

Pseudo - Amateurism under Fire

It always starts by a bombshell which often misfires and... comes to naught. In this case, the attack was launched by Werner Scharch who has been one of the leaders of Amateur Cyclism in East Germany since 1949. Man of great value, he was greatly appreciated for his uprightness and honesty. He was praised alround for the outstanding success he made of the World Championship of cyclism which was held in Leipzig and in Karl-Marx Stadt (on the eve of the Rome Olympics last Summer). Herewith are a few

particulars we learned about him from the press.

The scandal was revealed last October, by several European newspapers, among which we noticed particularly that of *l'Equipe* of Paris. We publish herewith the results of the interview Werner Scharch gave to the journalist Serge Lang, at Mulhouse. In order to make the situation quite clear and according to Lang, we must explain that Werner Scharch escaped from East Germany, and took refuge at Linz in Austria. It is

apparently the first time that an eminent sport leader of one of the East European countries has left his country. He is a former chemical technician and built himself in the lapse of ten years, a solid reputation in the sporting field of East Germany. He played football until 1948 when he took in hand the management of the cycling federation in East Germany, of which the roadracers Gustav-Adolf Schur (1958-1959) and Ekstein won the world record of *amateur cyclists*. Herewith is what we read in *l'Equipe*:

EX-LEADER SCHARCH INTERVIEWED

1. *What circumstances prompted you to relinquish your function with regard to sport and to leave the DDR?*

— I do not propose to give here all the reasons which incited me to quit the DDR of East Germany, as they are of a personal order, but one of them must be revealed. It concerns the problem of status of our sportsmen which has brought me face to face with a very serious case of conscience. You know that the Olympic Charter gives a very clear definition of the amateur status of sportsmen. In order to qualify for participation in the Games, the International Cyclism Union instituted three clearly defined categories: the amateurs, the independents and the professionals. Each of these categories has its functions clearly defined. Now, in the past few years, the States of the East created an entirely new situation by setting up in their midst a clearly defined category: the State professionals. The reason why I mention these State professionals is that in these countries of the East, amateurs are treated as professionals. This means that amateurs receive a fee for their performances and this is a flagrant transgression of their amateur status. (*These allegations have been strongly refuted by the USSR, see last Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee.* Ed.) All these facts are bound to set a very intricate problem to the International Cyclism Union wish, however, to point out that as a result of me recently leaving my federation and my country, these matters do not concern me anymore and I have no intention to discuss the problem. In point of fact, it is on account of these problems that I resigned my post. In former days, I often discussed these problems with the leaders of the International Cyclism Union and a few journalists of *l'Equipe*; we sought a means to solve these problems. Indeed, it is imperative that a solution be found, for, in the long run, the position of athletes in the countries of the East will become intolerable to integral amateur status. Already now, the situation has become unbearable on the strictly sporting basis. Indeed, in the present conditions, the amateur runners belonging to countries which have also instituted a class of professionals, meet in competition runners of the countries of the East who are in fact professionals. Gustav Adolf Schur, for example, could hold

his own, and compete on equal terms with the greatest champions among the 'pros', has no difficulty in holding the young competitors in check who are still real amateurs. It is obvious that such a situation is inadmissible.

2. *You maintain that the runners of the DDR (East Germany) are professionals, how are they paid?*

— In occidental countries, professional runners belong to a firm, represent a trademark or belong to a group of ultra trained sportsmen who pays them according to what they yield or according to their standing. In East Germany, the racers belong to a club which pays them a fee. Schur, Hagen and Eckstein belong to the sports club called 'Wissenschaft' (Sciences club) and they earn a fee of 600 to 1200 marks per month, which is quite a large sum of money according to our standard, and what is more, they are housed and are paid a bonus reaching sometimes the top level of 7000 marks when they win a title, on an international basis. The fact that some of these runners — Schur for example, — carries on very serious studies, does not, in my opinion, matter much, since students receive scholarships which, in no case, must exceed the monthly sum of 300 marks. I do not raise any objection to the fact that these athletes receive money but, in that case, they ought to be classed, and compete with the professionals of other countries. Besides, this would be in their own interest.

3. *In which way do you envisage the evolution of the present situation?*

— Cyclism is in a situation similar to that of football. It is the same international federation which controls both amateurs and professionals. The solution of the problem to which I have alluded above is obviously made difficult owing to the difference which exists between the economic and political regimes operating in the eastern and occidental world. But, sport has on the whole its own rules which, on an international basis, are not tied to the political structure of the various countries belonging to an international federation. The only essentials which affect sport offer, as I have said before, points of similarity between eastern and occidental countries. Thus, I am of opinion that one ought to seek in the case of cyclism a solution similar to that found and adopted by the International Football Federation.

4. *What practical solution are you prepared to suggest to the leaders of the U.C.I.?*

— On the first instance, one ought to create a system of universal licence. In this way, each country could determine the status which suits her best, and nothing could prevent, for example, the maintenance of the present categories in the occidental countries. Moreover, the World Championships would be contested in one event only

opened to the ten best runners of each country, amateurs or professionals. In order, however, to respect *olympic amateurism* and maintain cycling in the Games Programme, U.C.I. ought to decree, as FIFA (International Federation of Football amateur) did, that a runner, who has competed in the World Championship, is not qualified to represent his country in Olympic competitions. This system was adopted by FIFA, players who competed in the World Championship of 1957 in Sweden did not qualify to participate in the Olympics of Rome in 1960. Such a solution would allow, for example, Sovietic runners or East of Germany contestants to take part in the Tour de France or in the Giro whereas the Belgian and Italian as well as the Swiss and French 'pros' would qualify to compete in the 'Course de la Paix'.

5. *Have you weighed the full significance of your statements?*

I am perfectly conscious of the implication and consequence of my declarations. I want, however, to point out that I did not make these statements with the object of inconveniencing anyone but because I find it opportune that, at this juncture, when I have given up all my official functions, I should help contribute to solve the problem which it is no longer possible to elude.

THE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OF THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (EAST) REPLIES TO
MR. SCHARCH ALLEGATIONS

Letter of November 15th 1960.

'After contacting the leaders of the German Cyclism Federation, I can assure you that the allegations brought forward by Mr. Scharch are utterly void of foundation and have been conceived by Mr. Scharch and his supporters solely with one purpose, namely that of stirring trouble and disturbing the collaboration existing between the sportsmen who belong to the two different German States and of spoiling the friendly relations among the sportsmen throughout the world. Previous to receiving your two letters, I was informed by the leaders of the German Cyclism Federation that Scharch, who left the Democratic German Republic (East), is spreading most shocking lies about the cyclists of our country, in West Germany and abroad (*a few other remarks follow which are of a private nature and do not concern sport, Ed.*).

The German Cyclism Federation begged me to emphasize the fact that the federation is determined to implement at all times the rules and principles laid down by the International Olympic Committee and the International Cyclism Union.

Signed: *H. Schöbel, President.*

This is a typical case confronting the International Olympic Committee and ought

to convince the people who accuse the International Olympic Committee to close its eyes and refuse to inquire into the question. Where is the truth? What more can be done? Opposed views and opinions exist on the matter, and the International Olympic Committee does not have an army at its disposal, as President Brundage aptly remarked, to set matters right. Let us be objective and recognize the fact that we have reached the turning point of history. Sport is not the only victim of this wholesale deceit...

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A last word: Scharch confirms his declarations in a recent letter to the International Olympic Committee.

WHEN MR. WERNER SCHARCH WAS AT THE
HEADQUARTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE IN LAUSANNE

Let us recall the fact that in 1951, the International Olympic Committee represented by Mr. Avery Brundage signed a convention with the delegates of West Germany (represented by Dr. Karl Ritter von Halt) and the East German delegation including Mr. Scharch. We still bear in mind that Mr. Scharch was the most conciliatory party of the three representatives of East Germany. What is known too, is that upon his return, to Berlin, the said delegation was refused the ratification of this convention by the leaders of the East and that it was considered *a mere scrap of paper*. The whole matter was left in suspense till 1955, when a new agreement, which is still in force, was signed between the two parties that of East and of West Germany.

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To conclude the whole problem will be submitted for examination at the Session of the International Olympic Committee in Athens in June 1961. This Session will be preceded by Conferences of the Executive Board with the delegates of the International Federations and those of the National Olympic Committees. A motion on amateur status has been moved and must be discussed in an open debate. Let us emphasize the fact however that some of the International Federations would like to see the Games opened to all, but the majority of the International Federations do not share this opinion, since they still respect integral amateurism. According to its new conceptions, the International Olympic Committee operates within the Olympic Movement, namely it takes into account to a large extent, the opinions and views expressed by the International Federations and by the National Olympic Committees. The members of the International Olympic Committee are not imprisoned in an *Ivory Tower* as alleged, although some reactionary people still seem to think so.

1961 represents the Session in Athens followed by a pilgrimage to Olympia which will no doubt give a new impetus and inspire the participants?

MR. RENÉ CHESAL, GENERAL SECRETARY
OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CYCLISM UNION, INTERVENES

'The whole problem of sport and Olympism is affected', said Mr. Chesal to the press. 'Let us be frank and review the whole situation of sport', he wrote to the International Olympic Committee when he pleaded with the latter not to incriminate cyclism with facts and happenings which could just as well be implicated to other sports, to other countries, indeed to all. 'Cyclism, stated Mr. Chesal, had the courage to lance the abscess and strike at the root of the trouble, it is therefore unfair to discredit a sport which had the courage to investigate its own case and expose it in broad daylight.' Let us recognize the great frankness of Mr. Chesal at any rate.

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The French journalist Marcel Thierry commented rightly in *l'Equipe* that this uneasy and uncomfortable feelings do not only exist in cyclism which scandal has been revealed in Mr. Scharch declarations to the press, nor is it to be attributed to the Eastern countries only, but it is universal. The sport leaders of East Germany may be quite sincere when one takes into account their conceptions of things in general. As soon as a sportsman or artist shows talent above the average, he is granted facilities to train and improve in order to reach the best results. He is not considered a professional since it is the State which provides him with these facilities and not an organization as it is done elsewhere. Mr. Thierry is of opinion that the accused cyclists are remunerated by their club (especially when it calls itself 'the Sciences Club'), this fact does not put at a discount amateurism according to the conception they have out there of it, inasmuch that the two athletes implicated in the case have other 'pursuits in life, beside sport'.

MR. RODONI, PRESIDENT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CYCLISM UNION, HAS ALSO
EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT

'The International Cyclism Union will set an inquiry in the matter, did he say, adding that if documents and proofs can be found to prove their guilt, the accused cyclists will immediately be classed as professionals'. It is said that Mr. Scharch's declarations pleased the president of the International Cyclism Union as they provide him with the opportunity to raise the question of amateurism at the next congress, and to revise the whole situation as it now stands.

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In October 1959, the Tribunal of the Seine in its summing up of the case brought up by International Olympic Committee against a Parisian Sports Pictorial paper, declared openly that 'it does not fall within the competence of the International Olympic Committee to determine the amateur status of an athlete'. This responsibility befalls the National Olympic Committees and the International Federations. On the other hand, *it is its duty to make known the facts which have come to its knowledge*. It is up to the parties responsible to adopt a definite position with regard to this matter. The International Cycling Union has written to the International Olympic Committee on the first instance, before the latter asked for particulars with regard to the 'denunciation' of the incriminated cyclists. This spontaneous gesture on the part of the International Cyclism Union has been appreciated. The International Olympic Committee is examining other cases as well. It is impossible for it to get precise information in all cases. Maeterlinck once said: 'The human race has lost the notion of right and wrong.'

If we alluded to the topic mentioned above, it is less with the object of questioning Mr. Scharch's declarations (He has just confirmed his allegations to us by phone from Linz at the very moment we are writing these lines), than to point out the very serious danger threatening honest sport in the world at the present time. On this matter, we share the point of view of Mr. René Chesal, Secretary of the International Cyclism Union, who had the courage to denounce this state of affairs.

TOPICS UNDER DISCUSSION IN THE PRESS...

— The automobile firm of Fiat (unpaid publicity) has 'lent' a touring car to every Italian athlete who won a medal at the recent Olympics in Rome. The Italian Olympic Committee gave its approval of this gift and thanked the Turin firm for its delicate attention. Thirty-five athletes are thus benefitting by this measure.

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Twenty-five persons belonging to the Skating Federation of East Germany (coaches, officials and competitors) went for a three months stay to the Swedish town of Kiruna in order to follow a special course of training in view of the forthcoming competitions of this winter. Among the skaters present in this training centre, we found the Olympic Champion of the 500 m. Helga Haase and her comrade Inge Görner.

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The German recordman Martin Lauer (4th in 110 m. hurdles in the Olympic Games of Rome) was suspended by decree of the Legal Board of the German Federation of Athletics

for committing the offence of publishing an article (without retribution, he told us), in an illustrated German magazine where he criticized the organization of the Olympics in Rome (*after enjoying free hospitality there.* Ed.) as well as finding fault with the attitude of certain German officials. The legal Board adjourned its verdict with regard to 'certain material benefits' which Lauer might have drawn from his participation in various sports meetings...

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The Finnish newspaper *Viiko Sanomat* accuses the athletic champions of accepting bonuses for their recent participations at sports manifestations. We shall refrain from entering into details as far as these bonuses are concerned, they extend from Swiss Francs 120,— to Frs 1,400,— (The highest value is set on 1,500 m., as compared with the 5,000 m., or the 10,000 m., for example.) These facts were revealed on the basis of statements made by former Finnish Olympic champions. It is revealed also that the Norwegian Johannesen (Olympic champion of the 10,000 m. at Squaw Valley and the Scandinavian vedette) declared that: 'An amateur is the man who accepts payment on the sly'. As for the long distance skiers, they are worth '40 Swiss Frs' per kilometre...

Editors comments: It is not us who say so but the whole European press, why should we hide the truth? One question however must be asked in the responsible quarters: What do the National Olympic Committees think of it all?

DAN WAERN ADMITS HIS FAULT

UPI. The famous Swedish runner Dan Waern, who came in 4th in the 1,500 m. at the Olympics in Rome, made a full confession of having broken the rules of amateurism.

Accused by his federation of having accepted money for his participation in athletic gatherings, Dan Waern declared: 'Indeed, I do not profess to be an amateur as conceived by Mr. Avery Brundage, president of the Olympic Committee, and by the Swedish Athletic Federation: I have been running in more than fifty races during the season, and I fail to see how I could have defrayed my personal expenses and provide for the needs of my family had I always remained an amateur.'

M. BEETZ HAD DECLARED...

M. Beetz, sport's leader in Frankfurt has been suspended for 10 years by the Ligue of Hesse in Germany. He declared that he paid 970 Marks to Hary, the Olympic champion and that the American Olympic champion Otis Davis (who won the 400 M. race in Rome) asked him 1000 Marks... for

his wardrobe and his refreshments! Finally Davis was satisfied with 500 Marks.

THE GERMEN, CARL KAUFMANN AND MARTIN LAUER ARE SUSPECTED TO BE SHAME-AMATEURS

The German and the International Federations inquire.

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The German Olympic champion Armin Hary has been suspended for one year by the disciplinary commission of the Hesse Athletic Federation for having violated the amateur rule, Hary having asked and received too high cash rewards for having participated in two events in Hanover and Frankfurt. It has been reproached also to Hary with having written injurious articles against official sports personalities.

ONE SAYS...

The British amateurs Bannister, Brasher, Chataway are in favour of a revision of the amateur status which, through their severity, leads to their violation.