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[Olympiad book copied from Olimpbase.org?](#)

Sep 19th, 2012 by [Daaim Shabazz](#)

Dear Chess World,

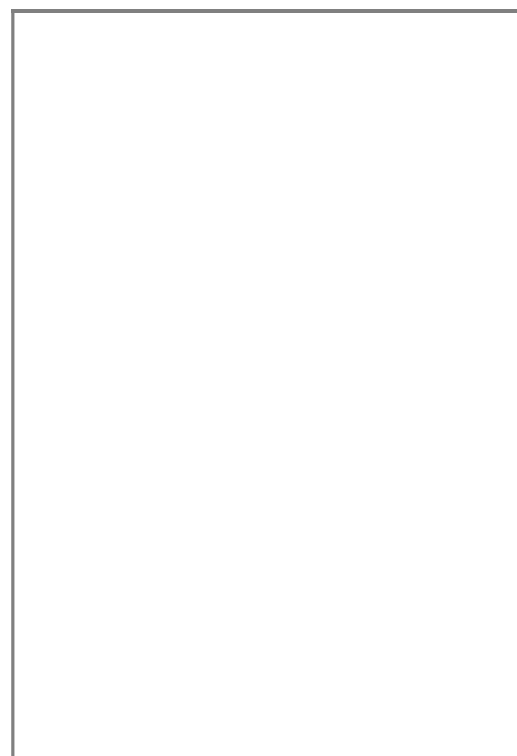
Those of us in the small community of chess journalism commit to this task as a labor of love. There is no quantifying the amount of time and energy invested in telling the story of chess to the world. Many of us who cover chess have full-time jobs in addition to the incredible full-time job of reporting chess news. Thus, it is shocking when (1) someone determines that our hard work does not constitute journalism (2) freedom to report is stifled and (3) journalistic efforts are used without consent for profit.

During the 40th Chess Olympiad in Istanbul, Turkey all three of these occurrences took place not to mention the payment of a 100 euro fee to cover the event. The case of **Evgeny Surov** is well-known to journalists, but it details the case where Surov was not allowed to cover the Istanbul Olympiad because it was declared by **Ali Nihat Yazici** that "he is not a journalist". **Peter Doggers** at Chessvibes reported extensively on this. (*see [story](#)*)

One look at [chess-news.ru](#) and one would get the impression that it is one of the most resourceful bilingual sites out there for chess. Be that as it may, Yazici stated at the General Assembly that he wants to protect chess from damaging stories and thus, his actions were warranted. He has also stated that journalists should be required to register with FIDE and present press credentials (*see [story](#)*).

However, if this is Yazici's initiative, something far more egregious occurred at the Olympiad. There was an official book sold at the Olympiad called, *Chess Olympiads & Istanbul*, a handsome compilation on the Olympiad tournaments from 1924-2012. Certainly the day the book hit the floor, I took great interest. I noted that the committee had done a great job in securing photos of the ongoing Olympiad for the book.

While the photo production in the book was slightly grainy, the pictures on the main website by **David Llada** and **Arman Karakhayan** were stunningly beautiful. Nevertheless, I thought about the value of the book and made plans to purchase it in helping me to identify players.



Chess Olympiads & Istanbul was prominently on sale at the 40th Chess Olympiad for 28 euros.



Useful photo section featuring all of the participating teams.

As I began to read the book, I immediately noticed a familiarity with material from olimpbase.org, an excellent website chronicling of team events done by **Wojciech Bartelski** of Poland. I had communicated with “Wojtek” on occasion and was very familiar with his work. It appeared, upon initial glance, that the information had been taken from the olimpbase site with the format intact. “Good project for Wojtek”, I thought. That was until I noticed the authors being **Hayri Özbilen** and **M. Sabri Koçak**. I also looked for references to olimpbase.org and found it to be one of five references listed.

Nevertheless, I bought the book for 28 euros and immediately went to the olimpbase.org website and found that the contents of the books were liberally copied from the website, word-for-word... even colloquial expressions. It was a cut-and-paste exercise that any professor or teacher would admonish and fail a student on the spot. Below is an example from 1927 Olympiad in London:



Images of respective narrations on 1927 Olympiad... olimpbase.org on left, Olympiad book on right... CLICK on images to enlarge.

This pattern is repeated for most every Olympiad entry with the exception of the ones that were not fully documented on olimpbase (2006-2012). After seeing this, I e-mailed Wojtek and informed him of the book and asked if he had granted permission. His words were, **“Of course I did not give any permission.”** I felt a sadness because I know the hard work he put into compiling this information and actually building the website. The site has a following. In fact, on September 2nd (prior to book’s release), **Mig Greengard** of Chess Ninja had tweeted:

Mig Greengard @chessninja

Btw, I'm always shocked that some chess fans don't know about <http://Olimpbase.org> . It's a global treasure.

Well apparently many people know about it and see the value. Unfortunately some have moved to capitalize off of Wojtek's work without giving due credit. Strangely the entire episode seems ironic. **Ali Nihat Yazici** admonished Surov about his journalistic ethics, yet whether he is aware or not, he has an endorsement letter in a book that appears to violate all principles of copyright protection. Wojtek's invitation of "fair use" has been overreached.



Ali Nihat Yazici speaking on ethical standards for journalists at General Assembly in Istanbul. Photo by Daaim Shabazz.

This was an egregious violation of a writer's creative ownership and if FIDE's Yazici wants to set a commission on journalism ethics, then this should be one of the first cases. The violation of Wojtek's work is something that should be condemned by FIDE of the highest order and motion set for sanctions against the violators and reparations to **Wojciech Bartelski**.

Dr. Daaim Shabazz, [The Chess Drum](#)

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8 Responses to "Olympiad book copied from Olimpbase.org?"

1. on 19 Sep 2012 at 3:18 pm [vejh](#)

Extraordinary. The OlimpBase page for the 1927 event contains a large extract from a work by Ken Whyld (which it cites, no passing-off is involved) and then a passage which I assume is Mr Bartelski's own. The FIDE book appears to have taken three paragraphs from the section which is originally Whyld's and then hops right into the middle of Mr Bartelski's own section. And – in the traditional test of genuine plagiarism – it immediately repeats a mistake of English in Mr Bartelski's original! "Hungary were lead to the victory".

But even without that proof, this is a clear and incontrovertible case of copying. No doubt about it. And when you copy that extensively, it's not "fair use" and nor is it adequate simply to bundle in your source as one of a number of references.

There's a great deal too much tolerance of outright plagiarism in the chess world. It would be good if this were the point where that tolerance began to end.

[\[Reply\]](#)

2. on 19 Sep 2012 at 3:51 pm [2Daaim Shabazz](#)

ejh,

The bundling is most disturbing because the implication is that the one reference to olimpbase.org covers any use of the material. If you saw the book and compared it with olimpbase.org, you would be shocked at the level of cut-and-past that was done. It is nearly full and complete with the exception of adding a few pages and historic photos.

Here is the preface and the credit page...

Preface

Olympiads are the most special of all types of competitions. Chess Olympiads are no different. Contestants from all over the world, competing for their countries bring the competition alive. To know the history of the competition, know its contestants, makes it all the more interesting and exciting. The purpose of this book is to give the reader that sense of involvement by using visual and informational resources. It is undoubtedly that much of the information edited here can be found in internet based sources. However, we thought that if all this information were to be collected in one book, it would be advantageous and entertaining for chess lovers.

The idea for the creation of this book belongs to senior national chess player and former president of the Turkish Chess Federation, Hayri Özbilen. We worked together with him in the process of making this book. Visual materials in this book are limited to what we were able to find. We wish we could have used more photographs and those that are more informative. Besides, print quality of the some photos that we used in this book aren't good as we would want them to be. We prefer to use those photos over not to use them at all because we thought those photos will be helpful for the reader to recreate the moments in those competitions.

This work acknowledges that photographs and information relating to all significant competitions must be kept in FIDE's archives and must be available to the public. We hope that this publication will be the beginning of this process.

Thank you to everyone who helped us to collect the photographs and information used throughout this book.

Dr. M. Sabri Koçak

We didn't mention unofficial Chess Olympiads in this book. There are four unofficial chess olympiads that FIDE didn't recognize them. 1924 Paris, 1926 Budapest, 1936 Munich and 1976 Tripoli.

We would like to thank the one's mentioned below for their contributions to this particular book.

Thanks a lot to people below for helping to prepare 40th Chess Olympiad section of this book:

Photographers: David Llada, Arman Karakhanyan, Kema Goryaeva, Sinem Eryılmaz, Ersin Bardakçı

Page designers: Benan Kazdağlı, Ekin Zeytinoğlu, Ersin Bardakçı, Kaan Kanlı

Sources

- 1 - FIDE information pages.
- 2 - Chess Olympiads official sites.
- 3 - Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia
- 4 - OlimpBase - The encyclopedia of team chess (Wojciech Bartelski &Co.)
- 5 - Chess-results.com.

[\[Reply\]](#)

3. on 20 Sep 2012 at 1:26 pm [stephen dann](#)

I work as a contractor for a N.Y.Times-owned newspaper (Telegram.com), but also as a volunteer for a state chapter of the U.S. Chess Federation. I review books on chess history and chess in education as a service to my readers (37 years) while I do reporting, merchandising and sometimes investigating work outside of the hobby and sport. History and "glorification" of chess and its "educational benefits" has indeed become a business, far beyond that of making celebrities among those players who represent their own countries in the Olympiads (a public event), or, record this as a hobby to share history with others in the world. There are so very few serious students of chess and research in the world, that we should see outright copying (cut & paste) of such material without due credit! This certainly doesn't show true character in historical preservation or research, just fodder for more personal lawsuits, which do not reflect in a positive way to the growth of the hobby. This is a pure copyright "test," but Internet copyright law is far from being the same as the common law of "fair use" of printed materials. It does explain why many "free" websites use "low definition" versus "high definition" to make it a bit more difficult for anyone to produce a "high

quality knockoff” of their work. The most shame is that FIDE should encourage such activities to commercialize chess in this way. Is chess one family, hobby and sport, or is the game now an invitation for all kinds of money-making scams? I promote the work of others continually on various websites and in print, not of the politics of greed. This is just one example of many chess scandals (in recent decades) are just being brushed “under the carpet.” Many thanks for speaking out.
Stephen Dann—43 year chess journalist from Massachusetts

[\[Reply\]](#)

4. on 21 Sep 2012 at 9:54 pm [4](#) [Daaim Shabazz](#)

I just learned from Peter Doggers at Chessvibes that he approached Ali Nihat Yazici at the ongoing FIDE Grand Prix in London. Yazici, a FIDE Vice President, has defended his colleagues’ copying 90% of olimpbase.org for Olympiad book sold in Istanbul. He bases this on a citation on the sidebar of the website which reads

“OlimpBase

:: the online encyclopaedia of international team chess events © Free to copy. Please cite the source. 2003-2012 Wojciech Bartelski”

Of course you cannot recklessly copy someone else’s work and then sell it for 28 euros (without permission) and think it is fine... despite invitation to copy for “fair use”. Yazici has railed against journalists of unethical reporting, yet he does not hold his own people to the same standard.

[\[Reply\]](#)

5. on 21 Sep 2012 at 11:17 pm [5](#) [Guy Colas](#)

Daaim, I took time to read and I enjoyed each and everyone of your articles about the Olympiad. I think we’re all enjoying the fruit of your gift. Keep doing what you were called to do!

[\[Reply\]](#)



[Daaim Shabazz](#) Reply:

September 22nd, 2012 at 8:58 am

I have some interviews coming!

[\[Reply\]](#)

6. on 04 Oct 2012 at 11:56 pm [6](#) [Daaim Shabazz](#)

Update: I asked Wojtek if he received his copy of the book and he replied:

Oh yes. This is not based on my work. It IS my work. Every page, every word. Including grammatical mistakes.

More news coming. The FIDE Ethics Commission will certainly be notified of this egregious disregard of intellectual property.

[\[Reply\]](#)

7. on 22 Oct 2012 at 10:52 am [7](#) [NN](#)

I cannot believe my eyes when reading all this.

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