

# An Orwellian Olympics

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The International Olympic Committee has announced that it is "satisfied" competitors will not be impacted by Russia's recently enacted homophobic laws, and that those laws do not violate the Olympic charter. From this I must conclude that creative ceramics have been added to the list of Olympic sports, because that is the biggest crock of male bovine excrement in Olympic history.

The chairman of the IOC Coordination Commission, former Olympic Alpine skiing star Jean-Claude Killy, never conquered a mountain as high as the pile of bullshit he spewed out when he told the world last month, "The IOC doesn't really have the right to discuss the laws in the country where the Olympic Games are organized. As long as the Olympic charter is respected, we are satisfied, and that is the case."

Killy's assessment makes sense only if we assume the Olympic charter, which prohibits discrimination of any kind, including creed and sexual orientation, was written by George Orwell. All athletes are created equal, but some are created more equal than others.

The Russians have been disingenuous in the defense of their laws, which prohibit any "propaganda" that promotes "non-traditional" sexual orientation. Propaganda is normally a term applied to false or exaggerated information, but in this case the Russians include any discussion; any objective truth which reflects positively; and routine, spontaneous expressions such as kissing, hand-holding, or attire.

"Regarding this law, if people of traditional sexual orientation spread propaganda of non-traditional sex to children, then they will also be held accountable," said Dmitry Kozak, a deputy prime minister in charge of overseeing preparations for the Sochi Olympics. "So there is simply no need to talk about discrimination."

So homosexuality, which was alive and well when the Olympics were first held in ancient Greece, is a taboo topic, but homosexuals and those who accept them are not discriminated against? Absolutely, as long as they look straight, talk straight, and dress straight.

Which begets the question: how are they going to fit the medals podium in the closet?

The Human Rights Campaign has condemned the IOC's statement of acceptance of the Russian law.

"If this law doesn't violate the IOC's charter, then the charter is completely meaningless," said HRC President Chad Griffin. "The safety of millions of LGBT Russians and international travelers is at risk, and by all accounts the IOC has completely neglected its responsibility to Olympic athletes, sponsors and fans from around the world."

I sit here munching on my bowl of Barilla pasta and my takeout from Chick-fil-A and wondering when did we become so accepting of intolerance? When did we let concern for disrupting a major commercially sponsored event become so much more important than refusing to roll over one more time for the steam-roller of oppression? When did we decide

that "boycott" is a four-letter word not to be uttered in polite society while the hypocritical pageantry begins?

Reality is the members of the Impotent Olympic Committee don't give a damn about our rights. For them, this is an inconvenient issue arising at an inopportune time. They are more worried about whether their sponsors will be ruffled and whether television viewers will turn off their sets. Their great hope is that we shall acquiesce out of misguided loyalties or fall silent through sheer exhaustion.

That's a shame, because with all of the goodwill and financial resources that the Olympics command, the IOC really had a chance to take a stand with symbolic gestures that would do much to relegate the Russian intolerance to the international isolation it deserves.

It could have asked the athletes to march into the opening ceremonies holding hands as an expression of unity and camaraderie, the embodiment of the Olympic spirit. It could have suspended the playing of national anthems of any country that won a gold medal but does not protect basic human rights, including the right of expression. It could have offered a moment of silence during the opening ceremonies where it would have had a statement of LGBT support but cannot under Russian law. It could have ordered the ice at the rinks dyed pink. It could have asked Johnny Weir to design the clothes its dignitaries will wear in Sochi – and they would have looked fabulous.

Instead, Killy tells us the IOC does not have the right to speak, much less to act. Instead, the IOC tries to tell us we are not discriminated against as long as we do not think the things we think, dress the way we wish, or speak the truth of who we are.