Chess in the Courts

Edward Winter

We present a chronological catalogue of chess-related cases which went to court. Information on other affairs will be much appreciated.

1888: Priscilla Horwitz v Charles Windust

From pages 78-79 of the *International Chess Magazine*

, April 1888:

"Horwitz v Windust. 31 January, before Mr Justice Wills, Queen's Bench Division. Mrs Horwitz, widow of the late B. Horwitz, sued Mr Charles Windust, a publican, proprietor of the Royal Mail public-house, Noble-street, City, to recover £45 under the following circumstances. It appeared that plaintiff was desirous of selling the copyright of her late husband's work *Chess Studies and End Games*, with the stereotype plates belonging to it. She was introduced to defendant and, according to her case, he undertook to sell them for her. He succeeded in effecting a sale to Messrs Bell and Sons, publishers, for £75, and gave plaintiff

introduced to defendant and, according to her case, he undertook to sell them for her. He succeeded in effecting a sale to Messrs Bell and Sons, publishers, for £75, and gave plaintiff £30, and she now claimed the balance, contending he acted as her agent. The defendant, on the other hand, said he was introduced to the plaintiff as one who would buy her book, and acted as principal throughout, buying the work absolutely for £30. In support of this he relied upon an agreement signed by him to the effect that he would give her £30, free from all expense, for the book. Defendant also said he paid £5 for the introduction to plaintiff, and had incurred some expense in finding a purchaser and in running down to Brighton to see plaintiff, who was visiting there. Mr Hextall appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr Lyon for the defendant. His Lordship came to the conclusion from the plaintff's evidence, which was corroborated, that at the outset the defendant undertook to sell the book for the plaintiff, and a man could not change himself from an agent to a principal without giving the other side full knowledge of the change of circumstances, which in this case had not been given. The defendant evidently did not understand what the doctrines were upon which in a court of law or equity a question of this kind must turn, and he was sure his moral perceptions unaided would scarcely lead him in that direction. He must therefore give judgment for the plaintiff for £45. Mr Lyon pointed out that the defendant had been put to some expense. His Lordship said he would enter the judgment for £40 on that ground." -Liverpool Courrier

1890: Isidor Gunsberg v *Volksblatt* **Gunsberg (C.N. 1078)**

+ Francis Joseph Lee v Isidor

The September 1890 *International Chess*Magazine , pages 273-274, had a letter from Gunsberg to Steinitz explaining the

details of 'the first chess libel suit on record'. The Vienna paper

Volksblatt

was found guilty and fined for publishing a 'libelous

paragraph' about the abortive Chigorin-Gunsberg match. According to Gunsberg, Chigorin

suppressed the correct facts of the match negotiations and a false insinuation was taken up by the

Austrian journal.

The following issue, pages 299-300, featured information on another chess legal case. Again Gunsberg was involved, although this time as the defendant. Francis Joseph Lee – and this is the only time we have ever seen his forenames in full in a contemporary source – sought leave to commence proceedings for libel against the editor and publisher of the Evening News and Post and its chess columnist, Gunsberg. The latter had allegedly 'imputed or suggested a corrupt motive to Mr Lee in losing to Mr Mason a game in the Manchester Chess Tournament'. Gunsberg denied that he had imputed or suggested anything of the kind. 'The learned Judge refused to make an order giving leave to prosecute.'

Steinitz commented:

'In both cases Mr Gunsberg was successful, and we thoroughly sympathized with him in the first case, but cannot do so in the present instance. Mr Lee's cause of complaint may not have been so strong as to warrant a legal prosecution, but it is to be regretted that even the slightest hint of professional dishonesty should have been given in a chess column, edited by a professional master, without the accusation being capable of absolute proof.'

1898-99: Samuel Rosenthal v Prince Balaschoff (C.N. 1483)

From the *Stratégie* we learn that a curious lawsuit has just been brought before the First Chamber of the Civil Tribunal at Paris. A dozen years ago Prince Balaschoff engaged Mr Rosenthal as a teacher of chess, at a salary of 500 fr. per month, and 1,000 fr. when M. Rosenthal accompanied his pupil in travel. Pupil and teacher were on the best of terms, and they laboured together hard at a work on chess. But one gets tired of everything, and some months ago M. Balaschoff got rid of his instructor. The latter brought an action to recover 15,000 fr. arrears of pay according to agreements, 1,000 fr. for the last journey to Stuttgard [*sic*], and 25,000 fr. indemnity for sudden dismissal, and for loss of profits by non-publication of the chess work on which they had been engaged. The tribunal awarded M. Rosenthal 15,000 fr. for salary according to agreements, but rejected all his other demands.'

Source: *BCM* , March 1899, page 112. The French magazine's report appeared on pages 20-21 of its 15 January 1899 issue.



Samuel Rosenthal

1906: BCM v Harold H. Cudmore

The January 1906 issue of *Lasker* 's *Chess*Magazine published a fictional/satirical article by Harold H. Cudmore entitled 'A Method (Possibly an English one) of Conducting a Problem Tourney'. The BCM considered that it 'conveys serious innuendos, and suggests deliberate and systematic fraud in the methods employed by English conductors of problem competitions', and the BCM also used such terms as 'cowardly attack', 'sorry stuff', 'most despicable' and 'a libel upon the honesty of English chess editors (and especially ourselves)'. The BCM also stated:

"... Mr Harold H. Cudmore was asked for a reasonable retraction; as he refused there was no option but to invoke the aid of the law. Writ and Statement of Claim did not melt the Defendant's determination to resist ..."

The magazine noted, however, that Cudmore subsequently (on 23 July 1906) signed a memorandum of apology and paid the plaintiff's costs. Lasker 's Chess Magazine also published the memorandum and expressed 'our regret for the unjust charges brought against Mr Laws [the Problem Editor of the BCM]'.

Sources: Lasker 's Chess Magazine

January 1906, pages 138-140 and 144 and June 1906, page 94.

BCM: May 1906, pages 181-186, August 1906, pages 317-318, and October 1906, page 389.

1914: Spero v Pease

Under the heading 'Chessmen in Court' page 345 of the *Chess Amateur*, September 1914 related a case recently heard in the King's Bench Division over Spero's sale to Pease of an antique box of games, including a set of chessmen. 'Judgment for plaintiff [Spero] for £48.'

1915: Siegbert Tarrasch v *Deutsches*

Wochenschach (C.N. 1483)

'Deutsches Wochenschach of Berlin has been sued by Dr Tarrasch for reprinting the game between Dr Tarrasch and Walbrodt, which the former had annotated for a Norwegian paper. H. Ranneforth, the editor, explains in a recent issue of the German weekly that this particular game had been reprinted at the request of A. Lindström, chess editor of the paper referred to. The suit in question is a decidedly novel one and the outcome will be awaited with keen interest on the part of chess players everywhere and especially so by chess writers.'

Source: *American Chess Bulletin* November 1915, page 219.

This account was based on what appeared on page 266 of *Deutsches Wochenschach*, 19 September 1915. On page 358 (19 December 1915 issue) the German magazine reported, 'Das daraufhin eingeleitete Vorverfahren ist von der

Staatsanwaltschaft jetzt eingestellt worden ', and we shall be grateful if a reader can clarify exactly how the case eventually ended.

1916: Charles Jaffe v Hartwig Cassel (C.N. 1105)

From the *BCM*, June 1916, page 200:

'When chessplayers go to law on some matter connected with the game, there is usually a touch of the ridiculous. In the Bronx Municipal Court, on 4 April, a case came up in which Charles Jaffe sued Hartwig Cassel, one of the editors of the *American*Chess Bulletin

The for work alleged to have been done in analysing the Rice Gambit. Last year Professor Isaac J.

[sic — L. would be correct] Rice invited a number of strong American players to Utica to test his gambit once more, and it was agreed that their investigations should be continued. Jaffe, however, broke away from the rest and decided to analyse by himself. The

others concluded their joint work, which is to appear in a book entitled Twenty Years of the

Rice Gambit , while Mr Julius Finn, who was appointed referee in the matter, declared Jaffe's work not acceptable. Hence the lawsuit, Mr Cassel being brought in as having acted in an advisory capacity for the late professor in chess matters. The witnesses at the trial included Marshall (who considered Jaffe's claim not unreasonable), Julius Finn, Albert B. Hodges, and J. Rosenthal. The verdict was in favour of Mr Cassel. The chief amusement seems to have been when Jaffe was in the witness-box on his own behalf, and expressed his opinion of the chess strength of a number of noted players in the court – not unqualified by their attitude towards him in the case.'

A detailed account of the case appeared on pages 124-125 of the May-June 1916 American Chess Bulletin

1916: Isidor Arthur Gunsberg v Alfred William Foster (C.N. 360)

In his chess column on page 4 of the (London) *Daily Telegraph* of 26 June 1915 Gunsberg wrote:

'The Hostile Series. Neither Huxley nor Todhunter, though they have learnedly dealt with the average run of chances, have done sufficient justice to the problem of the hostile series. The subject is worthy of the attention of mathematicians and philosophers. Instinct is very often a more unfailing guide than the mathematician or philosopher can be. The bridge player, or any other player for the matter of that, who ceases to play when he thinks the hostile series is approaching does the right thing. At the moment we have the feeling that we are the victim of a hostile series affecting our problems. Why it should be that for many months we may not have an unsound problem, and that all at once a series of second solutions should crop up, we cannot explain, except on grounds of a regular occurrence of hostile series.'

A week later, on page 4 of the *Evening News* of 3 July 1915, the chess column ('by the Chess News Agency') included the following paragraph until the heading 'The Hostile Series':

'A wonderful excuse for making blunders has been evolved by one sapient scribe of the chess world. Apparently he has been publishing more unsound problems than usual, as nearly every problem which has appeared in his column for some time has had at least two solutions; and he moralises thus: "At the moment we have the feeling that we are the victims of a hostile series affecting our problems. Why it should be that all at once a series of second solutions should crop up we cannot explain."

A wonderful excuse for making blunders has been evolved by one sapient scribe of the chess world. Apparently he has been publishing more unsound problems than usual, as nearly every problem which has appeared in his column for some time has had at least two solutions; and he moralises thus: "At the moment we have the feeling that we are the victims of a hostile series affecting our problems. Why it should be that all at once a series of second solutions should crop up we cannot explain,"

The author of those words was A.W. Foster, and Gunsberg sued for libel. When the case came to court at the end of the following year the *Evening News* of 8 December 1916 reported:

'The defence denied that the words in question were libellous. Justification and fair comment were also pleaded.

... A long list of newspapers for which Mr Gunsberg had acted as chess editor was given by counsel

... Mr Mayer [Sylvain Mayer, K.C., counsel for the plaintiff] then pointed out that extra marks were given by Mr Gunsberg to solvers who found two solutions to a problem in the *Daily Telegraph*

It was impossible – said counsel – to avoid giving problems with two solutions occasionally. A second solution to a magnificent problem by Mr Blackburne was found 42 years after it was published.

In 1915 the proportion of problems in the *Daily**Telegraph with two solutions was not abnormal. There were three cases of misprints.

Counsel complained that in the passage quoted from the *Daily*Telegraph the words "For many months we have not had an unsound problem" were omitted.

Mr Gunsberg, giving evidence, said that the proportion of unsound problems given in certain other newspapers was greater than that in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Mr Hume Williams, cross-examining, asked the witness if eight out of 11 problems that appeared in a certain period were not unsound.

The witness replied that three misprints were included.

With regard to a misprinted problem, the judge asked why a white pawn should not have been a white knight.

Mr Hume Williams: "Your lordship must be careful; you shock the chess experts."

Mr Gunsberg agreed that "a hostile series" meant a run of bad luck. He had experienced such things at Monte Carlo.

Mr Williams: "You don't shock me, Mr Gunsberg, but you may shock the chess experts. (Laughter.)

The witness explained that his bad luck was that the unsound problems came together in a bunch.

Replying to a question, the witness said that nobody could guarantee the soundness of a chess problem ...'



Isidor Arthur Gunsberg

The Times

of 9 December 1916 also reported the case:

'Counsel, referring to the alleged libel, contended that Mr Gunsberg had made no blunders. The occasional publication of problems with two solutions could not be avoided.

The plaintiff, in evidence, denied that he had committed blunders. Problems had sometimes been published which had no solution at all. They afforded just as much amusement as those which had solutions.

Mr Hume Williams: "They must last longer any way." (Laughter.)

Mr Benjamin Glover Laws, the editor of the problem department of the *British Chess Magazine*, said that he had always had a very high opinion of Mr Gunsberg. It took months, and in some cases years, to construct a problem and many days properly to analyse it in order to detect flaws. A prize problem was often examined by hundreds of persons. Some prize problems, although composed by eminent composers, had been found to be unsound after many years. It was impossible to avoid such a thing.

Mr Justice Bray: "It is just like a Judge's making a mistake in law. You don't call that a blunder." (Laughter.)'

The following report was published in the *Evening News* December 1916:

of 12

'The action in which Mr Isidor Arthur Gunsberg, the chess master and chess journalist, is asking for damages for libel against the Associated Newspapers, Ltd., and the Chess News Agency was continued before Mr Justice Bray and a special jury today.

... The effect of the paragraph [in the *Evening News*] was that recently published problems were "more unsound than usual" and it is stated by the defence that eight out of the 12 problems had two solutions.

Mr Gunsberg agrees that problems with two solutions were published. He contends that the average percentage of unsound problems published by him is less than normal, and that it is impossible to guarantee the soundness of a problem.

Mr A. Guest, a well-known player and problem composer, was called as a witness for Mr Gunsberg. He has been chess editor of the *Morning***Post** for 33 years.

This witness said that in spite of the care devoted to the matter he had had 21 unsound problems out of 260 in his column during the past five years.

The word "blunder" had been used in the *Evening News* paragraph.

Replying to counsel, Mr Guest said that he did not consider that "eight oversights spelled one blunder".

Mr J.H. Blackburne, the veteran British champion, winner of many international tournaments was the next witness. He is now 77 [sic] years old. He had known Mr Gunsberg – said he – for 50 years.

Mr Blackburne told the court that he did not think it was a blunder to publish problems with two solutions, as he had done the same thing himself.

He recalled a problem that he composed and published in 1847 [sic]. It was examined by five experts including himself, for days and was passed as sound. Two years ago "some Argus-eyed individual in Devonshire" discovered a second solution.

Mr Hume Williams, K.C. (for the defendants): "It had a long though unsound life." (Laughter.)

Mr Hume Williams asked if it would not point to carelessness if the second solution were easily discoverable.

Mr Blackburne replied that he had not examined the problems in question. The second solutions, or cooks, were usually more difficult to find than the intended solutions.

Opening the case for the defendants, Mr Hume Williams said Mr Gunsberg had not suffered one farthing damage by what was published.

He had himself, in the *Daily Telegraph* , spoken of the second solutions, and attributed them to a hostile series of bad luck against him.

Mr Hume Williams spoke of the unsound positions in detail. He asked Mr Herbert Jacobs, a distinguished player, who was appearing with Mr Mayer, K.C. on the other side, whether a "rook" was not the same thing as a knight.

Mr Jacobs: "A rook is a castle."

The Judge: "Do you really pretend, Mr Hume Williams, that you do not know?"

Mr Hume Williams: "Your lordship must not say 'pretend'. I shall bring an action against your Lordship." (Laughter.)

Mr A.W. Foster, the writer of the paragraph, said it was supplied to the *Evening News* by the Chess News Agency.

The witness said he had combined the distinction of being president of the Cambridge University Chess Club with being vice-president of the Oxford University Club.

"I was amused and surprised", said Mr Foster, "to find that a chess expert should regard chess as being on a level with a game of chance."

The Judge: "You were shocked?"

Mr Foster: "My chess conscience was shocked."

The witness then said he had no malicious feeling towards Mr Gunsberg. He was merely poking a little mild fun at him without mentioning his name.

The witness pointed out that four of the eight unsound problems in question were two-movers and four three-movers. A second solution in a two-mover should be easily detected.

Cross-examining, Mr Mayer pointed out that early in the year the *Field* published unsound problems on three successive weeks.

The Judge: "Which is the bigger man, the chessplayer or the problem expert?"

Mr Foster: "The type of men is entirely different.""



Alfred William Foster

A similar account of the proceedings was published in *The Times* of 13 December 1916, which, however, gave 1874, rather than the impossible 1847, in the account of Blackburne's evidence and added the following details:

'Mr A.W. Foster ... believed that the plaintiff had made a blunder and had evolved a very clever excuse. He imputed carelessness.

Cross-examined by Mr Sylvain Mayer. He could not say if 16 out of 77 problems published in the *British Chess*

Magazine were unsound. He was acquainted with Grimshaw's famous problem published for 20 years in every country before a second solution was discovered. He had never himself composed or published a problem and was not a chess master.

His use of the words "sapient scribe" of the plaintiff was sarcastic, and he was quite content to be classed by Carlyle with ironical people as a "pest of society". Carlyle had also said that the 40 millions were mostly fools.

Mr Tinsley said that for 10½ years he was chess editor of *The Times*, which was then the leading newspaper for problems. His percentage on 3,000 problems over this period was 5% unsound. That eight out of 12 should prove unsound could be due only to carelessness in scrutinizing them.

Cross-examined by Mr Mayer. He once published a hostile American series, in which the percentage of unsound problems was from 10 to 15.'

The verdict was announced in, *inter alia*, the *Daily Telegraph* of 13 December 1916:

'Gunsberg v Associated Newspapers (Ltd.) and Another. After an hour's deliberation in private the jury awarded plaintiff in this suit, Mr Isidor Arthur Gunsberg, chess master and chess journalist, £250 damages for libel.'

That was quite a windfall, and our account concludes with a reminiscence by C.S. Kipping on page 87 of the January 1950 *CHESS* :

'The great master I. Gunsberg never claimed to know much about problems but brought an action for libel some 30 years ago when someone published derogatory remarks in the press. When next we saw him after the verdict he rubbed his hands together and hoped someone else would libel him, since he was provided with housekeeping money for some years.'

1921: William Winter (C.N. 1072)

William R. Hartston (Cambridge, England) submitted the following from the London Evening News of 5 December 1921:

'A Chess Prodigy Goes Astray Counsel Thinks Brain May Have Been Weakened

A child chess prodigy, William Winter, known afterwards to the police as "a Simple Simon among the Communists" appealed today against a six months' sentence at Bristol for seditious speeches.

He was described as an international chess player and a student of Cambridge University.

Mr H.S. Diamond, on his behalf, said he could not really appeal against the conviction, as there was evidence that he uttered the speeches.

During the war, he said, Winter was in the Honourable Artillery Company, being discharged with a good character. He seemed to have left his studies at Cambridge to air his extreme Socialistic views and join the Communist ranks.

It was said that he was under the influence of a woman older than himself.

While he did not suggest that chessplayers all become weak in the head, he submitted that in this case the man's brain was weakened. A term of imprisonment might have a severe effect on him.

Mr Justice Branson said no fault could be found with the trial. This young man left his studies and employment to stir up strife among those less fortunate than himself.

The sentence was not too severe, for those who made such seditious speeches inflamed and perverted many people. The appeal was dismissed.'

1922: Samuel Reshevsky (C.N. 742)

A report on pages 16-17 of the January 1923 BCM

'The Reschefski [Reshevsky] case was decided at the Children's Court, Manhattan, on 15 November, when a motion for the dismissal of the case was granted, on the ground that the charge of improper guardianship had not been sustained. The evidence for the prosecution was insufficient, in the judge's opinion, to show that the boy's health or morals were in danger of being impaired; and testimony as to his education at the Rabbinical School, East Broadway, was put in by the defence. The *Brooklyn*

Eagle says: "After dismissing the case, Judge Levy recommended that, in order to prevent undue exploitation of Sammy's remarkable powers, someone outside of the immediate family be designated to act as sponsor and make occasional reports to the court concerning his progress. This Assemblyman Perlman undertook to do in behalf of Sammy, who went home with his parents, delighted over the outcome of this, his first court experience."

1933: Frank Taylor (C.N. 1483)

'In reference to the Knightlights Club, *vide* the January *BCM*, Mr Herbert Jacobs quotes a most interesting letter from Mr Frank H. Taylor of Philadelphia, respecting a legacy of £100 left for the Franklin Chess Club of the Quaker City. It appears that under the laws of Pennsylvania the Court was about to make the bequest null and void because the gift did not contribute to the advance of literature. To rebut the arguments Mr Walter Penn Shipley, a noted lawyer of Philadelphia and of international chess reputation, took up the case.

The wind-up of Mr Shipley's brief was a translation of a Persian poem ending as follows:

"Know that its skill is science's self,

Its play distraction from distress:
It soothes the anxious lover's care,
It weans the drunkard from excess;
It counsels warriors in their art,
When dangers threat and perils press;
And yields us when we need them most
Companions in our loneliness."

In concluding his letter Mr Taylor says: "At the age of 77 I find the last two lines are true and, when I saw Shipley last, which was quite recently, no objection had been filed." – Yorkshire Observer Budget .'

Source: *American Chess Bulletin* November 1933, page 164.

1938: Ernst Klein (C.N. 1602)

A photograph caption on page 361 of *CHESS*, 14 June 1938 described Ernst Klein as having 'achieved satisfaction in his libel action', and the April 1940 issue of the same magazine (page 168) referred back to this matter:

'One hundred years ago, chess masters used freely to print things about each other which would lead to an instant and successful libel action today. E. Klein, the ex-Austrian master, entered on such an action when most of the visiting chess masters at Margate, a couple of years ago, signed and published a petition complaining about his "unfair and obnoxious behaviour" and stating their unwillingness to have him competing with them ever again; and he obtained redress.'

1939: Baruch Harold Wood v Jaques (C.N. 360)

In 1939 B.H. Wood found himself in the dock for having advertised for sale in *CHESS* in 1937 'genuine Staunton chessmen' (see C.N. 3656). The plaintiffs were John Jaques & Son, Ltd., and Sir George Thomas, Max Euwe and Lodewijk Prins appeared as witnesses for the defence. The case is referred to by Fred Wren in his article 'Tales of a Woodpusher: Woodpusher's Woodpile', which appeared in *Chess Review* , 1949 and was reprinted in Reinfeld's *The Treasury of Chess*

Lore (New York, 1951). The issues of *CHESS* of the time also contained a huge amount of material on the case. The decision was that 'Staunton' alone was a permissible description, but that the phrase 'genuine Staunton' implied a product made by Jaques & Son, Ltd., as opposed to any Staunton pattern. However, B.H.Wood appealed and, in 1940, won.

1944: Dupree's Trusts, Daley and Others v Lloyds Bank, Limited and Others (C.N. 360)

The question arising in this case was whether chess was of sufficient educational value for a gift to encourage chessplaying to qualify as a valid charitable gift. The verdict was yes, whilst acknowledging that the whole affair was rather a slippery slope: 'If chess, why not draughts: if draughts, why not bezique, and so on, through to bridge, whist, and, by another route, stamp collecting and the acquisition of birds' eggs', concluded J. Vaisey of the Chancery Division. This affair was brought to our attention of Paul Timson (Whalley, England), who provided a copy of the judgment.

1954: Baruch Harold Wood v William Ritson Morry (C.N. 2569)

From page 161 of CHESS , August 1954:

'Chess Criminal Charge

B.H. Wood was acquitted at Birmingham Assizes on 14 July, without calling upon any evidence, of a charge of criminal libel instituted by W. Ritson Morry. In a letter to a Mr Golding, Mr Wood had indicated that if Mr Morry was in the new Welsh Chess Union, Mr Wood was out; he referred to Mr Morry as "this ex-gaolbird". It was held that Mr Wood was entitled to give his reasons for withdrawing; that the description was true, as Morry, after misappropriating clients' money as a Solicitor some years before, had been sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.

The Commissioner stated that in his opinion the case should never have been brought, and awarded B.H. Wood costs not exceeding £100.'

1957: A.E. Nield v Hastings & St Leonards Chess Club (C.N. 1483)

A.E. Nield claimed damages at Hastings County Court against officials of the Hastings & St Leonards Chess Club, from which he had been expelled. He asked for a declaration to clear his name. He had joined the club in 1951 as a country (as opposed to resident) member, but was informed on 28 March 1955 that because of his extensive use of club facilities he would have to pay the full membership fee, 30 shillings. Nield refused and was expelled. He won his case and was awarded £10 damages.

Full coverage of the case appeared in *CHESS* , 20 July 1957, page 246, and 20 August 1957, page 278.

[CHESS referred to the 'Hastings Chess Club', but on 28 June 2007 Paul Buswell (Hastings) informed us that since its formation in 1882 it has always been the Hastings & St

Leonards Chess Club. We have therefore incorporated that change above. Mr Buswell added that in the Nield case the Club's total liability for costs (in addition to the £10 in damages) was £351. Source: Club Minute Book.] Mr Buswell also quoted from the Committee Minutes of a meeting held on 14 August 1957: 'The hon. Secretary reported the receipt of a letter from Mr A.E. Nield, tendering his resignation from the Club, which the hon. Secretary was instructed to accept.'

1957: Alexander Piotrowski v Kazimierz Osiecki (C.N. 1483)

'A quarrel over a game of chess brought before the North London Magistrate in July, with cross-summons for assault, two Poles, Alexander Piotrowski ... and ... Kazimierz Osiecki. ... "So far as I know", said the magistrate, Mr Frank Milton, "this is the first time in the 2,000 years that chess has been played that a game had resulted in both players going to hospital".'

The two were playing chess on a lawn when tempers rose, and blows were exchanged (with the aid of, *inter alia*, a push chair). The magistrate dismissed both cases.

Source: CHESS , 20 August 1957, page 278.

Later cases referred to in C.N. are as follows:

- 1978: Legal action by J. Tennant-Smith begun against the British Chess Federation in 1978 and settled in 1986. This concerned chess's administrative structure in Manchester. Source:

 Newsf1ash
 April 1986, page 9 and page 5, and 7 August 1987, page

 (C.N. 1483)
- In an interview in the November 1988 Revista
 Internacional de Ajedrez
 Karpov discussed (pages 13-14) his legal confrontation with a former West German journalist, Helmut Jungwirth, over the latter's alleged embezzlement of computer advertising returns. On 1 December 1988 various European newspapers reported that Karpov had won his case and that the journalist had been committed to prison. (C.N. 1767)
- C.N. 1713 reported that Donald Schultz of the United States Chess Federation had announced a lawsuit against Larry Evans for libel, slander and defamation. The final ruling (21 August 1989) dismissed the suit on jurisdictional points.

Legal affairs involving Bobby Fischer having been widely reported, they have not been covered by us.

Latest update: 1 July 2007

To the Chess Notes main page.

To the Archives for other feature articles.

Copyright 2007 Edward Winter. All rights reserved.