

SPORT IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES



Forty Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968–2008

“To Remember is to Resist”

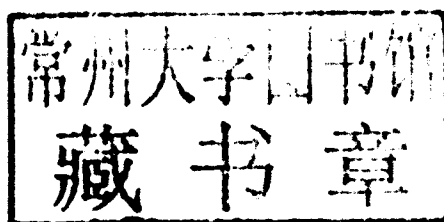
Edited by Russell Field and Bruce Kidd

ROUTLEDGE

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Forty Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968–2008

1968 was a year of protest in civil society (Prague, Paris, Chicago) and a year of protest in sport. After a world-wide campaign, the anti-apartheid movement succeeded in barring South Africa from the Olympic Games, while US athletes from the Olympic Project for Human Rights used the medals podium to decry the racism of North America. Meanwhile, students in Mexico City demonstrated against social priorities in Mexico, the host of the 1968 Games. These events contributed significantly to the rejection of the idea that sports are apolitical, and stimulated the scholarly study of sport across the social sciences.

Leading up to the Beijing Olympic Games, similar dynamics were played out across the globe, while a campaign was underway to boycott the ‘Genocide Olympics’. The volume, *Forty Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968–2008*, considers together sports, human rights and social change in the forty years after Mexico City and the lead up to the Beijing Olympic Games.

The contributions to this volume capture the memories of activists who were “on the ground” using sport as a site for the struggle for human rights and provide scholarly examinations of past and current human rights movements in sport.

This book was previously published as a special issue of *Sport in Society*.

Russell Field is assistant professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba, whose current research examines the contested meanings of global sporting events.

Bruce Kidd is professor of physical education and health at the University of Toronto. During more than forty years, Kidd has combined careers as an internationally ranked athlete, coach, sports administrator, professor and dean with critical scholarly and popular writing about sport, often on the issues in which he has been directly involved.

Sport in the Global Society – Contemporary Perspectives

Series Editor: Boria Majumdar

Forty Years of Sport and Social Change, 1968–2008

“To Remember is to Resist”

Sport in the Global Society – Contemporary Perspectives

Series Editor: Boria Majumdar

The social, cultural (including media) and political study of sport is an expanding area of scholarship and related research. While this area has been well served by the Sport in the Global Society Series, the surge in quality scholarship over the last few years has necessitated the creation of *Sport in the Global Society: Contemporary Perspectives*. The series will publish the work of leading scholars in fields as diverse as sociology, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, cultural geography and history, political science and political economy. If the social and cultural study of sport is to receive the scholarly attention and readership it warrants, a cross-disciplinary series dedicated to taking sport beyond the narrow confines of physical education and sport science academic domains is necessary. Sport in the Global Society: Contemporary Perspectives will answer this need.

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ABSTRACTS

The conservative vision of the amateur ideal and its paradoxical whitening power: the story of Valerie Jerome in 1950s and 1960s Canadian track and field

Valerie Jerome and Stuart Parker

Valerie Jerome was a member of Canada's team at the 1959 Pan American Games where as a 15-year-old she placed 4th in the 100m. She was also a member of Canada's 1960 Olympic and 1966 Commonwealth Games teams. After leaving competitive sport, Valerie continued to serve as a track and field coach and official, serving as Chief Judge for Horizontal Jumps at the 1976 Montreal Olympics and Jumps Referee for the 1978 and 1994 Commonwealth Games and World Indoor (1993) and Outdoor (2001) Championships. She is also a fixture in Vancouver civil society, serving on such diverse boards of directors as the Achilles Athletics Foundation, the Goh Ballet Academy, Vancouver Youth Theatre and the British Columbia (BC) Association of Black Educators. She has been nominated seven times to run for public office beginning with her 1978 candidacy for The Electors Action Movement through to her 1996 candidacy for the Green Party of BC.

The athlete as Sisyphus: reflections of an athlete advocate

Ann Peel

As a 12-year-old living in Moscow in 1973, I watched Canada's Glenda Reiser win the 1,500m at the World University Games, and, as children do, decided that would be me. Raised to believe I could do whatever I set my mind to, off I went. But the journey was to be far more complicated than I could ever have anticipated.

Each time I felt I was making progress in my quest for excellence, a barrier would appear. I felt like Sisyphus who was sentenced to roll a rock up a hill. Each time it reached the top, the rock rolled back down again. His crime had been to challenge Zeus. Mine was much less grandiose: I wanted only to reach my maximum potential free of restrictions created by the sport system.

Athletes are still rolling their rocks up hills. They shouldn't be. The role of the system should be to flatten the barriers, to ease the way, to widen the path. Unfortunately, much of the time that is not what happens. But it could be, and what follows is the story of an effort to help athletes get to the top of the hill a little more easily, with less interference from the system.

My thesis is a simple one: athletes want to perform. Their performance, and the supports needed to create it, should be the focus of the sport system. To ensure that focus, athletes and their coaches must get involved. If, as athletes, we do not shape and support the systems we need, we will roll our rocks for evermore.

Tony Suze's reflections on the importance of sport in the struggle to end Apartheid

Chuck Korr

For 15 years, Tony Suze was a political prisoner on South Africa's notorious Robben Island. He was one of the driving forces behind a campaign to obtain the right to play football (soccer) and he helped to create an organized league that met all the requirements of FIFA, the international governing body for the sport. Football was much more than just a game for the prisoners – it was one of the ways in which they confirmed their dignity as individuals and asserted their right to run at least a part of their lives despite the brutal conditions of the prison. It was a way they trained themselves to participate in governing South Africa and it was one of the few times they could enjoy something they did on the Island. Tony's first time outside of South Africa (a conference in Toronto) gave him the opportunity to give a personal account of how sport on Robben Island helped pave the way to the creation of a free, democratic, and non-racist South Africa.

The untold story of Robben Island: sports and the anti-Apartheid movement

Anthony Suze

Anthony Suze was born in 1942, in a small township northwest of Pretoria. By his own admission, a more avid sportsman than student, he participated in a number of sports and played second-division soccer with Methodist FC. His political awareness emerged in Apartheid-era South Africa 1960 when he was recruited by the Pan Africanist Congress. In 1963, Suze was one of members instructed by party commanders to mobilize and indoctrinate other students. Upon Suze's resulting arrest, he was one of 14 men, most in their early-20s, who were sentenced in May 1963 to a combined 185 years on the infamous Robben island prison. Suze spent the next 15 years on the island. While there he participated in a remarkable movement of sport resistance, as the political prisoners agitated for and won the right to organize their own soccer league. The resulting Makana Football Association was a multi-team, two-division league – featuring formal team administrative structures, referees trained according to FIFA standards, and a leaguewide disciplinary committee – that allowed the participants to be physically active while honing their organizational skills as the government-in-waiting.

'In good conscience': Andy Flower, Henry Olonga and the death of democracy in Zimbabwe

Callie Batts

Just before their first match of the 2003 Cricket World Cup, Zimbabwean cricketers Andy Flower and Henry Olonga issued a statement explaining their decision to protest the ongoing human rights abuses waged by the oppressive regime of Robert Mugabe. By donning black armbands, Flower and Olonga engaged in a political gesture designed to mourn the 'death of democracy' in Zimbabwe and draw attention to the social, political and economic problems of their homeland. For Flower and Olonga, the act of expressing their feelings represented an exercising of basic human rights denied to many of their fellow countrymen and women. In response, the authorities castigated the two athletes, reiterated the myth of apolitical sport, and tightened the connection between the government and the national team. While the protest failed to catalyse direct social change, it raised awareness of human rights issues in Zimbabwe and illustrated the relevance of sport in even the most beleaguered societies.

Social change and popular culture: seminal developments at the interface of race, sport and society

Harry Edwards

Outstanding achievement is enabled by the example of outstanding forerunners transmitted by traditions of community. This essay argues that the post-Second World War pattern of racial integration within the United States was one-way and selective, splitting the black community along class lines, giving the middle-class new access to the established institutions while leaving those left behind in deteriorating circumstances. These changes have been reflected in popular culture – including sports and feature films – and the escalating violence of many urban communities. The essay argues that this split has ruptured the cultural support for excellence in the black community. Reinforced by other changes within the US college and professional sport structures and exacerbated and accelerated by globalization, it has led to a spiralling decline in the number of black athletes in US sport.

Anti-apartheid boycotts and the affective economies of struggle: the case of Aotearoa New Zealand

Malcolm MacLean

One of the major manifestations of sport-centred activist political struggles in the latter half of the twentieth century centred on the demand for the sporting and broader cultural, social, economic and political isolation of South Africa during the apartheid era. The struggle saw apartheid-endorsed South African sports organizations expelled from international bodies beginning in the 1950s, with the South African National Olympic Committee being the only one ever to be expelled from the IOC. The sports boycott was one of the major successes of the international anti-apartheid campaign, yet the existing literature on boycotts is only marginally relevant to cultural (including sports) boycotts. Furthermore, the existing literature dealing with sports boycotts, with its focus on the multilateral politics of Olympic boycotts, is of minimal use in explaining mass activist campaigns such as the anti-apartheid movement. This essay centres on the campaign against the 1981 South African rugby tour of Aotearoa

New Zealand to explore the multiple significances of sport in the target (South Africa) and sender (Aotearoa New Zealand) states, and the character of the mass movement to argue that the cultural significance of both sport and the politics of ‘race’ and colonialism are vital to an effective understanding of mass movement supported bilateral cultural boycotts.

It’s not just sport: Delhi and the Olympic torch relay

Boria Majumdar and Nalin Mehta

This essay studies the 2008 Tibetan protests in Delhi over the Olympic torch relay as a case study to understand the political and social symbolism attached to the rituals of the Olympic relay. It analyses the impact of the political tightrope walked by the Government of India as it sought to balance its diplomatic priorities, in pursuing the recent thaw in Sino-Indian relations, with the imperatives of a democratic public culture. India has been host to the Dalai Lama since the 1950s and the Beijing Olympics provided the trigger for a renewed focus on the Tibetan question. The Delhi leg of the Olympic flame relay

emerged as an important cog in the global chain of pro-Tibetan protests that the Games ignited. This essay studies the local manifestations of the Delhi protests, the organization and mechanism of the agitation, the countermeasures adopted by the state, the national and international implications of the protests and its broader meaning for the institution of the flame relay itself.

Between small everyday practices and glorious symbolic acts: sport-based resistance against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia

Dino Numerato

This essay presents a socio-historical interpretation of sport-based resistance against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. It argues that the sphere of sport was never absolutely subordinated to the prevailing political order and it maintains that sport provided a space for expressions of resistance. Such resistance is not just evident in cases of large demonstrations during which Czech and Slovak sport celebrities reinforced public protests with grand symbolic and mass-mediated gestures. The same level of importance to opposition against the dominant power can be attributed to small everyday practices. Hence, while considering glorious acts of resistance and protest with a large-scale impact, the study simultaneously explores subtle and everyday subversive strategies that have appeared in public participation in sport. The study is based on a secondary analysis of documents and on semi-structured interviews with a number of representatives from the Czech sport movement.

The ambiguities of development: implications for ‘development through sport’

David R. Black

This essay brings the perspective of the academic sceptic to bear on Development Through Sport (DTS) – an area of rapid growth and burgeoning enthusiasm in the theory and practice of international development and organized sport respectively. It highlights some of the challenges and dangers of engaging in the development ‘enterprise’ for this comparatively new and hopeful field. While acknowledging the valuable contributions that may be made to development through sport, it identifies some core ambiguities in the idea and experience of development, and therefore some cautionary implications for those who come to development through this prism. Indeed, one of the key advantages of DTS advocates and actors is that they are latecomers to the development enterprise, with the opportunity to learn from the dangers and missteps that have befallen more ‘mainstream’ development practitioners through its post-Second World War history. Three key themes are explored: the ambiguous meanings and experiences of development; some of the core challenges they give rise to, particularly in the post-Structural Adjustment era of the late 1990s and beyond; and some key issues and possibilities for the DTS community in this context.

One day, one goal? PUMA, corporate philanthropy and the cultural politics of brand ‘Africa’

Michael D. Giardina

This essay addresses lifestyle sport brand PUMA and its recent activist endeavours with respect to ‘Africa’. Charting a path different from those of transaction-based philanthropic affairs such as (Product)RED, PUMA, the author suggests, has deployed

a transformation-based strategy organized around messages of peace and social justice in which supporters are charged with affecting change themselves in concrete interactions rather than impersonally or from a distance. Likewise, the author discusses the role of Cameroonian footballer Samuel Eto'o and his location to PUMA's mediated efforts with respect to PUMA's brand footprint on the continent. The essay concludes by noting that while such efforts are a step in the right direction, the story is necessarily a work-in-progress.

'No Olympics on stolen native land': contesting Olympic narratives and asserting indigenous rights within the discourse of the 2010 Vancouver Games

Christine M. O'Bonsawin

The Olympic movement is a powerful industry and resistance to it is often deemed unnecessary, and at times is considered to be criminal. The campaign calling for 'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land' is perceived to be a radical crusade calling for the cancellation of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games. However, the reality is these Olympic Games will take place and they will be hosted on unceded and nonsurrendered indigenous lands. The British Columbia land question remains unanswered, and the very presence of the current Olympic structure on contentious indigenous lands has the potential to temporarily silence, and perhaps permanently alter, the immediate needs of indigenous peoples within British Columbia, Canada. This essay contributes to the ongoing narrative of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics as it provides an historical framework for understanding the fragile tensions that exist between present-day Olympic programming and indigenous activism.

Epilogue: the struggles must continue

Bruce Kidd

In the epilogue to this special issue, the co-editor reflects upon recent efforts to bring about social change in and through sport, the contributions of scholarship to those efforts and the current terrain. He argues that while sport has power to effect progressive change, we should not exaggerate the extent of that power. Moreover, sport activists rarely make effective coalitions with progressive groups outside of sport, to the detriment of both. He concludes that the most pressing need today is to shore up public opportunities for sport and physical activity. To that end, he suggests four contributions scholars can make: document and publicize the contradictions between promise and reality, conduct critical research, engage students and support open source publication.

Contents

<i>Series Pages</i>	vii
<i>Abstracts</i>	x
Foreword: 1968 and all that: social change and the social sciences of sport <i>Peter Donnelly</i>	1
1. 'To remember is to resist': an introduction <i>Russell Field</i>	6
Section 1: Remembering	
2. The conservative vision of the amateur ideal and its paradoxical whitening power: the story of Valerie Jerome in 1950s and 1960s Canadian track and field <i>Valerie Jerome and Stuart Parker</i>	12
3. The athlete as Sisyphus: reflections of an athlete advocate <i>Ann Peel</i>	20
4. Tony Suze's reflections on the importance of sport in the struggle to end Apartheid <i>Chuck Korr</i>	32
5. The untold story of Robben Island: sports and the anti-Apartheid movement <i>Anthony Suze</i>	36
Section 2: Resisting	
6. 'In good conscience': Andy Flower, Henry Olunga and the death of democracy in Zimbabwe <i>Callie Batts</i>	43
7. Social change and popular culture: seminal developments at the interface of race, sport and society <i>Harry Edwards</i>	59
8. Anti-apartheid boycotts and the affective economies of struggle: the case of Aotearoa New Zealand <i>Malcolm MacLean</i>	72
9. It's not just sport: Delhi and the Olympic torch relay <i>Boria Majumdar and Nalin Mehta</i>	92

10. Between small everyday practices and glorious symbolic acts: sport-based resistance against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia 107
Dino Numerato

Section 3: Continuing contemporary struggles

11. The ambiguities of development: implications for ‘development through sport’ 121
David R. Black
12. One day, one goal? PUMA, corporate philanthropy and the cultural politics of brand ‘Africa’ 130
Michael D. Giardina
13. ‘No Olympics on stolen native land’: contesting Olympic narratives and asserting indigenous rights within the discourse of the 2010 Vancouver Games 143
Christine M. O’Bonsawin
14. Epilogue: the struggles must continue 157
Bruce Kidd
- Index* 167

Foreword

1968 and all that:¹ social change and the social sciences of sport

Peter Donnelly

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It is always a problem to fetishize a particular year. It is both ahistorical and asociological, taking a year out of the context of history and the processes of social change. I am quite self-conscious of the fact that – as someone who is old enough and was usually conscious enough to remember the events of 1968 – I may also be indulging in some wilful nostalgia here. And I am aware that the events of 1968 may only now appear significant because we know what happened since. But, there was something quite singular about 1968, and a volume on *40 Years of Social Change* has to start somewhere. That singularity places 1968 at the centre of momentous social changes, many of which were associated with sport. And, as social scientists, it is fitting to consider the processes of social change.

In 2003 Jeffrey Hill argued that the state of sport history at the beginning of the millennium could be compared to that of social history in the 1970s. Using Hobsbawm's critique of social history, he proposed that sport history needed 'a recognition of the totality of society, and an ability to explain [as Hobsbawm claimed that the companion disciplines of economics and sociology had not satisfactorily explained] the processes of social change'.²

Despite Hobsbawm's dismissal, it is clear that the disciplines of history, political economy and sociology have, in combination, developed some insights into the processes of social change. These are not complete. There is no grand and widely accepted theory of social change. Modernization theories, those passive notions of social change as grounded in some inevitable and evolutionary process of human development, are no longer given much credence. These are being replaced by the view that processes of social change occur as a result of two overlapping conditions.

The first is technological change – emerging most recently from the scientific revolution that has been developing since the eighteenth century. The shift from a world view rooted in fatalism and superstition to one governed by reason and rationalism led to changes ranging from the agricultural and industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the information and communications revolutions of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These have had profound effects, both intended and unintended, on social change.

The second involves the struggle between two opposing forces. On the one hand is a human tendency to want to hold on to power and material wealth, to increase those resources whenever possible, and to transfer them to one's offspring. Numerous social formations and forms of social organization have been developed to ensure this, ranging from caste systems and arranged marriages (including marriages to ensure the continuity of aristocratic dynasties), to class systems and other forms of social exclusion. Our understanding of the processes of social reproduction provides insights into this tendency. On the other hand is the human tendency, among those without power and wealth, to attempt to achieve fairness and social justice by implementing systems of social equality and equity.

Thus, those representing the first tendency attempt to turn the benefits of technological revolutions to their own advantage, and prevent or regulate social changes that may cause them to share their wealth and power more equitably; while those representing the second tendency engage in struggles which take a number of forms, and which are not always evident, to achieve greater equity. Williams reminds us that hegemony:

does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own... That is to say, alternative political and cultural emphases, and the many forms of opposition and struggle, are important not only in themselves but as indicative features of what the hegemonic process has in practice had to control.³

The great struggles against slavery, and for women's suffrage and workers' rights, provide clear examples of these opposing forces.

The emergence of a sense of shared humanity, and the resulting concept of human rights that began in the eighteenth century, has had a profound impact on the change towards more equitable societies. Hunt argues that, 'human rights are still easier to endorse than to enforce'.⁴ However, once the genie of *human rights* was out of the bottle, it was impossible to replace. The ultimate success of human rights lies in the fact that it is no longer possible to ignore them – it is no longer possible to pretend that some humans are less human than others: 'you know the meaning of human rights because you feel distressed when they are violated. The truths of human rights might be paradoxical in this sense, but they are nonetheless self evident.'⁵

1968

The year 1968 was a landmark in the struggles for social change – for freedom, equality and human rights. What ended in 1968, or thereabouts? The assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were so shocking because so much hope was attached to the two Americans. They represented continuity for the social changes that were occurring in the US and around the world. Similarly, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia marked the end of the 'Prague Spring'. But what ended for so many young people was their innocence, their political *naïveté*, and their unquestioning deference to 'authority'.

So many things started in 1968, or thereabouts. As if to symbolically characterize the differences between Canada and the United States, Pierre Trudeau and Richard Nixon were elected to the highest office in their respective countries in 1968. Students, the poor, ethnic minorities, and ethnic majorities in colonial societies took to the streets in Paris, Prague, Mexico City, Algiers, Montréal, Detroit, Chicago, and many other cities around the world. The year 1968 marked the 20th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights (IDHR), and protestors were asserting their rights to peace (the Vietnam War, the Cold War, nuclear disarmament, etc.), justice, equality and independence.

In 1968, the dismantling of the British Empire was just about complete – who could have imagined in 1938 that an Empire upon which ‘the sun never set’ would disappear in 30 years? The struggle against apartheid in South Africa was well under way, and South Africa would not appear at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics because the international campaign against apartheid sport, backed by the Soviet Union and its allies, persuaded the International Olympic Committee to withdraw its invitation. And, in the United States, the civil rights movement quickly gathered momentum, reminding us that movements for social change are not dependent on one person. Just six months after King’s assassination, on 16 October 1968, two courageous African American Olympic medalists, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, stood on the medal podium in Mexico City, bowed their heads, and raised their gloved fists during the playing of the US national anthem; the third medalist, Australian Peter Norman, showed solidarity by wearing the button of their ‘Olympic Project for Human Rights’.

The civil rights movement in the US was distinct from, and yet parallel to, anti-colonial and independence movements around the world, and it foreshadowed so many other social liberation struggles, including the movements for women’s liberation, aboriginal rights and gay rights. It is important to recognize that Title IX in the US, that key moment in the democratization of girls’ and women’s sport, was part of the 1972 Education Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Aboriginal rights movements were maturing in various parts of the world, but it was not until the 1970s that sport became a part of that movement (e.g. the Saskatchewan Indian Summer Games started in 1974). Gay and lesbian rights were just beginning to be recognized, although the Stonewall Riot that symbolically marked the start of the gay liberation movement did not occur until 1969, and it was another 13 years before the first Gay Games in 1982.

In terms of the rights of persons with a disability, Eunice Kennedy Shriver had been developing camps for children with an intellectual disability in the US since 1962 and, sustained by Frank Hayden’s research carried out at the Universities of Toronto and Western Ontario, organized the first Special Olympics in Chicago in 1968. Paralympic Games were better established by 1968, having made a connection with the Olympics in Rome (1960) and Tokyo (1964). However, the Mexico City Olympics organizers backed out of their commitment, and Tel Aviv stepped in to host the 1968 Paralympics as part of the celebrations of Israel’s 20th anniversary. The Paralympics were not able to re-establish their connection with the Olympics until Seoul (1988).

In many ways these successes are in step with recognition of the civil and political rights enshrined in the IDHR – none are fully realized, but progress has been made. Even the struggle for prison reform achieved some momentum following Johnny Cash’s famous Folsom Prison concert in 1968, but no one would argue that it has gone very far, or that there have not been reversals. However, even less progress was made in the struggle for the economic, social and cultural rights outlined in the IDHR. Lyndon Johnson won a few small battles in his ‘war on poverty’, but poverty demonstrations in Mexico City two weeks before the 1968 Olympics led to the massacre of over 300 students by government troops. The students were demonstrating for social justice, protesting the lavish expenditure on the Olympics in the face of so much poverty. More than 30 years later the United Nations was obliged to make the struggle against poverty (and the related deprivations in health and education) central to its Millennium Development Goals. There is every indication that the Goals will not be achieved by their target date of 2015. The Sport for All movement began to appear in the late 1960s, but despite the successes of the various democratizing movements outlined here, poverty is still the greatest barrier to participation in sport and physical activity.