

A Naïve Victory

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The warning was loud and clear. It came from China's government and was echoed by Nancy Pelosi: during the Beijing Olympics, don't dare protest the brutal policies of China's government lest it come down upon you like a ton of bricks.

An Olympic athlete has found a way to both heed and spurn this counsel.

In what the *New York Times* calls a "rare rebuke," Swedish speedskater Nils van der Poel

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has given one of his gold medals to the daughter of a Chinese-born Swedish publisher being imprisoned by the Chinese government.

Last November, Nils saw a production by Civil Rights Defenders that told of how Gui Minhui, a publisher of works criticizing the Chinazi regime, is now incarcerated in China. He had been abducted by Chinese operatives while vacationing in Thailand.



The skater felt obliged to do something in protest "since I had the opportunity that very few people have."

Gui's daughter, Angela, shrugs off any suggestion that the skater's gesture, lacking immediate power to free her father, must be naïve.

"A little bit of naïveté is important to try to effect change," she says. "I think it's very important that Nils giving me his medal to honor my father is understood as honoring political prisoners like him, many of whom are increasingly Hong Kongers and Uyghurs."

What about it, fellow Olympic winners? If you follow Nils's example, you'll no longer have your medal. But you'll still have your victory.

And a little more.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.