



MAKING A STAND

INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed to help you think about the significance of the protest made by Tommie Smith, John Carlos and Pete Norman at the 1968 Olympics.

It is organised into themes that can be covered in citizenship, PSHEE and/or English. As you work through the some of the tasks, you will develop your skills in speaking and listening as well as considering issues of social justice, civil rights, individual risk and collective responsibility. The activities are particularly suitable for covering during October's Black History Month.

The trailer and production notes will give you a strong impression of the film *Salute* that is sufficient to cover these activities. If you get a chance to see the whole film, your understanding of the story will be even richer.



THE IMAGE



As a group, look closely at this image then discuss the questions below. Some of you will have seen the image before and will know something about the protest. For others, the image will be new and you may have to make some educated guesses about it:

- What impression do you get of the athletes on the podium? Look closely at their posture, facial expression and anything else you see in the frame.
- What do you understand the closed, raised fist to mean? How do you reach this understanding?
- This protest made some people very angry and others very proud. Why do you think it was so controversial?

Now watch the trailer at www.filmeducation.org/salute

What does this add to your understanding of the story behind the image? Make a list of three key points to share with your group or class.



CHALLENGING INJUSTICE

Read these extracts from the Production Notes then work through the tasks below:

SALUTE is a journey back to the 1960's to examine what has now become one of the most famous Olympic moments in history.

During this era the world was just three years away from the Cuban missile crisis and the threat of nuclear war, the horror of Vietnam, the assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Frightened and desperate people were rioting in the streets of Europe, and throughout the U.S. where there was an urgent push for civil rights. Black nations were threatening to boycott the Olympics in protest and black athletes within the U.S. team were being urged to boycott the Games.

Into this atmosphere walked Peter Norman, whose performance had taken the U.S. team by surprise. Who was this unknown sprinter from Australia? He wasn't a typical sprinter – he was quietly spoken, short legged and white.

In the 200-metres final, he ran the race of his life and split Tommie Smith and John Carlos, winning silver. As they waited for the presentation ceremony, Smith and Carlos told Peter of their plans. One had left behind his pair of black gloves, and at Peter's suggestion, they wore one each.

Despite it not being a situation that affected him directly, Peter asked the Americans if he could join their protest. He felt there was a moral imperative on him to stand up against something he felt was wrong. Like Tommie and John, Peter wore an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge in support of their silent protest.

The image of the three of them on the dais, heads bowed, the Americans delivering the "Black Salute", is regarded as one of the most powerful images of the 20th Century.

Lasting repercussions followed. Smith and Carlos were dropped from the relays and the team. They were kicked out of the Olympics and banned for life. Their lives were ruined, with Carlos's wife later committing suicide.

The punishment of Peter was less dramatic but ultimately as destructive. Coming from a conservative family in a country that still had a white only immigration policy, Norman's stance caused a storm. He was hated in parts of the Australian establishment and the media turned on him.

His chance to win gold at the 1972 Munich Olympics was stolen from him. Despite being the favourite to win gold, qualifying 13 times for the 200m and five times for the 100m, the powers that be refused to take him to Munich. For the first time Australia was not represented in the sprint events at an Olympics.



At the Sydney 2000 Olympics in Australia, Peter Norman was not invited to attend in any official capacity. Australia's best sprinter ever, whose 200m Mexico games time of 20 seconds flat would have won the gold medal at Sydney and whose Australian record still stands nearly 40 years later, wasn't even invited to the 200m final by the Australian Olympic authorities. He was, however, invited by the U.S. team who flew him to Sydney and he was treated as an American guest.

- Try to summarise in one sentence, the reason the athletes made this protest.
- Identify the risks and consequences for the three athletes directly involved.
- Make a list of ways to protest peacefully against injustice and discuss in your group the risks and responsibilities involved in each protest action. Think about the differences between individual and collective forms of protest.

SPEAKING UP

Using your knowledge of the film *Salute*, the suggested links below and your understanding of the issues behind the protest, work in a group to produce an imagined role-play or factual presentation aimed at students your age.

ROLE-PLAY

In pairs or threes, imagine you are on a TV or radio discussion programme in the build up to the London Olympics. The topic is Olympic legacy and the discussion focuses on the 1968 salute protest and its significance. Roles should include:

- Programme presenter
- Eye witness to the 1968 protest, i.e. Someone who was there on the day
- Journalist / Historian

PRESENTATION

In pairs or threes, create and deliver a factual presentation about the protest and the people involved. Invite questions from your audience and lead a discussion about the protest's contemporary significance.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- [BBC Schools World Service Primary Sources](#)
- [BBC Schools World Service Secondary Sources](#)
- [Guardian newspaper obituary for Peter Norman](#)