

Primary Source (Image)

Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics,
October 17, 1968



What progress has been made in the twentieth century in the fight to realize Founding principles of liberty, equality, and justice for African Americans? What work must still be done?

- ☐ I can interpret primary sources related to Founding principles of liberty, equality, and justice in the 1960s to the present day.
- ☐ I can explain how laws and policy, courts, and individuals and groups contributed to or pushed back against the quest for liberty, equality, and justice for African Americans.
- ☐ I can explain why the civil rights movement fractured in the 1960s.
- ☐ I can compare movements for liberty, equality, and justice for African Americans over time.
- ☐ I can create an argument using evidence from primary sources.
- ☐ I can analyze issues in history to help find solutions to present-day challenges.

Building Context

On October 17, 1968, runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos of the United States won the gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 200m event at the Olympics. While on the podium, they each raised a fist and bowed their heads while the national anthem played. The raised fist was the Black Power salute, and Smith and Carlos's action was meant to condemn continued discrimination. Instead, their protest was condemned by the International Olympic Committee. In a press conference, Smith explained, "If I win I am an American, not a Black American. But if I did something bad then they would say 'a Negro.' We are Black and we are proud of being Black. Black America will understand what we did tonight."

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(Credit: Angelo Cozzi)

Source Link:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Olympics_Black_Power_salute#/media/File:John_Carlos,_Tommie_Smith,_Peter_Norman_1968cr.jpg

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

1. How does this event shed light on the status of the civil rights movement by 1968?

2. How do Smith's words at the press conference show the influence of the Black Power ideology?

3. Smith and Carlos's actions were seen by audiences around the world, not just in the United States. Why is this significant?