

PREFACE

In addition to being hailed as the Orwellian year, 1984 has another claim to fame—it is an Olympic year. With the city of Los Angeles, California playing host to the XXIIIrd Olympiad, the United States has the ultimate opportunity to showcase democracy in a free society and present to the world the “American way of life.” Will the myth of the “American dream” be perpetuated as the result of allowing only a one-dimensional view of America to be presented to the world at large? Or will America be portrayed as it really is—a multitude of races, ethnicities, religions, attitudes and lifestyles that reflect the diverse composition of our country?

One would think that because the Games are going to be held in Los Angeles, a city in which minorities comprise well over 50% of the total population, proportionate minority representation would be evidenced in all phases of planning and staging the event. This, however, has not been the case. Thus, although the answers to the above questions will not be revealed until the conclusion of the Games, the actions of those running the Olympics, thus far, indicate that the world will see America only as *they* want it to be seen . . . at any cost.

This determined attitude on the part of the Olympic organizers has created a concern of communal disenfranchisement by the minority communities surrounding several of the Olympic sites. These communities fear that they will be excluded from reaping an economic profit although the Games are being held in their neighborhoods, that they will be forced to endure increased police brutality and harassment in the name of “Olympic security,” and that their constitutional and civil rights will be violated by the limiting or banning of the right to assemble, picket, or demonstrate in a public place.

One would think that America would want to show the world that in a democratic society people are free to demonstrate and voice their opinions. Yet, sadly, all indications point toward the strict curtailing of the constitutional right to assemble and demonstrate during the period the Games are to be held in Los Angeles.

But the Games have always been “political.” From the United States boycott of the 1980 Olympics held in Moscow, to show disapproval of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, to the Russian and communist bloc countries’ pull-out from the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles because of “fear of inadequate Olympic security for Soviet athletes” (or better yet, fear of defections of Soviet athletes), the Olympic Games have become a highly provocative and powerful political arena. Coupled with the British decision to allow Zola Budd, a South African woman, to race under its flag (a direct affront to African nations and people of color), the political nature of the Games not only brings to a head ideological conflicts between the East and the West, but also fuels racial tensions as well.

Thus, although the illusion persists that blacks as a race have achieved parity, any inroads our people have made mean little when the pervasive effects of racism still permeate society and manifest themselves in newer and more subtle ways.

The writings which comprise Volume 9:1 of the *Black Law Journal* examine some of the areas in which racism still persists today. The foreword by Henry McGee, Jr. provides perspectives on racism, sexism and elitism in society. The articles by Professors Harry Edwards and Ray Yasser may be viewed with an eye toward the subtleties of racism in amateur sports. The article by David Hall and George Henderson illustrates that despite the passage of thirty years, racism still makes desegregation a viable issue. Further, the article by Roy Copeland shows that the decline in black landownership can be directly attributed to racism. Finally, the book reviews discuss how racism characterized the images of blacks portrayed on television and how blacks in the legal profession have helped and can presently help to combat racism in America.

The *Journal* consistently strives to provide a forum through which relevant and thought-provoking issues may be presented for consideration and deliberation. Similarly, we aim to provide individual viewpoints on issues we believe should be a constant concern of minorities and others interested in justice and equality. It is our hope that Volume 9:1 meets this goal.

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