

# What does the International Cycling Union think?

*Fellowship among sportsmen, an ostrich-like Policy or self-seeking favouritism?*

On the occasion of the World Cycling Championships which took place last August, the Press has reported an incident not only symbolic but also of practical interest. The International Olympic Committee and all sportsmen concerned with fair play cannot remain indifferent to it.

Let us briefly call to mind the facts. Once again the World Cycling Championships took place in Belgium — which is one of the three great cycling countries of the world, the other two being France and Italy. Once more, due to the fact that Belgium is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, East Germany was obliged to shoulder the cost both figuratively and actually, since the German team, unable to obtain from the Inter-Allied Bureau the necessary papers for getting entry visas, had however gone to Brussels in the uncertain hope of yet being able to take part in the meeting in spite of everything.

The members of the team were doubly humiliated when, held up at the airport, they waited in vain for the International Cycling Union to use its considerable influence with the administrative authorities in order to get the ban lifted.

It is easy to imagine the sad disappointment of the athletes who were not only looking forward to a possible victory, (their home performances had made this a distinct possibility), but who, at the same time, saw themselves badly let down by their own International Federation.

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Several questions are consequently raised, as urgent as they are ever-present. We are

told that the International Olympic Committee has no right to concern itself with the internal problems of the International Federations. This is certainly true, but here is a matter of interest to sport on the highest level. Thus at the moment when both the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations come to grips with this serious problem of political discrimination, which hinders the carrying out of so many competitions, one or other of these organizations, even at the risk of endangering months of preparation, must cancel these meetings or championships so that the noble principle of sport, open to all without discrimination, may be respected. Are we not allowed to deplore the fact that so many efforts are compromised by indifference or by private interest? Is it really so impossible to give the organization of international competitions only to those countries able to guarantee the participation of all nations entered, or will the final outcome be the overthrow of the fraternity of sport?

The ability of sport to open frontiers will be diminished if, on some pretext or another, certain of its governing bodies accept compromises or depart from a policy of action which should be not only permanent but common to all, but which may become merely sporadic and therefore ineffectual. In this event, sport will be solely a physical exercise and will lose the moral force which places it among the noble activities of man. In the same way, one cannot be astonished if the athletes themselves, taking their cue from their mentors, overstep the rules of honour, loyalty and integrity which it is their duty to uphold.