting between the two of them in the actual race itself was my moment of

¹ Smith with Steele, 22. Emphasis in the original.

² Peter Norman quoted in Norman, at 43 minutes.

³ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 64 minutes.

⁴ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 189. Emphasis in the original.

glory. I was very proud to run second and I was very proud to be on the victory dais with them when they made their statement.¹

Previewing the demonstrations that took place at the medal presentation ceremonies, several Black US athletes raised their fists during the parade at the opening ceremony in what was reported in the media at the time as a sign of Black solidarity or Black Power.² However, John Carlos did not attend the opening ceremony, partly as the result of a cold and partly as a gesture of protest.³

As Norman recalls, the moment on the dais after the men's 200 metres was collaborative in multiple senses:

Tommie and John planned on wearing gloves on the victory dais and going through certain motions. Then John discovered that he had left his gloves back in the village. Tommie was still going to wear his. I suggested they wear one each as they were only going to be holding up one hand. So that's what they did. John got the glove on the left hand and Tommie on the right hand.⁴

The great and famous US sportscaster, Howard Cosell of ABC, secured an interview with Smith after the protest. As a result, Cosell was partly responsible for bringing the event to the world's attention when not all newspapers initially realized its significance. For this choice, the established sportscaster received a measure of criticism. Also at the time, Cosell earned the ire of many people in the United States because he called Muhammad Ali by his chosen name (as opposed to Cassius Clay) when they worked together broadcasting the boxing matches at the 1968 Olympics.⁵ In that first

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 2.

² See, in particular, section 7.1.

³ Johnstone and Norman, 24

⁴ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 39.

⁵ Hartmann, 154.

interview immediately after the protest, Smith told Cosell the meaning of the symbolism he sought to invoke on the podium:

My raised right hand stood for the power in Black America. Carlos' left hand stood for the unity of Black America. Together, they formed an arch of unity and power. The Black scarf around my neck stood for Black pride. The Black socks with no shoes stood for Black poverty in racist America. The totality of our effort was the regaining of Black dignity.¹

They also wore the aforementioned² Olympic Project for Human Rights buttons, which were symbolic of the struggle. John Carlos even wore one of these buttons on his singlet during the race.³ The story behind the badge that Norman was wearing in the famous photos of the protest displays multiple elements of cross-racial solidarity:

I suggested that if they had an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge, I'd wear it in support. As we were going out onto the track Paul Hoffman, the cox of the US rowing eight, came over to congratulate the guys. The rowing team was supporting the African American guys. Paul, who is White, had his badge on. As Paul reached over to shake hands with John, while John has his right hand clenched, he reached across with his left hand and undid Paul's badge. He then pinned it on my tracksuit. I proudly wore it on the stand.⁴

Tommie Smith comments on Norman's post-race overtures to participate in the protest: "Peter's offer to wear the badge was significant to me. I heard John mention it to him and I thought that is not really Peter. It's an American situation. Don't get Peter mixed up in this. He was committed but I didn't know that."⁵ Five time Olympian Willye White, who was competing in the Long Jump in Mexico City, also commented on Peter's

¹ Tommie Smith quoted from the transcript of the ABC interview on October 18, 1968 in Smith with Steel, 175.

² See section 5.3.

³ See any of the many YouTube videos of the 1968 men's 200 metres final, which we should also keep in mind was a truly remarkable race in and of itself. A brief expansion on the latter point is found in section 1.0.

⁴ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 39.

⁵ Tommie Smith quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 48.

participation in what she considers to be “The Black Revolution[:] ...To have an Australian do that, when you were having your own problems, was fantastic. He will always be very special!”¹ Bruce Kidd picks up on this point, noting a simple reason for cross-cultural solidarity based in shared team identities:

Like Peter Norman, like me, like [US Olympic Hammer Thrower] Harold Connolly, there were lots of White athletes [interested in the cause of equality in the late 1960s]. I mean these were your teammates and you could see what they were going through. I mean like me and [Great Canadian Sprinter] Harry [Jerome]. Harry went through hell. It [racial injustice] was happening all over the states. I mean that was the general condition. You know the people who were protesting were getting killed.²

Despite the sometimes negative perception of his act of solidarity at Mexico 68,

Norman appreciates the way his role came to be recognized:

The podium launched all of us to infamy or fame. It was infamy for a long time. Now everyone is a little more comfortable with it. John has made a statement on a number of occasions where [Carlos states] he believes the three of us were put on this earth to make that statement that day. It’s nice to be included as one of them when he says that.³

Looking back on the path, which led to that earthshaking moment on the podium, Smith laments a certain lack of solidarity that failed to recognize the connection between different forms of oppression:

We were students and we were very dedicated to the Olympic Project for Human Rights. What we as Black athletes took on for the whole world was a basic platform that should have drawn support from everybody everywhere. But no one else wanted to join us. For example, White women faced the same things we did, and years later, in the 1970s, when they realized the power structure was in the hands of the man and that was what we were fighting for is what they also should have been fighting for, they took up the fight for themselves. These women then said, “We should have helped you, because we

¹ Willye White quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 53.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 285.

understand what you're going through." At the time, though, they looked at us Black athletes like racist dogs who didn't know what we were talking about. So all alone in the fight, we took the bull by the horns, and we did the best we possibly could.¹

In practical terms, this orientation meant that many of the female athletes were excluded from the discussions surrounding the Olympic Project for Human Rights. As repeat Olympic 100 metres gold medalist Wyomia Tyus reports: "It appalled me that the men simply took us for granted. They assumed we had no minds of our own and that we'd do whatever we were told."² Nonetheless, a number of the women Olympians were supportive of the endeavour and wore the Olympic Project for Human Rights button. For example, despite being left out of the process, Tyus dedicated the women's sprint medals to Smith and Carlos after they had received their disciplinary action.³

In a 1991 *Sports Illustrated* interview, Tommie Smith also struggled over the lack of female representation in the Olympic Project for Human Rights: "They should have been involved. It just wasn't done, but it was not meant to be denigrating. So many things were happening, and there was so little time. It was an inadvertent oversight."⁴

Nonetheless, Smith has come to emphasize the systematic nature of the protest. As an example, in his biography, he notes that: "the issue was human rights It wasn't just me as a Black athlete unhappy about how I was treated; it was a systematic battle over more than one issue."⁵ He expands on this point saying that he understood his actions on the podium in the context of a much needed solidarity in 1968:

¹ Smith with Steele, 23.

² Wyomia Tyus quoted in Moore, "Eye of the Storm."

³ Wyomia Tyus quoted in Hoffer, 206.

⁴ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, "Eye of the Storm."

⁵ Smith with Steele, 39.

Being proactive and being involved in social change, social movement. During that year, the Democratic Convention, the apartheid situation. The women was in peril because of them not being treated fully. The New York AC,¹ we needed more African Americans in the public school system, in the junior college, especially the professional ranks in terms of sports, in terms about representing our kids as the system did not, and pushing that forward.²

This solidarist framing is now coming to be accepted even by establishment figures, who also are moving to disassociate the Olympic Project for Human Rights from a Black Power-related view of the protest. This shift is evidenced by the words of remembrance delivered in the Parliament of Australia after Norman's death and similar speeches during the unveiling of the statue group at San Jose State.³ By the first decade of the new millennium, the protests at the 1968 summer games were very much understood to have been part of a now respectable civil rights movement, despite the fact that the name of the Olympic Project for Human Rights implies an effort to move beyond that movement's accomplishments into a more trans-national framing of activism.⁴ For example, the Australian MP, Nicola Rixon, was firm in her presentation of the events of Mexico 68. She declared that the demonstration on the podium after the men's 200 metres, heralded and symbolized an important strand of the civil rights movement in the US:

¹ The story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights' activism in relation to the discriminatory practices of the New York Athletic Club is presented in section 6.2.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Tavis Smiley. "Tommie Smith" airdate February 28, 2007 Available from http://www.pbs.org/wnet/tavissmiley/?post_type=wnet_interviews&s=smith&x=0&y=0. Accessed October 9, 2010.

³ For more on the story of this statue group see, in particular, the commentary on section 7.4 in section 7.5.

⁴ Recall here the distinction about the existence and validity of universal and intrinsic human rights as not being dependant on state accorded civil rights. See earlier in this section and section 2.6.

Mr. Norman's performance at those Olympics was all the more inspiring for the support he gave his co-finalists on the podium . . . Mr. Norman's involvement in this protest is something that we should all be proud of . . . Mr. Norman is a role model for all Australians in his stand and support for equal rights. With the American civil rights movement in a way heralded and symbolized by this action, the world began to recognize the right of all people to live free from oppression. Mr. Norman's actions at the 1968 Olympics, standing in solidarity for the rights of other, are worth reflecting on again today. After all, human rights are all about caring, not just for yourself but for the plight of others around you.¹ Nevertheless, I do not want this moment in history to overshadow his outstanding sporting achievement and lasting contribution to the community. . . . Mr. Norman's life shows that our national pastime, sport, can be coupled with a commitment to social justice and equality for all and was perhaps the start of a rich tradition of Australian sportsmen and sportswomen who have used their sporting success to highlight and combat social inequity.²

This transformation of the understanding of the moment of protest and its meaning in the popular imagination brought increased levels of respectability to the student-athlete activists involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Yet this outcome was somewhat bittersweet for the athletes involved. Reflecting on the irony of being whole-heartedly welcomed at San Jose State by the establishment figures in 2003, Smith mused:

For the official segments of the campus, city, and country, the time to acknowledge and embrace and recognize us was that third week of October 1968, when we were sent home from Mexico City. What were we sent home to? When we got onto the campus, it was just the status quo. Nothing. No celebration. At best, we were considered outside the mainstream, even more than we had been during our college years, and that period was no time for those outside the mainstream to wait for recognition. At worst we were simply infamous. . . . We received positive reactions from some, but the negative far outweighed the positive and many made it clear how negative they planned to be.³

¹ Notice also here how Roxon's speech mixes categories of civil and human rights.

² Nicola Roxon's speech to the Australian Parliament on October 19, 2006 as quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 302-303.

³ Smith with Steele, 18.

Adding to Smith's reminiscence of their return to the US from Mexico 68, Carlos confirmed the wide reaching effects of their action by recalling an almost immediate effect of his protest on his family:

[The government] have a way to try and divide you and break you down. My brothers was in the war. And, incidentally talking about the war, when we did that demonstration, two days after that demonstration, they went to Viet Nam, pulled my brother out, they said "you're discharged," they went to my other brother in Panama and said "you're discharged" and my brother said, "what do you mean I am discharged? I didn't ask for no discharge." And they said, "you are out of the war right now, as of today." And my brother said, "hey man what did you do?"¹

Later, in 1969, Norman was invited to come to the US and compete against a strong field including John Carlos at the inaugural Martin Luther King International Freedom Games in Philadelphia. Peter was the only non-Black athlete in the field. This was one of a number of competitions that provided opportunities for Peter to foster his relationship with Carlos and gain a deeper appreciation for the consequences of the American's participation in the protest.²

Despite an initial icy reception by the establishment and other sectors of US society, Smith considered the Olympic Project for Human Rights a success story. He was so committed to solidarity in this endeavour that he laments the fact that the project turned out to have a cast of more significant central actors, as opposed to being a completely discursive and democratic organization:

But the way it turned out worked; in reality, . . . me, Lee, John, Harry Edwards, we were the hub of that wheel, and a lot of the athletes didn't even want to be any of the spokes; they thought that they might be crushed once the wheel started rolling. Nobody that wasn't

¹ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 66 minutes.

² Johnstone and Norman, 161.

supposed to be in the hub was in the hub. We still involved as many Black athletes as we could, and plenty of the White athletes as well. In the final analysis, the Olympic Project for Human Rights succeeded.¹

Notwithstanding this acknowledged role as one who formed this central part of the Olympic Project for Human Rights “wheel,” some thought that 1968 400 metres Olympic champion Lee Evans failed in his solidarity with Smith and Carlos, in order to save his reputation in the eyes of Olympic officials and win another gold medal in the 4 x 400 metres relay, which was held after the individual 400 metres competition. Smith asserts that this critique is misplaced and that Evans, by wearing his tam (beret hat) on the stand and bringing on board his co-medalists, had achieved enough. In Smith’s opinion, Evans was under as much pressure as he and Carlos were and suffered the weight of the reaction in a similar manner. For Smith, there was no need to repeat their silent gesture. Smith feels that Evans came through well under the circumstances, arguing that those who critiqued him:

didn’t understand things the way we did. I guess that’s why I like Lee so much now; he stood up under the pressure, I mean stood under it, and though he didn’t have a chance to do what John Carlos and Tommie Smith did, he stood behind us with his life. You talk about a friend—there aren’t many others like Lee. And I know Lee had hard times after that, the same as if he raised his fist on the stand himself.²

In addition to bringing Norman on board with the Olympic Project for Human Rights, the fact that Carlos and Smith were in Mexico for the event also provided other networking opportunities on an international solidarist level. For instance, John Carlos

¹ Smith with Steele, 168.

² Smith with Steele, 170-171. Recall here that Evans did, in fact, raise his fist on the podium on both occasions when receiving his gold medals at Mexico 68. However, he did not perform the action when the US national anthem was playing. See section 5.4.

found the Olympic village to be an excellent place to bond with other athletes from around the world and to establish Black solidarity:

The African nations knew about the Black Americans' plight regarding the Olympic boycott. From that understanding they developed a great respect for what we had done. But most importantly they were happy that we decided to participate. They esteemed us highly, and right away there came into being a confirmation that the Africans would win all the long distance races and the Americans would win the short distance races. Further, when the Cubans came and Blacks from other countries arrived, there was an instant bond. It was not about governments and things; it was about human beings meeting and coming together as friends. It was about Black athletes coming together as friends. All of the Black athletes from every different country bonded together.¹

After such bonding, both the men's and women's 400 metres relay teams from Cuba presented their medals to Black community leaders based in the US in a show of solidarity with the two suspended sprinters.² The Cuban men's team gave their silver medals to Stokeley Carmicheal and the Cuban women's team presented their silver medals to Harry Edwards.³

These stories show how, in a certain sense, the entire work of the Olympic Project for Human Rights was about solidarity, because the people involved had much more than a narrow focus on the rights of athletes in mind as they crafted their student activism.

Edwards explains:

The Project was not just about athletic goals. We recognized that the Black athlete was inextricably embedded in and reflective of the community circumstances from which these athletes emerged. We felt we had to speak not just about the predicament of athletes, but to the interests of their communities. To simply speak to athletes' interests would not only have been short-sighted, but self-serving. We had to

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 173-174.

² Hartmann, 162.

³ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 108.

understand the broader context and configuration of the Black struggle for freedom and justice.

This enabled us to link up with the broader civil rights movement. Up until that time everybody saw sport as the citadel of brotherhood and harmony and understanding, where what counted was not the color of your skin or previous condition of servitude, but only how well you played the game—that it was a level playing field. Well, we demonstrated that the slant of the playing field in sport was the same as in the broader society. Therefore, whether in sports or elsewhere, the struggle for freedom was one struggle. This enabled us to join up in a very strategic fashion, not just spiritually, not just sympathetically, with the broader civil rights movement. So, our goals were not limited to things like more Black coaches, more equitable treatment, but were part of the whole movement.¹

6.2 Why Not Boycott?

Boycott had been famously invoked by student-athletes from the Syracuse University Football team of 1960 as a tool to mark an unjust socio-cultural situation. The entire team boycotted the Cotton Bowl banquet when they learned that their star player, Ernie “The Express” Davis, would not be permitted to dine with his teammates despite winning MVP in the game. Most of the Syracuse players were white. Nonetheless, they chose to reject a compromise that would see Davis collect the award and then leave the segregated banquet facility.²

The idea of a Black boycott of the Olympics had been raised before the run up to Mexico 68. For example, prior to the 1960 games in Rome, the comic and activist, Dick Gregory, advocated for such an action. Gregory also tried to organize a Black boycott in

¹ Harry Edwards quoted in Leonard.

² See Jocelyn Selim. “Ernie Davis’ Last Down.” *Collaboration—Results* (Spring 2008). Available from <http://www.crmagazine.org/archive/Spring2008/Pages/ErnieDavisLastDown.aspx>. Accessed April 5, 2013.

relation to the 1964 games that were held in Tokyo.¹ Building on Gregory's example, Harry Edwards and Ken Noel, both sessional instructors and former San Jose State student-athletes began holding meetings to organize a boycott of the 1968 Olympics.²

The themes discussed at these meetings are recalled by Smith:

The issues at stake were well known. Apartheid was still the rule in South Africa, and the country was still banned from international competition. Muhammad Ali's fight with the government over being drafted had already begun. Demands to hire Black coaches to go with all these Black athletes on campuses were growing. There were athletic organizations that were still all White, including the New York Athletic Club, host of the most prestigious amateur meets every year at Madison Square Garden. And there was the housing issue at San Jose State. As far back as my junior year, it was apparent to me and every other Black athlete on campus that it was next to impossible to get an apartment in San Jose.³

For many, whether they thought of a Black boycott as potentially a positive or negative event, the very idea of a boycott became associated with political action. Despite the claims of Brundage that the Olympics were apolitical, there were a number of boycotts before, during, and after his tenure with the International Olympic Committee. Notable examples from the post-World War II time period include the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, where in protest against the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland refused to compete in the summer games. Also prior to Melbourne, in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon declared they

¹ Smith with Steele, 148.

² Smith with Steele, 157.

³ Smith with Steele, 158.

would not compete. Further, the People's Republic of China boycotted the Melbourne summer games in protest of the space made for Taiwan's participation.¹

After Mexico 68, the 1976 Montreal Olympics brought their own round of boycotts. More than 20 African countries chose not to participate after New Zealand was allowed to compete at the games despite having violated the International Sporting Ban when the All Blacks (the national rugby team) toured a South Africa that was still marked by a government enforcing apartheid policies. Four years later, more than 60 nations boycotted the Moscow summer games in protest against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.²

In what some commentators saw as revenge against US leadership for organizing a boycott in the run-up to the 1980 summer games, the Soviet Union and 14 of its Eastern Bloc allies refused to compete in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Iran and Libya also chose to boycott, citing the United States' foreign policy as their principal reason. Even the 1988 summer games in Seoul saw boycotts by North Korea, Cuba and Ethiopia over South Korea's refusal to let the North act as co-hosts of the event,³ which might have served to ease tensions and otherwise deescalate the continuing conflict on the peninsula.

Back in the run up to the 1968 games, initial support for a boycott appeared on the surface to be strong. A meeting of 200 Olympic hopefuls, including Evans, Smith and Lew Alcindor (the future Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) took place at Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles on the American Thanksgiving weekend in 1967. Those assembled for the

¹ Lindsay Craig. "Past Olympic Boycotts." (31 March 2008). Available from <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/indepth/feature-boycotts-countries.html>. Accessed November 19, 2011.

² Craig.

³ Craig.

meeting responded to the pressures facing Black athletes at the time by voting unanimously for a boycott.¹ Part of the inspiration came from a stirring speech delivered by Alcindor, which drew a standing ovation from the crowd:

Everybody knows me. I'm the big basketball star, the weekend hero, everybody's All-American. Well, last summer I was almost killed by a racist cop shooting at a Black cat in Harlem. He was shooting on the street—where masses of Black people were standing around or just taking a walk. But he didn't care. After all we were just niggers. I found out last summer that we don't catch hell because we aren't basketball stars or we don't have money. We catch hell because we are Black. Somewhere each of us has got to make our stand against this kind of thing. This is how I take my stand—using what I have. And I take my stand here.²

Building on the momentum from the Los Angeles meeting, in December of 1967, in an event which can serve to remind us, once again, of how the student athletes were tied into the larger cultural context at the time, Martin Luther King Jr.³ held a press conference with members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights in support of the boycott.⁴ Recalling his multiple interactions with Martin Luther King some forty years after they took place, Edwards states: “He understood that this was merely an overlay onto Athletics of the pattern and paradigm he had established.”⁵ At the time of the press conference, several of the athletes released personal statements explaining some of their reasons for participating in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Tommie Smith's statement (showing some influence from Edwards) read as follows:

¹ Murphy, 141.

² Lew Alcindor quoted in Edwards *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 53.

³ With Malcolm X now dead, King was undeniably a key figure in the nonviolent struggle for human rights at this time. Yet, he was also challenged on the validity of a nonviolent approach by people like H. Rap Brown. On the latter point see Davis, *Social Problems*, 337.

⁴ Hartmann, xviii.

⁵ Harry Edwards quoted in Small, at 15 minutes.

I have received many phone calls about my decision to support the Olympic Project for Human Rights. I have tried to explain this at a number of speaking engagements. I will do this again here. It is true that I want to participate in the Olympics and also in all the other track meets scheduled for next year. But I also recognize the political and social implication of some Black people participating for a country in which the vast majority of Black people suffer from unthinkable discrimination and racism. I therefore feel that it is my obligation as a Black man to do whatever is necessary, by any means necessary, to aid my people in obtaining the freedom that we all seek. If I can open a single door that might lead in the direction of freedom for my people, then I feel that I must open that door. I am not only willing to give up an opportunity to participate in the Olympics, but I am also willing to give up my life if there is even a chance that it will serve to dramatize, much less solve, the problems faced by my people.¹

Writing from Chicago in a letter published in the January 1968 issue of *Track and Field News*, Bruce Kidd expresses some of the complexities around the issue of the proposed Black boycott that had been generating hostility amongst some readers of the magazine:

I was appalled by the general reaction to the Olympic boycott proposal printed in the December issue, especially by the smug, condescending editorials by Nelsons titled "Opinion 68." 1868?²

It simply confirms my long-standing [suspicion] that sportsmen count among the world's most reactionary. Despite their professed liberalism, the Nelsons and their fellows sound like southern colonels. When two brave young men declare themselves for the social revolution which must occur if the United States is to survive, the Nelsons can only reply: "It won't work until we whites allow it so don't be a martyr. Run along and play." But they really don't give a damn about Tommie Smith or Ralph Boston or the rest of the American Negroes. All they care about is that the American Olympic team perform well in their beloved sport of Track and Field. . . .

I have great admiration for the courage of Tommie Smith and Lee Evans and do not envy the decisions they and other Negro athletes

¹ Tommie Smith quoted in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 64.

² Playing on a normative idea that there is a forward-moving course for history, Bruce Kidd is here implying that the opinions expressed by Nelsons are more suited to 1868 than 1968.

must make. The pressure all of them are presently facing must be tremendous. On the one hand is the Olympics, the dream of every athlete, hopefully the glorious climax of a long, gruelling athletic career. Track and Field, moreover, is an individual sport and the Olympics in theory is the world's championship between individuals, not countries. On the other hand is the gnawing awareness that one's participation may strengthen the status quo of tokenism to which one is adamantly opposed. Whatever their decision, I hope they will all continue to act upon their concern for the Negro in America.¹

Despite the generally nonviolent orientation of this campaign, Edwards was prone to using conflict-inducing language which, even when it eschewed violence, left some possible participants in the activism activities feeling threatened. For example, speaking about the boycott early in 1968, Edwards said:

I don't think any Black athlete will go to the Olympics. If they do go, I don't think they'll come back. I am not threatening. I am not encouraging violence. I am assessing reality. I know the demeanor of the Black people. They see a Black man back from the Olympics and they'll say, 'Look at the devil with his medal around his neck.' Some of them are going to have accidents. You can't live with the crackers and come back to Harlem. The athlete that goes will face ostracism and harassment. People are fed up with those shifflin' niggers. The Black athlete that goes will be a traitor to his race, and will be treated as such.²

In light of such comments, it is telling that Bruce Kidd emphasizes that the protest itself represented a give and take common in many voluntary associations:

The protest was a compromise. The original idea was to have a Black boycott. Some, most prominently Lew Alcindor, who became Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, found a way to not go. But for track and field athletes, at a time when the Olympics were the major event, there was no series of World Championships, there weren't any World Cups. This was their time. And it was very hard to give up something, the most important competition in your sport. And for many of them it was a meal ticket. This was the dying days of amateurism. The careers they were putting together depended upon or would be enhanced by good Olympic performances. The decision taken was

¹ Kidd, "Letter to the Editor".

² Harry Edwards quoted in Murphy, 169.

that they would go and behave in a way that distanced themselves from that predictable American propaganda. They tried ways of doing that, supported in the media spotlight by Harry Edwards and other Black and a few White leaders.¹

A first success for this group of concerned actors occurred in mid-February 1968, when the New York Athletic Club was to host its 100th anniversary meet at Madison Square Garden. The club had well-known discriminatory practices directed against Blacks and Jews. This was to be the biggest meet on a then popular indoor track and field calendar. The Olympic Project for Human Rights was determined to boycott the event to make a point about racism in sport and society in general. Lee Evans recalls his own personal contribution in modest terms: “I called some of my friends, some of the guys that I knew and said, ‘hey listen don’t go to the New York AC meet.’”² The Olympic Project for Human Rights also held a number of press conferences.

Such tactics were largely successful. Two prominent Catholic universities, Villanova (Augustinian) and Georgetown (Jesuit) withdrew their teams³ and the Soviet Union team refused to compete at the last minute, after the Olympic Project for Human Rights sent a telegram to the Soviet Embassy explaining the reasons for their planned action.⁴ A West German representative team also chose to decline its invitation.⁵ Other colleges, including all the Ivy League schools, Manhattan College (Catholic) and City College of New York, pulled their athletes in expressed agreement with the tenets of the

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Lee Evans quoted in Small, at 21 minutes.

³ Hoffer, 58.

⁴ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 66.

⁵ Hartmann, 102.

Olympic Project for Human Rights.¹ Additionally, New York City and area public and Catholic schools de-registered their pupils from the popular schools section of the meet.²

Plans to boycott the New York Athletic Club meet and the summer Olympics were first announced by Edwards in a press conference in front of the Americana Hotel in December 1967. He was accompanied by Black leaders, including Dr. King, whose support lent momentum and credibility to the project.³ Edwards explains his reasons for involving Dr. King, Stokely Carmichael and other prominent Black leaders. His words are also indicative of the broad range of views about how to handle racial inequality that coalesced to be made manifest in support for the Olympic Project for Human Rights:

We wanted to establish an organic link with the struggle of Dr. King, the struggle of Malcolm X, the struggle of SNCC, the struggle of CORE, the struggle of the Panthers. What we were fighting for in athletics was part and parcel of the same struggle. We were simply struggling in the athletic theatre. We wanted to make that clear from the Olympic podium. Predictably, the media only focused on the raised fists, but the whole pose--the bowed head, the shoelessness, and so forth--was meant by Tommie and John to be a powerful statement about the poor conditions of Black people as a whole in this country.⁴

The demands of the Olympic Project, as listed at the Americana Hotel in New York, were:

1. Restoration of Muhammad Ali's title and right to box in this country.
2. Removal of the anti-Semitic and anti-Black personality Avery Brundage from his post as Chairman of the International Olympic Committee.

¹ Bass, 148.

² Hartmann, 102.

³ Bass, 138.

⁴ Harry Edward interviewed by Leonard.

3. Curtailment of participation of all-White teams and individuals from the Union of South Africa¹ and Southern Rhodesia in all United States and Olympic Athletics events.
4. The addition of at least two Black coaches to the men's track and field coaching staff appointed to coach the 1968 United States Olympic team. (Stanley V. Wright is a member of the coaching team but he is a devout Negro and therefore is unacceptable).
5. The appointment of at least two Black people to policy making positions on the United States Olympic Committee.
6. The complete desegregation of the bigot dominated and racist New York Athletic Club.²

Edwards returned to New York City for the New York Athletic Club meet and was joined by a group of activists that included H. Rap Brown. Under the media spotlight the group explained that any college or university attending would be "White-listed."³ Just five elite Black athletes crossed the picket-line set up by the protestors and only a small total of nine Black athletes competed in the meet. Amongst these competitors was future gold medalist Bob Beamon.⁴

Additional momentum for an Olympic boycott was gained in the minds of people like Ralph Boston after the assassination of Dr. King in April, 1968.⁵ Yet, Vince

¹ Bruce Kidd cites the apartheid issue in South Africa and the country's continued participation in international sport as something that drew him into the Olympic Project for Human Rights but also as an issue that motivated his subsequent involvement in sport activism within a moral framework: "Another part of the Olympic Project for Human Rights was to campaign against the inclusion of South Africa in the 1968 Olympics. I was very much involved in that. I wrote numerous letters and spent a good part of thirty years working against the involvement of apartheid South Africa in international sport. And that too is an expression of my belief that you have to take responsibility for your community, its governance, and its problems." From Kidd interview. Here, notice Kidd's cosmopolitan view of community.

² Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 58-59.

³ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 67.

⁴ Hoffer, 58.

⁵ Hoffer, 60.

Matthews reports that he and many of his fellow athletes were reluctant to commit fully to Edwards's vision of an Olympic Project for Human Rights boycott precisely because of the fear of losing the (then illicit) payments from shoe manufacturers commonly occurring in the sport.¹ Despite his position as a shoe representative, Boston later protested on the podium at Mexico 68 himself, by receiving his medal barefoot (to represent poverty), after Smith and Carlos had been sent home. He remembers telling officials: "Send me home, too, because I protested on the victory stand."² Edwards reflects on the evolution of his activist organizing throughout this period:

We began to get letters from athletes all over the country. So I began travelling around the country and organizing what came to be known as the Revolt of the Black Athlete. By travelling we found out that those Black athletes who were being shafted on the campuses, were the same athletes the nation depended on as part of its Olympic contingent. These Black athletes could participate in the NY Athletic Club's indoor track meet at Madison Square Garden, but weren't allowed to join the Club or be housed there with their White peers. So it was not a huge jump from the Revolt of the Black Athlete on college campuses to the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Many of the people at the higher echelons of the NCAA were also connected to the United States Olympic Committee. It was all one sports hierarchy. We were battling one beast that had several heads. That was essentially the evolution of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.³

Around this time, Bruce Kidd, who was in favour of the athletes choosing whatever the best course of action was in their view, debated Rafer Johnson, the famous 1960 Olympic Champion and 1955 Pan Am Games gold medalist who also won a silver medal at the 1956 games in Melbourne. Johnson had been the first African-American flag bearer at the Olympics in Rome in 1960 and had moved on to an acting and television

¹ Matthews with Amdur, 173.

² Boston quoted in Hoffer, 188.

³ Edwards interviewed by Leonard.

career by the late 1960s.¹ The debate took place in a televised format. Bruce Kidd describes the events of that day, inclusive of a remarkable ride home from the broadcasting studios, as follows:

One of my most memorable moments was debating Rafer Johnson on national TV. He was in a qualified way opposed to the boycott as it then was. And I was in favour of whatever they decided to do. And we debated the reasons why on national television. And what I particularly remember is after the debate and when I came out and took my makeup off. And the receptionist came into the green room and said, "Mr. Kidd, there is a police officer here to see you." So I go out into the lobby and there is this Black guy with four guns on his body. His name was Ray Robinson. He was the president of the African American chapter of the Chicago police union. And he looked at me and said, "Boy, you need protection". And he drove me home. And he gave me his phone number. And he told me that if anyone gave me a hard time over what I was saying, I could call him.²

Also at this time, a *Track and Field News* survey of prime Olympic prospects showed that nine of the twenty seven surveyed athletes would at least consider a boycott.³ In many ways the boycott idea was most successful with the basketball stars. Their trials had coincided with Edwards' greatest period of influence and, with bright prospects for National Basketball Association (NBA) and American Basketball Association (ABA) contracts,⁴ they had the least to lose from boycotting. The team had

¹ To show another instance in which violence enters the stories told in this thesis in multiple ways it may be informative to consider that Rafer Johnson would also later be one of the people on the scene when Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June of 1968, helping subdue the assassin, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan. See SR Olympics Staff, "Rafer Johnson." <http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/athletes/jo/rafer-johnson-1.html>. Accessed October 18, 2011.

² Kidd Interview.

³ Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

⁴ Recall here that American professional basketball players did not participate in the Olympics until 1992 and that the games remained formally amateur in 1968. As such, collegiate players, as amateurs, formed the bulk of the US squad. The ABA, founded in 1967, merged with the older NBA in 1976.

been weakened by the boycott. Their superstar Lew Alcindor had spoken publicly on the *Today* show and even debated on the topic of human rights during that appearance. Also, the Olympics' timing during the NCAA season made participating in the boycott more palpable and provided a ready excuse about academic concerns should anyone question their rationale for not attending the Olympics. The team was so weakened that many were worried that the US men's basketball squad would forfeit its dominance. In the end, they still managed to win gold without two dozen of the country's top amateur players.¹

After the decision was taken by the track and field athletes to attend and act according to conscience, Tommie Smith recognized that their very presence at the games in Mexico City brought with it a responsibility. Reflecting on his pre-race preparations (undertaken while injured) on the night of the 200 metres final, he writes: "the very fact that we were lined up to compete in this race meant that we did not choose to boycott. But just as clearly something was to be done on this stage; something had to be done."²

Carlos also felt this urgency to do something with the space provided by the Olympics:

I wanted to use the protest to raise consciousness about the Olympic Games. I wanted to create a protest to tell the world that the Black man and woman dominate the Olympic Games, and this particular Olympics is a Black Olympics for Blacks all over the world. This protest is a protest to mourn the deaths of all the Black women, men, boys, and girls that died fighting against the European kidnappers on the shores of Africa. Then to those who died in the Middle Passage along the way. Then to those who were beaten unmercifully by the slave masters, being separated from family, religion, and language.

Since 1952 reparations amount now to 3.5 billion dollars and more than 44 million acres of land have been paid to Japanese Americans, Jewish Claims on Austria, Indians, Eskimos, Japanese Canadians, Ottawas of Michigan, Chippewas, Seminoles of Florida, Sioux, Klamaths of Oregon, Alaska Natives, and German Jews. Black people

¹ Hoffer, 222-224.

² Smith with Steele, 23.

have lost over 50 to one hundred million people in a span of 400 years of slavery just like the Native American Indians. Black Americans never got anything for the mistreatment of slavery by America. Somebody had to say something about the mistreatment of Black people around the world. Many of the Black ministers, politicians, educators, and businessmen weren't doing anything other than conforming to the status quo. They weren't talking about giving up their lives and taking a few so that their children could have it better. The Black Panthers did what they could do, but they were shut down real quick. Martin and Malcolm did a great job, but they did not have a world stage until they were long dead. The Olympics gave us a world stage, and we had the opportunity to say something with it while we were being presented a medal on a victory platform. This was exciting to me. So my whole purpose was to use that world stage to represent Blackness.¹

Even speaking about representing Blackness and struggle in this manner could bring with it severe consequences. In a move that was to shatter Smith's emerging popular image as a respectable all-American soldier drafted by the Los Angeles Rams (set to follow in the footsteps of 1964 Olympic Champion Bob Hayes as a National Football League player), Smith gave just a single interview to the foreign media in a foreign country.² Specifically, the idea of a boycott gained media attention when, after winning the 200 meters and coming second in the 100 meters at the 1967 World Student Games in Tokyo, Smith responded to a question by a Japanese reporter by saying that a boycott was a possibility. When he returned home, Smith was under pressure to recant his words. Instead, he issued a statement, which suggested that a boycott could be avoided only if American society changed to reflect the acceptance of everyone's human rights.

The statement read, in part:

I have not made any precise open appeal to Black athletes to boycott the Games. I, as an individual, cannot tell another Black competitor that it is his duty to forget a goal he has sought for himself in this field. . . . My conception of the greatest amateur athletic achievement

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 194-195.

² Hartmann, 38-39.

is to win a gold medal in the Olympic Games. From now until the Games, the events which occur in our society will probably influence the decision of many Black athletes. Hopefully, a boycott of the games never will be needed to bring about the necessary changes in our country. But, if a boycott is deemed appropriate, then I believe most of the Black athletes will act in unison.¹

In October 1967, shortly after Smith's return from Tokyo, the Olympic Project for Human Rights was formed. The focus of the first meeting was very much on a boycott. That meeting was called by Edwards with Smith and Lee Evans amongst the future Olympians in attendance.² Smith's statement initiated his first experience with what was to become a barrage of hate mail. One piece of correspondence, addressed "Dear Traitor," was both blunt and to the point. It said: "You are not only a disgrace to your College, your Country . . . but to yourself! Please don't try to win a place on the Olympic Team. I'd rather have our Country finish last, without you, than first with you."³ Such a plethora of hate mail could have the opposite effect to what was intended when it interacted with the agency of elite track and field athletes. An example of this was the situation where hate mail actually helped to motivate Ralph Boston's participation in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. He had initially tried to remain somewhat neutral but: "When the meetings first began in California, I started getting hate mail and I was nowhere even near that. It made sense to me that if I am going to get hate mail, if I am going to get killed, and the threat was there, I might as well get killed for something rather than just standing out on this island alone."⁴

¹ Smith with Steele, 160.

² Smith with Steele, 161.

³ Letter reproduced in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 49.

⁴ Ralph Boston quoted in Small, at 29 minutes.

Despite the fact that Carlos and Smith's presence at the games may have cost him a gold medal, Peter Norman was thankful that the threatened Black boycott of the Mexico City Olympics never took place:

Had it been carried out it would have taken away one platform they had to make a stand. It was proved in a very real way with what Tommie did on the dais. If the boycott had gone ahead, White America would have said such things as those Black guys wouldn't represent their country, they're scared to get beaten, they don't deserve to be Americans, when you need them they're not there, they run way from a fight; all that sort of thing would have been pointed at them. By going to the games and succeeding the way they did White America sat up and took notice. They were American sporting heroes. Had they not performed as well they would have been nobodies and treated like dirt.¹

Just prior to the games, several of the Black American athletes met in Denver, during the uniform fitting and high altitude training for the entire US team.² Things may have wound down prior to this point. However, the athletes were stimulated in their activism: "There, we learned that Brundage had attacked the Black athletes, he said we were lucky to be *allowed* on the team. If he hadn't come out like that, I don't think anything would have happened."³ The last US-based meeting of athletes was chaired by 1964 gold medalist Ralph Boston and attended by Smith, Carlos and Evans (but not Edwards). Many fears were expressed concerning a boycott. Some in the military feared that they would be court marshalled. Other high-ranked athletes worried about their financial security if they did not attend the games and medal presentations.⁴ Larry James remembers the essential issues at stake during the meeting: "It boiled down to a clash, between the *goal*—doing good for all mankind—and the *gold*: the individual's self-

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 151-152.

² Smith with Steele, 166.

³ Lee Evans quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

⁴ Smith with Steele, 145.

interest. There was, shall we say, counselling back and forth to sort out the two.”¹ Lee Evans recalls the proceedings: “Imagine the eagles we had there. And we were going to run. But what *else* could we agree to do? I suggested we run in Black socks. Somebody yelled, “I can’t *run* in *any* socks.” People were scattered, thinking of the careers they were going to, some to football, some the military.”² Tommie Smith had the final word. He remembers saying: “I hold no hate, for people who can’t make a gesture, whatever the reason. But I have to preserve the honour of Tommie Smith. I’m an American until I die, and to me that means I have to do something. I don’t know what I’ll do. But we have to make worthwhile this last year.”³ Lee Evans recalls a rather ambiguous end to the proceedings. He reports: “We all went out and got haircuts.”⁴

As a result of this meeting, it was decided that a boycott was not within the realm of the possible. Further, a consensus was reached that everyone should participate in the games and make statements according to their own conscience.⁵ Prior to these deliberations on July 31, at the end of a meet in Los Angeles that was at first meant to be the Olympic trials (a meet status that was likely changed due to the prospect of a protest), Lee Evans announced that the athletes had met and the boycott idea was finished and that members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were released to compete and make a sign according to their conscience in Mexico City. Evans recalls: “I thought we’d wear Black armbands or something.”⁶ However, Harry Edwards immediately counselled the administrators of the US team not to take the announcement seriously. Frank Murphy

¹ Larry James quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

² Lee Evans quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

³ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

⁴ Lee Evans quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

⁵ Smith with Steele, 145.

⁶ Lee Evans quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

feels that this was because Edwards wished to have the final word on the boycott.¹ Yet, in Denver, Evans' response from July was confirmed by the consensus of the athletes as the path of action. Smith's departure from Colorado left him feeling somewhat directionless, despite being on the way to the Olympics, which all his many hours of training had made possible. He recalls: "I left, wondering how I was going to carry this load alone. The decision to go our own ways eliminated what need I had to protect my teammates, but I knew any protest would risk volatile reaction. I felt one person had to take responsibility for it."²

6.3 Faith

Now I lay me down in the block,
I ask the Lord for socks and jocks,
If I should die before the Gun,
I ask the Lord my race be won.³ -Vincent Matthews

The grace of God got me through it all.⁴ -John Carlos

Martin Luther King Jr. was famously interested in St. Paul's use of the footrace image⁵ as metaphor of social justice which, according to Hartmann's analysis, demonstrates the link between the sociology of Western sport and American culture.⁶ As evidenced by Bruce Kidd's following comments, a general climate inspired by religious leaders working on the same issues of peace and racial justice could, during the late

¹ Murphy, 225.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

³ Vincent Matthews, "The Trackman's Prayer." Quoted in Matthews with Amdur, 1.

⁴ John Carlos. "Address to Rainbow Coalition." (22 October 2011). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=E4IhH6UmsNM&NR=1>. Accessed June 23, 2013.

⁵ See, in particular, 1 Corinthians 9: 24: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." and Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

⁶ Hartmann, 79.

1960s, inspire activism amongst even those, like himself, who did not hold religious faith:

You know when I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, every Saturday I would go to a community service that was run by a young reverend by the name of Jesse Jackson. And it was called “Operation Breadbasket.” And it was a meeting, concert, you know choir band. And then we would go out and do some political action, after the service. What I remember is that for a long time we would picket A & P Stores because, in poor neighbourhoods, they would have the worst produce and rip off prices.¹

Many miles from Chicago, on the West Coast, a Roman Catholic organization (Santa Clara Valley² Youth Village’s track club) provided a space for John Carlos to run while he was waiting to become eligible at San Jose State.³ This faith-based organization was also the club for which many of the San Jose State Athletes ran in the summer. Elements of faith were also involved in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights far beyond the level of formal organizations. Tommie Smith maintains that his head was bowed in prayer during the playing of the national anthem in Mexico.⁴ For his part, John Carlos also reports that his head was bowed in prayer and that he felt the presence of the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. as he petitioned God that the US flag would one day truly represent equality.⁵

Such moments of prayer often grew organically out of the experiences of the main actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. For example, John Carlos

¹ Kidd Interview.

² San Jose is located in the Santa Clara Valley.

³ Carlos with Jackson, 151.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 139.

⁵ John Carlos. “John Carlos, 1968 Olympic U.S. Medalist, on the Sports Moment That Changed the World.” Democracy Now War and Peace Report. (12 October 2011). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D35uypN3IKk>. Accessed June 23, 2013.

went to Catholic Church every Sunday with his father. To pay his tithe, John's father, Earl, offered the services of his shoe shop, repairing and shining the shoes of the priests and nuns of Harlem.¹ In the Norman family, the Salvation Army played a huge role in their faith. Peter Norman recalls his experience growing up with the "Salvos:"

Our lives revolved around being part of the Salvation Army for a long time. We went to Sunday School followed by Church service at 11 o'clock, then home for a roast lunch, then back in the afternoon for more Sunday School, home for leftovers for tea, and then, as we got older, back to the service in the evening.²

Norman felt that his experience in the Salvation Army laid the core values that would guide him for much of his life, including through his experience at the 1968 Olympics:

One of the big things the Salvos taught was tolerance. William Booth, the founder, once said, 'Go for souls and go for the worst.' So the Salvos mission wasn't just to preach on Sunday. It was also to go out and find people who needed help and bring them to church. There was no such thing as discrimination or quality control or anything like that. It was a matter of 'all men are created equal.' Race or creed or colour didn't come into it. We were taught through the Salvation Army to love everybody.³

Peter Norman's grandparents had been Majors (ministers) in the Salvation Army and his family were pioneering Salvationists in Australia.⁴ Norman was heavily involved in "the Salvos" in his youth, attending youth group events and playing in a Salvation Army band.⁵ Even when competing at the highest level, Norman made time for the

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 34.

² Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 63.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 63.

⁴ Johnstone and Norman, 64

⁵ Johnstone and Norman, 95.

Salvation Army, serving as a youth minister and captaining the basketball team at the Salvation Army hall in Altona (a suburb of Melbourne).¹

Tommie Smith often reflects on his early life experience as a share cropper's son attending a segregated one room school house in Texas. During this time, religion and the church were a source of much needed strength under oppressive conditions. For example, he recalled hearing his father called "boy" by a straw boss who required that *he* be referred to as "Sir" or "Mister." Such discrimination continued to affect his family even after they moved to California. Smith and his roommate, both believing that God abhorred racial discrimination, continued to attend church services when he lived in San Jose. They were among only a small number of student athletes who made the effort on Sunday mornings.² Lee Evans, growing up with a similar background to Smith, also had a strong faith background in the Church of Christ. He never lost this faith, which left him with the feeling that the Holy Ghost was always with him in times of adversity.³

Smith makes his understanding of the role of faith in social crises in North America very clear in the acknowledgments section of his autobiography: "FIRST AND FOREMOST: to my Heavenly Father who chose me to be a vessel in this season, thank you for giving me the opportunity, the strength, and the knowledge to Stand Up for Peace, Love, and Equality for ALL."⁴ In fact, it is important to emphasize that Tommie Smith, like Carlos, frames the entire protest venture in terms of a prayer: "In 1968, we had a platform. We had no words, because we couldn't say it. So we call it 'the silent gesture heard around the world.' As a prayer—as the hand went up and you saw the bare

¹ Johnstone and Norman, 127.

² Smith with Steele, 51.

³ Murphy, 22.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 259. Emphasis in original.

feet, it was a prayer and a hope that this wouldn't be taken negatively; only a cry for freedom in a system which needed a shot in the arm."¹

Furthermore, in response to the charge that he had committed a long slow social and political suicide by participating in the protest, Smith invoked his faith in the divine and the language of witness to express his lack of regret for his actions at Mexico 68:

"Under the same circumstances, I could do no differently. It had to be done. I thank God I had the background to act. But I can't do it again. So I'll have to do something else. I'll have to teach you people one by one."²

Similarly to his fellow medalist, the acknowledgment section of Carlos' autobiography begins "by giving thanks to our Creator God, the One in whom we trust, for without Him our lives would be in vain."³ This section also ends with a faith-based statement: "And again, we give thanks to our Heavenly Father, who makes all things possible."⁴ Peter Norman also shades the space earned for the protest on the podium in religious terms: "I'm a firm believer that in a victory ceremony for the Olympics, there's three guys standing up there. Each one has been given a square metres of God's earth to stand on and what anyone does with that square metres of earth at that stage is entirely up to them."⁵

Also invoking religious language, Smith sources the dawning of his political consciousness with his first self-reflective reading of the Bible:

As I got older, of course, I began to get curious about what I had been told about God and the Bible. I started reading the Bible, which can be

¹ Tommie Smith quoted in Smiley.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, "Eye of the Storm."

³ Carlos with Jackson, 4.

⁴ Carlos with Jackson, 5.

⁵ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 2.

difficult to interpret. As much religious faith as I had, and as much faith as I had in the way my parent's raised me, I saw things in the bible that prompted questions. I read that everyone is equal in God's eyes, that we are all children of God, that we serve him as one, thus no one is better than another. I believed in that, yet we went to a Black church and Whites went to a White church, and we went to one school and they went to another, and we walked to school and they rode to theirs, and we lived in a shack and worked in their fields and they lived in nice houses near town. I asked myself why this was. It was a long time before I got any answers I could comprehend.¹

Faith commitments extend in many directions from the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Peter Norman was eligible to represent Australia in the 100 metres in 1968 but chose not to run because the event would take place on a Sunday, the Christian Sabbath. Previously, he had run on Sundays in Melbourne but always wore a tracksuit that said either "Jesus Saves" or "God is Love." The origins of this tracksuit lie in a compromise that Norman had to make with the way he was brought up in the Salvation Army which taught him that playing sport on the Sabbath was wrong. Norman recalls: "We weren't even allowed as kids to kick a football on the street on Sundays. Sundays were set aside for spiritual things."² This created a dilemma for Norman because then, as now, many major athletics events were held on Sundays. Reflecting on how the Salvation Army permitted the playing of instruments (presumably by people with talents and gifts) on Sundays, Peter theologized: "My gift was running so it was only right for me to make the most of the gift that I was born with."³ After the 1962 Commonwealth Games, Norman reconciled his personal conflict on the issue by wearing the aforementioned "Jesus Saves" and "God is Love" tracksuits, which his wife, Ruth, sewed for him whenever he competed on the Christian Sabbath.

¹ Smith with Steele, 52.

² Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 114.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 114.

Norman remembers the nuances of his theological reasoning and the reception the track suits received:

While the Salvation Army band was marching around the streets on Sunday, or playing inside using their talent to promote the Lord, I felt I could do the same thing by wearing my track suit to track meets. While I don't think they agreed with it, they didn't exactly try and stop me. Wearing the "God is Love" tracksuit caused a bit of a stir. It was something of a political statement for me to make in those days. Because of my upbringing, I believed what it said. The tracksuit got comments from my teammates, but more from the opposition, who used it as a weapon. Stuff like, 'God won't help you today, you're running against me.'¹

Also recalling his experience at this intersection of faith and competition, Tommie Smith remembers the second Olympic qualifying trials at Lake Tahoe and being extremely weakened from "the runs" (i.e., diarrhoea) when he received a little divine help. He felt he was in no shape to race against the likes of Carlos:

But I think God Almighty protected me because he knew there was a message that was needed; he kind of picked me up, patted me on the back, and said, "You worked this hard, you have so much to say, I'd better put you in there so you help yourself and somebody else in the process."²

In another key moment on the path to the podium, as mentioned above,³ prior to the 200 metres final at Mexico 68 Smith was engaged in heavily icing a leg injury sustained in the final. It was not certain that Smith would even be able to run. Remarkably, for what was to be a world record effort, he took no practice starts before the race. Describing the start of the Mexico 68 final, Smith said in 2008: "When the gun went, I prayed and said 'God, it's on you man!'"⁴ Asked in 2007 what was going through

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 114.

² Smith with Steele, 31.

³ See section 5.1

⁴ Tommie Smith quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 27.

his mind prior to the definitive race of his athletic career, Smith replied that he was thinking: “God help me. I needed more help than man could supply so I called on the strongest thing I had backing me, which was my non-secular belief: I knew that I was brought there for a reason and I knew that I could not stand the pressures by myself.”¹

Smith explained, in a recent interview with Tavis Smiley, how this faith-based strength sustained his activism:

Tavis: So you mentioned a moment ago that you were at your most vulnerable. I’m paraphrasing. You were at your most vulnerable then. Where do 21 and 22 year olds find that kind of courage, conviction, and commitment to take that kind of international risk? Where’d that come from?

Smith: We had a fortitude of faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and evidence of things not. . .

Tavis: Evidence of things not seen.

Smith: Amen, son.²

The involvement with faith in this story even extends to the prophetic. In this regard, John Carlos recalls that God gave him a vision when he was seven years old. In the vision, he saw that he would win a race, stand on a box and first be cheered and then booed. He felt scared after receiving this vision but he also knew that it was his divinely mandated destiny.³ Later, describing the impact of his protest, Carlos revisits the theme of destiny: “This protest shook the whole world. It reached heaven! God looked down on America that day, saying that this hour had been ordained by Him. He had used these men as His instruments to tell the world about America’s wrong against all children who

¹ Tommie Smith. Interviewed on *Democracy Now*. (16 March 2007). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJXV6VniJgE>. Accessed September 28, 2010.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Smiley.

³ John Carlos, “You Got 48 hours.”

should be free.”¹ During the moment of the protest, Carlos’ thoughts returned to that vision and the satisfaction of fulfilling divine will in the cause of liberty, inclusive of a sense of being at peace while risking martyrdom. He recalls thinking:

I am free! I emphatically state that I was the most relaxed person in the stadium despite the fact that me and Tommy [*sic.*] were facing death, ostracizing, economic death row, and a name that would spell disaster for anyone who wanted to be associated with it. I was standing there thinking of the prophetic vision of the protest that the Lord showed me when I was 7 years old. At the same time, I was reflecting back on my life, and everything that I had done up until that moment. The last thing I thought about was the fact that out of five billion people on the planet, Tommy [*sic.*], and I were selected by God to do a silent protest in front of the world. I was at peace in the middle of America’s nightmare. I was ready to die!²

Carlos further explains his actions in the protest with reference to his divinely ordained destiny and perceived created nature: “I think of all the billions who come through this bubble, this life. He could have made me Gladys Knight. He could have made me Michelangelo. But He made me John Carlos to make His statement in life.”³

Common faith experience, which shunned any idea of “divine racism,”⁴ even facilitated cross-cultural participation in the moment of protest. Peter Norman’s status in the Salvation Army helped to convince Carlos of the authenticity of his request to participate in the protest on the podium. Carlos recalls: “I asked Peter, I said, ‘Listen man do you believe in human rights?’ And this is what I learned from Peter, that his parents, all his life was involved in the Salvation Army. So when he said that, then I knew he

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 11.

² Carlos with Jackson, 207.

³ John Carlos quoted in Moore, “Eye of the Storm.”

⁴ In laying some foundations for Black liberationist theology that questions the legitimacy of segregation and discrimination, William R. Jones, argues that “divine racism” ought to appear as a logical contradiction (like a married bachelor) because it questions God’s beneficence and love for all. See William R. Jones, *Is God a White Racist?: A Preamble to Black Theology*. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973), 6-7.

knew everything there was to need to know about human rights.”¹ Carlos also chose religious language to explain the significance of Norman joining the protest:

Peter wasn't from the United States. Peter was not a Black man. Peter didn't have to feel what I felt. When Peter put that button on his chest, that was as powerful as us putting our fists in the sky. Peter was saying, 'Man I respect you. I respect human rights and I can do something with you.' Here was a guy from the other side of the world showing he believed in humanity, in love, and in God, and that showed his character.²

In expressing his love for the landscape in which he learned to run and his final wishes for his earthly body, John Carlos also rendered his understanding of eschatology: “When I die, my last wish will be to have my body burned, my ashes flown in a helicopter or plane and poured out over the city that I love, Harlem. It will become my permanent place of rest for my body until God comes.”³ Further, Carlos thought of Norman's participation in the protest in terms of divine destiny. In this light, Carlos understood the impact on Norman's life in religious terms (notice here the language of “pawns” to which this thesis will return in the conclusion):

I don't think we fully comprehended what Peter was about to face when he went home. Merely because he wore a button and God put him up on that victory stand with us. You understand? And then when you sit back and say, “it wasn't his doing [pointing to Norman], it wasn't his doing [pointing to Smith], it wasn't my doing.” When you think about it we was just the pawns and tools for God.⁴ Because God orchestrated it. But we still never understood the changes that Peter would have to go through back in Australia.⁵

Here we also see how Carlos understanding the events in his life as ripe with divine significance, that it was “God's plan” that he meet people like Dr. King, stay away

¹ John Carlos quoted in Norman, at 54 minutes.

² John Carlos quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 48.

³ Carlos with Jackosn, 25.

⁴ I shall return to analyse this sense of “pawns” in the conclusion.

⁵ John Carlos quoted in Norman at 68 minutes.

from drugs, use his talents to reach the podium and make a statement at Mexico 68.¹ In a similar vein, John Carlos even developed his own theology of redemptive suffering in relation to the cost, calling himself and Smith “sacrificial lambs”² for the hardships they bore for taking a stand in Mexico City:

Times got so hard until I had to question God as to why I had to suffer for doing the right thing. He revealed to me through his word that I had not done anything that He had not done in terms of suffering. We could have protested in other ways, but a silent protest was most appropriate. For suffering is a good thing according to the scriptures.³

In expressing his concern that a statue group,⁴ which was to be erected at San Jose state in honour of the Olympic protest on the podium at Mexico 68, might be defiled, Smith’s comments invoke religious language:

The only statue I revered is a statue of Jesus. . . Oh my God. They took the Ten Commandments out of the state courthouse in Alabama, right around the same time San Jose State [students] were proposing this statue. If that couldn’t stay where it was, how is this going to make it?⁵

As this statement helps to show, both faith and doubt remain part of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

6.4 Nonviolence

The White man is your enemy. You have got to destroy your enemy. . . I say you better get your gun. Violence is necessary. It is as American as cherry pie.⁶

We need work simply and clear and if we can identify the need to work proactively, the work of nonviolence, then I think this would be a better place to live.¹

¹ Carlos, “John Carlos, 1968 Olympic U.S. Medalist, on the Sports Moment That Changed the World.”

² Carlos, “Address to Rainbow PUSH Coalition.”

³ Carlos with Jackson, 268.

⁴ A fuller account of the story of the statue group on the San Jose State University Campus is found below in sections 7.4 and 7.5.

⁵ Smith with Steele, 249.

⁶ H. Rap Brown Speaking in June, 1967. From H. Rap Brown quoted in Witherspoon, 92.

The Mexico City organizing committee was keen to cement the connections between the Olympics and peace, as evidenced by the way they placed images of White doves and/or signs that read “Everything is possible with Peace” on every major thoroughfare.² However, it may have been the Olympic Project for Human Rights members who held the more substantive vision of peace. This section of the thesis explores such a possibility, beginning with a meeting between a few key figures in the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the most famous practitioner of nonviolence during the 1950s and 1960s in the US.

When John Carlos and Harry Edwards met with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in New York City late in 1967, King spoke poignantly to Carlos about how he understood the Olympic Project for Human Rights’ idea of boycotting the Olympics as fitting well with his nonviolent philosophy. King explained how he thought the Black Panthers, the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee³), and other Black organizations, which were embracing violent methods for social change in 1967, were making a grave mistake. He also spoke to Carlos about the example and power of the nonviolent protests of Mahatma Gandhi, the model for the former’s own nonviolent philosophy. King (already aware of the threat to his life)⁴ said that if he came back from Memphis, he would like to go to the Olympics with Carlos so that they might boycott the event

¹ Tommie Smith. “Interview at *Salute* UK Premier.” (11 July 2012). Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL6QpUUXE40>. Accessed June 25, 2103.

² Hoffer, 108.

³ Ironically titled by this point in its existence.

⁴ Recall here Martin Luther King Jr.’s premonition of his violent death as represented most notably in the eerie “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech. See section 2.6.

together. Carlos recalled being “set on fire” by King and said that at that moment he would have done anything for the preacher.¹

Further evidence of King’s direct support for the movement, and the idea of a boycott in particular, is found in a letter written by Reverend Andrew Young who served with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Later he became a Congressman, the first African-American Ambassador to the UN, Mayor of Atlanta and co-chair of the successful bid to hold the 1996 summer Olympics in the state of Georgia. In 1967, Young wrote:

Dr. King applauds this new sensitivity among Negro athletes . . . and he feels that this should be encouraged . . . Dr. King told me that “this represents a new spirit of concern on the part of successful Negroes for those who remain impoverished.” Negro athletes may be treated with adulation during their Olympic careers, but many will face later the same slights experienced by other Negroes. Dr. King knows that this is a desperate situation for the Negro athlete, the possibility of giving up a chance at a gold medal, but he feels that the cause of the Negro may demand it.²

From the example of people like Dr. King, in recalling the general climate surrounding the dawn of his interest in human rights, Tommie Smith was well aware that often nonviolent demonstrations had been met with violence on the part of the authorities.³ Despite this danger, Smith and the other student activists he was involved with at San Jose State remained committed to nonviolence as a means of raising the human rights agenda. Lest anyone should miss that point, Smith spells out his commitment to nonviolence specifically as in sharp contrast to the way Harry Edwards shaded the revolt of the Black (US) athlete. In making that contrast Smith writes:

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 146-147.

² Andrew Young quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

³ Smith with Steele, 95.

Had we truly been radical or militant, we would have pointed out that in the Constitution itself, it says that if it does not serve the people, then the people should change it. That spells revolution. But that means war, as Malcolm X said, a complete overthrow of the system. We never said that, never said, “I’m a revolutionary,” or, “I will revolt against this because I am Black and I am being denied what your very laws promised me.” I am Black but we Blacks are not the only ones being denied. This, again, is why this was about human rights for me, and this is why what I did, and what we did, cannot be interpreted as radical or militant except by those bent on preserving a corrupt system at all costs. I hope it’s fairly clear that we were not interested in a violent solution.¹

Looking for such nonviolent solutions often required something of a juggling act when one had the time commitments of an elite student-athlete. An example illustrates how Smith early on learned to mix athletics and activism. On one occasion during March 1966, Smith set two world records (for the 200 metres and 220 yards run on a straight²) and competed in a full program of events at a Tri-Meet.³ On the day of his record-setting performances, he participated in his first demonstration, getting a ride from his friend Art Simburg⁴ who was then a sports reporter for *The Spartan*, the San Jose State student newspaper. Smith joined the marchers near the end of the first day of a two day march from San Jose to San Francisco. The event was held in solidarity with the freedom marches then occurring in the southern US. The march included people of varying

¹ Smith with Steele, 100.

² Today, the outdoor 200 metres is normally run with a start on or into the curve of a 400 metres track. Prior to synthetic tracks, it was also common to run 200 metres in a straight line. Some non-synthetic tracks in England still host these races. This race has its own set of psychological challenges as it is not easily broken into two parts (i.e., run the curve, then run the straight) by competitors. As my coach, George Tanner, whose racing career peaked in the early 1960s, often recalls, “200 metres is a long way in a straight line.”

³ A Tri-Meet is competition between three teams. In track and field, a Tri-Meet is usually scored based upon placing in the individual events and relays.

⁴ Art Simburg would later become a shoe company representative for the Puma Brand, even being arrested and having his passport revoked in Mexico City during the Olympics as the result of a notorious “shoe war” with Adidas that pushed the limits of amateurism. See Underwood.

ethnicities and a number of fellow San Jose State athletes. The event was firmly committed to the principles of nonviolence. As such, when the marchers did encounter resistance from White people, who hurled insults and missiles at them:

We never let the name-calling and jeering and object-throwing provoke us. Martin Luther King's stand for nonviolence inspired us to march and to stay nonviolent ourselves; we did not, I repeat, did not carry sticks or guns or any kind of weapons to either defend ourselves or provoke anybody. Many of the athletes on the march served to keep the march running smoothly, organized and without disruption; a few marchers walked on the periphery to make sure we stayed on route, remained orderly, and did not leave any trash or belongings along the way. We talked along the way, but in a quiet tone of voice out of respect for our surroundings. We were not there to make a scene, only to support the freedom marchers and the fight for systemic change. In all, it was one of the most organized functions I had ever taken part in. The group had remained strong and unified in the first leg from San Jose, and remained that way throughout that second day from Sunnyvale to San Francisco; its spirit was not broken by the long march, the fear of violence, or the actions of the passerby.¹

Smith also recalls the success of one of the first nonviolent actions taken on the San Jose State campus. It was planned for the opening football game of the season against the University of Texas at El Paso. Students and players were to protest peacefully at the event, working for a transparent and non-discriminatory housing policy in the city of San Jose. Harry Edwards' organizing premise was simple: "If they² won't rent to us, why should we run or play for them?"³ Edwards' comments on the reasons for choosing to move towards a protest and the attention it generated:

I went to the president of the University to talk about the problems Blacks faced. He sent me to each dean or vice president who was in charge of a specific area which I had raised a concern about. The president literally sent me to the vice president in charge of housing,

¹ Smith with Steele, 111-112.

² The "they" in this quote refers to the White establishment.

³ Harry Edwards quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

to the dean in charge of academics, etc. They literally laughed in my face—they took my concerns as a joke.

At that point I began to organize the athletes. We got mobilized and were able to get a football game cancelled when Blacks on both teams threatened to boycott. Then Governor Reagan¹ promised to call out the National Guard to assure the game was not disrupted. *Time* and *Newsweek* picked up the story because it was the first time in 100 years of NCAA Division I history that a football game had been cancelled because of campus protest.²

As hinted at by Edwards' words, when news of the protest spread many people became worried that the action would be high-jacked by the Black Panthers, who had strong roots in nearby Oakland.³ The San Jose State president, Dr. Robert Clark, cancelled the game, affirmed a commitment to equal housing on campus and negotiated with the city to open up their housing policy. The planned nonviolent action had met its goals without actually taking place. This turn of events earned the ire of the new government in Sacramento, the California state capital. Smith expands upon the reaction to the San Jose State president's choice to literally not "playing the game," from a newly elected former actor in Sacramento:

The loudest critic of the cancellation was none other than the actor elected governor the year before, Ronald Reagan, who called for Dr. Clark to resign and thought he should have just crushed the protest and played the game instead of submitting to a "policy of appeasement." Reagan had a lot of support, and a year later those who supported him did their best to get the state to halt funding to San Jose State because of what we did in Mexico City, and the fact that Dr.

¹ Making his shift from acting to politics more complete, Ronald Reagan was elected Governor of California in 1967. See Smith's description in the next block quote below.

² Harry Edwards interviewed by Leonard.

³ The Black Panthers had been founded in Oakland, California in 1966. For more on the origins and legacy of Black Panther Party see Hugh Pearson, *The Shadow of the Panther: Huey Newton and the Price of Black Power in America* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 1994).

Clark did not join in condemning us and calling us ungrateful Communist sympathizers.¹

In addition, in a remarkable violation of most concepts of academic freedom, Reagan had called on San Jose State to revoke Edwards' teaching contract, claiming that Edwards was doing nothing to support inter-racial harmony in California.² However, the power of nonviolent protest had by that time been proven to the football players at San Jose State. In the 1960s, Black players on that team had an injury rate some four times higher than their White counterparts, and for skilled offensive players the injury rate even was higher. Tommie Smith's knowledge of the treatment of receivers on the San Jose State team, and their tendencies to get banged up knees and torn Achilles tendons was one of the reasons that he chose to not take up his scholarship option to play football at San Jose State, even though later on in his life he would be good enough to earn a type of professional contract in the National Football League.³ Taking inspiration for this first success and subsequent events in 1968, the football players organized their own protest. Smith remembers the spread of nonviolent activity on campus:

Not long after Mexico City, the Black San Jose State football players, angry at treatment by their White head coach, walked out of a practice and threatened to boycott a game against Brigham Young University, an ideal target for a boycott because the Mormon Church, which ran the school, had even stronger racist tendencies than San Jose State, or any other school. By then, the Black athletes were used to making points.⁴

¹ Smith with Steele, 152.

² Hartmann, xviii.

³ Smith was scouted by multiple professional football teams. Originally, he was contracted to play for the Los Angeles Rams but was dropped after the protest at Mexico 68. Later, Smith earned a "taxi squad" contract (essentially a practice roster contract) with the Cincinnati Bengals. See section 7.2.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 159.

In terms of the International and United States Olympic Committee's response to the protest that helped inspire these football players, Wyomia Tyus thought it was awful that Smith and Carlos were being sent home. She shaded her reaction with the notion that nonviolent action did not warrant such harsh treatment. She stated that Smith and Carlos: "did not hurt anybody. As long as they don't touch somebody and then hurt them, I don't see how they can be punished."¹

Wyomia Tyus' moral sentiment confirms Tommie Smith's avowed active nonviolent orientation for the protest, one further geared toward raising consciousness amidst an oppressive socio-political situation:

It [the gesture] had to be silent—to solve the language problem—strong, prayerful and imposing. It kind of makes me want to cry when I think about it now. I cherish life so much that what I did couldn't be militant, not violent. I'll argue with you, but I won't pick up a gun.

We had to be heard, forcefully heard, because we represented what others didn't want to believe. I thought of how my sisters cringed because they didn't want me to embarrass the family by describing how poor we were, when we *were* poor. No one likes to admit flaws, even though it's the first step to fixing them.²

The whole matter of the symbolism of the silent gesture remained controversial. Many thought it was a protest that endorsed violence. Nonetheless, in the Australian team, several of the athletes supported Peter Norman's stance. This included fellow 200 metres medalist Jenny Lamay³ who opined that Norman had acted appropriately, "because as far as I'm concerned everybody is born equal."⁴ However, Australian 200 metres sprinter Greg Lewis thought that Norman had endorsed violence with his

¹ Wyomia Tyus quoted in Bass, 266.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, "A Courageous Stand."

³ Lamay, still a junior at the time, earned a bronze medal in the women's 200 metres at Mexico 68.

⁴ Jenny Lamay quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 52.

participation in the protest. Reflecting on the moment on the podium, Lewis stated: “The Black fist was the Malcolm X salute, which was violence and Black Power. Now it’s been watered down to human rights. It was an unfortunate association. That’s the reason it had all the publicity.”¹ If “Black Power” is aligned with violence in the present popular imagination, then Smith, in no uncertain terms, denies the link that Lewis is making in this regard: “Of all the misconceptions that have spread about the victory stand for the past 35 years, the one about us being Panthers and giving what they called a ‘Black Power’ salute has gone the furthest.”² This false assumption was even reproduced in *Time* magazine’s review of 1968, printed 40 years on, which defined the protest on the podium after the men’s 200 metres final as the “iconic moment of the games. . . [with] sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos converting their medal ceremony into a political protest by holding their clenched fists aloft in a Black Power salute.”³ In 1968, the day after the protest, BBC television opened its morning coverage (2 a.m. in Mexico City, 9 a.m. in London) with a description and header of a “Black Power Salute.”⁴

In contrast, US Olympic rower Cleve Livingston understood the events and Norman’s participation in them within a global context and a universal human rights framework:

Peter’s effort introduced an international dimension. By expressing support for Tommie and John, Peter really sent a message. This was about human rights and human rights are international rights. South Africa had been excluded from the Olympics because of apartheid. You had the killing of hundreds of students immediately before the

¹ Greg Lewis quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 52.

² Smith with Steele, 16.

³ McCann Fenton, 100.

⁴ BBC clip reproduced in Small, at 1 min.

games who were protesting for human rights. This was a very special time in terms of the struggle for human rights all around the world.¹

Part of the controversy about the role of violence within the group might be “pacified” by the information pamphlet for the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which does list nonviolence as one key principle of engagement with social issues and justifies the focus on the Olympics in no uncertain terms:²

The overriding goal (that of utilizing one of the few remaining nonviolent ways of effective expression of the plight of Negroes in the U.S.) should be self-evident. In a word, when people are suffering to the extent that they are laying down their lives in the streets, who is to say that *any* area is too sacred to be used as an avenue to relieve this suffering.³

One problem with ensuring that everyone in the group was clear in making the nonviolent nature of the organization known to the media and the general public was the relative lack of freedom accorded to scholarship athletes on US campuses in the late 1960s. So, even though the Olympic Project for Human Right’s booklet was mailed out to all athletes on major college campuses, it is doubtful they all had an opportunity to read the above passage. Coaches often screened athlete’s mail, destroying pieces of correspondence they did wish to get through to the student-athletes under their charge.⁴ However, if either the coaches or athletes carefully read this piece of mail, they would have come across, not only the above passage but, another argument related to nonviolence. This second argument specifically appealed to the notion that an athlete’s

¹ Cleve Livingston quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 56

² In light of section 6.3, it is also interesting to note the language of sacred space in this quote from the Olympic Project for Human Right’s pamphlet.

³ Olympic Project for Human Right Information Booklet Reproduced in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 185.

⁴ Bass, 206.

success in the system, even if it was not total, gave space¹ and engendered a responsibility to speak up for human rights as an alternative to violence in order to help effect positive social change: “Those of us who have managed to make some inroads into the system have the responsibility of searching for new alternatives to violence for the effective expression of the plight of the masses of Black people.”² A complementary point is made in the closing of the introductory section of the booklet, which ends with an explicitly nonviolent salutation:

For in the last analysis, it is the position of persons like yourself that will determine the extent to which we are able to avail ourselves of this and other means of nonviolent protest to further push back the barriers of racism and bigotry that threaten not only the survival of Black people, but also the survival of American Society. Peace.³

It was this nonviolent and substantive peace-oriented feature of the group that the Harvard rowers cited as a key reason for their involvement in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. In a public letter sent out to other White athletes on the Olympic team, the rowers explained that the goal the project sought to achieve was: “a nonviolent dramatization of the plight of the masses of Negroes in this country that would exceed riots and bloodshed in its effectiveness.”⁴

¹ At this point, I am drawing upon the image of creating space for peace as named in the posthumously released collection of writing from Gene Stoltzfus (1940-2010), perhaps best known as a founder and long-serving director (1988-2004) of the Christian Peacemakers Teams. See Gene Stoltzfus, *Create Space for Peace: Forty Years of Peacemaking* [Eds. Dorothy Friesen and Marilen Abesamis] (Deerfield Beach, FL: TriMark Press, 2010).

² Olympic Project for Human Rights Information Booklet Reproduced in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 184.

³ Olympic Project for Human Rights Information Booklet Reproduced in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 184.

⁴ Curtis Canning, Paul Hoffman, Cleve Livingston, Scott Steketee and Dave Higgins as quoted in Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 109.

Nonetheless, within the structure of a loose association that was the Olympic Project for Human Rights, there was some tension in terms of maintaining a nonviolent focus, even with regards to how the participants formed their self-understanding at the time and continue to construct their identities today. For example, as described above,¹ Malcolm X is problematically (given the conclusions he came to in later life) conceived of as more radical or more violent than King, who is often associated with nonviolent activism in contemporary terms. Invoking this contrast in 2003, Carlos described the dynamics of his relationship with Smith by explaining that Smith is more aligned with the philosophy of Martin Luther King while he subscribes to the mindset of Malcolm X. Smith picks up the thread of this aspect of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights:

. . . but rather than letting this keep us apart, we brought our approaches together and, they intersecting, those who opposed us had to take notice, to the extreme. I had voiced that thought about Dr. King and Malcolm myself, but he was the one who put us in these roles. He was right on with that. Our differences are very distinct, and for that reason we conduct our own lives and are far from the permanently linked pair so many like to portray us as being. But we are not rivals either. I'm my own man, as so is Carlos. Anyone who watched and listened to us that day understood our link and our separateness.²

On the level of personality, the implication here is that Carlos' personality was more conflict-oriented than Smith's. Such a difference is borne out in Carlos' reaction to the Harvard Rowers' announced support for the Olympic Project for Human Rights. When asked about the potential of the new cross-cultural collaboration, Carlos replied:

¹ See section 2.6.

² Smith with Steele, 15.

“Who needs them?”¹ Yet Carlos, along with Vince Matthews, supported Hal Connolly’s right to stay at the meeting for athletes after the 200 metres final when Jesse Owens asked that all White people leave.² Owens’ response to Carlos’ solidarity was to taunt him, apparently in an attempt to wound his pride, by saying he was allowing a White man to speak for him.³ However, Carlos chose a path of cross-cultural solidarity at Mexico 68.

Carlos admired Dr. King’s conviction and greatly treasured meeting him before the latter’s fateful trip to Memphis.⁴ This admiration extended to both King’s nonviolent peace witness and his cross-cultural solidarity. As such, though Carlos is generally presented as the most “hot-headed” amongst the main actors in the Olympic Project for Human Rights, it seems that Harry Edwards may have been more willing than any other actor in this story to endorse violent means. For example, even as Edwards extended his solidarity to the Mexican students in his last official act as chairman of the Olympic Committee for Human Rights,⁵ he was prepared to sanction violent means to achieve the equity he desired. In that letter of support to the Mexican students dated August 15, 1968, Edwards wrote:

Brothers and Sisters:

We, the colonized and oppressed Black people of racist America, support one-thousand percent all and any efforts on your parts to obtain redress of your grievances against the Uncle Tom⁶ puppet

¹ John Carlos quoted in Murphy, 257.

² See section 7.2.

³ Murphy, 273.

⁴ See close to the beginning of section 6.4.

⁵ The Olympic Committee for Human Rights was meant to be directing the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

⁶ Here Edwards is employing “Uncle Tom” as a term in a slightly different way than it was normally used to delineate between “Negroes” who were supportive of the status quo and Black leaders, like himself, who self-identified as “militant”. For more on this distinction, see F. James Davis, *Social Problems*, 329.

government of Mexico. It seems ridiculous to us also to see a government spend 150 million dollars on an imperialistic spectacle while millions of its citizens live at sub-human levels of existence due to lack of sufficient programs to provide food, jobs, and shelter.

The anti-human governments of the world must be made to understand **BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY**, that the rising tide of youth will use any means necessary to stop the generation to generation flow of inhumanity.

Your valiant efforts to dramatize the plights of the oppressed peoples through use of the highly political Olympic Games will serve as a model for coming student generations.

Viva la Revolución del Mundo!!

We Shall Conquer without a Doubt

Professor Harry Edwards

Chairman, Olympic Committee for Human Rights.¹

6.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 6.1

First, a word about how solidarity was framed within the movement may be useful here. As seen previously,² Edwards is following Malcolm X's and Martin Luther King's example in shifting from a civil rights perspective to a preference for a human rights framing when working for social justice in the 1960s. In a similar vein, for Charles Korr, a key element in the iconic protest at Mexico 68 was the way that the Olympic Project for Human Rights had as its crowning moment an aspect of solidarity across international and racial divides: "When you ask me about the Olympic Project for Human

¹ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 101. The emphasis is Edwards' own. It is interesting here to witness the nature of his cross-cultural solidarity with Mexican students.

² See section 2.6.

Rights, what it conjures up in my mind is Peter Norman and his story that he shared with me about the significance of the [Olympic Project for Human Rights] badge.”¹ For Korr, cropping Peter Norman out of the picture and/or telling the story without a mention of the Australian’s contribution is incredibly problematic. As Korr notes:

It really short changes the universal appeal of what they [Smith and Carlos in particular] did, it diminishes the importance of what they did. The fact they could immediately reach across racial and geographic lines. What they were doing was so important it could appeal even to an “outsider.” Now granted, Norman was not typical given his Salvation Army background and the fact that he was a “trouble maker” in Australia. But I think it really short changes the universal appeal of what they did to not mention him.²

In my view, as may already be evident, this aspect of cross-cultural solidarity is important to the story. In some ways, people like Norman and Kidd were risking less because of their association with the Olympic Project for Human Rights since they did not erase all elements of white privilege by their participation. However, in some ways, they were risking their status within the sporting community. In this light, it remains heartening to note, as we have seen in this section, that people like Peter Norman, Harold Connally, Bruce Kidd, and even Howard Cosell, lent various degrees of support to the cause of human rights-based equity in 1968. Regardless, the framing is important because the human rights language invokes a universal principle that is relevant to addressing a number of systemic injustices and also speaks with urgency to the struggle for equity within the US. In this light, it is telling that, even though women were largely excluded from participation in Olympic Project for Human Rights, the main actors like Smith now fully acknowledge that the lack of gender equity within the activist group was

¹ Korr Interview.

² Korr Interview.

clearly (in retrospect) a mistake, even as they hold that insight in tension with the need they felt to assert their own manhood in response to the emasculation represented by a system that too often resulted in them being called “boy.”

Moreover, it is crucial to emphasize that the assertion that the Olympic Project for Human Rights name, as emphasized by Edwards above, points to a strong belief that the human dignity of the athletes was inviolable. That is, their dignity was not accorded solely, or even principally, by a laxly enforced civil rights legislation. Rather, it rested on the more cosmopolitan foundation of international human rights principles and legal norms.

Also, in regard to the idea of a universal framing for human rights and the way in which it spoke to people in different contexts, it is worth highlighting the story of the men’s and women’s 400 metres relay teams from Cuba, sending their sets of Olympic silver medals to Stokeley Carmicheal and Harry Edwards, respectively. That story demonstrates that the struggle for equity in the US was a concern even across Cold War divides in the same decade as the Cuban Missile crisis. Their donation also highlights how active and politically-conscious women athletes were at the time.

Although Smith now sees the connections between the woman’s movement and the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Edwards, writing at the time, reproduced gender stereotypes as part of his own work on the project. He most often referred to the (amorphous) “Black athlete” as “he.” Moreover, Edwards considered the struggle as one of masculinisation for the Black male.¹ Vince Matthews agreed with this framing. In the face of emasculation inherent for him by repeatedly being called “boy,” he asserted that:

¹ See Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*.

“It was important, to reassert the basic masculinity of Black men and force the controlling White forces in the United States to stop taking the Black man’s services for granted.”¹ This contrast and tension, between the need to assert Black adult masculinity and the practical exclusion of the agency of women, shows how equality activism cuts in several directions in the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Further, it is significant that Smith, a key actor in this story, now fully recognizes the importance of addressing multiple sources of oppression.²

Also worth holding up from this section is the role of Howard Cosell as something of a solidarist ally. The famous sportscaster realized the significance of the podium protests and sought to make sure it reached the public’s attention at the time. Further, Cosell’s controversial decision to call Muhammad Ali by his chosen name takes on layers of deeper meaning in light of the macro-context in the 1960s, demonstrating that even some who benefited from the status quo in sport were concerned for issues of cross-cultural equity and liberating forms of recasting identity. Part of the reason for Cosell taking that position, despite his noted rhetorical rivalry-style discourse with Ali, was a deep friendship developed through their exchanges over the years.

As Kidd shows above, in the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, such relationships also extend to the team level. Despite track and field being an individual sport, team dynamics also contributed to cross-cultural solidarity at Mexico 68. The general condition of the time, when people were being killed for protesting for equal treatment, did not leave athletes outside the system. Teammates came together from

¹ Vince Matthews quoted in Moore, “Eye of the Storm.”

² Recall here Heather Eaton’s point about inter-locking layers of oppression. See section 4.1.

different communities and the reality of Black suffering, in relation to unjust social structures existing at that time, was often personified for their White teammates. The idea that this reality could then be avoided or fully oppressed became impossible for people like Kidd and Jerome who had a relationship. It ought not to be surprising, then, to learn that places of cross-cultural contact like Kidd and Jerome's shared hotel room, or the athletes' village in Carlos' experience, became locations of solidarity building across cultures. Here, we see yet another set of examples that support the notion that the goals of the Olympic Project for Human Rights emerged out of multiple experiences and, as Edwards claimed, were not limited to addressing inequality in sports.

One final point worth highlighting in relation to the material presented in this section of the chapter is the story of how Evans was marginalized by the activist community and Harry Edwards in particular. Smith asserts that Edward's critique that saw Evans as sitting on both sides of a fence was misplaced. Nonetheless, the realities of isolation that Evans felt from the activist community might be held up as signifying a need for a note of caution. In terms of how we construct a culture of solidarity, it is essential not to create a culture of marginalisation in relation to those making an authentic effort to participate in action geared towards fostering a more substantively peaceful society.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 6.2

The opening of section 6.2 allows us to witness that the genealogy of Olympic boycotts has a long history both before and after Mexico 68: from Melbourne to Montreal to Moscow to Los Angeles. Even the idea of a Black boycott has its own genealogy dating at least from the advocacy of Dick Gregory around the Rome games in 1960.

Pertinent to our case are the comments made by Smith and Edwards in 1967 concerning the possibility of an Olympic boycott, when we see two very different approaches to the politics of persuasion. Edwards employs the threat of violence against those Black athletes who might choose not to boycott. Smith previews the ultimate solution to the question by leaving action up to an individual's conscience. Both stances, as we shall see, earned the ire of some members of the public. As Kidd implies, pragmatically speaking, the basketball players appear to have had the better approach, opting out of the discussion early, thereby avoiding the most marked controversy. Yet, in terms of track and field, the example of the New York Athletic Club meet shows how the politics of boycott did serve an important role in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Furthermore, if Smith and Carlos had not participated, Norman may have ended up as the Olympic champion, but the iconic moment on the medal podium would not have taken place.

In this regard, it may be informative to consider activism at Mexico 68, particularly as captured in the iconic photograph, in light of Tamar Hermann's, notion of "political opportunity structure." With that concept, Hermann shows that society can sometimes provide interesting and somewhat unexpected places for nonviolent activism. By way of illustrating Hermann's approach with an example, consider the fact that Israeli peace groups are committed to nonviolent political resolution of conflicts in the Middle-East, yet very few are pacifistic in their nature. This feature has allowed for certain

groups headed by former officers of the Israeli Defense Forces, who hold a high social status in Israel, to gain a much greater degree of legitimacy.¹

In our case, history can be called as a witness to the fact that the American Black track and field athletes' choice to make the journey to Mexico City was likely the best possible decision to take if they wanted their voices to be heard within the political opportunity structure of the time. The boycott of the New York Athletic Club meet, although successful in many senses, was also somewhat of a failure in terms of promoting a culture of equality and peace. Frank Murphy is convinced that it was because Edwards had been so involved in the organization of the boycott that violence may have ensued:

Harry Edwards was not the right person to lead a boycott movement. The young professor did not discipline his words or his emotions in a way consistent with the task. Within weeks of the demonstration outside the Madison Square Garden—the near riot over which Harry Edwards had presided—Martin Luther King Jr., a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and a man popularly associated with nonviolent resistance and the boycotting of goods and services, was dead. Harry Edwards did not kill him, of course, nor did any of the others with whom he was allied. In the phrasing of the day, a “White man” killed him. But all the leaders who permitted themselves to be wooed by violence as an instrument of social gain, who spoke of result without process, who sought to incite the end by any means necessary, as if all means were equally valid and defensible, as well as sustainable, had deadened the Reverend King before his death. If the Reverend hurried to catch up near the end of his days, his was a heavy and despondent chase behind people who had traded the future for the present and marked the present with the illusion of control. How had Harry Edwards in particular done this? He had said the wrong things, to the wrong people, in the wrong way, at the wrong time. Seeking an emotional foothold, he pushed first one way and then the other, encouraging one result and then backing away from that result, leaving uncertainty in a situation that demanded sureness.²

¹ See Tamar S. Hermann. *The Israeli Peace Movement: A Shattered Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

² Murphy, 168-169.

In this light, it is telling that Vince Matthews felt that most Black athletes could not be as radical as Edwards wanted them to be.¹ Nonetheless, the idea of the boycott and the initial efforts to organize such an action brought their own rewards in terms of consciousness-raising about issues of systematic discrimination and substantive peace and justice:

I felt a certain allegiance with the boycott movement, but it was difficult for me to be as intense as Harry Edwards hoped every Black athlete would be. I was only twenty years old, I wasn't a man of the world, and most of my relationship with Whites had come from more subtle racism in the North.

If anything, the boycott movement planted the first seeds of social awareness in me. It gave me a sense of relating events that I had taken for granted with the plight of the Black man in America. Things like going to school in split sessions, my problems with English, or the failure of the city to bus Blacks to better schools. Then there was the economic paradox of living in a Black community where most of the stores were owned by Whites you never saw after the stores closed. These were the little things that never crossed my mind as a nine-year-old. Even when I'd see dogs biting Black protestors on television.²

In the end, participation in the games brought its own opportunities. Commenting on the advantage gained by the boycott not taking place, 1968 Olympic track coach Payton Jordan offers the following analysis: "It [the boycott] would have been a grave error to lose the opportunity to really cause an impact on the world by one focal point moment."³

In this regard, as Smith himself emphasizes, protesting as an extension of their role as elite athletes, even prior to Mexico 68, provided them spaces to take up several concrete manifestations of racial injustice in the sports world. These included drawing attention to Apartheid in South Africa prior to the sporting ban, highlighting the need to

¹ Matthews with Amdur, 174.

² Matthews with Amdur, 174.

³ Payton Jordan quoted in Norman, at 23 minutes.

hire Black coaches, protesting against the segregationist policies of the New York Athletic Club, and surfacing access to housing issues as they impacted Black student athletes. Each of these areas, in turn, pointed to macro-level issues of social injustice.

Indeed, as we saw through his own testimony, even the highest status student-athletes like Lew Alcindor, the future Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who did manage to boycott, were literally endangered by the context of racism and violence. In Alcindor's case this danger was manifested when he was almost killed by what he described above as a "racist cop" who was shooting at a "Black cat" in Harlem. In this light, the involvement of Martin Luther King Jr. in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights prior to his assassination shows how tied in the protests at Mexico 68 were to the struggle for Black liberation at the time. King's involvement also gives a hint as to how this event might be counted as part of the history of cultures of peace.¹ Further, we can see that the centrality of the actors and their commitments helped society to notice their activism. For instance, they took advantage of the high media interest in King and sport at the time to draw attention to the situation of Black student-athletes and the culture of racism and militarism generally.² These two contexts demonstrate why it is significant that Smith invoked the language of martyrdom at the time to say that he was not only willing to forsake his chance at a gold medal but also lay down his life if it meant that it would improve the situation faced by Black people at home and abroad in 1968.

The issue that is important here concerns just how this solidarity is to be fostered. For Smith, it was clearly through consciousness-raising. That is the tactic which is

¹ See section 8.3.

² For more on the context of racism and militarism that underpins this activism, see chapter four.

embraced in the publicity for the Olympic Project for Human Rights reproduced in this section, publicity, it is important to note, that was drafted by a number of members of the group and explicitly embraces nonviolence. Hence, Lee Evans, as we saw in this section, called his friends and used the power of verbal persuasion to keep them from attending the New York Athletic Club meet. Yet, at the same time, it seems that Edwards was willing to embrace more physically coercive methods to encourage Black athletes to join his proposed boycott, as is evidenced by his warnings in early 1968 about potential “accidents” that would follow upon Black athletes choosing to attend the Olympics. For example, Edwards: (1) notes the patterns of oppression that manifested themselves on various campuses around the country and connects these to the policies of the New York Athletic Club and the USOC; yet, (2) uses the framing of a struggle against a “beast with many heads” (which presumably needs to be slaughtered like Tiamet)¹ to make the connection. This rhetoric, especially the language of “accidents,” might be taken as indicative of the type of approach that perpetuates cycles of violence cited, for instance, as problematic by Wink² and Câmara³ above.

While the story of Lew Alcindor reminds us that there was indeed a boycott at Mexico 68, significantly the track and field athletes were able to choose the route of going to the games and making their own statement that was designed to disrupt cycles of violence. Indeed, this was their one (crucially singular) global large-stage venue in an era without world championships. So, while Kareem Abdul-Jabbar went on to play the

¹ See section 2.7 for the connection to the notion that violence can be redemptive.

² See section 2.1.

³ See section 2.7.

second highest number of games in NBA¹ history, if the track and field athletes chose not to attend the Olympics they would, in a sense, have been cutting off their noses to spite their faces. In this light, we can see that the boycott of the New York Athletic Club's 100th Anniversary meet was an event (in terms of its significance for those involved) equivalent to the basketball players' boycott of the Olympic Games—significant, but not (yet anyway) career-damaging. It is further telling that schools, university and international teams latched onto the boycott of the New York event, showing the wide extent of support for an end to discrimination in sporting situations.

The disease of racism was seen as operative in sporting institutions ranging from the New York Athletic Club (with its practice of not admitting Blacks and Jews) to the more hidden manifestations of discrimination at the IOC. These realities served to couple the struggle of individual Black athletes with the larger issues of systemic racism and militarism at the time.² The prevalence of the issues of social justice and peace at stake during this time helps to explain why it is possible to link a number of individuals, almost organically according to Edwards' imaging, from Malcolm X to the SNCC to CORE, to Dr. King to the Black Panthers. In retrospect, such linking remains a noteworthy feat. The fact that individuals associated with all of the movements and people whom Edwards mentioned above supported the Olympic Project for Human Rights could be taken as evidence of the groups' broad appeal is remarkable given the divisions within the Black activist community in 1968.

¹ The NBA was the premier location for basketball over the course of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career (1969-1989), most especially after the NBA-ABA merger in 1976.

² For a description of racism and militarism at the time, from the athlete's perspective, see chapter four.

One marker of such division at this time of transition is evident in Edwards' statement about Wright, point number four on his list of demands at the Americana Hotel in New York. This is an example of the distinction Edwards was making at the time between the use of the terms "Negro" and "Black." As an example, in terms of their participation in sports, he repeatedly referred to Owens and like-minded individuals as "Negro gladiators," while he speaks of Smith and Carlos as "Black warriors."¹ Edwards also states that his organising committee avoided approaching the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) because they were regarded as primarily "Negro oriented."²

Yet, the 1960s were also a time of transition for the athletes themselves. We saw, for example, that Bob Beamon crossed the picket line at the New York Athletic Club meet but also saw that he later demonstrated support for the Olympic Project for Human Rights in Mexico City. On the day before the New York meet, in a decision that was reversed after the threat of an African boycott, the IOC voted to allow South Africa to participate in the upcoming Olympics. The New York Athletic Club meet boycott success was aided by this turn of events, which served to give the whole endeavour a certain momentum. Conversely, that South Africa was later excluded from Mexico 68 should be kept in mind as one of the reasons that made an Olympic boycott less palatable for track and field members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

Yet, despite the argument that their lack of presence would mean that the US would lose its chance at an "easy" gold medal, a number basketball players did boycott. In the end, the US won men's basketball gold but it remains significant that Lew

¹ See another example in Kidd's solidarist letter (section 6.2).

² From Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 58.

Alcindor still went on television to debate the topic of human rights. Bruce Kidd, as we saw, did the same thing. The Canadian's story about the protection afforded him by Ray Robinson shows that solidarity between Black and White people was multi-directional at the time. One issue that remains concerning the basketball players' boycott is that the majority of those student-athletes seem to have used the games' timing during the NCAA season as an excuse for non-participation at the games. The question is: if human rights and social justice were the true reason for their absence from Mexico 68, did the basketball stars' use of such excuses lessen the impact of their actions in comparison to a situation wherein more players would have made definitive statements about human rights in the context of the Olympic Games?

In this light, the relatively minor place of the basketball players in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, inclusive of Lew Alcindor who spoke out for human dignity at the time, helps to lay to rest the idea that the track and field stars would have made a bigger impact had they elected, in the final instance, to boycott the games in Mexico City. In the end, in contrast to Girard's notion of a contagion of violence,¹ we saw something akin to a contagion of nonviolent protest amongst track and field athletes at the games. The actions of the officials served as catalyst for social activism both before and after Smith, Norman and Carlos' protest. Such "egging on" by officials representing the unjust status quo was most personified in the actions of Avery Brundage, as we saw in this section. He even tried to extend his power to assert that US elite track and field athletes who had made it through a double trial system to earn spots on the team were "lucky" to be allowed to compete at the Olympics. In a way, with this statement he was

¹ See section 2.7.

challenging competitive individuals, who were known for rising to set challenges, to exercise their agency and demonstrate their individual and collective autonomy. Simply put, Avery Brundage is not using his leadership position to foster superordinate goal setting with the student-athletes. Thus, according to Hamburgs' terms of analysis, presented in *Give Peace a Chance*,¹ Brundage did not exercise his leadership to maximize positive outcomes in conflict resolution. As such, the athletes' agency becomes a form of non-violent contagion.

Another partial reason for this nonviolent contagion may have been the situation, which Smith alludes to above, that the imperative to protest was even stronger after the athletes chose not to boycott. In retrospect, he associates that duty with a general climate of reparations for slavery and trans-border solidarity. Indeed, the space necessary to make a statement on a scale comparable to that taken by the student-athletes, in particular the three men's 200 metres competitors, could only have come into being as a result of the media focus generated at the first games covered by satellite television.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 6.3

Although Bruce Kidd would not consider himself to be religious, in an example that calls into question the premise that secularization necessarily equates to

¹ In *Give Peace a Chance*, father and son co-authors, David and Mark Hamburg, present a "compendium of ideas on minimizing mass violence" (p. 180). This series of ideas is harvested from a range of scholarship (drawn mostly from natural and social scientists) and the elder Hamburg's life's work in medical, educational and international organizational contexts dedicated to understanding and mitigating violence as a human phenomenon. Notable amongst these experiences is work for peace with the Carnegie Corporation, in close partnership with UN agencies, and in dialogue with a range of people from Jane Goodall to Mikhail Gorbachev to Desmond Tutu to Hillary Clinton. A recurrent theme in this volume is the need for leaders to recognize the value of crafting peace by employing superordinate goals (requiring cooperation amongst actors). See David A. Hamburg with Eric Hamburg *Give Peace A Chance: Preventing Mass Violence* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2013).

modernization (with religion acting as a conservative force),¹ Kidd felt the influence of religious-minded people around him while completing his Masters in Adult Education at the University of Chicago in the run-up to the 1968 games. In particular, he cites the influence of his coach, who had roots in the Social Gospel movement on the Canadian Prairies:

My coach at the University of Chicago, Ted Hayden,² was also an activist. Originally from Western Canada, he grew out of roots there. His father was a professor of theology at the University of Chicago who had come from Western Canada where he was a social gospel minister, in the mode of Tommy Douglas. Ted was very supportive and understanding [of the Olympic Project for Human Rights].³

Here we see an important link between the type of thinking associated with the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the underpinnings of social gospel values. This may be considered another example of a nonviolent contagion. In this regard, it is very interesting to see a person like Kidd, who was not religious, tapping into the energies that come alive when faith and works are united as per the examples of the social gospel movement, the praxis of liberation theology and the Black church. During the late 1960s, this confluence is represented by Kidd's contact with Jesse Jackson and Operation Breadbasket's work in Chicago. In this sense, near the end of his life, Heschel was

¹ For a discussion of the falsity of this premise, in terms of the Christian context in Canada, see Michael Gauvreau and Olivier Hubert, "Beyond Church History: Recent Developments in the History of Religion in Canada," in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-century Canada*, eds. Michael Gauvreau and Olivier Hubert (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2007), 3-45.

² For more on Ted Hayden, see section 6.1.

³ Kidd interview.

correct to associate the “Black Church” and its outreach activities¹ with an exercise of the prophetic voice in America.²

Building on this insight, in the area of ethics, Carlos, Norman, Evans and Smith can be understood as working against trends toward segmentation in both social and personal ethics. In this sense, the athletes were living out their conviction that ethics can unite religion and life.³ In Religious Studies terminology, it follows that they were completely against the type of dualism that Rauschenbusch identifies with an individualistic theology where personal pietism takes the place of Christian social duty.⁴ For the men’s 200 metres medalists in Mexico City, it was simply untenable that God had called them to live under such segmented conditions. In this aspect of their efforts, the Olympic Project for Human Rights activists’ example adds credence to the idea that the consciousness of solidarity is fundamental to religion.⁵ They found alternative models of service in the Christian tradition,⁶ ones that were defensible by appeals to basic concepts of peace and justice. As such, the Olympic Project for Human Rights activists accepted the importance of what Social Gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch calls the “voice of prophecy” in that they named problems associated with oppressive ways of organising society.⁷ In this light, Câmara’s struggle against oppression in Latin America, and his concomitant reflection about how different forms of violence are connected, may inform

¹ Operation Breadbasket was initiated by the Southern Leadership Conference, so closely associated with Martin Luther King Jr. and his legacy. See section 2.6.

² See section 2.6.

³ Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1917), 14.

⁴ Rauschenbusch, 2.

⁵ Rauschenbusch, 94.

⁶ Rauschenbusch, 23.

⁷ Rauschenbusch, 279.

the task of someone seeking to exercise a prophetic voice in the contemporary context.¹ Many of the student athletes' stories described in this thesis represent this style of prophetic voice.² As such, in general terms, religiously literate theory and reflection may provide a good basis on which to craft richer understandings of both the protests at Mexico 68 and the goals of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Taking Smith and Carlos at their word, for instance, it follows that the protest image we so commonly associate with the 1968 Olympics could be understood as an image of prayer. If so, it is arguably one of the best known images of prayer from the twentieth century. As Smith reported in conversation with Smiley, this prayer was meant to have a jarring effect that would awaken the oppressors to the situation via a process of conscientization so important to Paulo Friere's project.³ In this manner, Smith and Carlos' prayer becomes a political act of principled nonviolence in the mode of Gandhi and King, a silent cry for those living with the consequences of an unjust status quo.

Other important aspects of the story are revealed through a faith-literate lens. For instance, Norman can be seen to be working in parallel with Câmara's invocation of the preferential option for the poor⁴ when he names "the Salvos" teaching as leading him towards a special attention to those who are marginalized or in distress regardless of their racial identities. Similarly, Smith can be understood as forming a view of God as liberator when it is noted that the acknowledgement section of his book thanks "first and foremost" a God who is portrayed as having a will directed towards sustaining and incarnating peace, love and equity for all. Further, in Norman's telling, the men's 200

¹ See sections 2.1 and 2.2.

² See section 2.6.

³ See section 2.6.

⁴ See section 2.2.

metres award podium was a patch of God’s Earth that the competitors had earned as their own. Combining these theologies of the divine with the image of the podium and the athlete’s sense of their protest as a “duty,” we can deduce something of a temporary stewardship covenant. Under this covenant, the athletes are granted temporary use of the small portion of the Earth that they have won, through speed and the hard work of the race, that geography of activism then takes on spiritual proportions such as those invoked by Paul.¹ The athletes made a statement in accord with their view of the divine as emanating peace, love and justice. For Smith, as we see in this section, this podium experience is a prayerful moment and, therefore, not solely a nonviolent act. Further, this moment of prayer represents and is premised upon, a “liberationist” (in the vein of Câmara,² recalling Bennett’s “hermeneutical key of the Golden rule”³) reading of the biblical text. In this light, it is significant that Smith equates, through his self-reflective reading of scripture, the biblical vision of justice with equality-based activism. Here he is motivated by, and seeks to represent, a sustained hope for a more substantively-just world.

This reading of the motivation of key actors in the protests at Mexico 68 represents a certain contextualization of faith that is also present in the example of Norman’s theologizing to reconcile his faith and his speed. As such, even Norman’s wearing the “Jesus Saves” and “God is Love” tracksuits points to a contextualization of his faith commitments within a culture of sport. That contextualization served to

¹ See the relevant text and footnote near the beginning of section 6.3.

² See sections 2.1 and 2.2 above.

³ See section 2.7 above.

foreshadow the political commitments that he vividly demonstrated on the podium at Mexico 68.

For his part, Carlos' feeling of divine providence extends to a sense of joint purpose, wherein his talent and hard work are necessarily combined with a divine mandate to make a statement. His invocation of a strong "non-secular belief" shows how he felt a purpose beyond the self in terms of both his athletic accomplishments and the spaces for activism those achievements helped to provide. With the advantage of hindsight, Carlos is able to shade everything he and Smith were facing in light of this spirituality, inclusive of threats on their lives, social isolation, "economic death row" and the power to engender disaster by association. All of these factors and more were at stake. Yet in response to such mitigating factors, Carlos speaks of the need to incarnate "a prophetic vision of the protest." This is certainly a prophetic witness for justice in line with the one marked by Heschel¹ who, like Carlos, thought of the statements he made in the 1960s as tapping into something larger than himself.

In this regard, it is important to highlight that the cross-cultural solidarity on the podium partially came about because of shared faith in the transcendent. It was a joint set of beliefs in humanity, love and God that Carlos reports as the reason he felt able to quickly agree to Norman's participation in the protest on the podium during the men's 200 metres ceremony at Mexico 68. For, as paralleled in the history of recognition of conscientious objectors status,² and learning of Norman's religious commitments helped

¹ See section 2.6.

² Conscientious objector status has traditionally been more easily granted to those whose faith lives and beliefs were taken as authentic evidence of pacific conviction. See Christopher Hrynkow, "Conscientious Objection," in *Religion and Violence: An*

to cement, in Carlos' mind, the authenticity of the Australian medalist's commitments to human rights.

Particularly interesting, in terms of the title of this thesis, is the manner in which Carlos uses the language of being “pawns for God” with reference to his activism in tandem with his athletic career. On the surface this may seem like a denial of agency. However, remembering Wink's point that proper faith in God stops nations or organisations from taking on the power of the absolute,¹ we might see that “pawnship” as invoked here is actually a form of agency—choosing to participate in action that pointed towards what was right and just.

Yet, somewhat problematically, theologizing around this event allowed Carlos to form a concept of redemptive suffering. This theology is evidenced in his embrace of the model of silent protest that engendered, in accord with his reading of the bible, a form of “good” suffering. Although, from within a peace-oriented theology, such formulations of redemptive suffering are incredibly problematic because they can too easily be used to uphold suffering within an unjust system by distracting those affected from seeing the need to transform their situation, such theologies do hold a place in the religious imagination of many people.² What is significant here is that the concept of redemptive suffering is being used to show how a righteous cause can be worth a certain amount of suffering. Further, this connection is made through a parallel with the passion of Jesus, which in Christian theological formulations, is often connected to love and concern for

Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict from Antiquity to the Present, ed. Jeffrey Ian Ross (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011): 206-212.

¹ See section 2.7.

² For an alternative theological framework to redemptive suffering, see Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).

the world. In our case, this is another example of how faith commitments allowed the principle actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights to be oriented towards spiritual markers beyond themselves. This spiritual orientation, as we can see in the passage from Smith that closes section 6.3, in a sense also directs reverence away from the medalists. In another manner, those comments demonstrate how the athletes' efforts represent a form of agency that strove to enter into service of the cause of ultimate goodness and justice.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 6.4

Walter Wink notes that nonviolence need not be passive.¹ As the lives of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Dr. King and the later life of Malcolm X show,² it can be a very courageous, confrontational and active undertaking. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the story of Martin Luther King and John Carlos' interaction around the legacy of Gandhi. The sense of duty it took on the part of King to go to Memphis as brought forward by the Olympic medalist shows how active nonviolence can require a courage that even impresses the likes of Carlos. This was, of course, not an insignificant example of fortitude in relation to standing up for what was right in the face of threats to substantive peace. Here, recall Martin Luther King Jr.'s premonition of his violent death which Carlos felt palpably as he dialogued with King in New York City. That premonition is represented most vividly in the eerie "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech given in Memphis.³ Yet, as Carlos adds to our understanding of the history of

¹ See section 2.7.

² See section 2.6.

³ See section 2.6.

cultures of peace, the premonition was brewing for some time before King went to Tennessee to stand in solidarity with the striking sanitation workers.

As his comments concerning a willingness to pay the price for an appropriately-raised just cause clearly demonstrate, Tommie Smith displayed similar courage in relation to nonviolent activism in the run up to and during the Games. In addition, the contrast he makes with militant revolutionary warmongers implies that he favours something akin to John Paul Lederach's preference for the transformation (moving towards more positive relationships and just structures¹) rather than the destruction of people and systems. This, of course, represents taking on a big task. Yet, this is a task that accords well with the ability of these remarkable individuals to juggle life-sized commitments and still achieve world-beating results on the track. Hence, it is not surprising to learn that Smith could arrange his life so as to set two world records in the morning and then join a respectful nonviolent march in the afternoon. His mode of telling that story is also significant.

For instance, Smith's emphasis on the trash policy of the marches provides evidence concerning how these nonviolent demonstrations were centred on respect in a multi-faceted sense. Consequently, this orientation represents an empowering way to answer Harry Edwards' question about why someone should run and play in sports that serve to legitimize a system that will not even rent housing to Black athletes. The way Smith answered that particular question with his actions shows that nonviolence can be fruitfully expressed as noncooperation with systemic assumptions that are oppressive. After the football game action was successful, Governor Reagan's attempts to pressure

¹ See section 2.4.

San Jose State to revoke Edwards' contract (based on the premise that the instructor was doing nothing to promote inter-racial harmony in California) belies a failure to realize the transformative potential of non-cooperation in this regard. Moreover, they point to a view of peace as something akin to the mode of "bovine placidity"¹ rather than in a way that recognizes the power of creative conflict to positively transform unjust situations in the service of substantive peace.

In what I hold as a significant parallel, Thomas Berry uses "bovine placidity" as a descriptor in the context of arguing for the value of creative antagonisms for fostering an optional ecosystem and Earth community health (where humans are considered to be part of both).² According to this worldview, things that are damaging to specific ecosystems are, due to webs of ecological relationships, also damaging to human health. For example, the presence of toxin-generated diseases in people living in or near a site of environmental harm points to larger problems for the Earth community. In this light, it is interesting to consider the reflections of Smith about why he did not wish to play football at San Jose State. Combining Berry's analysis with Smith's reluctance to play football, one can see that the societal health issues for Black people are reflected in the injury rate distribution on the San Jose State team. In that situation, even those Blacks playing the great American sport at a high level felt the injustice of the social hierarchy in their bodies, thereby pointing to another sense in which sport acts as a microcosm of US society. Here, racism is revealed as an issue of bodily health.

¹ For more on this point, see Thomas Berry's reflection on the peace of the Earth (*Pax Gaia*) in *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988) and Christopher Hrynkow and Dennis Patrick O'Hara, "Earth Matters: Thomas Berry, The Pacifism of Religious Cosmology and The Need for Ecojustice," *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 2012): 3-28.

² See Berry.

As we saw section in 6.4, another illustration of the control that coaches had on marginalized scholarship student-athletes at the time is found in the way that coaches screened, censored and even destroyed mail addressed to students under their charge. In the face of such direct control, when the athletes challenged the codes of patriotic behaviour at Mexico 68 they were coming up against an unjust system with far-reaching power. Taking into account Wyomia Tyus' point that they did not touch people or hurt them, reveals an additional layer to this story often obscured in the press reports, namely, that the jarring effects of the protests were not due in any way to direct violence. Rather these jarring effects can be sourced in coming up against what Wink labels as the "Domination System."¹ In particular, Smith, Norman and Carlos' nonviolent vocation can be read as confrontational on both a symbolic and systemic level, and in terms of those interests connected to domination. To use Smith's language from the Moore interview, it was an effort to be "forcefully heard," so as to demonstrate that everything was not "alright" in the US and the international context with regards to racism and militarism.

However, as Tyus' comments show plainly, that forceful confrontation took place without attacking people personally on the level of bodily harm. This analysis helps to bring into focus the act of misdirection, which serves segmented interests and an unjust status quo. It takes place when the participants in the Olympic Project for Human Rights are categorized as Black Panthers giving a Black Power salute, with all the cultural baggage and associations with direct violence that this labelling implies.

¹ See section 2.7.

While that cultural baggage is certainly worth unpacking, it is very significant that Smith identifies the myth that the protest was centred on a Black Power salute as going farther than any of the other erroneous tales surrounding the demonstrations on the podium at Mexico 68. Smith's observation is supported by the fact that *Time* magazine's review of 1968 (published in 2008) gives Smith and Carlos (Norman is left out of the commentary) credit for the iconic moment of the games but still names that moment as a Black Power salute. As we saw in various media selections, that category (of Black Power Salute) has been mixed up in the reporting of these events from the time they first took place.¹ A comment could be made here about the tendency of the media to fit unfolding events into preconceived categories and scripts.²

As regards to fitting these events into pre-existing categories, consider Australian sprinter Greg Lewis's three-pronged shading of the men's 200 metres protest as recreating a "Malcolm X salute, which was violence and Black Power." This interpretation leaves aside the athletes' own understanding of their statement. It also ignores the fact that, as we saw above, Malcolm X embraced nonviolence in the final stages of his (activist) life.³ Yet, note how Lewis also partially recognizes that the tide was beginning to change *vis a vis* a negative reading of the men's 200 metres protest by opining that the medallists' statement at Mexico 68 has now "been watered down to Human Rights." This latter phrase is particularly telling, implying that a human rights framing is a dilution of the original statement.

¹ As noted in the literature review this phenomenon of collapsing these events into Black Panther categories is even evident in Ron Briley's work. See section 2.10.

² For instance, during the editing phase of this thesis, this phenomenon of fitting "new" stories into "old" scripts seems to be active as Mali is painted as a new front in a problematically amorphous Western war against Islamist Terrorism.

³ See section 2.6.

However, that interpretation is juxtaposed with numerous examples of the athletes asserting, from the moment of protest to the present, that they were undertaking a protest in support of human rights (represented most simply by the nomenclature of the group). In this regard, it is significant that when Norman's request for participation in the men's 200 metres protest was being considered by Carlos, the American asked Norman if he believed in human rights.¹ Further, despite the contrast that both Smith and Carlos make (the former being more aligned with Dr. King and the latter with Malcolm X), Carlos greatly admired King's courage in going to Memphis in the face of death threats. In this light, it seems clear that at Mexico 68, it was King's type of courageous principled nonviolence that Carlos was upholding and modeling with the podium protest. Further, we see that Cleve Livingston understood the mode of his and Norman's participation as resting upon international human rights norms affirming the inherent dignity of all persons.

There were other perspectives at play here too. Most notable was the willingness of Edwards to pen a rhetoric implying the use of direct violence for achieving the just cause. This is a worrisome observation as Edwards was the most academically successful of the main protagonists in the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the person most often associated with a leadership role in the group.² Yet, what is arguably even more crucial is that Edwards' comments, most especially in the period from 1967 to 1969, may be interpreted as representing a sort of violent epistemology, which can be far too present in a number of academic fields. I find this violent epistemology particularly disturbing

¹ See section 6.3.

² A comment may be made here about how the media look for a single leader even in loose associations.

and uneasy when it is manifest on the level of insight. For, presumably on the level of insight, we should be able to activate what Lederach names as our moral imagination¹ to posit substantively peaceful alternatives to such violent episteme.²

Specifically, with reference to the Olympic Project for Human Rights' group dynamics, considering disagreement on such a major issue as the legitimacy of employing violence in the service of a just cause, what is particularly interesting in that such a diverse group of extremely busy people was able to come together in order to specifically address a virulent form of racism and discrimination. This was helped by the nature of the group as a loose association, a sort of joint action force, allowing people to bring different commitments to bear on the subject matter of Human Rights. In the area of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue³, this is in line with the ecumenical principle of a "dialogue of life."⁴ As is most relevant to my case study, this principle means that people can come together quite successfully to work on specific projects, even though they might have very different deep-seated reasons (for example, on the level of faith traditions) motivating their participation in this dialogue of life. What is particularly interesting is that the Olympic Project for Human Rights' example is geared toward

¹ See section 2.4.

² Compare Spivak on violent episteme. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Available from http://www.mcgill.ca/files/crclaw-discourse/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf. Accessed February 18, 2013.

³ An example of a close alignment of these areas with PACS are the teaching and research-based programmes dealing with International Peace Studies and Reconciliation Studies housed alongside similar ecumenical, intercultural and interreligious dialogue programmes at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin.

⁴ See section 2.7.

violence intervention and prevention in a broad sense,¹ addressing layers of inequity and oppression.

In contrast, as cited above,² Govier argues for the benefits of a narrower definition of violence,³ so as to not diminish the history of nonviolent action. However, in light of the material presented in this chapter, there may be an advantage to what seems to be the *de facto* stance on this issue in the field: namely, employing an expansive definition of violence when identifying the issues to focus on in terms of nonviolent action while, at the same time, putting narrower limits on such action in terms of what constitutes nonviolent action. For example, this distinction allows us to name a moral difference between using military force to establish peace and employing confrontational street theatre to shift the consciousness of members of an oppressive group and, thereby, giving us grounds to label the street theatre as nonviolent action despite its confrontational nature.

This interpretative stance is not an ambiguity as such, but could represent a careful contextual application of a definition. This interpretation has significant benefits for explaining a deep sense in which nonviolent protest can be concerned with all of Câmara's violence No. 1, violence No. 2 and violence No. 3.⁴ This more expansive definition of violence (and, hence, the larger endeavour for peacebuilding) is also representative of the socio-political understanding of the violence inherent in racial

¹ For more on how a group of actors can come together to work with diverse communities for violence intervention and prevention within a dialogue of life framework, see Hrynkow, 113.

² See section 2.7.

³ Compare, for example, Byrne and Senehi, *Violence: Analysis, Intervention and Prevention*, 194-217.

⁴ See section 2.1.

discrimination and militarism, palpable for many of the actors involved in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights.¹

As we shall see in the next chapter, similar manifestations of violence are also discernible in the reaction to the protests at Mexico 68. They are especially present in the lack of due conflict resolution technique employed after the student-athlete's statements. Further, the theme of violence is certainly not absent when we examine the legacy of the protests.

¹ See, in particular, Chapter Four and section 5.2.

Chapter Seven—Reaction, Conflict Resolution/Transformation and the Legacy of the Protests

7.0 Introduction

When Smith and Carlos raised their fists as the anthem sounded through the stadium during the men's 200 metres award ceremony, the power of the action stunned even Lee Evans, who remembers saying softly in disbelief: "Oh shit, no they aren't."¹ Tommie Smith recalls the stadium being so quiet at the moment of protest that he could discern Lee Evans' voice in the crowd: "You could hear a pin falling through the air before it dropped. 80, 000 people and it was very quiet. And I heard Lee Evans in the stand say, 'Oh my' very clear like it was just part of that pin, the waves of it flying through the air."² Carlos recalls the reactive silence in colourful terms: "The American people in the stands were shocked into silence. One could hear a frog piss on cotton it was so quiet in the stadium."³

Part of the reason for that silence was that 90 percent of the foreign visitors in Mexico City for the Olympics were US citizens.⁴ Perhaps this fact also helps to explain why the reaction to the moment of protest was so immediate. Although applause had rained down on the athletes as they entered the inner circle of the stadium, boos greeted them once they raised their fists during the playing of the anthem and the jeers grew louder as they left the infield of the stadium and headed for the athletes' area under the

¹ Lee Evens quoted in Hoffer, 161.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Norman, at 60 minutes.

³ Carlos with Jackson, 10.

⁴ Bass, 109.

stands. In transit, Carlos and Smith responded by once again raising their fists as they walked out amidst insults and booing.¹

This chapter continues to explore the athletes' perception and reaction to their protests, this time in relation to fallout from that moment of silence and the other demonstrations at the time. Specifically, Chapter Seven explores the immediate reaction to the protests, the rather abrupt ways for addressing the conflict resolution (and conflict transformation) considerations emerging from the iconic 200 metres demonstration and, in particular, the social and economic penalties the athletes paid for taking their stand. This chapter ends with a discussion focussed on the legacy of the protests, which offers some redress in relation to the former. The discussion and conclusion help to ground the theme of the broadened legacy of the protests while giving the last word on their activist legacy to Ralph Boston's succinct and lively relational assessment.

7.1 Reaction

A former Melbourne interclub athlete, Paul Jenes, was living in the US in 1968 and was, therefore, well aware of the struggle for inter-racial equity in that country. Jenes came to Mexico City to watch the athletics competition. He described the scene:

As they come out to get their medals, everyone applauded, then when the anthem stopped the booing started. While I am still cheering Peter as they came off, every possible derogatory comment towards a Black man was hurled by a segment of White Americans. They were disgusting. It was pretty ugly.²

Carlos remembers another immediate reaction of some Americans who felt their country to be under attack from the silent gesture: "Those singing the anthem, started screaming it

¹ See any of the numerous YouTube clips of the immediate aftermath of the protest.

² Paul Jenes quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 40.

out.”¹ As they crossed the track and entered the area below the stands, Tommie Smith recalls seeing: “Homo sapiens with hate in its face, I threw my arm up again and said, ‘Please, God, get me out of here.’”² This was not the first time Smith had been booed and jeered at for one of his political stances. A preview of that ire was felt by Smith and Evans at the Los Angeles Invitational Meet in February 1968. Nonetheless, they stayed on course with their social activism.³

As we are now aware, intertwined athletic prowess and creative consciousness led Smith to the dais on that fateful night in Mexico City. We commonly use the phrase “earn a spot on the podium” when speaking about ambition and victory at the Olympics. A significant question surrounding this story is, if one does achieve victory, is that spot on the podium theirs to do with as they please or must they conform to social norms when standing on the dais?⁴ Tommie Smith’s view on the matter is clear and connects the privilege of the spotlight accompanying victory to the responsibility for social justice:

That was my victory stand. Not only because I won the gold medal in the 200 metres final a half hour earlier, in world-record time. This was my platform, the one I had earned by years of training my body and mind for the ultimate achievement. The athletic achievement paved a road toward my quest for a social victory, where everyone would be listening to and watching my statement about conditions in which my people and I were living in the greatest country in the world. I never said a word as the national anthem was playing. My silent gesture was designed to speak volumes. As hard as I had worked to climb the victory stand, I had worked just as hard to earn the platform the stand provided. For me, and for all of those who had participated in the struggle to bring me there and put that platform to its best use, this victory stand represented more than just a place to accept a medal.⁵

¹ John Carlos quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

² Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

³ Murphy, 157.

⁴ Recall here Norman’s framing of this issue (section 6.3), the podium was an earned piece of God’s earth with which the athletes could do as they pleased.

⁵ Smith with Steele, 2.

In this regard, Smith has a well thought out and practical response for those who view with disdain using the Olympics as a venue for protest:

What I believed, instead, is that you take what you do best, which for me was running track and field, and use it as a platform for something good, to get something done. The Olympic Games was part of the platform that I was able to use because of what I had accomplished, to make people realize what's going on in this country. You can't not use it. What we did was aimed at no individual but at society in general.¹

Speaking in 1991, Larry James recalled his immediate reaction to the gesture on the podium: "I didn't think it was that radical at the time."² In a similar light, Peter Norman reaffirmed the appropriateness of the protest and echoed many of Smith's sentiments (expressed in the block quote immediately above) as he spoke with Charles Korr in the run up to the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea: "Tommie and John were entitled to be there and could stand if they thought that was the best way to make a point. After all, anyone just had to talk to them to know that they were right and what they were demonstrating for was right."³

Not everyone in the athletic community concurred. Carlos remembers bumping into his former athletic director from East Texas State University on his way out of the elevator at the Hotel El Diplomático, where Smith and Carlos were staying with their families (in fact they chose to sneak back into the Athletes' Village, to make sure pictures of them getting officially "kicked out" would feature in the media). As he pushed by Carlos to get into the elevator, Jesse Hawthorne shook his head and remarked, "John

¹ Smith with Steele, 35.

² Larry James quoted in Moore, "Eye of the Storm."

³ Peter Norman quoted in Korr, "When Protest Made a Clean Sweep," S11.

Carlos, always causing trouble.”¹ Shortly thereafter, in an extended sit down BBC interview, Carlos responded effectively to the charge that he was a publicity hungry trouble maker who in fact had it all, inclusive of an Olympic medal:

I can't eat that. And the kids around my block that grew up with me, they can't eat it. And the kids that is gonna grow up after them they can't eat publicity, they can't eat gold medals, as Tommie Smith said. All we ask for is equal chance, to be a human being. And as far as I see now, we are five steps below the ladder. And every time we try to touch the ladder they put their foot upon our hands and don't want us to climb up.²

Also invoking images of what is essential and just, Peter Norman commented on the media reaction:

The whole thing was blown out of proportion by the US press. They weren't denigrating the flag. They weren't denigrating the anthem being played. They weren't there to proclaim Black supremacy. They were there to proclaim Black equality. Equality was all they wanted. The American people took it as an absolute slight against 'Old Glory' and the national anthem and America as a whole. The symbolism went something like this. The heads were bowed in memory and respect of brothers and sisters that made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of African-American unity. The raised arm and the clenched hand was a symbol of unity with the fingers coming together in a symbol of strength. It was never meant as a threatening gesture. The Black socks, worn throughout the competition, and no shoes, was a sign of African-American poverty. The fact that they couldn't get decent jobs or *decent* education. This symbolism went by the board because they didn't get a chance to explain it. All the press wanted to talk about were these militant young Black athletes that had despoiled the Olympic dais.³

Of course, not all newspapers immediately grasped the importance or relevance of the protest. The Australian newspapers at the time printed varied reactions. Gary Osmond

¹ John Carlos remembering Jesse Hawthorne's words as quoted in Hoffer, 175.

² John Carlos quoted in Small, at 54 minutes.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 47.

offers an extended analysis of the *Melbourne Age*'s reporting on the event, with its particular emphasis on Peter Norman's involvement:

The *Age*, Melbourne's daily broadsheet, prioritized the sport politics in its breaking story on October 18, 1968, by publishing the protest photograph on page one within a story headlined "Negroes in protest at Games." Its opening paragraph included Norman in the protest: "Two angry American Negro athletes and an Australian sprinter, Peter Norman, today turned the Olympic Games into a political demonstration of equality for the American Negro." Norman is not only complicit, but also central to the *Age*'s story, which is confirmed by the placement of a prominent, close-up shot of Norman directly above the protest image. The caption reads: "Peter Norman with the badge inscribed 'Olympic Project for Human Rights.'" The story identifies Norman as a civil rights supporter and quotes him as follows: "I think most Australians would favour what I did. At least I hope they do. I became friends with Tommie [Smith] in Los Angeles in 1966 and when he was in Australia last year. I have followed his career politically right through and have been very interested in what he is doing. I believe in civil rights. Every man is born equal and should be treated as humans [*sic*]. I thought this was a good chance to have a White man on their side."

The protest image itself is cropped to emphasize the fisted salute and Norman's "Olympic Project for Human Rights" badge. Indeed, the entire front-page story focuses on the protest and on Norman's role. His athletic performance itself, in winning silver for Australia, is relegated to page 25. The headline of that buried story, "Norman's feat has to take back seat," referred to the paper's privileging of the politics angle as well as the overshadowing of his outstanding race by the breaking of three track-and-field world records that day.¹

Weighing in on the controversy, Australian Ron Clarke, 1968 Olympic team member and long distance runner, felt that the athletes were well within their rights to protest on the podium given the racial inequity prevalent in the US at the time:

I appreciated their cause; it was something you could really understand. So if they are going to have a medal ceremony at the Olympics, the guy who deserved to get up there is allowed to do anything. If he wants to wave his flag or someone else's flag or a surrender flag in protest, he is entitled to do it. It's his time. He did it.

¹ Osmond, 126.

You've given him the stage, so don't complain if he doesn't act the way you want him to act.¹

Despite such international support, John Carlos explains that the protest was not well received by all his teammates: "Some people felt that what we did on the victory stand took away from their events."² This sentiment is evident in 110 metres hurdle-champion Willie Davenport's immediate reaction: "I came here to win a gold medal—not to talk about Black Power."³ When interviewed 40 years after the event, Larry Questad, who finished sixth in the men's 200 metres at Mexico 68, still described the scene during the medal ceremony as "just sick." Expanding on his frustration with Smith and Carlos, Questad said:

All people talk about are Black fists! People should remember Tommie broke the world record by two-tenths of a second. That was a tremendous event, one of the same calibre as Bob Beamon jumping 29 feet. There haven't been too many such events where someone makes a quantum leap on the world record by taking two-tenths off in one whack and he did! No-one ever thinks about the performance. It was a performance that was really outstanding.⁴

The great US track coach George Payton explained his understanding of the protest as follows: "I thought it was a social statement that addressed problems that had to be addressed. It had nothing to do with the Olympics. It had nothing to do with me as coach, with the sport, but it had everything to do with the society."⁵ On Smith and Carlos' return to San Jose State, college president Robert Clark spoke these words: "They

¹ Ron Clarke quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 52.

² John Carlos quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 53.

³ Willie Davenport quoted in McCann Fenton, 101.

⁴ Larry Questad quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 53.

⁵ Payton Jordan quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 53.

do not return in disgrace, but as the honourable young men they are, dedicated to the cause of justice for the Black people in our society.”¹

When he arrived back home in Australia, Norman received regular letters for 6 months and intermittent correspondence for some 18 months thereafter concerning his participation in the demonstration on the podium. “A lot of lovely letters” numbered amongst this correspondence. Norman recalls: “I also received quite a few letters that suggested if I wanted to do something like wear an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge, and agreed with these two guys, then why didn’t I go and live with them.”² It seems that a negative tone marked much of the correspondence received in the United States in relation to the protest as well. This phenomenon even touched those not directly involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. For example, Dr. Robert Clark’s statement cited at the end of the last paragraph elicited a stack of hate mail. As Tommie Smith put it: “He immediately got a taste of what we had gotten in the months leading up to the Olympics and ever since the victory stand.”³

John Carlos talks about the very personal toll that his participation in the protest took on his family:

My first wife took her life ‘cause she couldn’t deal with it no more. It was tough for them [his children] to see their mother take the back door and leave this world saying I can’t handle this no more. I had to embrace my kids, protect them in school. Once a teacher found out that John Carlos was their father, the teacher turned very negative towards my kids merely because I was their father. I had to deal with the teacher and tell my kids, ‘it’s not your fault.’⁴

¹ Robert Clark quoted in Moore, “Eye of the Storm.”

² Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 151.

³ Smith with Steele, 10.

⁴ John Carlos quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 153.

In contrast, Peter Norman did not feel immediate negative outcomes from his participation in the protest. He comments, “I was damn proud to be part of it. I felt the repercussions a little further down the track when it was considered [by Australian national team selectors] that I probably wasn’t the person to take away on Games trips anymore.”¹ In terms of his family life, John Carlos tells the story² of visiting his father and discussing the legacy of the protest during the last days of the elder Carlos’ life:

My father was in the hospital getting ready to die. And I never get mad. I came into the hospital and we got to talking. And my old man got to talking and he said to me: “Son, why did you do all those bad things?” And it rocked me man. I mean, I was so emotional I could hardly talk. I had to gather myself and I said to my father, I said: “Pop, listen. Read this article over here about what they are saying about H. Rap Brown and Harry Edwards and Stokely Carmichael and those people.” And I say “then read what they are saying about your son.” I say now, “It’s the same things they are writing about both. But you don’t know H. Rap Brown and those people.” I say, “But there ain’t nobody who know me better than you.” And we both broke down and started crying.’³

Tommie Smith also recalls a powerful encounter with his father:

I went to visit my father in Lemoore. He looked right through me, stone silent as usual. Then, for the first time in my life, he reached for my hand. “I don’t really know what happened,” he said, “but what you did was right.” I melted. From this severe man I’d tried to please all my life that was worth a lot of suffering.⁴

One area which may have often been misrepresented in terms of the reaction to the event is the US role of the boxers in general and George Foreman’s supposed reaction in particular. The Olympic Project for Human Rights had chosen not to target the boxers. In academic terms, it was thought that the boxer’s more nationalistic and militaristic

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 153.

² Note here also Carlos’ discernment of patterns and scripts in media reporting. See also the analysis on this point in section 7.5.

³ Carlos with Jackson.

⁴ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “Eye of the Storm.”

socio-political world did not mix well with the project's programming. On the US Olympic 1968 boxing team, eight of the members had served in the military. In fact, the athletes addressed each other by rank and both coaches were called "Sarge" by the boxers under their charge.¹ In addition, heavyweight gold medalist, George Foreman, remembers being asked by a reporter about the potential for a boycott during the summer of 1968 and responding: "That's for college kids."²

While overtly decrying the exclusivity of student-athlete activism, Foreman's response, he now openly admits, also hid a deep disappointment that the Olympic Project for Human Rights had not courted him more actively. He was especially disappointed that he had not even been invited to one of its meetings. This was in sharp contrast to the media, who became very interested in Foreman's story and quips after the protest during the 200 metres medal ceremony at Mexico 68.³ Foreman admits to not understanding all the issues at the time. However, he also remembers being shocked at the scene when Smith and Carlos were expelled from the athletes' village. Foreman had enjoyed village life immensely, to him, it was a little bit of paradise. His legendary appetite was quenched for the first time in his earthly existence by the village's 'all you can eat' buffet. Hanging around the buffet had also given Foreman a chance to meet Carlos; the boxer was duly impressed with the way the track star carried himself.

In terms of our main story, Foreman recalls turning to his trainer after witnessing the scene of Smith's and Carlos' expulsion from what he considered paradise and telling the trainer he no longer wished to compete unless his teammates could enjoy village life:

¹ Hoffer, 163.

² George Foreman quoted in Hoffer, 164.

³ Hoffer, 166.

“We are a team. We all got to stand together.” The only way to calm Foreman down was for the trainer to tell him that Carlos had requested that he continue to box. Foreman now doubts the authenticity of this claim, but at the time agreed to continue. However, he does remember asserting that the fun was gone after the expulsion of Smith and Carlos.¹

Taking advantage of the cross-cultural dialogue opportunities afforded by the opening ceremonies, Paul Hoffman had met one of the other team US boxers, Albert Robinson, who was enlisted in the Navy. When the little cox showed up to watch one of Robinson’s fights he was met by the head coach, Henry “Papa” Gault, who was the first Black coach for the boxing team. Gault, however, had very little patience for the protestors. When he saw Hoffman, he asked him to come to one of the mailrooms under the stand. Gault then picked up the 110 pound cox by the scruff of the neck and shoved him into a door, warning him to keep his distance and imploring him, with multiple layers of irony, to: “Stop intimidating my athletes.” Hoffman remembers being shocked by Gault’s reaction.²

These are important reactions to highlight in this story of conflict because the media later juxtaposed the patriotism of the boxers with the rebellion of the track athletes. It was supposed that George Foreman had waved his miniature flag around the ring after his final victory to actively contrast the protests on the podium with an act of more traditional patriotism. However, Foreman maintains that his not so silent gesture³ was, in

¹ George Foreman quoted in Hoffer, 168-169.

² Paul Hoffman quoted in Hoffer, 165.

³ This phrasing is meant to be a contrast to Smith understanding of the Men’s 200 metres podium protest as a silent gesture. See, in particular, sections 5.3 and 8.3.

fact, meant as a retort to the judges for ruling against one of his teammates earlier in the tournament.¹

Nonetheless, in sharp contrast to his portrayal of Muhammad Ali as a mistreated sporting hero and model of Black masculinity,² in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, Harry Edwards condemns Foreman in no uncertain terms. During his description of the boxing competition at Mexico 68, he contrasts Foreman's flag waving with the treatment of Smith and Carlos for their "political" action:

Twentieth century Negro gladiators, under the tutelage of old school Negroes, boxed their way to gold medals and then, on one occasion, marched around the ring carrying an American flag and calling for "United States Power." George Foreman, the boxer guilty of this particular act, never seemed to consider that the flag that he so proudly flaunted was the same flag under which four Black girls were murdered in Alabama; the same flag under which Martin Luther King, the generation's chief advocate of nonviolence and brotherhood, was violently killed in cold blood; the same flag under which troops marched into Black communities of America and shot down men, women, and children in the streets and in their homes; the same symbol of hypocrisy and inhumanity under which Black soldiers have died over the decades to keep George Wallace safe from communism. For his blatantly political performance Foreman was not criticized or ejected from the games. For his behaviour was in the interest of the establishment and of White folks.³

This interpretation of event haunted Foreman after he returned to his neighbourhood in the city of Houston's fifth ward. Proudly walking the street wearing his best clothes and his gold medal, Foreman soon encountered an old friend who asked him: "How could you do what you did? How could you wave that flag when our brothers were

¹ George Foreman quoted in Hoffer, 240.

² Recall that the Olympic Project had a special affinity for Ali on many levels. They called for his title to be restored as part of their demands during the successful boycott of the New York Athletic Club's 100th Anniversary Meet. See section 6.2.

³ Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 106.

protesting? How could you?” At once Foreman understood his role in the Olympics. He was ashamed and put the medal away in a drawer, not looking at it again for years.¹ Meanwhile, it seemed that the negative reaction towards the demonstration participants was becoming more entrenched. For example, at the American Athletic Union championships in 1969, officials were so worried about potential agitation precipitated by Carlos’ presence that they had police dress in riot gear when he was racing.²

7.2 Conflict Resolution/Transformation Technique (or Lack Thereof)

Showing a certain lack of judgment in the face of athletes with a strong commitment to progressive social change, Avery Brundage “fanned the flames” of conflict, after the talk of a boycott of Mexico 68 had already died down. During the final US Olympic track and field team trials at Lake Tahoe (September 1968),³ he commented to the media (note Brundage’s use of “boys”): “There is not discrimination whatsoever because of race, religion, colour, or political affiliations [in the Olympics] A boycott would only disadvantage the athletes themselves. I don’t think any of these boys would be foolish enough to demonstrate at the Olympic Games. If they do they’ll be promptly sent home.”⁴

Despite his claim that the Olympics were apolitical, Brundage had been involved in the politics of boycott before. This was in 1936 when there was talk of a team US boycott of the Berlin Olympics over the treatment of Jewish people in Germany. In one of his first acts as then president of the American Olympic Committee (AOC), Brundage returned home and gave the following statement at a press conference: “I was given

¹ George Foreman quoted in Hoffer, 241.

² Carlos with Jackson, 230.

³ Murphy, 247.

⁴ Avery Brundage quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 7.

positive assurance in writing by Tschamme und Osten, Germany's official Olympic representative, that there will be no discrimination against Jews. You can't ask more than that and I think the guarantee will be fulfilled."¹ In the aftermath of the men's 200 metres final protest at Mexico 68, Avery Brundage threatened to expel the entire US team if anyone else did anything akin to what Smith and Carlos had done.² Invoking the importance of personality within conflict dynamics, in his reading of Brundage's role of the events of the 1968 protests, Murphy goes so far as to argue that the protest might never have taken place if the IOC had been under different leadership:

Mr. Brundage portrayed the Olympic Games as a force for good and for harmony in the relationship between differing peoples. Those were the goals towards which he professed to work. But those Olympian goals turned on Mr. Brundage. They mock him and subject him to one more charge. The charge is hypocrisy. And it didn't take 40 years of time passing for Lee Evans and Tommie Smith to notice. Had a man other than Avery Brundage served as IOC president in 1968, it is entirely possible that only a track fan would know the names of either Smith or Carlos, as another man would have taken steps to make the protest unnecessary, or at least he would have refrained from making himself, personally, a natural target for demonstration and objection.³

Despite the potential rewards inherent in his position as future Olympian, Tommie Smith was feeling a lot of psychological pressure even at the trials due to his activities with the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Lining up in the starting blocks at Lake Tahoe for the 200 metres, while suffering from the effects of "the runs,"⁴ he recalls that: "the internal physical pressure was not the only pressure; the athletes had received a letter from the USOC saying that if we were contemplating an 'embarrassment' to the United

¹ Avery Brundage quoted in Murphy, 132.

² Smith with Steele, 170.

³ Murphy, 135.

⁴ See section 6.3 for another description of this moment.

States at the trial or at the Games, we would be ordered to leave the team.”¹ Smith remembers that the presence of the letter at the trials acted as what might be characterized as a negative catalyst, encouraging a solidarist response from the athletes. This precipitated the recruitment of Ralph Boston,² due to the perceived harassment implicit in the United States Olympic Committee’s (USOC) method of choice for communication:

Carlos was ready but I was distracted. The USOC had sent us a letter saying any athlete who didn’t perform in honor of the United States would be sent home from Mexico. Ralph Boston—who’d originally been against the boycott—drafted what we replied: “Get off our backs and let us train.”³

In the aftermath of the protest itself, US hammer thrower Harold Connolly, whom Charles Korr recalls as being a strong willed individual,⁴ expressed his displeasure with the conflict management process that had sent Smith and Carlos home “without giving them the opportunity to speak to the people who censured them and without any recourse to appeal.”⁵ Speaking during an interview conducted for this thesis, Bruce Kidd noted his continuing concerns that the conflict management process imposed on the athletes in 1968 lacked due process. Kidd puts this point in a historical perspective:

Were the protestors dealt with fairly? Absolutely not. I am convinced, and I have written this in several places including in reports to the IOC, that if the Court of Arbitration for Sport was in existence in 1968 they wouldn’t even have brought charges against Tommie and John because there were no rules in place which they had broken. And even

¹ Smith with Steele, 31.

² Recall here that Ralph Boston was a shoe company representative, had already medalled in two previous Olympic Long Jump competitions prior to the 1968 games and was a double Pan American Games champion. So, having someone of his stature and experience on board was helpful for the student-athletes. See Appendix A (which the reader may remember offers a brief description of the cast of the main characters in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights).

³ Tommie Smith quoted in Moore, “A Courageous Stand.”

⁴ Korr Interview.

⁵ Harold Connolly quoted in Bass, 266.

if there were rules in place, I couldn't believe that the punishment fit the crime. So absolutely not, it [the treatment of the athletes] was a completely arbitrary decision by Avery Brundage. It was illustrative of the arbitrary and capricious power that amateur Olympic sports leaders enjoyed for far too long.¹

Charles Korr confirms Kidd's concluding assessment and delves deeper into the motivations behind the United States Olympic Committee's lack of solidarity with the athletes. In this regard, he cites the USOC's compliance with Brundage's methods for dealing with the conflict between himself and the Olympic Project for Human Rights' athlete-activists:

I have two senses of why the US officials did what they did. My benign version is that they were scared. My less benign version is that [Brundage's pressure] gave them an excuse to do what they wanted to do anyhow. And I can just not imagine that US Olympic officials would have in any way wanted to defend what Smith and Carlos did. And when the IOC acted outrageously it gave them [the United States Olympic Committee] an excuse to do what they wanted to do anyway. Now can I prove that? No. It is just an impression from the outside but we do know that they caved in.²

Many other athletes, including US triple jumper Art Walker,³ questioned the entire premise of the United States Olympic Committee's moral stance within the conflict management process, a response which was supposedly founded upon an apolitical transnational ideal. Yet, politics and nationalism permeated the games. As an example, Walker noted at the time that the US flag bearer, as a matter of national tradition, did not bow the stars and stripes flag (as per Olympic tradition) to the host country's box. He, thus, found a certain element of hypocrisy to be present in the conflict management process. This politically infused "tradition," which Walker is identifying among US flag

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Korr Interview.

³ Bass, 266.

bearers, dates back to the 1908 London Olympics when the flag bearer, Irish-American Martin Sheridan, refused to dip the “stars and stripes” toward Edward VII, reportedly stating: “I will not dip the American flag before any earthly King.”¹

In 1968, the USOC even tried to promote the notion that the Olympic Project for Human Rights protests had been an insult to the Mexican people. Earlier, the USOC had sent Jesse Owens to Mexico 68 and given him the title of athletes’ representative. However, Owens had tipped his hand with regards to his view of the Olympic Project for Human Rights when he recorded a thirty minute film against the idea of a boycott and political interference with the Olympic movement.² There is an irony here in that the story of Owens winning his medals at Nazi-governed Berlin in 1936 would surely rank amongst the most politically-charged moments in the history of the games. Nevertheless, Owens went to the meeting that Smith and Carlos held after the protest and tried to discourage any future protest.

That meeting was meant to be for all US athletes, but the only Whites present were hammer thrower Harold Connolly (Smith’s roommate in the Olympic village) and the members of the US rowing team from Harvard. When Owens was unsuccessful in calming things down, he wanted to know the future plans of the athletes. The members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights suspected that this request was made so that Owens could inform the USOC and so they asked him to leave. Smith had respected Owens greatly and even hoped that Owens might see the link between his moments on the Berlin podium in 1936 (thinking that he had won a victory for freedom) and the events on the victory stand in 1968. However, that outcome did not come to pass. As

¹ Martin Sheridan quoted in Bass, 298.

² Murphy, 272.

events unfolded, Tommie Smith recalls the role Owens played in the conflict management process and the unceremonious reaction it engendered:

Not only did he try to tell the White athletes [at the meeting] to leave—a move which we all rejected—but he also tried to get information from us about whether the Black athletes had any other protest plans, to take back to the USOC. We did not tell him anything. He got really upset, and started crying and asking, “How can you do this? I’m the person responsible for you being here now. How can you do this to another Black brother?” We applauded him and tried to treat him with respect, but we tore him down verbally after he left.¹

Among the words used to describe Owens at that time was “Uncle Tom.”² Evans recalls the effect of Owens’ misbegotten attempt at mediation: “We chased him out, the great Jesse Owens. We looked at him and said, ‘big Uncle Tom’.”³

It was not only the US 200 metres medalists who earned the ire of the IOC and USOC. Because Paul Hoffman had been observed giving Norman his badge,⁴ he was brought before the American Olympic Committee on rather ambiguous charges of having compromised the Olympic ideal. He was scheduled to cox the men’s eight in the rowing finals the next day. Hoffman, now a lawyer, recalls the hearing as a rather sordid affair, which was also lacking in due process. As for the accusation of compromising the Olympic ideal, he comments that it:

. . . was blown up into a charge that I had conspired and aided a demonstration, which apparently was an offence in the eyes of some. The next day the rumor spread around that they had suspended me and had made provision to substitute a coxswain. At the hearing, I was asked didn’t I think that Smith and Carlos had dishonoured the Olympics. I said, it struck me as clear that the Olympic ideals were

¹ Smith with Steele, 169.

² See footnote to Edwards’ letter in section 6.4 for more on F. James Davis’ use of the term “Uncle Tom.”

³ Lee Evans quoted in Small, at 53 minutes.

⁴ That is, his Olympic Project for Human Rights button.

represented by people who were talking about equality and brotherhood.”¹

In the end, under threat of suspension, Hoffman was compelled to promise that even if the US eight did not win a medal that they would not demonstrate. This promise was eventually extracted: “After about 30 minutes, the [United States] Olympic Committee, who frankly were old men, finally decided they’d let me compete the next day.”² During this same time there was pressure on the US track and field coach Payton Jordan to send Carlos and Smith home. He explains (note his use of “men” as opposed to Brundage’s use of “boys” to describe the athletes above):

The IOC told the USOC that these men were through and it filtered down from the top to me. “You send them home.” I said, “I will not send them home. They’re still part of the team and they did everything they were asked to do.” They were loyal, worked hard and did tremendous jobs. I said, “if anyone sends them home it will be up the ladder, not down.” And that is the way it was. I thought too much of those guys to turn on them when they needed me.³

This resistance on the part of Payton was to no avail. On the day after the race (Thursday), Carlos and Smith were told to leave the Olympic Village. That same day, the USOC asked for a meeting with Smith and Carlos but, as they were preparing for a BBC interview, they said ‘no,’ Carlos doing so with colourful language. Smith now wishes he had gone to that meeting to see what they had to say. In any event on the Friday, they were informed by Mexican officials that their visas were revoked at the request of the USOC and they had 48 hours to leave Mexico.⁴ Amy Bass reports that the meeting was only offered for the purpose of reading Carlos and Smith the USOC decision that they

¹ Paul Hoffman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 55-56.

² Paul Hoffman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 56

³ Payton Jordan quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 57.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 173; Carlos, “You got 48 Hours.”

had been suspended from the team.¹ Therefore, it offered no chance at conciliation, transformation or a participatory resolution of the conflict.

After exiling them from the athletes' village, the USOC also asked that Smith and Carlos turn over their medals to the committee. That demand was met with noncompliance,² as Smith puts it: "John Carlos and I were not stupid enough to listen to the USOC, travel over to their office and hand over those medals. They did ask for them, the next day, but of course we did not go and each of us has his medal at this very moment."³

Throughout this time it seems that a lack of respect for both the athletes' agency and circumstance characterized the conflict dynamics active in this story. For example, in an act that could have jeopardized the longer sprinters medal chances by disrupting their physical and psychological pre-race preparations, minutes before the 400 metres final, USOC President Douglas Roby went to the warm up area and lectured Evans, Freedman and Larry James on the importance of manners.⁴ It was young Larry James, generally considered the least militant of the three men, who asked Coach Wright to get Roby to leave.⁵ Earlier in the day, Bud Winters had rushed to Evans' aid when he was being chastised by a US manager. Yet, as soon as Evans was away from that man he was swarmed by the media outside.

All this seemed a bit much for Evans and he blacked out. Winters, who had always emphasized relaxation for his athletes prior to races, rushed Evans onto a

¹ Bass, 269.

² Though it is often reported that Smith and Carlos had their medal stripped, this is not the case, as can be seen here.

³ Smith with Steele, 172.

⁴ Murphy, 279.

⁵ Murphy, 280.

Japanese team bus. He gained admission to the vehicle by telling the driver he knew the head coach of the Japanese team. At Winters' request, the bus left the village, circled around, and then dropped Evans off at his room. There, with five hours before the race, Winters applied his relaxation techniques to the 400 metres runner. The coach also brought in Smith and Carlos to tell Evans that it was his turn to run and win. Winters, Smith and Carlos worked together as a team to emphasize the point that Evans could win and then protest.¹ So it was, in fact, solidarity and a team effort that went into a major feature of the last protests at Mexico 68.

7.3 Cost for Taking a Stand

Warnings about the potential cost for demonstrating at Mexico 68 were coming from many directions prior to the games. The long jumper, Air Force Captain Phil Shinnick, who would have qualified for the Olympic Games if the first set of trials in Los Angeles (July 1968) counted for final selection, expressed his sympathy for the Black athletes to an ABC reporter at the second trials in Lake Tahoe during a televised interview. Previously, as a student at the University of Washington, Shinnick had been involved in fighting discrimination in both athletics and housing in Seattle. He was also interested in a hot button issue of the time in the northern urban centres of the US: redlining.² The day following the ABC interview, an Air Force General came to Los

¹ Lee Evans quoted in Hoffer, 189-190.

² Redlining is "the practice of arbitrarily denying or limiting financial services to specific neighborhoods, generally because its residents are people of color or are poor." From D. Bradford Hunt. "Redlining." (2005). *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Available from <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1050.html>. Accessed October 12, 2011.

Angeles and told Shinnick to “cool the empathizing,” otherwise he risked a court martial or a flight to South Viet Nam.¹

As part of their actualized disciplinary action, the USOC banned Smith and Carlos from Olympic, international and national competitions under their jurisdiction, thus cutting off access to stipends and under-the-table shoe sponsorships, which had helped them get by financially prior to Mexico 68.² In terms of this sanction, it is haunting to ponder that Smith, who would have been only 28 years old at the 1972 Olympics, might have accomplished feats similar to those achieved by the likes of Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson, as they reached a more mature age.³

Taking into consideration the aftermath of the protest on the podium at Mexico City, their teammate and fellow 200 metres finalist, Larry Questad, still feels that Carlos and Smith showed poor judgment:

That was a hell of a 200 metres. . . .They paid for it [the protest] dearly. If they hadn't done that, they would have probably been happier, healthier, wealthier, and been more influential in the community than they have been. This country likes heroes who are winners. It was almost like they won, but lost because of what they did.⁴

In something of a reverse echo of this analysis, even after his marriage broke up and he had been spat upon in the streets, Tommie Smith could still appeal to the binding force of conscience in relation to the protest, during a 1972 BBC interview: “Had I been a good boy in Mexico, I could have probably been monetarily richer. I would have

¹ Hoffer, 87-88.

² Smith with Steele, 179.

³ Smith with Steele, 180.

⁴ Larry Questad quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 53.

probably been a bigger figure than I am right now. But yet, and still, I would have to fight myself from the inside.”¹ The impact of that conscience struck many aspects of his life.

Prior to the games, Smith worked at a car dealership. His employment involved washing cars before they were put on display. Once he made Team USA for the 1968 Summer Games, the dealership erected a sign that said people could come in and meet an Olympian. When requested, Smith would change into a suit and tie in order to “meet and greet” customers. Once that task was done, he changed again and returned to washing cars. Despite conjuring up an employment relationship that was doubly beneficial from a business perspective, the dealership manager told Smith in no uncertain terms, that if he protested in Mexico City, he would not be welcomed back. So Smith could already count on one reactive consequence before he chose to protest on the podium.²

After returning to San Jose State, Smith took only night classes so as to avoid those people who were angry at him. Concerning this period in his life, Smith recalls: “One class, meanwhile, I never had to worry about again; I was asked to leave the ROTC program, and I was given an honorable discharge.”³ In his 1980 autobiography, Harry Edwards makes an interesting point about Smith’s discharge:

Tommie Smith, already under surveillance by the FBI and local agencies, was asked to resign from the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at San Jose State by the unit’s commanding officer. When Tommie refused, he was given an honorable discharge from the United States Army, although he had never served a day of duty. So at the height of the 1968 Peace Movement, when hundreds of young Americans were being jailed or forced to leave the country for

¹ Tommie Smith quoted in Small, at 64 minutes.

² Smith with Steele, 175.

³ Smith with Steele, 178.

refusing induction into the military, the army was telling Tommie Smith, “Hell no! You *can’t* go!”¹

Even in 2003, Tommie Smith recalled real and continuing pain when asked about the consequences of participating in the 1968 Olympic protests. Smith writes:

I had been harassed at home, right here in San Jose. I’d gotten letters, of course, and phone calls, and people driving by the house and yelling, or throwing things, or just stopping and sitting and waiting for a reaction before pulling away. They would do this when I was home, and they’d do it when my wife and infant son were there by themselves—and when my wife went shopping to buy Similac for little Kevin, spending the precious few dollars I had to feed our child, money I barely scraped up because I had lost jobs because of my beliefs. And I couldn’t go on. I didn’t want to go on. I normally am not a big talker anyway. This time, though, the memories of what my wife and son endured because I chose to take a stand overwhelmed me.²

In the end, the period after the protest proved to be very difficult to say the least. Smith pursued an NFL career, not with the Los Angeles Rams who had drafted him initially but with the Cincinnati Bengals. He even tried playing in the Canadian Football League for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. Smith’s football career met with some, but limited, success. His marriage suffered from the strain of being alienated from “patriotic” members of US society (and from his wife) over the legacy of the protest. Smith further believes that the reaction to the protest contributed to his mother’s early death. His football career and marriage ended at the same time.³ However, Smith went on to earn good jobs coaching at Oberlin, where he was denied tenure in the wake of an administrative change, and then at Santa Monica College, where he eventually received

¹ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 195. Emphasis in the original. Though given Smith developing peace and social justice-oriented consciousness, ending his relationship with ROTC in 1968 might be considered a happy outcome.

² Smith with Steele, 13.

³ Smith with Steele, 187-193.

tenure. To this day, Smith still receives threats linked to his involvement with the Olympic Project for Human Rights.¹

Double Olympic 100 metres champion Wyomia Tyus understood that there would be repercussions due to Peter Norman's participation in the protest:

By wearing that button Peter knew that it was not going to be easy for him, especially when he got home. He was going to get a lot of questions like, 'How could you do this?' But he took a stand. I can't tell you what he was thinking but from my perspective, I felt he was in support [of human rights] and understood what was going on and how unfairly people were being treated.²

Like Smith and Norman, John Carlos also had problems finding work after the protests:

I can recall on many occasions when I went to employers, and once they found out who I was they would have a different attitude. They would ask me if I was that person who participated in the protest at the Olympics. I responded, "Yes." Once they got confirmation that it was me for sure, they showed me that they really did not approve of what Tommy [*sic.*] and I did. They refused to give me a chance at the job. The employers never took into consideration that I had a wife and children. I had discussed the fact that it was hard times It was like revealing yourself, allowing them to know that you had a scar on your chest that's fresh and then they take salt and throw it into the wound.³

Following his own attempts at professional football, Carlos eventually worked for the Los Angeles organizing committee for the summer Olympic Games in 1984. After a few more short stints at odd jobs, Carlos moved to Palm Springs with his second wife and earned employment as a security guard and then as an in-school suspension supervisor at Palm Springs High School.⁴

¹ Smith with Steele, 224.

² Wyomia Tyus quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 54.

³ Carlos with Jackson, 268.

⁴ Carlos with Jackson, 290.

Similar to the experiences of Smith and Carlos, Lee Evans received death threats, even in the 1968 Olympic village. He was in an awkward situation. Evans had not been so radical in the eyes of the officials as to merit being banned from future Olympics or radical enough to earn the respect of more militant Blacks. In a gesture of solidarity, Evans had said in an interview that his victory was for all his White and Black friends, which served to further alienate him from some activists in the Black community. When Evans returned to the Bay Area, he was offered a job by the San Jose police, which he had understood would be focused on community outreach to schools but was in fact geared toward calming down potential Black rioters in the city. The publicity that followed in the Black community questioned his agency. As a result of being in this in-between place, he felt very alone.¹ In sum, Evans' stand had at once cost him his reputation in the Black community and in the larger society.

Nonetheless, Evans continued to enjoy what others would consider remarkable successes on the track. In 1969, he captained a San Jose State team that included Carlos to a NCAA championship. Evans also won the 1969 US Championships. But he came second at the NCAA championships and lost his world number one ranking. By 1971, Evans' marriage had broken up and his brother had died. These painful events, combined with the way he was treated after the Mexico games, made preparing for the 1972 Olympics difficult.² He finished fourth at the trials and so went to Munich as a member of the relay team that did not run because the individual 400 metres medalists were disqualified for their "performance" on the podium, another protest that was met with boos and jeers. That protest unfolded after Vince Matthews (gold medalist) and Wayne

¹ Murphy, 294-297.

² Murphy, 298-307.

Collet (silver medalist), who had been dragged to the podium by officials although still breathing heavily from their race, accepted their medals with jackets undone and with Collet in bare feet and shorts. Both US athletes also shared the top spot on the podium and chatted instead of standing at attention during the anthem.¹

Evans' chance at a second Olympic Gold in the 4 x 400 metres relay was denied as a result of the suspension of Matthews and Collet. He then signed a professional track and field contract and made a little money before the circuit folded. Next, he decided to go to Africa to coach. At the 1976 Montreal Olympics, he arrived as coach of the Nigerian track and field team, but his team did not compete because of the African boycott (also mentioned above)² that year. Again proving that the politics of race remained a part of the Olympics, the group of African nations had chosen to boycott Montreal 76. This action was taken after the All Blacks (the New Zealand national rugby union³ team) defied the international sporting ban and toured South Africa⁴ during the Soweto Township Uprisings. Nevertheless, New Zealand's athletes were still allowed to compete in Montreal. Evans returned to the US in 2003 to take the head coach job at the now fully integrated University of Alabama.⁵

¹ A video of this protest (and the race that preceded it) can be found at "Olympische Spiele München 1972: 400 Meter Herren". Available from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9DqHO5lxmlk&feature=player_embedded. Accessed December 9, 2011.

² See section 6.2.

³ Currently, there are two main "codes" of rugby: rugby union and rugby league. The former was officially amateur until 1995 but is by far the more global game. Rugby union is most often considered to be New Zealand's most beloved sport.

⁴ On a tour that lasted from the end of June until the middle of September, New Zealand played twenty four matches in South Africa, including four tests against the national side (the Springboks). See Terry McLean, *Goodbye to Glory: The 1976 All Black Tour of South Africa* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed Ltd, 1976).

⁵ Murphy, 308-317.

Perhaps because of the controversy surrounding the protests, the 1968 summer Olympic team was the only one not invited to the White House, although some athletes, such as George Foreman, did receive invitations to meet the US president in his official residence.¹ This situation again illustrates the point that the Olympic Project for Human Rights is not so easily extractable from the larger political context. At the end of the remarkable year that was 1968, Richard Nixon was one of the chief beneficiaries of the feelings of turbulence present in the US as he won the presidency based on a law and order platform, which he equated with what came to be called the “silent majority.”

Even before the Olympic Project for Human Rights activities in Mexico City, Nixon previewed this law and order strategy in his acceptance of the GOP nomination for the presidency when he said: “As we look at America, we see cities enveloped in smoke and flame. We hear sirens in the night. We see Americans hating each other, killing each other at home. And as we see and hear these things, millions of Americans cry out in anger: Did we come all this way for this?”² A commentary on the posture implied by this question is found below.³

7.4 The Legacy of the Protests

Recall that we chose to demonstrate only during the *existing* political activity, the anthem.⁴ –Tommie Smith

¹ Hartmann, 170.

² Richard Nixon quoted in McCann Fenton, 32.

³ See section 7.5.

⁴ Here Tommie Smith is responding to the charge (both in the moment by Avery Brundage and subsequently by others) that the Olympic Project for Human Rights activists were inappropriately politicizing the games. From Tommie Smith, quoted in Moore, “Eye of the Storm.” Emphasis in the original.

In a *New York Times* article published during the run up to the 1992 summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Charles Korr offered a positive assessment of the protests and their legacy, while also managing to recall their controversial nature:

When Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the gold and bronze medalists at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, raised their Black gloved fists on the victory stand, they became heroes for a generation of protesters. They were heroes to those who supported their cause of justice and racial equality, villains to those who opposed what they stood for or clung to the myth that politics play no role in sports.¹

In 2008, looking back at the events he witnessed as a 12 year old, the great 400 metres hurdler Edwin Moses explained: “Tommie and John putting their fists into the air was something everyone really related to because everyone was in some type of denial in America, to something.”² There of course remains a damper on this 1968 consciousness-raising moment. Namely, the injustices that the Olympic Project for Human Rights pointed to at the time are still all too active today within the dynamics of human society, particularly in the US. Recognizing the continuation of injustice concerning human rights issues, and cognizant of the complexity of these issues, Peter Norman noted just before his death that: “If there has been a change it has not been a full 180 degree change. . . we still have a long way to go.”³

As illustrative of the anxiety about the amount of change that US society has undergone since the Olympic Project for Human Rights was active, consider that just prior to construction of the statue group at San Jose State (dedicated October 16, 2005) commemorating the most iconic moment in his and Carlos’ life, Smith was still worried

¹ Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

² Edwin Moses quoted in Small, at 1 min.

³ Peter Norman quoted in Norman, at 76 minutes.

that it would be vandalized. These feelings are indicative of the hold the reaction from 1968 still had on him in 2005:

I don't want to think about what people are going to do to it. I feel that it's going to be defiled quickly. Burned up, shot up, peed up. I don't want to think about what might happen to that statue. It's going to be standing up there, and no one is going to protect it. Do you think I can forget what was done to me and my family, and think that this statue is going to somehow be universally and unquestionably revered?¹

The process that led to the crafting of this monument was set in motion by a young White 23 year old, San Jose State student body president, Erik Grotz. Much of the ceremony surrounding fundraising for the statue group was centred on the first football game of 2003, which was (due to the commemorative events) the first sellout in over a decade.² By 2003, the track stadium, once the envy of Peter Norman, was in a state of disrepair. Despite its Olympic and social justice credentials, the track and field program at San Jose State was cut in 1988. The surface is now used to handle overflow parking on football game days.³ In his efforts to get the university to approve the series of events to honour Smith and Carlos, Grotz enlisted the help of his fellow student, Alfonsa de Alba, born in Mexico City on October 16, 1968.⁴

In the person of de Alba, the student activism of the Olympic Project for Human Rights had come full circle. Smith saw a connection here not only with student activism but with the strain that the Bush regime was putting on international and civil human rights at the time (2003). Smith specifically connects his student activism in 1968 to events thirty-five years on:

¹ Smith with Steele, 249.

² Smith with Steele, 7.

³ Smith with Steele, 5.

⁴ Recall that this is the same date that Smith, Norman and Carlos staged their protest on the podium after the 200 metres final. See section 5.3.

Our point is missed even now: it wasn't a Black athlete on the victory stand giving accolades to his triumph in athletics, but to his triumph socially. If there ever was a time to understand that point, it's today, with so many of the same problems back with us again. The present government is at war for an unclear reason, taking and losing lives to force its version of democracy on other people. It is undermining the Constitution here and abroad and denying the rights guaranteed in the Constitution to its own citizens that same way as in the '60s. The groundswell of activism will grow from the students, as it must.¹

While still a student activist himself, Bruce Kidd recalls being interviewed after the protest in Mexico City with Harry Jerome, the great Canadian sprinter at his side. Jerome was a three time Olympian, a Commonwealth games gold medalist and a Pan Am Games Gold Medalist at Winnipeg in 1967.² At Mexico 68, Kidd and Jerome were asked to comment on whether or not the protest made sense. Kidd was emphatic that the protest held deep meaning:

I am saying: "Of course it makes sense. It was the only way that they could have distanced themselves and call the US state to account for the history of celebrating with propaganda the victory of US Blacks on Olympic teams while ignoring the treatment of US Blacks every other day of the intervening four years." Harry had been trying to downplay it [the significance of the protest]. And right in the middle of the interview, I realize that many of the stories I know [about racial discrimination in the US] first came from Harry, who was my teammate and roommate for a lot of the previous years. When I saw this interview again recently, it was kind of embarrassing because I should have known that when he was back at [the University of] Oregon trying to finish his degree he was vulnerable.³

¹ Smith with Steele, 8.

² Jerome was a bronze medalist in the 100 metres at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo and placed 7th in the 100 metres at the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. See Harry Jerome Track Classic Staff. "Harry Jerome." (2011). Available from <http://www.harryjerome.com/history/harry-jerome/>. Accessed October 14, 2011.

³ Kidd Interview.

In this regard, Kidd succinctly notes the ironic advantage of cross-cultural solidarity: “It was easy for a White guy to say, not so easy for him to say [i.e., express solidarity with the protestors and affirm the validity of their actions] as a Black guy.”¹

Nonetheless, even for more privileged White athletes, the wounds over participation in the Olympic Project for Human Rights could run deep. Despite earning Pan American Games Gold Medals in Winnipeg in 1967,² the Harvard rowing eight did not handle the altitude well in Mexico City, making the finals but missing out on the medals. USOC President Doug Roby felt vindicated by that result and he wrote the Harvard coach, Harry Parker, a rather vengeful retrospective note especially for someone who was charged with encouraging the best from the United States Olympic Team:

At one time I, personally, was in favor of disqualifying you and your crew for acts grossly unbecoming to members of our Olympic Team.³ I am now glad that I did not encourage such a harsh action for I feel that the miserable performance of you and your crew at Mexico City will stand as a permanent record against you and the athletes which you led.⁴

Despite this “mark” on their record, all of the members of the Harvard rowing team who went to the 1968 Olympics managed to become either lawyers or medical doctors.⁵ One of these Olympians, Clive Livingston, has a quite different take on the legacy of the Olympic Project for Human Rights: “I think that we are still in need of

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Hickok Sports Staff, “Pan American Games Rowing Medalists.” Available from <http://www.hickoksports.com/history/panamrowing.shtml#meights>. Accessed September 25, 2010.

³ Charles Korr feels that this disciplinary action would never really have run its course. With reference to what might be described as layers of privilege, he comments: “You are not going to disqualify a bunch of White kids from Harvard. Even Avery Brundage wasn’t going to go that far.” From Korr Interview.

⁴ Doug Roby quoted in Hoffer, 242.

⁵ Hoffer, 242.

leadership, the kind of leadership that Peter and John and Tommie showed. In 1968, I think you had a coming together of a lot of different things that made it a very special year. I think it was the political context, the events. But also an unusual collection of people, who were willing to step up and show the kind of leadership that it takes to move societies from one level to the next.”¹ In any case, a number of the crew, including the Livingston brothers and Hoffmann, returned to the Olympic Summer Games in 1972 to win a silver medal.²

Turning back to the realities of the main protagonists in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, John Carlos remains troubled by the very fact that the injustices surrounding racism, education³ and sport he was struggling with in 1968 have still not been positively resolved:

There are little brush fires in our lives that we need to address: social issues, poverty, illiteracy, depression, drug addiction, child abuse, pollution, racism, and hunger. These are some of the things that John Carlos has been concerned with in his lifetime. I put my life on the line and faced many obstacles, like when it came down to standing up for children to allow them a chance to obtain decent education. I am concerned about all my brothers and sisters who are locked up in institutions where they represent the majority in prisons and a minority in America. I am concerned about the way Blacks are being exploited in sports and at colleges and universities. These institutions continue to pimp them by allowing them to attend their schools as a trade for their athleticism. Many of these Black athletes can't read and write. When their eligibility is up, the schools drop them like a hot

¹ Clive Livingston quoted in Norman, at 77 minutes.

² George Sayour, “Olympic Rowing Coxed Eights (8+) Men’s Past Medalists (1940 - 1972).” Available from http://paddling.about.com/od/safetyprecautions/a/Coxed_Eights_M_2.htm. Accessed September 25, 2010.

³ In the area of education specifically, Manning Marable speaks of the “unfilled promise of Brown,” referring to continued struggles that Blacks faced as, for example, Whites abandoned mainly Black school districts for “refuge” in predominantly White suburbs. See Marable, *Living Black History*, 193.

potato and bring the next Black athlete in. It is the same old game just being played in a modern way.¹

Despite the reality of these continuing cycles of structural violence,² Tommie Smith reports that while he was at San Jose State in 2003 to help start the fundraising process for the statue group, several student athletes reported to him: “now that they knew [about the work of the Olympic Project for Human Rights], they would take a more active role in the issues that affected them as athletes and as members of the community—even to lead.”³

On the issue of misunderstanding the action in Mexico, Smith is reflectively Socratic: “The victory was a human rights stand, and even if what happened on the victory stand was not fully understood, if it was confused as a civil rights stand or a Black athletes’ stand, at least it opened up the thought process, and it affected how people think about these issues to this day.”⁴ This distinction between civil rights and human rights was also important for Harry Edwards and helps explain his reasons for pursuing the Olympics as a site of protest:

It was an international stage. In the early 1960s, Malcolm X stated that we must move beyond civil rights, which made us depend on the political machinery of the United States, and begin to talk about human rights, which made our struggle of international significance. He argued that we had to see our circumstances as part of a broader system of inalienable rights that extended beyond the rights accrued through citizenship. This meant that we had to move beyond appeal to the US court system, the Congress and so forth, to the world stage. There are certain inalienable human rights, which the United Nations and the rest of the world recognize as legitimate, but which are violated in the US. That was what made us think of the Olympic Games.

¹ Carlos with Jackson, 307.

² See section 2.0.

³ Smith with Steele, 12-13.

⁴ Smith with Steele, 39.

The Olympic stage was second only to the United Nations as an international political forum. The Olympics was the only international/political stage that grassroots Blacks had access to. The Olympics were about politics: which nation would prevail, which nation would demonstrate social, political, economic, and physical superiority through the performance of its athletes. Athletes had become soldiers in a global struggle between East and West. That is why the Olympic podium became so important as a forum for political issues.¹

With reference to power dynamics, Charles Korr supports this aspect of Edwards' analysis by questioning the foundational premise that underlies the position that athletes should be apolitical: "This whole idea that sports and politics don't mix is just a flawed idea. They always mix. My basic position is that when some sports official tells you that politics and sports don't mix what he is really saying is that your politics shouldn't mix with his sports."² Korr reports that the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the treatment the athletes received from Avery Brundage are the prime examples he uses in his teaching to illustrate the point that sports are not apolitical.³

On another note regarding legacy, one participant in these events benefited the most in terms of an academic career. Edwards' activities with the Olympic Project for Human Rights inspired his PhD thesis work at Cornell, eventually refashioned into a book, *The Sociology of Sport*. Aware of that connection and its timing, one of the legacies that can be claimed for the Olympic Project for Human Rights was its contribution to the crafting of the sub-discipline of sport sociology.⁴ Furthermore, Edwards is probably the person in this story who has had the greatest trouble with cross-cultural solidarity. This is

¹ Harry Edwards interviewed by Leonard.

² Korr Interview.

³ Korr Interview.

⁴ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 215.

quite understandable given the numerous death threats and violent actions directed against him, such as the slaying of his dogs, by certain White people as a consequence of his activism. Yet, when Edwards' first child was born prematurely, his feelings of mistrust was eased in, of all places, an institutional context. Edwards recalls high levels of anxiety at the time:

After the doctors and paediatricians explained the difficulties and dangers involved with premature births, our initial distress over the situation intensified. We also worried about any possible reverberations stemming from my highly publicized political activities. Aside from the fact that doctors generally have a reputation for political conservatism, the doctors and nurses attending our baby were all *White*! So, after years of distrusting White people, almost as a matter of principle (“Blessed are those Black people who expect only the worst from White America for they shall not be disappointed”), I now had no choice but to trust a staff of White doctors and nurses with that to which my wife and me was *most* precious—our baby. *And I was not disappointed*. THE entire staff worked valiantly to save our daughter's life.¹

Such experiences may have contributed to Edwards' recalculation of his efforts in 1968. When he was asked, in 1998, what some of the failures of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were, he responded as follows (note the inter-racial framing of the potentially more substantive cross-cultural relationship):

Some of our greatest supporters—the Harvard University crew team, Hal and Olga Connolly, Bill Toomey—were White. Even with the tremendous Black Power thrust of the movement, and its emphasis on Black culture, I should have made a greater effort to publicly enunciate and embrace that interracial relationship. Even though the media didn't want to hear it, and they didn't because they wanted to paint it as a wild, militant Black Power thing, I should have put greater emphasis on the interracial dimensions of what we were trying to accomplish. We probably would have lost some people on the Black side, but I think the long term validity, clarity and honesty about what actually happened, and who was actually with us in this effort, would have been enhanced. It would have simply been more valid.

¹ Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*, 270. Emphasis in the original.

We also didn't do the job we should have done in terms of women. Even with all of those Black women athletes in the Olympics, we never really approached them. In today's language that means we were sexist, an indictment that could be extended to the whole civil rights movement.¹

7.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 7.1

In a number of ways, section 7.1 speaks for itself showing, through a representative sample of quotations, several ways the protests at Mexico 68 have been understood and misunderstood. At this point, it might be interesting to consider how participation in that reaction continues to take place in today's environment. A potential setting for such reflection and integration of the story may be on the San Jose State University campus.

On October 16, 2005, a monument commemorating the significance of Carlos and Smith's Olympic stand was dedicated at San Jose State. It is a statue group with full figurative representations of the two American athletes. Intentionally, it leaves the second place on the podium empty. On the occasion of the unveiling, Peter Norman (silver medalist in the race) said of their silent gesture: "It was like a pebble being thrown in the middle of a small pond and the reverberations are still travelling. Another pebble [the statue] has gone into the water and is travelling to the other end of the pond. It is a very big pond. It's the entire world."²

Of course, the statue group is an important marker of memory, a special example of the type of ripple that Norman is referring to above. Just as the story galvanized San Jose students' interest at the turn of the millennium (the genesis of the monument), the

¹ Harry Edwards quoted in Leonard.

² Peter Norman quoted in Johnstone and Norman, 279.

statue group can, in turn, stimulate new generations to discover the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. It can also challenge new generations to discover how the issues raised by the student-athletes at the time remain active, sometimes in new forms, even in the present day. Further, it can motivate those who experienced the event first hand, or on live television or in the newspapers in 1968, to revisit the story to see that the silent gesture had multiple meanings, which extend beyond a violence-tinged “Black Power” interpretation of the event.

To help encourage such shifts in consciousness, the sculptor, artist-activist Rigo²³, left the second place on the podium empty. This allows visitors, faculty, staff and students on the San Jose State Campus to take the silver medal position¹ and literally stand in Norman’s spot on the dais. One can surmise that the artist’s intention was that this empty place be equated with a geography (or a location) of solidarity that, in turn, might inspire empathetic consciousness and concrete commitments to social justice. Moreover, depending on which community a person occupying that space self-identifies, like Norman they could also be understood as claiming a space of cross-cultural solidarity.

However, even such a location has its own entanglements. For instance, this empty place is reminiscent of the way that Norman is often cropped out of photos² of the

¹ Steele, “Epilogue” in Smith with Steele, 256.

² This phenomenon is noted in a different manner by Gary Osmond, whose work I came across after I first drafted the above comments. Osmond analyses the varying ways that the photos of the 1968 men’s 200 metres medal presentation ceremony are presented for viewing. In particular, building on other theoretical reflections about photographic images, he focuses on the significance on the iconic images of the 200 metres protest at Mexico 68: “Through their use, manipulation, and changing presentation context, photographs change and with them their meanings change. The 1968 protest salute image confirms this. While the image has annealed [i.e., heated and cooled] in collective

moment on the 200 metres men's award podium in Mexico. The noteworthy frequency of the cropping out phenomenon is attested to by both my research, taken as a whole, and Bruce Kidd's observations.¹ In this light, one might ponder the potential for inspiring a deep cross-cultural solidarity, one that is absent when Norman's position on the podium, is vacant, erased or edited out.

At the same time, the moment of the main protest is interesting in itself. The reader will have noticed that the accounts of the different actors do not match up in a literal sense. However, they do match up emotionally and mark the event as a key moment in the athletes' lives. In this sense, much like in a courtroom context, the video of the event, which is available on YouTube in multiple versions, is not the final word. Since the majority of visitors at Mexico 68 were US citizens, the athletes were able to raise consciousness by disrupting, in what was essentially a "home crowd" situation, not only Olympic protocol but also US "patriotic" ritual. It follows, for instance, that the phenomenon of screaming out the national anthem (noted by Carlos) can easily be taken as a visceral reaction by some in the crowd who were seeking to amplify their understanding of patriotism because they felt it being threatened. This also explains the nature of the hate that Tommie Smith saw and felt in the faces of those who were uneasy as he and Carlos altered the patriotic script for American behaviour on the podium at an Olympics.

For Smith, however, this was no reason to doubt the veracity of his action. In his heart, along with the privilege of winning and the accompanying spotlight, came the duty

memory, in its reproduction and uses there are in fact various versions and iterations with differing emphases." See Osmond, 121.

¹ Kidd interview.

to protest. In this section, we see how a sense of duty had already permeated his consciousness. Therefore, Smith's quest for the podium was a quest for both athletic success and social victory. It became a share cropper's son's dual effort: (1) striving to fulfil his athletic potential with disciplined training and (2) seeking to find his activist voice through the exercise of his agency. In this light, we can conclude that the athletic victory of becoming a medalist and the social victory of raising his voice in the face of injustice, are joined both symbolically and emotionally in the silent gesture crafted to speak volumes.

In this regard, Smith had followed through with his commitments. He took an area afforded by his own excellence and used it as a location for performing an action geared towards social justice and human rights. He had employed the dais and the attention focussed upon it as a platform for seeking to foster positive social transformation. While some still routinely shade the demonstration as undertaken against racism and discrimination, Norman's framing of the events on that fateful night reminds us that most of all it was geared towards affirming human rights, social justice and peace.

This triadic affirmation recalls for me the important point made by Canadian philosopher and community peacebuilder, Mary Jo Leddy. Based on her experience of living in solidarity with refugees in Toronto, she asserts: "What a difference to be not only against violence but for peace."¹ This sentiment certainly rings true through the main athlete-actors' understanding of their roles in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. They kept both sets of goals in focus while working for positive social change. Recognizing the gravity of the historical moment they were facing, the athletes did their

¹ Mary Jo Leddy. *The Other Face of God: When the Stranger Calls Us Home* (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, NY, 2011), 92.

best to explain the symbolism of the protest. In this manner, they kept the moral high ground relative to an unjust establishment.

It is from the athletes' efforts to maintain this moral high ground and control the symbolism around their story that we now have the delightful tidbit of Smith and Carlos sneaking back into the village in order to be ejected for the cameras. Nonetheless, as we saw in this section, the press did not always respond to the initiatives of the athletes or fit their perspective into media reporting of the story as it was brought forward. Applying a PACS lens to this story reveals that, for the most part, patterns of representation in already existing media scripts were grafted onto this narrative with reductionist results.¹

On another note about media, related to this section, I am very grateful to Hoffer for bringing forth George Foreman's perceptions of the student-athlete protests at Mexico 68. The great boxer's reminiscences serve to challenge the dichotomy (also present in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*), which was active in reporting the events at Mexico 68, a script contrasting patriotic boxers with rebellious track and field athletes. However, that script does not adequately take into account the international solidarist dimensions as represented by Australian, Cuban and West German supporters. Given the above, it is not surprising that such a script helps to account for the obscuring of Norman's participation in the protests after the men's 200 metres final. It also interesting in regards to the boxing team is Gault's reaction to Paul Hoffman, which serves to illustrate the point that the "Domination System"² relies on internal collaborators amongst an oppressed group. Unfortunately, the material presented in this chapter also seems to point towards including the great Jesse Owens as an internal collaborator in such a system. One further

¹ On this point, also see section 6.5 and Carlos' comment in section 7.1.

² This is Wink's term. See section 2.7.

question that is raised about Edwards' condemnation of Foreman is whether his lack of presence at the games may have contributed to the choice words Edwards had not only for the boxers but also for Evans. Edwards' reading of the events has stuck.¹ In this regard, it may be interesting to consider how much Edwards was depending on the mainstream media for crafting his retrospective on the revolt of the Black athlete after the games.

Another feature of this story that relates to the value of personal dialogue and storytelling, has to do with Foreman's recollection of the moment when he was made aware of his manipulation. The picture is captivating. The boxer is in his best clothes and displaying his medal when he is figuratively knocked out by the realization that his achievements were being used as propaganda for an unjust system—an insight shared by a friend from an economically less well-off urban area who was disappointed with Foreman's example. This was a eureka moment, we learn, that caused the boxer to devalue his gold medal for years.

On the other side of the spectrum, this section ends with the story of Carlos's subsequent racing career where riot police were stationed trackside as he competed. This overreaction serves to demonstrate how, following President Nixon's example, the establishment adopted a siege mentality in relation to anyone who seemed to them a social radical at the time. This particular display of the state's power for violence is especially bizarre when one considers that the Mexico 68 protest, which in the

¹ Edwards' reading of this dichotomy is even reproduced without being problematized in Witherspoon's fine book. See Witherspoon, 134.

establishment's mind warranted such measures, was—according to Smith, Carlos and the recorded evidence—a *silent gesture*.¹

While recognizing limitations in the reporting and the establishment's reaction to these events, it is at the same time important to recall that the media interviews also produced poignant moments. For instance, Carlos' immediate response to the charge that the athletes were merely seeking attention and publicity for their own sake ranks as a telling reminder of the fundamental questions of justice and identity, which were intended to be invoked by the protest. With his initial responses, Carlos demonstrated that he was more than a pawn, actively redirecting media attention away from his person and towards concrete matters of substantive peace, inclusive of economic justice and social health.

Both Carlos and Smith invoked these issues with the powerful image of not being able to eat gold medals. However, as we know, the silent gesture came to be understood in quite different terms by a number of people. Norman's comments provide a clue as to how this happened. He highlights the problem of the athletes' agency being rejected, through a *de facto* denial of their ability to explain the symbolism of the protest with their own voice. These dynamics compounded a phenomenon of misunderstanding around the protest as they manifested themselves by denying adequate space for the athletes' voices in the majority of media coverage.

One of the reasons I hesitated to offer too much comment and analysis on the athletes' stories in the main body of this and the preceding three chapters is that the above-identified problem remains manifest today. In fact, I do not think that I can escape

¹ Further, I shall argue below that the silent gesture at the Mexico City Olympics can be classified as part of the history of cultures of peace. See section 8.3.

this tension and, for example, concede that I will probably reproduce misunderstandings and downplay their perspectives even as I strive, with the resources available, to share the athletes' stories in the most authentic manner possible. Osmond reproduces elements of this same tension when discussing the prioritization of "sports politics" in Australian newspaper coverage from 1968. In so doing, he only uses that term to mark the "sports politics" of the establishment. For example, the *Melbourne Age*'s coverage of Mexico 68 describes the Black athletes as "angry Negroes" who inappropriately turned the Olympics into a site of protest for equality. At least the athletes might be happy that the equality portion of their message got through. However, we also can see that, with the benefit of hindsight, members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were, themselves, entering into "sports politics" with their protest.

For his part, Ron Clarke effectively refutes the charge of inappropriateness in relation to the protest. The implication of his point is that if the system gives (often young and passionate) athletes access to the stage and, further, holds that stage up as something to be coveted and earned, then establishment figures should not be surprised if athletes choose to exercise their agency to make political statements—having earned the spotlight according to those very terms of reference. Nonetheless, this section also shows that not all of Smith and Carlos' teammates were happy with their actions. Willie Davenport's immediate reaction of refocusing on the script of journeying to Mexico solely to win a gold medal (a goal he achieved) reminds us that dissention is all too common amongst those who ought to develop solidaritst consciousness (in this case, in terms of shared identities as teammates and/or as Black people) in a post-colonial context.¹ Similarly, as

¹ Compare Spivak.

we saw, Larry Questad feels that the protest detracted from the amazing performance on the track that day.

A concern with exercising what Lederach identifies as our moral imagination,¹ points towards possibilities other than those articulated by Davenport and Questad, through taking a “both/and” approach to the problem, appreciating both the world record-breaking athletic performance and the protest for the cause of human rights as tremendous events. Indeed, as I have attempted to demonstrate above at numerous points in this thesis, it is particularly remarkable that both of these intertwined performances could be carried out in the same historical moment. That awe-inspiring dual achievement points to the fortitude of those involved. Moreover, in light of concern for what Galtung names as structural violence,² the statements of Coach George Payton and President Robert Clark demonstrate how the Olympic Project for Human Rights protests point to markers of social injustice, which had to be addressed if society were ever to be representative of substantive peace. It is interesting to note that even fairly established figures, like Clark, received hate mail for expressing such solidarity. This guilt by association extended much further as is evidenced by John Carlos’ wife taking her own life in the aftermath of the reaction to the protest. Bringing to mind Câmara’s example,³ this shows the real difficulties of direct and indirect violence coming together. Through this destructive combination people can be affected in their bodies, if they are even seen as being associated with someone challenging an unjust status quo.

¹ See section 2.4.

² See section 2.0.

³ See section 2.2.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 7.2

Conflict transformation practitioners can learn a lot from the events at the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. As may already be evident, and will be further delineated in this section, conflict resolution techniques that failed to recognize the agency of all the actors involved were all too prevalent throughout the most active period of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Avery Brundage was unwise to fan the flames by trying to assert his power over elite athletes who were aware of their agency.¹ Owing to this denial of agency (amongst other factors), to recall the language of Melchin and Picard, there was no “magic of mediation” in this case.² Several of the athletes knew that there were better ways to deal with conflict than the reactive posture they too often experienced from officials in the run-up to and aftermath of Mexico 68. However, those officials, with an interest in maintaining the status quo, were often not open to dialogue on these issues, even though such dialogue might have fostered more substantively peaceful outcomes. For example, Bruce Kidd recalls an experience that accompanied his time in Illinois as a graduate student:

When Chicago was announced as the site of the democratic convention, my wife and I were part of a number of groups in the city and at the University of Chicago who went to the city government and said: “You know, given the opposition to the Viet Nam war, there are going to be protests at the convention. Let’s work together to ensure that these take place in a peaceful way,³ supported by accommodation,

¹ Such an awareness of agency would come to the athletes even in the sense of having undergone the psychological processes necessary to hold world records and championship titles in the way many of these individuals did. Such experiences surely gave them a certain feeling of being able to shape and impact history.

² See section 2.8.

³ This effort previews the recommendations made by Vern Neufield Redekop and Shirley Paré in *Beyond Control: A Mutual Respect Approach to Protest Crowd-Police Relations*. Their work offers a framework for fostering mimetic structures of blessing, characterized by mutual respect, which they assert would prevent the type of violence that overtook

even if it was tent cities, toilets, first aid and so forth.” And the city said: “Absolutely not, anyone coming to this city will be arrested.” And so a group was put together. It was led by medical students and they put together a group called the Medical Committee for Human Rights, to work with churches and community groups to do what the city should have done. And my wife and I volunteered for that. And in the end I became a volunteer ambulance driver, driving a station wagon to rescue people who had been beaten up by the cops. And my wife ran a medical centre.¹

Unfortunately, we see clearly in section 7.2 that Brundage’s association with an unjust status quo has a long genealogy also connected to other misunderstood events in American and global history. For example, the talk of a 1936 boycott over the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany, calls into question the view that Americans were unaware of the mistreatment of minorities under Hitler’s regime until well into the Second World War. More significantly for our immediate subject matter, Brundage’s comments about his first prominent effort at conflict resolution resulting in a firm and trustworthy

downtown Chicago during the 1968 democratic convention. Conceptually, their framework is influenced by René Girard’s anthropological theory concerning imitation, contagion, and violence. Building upon Girard’s analysis, Redekop and Paré argue that positive forms of mimesis can mark police-protest crowd relationships to the ultimate benefit of healthy democratic processes. Key here for the purposes of positive imitation and social growth is the presence of persons who model respectful and nonviolent interaction between police and protest crowds. Such an orientation, further informed by the principles of community-based conflict resolution, has the potential to help effect a paradigmatic shift beyond crowd control, or even crowd management, to a framing focussed on mutual respect. Within Redekop’s and Paré’s mutual respect paradigm, mimetic structures of blessing facilitate the type of dialogue that prevents deep rooted identity-based conflicts. Applied to police-protest crowd relations, it holds out the prospect for creative manifestations of conflict and higher levels of consciousness emerging out of demonstrations that highlight injustice and oppression. See Vern Neufeld Redekop and Shirley Paré, *Beyond Control: A Mutual Respect Approach to Protest Crowd-Police Relations* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010). It is unfortunate that such an approach had not been more fully applied to police-protest crowd relations in the run-up to the 1968 Democratic Convention (as we can glean from Kidd’s comments here) or during the recent protests at the G20 meetings in Toronto (2010).

¹ Kidd interview.

guarantee that Jews will not be harmed in Nazi Germany, with the advantage of historical hindsight, seems absurd to say the least. That experience alone ought to have been enough to put the idea that the Olympics could ever be apolitical out of the rhetorical reach of Brundage. Yet, he continued to extol the line that politics and the Olympics did not mix.

As it was, to achieve compliance with his vision of order, Brundage used a divide and conquer strategy. Showing a rudimentary knowledge of the value of group cohesion in the upholding of social norms, he even, as we saw above, threatened to disqualify the entire US Olympic team if any American athlete made another gesture like Smith and Carlos. Yet, in all these efforts, as Murphy implies, Brundage bizarrely and repeatedly overstepped his bounds, doing virtually everything within his power (and misuse of power) to personify the unjust establishment that the Olympic Project for Human Rights was seeking to transform. In support of such analysis, we see that Brundage repeatedly displayed poor conflict resolution technique by allowing no space for those who seemingly had less power to feel a part of the processes affecting them.

As Korr's comments begin to show, we see that Brundage sought to achieve compliance 'down a chain' instead of dialogue 'within a circle.' Rather than seek out the services of a mutually concerned or disinterested mediator, the IOC President dispatched Owens to reiterate the establishment position at the meeting called by Smith and Carlos. Further, Owens tried to fracture cross-cultural solidarity by asking the White athletes present to leave. In such a manner, he quickly eroded his remaining moral capital¹ with

¹ Recall that prior to the 1968 Olympics, Owens had participated in a film denouncing the boycott idea (see section 7.2), thus diminishing his potential to act as a mediator between athletes and the sports establishment.

the 1968 Olympians. This erosion of moral capital led to the heartbreaking moment when the great Jesse Owens was chased out of the room. Because of the athletes' early hopes (and with the advantage of hindsight), it seems that Owens could have been an effective mutually interested mediator between the student-athletes and establishment figures in the IOC and USOC.¹ Yet, this was an opportunity lost as Owens presented himself to the athletes as a pawn, an "Uncle Tom," and mouthpiece for Brundage. This is why the 1968 Olympians ultimately felt they had to ask him to leave the room.

The establishment did little better on other fronts. In attempting to discipline Paul Hoffmann, USOC officials charged him with corrupting the Olympic ideal. However, with hindsight it seems that it was the members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights who had the Games' ideals on their side. For example, the nature of the pressure of being hauled before a disciplinary board the day before a final makes anyone with athletic experience wonder why the USOC would do such a thing if they wanted the men's rowing eight to carry through with their medal potential the next day.²

For his part, coach Payton Jordan's recognition of the athletes as moral actors, and his refusal to comply with a top-down conflict management process that lacked transparency, marks his experience of the dispute resolution process at Mexico. To rework a slogan from the time, it showed that the athletes could trust someone over 30

¹ Despite how events unfolded, Owens could have been a choice mutually interested mediator because (1) he had the ear of the establishment in 1968, (2) the huge clout his four gold medals had in relation to an unjust system at Berlin 36, (3) the actual effects of sports officials' discipline on his life and (4) his own telling experiences of discrimination in the US.

² One would think that USOC officials would be interested in fostering optimal performance from their athletes and the concomitant higher medal counts. This assumption does not, however, accord with the spirit of their interventions and the tone of the letter from Doug Roby. See sections 7.2 and 7.4.

years of age. For the athletes under Jordan's charge, the sanction whereby the USOC had Mexican officials revoke Smith and Carlos' visas raises issues about how far the US imperial reach went into Latin American domestic affairs at this time. That question reveals yet another sense in which, as Kidd's comments imply, having proper procedures in place would have resulted in a different outcome. Others concur with the spirit of that conclusion.

When asked specifically to consider whether or not the athletes were dealt with fairly in the aftermath of the protest, Charles Korr replied: "No, that is the easiest question to answer. They were not even dealt with fairly within the confines of their own rules. Remember the US Olympic Committee only sent them [Smith and Carlos] home when the IOC President [Brundage] threatened to ban the whole US team."¹ Korr goes on to describe his preferred solidarist outcome: "I would have loved to have seen the USOC have the guts to come out of that meeting and assemble the US press and say, 'by the way the IOC President has threatened to ban every US athlete.' It would have been the biggest Olympic story in decades. And there is no way the IOC would have carried through [on the threat]."²

As things unfolded, the agency of the athletes was all but ignored in the conflict resolution process. Yet, the protest has proved enduring, even if it is often misunderstood. Salvaging something hopeful from this malaise, Bruce Kidd notes a positive outcome of the athletes' transgression in terms of treatment for future generations of elite athletes: "You know one of the victories of the athletes' rights movement has been the creation of the International Court of Arbitration for Sport and here, in Canada, the Sport Dispute

¹ Korr Interview.

² Korr Interview.

Resolution Centre of Canada.”¹ But these developments were too late for Carlos and Smith. In 1968, Brundage was unrepentant, he even edited Carlos and Smith out of the official film of the 1968 Olympics.² Brundage went on to head the IOC for another four years, including during the next Summer Games in Munich, which were marked by an international hostage taking.³ Despite his editing after Mexico 68, it did prove, however, difficult to erase the student-athletes’ story.

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 7.3

This section opened with part of the story of long jumper Phil Shinnick who had been a student-activist at the University of Washington. Shinnick was also a Captain in the US Air Force. He gave an interview to ABC television expressing his support for the positions of the Black athletes and their social justice activities during the Lake Tahoe trials. It is interesting to note that even when threatening court marshal and a tour of duty in South Viet Nam the general who voiced those threats recognized the empathetic nature of Shinnick’s solidarity. That the general seemed to think of empathy as something meriting punishment is another matter.

Relatedly, in regards to authenticity in following an informed conscience, are Tommie Smith’s comments to the BBC in 1972.⁴ Yet, as that interview implied, following his conscience had cost Smith on many levels. Those multidimensional effects reflect inequity within the larger society. That inequity ran deep. The car dealership story drives home, on a more micro level, how athletes were put on public display for moments of focused attention only to be returned to a marginal position once the spotlight was

¹ Kidd Interview.

² Murphy, 288.

³ Brundage retired after Munich 72 and he died three years later.

⁴ I pick up on these themes in section 8.3.

elsewhere. Also noteworthy in this section are the multiple consequences that Smith endured in relation to his person and the health of his family after confronting the “Domination System” in a prophetic manner.¹ Although the forced ending of his relationship with ROTC in 1968 might be considered a happy outcome from a pacifist perspective, the spirit in which the severing of the relationship happened seems merely an attempt to remove someone deemed “undesirable” from the campus officer training program.

In this sense, Carlos’ image of the sanctions as rubbing salt on the wound (employing what Wink calls the “Domination System”²), poignantly captures the vulnerability of those from marginal communities who take a stand for human rights. Carlos’ inability to find stable employment in the late 1960s and the marginalization of those close to him at the time show how dissent is dealt with by such a system. As we saw above, such issues continued to mark the experience of these athletes for a long time. That the Domination System has a reach far beyond the US is symbolized concretely in both Evans’ decision to leave the Americas and the fact that the Nigerian team he arrived to coach at Montreal 76 was also affected by the politics of race. However, in what is something of a sign of positive transformation,³ Evans ended his coaching career at a school and in a place that had once been closely associated with the Jim Crow Laws. Indeed, Evans had returned to the very place and where those laws had spurred his father’s move to California.

¹ See Wink (section 2.7) and Heschel (section 2.6) for the resonance of the language that ends this sentence.

² See section 2.7.

³ See section 2.4.

Yet, at the end of 1968, such opportunities lay far in the future. Perhaps ironically, at least from a standpoint concerned with substantive peace and social justice, it was the reaction to many of the events referenced in Nixon's acceptance speech for the GOP nomination¹ that gave the Olympic Project for Human Rights its momentum, even as it helped generate political capital for the future president. The riots that followed King's assassination as well as the aftermath of the second Kennedy assassination and the riots at the National Democratic Convention in Chicago played to Nixon's platform. Yet these events also helped to nourish the student-athletes in their activism.

In the end, in terms of the courage it took to make a stand at Mexico 68, it is important to highlight that all of the main athlete-actors paid a dear price for participating in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. They lost spouses, were deprived of chances to return to the Olympics, felt compelled to try their hand at other sports,² and generally were denied opportunities for betterment in their home countries. As such, they could certainly be forgiven for falling prey to the reasoning of the American 200 metres finalist, Larry Questad, who declared that they would have been happier, healthier and wealthier had they merely followed customary podium etiquette.³

The main question then becomes, 'Was it worth it?' For the athletes the answer is 'yes.' And in the end, we can see⁴ that history has, in a certain crucial sense at least, started to redeem the actors and their action. A tension here (returning to Carlos' point of

¹ For a take on this history, that dovetails well with the work of Galtung, see Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

² These athletes took this route into other sports despite having achieved a level of excellence in track and field that should have provided an economically secure platform for the rest of their lives.

³ See section 7.3.

⁴ Notable in section 7.3.

redemptive suffering and my analysis in the footnote¹), is to find a way to separate the suffering associated with the protest from the category of “good” as it relates to standing up for a righteous cause. This would, of course, require a transformed social situation due to the fact that suffering perpetrated as a result of an unjust social system is far too often the cost for challenging an injustice supported by the status quo. Yet, fostering such transformation is important for positive social change as signified, for example, by Lederach’s reflection on the value of exercising the moral imagination.²

Commentary on and Analysis of Materials Presented in Section 7.4

As this research has shown in a number of places, the perceived legacy of the student-athlete protests at Mexico 68 is sometimes far from clear. Nonetheless, amongst those perceptions there is a discernible resonance with efforts to broaden the legacy of the Olympic Project for Human Rights along cross-cultural lines. For example, in 2008, John Carlos led off the alternative human rights torch relay in San Francisco’s Market Square. He was surrounded by Tibetan flags, Falun Gong practitioners and other concerned citizens in an activist performance that demonstrates Carlos’ continued support for human rights.³ Yet, despite repeated concerns about human rights abuses in China, the attention paid to human rights issues during Beijing 08 paled in comparison to the often uncritical praise afforded to the Chinese government as a result of hosting the Olympics.

¹ See Section 6.3.

² See section 2.4.

³ Christopher Heredia, Carolyn Jones, Stacy Finz. Chronicle Staff Writers. “Numbers low for S.F. Human Rights Torch Rally.” (Sunday, April 6, 2008). Available from [http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/04/06/MNA7100OB9.DTL &hw=human+rights+torch&sn=006&sc=473#ixzz10mkDzOgX](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/04/06/MNA7100OB9.DTL&hw=human+rights+torch&sn=006&sc=473#ixzz10mkDzOgX). Accessed September 27, 2010.

With reference to the historic group, and presumably informed by his consultancy work with professional sports teams, Harry Edwards was candid, in a 1998 interview with David Leonard of *Colorlines*,¹ about how the legacy of the Olympic Project for Human Rights is brought forward today. He went on to note how the presence of Black athletes as a force working for social equity is subdued in the present context of the cooption of sport by monetary imperatives in the US:

Everything moves on. Nothing stands still. The athletes who stood up thought of themselves as human beings. I am not just an athlete, I am a man. The movement started to run out of energy. Once there were concessions, once Black athletes were making more money, playing more positions, and getting more recognition than ever, the force and direction of the movement dissipated. By our own success things have been granted and cleavages in the Black community have been opened up. The Black middle class is clearly now very different than the Black underclass. Athletes no longer really talk about Black athletic solidarity because there is not a lot of difference between the circumstances of Black athletes and White athletes in the sports we have major access to, except that there may be more of us, and maybe we make more money. So the focus on Black athletes as a group has dissipated.

So, ironically, the outcome of the actions of Muhammad Ali, Tommie Smith, John Carlos, Jim Brown, Curt Flood, Bill Russell, Spencer Haywood and others who paved the way is Dennis Rodman, Deion Sanders, and so forth. There are a whole bunch of athletes whose focus is on ME, and I am so militantly about me, that there are no rules that I need recognize. Whatever serves to promote me is legitimate. So you have guys who are not demonstrating and raising a fist at a podium in deference to a greater cause, but doing anything to draw attention to themselves as individuals.

Today's Black athlete is very different. Their identity is different—they live in a rich, largely White world, a world where Black individuality is tolerated so long as it is without reference to the Black

¹ *Colorlines* is one of the arms of the Applied Research Centre, which seeks to promote “racial justice through media, research and activism.” See Applied Research Centre Staff. “About US.” Available from <http://www.arc.org/content/blogsection/4/200/>. Accessed December 29, 2012.

community. If you asked them about the history of the Black athlete, many couldn't tell you much. They don't find that history relevant to their world. Some even get angry when you ask them about it. One up-and-coming NBA star was asked about Oscar Robertson¹ and he said, "Don't know, don't care, and don't take me there." They don't care about whose shoulders they stand on. They have no idea about who set the table at which they are feasting. And the worse [*sic.*] part about it is not that they are ignorant of this history, but they are militantly ignorant. The sad part about it is that when people forget how things came about, they are almost certainly doomed to see them go. And I think that is where this generation of Black athletes may be headed in sports.²

In broader ethical terms, which are perhaps reflective of his own participation in the Olympic Project for Human Rights and his subsequent efforts to further promote deep equity in national and international sport, Bruce Kidd credits the protests with making some substantive changes to equity in athletics:

The original effort was to change American society not just sport. The target was not initially sport. The target was initially much broader. But the most important effect of the protest and all of the other protests that were waged in other ways in that period of time was to transform racism in North American sport and to at least transform the official policy of most sports organizations, particularly professional sport and the US college system. But unapologetic racism, the expectation that Black athletes or Jewish athletes had to merely tough it out, that disappeared as a result of these protests. Now there is a context of the US civil rights movement, might it have happened anyway? But without this huge mobilization, significant mobilization, and highly visible protest, I don't think it would have happened as completely or as quickly.³

As such, it is fitting, as we saw in this section, that a number of the great track and field stars from the 1980s and 1990s have weighed in favourably on the legacy of the student-athletes protests at Mexico 68, crediting them for breaking important ground in

¹ After growing up in segregated housing, Oscar Robertson, as president of the NBA players association, helped secure player's rights in advance of the NBA-ABA merger in 1976.

² Harry Edwards interviewed by Leonard. Emphasis in the original.

³ Kidd Interview.

multiple senses. On a personal note, which offers something of a contrast to points made by Edwards just above, it was something of a treat for me to gather the material in section 7.4. Roughly in parallel with the joy that Murphy felt in helping Lee Evans get his story out in more concentrated form,¹ I got to see some of the athletes that shaped my generation of competitors comment on the value of the statements made by members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. The real transformation becomes palpable here, even as I fully acknowledge with Norman, that there is a long way to go in terms of the issues identified in many of those statements. I would add, building upon Carlos' comments, that the conditions of substantive equity which the Olympics Project for Human Rights sought to achieve are further disrupted by new manifestations of these and similar issues.

An incarnation of the latter categories can be seen in Smith's worry that the statue group at San Jose might be vandalized. That worry honestly shows the struggle to accept a fluid situation by those who have been wounded. The complex interactions between context and changing views of history in play here affected Smith on a deeply personal level. These interactions extend throughout the stories shared in this thesis. For example, a complex set of socio-political factors are active in the exercise of cross-cultural solidarity as exposed in the story of the Harvard eight receiving the note from Doug Roby. Moreover, these dynamics are active in Kidd's honest retrospective about engaging in a solidarist discourse while Harry Jerome stood by his side. The great Canadian sprinter would certainly face issues of racism and discrimination and possibly

¹ See section 2.10.

the guilt by association when he returned to the US context to finish his collegiate eligibility.

In summing up the legacy of these events, Smith is careful to emphasize that the silent gesture was a human rights stand that has been misunderstood in other categories. Putting a positive spin on this phenomena of misinterpretation, he also points to the value of the event today as something that gets people thinking. In my view, which is supported below,¹ the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights can get people thinking about cultures of peace, hence, the importance of revisiting such misunderstood, yet prominent, events. To give a taste of that promise, we might build on Edwards' comments about Mexico 68 as an appropriate stage for the Olympic Project for Human Rights to make its statements, and ask, 'What better podium could be found at the time for student-athletes to express their support for international human rights norms than at an international event avowedly geared towards peace and understanding?'

Applying a different theoretical lens to these events and building on the anthropological work of John MacAloon, Douglas Hartmann argues that the enduring power of the protest after the men's 200 metres final at Mexico 68 is that it inserted "Blackness" into a ceremonial system that only makes space for national categories and excludes other non-national identities.² This is an informative point but it should be added that the demonstration also inserted human rights and transnational solidarity into that same ceremonial system in the form of many of the athletes' expressed motivations

¹ See section 8.3.

² Hartmann, xv. Amy Bass makes a similar point and both conclusions are previewed in the thesis work of Maureen Margaret Smith. See section 2.10.

for their participation in and support for the Olympic Project for Human Rights and the very title of the organization.

Finally, it is important to note Edwards' conciliatory tone in the block quote which closes section 7.4. This tone lends further validity to a premise underlying my research: that there is a continuing value in looking at these stories from a PACS perspective in the second decade of the 21st century, an assertion that will be supported further below.¹ As part of that approach, I have endeavoured to show that the emic should be taken into consideration along with the etic.² In that spirit, I believe it is important to give the last words on the legacy of the protest to one of the athletes involved in the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Summing up the continuing worth of Smith and Carlos' protest, Ralph Boston succinctly states: "Those guys did more to change this country than I think we will ever realize and I am glad they are my friends, man."³

¹ See section 8.3.

² See section 3.1.

³ Ralph Boston quoted in Small, at 69 minutes.

Chapter Eight— Conclusion: Players and Cultures of Peace at Mexico 68

8.0 Introduction

The action and the photo were a dramatic call for Justice. All I know is that what Tommie and John did was a job well done and a job that still needs to be done.¹ –Peter Norman

As we saw above,² Carlos asserts that he, Norman and Smith were pawns fulfilling a divinely-willed mandate as they made their statement on the platform afforded them at the Olympic summer games in Mexico City. Smith has recently concurred with that sentiment, saying “this was a divine mandate ... I had to do it.”³ However, an important distinction needs to be drawn here about the “pawns” of these sprinters. In a cogent manner, Carlos’ statement is another way of asserting that the athlete-activist “players” involved in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights were theologically and/or solidarity-motivated actors, not pawns, *vis a vis* the cultures, structures and institutions that coalesced to mount a formable reality of oppression in the late 1960s. Of course, the term “players” in the title of this thesis is somewhat (intentionally) misleading because individual track and field athletes are not players in a formal sense. They are, however, players in the terms of the structure-agency debate, in that they are (rather talented) actors as evidenced by their performances on the stage afforded them by their work and athletic prowess. Perhaps more substantively, they are

¹ Peter Norman quoted in Korr, “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep,” S11.

² See section 6.3.

³ Tommie Smith. “Tommie Smith (The 1968 Famous Olympics Salute) - U.S. Gold Medalist.” (11 July 2012). *Sky News*. Available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDH3ndmkCns>. Accessed June 24, 2013.

also active in terms of seeking liberation and success amidst a racist and oppressive context.

In view of this dynamic sense of “players” we see, for example, that while Smith acknowledges Edwards’ help in getting him there, Smith nonetheless maintains his own agency, repeatedly referring to himself as his own man. Looking at the attendance roll call at the 1968 Olympics, Harry Edwards, on Smith’s telling: “stayed home to steer clear of the death threats he received.”¹ Moreover, Edwards was not at the second trials either. Apparently, from the athletes’ perspective he was scared away after his dog had been killed and strung out. Carlos recalls his disappointment at Edwards’ absence in the immediate run up to the Mexico City Games:

I thought about the situation. Shit, all of us had been threatened and we were going to Mexico where we will be in the open for anyone to shoot at us at any time. So why punk out and give the White racists the privilege of knowing that they put fear in your heart? I had no fear, and I was disappointed with Harry from that point on.²

Smith carries Carlos’ analysis further, recognizing that while Edwards had his own struggles they were still different actors: “For all that he did to plant the seeds of protest in Mexico City, because of his idea for a boycott of those Games, he was not the man on the victory stand that night, nor the man who told us what to do when John and I got there.”³ As we have seen at numerous points above, there is enough historical truth in this statement to take Smith’s claim of agency at face value. Indeed, it would seem that, in the terms of the title of this thesis, Smith is certainly a player, asserting his agency on a world stage. As a result, it is a person like Jesse Owens who, unfortunately given the

¹ Smith with Steele, 123.

² Carlos with Jackson, 159.

³ Smith with Steele, 123.

symbolic power of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, comes off as the pawn (of the establishment) in this narrative. As a matter of fact, in relation to the dynamics of emasculation described above,¹ Owens was, even in 1968, described as a “fine boy” by Brundage.² Should there remain any doubt in Smith’s case, he erases that uncertainty when commenting on the founding of the Olympic Project for Human Rights in his 2007 biography: “Some people had the impression that I was pushed into the movement. I wasn’t pushed, and it wasn’t a situation where someone made me get involved.”³ Rather, Smith notes that his life and educational experiences left him with a sense of responsibility to use the platform he was given to address inequity and uphold the value of respect for human rights in this world.

8.1 General Findings

In this section, I unfold twelve important insights that flow from the analysis of the data presented above. This list is offered humbly, recognizing that its summative nature will necessarily be reductionist and that in a significant sense the thesis taken as a whole represents the most relevant “findings.” These considerations can be taken as lessons emerging from employing a lens concerned with peace and justice to navigate the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. In turn, and not surprisingly, this generates a series of points relevant to the PACS field. Immediately below, in line with the imperatives of an academic thesis, I will theoretically ground these points. However, in different contexts these points could be unfolded in another manner. For example, they could be used as a means to navigate the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights

¹ See section 6.5.

² Smith with Steele, 165.

³ Smith with Steele, 161.

or even presented as a standalone series of points to start a dialogue with interested parties about issues relevant to peace and justice, after some background information on student athlete activism at Mexico 68 had been effectively communicated.

With these qualifications in mind, what is presented now are a dozen general findings, which should have resonance beyond the immediate case study as they challenge unjust status quo supporting notions. The “harvestable” insights that flow from the data are as follows:¹

1. A single iconic and significant image can hold the key to unlocking a number of stories (including exposing the misdirected nature of some of the myths that may have grown up around that image).

A good number of people have seen the image of Smith, Norman and Carlos on the dais at Mexico 68. When I am asked the question, ‘What is your thesis about?’ (as I often am in my line of work), I have found that the easiest way to proceed is to ask another question: ‘Have you seen the picture of the athletes with their fists in the air at

¹ In terms of the numbered points themselves (minus the unfolding), I take my immediate inspiration for presenting my findings in this manner from Sister Cyril Mooney’s presentation of the lessons gleaned from her cross-cultural education methods (centred on community development) to my Cross-Cultural Education class at the University of Manitoba in June, 2012. She was in Winnipeg, among other reasons, to accept an honorary doctorate in recognition of her life’s work. I would certainly consider her an example of someone using human rights framing to help build cultures of peace, as is emphasized in the human rights curriculum she authored for both state and religious schools in West Bengal (and now greater India) and her participation in the Arthur V. Mauro Centre’s Winnipeg International Storytelling Festival. Most importantly building on her understanding of Roman Catholic social thought and liberation theology, Sister Cyril stands in solidarity with all socially concerned residents of Kolkata. Together, they publically name repressive social structures and work for policy change. She has been further legitimized in these efforts by being named a Padma Shri award winner (India’s highest honour for service to the nation). She was given the award on March 24th, 2007 by the president of India and the news made the front page of the *Irish Times*. See Loreto Sealdah Staff, “Felicitations and Thanksgiving Prayer Service,” *Ripples and Rainbows* (May, 2007): 11-14. For more on Cyril Mooney see Ashoka Staff, “Cyril Mooney”. Available from [http:// www.ashoka.org/node/3561](http://www.ashoka.org/node/3561). Accessed July 10, 2012.

the 1968 Olympics?’ Almost everyone asked this question answers affirmatively. As our conversation unfolds, I find that sometimes they assume the image was taken at Munich 72. Sometimes they assume it was captured after a 100 metres race. Quite frequently they assume the protest captured in the image was centred on a violent “Black Power” statement. Our conversation and this research serve as something of a corrective in terms of each of these misunderstandings. Most notably, this research points to how dismissing that image as solely about “Black Power” serves to dull its significance for cultures of peace.¹

2. *The Olympic Games are political.*

The athletes themselves and Charles Korr emphasize explicitly that to claim that sport and/or the Olympic Games are apolitical is nonsensical and tends to serve segmented interests.² These are crucial points to take from this thesis. A question that arises here is how the political nature of the Olympics can be more fully transformed (perhaps most appropriately in line with the Olympic ideals) into a location for the practice of the politics of peace.³

3. *Cross-cultural solidarity can be present in activist events where it is not immediately obvious or emphasized.*

Surveying the contemporary context in the US, in particular, it is all too easy to conclude cross-cultural solidarity across the “Black-White” divide is rare. The way this story is sometimes told leaves out these cross-cultural elements of solidarity not only as they extend to US racial divisions along categories of Black and White but also in terms of connections the athletes were making amongst racism and militarism, internationally

¹ See section 8.3.

² See section 7.4.

³ See section 2.7.

and in Mexico and Australia, in particular.¹ This point brings into focus how important it is to note the solidarist gestures performed by Australian, West German and Cuban athletes in relation to the Olympic Project for Human Rights activist programming at Mexico 68.

Also significant in terms of cross-cultural solidarity is the wide range of support that the activist group received for their boycott of the New York Athletic Club Meet (ranging from the Soviet Union team to post-secondary institutions to the area's Catholic and public schools). Additionally, it is important to highlight the Harvard Rowers (e.g., Paul Hoffman) and white US track and field athletes (e.g., Harold Connolly) who also stood up to be counted with their teammates. As a result of these solidarist actions, despite the efforts of people like Avery Brundage and Jesse Owens to break this cross-cultural solidarity, it is present in the main story of this thesis. Indeed, telling the Olympic Project for Human Rights' story without invoking or while marginalizing this aspect of the narrative can serve to lessen its impact to motivate still needed action to transform North American and international society along substantively peaceful lines.

4. Breaking status quo behaviour codes can allow oppressed groups to reclaim spaces granted to them by establishment figures so as to make creative and lasting nonviolent statements.

On the podium, at Mexico 68 Smith, Norman and Carlos, along with the other athletes mentioned above, broke with established behavioural patterns to make a statement about the injustices that the status quo represented. They refused, any longer, to be put on display to legitimate an oppressive system. Yet, by making their statements the

¹ On this point see, in particular, chapter four.

athletes challenged what Wink called the “Domination System”¹ and thus felt some of its weight come down upon them.

5. Faith can inform activism for social justice in subtle but important ways that can be obscured in an overly secular analysis.

A socially-engaged expression of faith informed many of the actors in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights on multiple levels in 1967-68. Amongst the most telling pieces of analysis that this thesis offers is its highlighting of the protest as a prayerful act, founded upon Smith’s understanding of the legacy of King and the power of faith-based activism to help effect positive social change. Further, the connection between faith and works (i.e., charity/justice, putting religion/value systems into action²) in the lives of the athletes provided a sustaining element to their activism and, as Carlos reports above,³ helped to facilitate the acceptance of Norman’s offer of participation in the protest.

6. A loose association of people can offer the chance for even the busiest individuals with differing views on righteous violence, to come together and craft effective nonviolent actions.

It must be remembered that the Olympic Project for Human Rights did not orchestrate any direct violence, despite having members who had different views of the acceptability of righteous violence in the face of a shared experience of oppression and/or

¹ See section 8.3 for a further development of this point.

² Compare James 1: 22-27, which reads: “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (NRSV).

³ See section 6.3 and my commentary and analysis on this moment in section 6.5.

complicity in the face of structural violence. The format of the loose association helped to make this peaceful expression of activism possible. Here, it is interesting to revisit Hermann's notion of "political opportunity structure."¹ It seems that the type of socio-political opportunities that sometimes lead to nonviolence being called "the weapon of the weak"² are in play. In this case, these dynamics are evident in the marginalization of a good number of Black student-athletes until they virtually became gladiators representing White institutions. Yet, this push factor is not the whole story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Rather, the commitments of some of the main actors, notably Smith, helped to carry the day so that the movement and the protest can be understood as belonging to cultures of peace.³

7. When the media spotlight is upon them, student-athletes can make an impact within limited public spaces (even when that space is only about one square metres).

It is remarkable to think of the creativity necessary to visualize that podium as a place of freedom rather than as a space of necessary conformity. Each spot on the dais was only about one square metres, yet with an entire stadium, live television and photographic attention on the podium, that tiny spot would extend across time and space, precisely because of the silent gesture of Smith, Norman and Carlos. Norman's point that the podium was "earned" space adds an important dimension here.⁴ So too does Smith and Carlos' sense of duty to make something of that space under conditions of

¹ See section 6.5.

² For his part, Gandhi reversed the distinction, asserting "Nonviolence is a weapon of the strong." From Mohandas K. Gandhi, "My Faith in Non-Violence." Available from http://www.mkgandhi.org/nonviolence/faithin_nonvio.htm. Accessed February 21, 2013.

³ See section 8.3.

⁴ See section 6.3.

oppression.¹ Most contemporary human cultures prize athletics and accept the form of a podium for top-three finishers at the Olympics to such an extent that it becomes a place of global media attention. This was particularly true in 1968 given the longer attention spans associated with the first incarnation of live television at the Olympic Games (when it was still assumed that coverage should mimic as far as possible the real-time experience of being in the stadium in Mexico City). Following through with Norman's logic, we can conclude that those spots (and the concomitant brief moments of media attention) on the podium were earned, through talent and years of training. They then become the athletes' spaces to do with as they please. If the normative use of those spots simply glorifies and legitimates a structurally and directly violent status quo, then the athletes were doubly justified to seek to make an impact when the media spotlight was upon them. The impact that Smith, Norman and Carlos, in particular, had at Mexico 68 was substantial, if only as evidenced by the fact that their statement often comes forward as a misunderstood moment in North American History.

8. The privilege of being an athlete does not negate one's human rights.

Many peace activists and conflict transformation practitioners would agree with the premise that human dignity is inviolable. Simply put, in human rights language, one cannot surrender one's human rights nor can they be abrogated by any authority. The realization of such inviolable rights may be a core condition of anything approaching substantive peace. This conclusion, for instance, accords with Abraham Joshua Heschel who, after losing virtually everyone he knew as a child to Nazi systemic murder, asserted that everyone ought be treated as the king of kings. Because he firmly believed that such

¹ See section 6.3 and my commentary and analysis on this point in section 6.5.

human dignity extended to members of all cultural groups of people, he became involved in the US civil rights movement, supported that movement's transition to a human rights framing, decried nuclear weapons, opposed the Viet Nam war and urged American Jews to support affirmative action programs.¹ The Olympians who joined the Olympic Project for Human Rights build upon such important claims by asserting that student-athletes, even if they are “full-ride” scholarship athletes, do not leave their human dignity behind or surrender their human rights.

9. A silent gesture can speak volumes.

For Smith, crafting a silent gesture that would speak volumes was an explicit, planned and intended consequence of his participation in the protest on the dais.² It is most certain that the power of his statement, made with Norman and Carlos, remains strong. This is so, even though the gesture is often misinterpreted. In fact, a good part of what makes this thesis important is that the image of the protest is misunderstood. Just pointing out the facts around the matter—that these three athletes were participating in a silent protest, which can be understood as a moment of peaceful prayer—opens up a space for conversations about myriad contextual issues that were manifest in sport, society and politics in 1968. The opportunities for such conversations are a potentially substantively peaceful legacy of the silent gesture and the symbolism that accompanied it (such as the black socks, representing poverty) at Mexico 68. Activating that legacy now will allow the silent gesture and all the solidarist action that surrounded it to speak volumes about human rights, peace and justice in a way that this thesis can only begin to suggest.

¹ See section 2.6 on Heschel.

² See section 7.1.

10. *A Raised Fist Can be a Symbol of Peace*

As shown above,¹ it is also important to explore the symbolism of the raised fist. Tommie Smith feels that this was a crucial symbol, if he and Carlos had just bowed their heads the impact of the protest would have been truncated. For Smith, the gesture was also a nonviolent act: “It was the fist that scared people. Bowing wouldn’t have received the response the fist did. It was a silent gesture. I never threw a rock.”² Concurring with Smith’s moral sentiment and showing multiple meanings to “Black Power,” Bruce Kidd associates the raised fist “with struggle, solidarity and Black Power in that sense.”³

In his quite nuanced discussion of power, Kenneth Boulding, who previously coined the “spaceship Earth” analogy,⁴ associated a raised fist with power that is conflated with force: “The general concept of power is often confused with the idea of “force,” which is a much narrower concept. If an audience is asked to give a symbolic gesture illustrating the concept of “power,” many of them will raise their fists, suggesting a threat power or the power to do injury.”⁵

This portion of Kenneth Boulding’s analysis needs to be revisited. In the case of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, the idea of a fist raised in solidarity is plausible, not only because of the athletes’ understanding of the events but also because, on a

¹ See section 5.5.

² Tommie Smith quoted in Kenny Moore. “Eye of the Storm.” (19 Aug. 1991). *Sports Illustrated*. Available from <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1139928/index.htm>. Accessed November 23, 2011.

³ Kidd Interview.

⁴ Kenneth E. Boulding, “Earth as a Space Ship,” (May 10, 1965). www.colorado.edu/econ/Kenneth.Boulding/spaceship-earth.html. Accessed November 18, 2007.

⁵ Kenneth E. Boulding, “The Nature of Power,” in *Introduction to Conflict Resolution Studies*, 132. Excerpt from Kenneth E. Boulding, *Three Faces of Power* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1989).

physical level, the raised fist is actually the least aggressive way (in terms of effectively applying physical force against another person) to make a fist. For, as the athletes knew, when they made the gesture on the stand it exposed their vital areas, literally their hearts and heads, to attack, be it from gunshot or a cocked fist. The rough analogy that helps bring this point into focus for me is the “hospital pass” in rugby. When a high pass is delivered in the face of force so that to catch it one has to raise one’s hands above the head, one is much more likely to suffer injury than if a proper pass was delivered between the knees and the bottom of the chest. The main point here is that, as in the case of the 200 metres men’s podium protest, the raised fist, as opposed to the bowed head, is actually a very exposed and vulnerable posture for any activist to take.

From the student-athletes’ perspective, the danger of direct violence was amplified in the 1960s. They knew the history of assassination for those taking a stand on similar issues and had, themselves, received numerous death threats. Moreover, at Mexico 68, stadium security was relatively lax—relying heavily on boy scouts. After the protest, a rather hostile, if stunned, crowd surrounded them, some raining down boos or singing the anthem more loudly in response to their experience of the protest. US tourists who could afford the ticket price made up the majority of fans in the Olympic Stadium. When track and field was arguably the premier sport at the games, poor Mexicans could not afford tickets to athletics (and certainly not to a high profile final). Given these facts, it would seem a possibility that the visceral reaction of the majority American crowd might have resulted in direct violence, if a single individual (hostile to the causes of the Olympic Project for Human Rights) had brought a gun into the stadium that evening as a guard measure to keep the “troublesome” Smith and Carlos in order. All too easily such

a situation could have translated into bullets entering the bodies of one of the athletes as he stood atop the podium in an open space, chest exposed and head bowed, as vulnerable as the proverbial sitting duck.

11. Pacifist Actions Need Not be Passive, They Can be Courageous and Confrontational

The general point that pacifist actions need not be passive is often brought to the fore by a number of conflict transformation scholars and peace activists. For example, as we saw above,¹ it was part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s project to build on the contributions of conflict transformation practitioners like Thoreau and Gandhi to champion active nonviolence in the face of racial oppression. As supported by my section developing point twelve below,² this is one way to read the student-athlete protests at Mexico 68—as a nonviolent protest belonging to the history of cultures of peace. Here, it may be worth emphasizing that just because those protests can be understood as active nonviolence does not mean that they were not confrontational. Indeed, the athletes were intentionally being confrontational in relation to a status quo system that was serving privilege and segmented interests.

In this light, Smith, Norman and Carlos can be read as driving home the point that pacifism need not be passive. Here, it is informative to remember that their act of breaking the ice in terms of podium-based demonstration at Mexico 68 took a great deal of courage, a virtue undoubtedly fostered by the skill set necessary for elite athletes to transfer the potentiality of ability into world-beating results. This confluence of courage emerges as an important type of praxis. Of course, as developed below,³ the direct

¹ See section 2.6.

² See section 8.3

³ See section 8.3.

lineage for inspiring this protest is found through Gandhi and King. However, the idea that confrontation on this scale was a “manly” and courageous thing to do recalls the story of one of Gandhi’s exchanges with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who you may recall is often called “The Frontier Gandhi.”

Gandhi himself implied that the reason Khan’s nonviolent revolutionaries were able to remain active pacifists, even though they had access to the means for effecting direct violence, was because their Pashtun identity was based on courage and bravery.¹ The story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights might be read in line with Gandhi’s analysis. Is it not possible that the brave and courageous podium protests were in part realized because of the skill set of the athletes² and developing Black consciousness at the time?³ Both these factors can be seen as forces potentially fostering bravery and courage in the student-athletes seeking to make a stand for substantive peace and justice at Mexico 68.

12. Events, like the Mexico 68 protests, generally assumed to belong to the history of violent confrontation, may have elements and actors whose stories accord with the “hidden” face of history, and support cultures of peace.

If the athletes risked that much with their activism and the story was reported so widely, it seems only fair that their self-understanding of the events should have come through to a greater extent than it has up to this moment in history. Moreover, if this silencing of the athletes voice serve to hide what was, in fact, a nonviolent protest then

¹ See section 2.7.

² See, in particular, section 5.1.

³ See, in particular, section 2.6.

the problems of silencing are multiplied. With those considerations in mind, point twelve is developed in the general conclusion below.¹

8.2 Suggestions for Future Research and Practice

This research has generated a number of suggestions for future study and practice in the field of PACS. I will discuss the more noteworthy of these briefly in this section. The first, and perhaps the most obvious lesson from this story in terms of conflict resolution practice, is that neither the agency nor the self-understanding of the track and field athletes was respected as officials exercised their offices within a “power over” paradigm instead of a “power with” approach in their interactions with the athletes. Those in leadership positions failed to foster superordinate goals.² This problem was compounded by the lack of human dignity accorded to the individuals in this story who were constructed as racial minorities and objectified. If conflict resolution is to truly contribute to substantive peace it must take the full human dignity of actors into account. This point is, as implied immediately above, already well known in the field of PACS. Yet what may be an interesting area for further research is how much the culture that surrounds sport, in particular, may act as a culture amenable to participatory conflict resolution.

In this regard, especially in lower level sport, the assumption is that “proper” players and athletes will surrender their autonomy to coaches and officials. I have certainly experienced the force of this expectation many times as a result of my involvement with amateur sport. It might be interesting to design research to assess the prevalence of these notions of compliance and the need for officials to hold “total”

¹ See section 8.3.

² See the discussion of Hamburg in section 6.5.

authority within cultures surrounding sport. Perhaps such research could be undertaken with the critically normative goal¹ of offering some deeper comment on how a sports culture, geared towards the surrender of autonomy, contributes to mitigating other factors in the mass society such as the tenability of participatory democracy² or the prevention of cases of serial child abuse.³ In a similar light, it may be interesting to assess whether connecting restorative justice and peacebuilding principles, as suggested by Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies professor Jarem Sawatsky,⁴ might positively influence the coaching and organization of sport.

In terms of coaching practice specifically, the research for this thesis has compelled me to reflect on the need to address what former United States Institute of Peace scholar, Walter Wink, calls the “myth of redemptive violence”⁵ as it is manifest in a punishment dichotomy. In team sport, exercises like running and push-ups are often used in response to transgression or error. I question how such an approach supports a “sport (or exercise) for life” philosophy, which can positively contribute to a healthy society. An alternative in this regard may be Paul Redekop’s understanding of “restorative discipline,” which recognizes the essential nature of harmful acts as

¹ See the main text and companion footnote in section 8.3 for a discussion of the concept of critical normativity and its applicability as a characteristic of Peace Studies.

² For a commentary on issues surrounding participatory democracy see Christine Bell and Catherine O’Rourke, “The People’s Peace? Peace Agreements, Civil Society, and Participatory Democracy,” *International Political Science Review* 28, no.3: 293-324.

³ Consider here how the culture of total authority that sometimes surrounds sport may have magnified the impact of Jerry Sandusky’s abusive behaviours, particularly when he was head coach of the (at least previously) prestigious Penn State Football program.

⁴ See Jarem Sawatsky, *The Ethic of Traditional Communities and the Spirit of Healing Justice: Studies from Hollow Water, the Iona Community, and Plum Village* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009) and Jarem Sawatsky, *JustPeace Ethics: A Guide to Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008).

⁵ See section 2.7.

examples of broken relationships that require healing and reconciliation.¹ Research in this area could consider what coaching, undertaken in line with a paradigm of restorative discipline, might look like. Such research could then attempt to apply that theoretical image in a reflexive manner across a number of sports.

A further area for research could be to assess the validity of Bruce Kidd's impression² that today's elite athletes have been transformed by professionalism into virtually marketable objects/products and, arguably more significantly, passive members of their own society. Athletes seem less willing to interact with others on trips, so that sport becomes a focal point for total identity. As such, perspective-increasing chances that come with holding international sporting events at diverse venues around the world are lost as athletes engage in activities like playing video games, watching bland media selected on their laptops, tweeting or getting massaged. This phenomenon extends to athletes parking themselves with entourages in hotel rooms rather than interacting with the local context or competitors from other places—sometimes even avoiding the Athletes' Village completely at major games.

A related issue is the role of sponsorship money in dampening elite athletes' inclination to activism. Sponsored athletes may choose to avoid activist stances so as not to endanger endorsement contracts. Prior to professionalism, it would seem that athletes were freer to take up activist projects. Even in track and field during the 1960s, still in the era of official amateurism when sponsorship was under the table,³ the conditions of

¹ See Paul Redekop, *Changing Paradigms: Punishment and Restorative Discipline* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2008).

² See section 5.5.

³ This is evidenced by the shoe company scandal that touched members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. See Underwood.

sponsorship would have been much looser, making a certain space for activist action of the kind witnessed at Mexico 68. These may be interesting points of comparison to develop in further research.

An additional area for research could assess the impact of sharing aspects from the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights with current athletes. Such research could perhaps focus on how hearing this narrative might shift or otherwise inform the worldview of present day athletes. Moreover, the example of the student-athlete group might be brought forward to show how it is possible to combine high level athletics and social activism. In this manner, as with Tommie Smith's reporting of his experiences at San Jose State in 2003,¹ the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights may help to encourage athletes to be more involved in addressing the issues that affect them as competitors and as community members. This could be done, for example, as part of research related to storytelling and its efficacy for peacebuilding,² wherein the latter is conceived in a broad sense as touching on a range of issues from fair play in sport to social justice to international cross-cultural solidarity. Fittingly, in terms of this prospect, it is to a rendering of this story that might form the basis for such peacebuilding to which this thesis returns for its general concluding statement.

8.3 General Concluding Statement

This story and the picture that accompanies it are inspiring partly because they are about agency exercised within multiple layers of identity and a context of oppression.

Furthermore, the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights student-athlete activists,

¹ See section 7.4.

² For a methodological resource and starting point in this regard see Jessica Senehi, "Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 9, no. 2 (2002): 41-63.

invokes a type of agency applied in the face of injustice. Recalling Câmara's interconnected theory of violence, we can see that the actors in this story addressed manifestations of violence no. 1, violence no. 2 and violence no. 3,¹ helping to break the hold that spirals of violence have in our societies. That this type of multi-dimensional agency rests with the people who formed the loose association that was the Olympic Project for Human Rights is important to emphasize. These actors brought their own motivations, dreams and experiences to the group. Yet, they simultaneously shared a common concern geared towards addressing racial injustice and discrimination principally as it was manifest in various socio-political forms at the time in the US and Australia. In this regard, they drew on a human rights framing, the struggle for civil rights, indigenous rights activism and/or the example of those displaying Black consciousness in the late 1960s. Analysing the same period, one might conclude that the Olympic Project for Human Rights also addressed a militarized form of injustice (that often reproduced layers of inequity) as expressed in the peace movement and its opposition to the involvement of the US and Australia in the war in Viet Nam. Such an anti-war stance is evidenced by how that conflict in South-East Asia was often mentioned by the Olympic Project for Human Rights participants.²

Nonetheless, it may be that Harry Edwards is someone who, during the late 1960s, purposefully advocated violence and the threat of physical harm to achieve his justifiable goals. If Murphy is correct, and Edwards was not, at that time, the type of person to organize a boycott,³ then it may be a good that he did not go to Mexico City

¹ See section 2.1.

² See, in particular, section 4.1.

³ See section 6.2.

and that the boycott was not successful amongst the US track and field athletes. Instead, in the Olympic Project for Human Rights, history witnessed the coming together of people who shared aspects of identity (but not all aspects of moral belief) in common within a remarkable group context of international level athletes who were also activists. In addition, this coalitional nature of the group seems to be a promising feature of organizations, parties and other actors in the political realm for those seeking to foster substantive peace and social justice.

In this light, the Olympic Project for Human Rights comes into focus as a coalition of action, one formed amongst people sharing a further layer of identity, which Lonergan characterizes as a “creative minority,”¹ leading the larger community on the proper path towards authentic and liberating social change. Here, again with reference to Lonergan, emerges another sense in which the Olympic Project for Human Rights is a coalition of agents oriented toward positive social transformation. In this regard, consider the following passage from Lonergan’s reflection on the integration of the human good:

. . . who are the agents? I have spoken simply of the process – situation, insight, counsel, policy, new type of action, new situation, new insight and the snowball effect of the entire cycle. The agents may be called a succession of creative personalities. The situation can be wholly transformed if there is a succession of personalities who are not simply sunk into the existing situation, immersed in its routines, and functioning like cogs in a wheel, with little grasp of possibilities, with a lack of daring.²

Such a process and agency-literate lens, allows for an understanding of the Olympic Project for Human Rights that would adequately take into account the diversity of belief (within the activist group proper) concerning the role and effectiveness of

¹ See the discussion of Lonergan’s view on creative minorities as a source of social change cited above in section 2.3.

² Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 51-52.

violence for social change. In this regard, it is true that the actors in this story, as an integral facet of their personalities, resisted being the “cogs in a wheel” to which Lonergan refers above. However, by extension, this also means that they will not be uniform in their beliefs and motivations.

As such, missing the concomitant variety and diversity of perspectives amongst the actors, when telling the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, can leave one at a loss. This, for example, may help to explain why it is possible to speak of the story of the photo from that night from a “Black Power” perspective,¹ either cropping Peter Norman out of the photograph or leaving him out of the narrative, even though Norman is literally right there wearing his Olympic Project for Human Rights button on the podium (at least for those who know where to look). Apropos to this point, is that even Charles Korr,² who knew the picture of the men’s 200 metres awards at Mexico 68 very well and used it in his teaching of graduate students did not *see* the button until 1988. To see this aspect of the photograph he had to enter into dialogue with Peter Norman and hear the latter say, “. . . did you notice that I also had the same badge on.”³ Only after that conversation did the fact of Norman’s solidarist support of the Olympic Project for Human Rights enter into Korr’s consciousness.⁴ Far from being a slight on Charles

¹ This is certainly one prominent thread of Harry Edwards’ recounting of the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969). In this regard, consider that monograph’s depiction of Smith and Carlos as Black warriors. See, in particular, section 6.2.

² I learned that Korr shared a similar view after I first drafted the above words.

³ Peter Norman quoted in the Korr Interview.

⁴ From Korr Interview.

Korr's substantive and impressive teaching record, this vignette demonstrates the importance of continuing dialogue, even on issues upon which we are expert.¹

Also, recognizing the “umbrella party” or coalition nature of the Olympic Project for Human Rights is important. As we have seen, the movement included people who supported both violent and nonviolent means of liberation for people whose human rights were compromised. In this regard, it is significant that Smith understands his actions to be in line with the legacy of Dr. King: a nonviolent protest realised with precision and planning. Such a prayerful nonviolent action was what Smith, in his telling, presented for the world on the podium on October 16, 1968.² Moreover, this nonviolent narrative is the story he is trying to share with the world today. As such, respecting Smith's agency, we must accept that framing of the events on a certain level. That does not mean, however, that the protest was merely a personal one, it was very much a social endeavour. The protest was not just about Tommie Smith. According to Smith, the action was about human rights, peace and social justice. He was well aware of the consequences, but chose to make the silent protest anyway. In this regard, it becomes clear on a fundamental level that human rights and the fundamental questions they raised about the dominant athletic and socio-political contexts of the time, were important to Smith at the student-athlete stage of his life in a significant measure because of people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

¹ This can be considered a form of reflective practice in line with the framework of human knowing delineated by Melchin and Picard within their Insight approach to mediation. See section 2.8.

² In terms of support for Smith's nonviolent understanding, here, it may be informative to pause and consider how many of the pragmatic or strategic methods of nonviolent action discerned by Gene Sharpe (more than 50), especially on the level of “actions to send a message,” were employed by the Olympic Project for Human Rights. See Gene Sharpe, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*. Boston: Porter Sergant Publishers, 1995.

In the spirit of Jarem Sawatsky's JustPeace ethics,¹ one might conclude that Smith had followed his informed conscience² in consideration of the common good.³ This orientation is of the same praxis-based fabric (more than theoretical, leading toward social action) as Câmara's writings during the identical moment in history in relation to his efforts to end poverty, violence and discrimination in Brazil and the wider world.⁴ Such is a deep solidarity, one that cannot be exercised without risking upsetting the unjust status quo and "the powers that be."⁵

In this light, it is not surprising that the system came down on Smith and scarred him. Today, however, many more people are recognizing the importance of his actions, even if they do not know the full meaning behind the picture of that stunning moment on the podium. Smith's story is hidden in a certain sense, because it seems to be about Black Power and perhaps about civil rights. Revealing the hidden side of history, in line with the organizing principle of one of Elise Boulding's last works,⁶ in this case may be crucial. Employing such a methodological lens, in accordance with a type of "critical

¹ Jarem Sawatsky's concept of JustPeace ethics, which provides a meeting place for people from various religious and cultural traditions to come together in a nonviolent and mutually enhancing manner, may be particularly relevant. For him, JustPeace ethics respects both particularity and interconnection, while: "Injustice robs people of power. JustPeace returns power." Sawatsky, *JustPeace Ethics*, 21.

² For more on the moral tradition of informed conscience see Timothy E. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).

³ For example, the Jesuit Philosopher William Rehg, influenced by both critical theory and Catholic social thought, discerns three aspects of the common good that are certainly at play in the story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights: (1) basic human rights and respect for persons, (2) a value placed on interpersonal flourishing, and (3) a goal of societal integration. See William Rehg, "Solidarity and the Common Good: An Analytic Framework." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2007): 7-21.

⁴ See sections 2.1 and 2.2.

⁵ A phrase borrowed from Wink. See section 2.7.

⁶ See Elise Boulding, *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

normativity”¹ that values substantive peace and justice, we might more fully explore the value of understanding events at the 1968 Olympics as tied in with the history of nonviolent activism and cultures of peace. In this light, we may come to understand that there may be more than a little bit of Gandhi and King at the 1968 Olympics in the figure of Tommie Smith and his silent gesture—clutching his olive branch (a symbol of victory but also a symbol of peace) and vulnerably holding his fist up high, with his head bowed in prayer.²

¹ Ken Booth describes Peace Studies as possessing a quality of “critical normativity” in his discussion of the normative elements that inform Critical Security Studies. Ken Booth, “Critical Explorations,” in *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, edited by Ken Booth (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 1-20.

² Recall here that John Carlos also reports that his head was bowed in prayer and that he felt the presence of the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. as he petitioned God that the US flag would one day truly represent equality. See section 6.3.

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Appendix A: Key Figures Associated with the Story of the Olympic Project for Human Rights

What follows below is a list of key figures and personalities associated with the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This list may prove helpful to readers as they work their way through this thesis.

1. **Tommie Smith** placed 1st in 200 metres final in world record time at the 1968 Olympics. He was a student-athlete activist inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. who raised his fist on the podium at Mexico 68. Smith currently lives in Los Angeles, CA.
2. **Peter Norman** placed 2nd in the 200 metres final at Mexico 68. Norman wore the Olympic Project for Human Rights badge. Despite world class performances four year later, he was not selected to the Australian Olympic team in 1972. Norman passed away recently (2006), but his story has just been told in a feature documentary film by his nephew Matt Norman, a well-known Australian actor (who also co-wrote a book dealing with the subject matter of the documentary).
3. **John Carlos** placed 3rd at games in the 200 metres. He was a student-athlete activist inspired by Malcolm X who raised his fist on the podium at Mexico 68. Carlos currently lives in Palm Springs, CA.

4. **Harry Edwards** was a former college basketball star and sociology of sport professor at San Jose State in the lead up to the games. He motivated San Jose State students and was involved in the foundation of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Edwards hoped to organise a Black boycott of the 1968 Olympics. He was fired from San Jose State for his role in what was then deemed to be a Black Power protest. Currently a professor emeritus at UC Berkeley, Edwards invokes something of the “academic activism” component of PACS.

5. **Lee Evans** wore an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge after breaking the world record in a Gold Medal effort during the 400 metres. He also wore a beret as part of the last track and field podium protest at Mexico 68 after helping to set the 4 x 400 metres world record, which stood for 24 years. He had been one of the main organizers of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. However, he was seen as not doing enough by some Black activists at home in the United States. Partly as a result of a frosty reception after the 1968 Olympics, Evans chose to pursue coaching in a number of African countries. However, he ended his coaching career at the University of South Alabama.

6. **Paul Hoffman** was the cox of the Harvard Eight (1968 US Olympic rowing team) that worked in solidarity writing letters to explain human rights violations. Peter Norman wore Hoffman’s Olympic Project for Human Rights badge on the podium during the 200 metres medal ceremony at Mexico 68. Hoffman went on to practice law on the east coast of the US.

7. **Bruce Kidd** is a former Canadian Olympian and current member of the Order of Canada, honoured specifically for his life devoted to the elimination of racism and sexism in sport. During his time as a student at the University of Chicago in the run up to the 1968 Olympic games he was involved with the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Later training as a sports historian, he is also Dean Emeritus of the Faculty of Physical Education and current Warden of Hart House at the University of Toronto.

8. **Martin Luther King Jr.** is widely considered to be the most prominent and influential leader of the American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. He is well known for his “I Have a Dream” speech and his support of principled nonviolent methods for positive social change. King’s work, combining religious and political themes in an active quest for an equal and just American society, was cut short by his assassination in the run-up to the Mexico City games in 1968. King was involved in the initial planning stages with the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

9. **Malcolm X** was one of the most significant and polarizing figures in the struggle for Black rights in America during the 1950s and 1960s. His vision for social change in the face of racial inequality is often contrasted with Martin Luther King Jr.’s nonviolent activism. Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965 leaving behind a

contested legacy, which reflects the different political and religious views he held during his lifetime. For many, he symbolized a psychological and practical transition from civil rights to a more violent Black Power movement.

Nevertheless, at the time of his death, he held a deep belief in the value of nonviolence to address severe inequity.

10. **Muhammad Ali** was the 1960 Olympic Gold Medalist and repeat heavyweight champion of the world. His conscientious objection stance¹ is an important element underlying the story told in this thesis. One of the Olympic Project for Human Rights demands was that Ali's title be reinstated after it was stripped as a result of the controversy surrounding his refusal to be conscripted into the US military and fight in the Viet Nam War.

11. **Ken Nobel** was the chief organizer for the Olympic Project for Human Rights. He had a student-athlete career as a middle distance runner at San Jose State.

¹ See John H. Stanfield II, "The Dilemma of Conscientious Objection for Afro-Americans." *The New Conscientious Objection: From Sacred to Secular Resistance*, eds. Charles C. Moskos and John Whiteclay Chambers II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 54. This concern touches on the role of physically fit male bodies in war. In that regard, see Stewart-Winter's work on conscientious objection which poignantly highlights that an apparently able-bodied male walking down the street in a Western democracy without a uniform would be viewed with suspicion during the time of the Second World War. See Timothy Stewart-Winter, "Not a Soldier, Not a Slacker: Conscientious Objectors and Male Citizenship in the United States during the Second World War," *Gender and History* 19, no. 3 (2007): 528.

12. **Avery Brundage** was the former head of the US Olympic Committee and head of the International Olympic Committee at the time of Mexico 68 who took a hard stance against “politics” in sport. Brundage told the demonstration participants that there was “no place for such things” at the Olympics. He recounted something of the tenor of his own conflict resolution methodology in relation to the protest when he said to the media “the boys involved were promptly sent home.”¹
13. **Jesse Owens**, the grandson of slaves, was a hero of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin for winning four gold medals, thereby challenging Nazi conceptions of racial superiority. At Mexico 68, he was chosen by Brundage to “calm things down.” Previously, Owens had been appointed to the United States Olympic Committee largely because of the demands of the Olympic Project for Human Rights for Black representation. He was called an “Uncle Tom” by the athletes due to the role he played in these events.
14. **Ralf Boston** was an Olympic Gold Medalist with Team USA (1960) in the long jump and was a double Pan American Games champion (1963 and 1967). He also won silver at the 1964 summer games and bronze at Mexico 68. After having trained so long, Boston was initially not keen to participate in a boycott. However, after coming on board with the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Boston chaired meetings of the group, wrote letters and went barefoot onto the podium at Mexico 68.

¹ Avery Brundage quoted in Small.

15. **Bob Beamon** set an incredible world long jump record (8.90 metres, a 55 cm improvement on the old record) at the Mexico City games. In the run up to games, he was not keen to participate in a boycott. Beamon crossed the New York Athletic Club picket line during one of the most successful boycotts organized in the run-up to the 1968 summer games. However, as we see in this thesis,¹ Beamon did raise his track pants to reveal Black socks in solidarity, after Smith and Carlos had been forced to leave Mexico.
16. **Vincent Matthews** was part of the world record 4 x 400 metres team in Mexico City. He sparked controversy for what some feared was a Black Power demonstration after winning gold in the individual 400 metres at the Munich Games in 1972.
17. **George Lawrence “Larry” James** won a silver medal at Mexico City in the 400 metres. As a symbol of protest, he wore a beret on the podium after both his individual race and playing his part in the world record 4 x 400 metres at Mexico. James passed away in 2008.

¹ See section 5.4.

18. **Ron Freeman (Ronald J. Freeman II)** earned a bronze medal in the individual 400 metres in Mexico before wearing a beret on the podium. In the relay event at Mexico 68, the split time for his leg of the 4 x 400 metres was electronically timed at a remarkable 43.2 seconds, the fastest 400 metres ever run until 1999.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Form of Question Asked to Olympic Project for Human Rights Members	Form of Question Asked to Other Research Participants (if Different)
1. Why did you do what you did?	Why did the 1968 Olympic protestors do what they did?
2. What does it mean to you when I say “Olympic Project for Human Rights”?	
3. Were you dealt with fairly in the aftermath of protests? Please explain your answer.	Were the protestors dealt with fairly in the aftermath of the protests? Please explain your answer.
4. What does the year 1968 mean for social justice?	These protests occurred at the 1968 Olympic games; what does the year 1968 mean for social justice?
5. What is the significance of people from different communities working together in the story of the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights protests? How would you define those different communities?	
6. How could you (1) do what it takes to be an exceptional top-class athlete and (2) take part in the protests? What, in your mind, is the relationship between (1) and (2)?	How could they (1) do what it took to be an exceptional top-class athlete and (2) take part in the protests? What, in your opinion, is the relationship between (1) and (2)?
7. What ideas are important for inspiring this protest? Where did these ideas come from?	
8. What symbols are important in this protest? Please explain their significance.	

Appendix C: Major Events Timeline Chart

Date	Event
August, 1936	Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Olympic Games in Nazi-governed Berlin.
May 17, 1954	The US supreme court rules on a combination of cases, including <i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> , and declares segregated public schools unconstitutional.
February 21, 1965	Malcolm X assassinated in New York City.
December, 1967	Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael and other prominent Black leaders meet with members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and express support for the idea of a boycott of the Olympics to highlight systemic racial inequality in the US and abroad.
February, 1968	The Olympic Project for Human Rights plays the central role in organizing a largely successful boycott of the New York Athletic Club 100 th anniversary meet at Madison Square Garden.
April 4, 1968	Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.
April 20, 1968	The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee withdraw the invitation (issued in January) that would have allowed South Africa to compete at Mexico 68.
June 6, 1968	Robert Kennedy dies after being shot in Los Angeles.
July, 1968	First set of US Olympic track and field trials in Los Angeles.
September, 1968	Second set of US Olympic track and field trials at Lake Tahoe, CA.
October 2, 1968	A protest crowd of around 10, 000 university and high school students, gathered in a square in Mexico City, are fired upon by government forces. The death toll from the event, now known as the Tlatelolco massacre, remains unresolved.
October 12, 1968	The first live television satellite broadcast of the Olympics takes place.
October 16, 1968	After winning medals in the men's 200 metres final at Mexico 68, Tommie Smith, Peter Norman and John Carlos make their silent gesture protest on the podium while the US national anthem is playing.
October 18, 1968	The American 400 metres runners sweep the medals at the Summer Olympics and stage a protest during the medal ceremony, although not during the playing of the US national anthem.
October 26, 1968	Despite coming into the Olympics with only 18 amateur fights under his belt, George Foreman parades around the ring waving a small US flag after winning a Gold medal in boxing at Mexico 68.
November 6, 1968	Richard Nixon emerges as the winner of a very close presidential election.
October 17, 2005	A statue group depicting Smith and Carlos on the podium in Mexico City is unveiled at San Jose State University.