



1968



2012

# RESISTANCE: THE BEST OLYMPIC SPIRIT

Take a black fist and a white fist.  
Link them together and form a hammer.

*Paul Robeson*

# JOHN CARLOS

Monday 21 May, 6pm  
Friends House, Euston Road, Euston



# SEIZE THE TIME

It was a moment that changed more than just Olympic history. That it certainly did, *forever*. The most iconic image of the Olympic Games and the Black Power movement also captured the mood, the anger and resistance of 1968.

1968 was the year the great civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, was assassinated. Across the US cities burned when the preacher of non-violence was gunned down in Memphis. 1968 was the year that marked the beginning of the end of the Vietnam War when the 'Tet Offensive' stunned the military might of the US. 1968 was the year when black workers in the car plants of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler got organised in the Detroit area launching the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. 1968 was the year of the Prague Spring and, in France, the biggest General Strike in history. 1968 was a year of global resistance.

In Mexico City 1968, as students were mowed down by state troops, Tommie Smith took Gold, winning the 200m race in a world-record time of 19.83 seconds. Peter Norman took Silver with 20.06 seconds and John Carlos, Bronze with 20.10 seconds. As the stars and stripes rose and the Star-Spangled Banner played, Tommie Smith and John Carlos bowed their heads and raised their fists in defiance.

Both athletes stood shoeless, wearing black socks representing the black poor of the ghettos. Tommie Smith wore a black scarf to represent black pride while John Carlos wore beads in memory of those who were lynched or killed, hung and tarred. With his tracksuit top unzipped, John Carlos expressed solidarity with workers in struggle. The Australian medalist, Peter Norman, wore the badge of the Olympic Project of Human rights in support of the two Americans.

Now, as the Olympics approach in London in 2012, the globe is engulfed in a deep recession. Unemployment rises as whole countries teeter on the brink. Impoverishment and insecurity deepens while the rich wine, dine and threaten to set the world aflame with wars and environmental destruction. Our rulers scapegoat the poor and immigrants, fueling fascists, while families seek justice for those loved ones killed at the hands of the racist police.

But there is resistance. The Arab Revolutions have inspired 'Occupy' movements around the world from New York to London to Madrid. Workers are organising, striking and fighting from Mahalla to Wisconsin; from Athens to Rome.

What lessons can we draw from 1968? What are our demands today as the Olympics approach and the whole world's media focuses in on London?

***Who better to introduce that debate than John Carlos?***

Make no mistake, this will be a very special event. Make note of the date and time in your diary. Further leaflets detailing the event will be available soon. One thing is assured however, you're in for a treat!

## Monday 21 May, 6pm, Friends House, Euston Road, Euston

For more information, contact: [unjummirza@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:unjummirza@yahoo.co.uk)

Initiated by: RMT activists on London Underground

"How can you ask someone to live in the world and not have something to say about injustice?"

*John Carlos*

