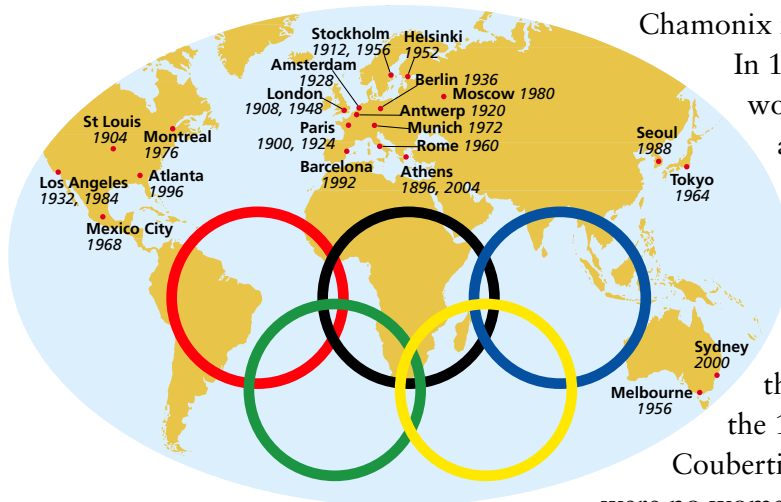


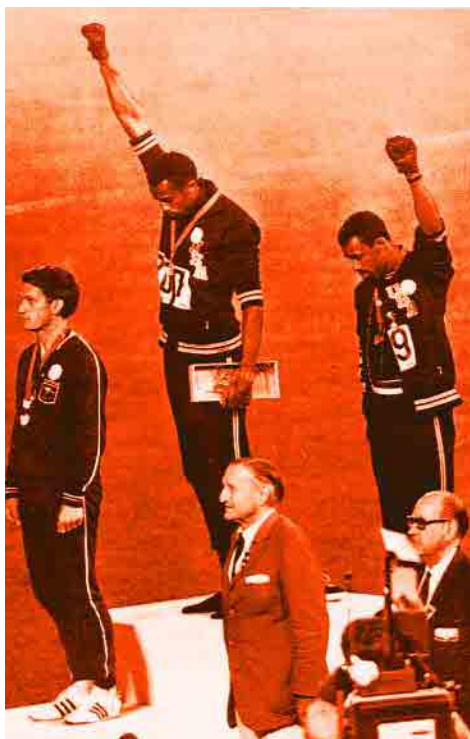
4 From Athens to Athens



From the first Olympiad in Athens in 1896 to the twenty-eighth Olympiad in Athens in 2004, the story of the Olympic Games has not always been a happy one. After 1896, the next two Games were not so successful and it was not sure that the Games would continue. But by the 1920s the Games had become famous and getting ready for them was serious – as you can see from the film *Chariots of Fire* about the 1924 Games in Paris. It was also in this year that the first Winter Olympics were held in

Mexico 1968: Tommy Smith and John Carlos show their support for black power

Chamonix in France (see page 20). In 1928, at Amsterdam, women competed in the athletics for the first time (see page 10). It had not been easy for women at the Olympics. None of the people who started the Olympic Games in the 1890s with Pierre de Coubertin were women. There were no women athletes at the first Olympics and although some women



THE OLYMPIC GAMES

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were at the second Games in Paris in 1900, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) did not want women there: the first real Olympic medals for women were not until 1912, in swimming. Women's athletics started in 1928 but they could not run more than 200 metres until 1960! Even in 1984, at Los Angeles, there were still no 5,000 or 10,000 metre races for women. The first women did not join the IOC until 1981: and there are still many more men than women on the IOC today. Sport is still a man's world.

There were problems in Berlin in 1936. Hitler wanted to show the world that the best athletes were white. He got very angry when a young black American athlete called Jesse Owens won four gold medals. The Games of 1940 and 1944 did not happen because of the Second World War. The 1956 Games in Melbourne were the first outside Europe or the USA, and in 1964 the Games went to Asia for the first time – to Tokyo. In 1968 in Mexico City, Tommy Smith and John Carlos showed their support for black power: they were sent home immediately. And the Mexican police

had big fights with students before the Games. In 1972, eleven Israeli athletes were killed by terrorists in the Olympic Village where the athletes live. The terrorists were killed by police.

In 1980, only eighty countries went to the Moscow Games because the Russian army had entered Afghanistan: once again it seemed possible that the Olympic Games would not go on. In 1984, the Russians and some other countries did not go to Los Angeles. But, although there have been problems, the Games have continued. 169 countries went to the 1992 Games in Barcelona which were happy and very successful.

Flags at half-mast after the deaths of eleven Israeli athletes, Munich 1972

