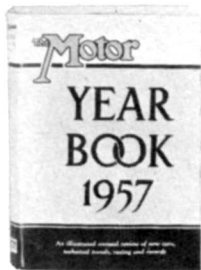


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letters

I have just read your September editorial and I am stunned. Don't you know you have just committed heresy? Why, I wouldn't be surprised to find you hanged in effigy in front of every sport-car pub in town. The faithful will wail, tear their clothes and pour dirt on their heads, the quasi-religion of sports cars having lost an apostle.

I have been a friend of the sports car for eight years and I have made a yearly note that the movement has moved little by little into a tightly knit elite, complete with symbols (badges, decals, shoulder patches, etc.), raiment (Ivy-league, of course), holy scripture (Sport Cars Illustrated), high priest (J. M. Fangio), bishops (Moss, Behra, et al), canonized saint (T.V. Nuvolari) and the soul satisfying smugness of being "one of them."

In order to belong to an elite, "Ye must believe." Elites from time immemorial have had one thing in common — to pull closely together and fight the outsiders either by direct attack, powerful propaganda, or simply assuming superiority and never bringing it up for discussion. Elites therefore take away much and offer little.

When the movement got this far I got out and the sports car people were mighty glad to be rid of me!

One of the greatest points of pride of the sports car set is that they are "international." Nonsense, they are simply "anti-national" instead. I am an American and not ashamed of it. I like American motorcars (and so do Europeans). National pride is not bad. All the world's people are proud of their traditions and the products of their land. Why should we suddenly turn against our own things and embrace the foreigners?

The recent running of the Monza 500 would, I thought, bring some of the faithful to a new realization of the excellence of things American. It didn't and I was very disappointed.

Two things of which I am most proud as an American are the almost uniquely American tradition of playing the game hard and to win, and the sanctity of an agreement. One should recall the two Grands Prix events run over the Roosevelt, Long Island course in which the Americans ran out-moded dirt track cars against Europe's finest road cars. We, naturally, were very badly beaten in the first year's race — only to come back the second year just as eager to race again. The second year, Rex Mays, one of our finest aces, finished third — right in the middle of Hitler's great Auto Union and Benz aggregations.

We simply do not pull out because we fear defeat. What would happen to the reputation of a fine college if it refused to honor its agreement to play a stronger team because "we do not have a chance to win"?

Also, in closing may I say that your magazine is excellent in most respects and is far superior to any magazine which represents speedway racing.

Yours very truly,
Pressly R. Keays
Hollywood, California

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DID SOMEONE CRY FOWL

I am sorry to see the members of UPPI labeled "chicken" by Mr. Christy in the September issue. Whatever their reasons for not entering the race at Monza, the very fact that for years these men have willingly raced on the toughest courses in the world and sometimes against unbeatable odds, should be proof enough that "chicken" is exactly what they are not!

Ann B. Johnstone
Greenville, Mississippi

Now let's see the Americans meet the "Chickens" at Silverstone, the Nurburg ring circuit, Road America or Sebring. Let's have a few right hand turns thrown in and the use of more than a two position gear box. Let's have pit stops for gas and tires a couple of minutes in duration like a pit stop should be, not long stops where, according to Autosport, welders were busy rebuilding the American cars. Then, gentlemen, the story might be different.

Lt. M. I. Johnstone
Mississippi

The tone of your editorial in September SCI is rather surprising, when considered in the perspective of the post war years. I don't think that anyone has ever proven the old provincialism that the USA has a monopoly on guts.

Motor wise, it seems to me that they just transported Indianapolis to Italy. One reason European type racing returned to this country was that many people believe that it proved more about the capabilities of a car, i.e. gear boxes, clutch, brakes, etc. These factors are absent in an Indianapolis type race.

If more cubic inches and higher gearing are superiority then I concede the fight.

Allen J. Jassen
San Pedro Calif.

The editorial said that had the members of the UPPI and the various manufacturers pointed out, with no carping, that they didn't have the proper cars or rubber and that they didn't feel it financially feasible to build same for this race, no one could have complained. What we objected to was the shouting about safety and the dangers of the circuit and in general crying that the race would "prove nothing." It proved several things, among which was that the track was rough (as we had said earlier), that our cars needed strengthening at certain points, and that Ecurie Ecosse has guts. It also proved that a banked track of that type was as safe as any — perhaps safer. When the steering broke on one machine the driver was left helpless at 180 mph but because of the banking the car literally steered itself down to the pits. Picture that happening any place else. Had the abstainers told the truth the editorial would never have been written. They didn't so the opinion stands as written.—Ed.



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