

# **The Untold Story Behind the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete: Critical American Studies Exposed!**

In 1968, something extraordinary took place at the Olympic Games in Mexico City. It was not just about winning medals or breaking records; it was a powerful moment that forever changed the course of history. In this article, we will explore the hidden stories of the 1968 Olympics and the making of the Black athlete, diving deep into critical American studies to illuminate the racial struggles, triumphs, and future impacts that emerged from this pivotal event.

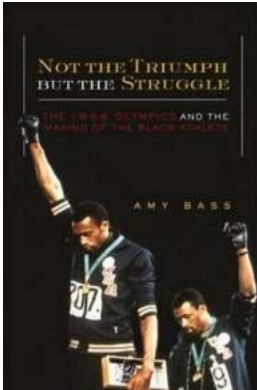
## **The Racial Climate of 1968**

In order to understand the significance of the 1968 Olympics, we must first grasp the racial climate of the time. The Civil Rights Movement was in full swing, demanding equal rights for African Americans and an end to racial injustice. This was a period of intense racial tensions, further fueled by the assassinations of civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. The Black community was fighting for their place in society, and the 1968 Olympics stood as a platform to voice their demands.

## **The Black Power Salute**

One of the most iconic and controversial moments in Olympic history occurred on October 16, 1968. Tommie Smith and John Carlos, two Black track and field athletes, made a bold political statement during the medal ceremony for the 200-meter race. As the national anthem played, Smith and Carlos raised their gloved fists in a black power salute, bowing their heads to highlight the struggle for racial

equality in America. This act of protest sparked immediate outrage, but it also ignited a worldwide conversation about the role of athletes in social activism.



## **Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete (Critical American Studies)** by Amy Bass (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3724 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 464 pages



### **The Fallout and Impact**

Smith and Carlos faced severe backlash upon their return to the United States. They were vilified in the media, received death threats, and were even suspended from the U.S. Olympic team. However, their actions had a lasting impact on the fight for civil rights. The Black Power salute brought attention to the racial discrimination and systemic oppression experienced by Black Americans, both in sports and society as a whole.

### **The Making of the Black Athlete**

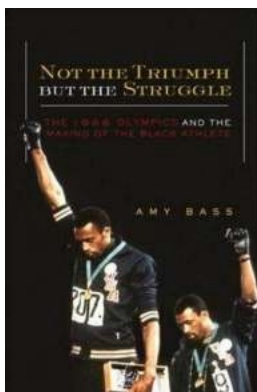
The 1968 Olympics played a crucial role in shaping the narrative of the Black athlete. Prior to this event, African American athletes were often marginalized and relegated to stereotypes, seen as physical specimens rather than complex individuals. However, Smith and Carlos, along with other Black athletes who took

a stand, challenged these stereotypes and paved the way for future generations of Black athletes to use their platform for social change.

## Legacy and Observations

The legacy of the 1968 Olympics and the Black Power salute is far-reaching. It continues to inspire athletes today to use their influence for social justice causes. Colin Kaepernick, for example, took a knee during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial inequality. This act sparked a nationwide debate and led to widespread discussions about the responsibilities and freedoms of athletes to address social issues.

The 1968 Olympics marked a turning point in the fight for racial equality, demonstrating the power and influence of the Black athlete. Through critical American studies, we can delve deeper into the context, struggles, and impact of this historic event. The stories of Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and other Black athletes who stood up for justice serve as a reminder that sports have the potential to transcend the playing field and ignite movements for change.



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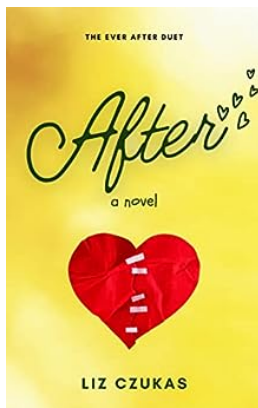
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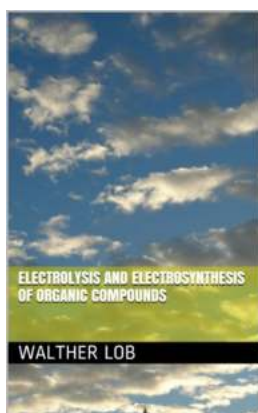


A sweeping examination of the role of "Black Power" in the 1968 Olympic games in Mexico City reveals the emergence of militancy and political consciousness in American sports.



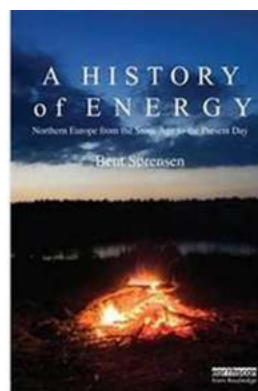
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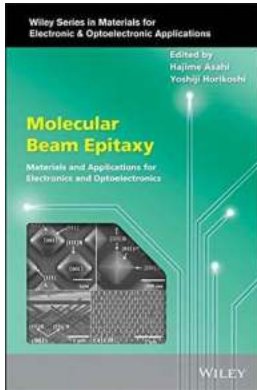
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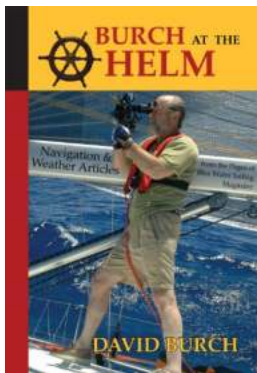
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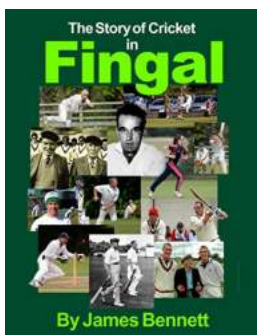
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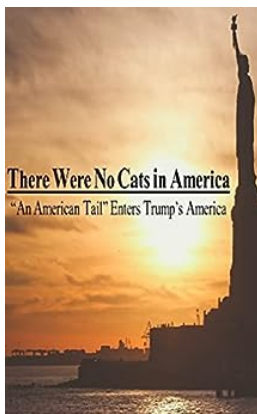
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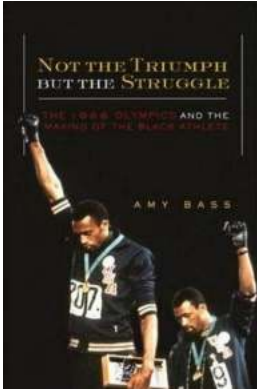
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