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THE MARCH OF CHESS IDEAS

HOW THE CENTURY'S GREATEST PLAYERS HAVE
WAGED THE WAR OVER CHESS STRATEGY



ANTHONY SAIDY

THE MARCH OF CHESS IDEAS

ALSO BY ANTHONY SAIDY

The World of Chess
(with Norman Lessing)

THE MARCH OF **CHESS** **IDEAS**

ANTHONY SAIDY

DM
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Revised Edition

Let us depart from science. Chess can never reach its height by following in the path of science.... Let us, therefore, make a new effort and with the help of our imagination turn the struggle of technique into a battle of ideas. —JOSÉ RAÚL CAPABLANCA

For in the idea of chess and the development of the chess mind we have a picture of the intellectual struggle of mankind. —RICHARD RETI

This book is dedicated to the memory of Reti, and to the martyr city of Sarajevo, which hosted the author in happier times.

Foreword for the 1990s

Two decades after the publication of *The Battle of Chess Ideas*, the writer, now suffused with middle-aged sobriety, is delighted to reconnect with the reader.

Though young romance cannot be recaptured, the magnetic allure of chess persists in maturity. Irreplaceable heroes are gone forever. One, miraculously, reappeared. New ones have arisen.

For this volume I have softened none of my youthful opinions, with which I'm content to live. New discoveries have found their way into footnotes. Most important, three new chapters have been added, on the three *K*'s who have dominated the chess world in the interim.

The tempo of dynamic change in our day has vastly quickened. In our own special intersection of art, history, and philosophy, the stirring dialectic of chess ideas finds new incarnations.

Once, a chess-loving fool was asked to predict for the next millennium. He exclaimed, "There will be no Soviet chess, and a woman will contend for the world championship." Of course, he was put away. Is it not time to rename him Sage?

Acknowledgments

My thanks go to those friends and associates who provided criticism, editorial and other help. They are Norman Lessing, the late Norman Reider, Ruth Birnkrant, and Burt Hochberg;

To Paul Keres and Bent Larsen, for personal communications clarifying certain analytical questions about their games;

And to my father, Fred Saidy,* for passing on the age-old compulsion to commit one's ideas to the printed page, and, I hope, some of his talent.

*Fred Saidy (1907–1982), playwright, author of *Finian's Rainbow*.

Preface

The mysterious pull of chess and the grandeur of the champions inspired this book. Why does chess have such fascination?

I was already a chess master before I took into account my basic ignorance. I didn't really know the meaning of chess or understand its heritage. So I proceeded to make that heritage a part of myself.

Certain readings were catalytic. I began to realize the depth and dimensions of chess. There is more to chess, I learned, than I had suspected. There is beauty, and hidden passion. And heroism. Associated with the leading players of the day and study of their art revealed that they too bid for immortality, like those figures of yesterday who live on in their recorded games and in legends.

On rereading Richard Reti's slender volume *Modern Ideas in Chess* (1922), I was struck with the beauty of his poetic and philosophic appreciation of the great chess figures. This work also revealed to me the role of chess as an art and its parallels to the intellectual development of modern man. Reti sketched the evolution of chess thought, from Anderssen to Alekhine. His later book *Masters of the Chessboard* (1930), is more analytical and gives the unique achievements of the great players of his time.

The history of chess ideas is the history of the players who embodied them. It is my aim now to epitomize the great chess artists of our time just as Reti did in his. Thus the current volume is a conscious sequel to Reti's work.

Moreover, I want to elucidate the mysterious attraction of chess, adding my own insights to those of others. I wish to suggest why chess has captivated so many people, including some creative geniuses. I hope that this book will show the reader not only *how* chess is played by its best exponents, but *why*.

I have chosen some of the greatest players, and their best games, to illustrate important concepts in the march of chess ideas. They are all men whom I have faced across the board or observed first-hand in the arena. To me they are flesh-and-blood beings, not legendary heroes from a bygone era. Inevitably, there are great competitors and contributors to theory who are omitted here.

Although my contemporaries are the main subjects of this book, I have also outlined the evolution of chess ideas from Greco to the contemporary era, so that the whole history of chess ideas is contained within these pages. But for the great games of the past, the reader is referred to the rich literature covering those times. To try to illustrate the ideas of the greats with single examples would be too superficial to do them justice.

One note about the annotations. I have consulted existing sources and made my own analyses, with no attempt to be exhaustive. Important alternatives are given, but the reader short of time need not play them over. This book is not a technical but a critical approach to chess.

My fondest hope is that even someone with no knowledge of chess may pick up this book and discover a new world of ideas—the never-ending intellectual battle of our beautiful game of chess.

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THE MARCH OF CHESS IDEAS

1

CHESS: ORIGIN AND MEANING

Not without reason is it the one game that, since its invention around A.D. 600, has been played in most of the world, has captivated the imagination and interest of millions, and has been the source of great sorrows and great pleasures. □

—Norman Reider

No one knows today precisely *when* and *how* chess was conceived in the mind of ancient man. But nearly everyone who loves the game has some suspicion of *why*.

Across the centuries chess has come to us with manifold changes, replete with myths and legends and symbolizing man's history and struggle.

The consensus of historians is that chess began in India in the sixth or seventh century. Its precursor was a four-handed dice game called *chaturanga* (four members of the army). At some point the dice, and with them the element of blind

chance, were discarded, and chess was born. It was not exactly the game we know today—for example, the powerful queen did not yet exist.

Chess soon traveled to Persia, where it was called *shatranj* and later *shah mat* (the King is dead). The Arabic conquerors of Persia brought chess to Spain no later than the eleventh century. Then it spread to the rest of Europe.

Chess was dominated by Spain in the sixteenth, Italy in the seventeenth, France in the eighteenth century. In more recent times, England, Germany, America, and finally Russia have captured the stage.

Some of the historical deductions about chess are basically linguistic. One Chinese name (*choke-choo-hong-ki*) is especially descriptive: "the play of the science of war." An early Italian name for chess clearly evokes its capacity to rouse strong emotions: *scacci alla rabiosa* (chess furious-style).

Unconfirmed are accounts that link chess to famous figures of the past, like Hārūn al-Rashīd and Charlemagne. But well-documented is the interest of Benjamin Franklin (the first American to write about chess) and Napoléon Bonaparte. One may look for symbolic meaning in the game's attraction for great revolutionaries—Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin, and Fidel Castro.

Formal changes in chess have roughly paralleled those in warfare and political life (although its royal character has not been lost in the democratic era). In the Dark Ages the power of the pieces was reduced; play was often restricted to a win by attrition, and outright checkmate was a rarity. Then suddenly the queen, which had once been the relatively weak vizier, or king's counselor, became the most powerful piece on the board. This transformation, which occurred about 1485, has been attributed to the emergence at that time in Italy of dominant female leaders.

Often more revealing than historical fact are myths aris-

ing in ancient times which, retold and modified, have had a deep unconscious appeal. Not a few of these relate to chess. The Oedipal theme recurs. In one story, chess was invented by sages to cure the madness of a tyrant who had murdered his father. A legend of another sort utilized chess to assuage a sorrowing queenmother whose son had been killed in warfare. These myths reveal that the chessboard, apparently innocuous, has the mysterious power to engage the deepest feelings within the human breast.*

What, then, is the essence of chess? Let us begin with its most evident characteristics and then go on to less obvious qualities.

Chess is clearly a war game. It shows us two opposing armies comprised of royal hierarchies and their assembled soldiers. World Champion Emanuel Lasker attributed its popularity to human delight in a fight. To him, chess was an intellectual microcosm of the struggle of all life—scientific and artistic yes, but not a true science or art. Thus, Lasker left us no new strategy or a legacy of beautiful games. Rather, his games exhibited the quality of that mythical being he postulated in a philosophical writing, the *Macheide* (Son of Battle)—evolving through eons of struggle and natural selection, reaching a peak of indomitability.

But chess is more than a game, a fight. It is a science, with man-made principles, recorded data, hypotheses subject to an ultimate proof—defeat or victory. It can be viewed, if you wish, purely technically, as a body of knowledge and applied principles with ever-widening frontiers and increasing refinement. Chess may thus be compared to a closed system in the physical universe; in order to master it, one must simply *discover* its rules as a chemist discovers the underlying dy-

* Norman Reider, "Chess, Oedipus, and the Mater Dolorosa," *Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytic Review* 47 (Summer 1960), no. 2: 55–82.

namics of matter. When one plays over a game by a fine technician, one receives a sense of rightness and the impression that the master has penetrated very deeply indeed into the workings of the chess pieces.

Moreover, and most importantly, chess is a creative art. It has within it that element which I believe delights human nature even more than a fight—beauty. There is the beauty of a fine technical performance, comparable to a well-chiseled rendering of Bach. And there is the beauty produced by the unleashed imagination of the creative master who ignores the restrictions of classical rules, bursting forth like the romanticism of Tchaikovsky. It is a pity that, unlike music or painting, chess requires of the viewer an initial period of instruction before revealing its aesthetic quality.

Chess mirrors more than warfare. It also symbolizes the romance of kings and queens and chivalrous knights. The fable of gold coins being showered upon the great American romantic master, Frank James Marshall, for his famous sacrifice of the queen against Levitsky, is reminiscent of the dream of El Dorado, the golden land envisioned by the conquistadors. Caissa, the goddess of chess is the daughter not only of Mars but of Aphrodite.

Chess has meant many things to men, some of whom have devoted their entire lives to it. Such a game, and such devotion, deserve our attention, for we see in chess the workings of the human mind and heart. What is the source of this attraction, sufficient to have provided a life-long creative channel for more than one genius?

We must credit those psychoanalytic theorists who have pointed out that the "royal game" offers a medium for the higher expression of basic human drives. According to Reider, "It is as if in the enjoyment of the game one experiences a kind of *unio mystica* with kings and queens, with their fam-

ily romance, and in participating in its royal richness, a part of lost omnipotence is recaptured."*

Reuben Fine left the pinnacle of the chess world to become a psychoanalyst. His famous monograph[†] points out, among other things, the sexual symbolism in chess. According to the Freudian view, women do not excel in chess because they have no unconscious drive toward father-murder.

I would like to go beyond these insights to present a theory of how sexuality, in the broadest sense, manifests itself in chess thought. To do so, I shall first go back about twenty-five centuries.

The ancient Chinese conceived of two complementary principles in nature which interact to produce "all that comes to be": the *yin* and *yang*. The feminine *yin* has passivity, depth, darkness, coldness. The masculine *yang* has activity, height, light, and heat. What has all that to do with chess?

In the chess thought of the greats, as expressed in their styles of play, there is also a dualism between masculine and feminine principles (which exist within every individual, man or woman). When the masculine pole dominates completely, thought runs to penetrating analysis, scientific reasoning, and technical skill.

At the feminine pole there are instead the elements of faith and intuition, the creative artistry whose aesthetic bias sometimes defies logic. The creative approach rebels against the tendency to reduce (my choice of this last word reveals my own bias) chess to a generalized scientific, technical exercise rather than an individualized artistic quest.

In the past, the above polarity was well exemplified by Tarrasch vs. Tchigorin. The games of Dr. Tarrasch were fine

* Reider, op. cit.

[†] Reuben Fine, *The Psychology of the Chess Player* (New York: Dover, 1966).

examples of scientific play. His moves were predictable, if one knew the rules; as explained by him, they are instructive even today. But Tchigorin's games can still be enjoyed as an ever-original creative experience. The preference is a matter of taste, comparable to one's choice when facing a flower—to write a biological treatise or a poem? In no great player of today does one tendency dominate to the exclusion of its opposite, yet this basic polarity has its modern embodiments, as we shall see. From the interplay of both are produced the works of contemporary chess—"all that comes to be."



This book is essentially about the great chess players of our time, and their ideas. I have come to perceive their symbolic relationship to Caissa, the goddess of chess.

Few really knew her; some encounter her without recognition. Yet it is for her favor that we strive as we bend our efforts toward chess art. It is she whose symbolic presence and promise of reward drive on the chess giants locked in combat.

What indeed surpasses her beauty? Innumerable men have beheld it and soon abandoned all else in life. Some of them find, despite all obstacles, a fitting place in chess history. Then there are many who, despite all talent, only flirt with the goddess, and fail to fulfill their true potential in chess.

The rationalist balks at my assertion. Where is the proof? When I allude to Caissa in the pages below, many will regard her only as a poetic metaphor. But I am not speaking of any objective reality—rather, I am speaking of the inner one, the life of symbols. And the inner reality of things is the most difficult of all truths to discover.

2

THE ROMANTIC ERA

The beginning student of chess today is like the viewer of art who first sees a painting aflame with color, or the discoverer of music who listens to the rich melodies of a symphony. The neophyte plays over the famous games of the old masters, rife with imaginative combinations, sparkling sacrifices, and attacks. He finds delight in the queen sacrifice leading to mate, in the reckless abandon with which pieces were thrown into the fray in quest of beauty.

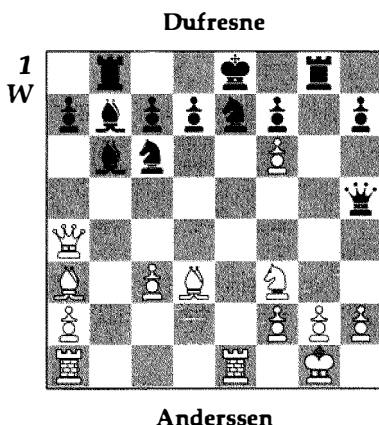
Similarly did the old masters approach the battleground of sixty-four squares. They discovered first the combinative possibilities of the chessboard, and their fertile imaginations produced gambits, mating attacks, brilliant sacrifices of ever-increasing variety and interest. They did not seek underlying rules or all-inclusive dogmas, as a biologist seeks to plumb the laws of nature. They disdained, whenever possible, victory by mundane gain of material. That period was the Romantic era of chess. An outstanding example was the Italian Gioachino Greco (Il Calabrese, 1600–ca. 1634). Well did those early masters show the power of the pieces, whose attacks could be overwhelming. The art of defense was but poorly developed. There was no systematic pedagogy of the game; one acquired knowledge simply by playing over numerous games of the masters, memorizing their opening patterns and seeking to emulate their combinations.

The Romantic stream was interrupted by one figure, far ahead of his time, who may be called the first *positional* thinker—the Frenchman François-André Philidor (1726–1795). It was he in monarchical Europe who discovered the importance of the pawns, which had been regarded only as candidates for promotion or impediments to one’s attacking pieces. He proclaimed that “pawns are the soul of chess.” He perceived that, since pawn moves are irreversible, their structure has a basic significance to the strategy of the game. He had faith in the capacity of a sound pawn formation to withstand a premature assault, and to support a correct attack, and he elucidated the disadvantage of weak (isolated, backward, or doubled) pawns. But he was too far in advance of his time, and died misunderstood. A full century later Wilhelm Steinitz (1836–1900) would refine and vindicate Philidor’s theory.

The Romantic school, led by the Frenchman Louis Charles Mahé de La Bourdonnais (1797–1840) in the early nineteenth century, began to falter in the 1840s when the Englishman Howard Staunton (1810–1874), regarded as the world’s foremost player, espoused a cautious style, content to accept proffered sacrifices and win by material preponderance.* But soon the era would be brought to its peak of glory with the most brilliant player of all time—Adolf Anderssen (1818–1879). This modest German schoolteacher has left us many games of surpassing beauty. Among them are the Immortal Game at the first modern international chess tournament (London, 1851) against Kieseritzky in which he gave checkmate after sacrificing both rooks and the queen, and another

* Staunton showed the effectiveness of the English Opening, 1 c4. Actually, his greatest impact on chess was a negative one: by refusing to go through with a match against Paul Morphy (1837–1884), he presumably effected Morphy’s disillusionment and permanent withdrawal from chess.

which has been quoted in almost every historical discussion. Its name, however, prompts us to savor it once again, for it is the Evergreen Partie.



White: Adolf Anderssen

Black: Jean Dufresne

Berlin, 1852

The Evergreen Partie

The position arises from a popular opening of the time, the Evans Gambit. Its contour, too, is typical—an open position, pieces of both sides trained at the enemy king. Material is equal, since White can regain his piece at will, although his own knight is attacked. Anderssen, calculating deeply, sees the chance for a beautiful combination. He starts with a quiet move:

19	Rad1!!	Qxf3
20	Rxe7+	Nxe7
21	Qxd7+	Kxd7
22	Bf5+	Ke8
23	Bd7+	Kf8
24	Bxe7	checkmate

One can see why Anderssen was lionized, and one can see here in concentrated form the beauty of chess. It is quite unimportant to Anderssen, the creative artist, or to us the audience that later analysts, studying the position at their leisure and subjecting it to the rigors of scientific proof, quibbled that 19 Be4 was a stronger initial move, or that they pointed out improvements for the defense: 19...Rg4 would have been strong, averting the mate that occurred in the game. Max Euwe has pointed out that even on the next move Black could have fair chances with 20...Kd8. Without giving all the alternative possibilities, best play then would be 21 Rxd7+! Kc8! 22 Rd8+! Kxd8! (22...Nxd8 23 Qd7+! leads to a mate like the actual game) 23 Bf5+ (or 23 Be2+ Nd4!)...Qxd1+ 24 Qxd1+ Nd4 25 Bh3 Bd5, and the outcome is unclear. The play of the Romantics often failed the test of later scientific analysis.

Such wild positions, with their nearly incalculable ramifications in practical play, are avoided by modern technicians as a matter of course. But Anderssen's conception will always delight those with an aesthetic appreciation of chess. No mechanized computer will ever play so!

Anderssen, the last and greatest exponent of an era, played a match in 1858 with a twenty-one-year-old American sojourner on the Continent, Paul Morphy. When Morphy decisively defeated the preeminent master of combination, it was clear that revolutionary change was afoot in the world of chess.

The bittersweet story of the young Creole gentleman from New Orleans and his European odyssey won him the appellation *The Pride and Sorrow of Chess*. It has even found its way into psychiatric literature and the novel.* Like a dazzling and doomed meteor, he flashed across the European scene, and in a few short months won the acclaim of a continent.

* Ernest Jones, "The Problem of Paul Morphy," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1931; Frances Parkinson Keyes, *The Chess Players* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1960).

But he soon became embittered (at Staunton's refusal of a match), and returned home to heroic honors only to withdraw increasingly from life and chess until his death in 1884. His love for Caissa having turned to deep revulsion, he did not touch chess pieces for the last fifteen years of his life. Meanwhile he had conquered Europe's best, entertained enraptured ladies in their opera boxes, and become the only chess hero ever to be borne on the shoulders of citizens through the streets of Paris.

Morphy speaks to us today only through his games, which are replete with sparkling combinations. But, more important to our discussion, he was the first successful exponent of positional play. Through no laborious study but rather intuitive grasp, Morphy knew, and imparted via his games, the principles underlying the conduct of open positions. They were: rapid development, control of the center, open lines.

Why were these principles revolutionary a century ago? Because they were the first *general* concepts put into effect by a successful player, an acknowledged champion. Whereas the Romantic players made moves with specific concerns of attack and defense, Morphy as a matter of course made moves based on quite general aims. He developed and sought open lines for his pieces, knowing that the opportunity for attack would naturally appear.

Morphy is cherished today for his many striking attacks and sacrifices, which have been reprinted in numerous volumes and will not be repeated here. But for the student of chess thought, it is his contribution to positional understanding, the very weapon with which he vanquished Anderssen, that is important. Thus, Morphy may be compared to Beethoven in music: the great transitional figure who signaled the start of a new era. He prepared the stage of chess history for the entrance of Steinitz.

3

SYSTEMATIC IDEAS IN CHESS

The Romantics, with their gambits, courting of unbalanced positions, and wild piece-play, had left too much to chance. A certain desire for order developed. Radical change in the style of chess play awaited the arrival of Steinitz.

Wilhelm Steinitz was born in Prague in 1836. He was no brilliant prodigy; his approach to chess was one of deliberate study and slow, organic development. His games during his early career gained little acclaim from the public, and later their cramped appearance and slow maneuvering were greeted with positive distaste.

Yet, before his death in penury and disappointment in New York in 1900, Steinitz was to become the seminal thinker of modern chess. He was so for three reasons: He was the first great *systematic* thinker; he had the didactic means for transmitting his ideas to the public; and his practical achievements carried him to the throne of the world championship (1886–1894). The era that he started may well be called the systematic era of chess.

Richard Reti referred to the “naturalism” of Steinitz. While the Romantics sought constantly to unveil the lovely flower of combination, Steinitz built up the mighty tree of position. He

was not a poet but a thinker. He approached the structure and dynamics of the game of chess as a geologist might analyze a stratum of earth. The various elements and their relationships, chiefly pawn structure, determine strength or weakness and the dynamic potential of a position. Sudden shifts of force or material (combinations) result from the structural potential and can be understood without recourse to some magical force (the creative genius of the great attacking players). He demonstrated the capacity of a sound position to repel an attack not justified by objective advantage. He had a special talent for closed positions. They permitted him time for the accumulation of many small advantages, without the early clash of pieces which could lead to premature simplification, or into the turbulent waters of combination play, with shoals sometimes difficult to foresee. Thus he emphasized *static* considerations from which dynamic results would naturally flow at the proper moment.* Steinitz also advanced the concept that the side with an advantage *must* attack, or lose the advantage. (This idea was highly prized by Lasker, who, after succeeding to Steinitz's throne, felt honor-bound to champion the latter's concepts.)

Steinitz elucidated many of the basic elements of positional play that were to become second nature to whole generations of future masters. Indeed the claim may be made that everyone has become his disciple. Once the basic principles of sound defense and positional play had been disseminated, it was no longer possible to overwhelm the opponent with sheer flights of the combinative imagination divorced from the objective characteristics of the position, as the old masters could do.

Among the principles elucidated by Steinitz were: the strong center, weak squares, the "bad" bishop, play against

* In this respect, Nimzovich would later emulate him.

weak pawns, the two bishops, lead in development and conversion to a permanent advantage, and the queen-side majority. The Steinitz Defense to the Spanish Opening, 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 d6, with a determination to maintain Black's pawn on K4 at the expense of a cramped game, was a typical contribution. His play also had certain eccentricities: withdrawal of the pieces far behind closed lines; marching the king into seeming danger (the Steinitzian King); the stubborn adherence to all his notions despite practical reverses, setbacks which in his declining years made him fear that the validity of his theory might be rejected by the world.

Later systematic thinkers would modify and embellish his ideas, but Steinitz in fact founded a new school of chess: the Scientific school.* The masters of the future would all operate within this Steinitzian framework. Later in this book the reader will see how contemporary styles range between two poles within this framework: the technical and the creative.

Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch (1862–1934) was Steinitz's worthy successor as chief pedagogue of the chess world. This German doctor was gifted, or burdened, with a dogmatic mentality. He attempted to reduce all of chess to a series of rigid precepts, such as "Knights are poorly placed on the side." These he imparted to the world through such writings as *Das Schachspiel*. Unlike Steinitz, however, he had no taste for cramped positions. He emphasized the advantages of space and reduction of the opponent's mobility and opportunities, together with rapid development. To Tarrasch, losing a *tempo* in the opening was a cardinal sin. He described his approach as "the stalemating style."[†] The effect of his doctrine was to

* By analogy with, say, Greek architecture, or music of the seventeenth century, which emphasized form and structure, the Steinitz school may also be called classical.

[†] Tarrasch was in this way a precursor of a modern World Champion, Petrosian, the apostle of Prevention.

suppress imagination in favor of a rigid approach to the game. An important contribution of his was the demonstration of the compensating strength of the isolated queen's pawn, in providing mobility for the pieces, and so he recommended the Tarrasch Defense to the Queen's Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5) as a means of "freeing the center." Students of Tarrasch were made to believe that all problems of the game were soluble by adherence to his orthodoxy.

Chess thought of the early twentieth century unmistakably bore the imprint of the mind of Tarrasch, despite the fact that he was consistently defeated by Emanuel Lasker (1868–1941), who held the world crown longer than any man before or since—for twenty-seven years (1894–1921). As outlined in chapter 1, Lasker was a philosopher who regarded chess as primarily a fight—and he was best because he could fight better than any of his contemporaries, especially in complicated positions that gave full scope to his tactical genius. Moreover, he was a superb chess psychologist, skilled in steering the game into areas where his opponent was insecure and prone to go astray. To the players of his time, Lasker was simply an awesome phenomenon that could not be imitated. Under the scientific influence of Steinitz and Tarrasch, many of the strongest masters, notably Schlechter, settled down to a drawish, technical routine that has never been equaled for sheer boredom. The routine was relieved by the sprightly play of neo-Romantics such as the American champion Frank James Marshall (1877–1944), but there was only one other figure of the nineteenth century who was to have a major influence on the development of chess ideas—the Russian, Tchigorin.

Mikhail Ivanovich Tchigorin (1850–1908) represented the dialectical counterforce to the scientific dogmatism of the Steinitz-Tarrasch school. He played both dashing gambits and closed, futuristic systems, like the Old Indian Defense.

In his time he was regarded as a nostalgic upholder of the Romantic tradition; today we can see him as a great original thinker who anticipated both the Hypermodern Revolt and the Dynamic school of today. He eschewed dogma and sought always what was creative in chess. He studied the openings not to memorize but to invent; the now-popular Tchigorin Defense to the Spanish Opening is only one of his many contributions. His line against the French Defense (1 e4 e6 2 Qe2) showed his originality of thought (and probably caused Tarrasch much consternation as being “against all principle”). He searched for the exception to hallowed generalizations, and chivalrously championed the knight against the cult of bishop superiority—witness the Tchigorin Defense to the Queen’s Gambit: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Bg4 4 cxd5 Bxf3 5 gxf3 Qxd5. Had Tchigorin not lost (narrowly) his championship match with Steinitz in 1892, the popularization and acceptance of creative ideas in chess might have occurred much earlier. His stature, which seemed to be neglected by no less a hagiographer than Reti, would later be vindicated by Soviet partisans, who have claimed him as the father of the Soviet school.

Akiba Rubinstein (1882–1961), a superb technician and dedicated artist, especially renowned for his endgame virtuosity, was the heir apparent to Lasker’s throne. But he was eclipsed by José Raúl Capablanca y Grauperra (1888–1942), a Cuban. Capablanca was one of those rare players like Morphy, Reshevsky, and Fischer, who from childhood displayed such skill at the workings of the sixty-four squares as bespeaks true genius. For him there was no plodding study of theory or memorization of openings. The principles of positional play he grasped almost by intuition, and tactical complexities he penetrated and usually avoided, with great ease. While Tarrasch had built up a system with great ornamentation, Capablanca’s play was streamlined and went directly,

economically to the solution.* He erred with rarity; in one ten-year period he suffered only one loss (!). His technique, particularly in the endgame, was unexcelled. In the world title match of 1921 he vanquished the redoubtable Lasker almost without effort, with four wins and ten draws, boasting that at no time had he had an inferior position.

Capablanca, who was called "invincible," hardly studied chess. In his later career his play became ever more technical and drawish. He seemed bored with chess, complaining that soon, when all the foremost masters had absorbed the principles of modern technique, one could no longer hope to win a game from them; chess would be played out![†] He even suggested that the initial position of the knights and bishops be interchanged, so as to inject new life into the game.

Capablanca, the "Latin lover of chess," had too little passion for Caissa, and underestimated her ever-rejuvenating beauty. Like all Don Juans, his dalliance with the lady was relatively short, and he surrendered her hand in 1927 to Alekhine, her most ardent suitor.

* After the game with Janowski at his sensational debut at San Sebastian, 1911, he confessed to choosing an inferior move because the best one would have exposed him to criticism from the dogmatists.

[†] Lasker, too, had spoken of the "draw death."

4

THE HYPERMODERN REVOLT

We have seen that, under the stern paternal influence of Tarrasch, the masters before World War I adopted a technical style that became increasingly sterile, and even the great Capablanca thought that chess was approaching a dead end. How wrong he was! The richness of chess was soon demonstrated anew by a generation of rebels. Dubbed by Tartakower "the Hypermoderns," they came to the fore in the 1920s.

The essence of the Hypermodern philosophy was the affirmation of the individuality of each position, and thus a rejection of the notion of the Scientific school that general rules always apply. Thorough iconoclasts, the Hypermoderns spurned the almost sanctified dogmas of the Scientific school to the point of the bizarre.* As if to outrage the traditionalists, they made such statements as Breyer's: "After 1 e4, White's game is in the last throes" (!). In order to shake established doctrine, the Hypermoderns invented whole new openings and contours of position. A cardinal tenet was that control of the center need not be through occupation; that a

* Thus the Hypermoderns resembled their contemporaries in music and painting, Stravinsky and Duchamp. The Great War had shown the bankruptcy of values handed down by the old society.

central pawn mass need not be strong but often is an object of attack. So there came about Alekhine's Defense, which flew in the face of tradition: 1 e4 Nf6. Now the older players eagerly played 2 e5 Nd5 3 c4 Nb6 4 d4 d6 5 f4, claiming to have an overwhelming center. The Hypermoderns on the contrary thought it highly vulnerable to counterattack. (Theory today takes a mid-position.) In their reaffirmation of the creativity of chess, the Hypermoderns were in one sense neo-Romantics.

The two greatest figures of the Hypermodern Revolt were Nimzovich and Reti, both profound and original thinkers. Aron Nimzovich (1886–1935) introduced many new positional principles, such as prophylaxis, restriction and blockade, attacking pawn chains at their base, and "overprotection."* Tremendous were his opening contributions, notably the Nimzo-Indian Defense: 1 d4 Nf6 (the Hypermoderns disdained the classical reply with d5 to d4 or e5 to e4—they sought asymmetry) 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4. Black controls the important e4-square without using his pawns. Nimzovich usually continued by exchanging the bishop for the knight, then blockading the resultant doubled c-pawns and proceeding to demonstrate their vulnerability and lack of dynamism. If White instead played 3 Nf3, he replied 3...b6—the Queen's Indian Defense. His defenses remain sound and popular to this day. While scorning the old dogma, Nimzovich actually produced a new one by collecting and proclaiming his principles in a famous book, *My System*. None could gainsay it, for his system succeeded in the crucible of

* A rather amusing contemporary example of overprotection is the game Saidy vs. R. Byrne, U.S. Championship, 1966: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 g3 b6 5 Bg2 Bb7 6 e5 Nfd7 7 Ndf3 c5 8 Bf4 Nc6 9 h4 g6 10 Qe2 Bg7 11 Kf1 h6 12 Re1.

White's king-position is "overprotected," all right, but his pieces can do little else! Nimzovich also had a sense of humor.

practice and placed him among the very top players of his time.

Richard Reti (1889–1929) was the foremost poet of the chessboard. He was a composer of beautiful studies, a player of deep artistry, and a penetrating but magnanimous theorist and critic. The foremost spokesman of the Hypermodern school, he explained it lucidly in his elegant book *Modern Ideas in Chess*, every page of which radiates a love of chess and respect for fellow chess artists. Unlike other Hypermodernists, he paid full tribute to the achievements of the older generation.

Reti's creative contribution to chess strategy was outstanding. As White, he usually refrained from moving his center pawns early. When the classicists, as Black, rushed to occupy the vacuum, he attacked the pawn center with c4 and the fianchetto of both bishops. This system is now known as the Reti Opening. With a bishop on b2, he invented the move Qa1 to apply more pressure on the Black center and in one game (vs. Lasker, New York, 1924) even followed it with Qh1 (!). Reti's striking originality and philosophical depth were not quite matched by his combative and tactical skill. His premature death no doubt deprived us of further bounties.

Original and deep as the Hypermoderns were, their tournament contests in the twenties still turned in favor of the effortless technique of Capablanca and the still formidable fighting skill of ex-Champion Lasker, who were hardly disturbed by the new ideas. The Hypermodern style was somewhat indirect and seemed to lack an element necessary to the struggle for competitive superiority. Capablanca sat comfortably upon his throne, seemingly unassailable for years to come. But the evolution of chess ideas was now accelerating, with the proliferation of strong tournaments, unfolding opening discoveries, and the contention of opposing schools.

And so Caissa chose, as if by natural selection, one who not only mastered the traditional and modern ideas but also possessed the missing element—*dynamism*. That man was Alekhine, who was to become another great transitional figure to the chess of today.*

Alexander Alexandrovich Alekhine (1892–1946) was born in Russia, from which he emigrated after the Revolution. Chess was his life, and he brought to it a passionate devotion and will to win. With a brilliant combinational ability and thorough grasp of traditional ideas, he also developed to a striking degree the Hypermodern principle of treating each position as an individual creative challenge. Witness the following opening.

White: Alexander Alekhine

Black: H. Wolf

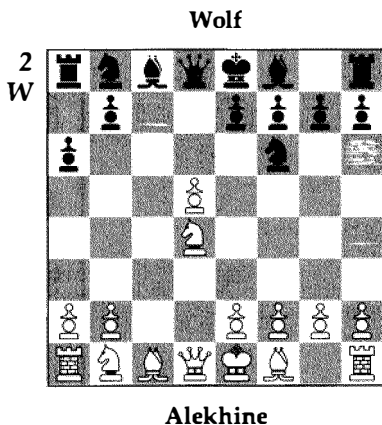
Pistyan, 1922

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	d5
2	Nf3	c5
3	c4	cx d4
4	cx d5	Nf6
5	Nxd4	a6

A defensive move, but not good.

* Deserving of mention together with Alekhine is Effim Bogolyubov (1889–1952), a Ukrainian émigré, world championship challenger in 1929 and 1934. He too integrated positional knowledge with a forcing, dynamic approach. His chief failing was overconfidence.



6 e4!!

Typical Alekhine dynamism. He forces the game into channels that give fullest play to his pieces. In order to find this move he had to lay a deep plan that would leave the opposing forces badly placed. One hampered by old dogma could not have conceived this plan, calling for no fewer than four queen moves out of the first eleven—to maintain an isolated d-pawn, which cramps the opponent's game.

6 ... Nxe4

7 Qa4+! Bd7

Not 7...Qd7? 8 Bb5.

8 Qb3 Nc5

9 Qe3!

To prevent the freeing ...e5. Black tries another way ...

9 ... g6?

10 Nf3! Qc7

11 Qc3 Rg8

12 Be3

... with a strong initiative.

Alekhine regarded chess as the peer to any of the creative arts. He studied chess incessantly, and produced many opening innovations, such as the above-mentioned Alekhine's Defense. Through contact with Capablanca he deepened his technical grasp. When their world title match at last came about at Buenos Aires in 1927, Caissa was ready to spring a big surprise on her devotees: She gave the laurels to Alekhine. After an arduous struggle, the true founder of the new dynamic style emerged victorious with six wins, three losses, and twenty-five draws. As if to show his universality, he beat Capablanca by surpassing the latter's accuracy of technique.

Alekhine's rounded, aggressive, creative style inspired a whole new generation of players with the rich possibilities of chess. Although his reign was interrupted from 1935–1937 by the logical Dutch theoretician Max Euwe (1901–1981), he shrewdly avoided a return match with Capablanca. During World War II he fell into Axis circles and was alleged to be a collaborator. He died in Lisbon in 1946, with a chess set in his hands. Whatever the vagaries of his personal affairs, the name of Alekhine is forever enshrined in the pantheon of chess, and all generations of chess lovers will continue to relish his games with delight. He was the most *complete chess artist* in history.

5

THE SEARCH FOR SYNTHESIS

Reti passed from the scene before the 1930s, having made no claim that the Hypermodern ideas were the last word in chess strategy. In the dialectical nature of things, it was the function of that decade to seek a synthesis of the new ideas with those of the classical school.

It is now time to take a deeper look at the play of those masters of the chessboard who came after Reti. In this chapter we shall have a glimpse at three who reached the summit in the thirties, and declined or became less active after the war.

FLOHR

Salo Flohr (1908–1983) carried on the classical tradition. He had little to do with the avant-garde; rather, his best efforts were very reminiscent of Capablanca. Usually he did not extend himself against his foremost opponents in a tournament, being content to draw with them while defeating the lesser lights, often with fine endgame technique. The books are filled with spectacular brilliancies. Instead, it should be instructive to see an example of Flohr's dry, quiet play, much closer to the bread-and-butter chess that wins modern tournaments.



Late in the championship match versus Alekhine in 1927, Capablanca introduced the Minority Attack as a new weapon against the Orthodox Defense, which was proving quite adequate in the many Queen's Gambits of that match. Here Flohr shows his sure grasp of that new technique.

White: Salo Flohr

Black: Max Euwe

First Match Game, 1932

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	d5
2	c4	c6
3	Nf3	Nf6
4	Nc3	e6
5	Bg5	Nbd7
6	cx d5	ex d5
7	e3	Be7
8	Bd3	O-O
9	Qc2	Re8
10	O-O	Nf8

Taking stock in this now time-hallowed position, the stage is set for White to launch the Minority Attack on the queen-side, which after b4 and b5 will lead to a small but definite permanent weakness in Black's pawn structure—which technicians love to work on. So, the usual move here is 11 Rab1. But Black's tenth prepares ...Ne4 and a kingside counterattack with pieces. Flohr therefore gives priority to preventive, simplifying measures. Only when his king is totally secure will he attempt to capitalize on a minimum advantage, keeping the draw "in hand." The great technicians dislike double-edged positions. Therefore:

11	Ne5	Ng4
12	Bxe7	Qxe7
13	Nxg4	Bxg4
14	Rfe1	Rad8
15	Ne2	Rd6!
16	Ng3	Rh6
17	Bf5!	Qg5
18	Bxg4	Qxg4
19	h3	

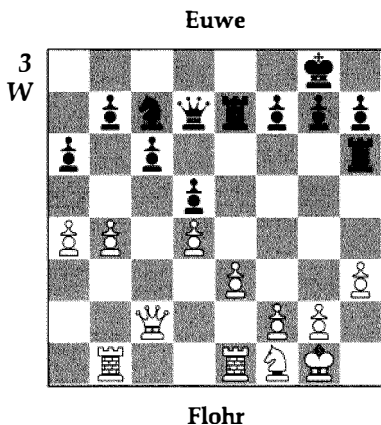
This move would be dangerous if Black's bishop were still on the board, or if ...g5 and ...g4, opening up an access to White's king, were feasible. But Flohr has neutralized any attacking chance for the opponent, and is now ready for his own plan.

19	...	Qd7
20	b4	Ne6
21	Rab1	Nc7
22	a4	a6

But Black prevents b5. If he can get his knight to d6 and c4 and play ...b5, White's attack will be hopelessly blockaded. Both sides now commence maneuvers focused on the queen-side breakthrough, but Black regroups awkwardly while White seizes the initiative.

23	Nf1	Re7
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A better defensive move is 23...Rc8.



24 Nh2!

First, by threatening Ng4-e5, Flohr repels the last trace of danger from the kingside.

24	...	Rhe6
25	Nf3	f6
26	Nd2	Re8
27	Nb3	R6e7
28	Nc5	Qc8
29	Rec1	Rd8
30	Nd3	Qb8
31	Nc5	Ne6

A dubious move, permitting the breakthrough, but it is very tedious to defend such dull positions. White may have planned Qc5-b6 or Nf4-e2-c3 and b5.

32	Nxe6	Rxe6
33	b5	axb5
34	axb5	cx b5?

It is better in the Minority Attack, as here, to permit the backward c-pawn, with good chances of adequate defense. But with the text, Black makes the d-pawn also isolated and weak, and the need to protect *two* weak pawns overstrains the defense.

35	Rxb5	b6
36	Qb3	Qd6

An alternative way to lose a pawn is 36...Qb7 37 Rcc5 Red6 38 e4 with two decisive pins.

37	Rb1	Rd7
38	Rxb6	Qxb6
39	Qxb6	Rxb6
40	Rxb6	Kf7
41	Kh2	Ke7
42	Kg3	Ra7
43	Kf4	g6
44	g4	Ra2?

Hastens the end by losing a second pawn, but the endgame is a theoretical loss anyway.

45	Rb7+	Ke6
46	Kf3	Black resigns

A game without excitement, but the execution of a strategic plan begun on move six with great precision and clarity, compels respect.



Flohr was also capable of attacking play when the opportunity presented itself. In this game he tries for nothing special in the opening, pragmatically content with a fluid, multipotential position. When his opponent falters, he pounces, and then does not let up on the attack. It is all quite like a foretaste of Tigran Petrosian.

White: Salo Flohr

Black: Emanuel Lasker

Moscow, 1936

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	Nf3	d5
2	e3	Nf6
3	c4	e6
4	b3	Be7
5	Bb2	0-0
6	d4	b6
7	Nbd2	c5
8	Bd3	Bb7
9	0-0	Nbd7

We have here a species of the Semi-Tarrasch Defense. The central tension can dissolve into many different configurations. White stands somewhat better because he has a convenient place for his queen, whereas Black must lose time.

10	Qe2	Rc8
11	Rfd1	Qc7
12	Rac1	Qb8
13	Ne5	Nxe5?

Lasker, the old lion in the twilight of an illustrious career, slips, permitting a strong pawn wedge into his position. 13...Rfd8 is correct.

14	dxe5	Ne4?
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From this second error there is no recovery. Now White's bishops become ferocious.

15	cx d5	ex d5
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Not 15...Nxd2 16 d6! winning at least a pawn.

16	Nxe4	dxe4
17	Bc4	Rcd8
18	Qg4	Bc6
19	Rxd8	Qxd8

Fatal would be 19...Rxd8? 20 e6 (a move constantly in the air) 20...f6 21 Bxf6! Bxf6 22 e7+ Rd5 23 Qe6+.

20	Rd1	Qa8
21	a4!	

Maintaining the bishop's position against ...b6-b5 but more, preparing the following combination in its best timing. Flohr knows that such small details can be decisive.

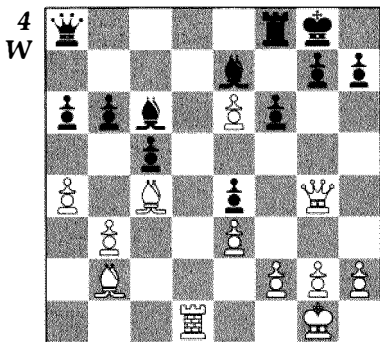
21	...	a6
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The natural move, to drive away the bishop.

Hopeless would be 21...Rd8+ 22 Rxd8 Qxd8 23 e6 f6 24 Bxf6. Probably best is 21...Kh8, moving from one dangerous diagonal to another.

22	e6	f6
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Lasker



Flohr

23	Rd7!	Bxd7
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Of no use is 23...Re8 24 Rxe7! Rxe7 25 Bxf6, and the rook cannot move.

24	exd7+	Kh8
25	Qe6	Qd8
26	Bxa6	

This bonus was shrewdly provided by the moves on the twenty-first turn. Black is rendered helpless by the advanced pawn. White threatens to grab the KP and simply advance on the kingside.

26	...	f5
27	Be5	c4

Or else 28 Qc6 and Bc7. Black is in virtual zugzwang.

28	Bxc4	Bc5
29	g3	Qe7
30	Bc7	Qxe6
31	Bxe6	Be7
32	b4	h6
33	a5	bx a5
34	bx a5	g6
35	Bd5	Black resigns



Thus did Flohr strategically link Capablanca and Petrosian. In 1938 he left Czechoslovakia for the USSR. After the war he ceased to be a world championship contender.

FINE

The man who best epitomized the 1930s was the American Reuben Fine. Born in 1914, he rose rapidly to the top in the

stimulating chess milieu of New York. Like so many New World talents before him, he then spent some years in Europe and Russia with notable successes, climaxed by a tie for first place in the historic AVRO tournament of 1938, which included the eight foremost players in the world.

As Fine has explained, it was the task of his generation to synthesize the classical and Hypermodern ideas into a sound modern system. His play was eminently direct and economical. His stress was on accuracy—"whatever happens then flows naturally out of the position."



In the following game, Fine on move four invites sharp play—perhaps his only eccentricity—but his opponent, a leading Soviet grandmaster of the time, declines. When on move fifteen Lilienthal finds himself cramped and makes a weakness in a dubious bid for freedom, Fine has all he needs for a superb example of accurate play. Despite an exchange of queens, a pretty mating attack "flows naturally out of the position." Occasionally something pretty may result from the pragmatic approach to winning.

White: Reuben Fine

Black: Andrei Lilienthal

Moscow, 1937

Griinfeld Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	Nc3	d5
4	Qb3	c6

Solid; 4...dxc4 5 Qxc4 Be6 6 Qb5+ Nc6 7 Nf3 Nd5 leads to sharp play.

5	Nf3	Bg7
6	e3	0-0
7	Bd2	e6
8	Bd3	Nbd7
9	0-0	Nb6

Although Black now gains the “minor exchange,” he remains cramped. He should develop with 9...b6. For the rest of the game his queen’s bishop remains buried.

10	Rfd1	dx c4
11	Bxc4	Nxc4
12	Qxc4	Nd7(?)

Since ...e5 is prohibited by an eventual Bh6, 12...Nd5 is better.

13	e4	Qc7
14	e5	Nb6
15	Qe2	f5(?)

A nervous bid to relieve his constriction—but the hole thus created on e5 proves worse.

16	exf6e.p.	Rxf6
17	Ne4	Rf5
18	Bb4	

Keeping Bb4-d6-e5 in reserve. Black’s weak dark squares will be his downfall.

18	...	Rd5
19	Ne5!	Rd8
20	Rac1	Nd5
21	Ba3	Ne7

The pawn remains immune, 21...Bxe5 22 dxe5 Qxe5?

23 Be7, winning the Exchange because of the threat of Nf6+.

22 Qf3 Nd5

Black has no counterplay; 22...Nf5 23 g4 Nxd4 24 Nf6+ Kh8 25 Nxg6+, and mates.

23 Qg3 Bh6

24 Rc2 Bf8

Not 24...Bf4 25 Nf6+. But the passing of this bishop makes White's knights even more dominant.

25 h4 Bxa3

26 Qxa3

This move shows Fine's pragmatism. Rather than damage his pawn formation with 26 bxa3, which would be undesirable if the endgame were reached, he loses a tempo in the attack.

26 ... Rf8

27 h5 Rf4

28 Re2 gxh5

29 Qg3+ Qg7

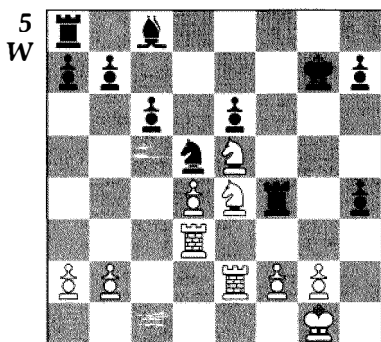
30 Rd3!

Fine foresees that the attack will be decisive, even without queens, because Black is, in effect, playing without half his pieces.

30 ... h4

31 Qxg7+ Kxg7

Lilienthal



Fine

32 g3! hxg3

Or 32...Rf8 33 gxh4 Nf4 34 Rg3+ Kh8 35 Ree3 and Nd6 will win for White.

33 Rxg3+ Kf8

34 f3

Preparing the inevitable penetration by his last reserve force.

34 ... Nf6

35 Rh2 Rxe4

A more aesthetic finish would be 35...Nxe4 36 fxe4 Ke7 37 Rxh7+ Kd6 38 Rgg7 Rxe4 39 Rd7+ Bxd7 40 Rxd7 mate.

36 fxe4 Nxe4

37 Rg4 Nf6

38 Rf2 Black resigns



Fine's extensive theoretical knowledge, expressed in very understandable terms, is reflected in his many books. But his

chief contribution to chess thought lies in another realm—the psychological. Among his many interesting observations was the unusual frequency of errors when he jousted with his rival, Reshevsky. This fact he attributed to the phenomenon of ambivalence: “Each wanted to beat the other, yet unconsciously each was reluctant to do so.” His contact with the striking personalities of the great players led him to seek out chess’s deeper meanings.*

Having discovered the hidden secrets of Caissa’s unique attraction, Fine after the war began to lose his passion for her. Having probed the meaning of chess, a sublime projection of basic forces in man’s psyche, he decided to devote his life to probing the mind itself—he became a psychoanalyst. Fine died in 1993.

EUWE

Max Euwe, a Dutchman born in 1901, comes closer than any other chess figure of this century to being an institution. World Champion from 1935 to 1937, prolific author, mathematician, teacher, athlete—he tried to shape chess by Knowledge and Method. Having learned and cataloged openings, combinations, endings, he founded a whole school of Dutch analysts who continue his work.

As a competitor Euwe placed great reliance on an encyclopedic knowledge of openings. Each game had a preordained plan; yet he was always ready for tactical skirmishes, despite the fact that it was precisely here that he would sometimes go astray. The unforeseeable was his downfall. He was called “a genius of law and order”; so, in anarchic moments on the battlefield, he fell prey to that disturbing factor—chance.

* Reuben Fine, *The Psychology of the Chess Player* (New York: Dover, 1966).



A most limpid example of Euwe's play is taken from his return match with Alekhine—the one he lost. Better prepared than his opponent in the tricky opening, which at that time was not well understood, Euwe takes the initiative with several sharp strokes and soon finds a winning combination.

White: Max Euwe

Black: Alexander Alekhine

World Title Match, Holland, 1937

Queen's Gambit Accepted

1	d4	d5
2	c4	dx c4
3	Nf3	a6
4	e3	Nf6
5	Bxc4	e6
6	0-0	c5
7	Qe2	Nc6

This move, and the ninth, lead to serious trouble in the center. Today, theory holds that the correct development is 7...b5 8 Bb3 Bb7 9 Rd1 Nbd7.

8	Nc3	b5
9	Bb3	Be7

This dubious move loses a tempo, but the normal way does not work: 9...Bb7 10 Rd1 Qc7 11 d5 exd5 12 e4! d4 13 Nd5! Qd1 14 Bf4 Rc8 15 a4!, and White has a powerful attack, introduced by the American master Sherwin in 1954. 9...cxd4 or ...b4 should be tried.

10	dx c5	Bxc5
11	e4	b4

Otherwise, White will play e5 and Ne4.

12	e5	... bxc3
13	exf6	... gxf6

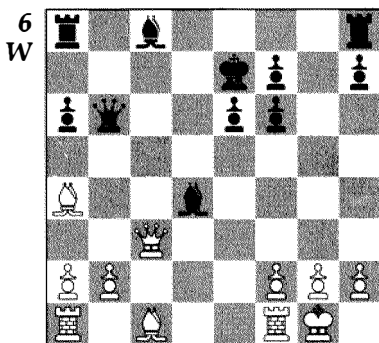
On 13...Qxf6 14 Qc4! gives White a strong attack, 14...cxb2 15 Qxc5! bxc1=Q 16 Raxc1 Bd7 17 Ba4 Rc8 18 Rfd1.

14	Qc4	... Qb6
15	Qxc3	

Euwe's pregame analysis has already ended. First 15 Ba4 is even stronger.

15 Nd4
16	Nxd4	... Bxd4
17	Ba4+	... Ke7

Alekhine



Euwe

18	Be3!	... Bxc3?
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Alekhine, never comfortable on defense, loses his way, failing to see that his king will be in a lethal crossfire of enemy pieces. The lesser evil is 18...Rd8 19 Rad1 e5 20 Bxd4

Rxd4 21 Rxd4 exd4 22 Qf3, with White retaining chances against the exposed king.

19 Bxb6 Be5

Of no help is 19...Bb4 20 Rfd1 and the threats of a3 and Bc6 are decisive.

20 Rad1 Kf8

Or 20...Bd6 21 Rxd6! Kxd6 22 Rd1+ Ke5 23 Bc6 Rb8 24 Bc7+, winning a piece. But the king will find no haven.

21 f4! Bxb2

22 Rf3! Bb7

Or 22...f5 23 Rb3 Bf6 24 Bc6 Rb8 25 Bc5+.

23 Rg3 Ba3

A prettier finish would be 23...Rc8 24 Rd8+ Rxd8 25 Bc5+ Rd6 26 Bxd6 mate.

24 Rxa3 and Black resigned on move forty-one.



The chess world was shocked at Euwe's disastrous result in the World Championship Match-Tournament of 1948. A decade which saw man's rationality succumb to brute passion and blind destiny thus witnessed in Art the decline of an apostle of Reason.



Having supervised or authored over eighty books, and after capping his long career by a presidency of FIDE that carried him throughout the world and saved the Fischer-Spassky match of 1972, Euwe died in 1981.

6

THE NEW DYNAMIC APPROACH AND THE SO-CALLED SOVIET SCHOOL

On March 13 [1917] Nicholas [Tsar of Russia], at last alarmed, set out in his private train to rejoin his family in Tsarskoye Selo, outside Petrograd. But the railway workers kept stopping and re-routing the train on an endless and aimless journey all over the countryside. As Trotsky later observed: "With its simple railroad pawns, the revolution had cried 'check' to the king!" □

—R. Goldston, *The Soviets, a Pictorial History of Communist Russia*

And the next year it was checkmate.

Reti recognized the birth of a new concept in chess thought, pointing out that while the older masters usually sought to find the best move in a position, Alekhine instead sought the deepest and most far-reaching plan, the dynamic approach rather than the static totting up of strengths. Reti could not know then that the new dynamic approach would develop in the next three decades in such a

way as to eclipse the “modern ideas” of his day and constitute a vital new mainstream of chess thought.

Alekhine brought forth this new dynamism on a strategic base that integrated the classical and Hypermodern ideas. R. N. Coles, in his book *Dynamic Chess*,* credits Breyer with the birth of the dynamic idea as far back as 1913. Breyer sought complex, asymmetrical positions full of “malignant, latent energy,” as Tartakower called it. An iconoclast, he scandalized the classicists with the following defense: 1 e4 Nc6 2 Nc3 Nf6!? So he was called a Hypermodern—yet his style was distinct from the others of that school. Breyer was perhaps too much ahead of his time. Of his premature death in 1921, Reti wrote, “A new Steinitz was all too soon snatched from us.”

Most of the work on the new dynamic concepts developed almost, as it were, behind a veil of mystery. For it was done not in Europe, which still thought itself the arena of chess ideas, but in the heart of Mother Russia. There, a momentous decision for the future of world chess was made by the Soviet state—“Take chess to the workers.” Government support made chess a viable profession for the first time. Without attracting much attention in the West, the Soviet chess colossus was being fashioned. Its administrators made possible an environment of economic security, systematic tutelage, and training, and collective and self-criticism. Mass popularity of chess as a sport required the emergence of an elite to whom the people could look, and “socialist culture” required ascendancy over the bourgeois world in chess as in other fields. Before World War II the Soviets did not take part in Olympic competition, and hardly risked sending abroad any player but their champion, Mikhail Botvinnik. After the war the power of Soviet chess really emerged, and the chess world was astounded to find that its capital had moved to Moscow.

* R. N. Coles, *Dynamic Chess: The Modern Style of Aggressive Play* (New York: Dover, 1966).

But the success of chess in Russia has to do with more than state support. Chess was played there in the Dark Ages. In a society characterized by strong authoritarianism, from the old tsars to the new premiers, a game devoted to destroying the king has deep unconscious appeal. And there is another reason why chess was a fulfilling field for aspiring creative artists in the Soviet Union, where poems and even symphonies have been censored and banned outright: No one has yet discovered the way to identify a "bourgeois" chess move. In chess, the only arbiter is victory.

The authorities who have proclaimed and defined the "Soviet school," chiefly Botvinnik and Kotov, have pointed to these qualities: a scientific and critical approach, tireless seeking of the new, and a struggle against scholastic conceptions and dogmatism (because the latter stifles the spirit of innovation). All highly laudable, all conforming to the ideal of "socialist man." But one wonders in what other area of Soviet life such qualities have been encouraged.*

THE GÖTEBORG TRILOGY

Let us now have a look at a famous example of the Soviet school in action.

At the Göteborg Interzonal of 1955 it so happened that a particular day brought together three Soviet players, all with the white pieces, against three Argentinians. The latter included Najdorf, inventor of the variation of the Sicilian Defense that bears his name (5...a6).

This tournament was an event for individual aspirants to

* Reuben Fine visited Moscow in 1937, when conformism was at its height, and wrote an article in *Izvestia*, in which he mentioned that the style of the late master S. Belavienetz was sounder than that of the other Soviet players. The recipient of this praise found it necessary to write an indignant letter denying that his style was different from anyone else's!

the world championship and not for teams. It was not meant to pit one country against another. But as the play unfolded on the three boards, more than a little "teamwork" became evident. All three games, Keres vs. Najdorf, Spassky vs. Pilnik, and Geller vs. Panno, followed the same course.

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6

With Najdorf it is perhaps a point of honor to use his own variation, and his countrymen follow suit.

6	Bg5	e6
7	f4	Be7
8	Qf3	h6
9	Bh4	g5!?

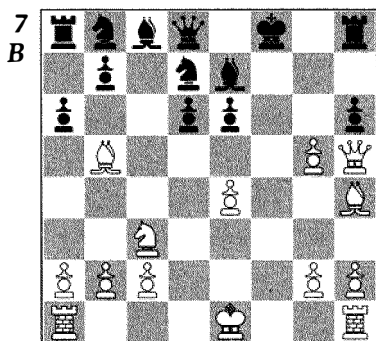
Not the sort of move one plays without due thought in advance. It is a pseudopawn sacrifice based on the strategic aim of securing the e5 square for a knight.

10	fxg5	Nfd7
11	Nxe6!?	

What is afoot? All three Soviet players sacrifice a piece. Is one looking over the other's shoulder and imitating him, or was the sacrifice, with all its ramifications, planned the day before? Indeed, was it found in the USSR by some diligent analyst and made communal property before they set out for foreign shores?

11	...	fxe6
12	Qh5+	Kf8
13	Bb5!!	

Najdorf-Pilnik-Panno



Keres-Spassky-Geller

This at first senseless-looking move is explained as follows: White would like to give checkmate on f7. If Black defends by moving his knight to e5, then the h4-bishop can renew the threat by playing to g3. If the f1-bishop had moved to any other square, then the b8-knight could defend its cousin without fear of being chopped off by the other bishop.

This extraordinary move should dispel all doubt: We are not witnessing brilliant chess play but a prefabrication, for which, as we shall see, the Latins were ill-prepared.*

Panno tried 13...Ne5? and ran into the refutation just explained: after 14 Bg3 Bxg5 15 0-0+ Ke7 16 Bxe5 Qb6+ 17 Kh1 dxe5 18 Qf7+ Kd6 19 Rad1+, Black had to lose his queen. The last moves were 19...Qd4 (or 19...Kc5 20 Qf2+) 20 Rxd4+ exd4 21 e5+ Kc5 22 Qc7+ Nc6 23 Bxc6 and Black resigned.

The other two games continued to follow each other until move twenty-three, when the first, trifling divergence oc-

* Larry Evans, quoting eyewitness Alberic O'Kelly, has claimed the opposite, saying that Geller was first to find the stroke and the others did not notice. But Spassky has told the author, "I saw what Geller played and liked it. Probably Keres also saw it." Thus the truth, that elusive entity, is somewhere in the middle. Or is it?

curred: 13...Kg7? 14 0-0 Ne5 15 Bg3 Ng6 16 gxh6+ Rxh6 17 Rf7+ Kxf7 18 Qxh6 axb5 19 Rf1+ Ke8 20 Qxg6+ Kd7 21 Rf7 Nc6 22 Nd5! Rxa2 (also hopeless is 22...exd5 23 Qxd6+ Ke8 24 Qg6). Here it was necessary, for safety, to move the h-pawn. Keres moved it two squares, Spassky one. Since either move wins, no doubt further imitation would have been embarrassing.

Then came 23...Qh8 24 Nxe7 Nxe7 25 Qg5. Here Najdorf resigned, whereas Pilnik played on a while. (White's pawn is on h3) 25...Ra1+ 26 Kh2 Qd8 27 Qxb5+ Kc7 28 Qc5+ Kb8 29 Bxd6+ Ka8 30 Bxe7 Ra5 31 Qb4 and Black resigns.

Chagrin in Argentine ranks was enormous. They had encountered not great chess play but a demonstration that could serve as Exhibit A in an effective argument for collectivism!

But the argument about the diagrammed position was not yet closed. Three years later, against Gligoric at Portoroz, fifteen-year-old Bobby Fischer was to show the power of individual effort: by finding 13...Rh7!, he rehabilitated the defense, as complex variations would prove.



It must have inspired confidence for a Soviet player to know, when he sat down to a game of chess, that he disposed of such resources of analysis and cooperative effort. But it was not so much a Soviet school as an eminently productive factory.

In any art the character of the individual artist will assert itself. We shall see that this statement is also true in chess. The true artist cannot be bent to the needs of a monolith.

Soviet theoreticians, after an initial freeze on Alekhine because of his political deviations, came to acknowledge his dynamic, combative legacy. The Soviet school grew up with the spirit of struggle, study of openings for new tactical surprises, and especially active counterattack. Today such ideas are certainly international. Perhaps earlier, under the dominance of

Botvinnik, one could speak of a Soviet style of chess play. But since 1950, as we shall see, a great flowering of stylistic variety has occurred among Soviet players. Chess offered them the freest medium of artistic expression. That world chess supremacy was firmly captured by the Soviet Union is beyond question. But one can no longer speak of a Soviet school of chess thought—only a superb school for chess, in the USSR.



The dissolution of the Soviet Union means the involution of the state structures that supported chess. Were we chess players caricatures apprehending nothing of the world except through our game, we'd have known of tumultuous historic changes by noticing a flood of strong ex-Soviet players to the West, claiming the lion's share of hard-currency prize funds.

When once asked the reason for Soviet superiority in chess, Fischer gave a trenchant reply, without having studied Marxist theory: "Money." Now chess books and journals will have to compete, like chess masters, in a market economy, shorn of ideological value. Whereas the Leningrad chess festivals disposed of state funding, the new St. Petersburg festival relies on entry fees. Their common denominator is the human one—the rich Russian tradition continued by devoted organizers, teachers, and chess lovers and immensely enhanced by Soviet rule.

Pundits who expected big successes by Western teams in the 1992 Chess Olympiad in Manila, owing to the breakup of the USSR into fifteen countries, were confounded by the results: The gold medal went to Russia (led by Kasparov, a Russian only by adoption); the silver went to Uzbekistan (!); and the bronze went to Armenia. *Voila!* The great Soviet Russian bear had spawned a dozen ferocious cubs and magnified, not reduced, its power. Crafty old Lenin, the one-time chess fanatic, might have smiled.

7

BOTVINNIK: THE MARCH OF SCIENCE

Chess is the art of analysis. □

—Mikhail Botvinnik

The man who epitomizes the spirit of the twentieth century in chess was born in St. Petersburg, Old Russia, in 1911. He is Mikhail Moiseyevich Botvinnik, a scientist. For this is the century that has seen the transformation of humankind by science and technology, in which the works of science have opened up limitless vistas.

Botvinnik belongs to the spiritual family of Steinitz and Tarrasch. He leans toward orthodoxy. But unlike those scientific systematizers of chess, he eschewed dogma and found new and independent paths based on fresh and deep investigations. And unlike their successors, who almost made of chess a pallid academic exercise, Botvinnik brought fighting instincts to the challenge of combat.

Yet to Botvinnik the struggle of chess is not essentially with a flesh-and-blood opponent but with an intellectual prob-

lem—the seeking of perfect objectivity through the deepest possible calculation. Thus, although he is a man honored for his achievements in engineering, capable of protracted struggle with a complex technical problem of electrical circuits, he has said, “The greatest pleasure is when one feels he is thinking and that is best accomplished with chess.” But he would seek to transcend the limitations of the human mind in search of the invincible electric brain.

Botvinnik’s superior brain carried him to the top of Soviet chess in the 1930s, and to the world championship from 1948, with two short interruptions, to 1963.

It is interesting that chess, to Botvinnik, expresses the artistic side of one’s personality. “Chess,” he has said, “is art and calculation.” And again, “Chess is the art of analysis,” in which one should aim at “perfection.” Aesthetic and emotional enjoyment results from “strict accomplished and forceful positions.” He argues that chess is not a science, because it studies a conventional system and not nature itself. Still, in Botvinnik’s games the flight of the imagination is controlled. To him, one may deduce, beauty lies in the logical working out of technical theorems. More than any contemporary, he reached in his games a perfection of flawless execution. For many, that is beauty enough.



Through painstaking analysis and the persistent adoption of certain opening systems, Botvinnik has contributed to great advances in theory. He notably championed the Winawer Variation of the French Defense, a difficult system not to most players’ taste. A typical example is Tolush vs. Botvinnik, USSR Championship, 1945: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Nf3 Qa5.

An unbalanced game results, in which White has attacking chances on the kingside but weak pawns on the other flank. After the further moves 8 Bd2 c4 9 a4 Nd7 10 Be2 Nb6

11 0-0 Nxa4, Botvinnik kept the pawn and, as usual, withstood the attack and won.

Single-handed, he rehabilitated the Dutch Stonewall Defense. Here is an early example, from his national debut at age sixteen, which heralded the arrival of a great new talent on the Soviet scene.

White: Ilya Rabinovich

Black: Mikhail Botvinnik

Fifth USSR Championship, Moscow, 1927

Dutch Defense

1	d4	e6
2	c4	f5
3	g3	Nf6
4	Bg2	Be7
5	Nc3	0-0
6	Nf3	d5
7	0-0	c6
8	Qc2	Qe8
9	Bf4	Qh5

All of this is now well known. Black has pressure on the kingside; White has a strong point at e5 and chances to smash through in the center with e4. A matter of taste.

10	Rad1	Nbd7
11	b3	Ne4
12	Ne5	Ng5!?
13	h4	

A weakening of the king position. Good is 13 f3 Nh3+ 14 Bxh3 Qxh3 15 e4.

13	...	Ne4
14	Bf3	

According to Botvinnik, 14 Nxe4 fxe4 15 f3 gives White the advantage, since then the Exchange sacrifice 15...Rxf4 gives "no prospects." Yet Reinfeld and Chernev give a long variation resulting in a win for Black: 16 gxf4 e3 17 Qd3 Bxh4 18 Qxe3 Bg3 19 Ng4 Nf6 20 Rf2 e5! 21 Qxe5 Bxg4 22 fxg4 Qh2+ 23 Kf1 Re8 24 Qf5 Bxf2 25 Kxf2 Ne4+, etc. That looks convincing. Botvinnik, though, is Botvinnik.

14	...	Qe8
15	Nxd7	Bxd7
16	Kg2	Bb4!
17	Bxe4?	

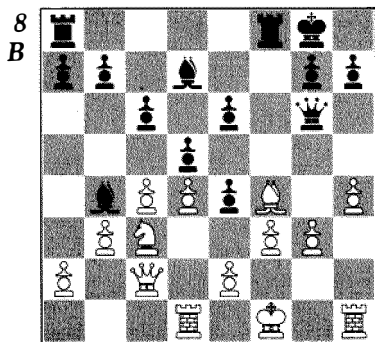
A serious error, activating Black's rook. The correct defense is 17 Nb1.

17	...	fxe4
18	Rh1	Qh5
19	f3	Qg6

Even stronger is 19...e5!, transposing into the game continuation...

20 Kf1

Botvinnik



Rabinovich

20 e5!

... since now White can prolong his survival via 21 h5 Qf5, though the endgame after 22 dxe5 exf3 23 Qxf5 Bxf5 24 Rc1 d4 25 Nd1 Be4 is very good for Black.

With 20...e5! releasing the "latent malignant energy" of the queen's bishop, Botvinnik's attack becomes irresistible. A fine example of the new dynamism.

21 dxe5 Rxf4!
22 gxf4 Qg3!

The "quiet" point of Botvinnik's combination, threatening mate with either ...e3 or ...Bc5. White is helpless: 23 cxd5 Bc5 24 Nxe4 Bh3+ 25 Rxb3 Qg1 mate.

23 Nxe4 dxe4

Quicker than 23...Bh3+. Now, on 24 Qxe4, Botvinnik planned 24...Bc5 25 e3 Bf5!

24 Rxd7 Bc5

Ever alert! Tragedy would result from 24...e3?? 25 Rxg7+!! and White wins!

25 e3 Qxf3+
26 Qf2 Qxh1+

Black, a piece ahead, received the opponent's resignation after the forty-second move.



In an essay, Botvinnik has defined combination: a forced variation with sacrifice. The essential contribution in his definition is the requirement of a sacrifice.

In his games he has no special bias toward this matter of sacrifices. He neither seeks nor avoids them but rather fol-

lows his own strategic plan, always ready for combinational opportunities.

In his study Botvinnik systematized not only opening lines but even certain mid-game patterns. He is especially adept at positions with the isolated d-pawn.

White: Mikhail Botvinnik

Black: Milan Vidmar

Nottingham, 1936

Queen's Gambit Accepted (in effect)

1	c4	e6
2	Nf3	d5
3	d4	Nf6
4	Nc3	Be7
5	Bg5	0-0
6	e3	Nbd7
7	Bd3	

Usual is 7 Rc1 or 7 cxd5. But Botvinnik steers the game into a form of Queen's Gambit Accepted, with a tempo less. He thus avoids the timeworn Orthodox Defense and reaches a position with the isolated d-pawn, whose strategic potential he has mastered.

7	...	c5!
8	0-0	cx d4
9	ex d4	dx c4
10	Bxc4	

Here is the basic isolated d-pawn position. Black can play against the pawn and use the strong point on d5; White has a point on e5 and open lines for attack. Now 10...a6, and if 11 a4, then ...Nb6 would give a very satisfactory game for Black.

10	...	Nb6
11	Bb3	Bd7

12 Qd3 Nbd5

Better to simplify with 12...Nfd5, keeping ...Ba4 in reserve. Exchanges lessen the attacking chances and heighten White's structural weakness. If then 13 Bc2 g6, threatening 14...Nb4, is quite acceptable for Black.

13 Ne5 Bc6
14 Rad1 Nb4(?)

A waste of time. Botvinnik suggests 14...Qa5.

15 Qh3 Bd5
16 Nxd5 Nbx5?

Oblivious of the brewing storm. Necessary is 16...Nfxd5 and if 17 f4, then ...f5, with a reasonable defense.

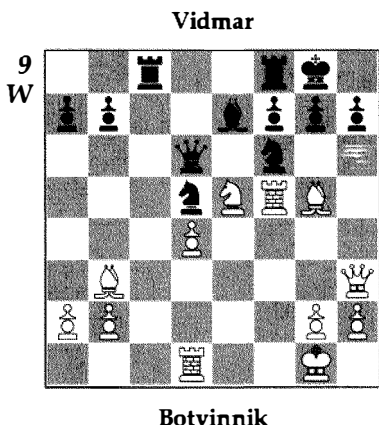
17 f4! Rc8

The Exchange is lost on 17...g6 (to prevent f5) 18 Bh6 Re8 19 Ba4, and on the alternative 17...Ne4, Botvinnik planned 18 Nxf7!! Rxf7 19 Qxe6 or 18...Kxf7 19 Rde1! and wins easily. Here is the sharp tactical component of the plan of opening up the f-file.

18 f5 exf5(?)

It was better but unappetizing to accept a weak, isolated e-pawn with 18...Qd6 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 Rfe1.

19 Rxf5 Qd6(?)



Vidmar obviously has no taste for defending this position. Better is 19...Rc7, but after 20 Rdf1 Panov showed that a winning combination is imminent anyway, and Black is helpless:

(a) 20...a6 21 Nxf7! Rxf7 22 Bxd5 Nxd5 23 Rxf7 Bxg5 24 Qe6!

(b) 20...Nb6 21 Qh4 (threatening to sacrifice both rooks on f6)...Nbd5 22 Nxf7! Rxf7 23 Bxd5 Nxd5 24 Rxf7 Bxg5 25 Qxg5!

But now the finish is simpler.

20	Nxf7!	Rxf7
21	Bxf6	Bxf6

Or 21...Nxf6 22 Rxf6, capitalizing on the undefended state of Black's c8-rook.

22	Rxd5	Qc6
23	Rd6	Qe8
24	Rd7	Black resigns

A potent demonstration of this attacking system.



Starting in 1935, the Soviet Union put forward its best—Botvinnik—into international competition. Without overwhelming all opposition he distinguished himself as among the world's best chess players. For his achievements, including his work in engineering, he was showered with honors by the state. He dutifully paid homage to the government and proclaimed the Soviet school.*



The following game may be considered the Dynamic Evergreen. It strikingly demonstrates the eclipse of classical ideas by the new dynamism. Capablanca superlatively represented the pinnacle of the classical tradition, and also its limitations. For it was he who thought that by adherence to principle, chiefly the avoidance of weaknesses, one should never lose—that the glory of chess would end in a “draw death.” In this encounter Botvinnik went beyond the classical ideas by showing the deep dynamic force of a position that by classical criteria was inferior. With good reason, he has called it “the game of my life.”

White: Mikhail Botvinnik

Black: José Raúl Capablanca

AVRO Tournament, Holland, 1938

Nimzo-Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	e3	d5

* It is gratefully noted that Botvinnik's patriotism fell short of that of the Chinese table-tennis champions who, many years later, were to credit their achievements to the Thought of Mao Tse-tung.

The normal, classical, continuation—but ever since this game, unpopular. It invites White to accept doubled pawns, because they can immediately be dissolved. He gets the advantage of the two bishops, but the c1-bishop seems hemmed in and ineffectual.

5	a3	Bxc3+
6	bx c3	c5
7	cx d5	ex d5
8	Bd3	0-0
9	Ne2	

White plans to activate his central pawn mass with f3 and e4, while Black seeks to prevent this expansion and to make use of his queenside preponderance. A tense conflict ensues.

9	...	b6
10	0-0	

In a later game against Alexander in 1946, Botvinnik chose 10 a4 followed by Ba3, with success.

10	...	Ba6
11	Bxa6	

A good alternative is 11 f3.

11	...	Nxa6
12	Bb2!?	

Botvinnik calls this move passive and recommends the immediate 12 Qd3! Yet the bishop can often spring to life from this square. Now Black can prepare to answer Qd3 with ...Qa4.

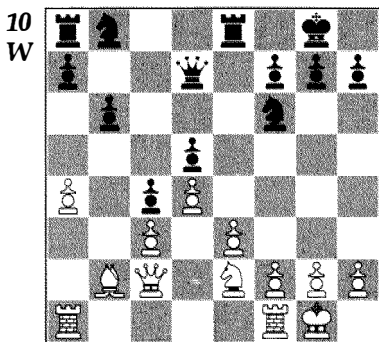
12	...	Qd7!
13	a4	Rfe8?!

Instead of playing 13...cx d4 14 cx d4 Rfc8, with at least equality, Capablanca decides on an ambitious but erroneous

plan—to prevent e4, close the queenside and via a long knight maneuver, win the a-pawn. With his next move the die is irrevocably cast. But we shall see that White's counter-plan is powerful.

14 Qd3 c4?!
15 Qc2 Nb8

Capablanca



Botvinnik

16 Rae1!

Courageous play! Botvinnik, having faith in his own idea, abandons the weak pawn with alacrity. If Black wished to retard White's plan of Ng3 and e4, he would now play 16...Nh5. Then 17 h3 f5 18 Bc1 Nc6 19 f3 Na5 20 g4 fxg4 21 hxg4 would offer White good attacking chances. But Capablanca goes his own way.

16 ... Nc6
17 Ng3 Na5

Or 17...Ne4 18 Nh1! followed by f3 and Ng3 again.

18 f3 Nb3
19 e4 Qxa4
20 e5 Nd7

Black threatens 21...Nbc5!

21 Qf2 g6

Black elects active defense with simplification rather than hurrying with his pieces back to the kingside in the face of White's attack. Thus he brings closer the crisis in which Botvinnik, with a series of incisive and brilliant moves, seizes the hand of Caissa.

22 f4 f5
23 exf6e.p. Nxf6
24 f5 Rxe1
25 Rxe1 Re8

This move loses, but Botvinnik states that 25...Rf8 26 Qf4! also gives Black little hope, best play being 26...Qd7 27 Re6 Na5 28 Ba3 Rf7 29 Qg5!, with a powerful attack.

26 Re6! Rxe6

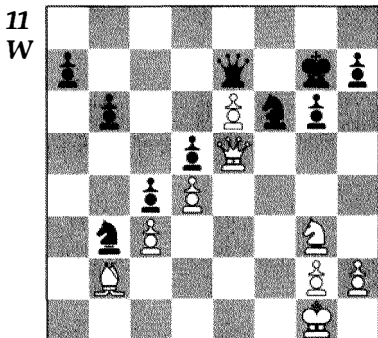
Hopeless is 26...Kf7 27 Rxf6+ Kxf6 28 fxg6+ Kxg6 29 Qf5+ Kg7 30 Nh5+ Kh6 31 h4 Rg8 32 g4 Qc6 33 Ba3! and mates.

27 fxe6 Kg7
28 Qf4! Qe8

Preventing 29 Nf5+ gxf5 30 Qg5+.

29 Qe5 Qe7

Capablanca



Botvinnik

Otherwise 29...Na5 30 Bc1! (threatening 31 Qc7+ and 32 Bh6) ...Qe7 31 Ba3! as in the game. Now Botvinnik springs a twelve-move combination.*

30 Ba3!! Qxa3

Or 30...Qe8 31 Qc7+ Kg8 32 Be7 Ng4 33 Qd7, winning.

31 Nh5+! gxh5

Or 31...Kh6 32 Nxf6 Qc1+ 33 Kf2 Qd2+ 34 Kg3 Qxc3+ 35 Kh4 Qxd4+ 36 Ng4+!

32 Qg5+ Kf8

33 Qxf6+ Kg8

34 e7!

As Botvinnik pointed out, the interpolation of 34 Qf7+ would ruin the win—the d-pawn must remain protected in the following sequence in order to prevent perpetual check.

* Botvinnik later revealed that he'd seen only six moves ahead, to at worst a perpetual check, then found the rest at move thirty-six.

34	...	Qc1+
35	Kf2	Qc2+
36	Kg3	Qd3+
37	Kh4	Qe4+
38	Kxh5	Qe2+
39	Kh4	Qe4+
40	g4	Qe1+
41	Kh5	Black resigns

Botvinnik's epochal achievement.*



Botvinnik is also known as a superb master of endgame technique. In the endgame, that phase which most resembles a mathematical exercise, the mind of this "iron logician" is unexcelled.

The following game, in common only with the greatest efforts, resembles an organic whole from opening to finish. From move twelve on, Botvinnik fixes his opponent with a weak black-square complex and inexorably drives home his advantage. The game can be enjoyed simply, with a minimum of comment—like a theorem in geometry.

White: Mikhail Botvinnik

Black: A. Konstantinopolsky

Sverdlovsk, 1943

Caro-Kann Defense

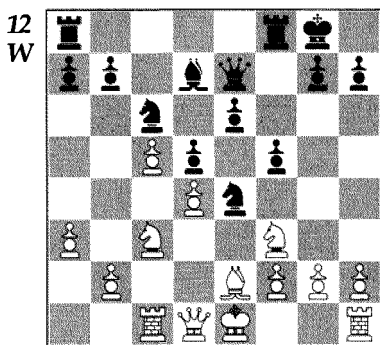
1	e4	c6
2	d4	d5
3	exd5	cxd5
4	c4	

* Olga Capablanca quoted her husband: "It was a pleasure to lose to Botvinnik, he played so well. He misled me completely. I thought I was winning. Very clear! Very good!"

Another opening specialty of Botvinnik's, now known as the Panov-Botvinnik attack. White gets either an isolated d-pawn or a queenside majority.

4	...	Nf6
5	Nc3	e6
6	Nf3	Be7
7	Bg5	0-0
8	Rc1	Nc6
9	c5	Ne4
10	Bxe7	Qxe7
11	Be2	Bd7
12	a3	f5?

Konstantinopolsky



Botvinnik

Black's first, last, and only mistake! It gives Botvinnik all he needs for a winning plan. The move, by weakening the e-pawn and creating a hole on e5, compels Black on move 17 to go into an inferior endgame. But White maintains his hold on the key squares d4 and e5, owing to Black's "bad" bishop. That hold, plus the queenside pawn majority, suffices for a win—with Botvinnik's flawless technique.

13	Bb5!	Ng5
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Necessary—or else White will settle a powerful knight on e5.

14	Bxc6	Nxf3+
15	Qxf3	bxc6
16	Qf4	Rae8
17	0-0	e5
18	Qxe5	Qxe5
19	dxe5	Rxe5
20	f4!	Re7
21	Rfe1	Rfe8
22	Rxe7	Rxe7
23	Kf2	Kf7
24	Rd1	Re8
25	Rd2	h6
26	Re2	Rb8

The minor-piece ending would be hopeless for Black. His active rook enables him to put up resistance. (Offering the rook exchange earlier would have failed: 24 Re1? Rxe1 25 Kxe1 d4! 26 Ne2 Ke6! 27 Nxd4+ Kd5.)

27	Ke3	Rb3
28	Kd4	

First stage of endgame accomplished: posting the king on the key blockade square in the center. Next stage: mobilizing the pawn majority.

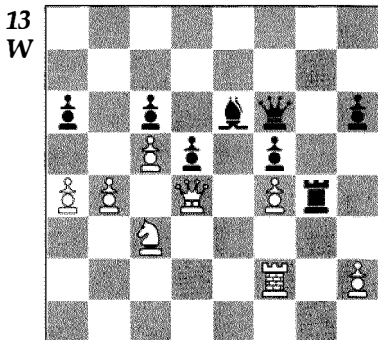
28	...	Kf6
29	Na2	Rb8

Or 29...a5 30 Nc1 Rb8 31 b3 with b4 soon to follow.

30	b4	g5
31	g3	gxf4
32	gxf4	a6
33	Nc3	Rg8

34 a4 Rg4
 35 Rf2 Be6

Konstantinopolsky



Botvinnik

The third stage, the breakthrough, cannot be stopped; for example, 35...Be8 36 b5 axb5 37 axb5 cxb5 38 Nxd5+ Ke6 39 Re2+ Kf7 40 Rxe8! Kxe8 41 Nf6+ K-any 42 Nxg4 fxg4, and White simply promotes one of his pawns (Fine).

36 b5! axb5
 37 axb5 cxb5
 38 Nxb5 Rg1
 39 Nc3 Kf7
 40 Rb2 Rf1
 41 Ne2

There is no hurry. If now 41...Kf6, then 42 c6 Rf2 (or 42...Ke7 43 Ke5) 43 c7 Rxh2 44 Rb6 Kf7 45 Rxe6 and queens.

41 ... Re1
 42 Ke5 d4

Otherwise the c-pawn just marches in. The end is near.

43 Kxd4 Kg6

44	Nc3	Kh5
45	Re2	Rxe2
46	Nxe2	Kg4
47	Ke5	Bc8
48	Nd4	h5
49	Nxf5!	Bd7

Black gives up his last chance to get rid of the "bad" bishop:
49...Bxf5 50 h3+ Kxh3 51 Kxf5 and White queens first.

50	Ng7	h4
51	f5	Kg5
52	Ne6+	Black resigns

A game of utmost simplicity, like clockwork in its logic and consistency.

THE ENCROACHMENT OF THE MACHINE

In latter years Botvinnik, whose rigorous play has been compared to that of an invincible machine, has increasingly turned his attention to the chess-playing computer. His expectations (1968) in this field were tremendous: "Computers will very soon be able to defeat even grandmasters" (!). What future does that prospect hold for the creative art of chess, the dramatic, human struggle? Is it not a prospect of creative doom and dehumanization, indeed the very death of chess?

Paradoxically, Botvinnik envisions that in the era of victorious machines chess will have added prestige, the grandmasters' reputations will be enhanced, great numbers of talented players will be attracted to chess. Such, it seems, is the glamor of the machine in our technological age.*

* The idea of a computer World Champion, as projected by Botvinnik, is to my mind an ultramasculine conception. As of 1992 certain grandmasters had lost some games to computers, mostly at speeded-up tempo. World Champion Kasparov defeated the world's best computer easily.

It is necessary to interject that science and technology are not unlimited boons; they have also a destructive potential. Just as man's technological products now threaten to engulf him physically, an ultrascientific frame of mind can lead to spiritual sterility. In chess the power of unlimited analysis, should it ever be gained by a machine, will do chiefly one thing: destroy that which we love. Chess lovers will always demand to see human, flesh-and-blood chess artists in creative combat, in preference to any computer!

This writer knows little about computers but still hastens to affirm: There will never be a computer that can play chess like Fischer, any more than there will be a machine that can compose music like Mozart. Because the thought processes of an artist cannot be captured in electronic cells. And, we must state again, chess is an art.

8

RESHEVSKY: THE SPIRIT OF SURVIVAL

In this position . . . I had to survive. □

—*Samuel Reshevsky*

In many of the strongest tournaments of our time, special provision has been made for scheduling of a certain participant, in order to avoid the Jewish Sabbath. Although perhaps half of all the greatest chess players of history have been Jews, this strict stipulation applied only to one man—Samuel Reshevsky.

Heir to an ancient tradition, Reshevsky was born in Ozierkov, Poland, in 1911. Soon after learning the game at the age of four, he was recognized as a boy wonder, and he attracted the attention of famous masters. He was taken to Łódź and to Warsaw, where the German governor of occupied Poland requested a game with the wunderkind. After defeating the most powerful opponent of his life, the six-year-old broke the silence by exclaiming, in Yiddish, "You play war, I play chess!"

No doubt influenced by economic considerations, Sammy's parents took him on a tour of European cities in 1920 and then to the United States, which was to become his adopted homeland. There he carried out more exhibition tours, one of which lasted over a year. The spectacle of the small boy walking round and round, mile after mile, to city after city, in simultaneous combat against dozens of grown men, undoubtedly fascinated the public. But what did it do to the child? The experience could not have furthered a creative delight in the art of chess. For young Reshevsky, chess was business, work, even drudgery, long nights in the lime-light far from the fireside. In dispatching a battery of lesser opponents, one sought routine, quick, not beautiful and deep moves. Later in his career, the imprint of his youth can be seen. He had no taste for studying chess between tournaments, as grandmasters must; from aesthetic and psychological considerations he was remote. Yet once having sat down to the chessboard he showed profundity second to none.

That wandering childhood could not be a way to prepare for a balanced, normal life. To some people it might have been ruinous. But Reshevsky quite comfortably survived it; he settled down to schooling, college, marriage, a family, not unlike any middle-class American. His neighbors could easily mistake this genius of chess for an ordinary businessman.

Out of that background emerged, on the stage of world chess in the 1930s, a new force capable of conquering the very best. *Force* is the word for Reshevsky. He brings to the chessboard little planning or preparation by way of opening knowledge. One watches this deep mind housed in a small body perched at the sixty-four-square battlefield, thinking, probing, penetrating the mysteries of the struggle, finding sharp, profound, and fitting moves. Usually,

eschewing memory, he consumes excessive time in the early part of the game. The critical portion of the fight arrives, with Reshevsky required by the ticking clock to reel off five, ten, or twenty moves in minutes or seconds. The opponent, seeing many pitfalls, sometimes having even an advantage resulting from a preplanned opening, expects victory to fall into his lap. Then the fingers, propelled by the Reshevsky mind, move with rapidity—here driving off an attacking piece, there safeguarding a strong point envisioned ten moves before, seizing all tactical chances, tenaciously defending, grabbing a piece or a pawn or a key square, whatever is most practical—and the smoke of battle clears. Reshevsky has survived all danger and won again.*

No one else has played chess so. There is no natural explanation available. Reshevsky sets loose upon the chessboard an elemental force that—who knows?—may have been inherent, an indomitable force that is related to Lasker's evolutionary *Macheide*—the spirit of survival. After all, both of these great fighters descended from a people that since antiquity, faced with the fiercest enemies and hardships, managed by maintaining the purity of its vision always to survive, emerging most triumphant after its darkest hours. Like a Reshevsky game.



It is fitting, then, that we begin with a game between Reshevsky, the young U.S. Champion, and Lasker, the aging former world king. To both of them, chess was a fight. I choose to see here the passing of the mantle of greatness from one generation to another.

* Reshevsky's resourcefulness in bad positions won him, from Soviet commentators in 1937, the title of "escape artist."

White: Emanuel Lasker
Black: Samuel Reshevsky
Nottingham, 1936
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1	d4	d5
2	c4	dx c4
3	Nf3	Nf6
4	e3	e6
5	Bxc4	c5
6	Nc3	a6
7	0-0	b5
8	Bd3	

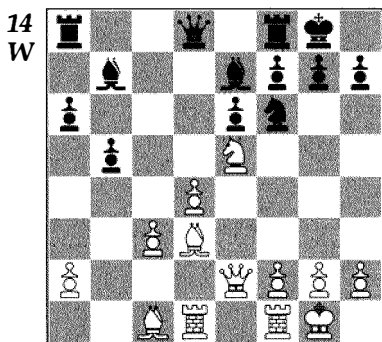
White's sixth and eighth moves are not preferred today. 8 Bb3 would better contest the strong point that Black now establishes on his d5-square.

8	...	cx d4
9	ex d4	Bb7
10	Bg5	Be7
11	Qe2	0-0
12	Rad1	Nbd7
13	Ne5	Nd5
14	Bc1?!	

As in his youth, Lasker avoids simplifying into a drawish position (though retaining the organic weakness of an isolated d-pawn) via 14 Bxe7 Qxe7 15 Nxd5 Bxd5 16 Be4. He wants to retain attacking chances, even though risking a further weakness on his c3-square. Reshevsky now seizes the initiative.

14	...	Nxc3
15	bxc3	Nf6

Reshevsky



Lasker

16 a4!?

According to Reshevsky, this move, probably planned two moves earlier, shows Lasker's greatness. He seeks to induce 16...bxa4, so as by 17 c4 to convert the backward c-pawn into a strong, dynamic center. Reshevsky reacts vigorously.

16	...	Qd5
17	Nf3*	Rfc8!
18	Bb2	Ne4!
19	Rc1(?)	

Here White loses his last chance—after 19 axb5 axb5 20 Bxb5 Nxc3 21 Bxc3 Rxc3, despite his weaknesses, some drawing hope remains in the fact that all the pawns left are on the kingside.

* Avoiding Reshevsky's intended 17 f4 b4. But Lutz Hermann and Edith Keller-Hermann have discovered a surprising resource for White: 18 c4! Qxd4+ 19 Be3 Qc3 20 Bxh7+! Kxh7 21 Rd3, winning the queen. Thus Lasker's ambitious fourteenth is vindicated, and it deserves instead "!!" (Assiac). Black should play 17...Rfc8 18 Bb2 Ne4 19 Rc1 Nd6, with equilibrium.

19 ... Ng5!
 20 axb5 axb5
 21 Bxb5(?)

Losing immediately. Better but insufficient is 21 Ne1 Nh3+ 22 Kh1 Nf4 23 Qg4 Bg5! 24 Rc2 h5! 25 Qg3 h4 26 Qg4 h3! (Reshevsky).

21 ... Nxf3+
 22 gxf3 Qg5+
 23 White resigns

For if 23 Kh1, then ...Qg4 wins the queen. This was Lasker's worst defeat. Capablanca and Alekhine also received sound beatings from the young Reshevsky, who feared no one.



One of the select few to compete for the world title in the match-tournament of 1948, Reshevsky, with his rather isolated sheer talent, proved unequal to the Soviet chess machine, headed by Botvinnik, with its trainers, seconds, and prepared opening research. In the challengers' event of 1953 he came tantalizingly close to the pinnacle, tying for second place behind Smyslov. Here is an example from that tournament.



Reshevsky's opening repertoire has always been limited and unpretentious. He never found time for researching novelties. Routine had to creep in—often in the form of repeated Exchange variations of the Queen's Gambit Declined, a dull system. He is also an expert at the Rubinstein Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense. Here, against a Soviet Champion, he shows its potential for deep strategic maneuvering and attacking breakthrough.

White: Samuel Reshevsky

Black: Yuri Averbakh

Zurich, 1953

Nimzo-Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	e3	0-0
5	Ne2	d5
6	a3	Be7
7	cxd5	exd5

Here 7...Nxd5, as in Reshevsky vs. Korchnoi, Match, 1968, offers good chances for simplifying and equalizing the game, as would ...c5 on any of the next three moves. But Black simply makes sound moves without a plan, permitting Reshevsky gradually to prepare f3 and e4, after which White's game grows like an expanding organism.

8	Ng3	Be6
9	Bd3	Nbd7
10	0-0	c6
11	Bd2	Re8
12	Qc2	a5
13	Nce2!	

Subtle maneuvers begin on both sides, based on White's goal of e4, which requires him to protect his d-pawn and g4-square.

13	...	Nb6
14	Nf4	Bd7
15	Rfe1	Bf8
16	f3	Bc8
17	Rac1	g6

18	Nfe2	Bg7
19	h3	a4
20	e4	

From a classical point of view, White may be said to have achieved the goal of his first move. If he is now permitted e5 and f4-f5, his attack will be decisive.

20	...	dx e4
21	fx e4	Be6
22	Be3	Bb3
23	Qd2	Nfd7

Otherwise Bg5, perhaps followed by e5 and Ne4, will be very uncomfortable. Now White induces a weakness before launching a kingside attack.

24	Bg5	f6
25	Be3	Nf8
26	h4!	Bf7
27	h5	Ne6
28	Rf1	Bf8

Black wants to break up White's powerful center via ...c5, gaining a strong point on e5. But he will be too late.

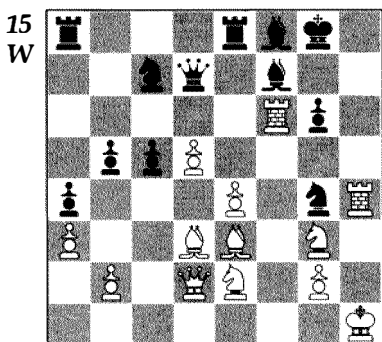
29	Rf2	Nd7
30	Rcf1	c5
31	d5	Nc7
32	hxg6	hxg6
33	Rf4!	b5
34	Rh4	Ne5
35	Kh1!	Qd7?

White, ready for a combinative finish, threatened 36 Bxc5! Bxc5 (no check!) 37 Qh6. Black's move may be an attempt to "trap" White in time pressure, since 35...c4 cedes the key d4-square, and 35...Qd6 allows 36 Bh6. The text move prepares

the defense 36 Bh6 Ng4 but does not answer even the primary threat of 36 Bxc5 and is nicely refuted. An interesting but risky bid for counterplay is 35...Nxd3 36 Qxd3 f5!? 37 Rh3 and now ...Qe7 or ...Bg7, but not 37...fxe4? 38 Nxe4 Nxd5 39 Bg5 Be7 40 Rxf7! Kxf7 41 Rh7+ Ke6 (or ...Kg8 42 Nf6+ and mates) 42 Nxc5+ Kd6 43 Nb7+ and wins.

36 Rxf6! Ng4

Averbakh



Reshevsky

Or 36...Bg7 37 Bg5!

37 Bg5! Bg7

Or 37...Nxf6 38 Bxf6 Bg7 39 Bxg7 Kxg7 40 Qc3+ Kf8 41 Qf6 and mates.

38 Rf4 Ne5
39 Bf6 Bxf6?

Hastens the end. Black may also have been afflicted with the clock.

With 39...Qd6 he can hold out for some time, with a pawn less.

40	Rxf6	Kg7
41	Qg5	Rh8
42	Nf5+	Qxf5
43	Rxf5	Rxh4+
44	Kg1	Black resigns



The secret of Reshevsky's success in adversity is a tremendous tactical skill. Not that he seeks combinations or king-side attacks—he is quite content with slow positional wins—but he welcomes tactical chances in which he nearly always sees further than the opponent. He has been called a materialist. Beauty in chess is not his conscious goal, yet he has played beautiful games. Here is one. Reshevsky plays to win, with aesthetic results.

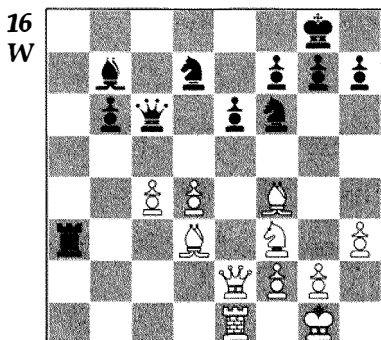
White: Samuel Reshevsky

Black: Jan Hein Donner

Second Piatigorsky Cup, Santa Monica, 1966

(The initial moves of a Nimzo-Indian Defense were 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 c5 5 Bd3 d5 6 Nf3 0-0 7 0-0 dxc4 8 Bxc4 Nbd7 9 Bd3 b6 10 a3 cxd4 11 exd4 Bxc3 12 bxc3 Bb7 13 Re1 Qc7 14 Bd2 Rfe8 15 Qe2 Rac8 16 Rac1 Bd5 17 c4 Bb7 18 a4 Qc6 19 Bf4 Qxa4 20 Ra1 Qc6 21 Rxa7 Ra8 22 Rxa8 Rxa8 23 h3 Ra3?)

Donner



Reshevsky

Black's twenty-third is impetuous. The safe move, maintaining the balance, was 23...h6.)

Reshevsky conceives a deep sacrificial line based on the strategic need to open up the game for his two bishops. Many ramifications must be foreseen.

24	d5!	exd5
25	cxd5	Qxd5

Not 25...Nxd5 26 Bb5! Qe6 27 Qb2 and wins.

26	Bc4	Qc5
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Losing lines are 26...Qf5 27 Qe7! and 26...Qe4 27 Bxf7+ and 26...Qc6 27 Bxf7+ Kxf7 28 Qe7+ Kg8 29 Qxa3. Playable is 26...Qh5 27 Ng5 Qxe2 28 Bxf7+ Kh8 29 Rxe2, and White has a somewhat better endgame.

27	Bxf7+!
----	--------

The point! Now the Dutch grandmaster can defend himself with 27...Kh8, but flustered at having the game deflected from the expected course, he decides mistakenly to "call Reshevsky's bluff."

27	...	Kxf7?
28	Qe6+	Kg6
29	Bd6	

The tempting 29 Nh4+ Kh5 30 Nf5—hoping for the pretty 30...Qc6? 31 Qf7+ g6 32 Qxh7+ Nxh7 33 g4 mate—is met by 30...Bxg2!

29	...	Qa5
30	Ne5+!	Nxe5
31	Rxe5	Ra1+
32	Kh2	Qa8
33	Qf5+	Kf7
34	Re7+	Kg8

The king “escapes” back home.

35	Be5	Re1
36	Rxg7+!	Black resigns

Mate is forced.



When asked to list his all-time favorite games, Reshevsky cited his victories over the greats, including four World Champions. It is significant that he selected not his most artistic achievements but his competitive successes in combat with the Titans. Here is one of his favorites, which also shows his artistry in intricate, thrust-and-parry middle-game play.

White: Paul Keres

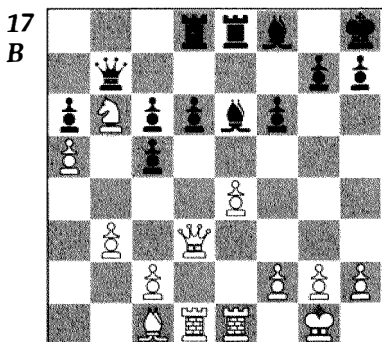
Black: Samuel Reshevsky

First Piatigorsky Cup, Los Angeles, 1963

(The initial moves of a Ruy Lopez were 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 d6 7 Bxc6+ bxc6 8 d4 Nd7 9 Nbd2 f6 10 Nc4 Nb6 11 Na5 Bd7 12 Qd3 0-0 13 Be3 Kh8 14 Rad1 exd4—forced—15 Nxd4 c5 16 Nf5 Re8 17 b3 Bf8

18 Bc1 Be6 19 Ne3 Qd7 20 a4 c6 21 Nac4 Nxc4 22 Nxc4 Rad8
23 Nb6 Qb7 24 a5.)

Reshevsky



Keres

White's spatial advantage, lacking time for c4, has been neutralized. Now Reshevsky expands in the center and opens up activity for his bishops.

24 ... d5
25 Bf4(?)

Better is 25 Ba3, to forestall what now follows.

25 ... c4!
26 Qd2

Best. For example, 26 bxc4 Bb4 and ...Bxa5, or 26 Qc3 cxb3 27 cxb3 dxe4 and Black wins a pawn.

26 ... cxb3
27 cxb3 d4
28 b4 Bb3
29 Rb1 Qf7
30 Bc7! Qxc7

31	Rxb3	f5!
32	Qd3	

Avoiding 32 exf5? Qf4! 33 Qd1 Rxe1+ 34 Qxe1 d3.

32	...	fxe4
33	Rxe4	Rxe4
34	Qxe4	c5
35	bxc5	Qxc5
36	g3	

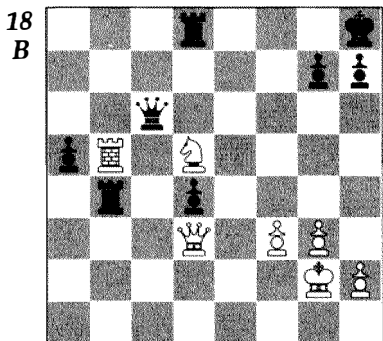
On 36 Qe1, Reshevsky planned 36...d3 37 Rb2 d2! 38 Rxd2 Qxa5, and while White can maintain material equality via 39 Nc4 Qc3 40 Qd1 Rxd2 41 Nxd2, the a-pawn is formidable. But now, with an extra (outside and passed) pawn, plus a passed d-pawn which "lusts to expand," Black should have little trouble.

36	...	Qxa5
37	Qd3	Qe1+
38	Kg2	a5
39	Qf3	Qe6
40	Rb5	Bb4(?)

On the last move before the time control, Black falters. Much quicker is the straightforward 40...d3; for example, 41 Nd5 d2 42 Rxa5 Qe1 43 Ne3 d1=Q 44 Nxd1 Qxa5. But now, after adjournment, Reshevsky produces some tricky and elegant play, to shepherd his passed pawns to victory.

41	Nd5	Qd7!
42	Qd3	Qc6
43	f3	

Reshevsky



Keres

43 ... Bd2!
 44 Ne7 Qe8
 45 Nd5

The d-pawn is immune; for example, 45 Nf5 Bb4 46 Nxd4 h6 47 Rf5 Qd7 48 Rf4 Bc5, winning the knight (Reshevsky).

45 ... a4
 46 Rc5 Be3
 47 Qf5!

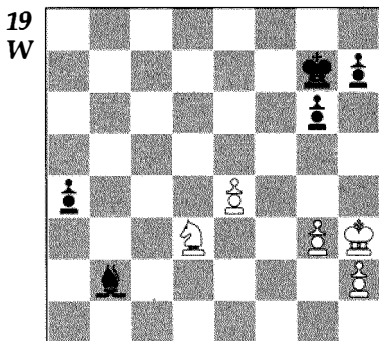
Keres threatens the diabolical 48 Nf6! Qg6 (or ...gxf6 49 Qxf6+ Kg8 50 Rc7 Rd7 51 Qc6! Rd8 52 Qf6 and draws) 49 Rc8! Reshevsky points out that 47 Ra5 h6 48 Nb6 Qc6 49 Nxa4 Rf8 50 Qe2 g5 would give Black good attacking chances. There is only one solution now for Black, and it wins.

47 ... d3!

Reshevsky prepares his counter, 48 Nf6? Qg6 49 Rc8 Bb6! It is a truism that in modern chess the brilliancies are in the notes. Reshevsky now forces a won endgame, by returning a pawn.

48	Rc3	Bd4
49	Rxd3	Qe2+
50	Kh3	g6!
51	Qe4	Qxe4
52	fxe4	Bb2
53	Nb4	Rxd3
54	Nxd3	Kg7

Reshevsky



Keres

Reshevsky even permits himself a little joke! If 55 Nxb2, then the pawn queens. The endgame is hopeless for White, since a knight is impotent against a bishop escorting a distant passed pawn. The remaining mop-up is child's play for Reshevsky: 55 Kg4 Kf6 56 Kf3 a3 57 Nb4 Ke5 58 Ke3 Bd4+ 59 Kd3 Bc5 60 Na2 Bg1 61 h3 h5 62 Nb4 Bc5 63 Na2 Bf2 64 g4 h4 65 Nb4 Bc5 66 Na2 g5 67 Nc3 Ba7 68 Na2 Kf4 69 Nc3 Bb8 70 Kc2 Be5 71 Nd5+ Kg3 72 Kb3 Kxh3 73 Ne3 Kg3 74 White resigns.

A tense and admirable struggle!



With his lack of preparation and failure to unlearn the habit of time pressure via methods well known to Soviet trainers,

Reshevsky in effect gave odds to his competitors for world supremacy, providing an impressive example of the capacity of the lone individual in the struggle of life.

In 1957 the world was amazed to see Reshevsky toppled from his primacy in American chess by the fourteen-year-old Bobby Fischer. He has borne his eclipse with grace, remaining a competitor to be feared. In latter years, the “grandmaster draw” has made its appearance in his play—this he now prefers to continual, exhausting adventures on the precipice with the dangerous clock hands. In 1968, at the age of fifty-seven, he made his last hurrah for world honors, reaching the quarterfinal stage of challengers’ matches. Reshevsky, the great fighter of unerring instinct, will never grow old—only mellow.



These last words proved accurate. Reshevsky tied for first prize at Reykjavík in 1984—at age seventy-three, a record. Just months after sojourning in Moscow, where he defeated Smyslov, Reshevsky died in 1992, with postal games in progress. He met the one time control that is absolute.

9

KERES:

THE SPIRIT OF ATTACK

It is 1944, wartime, in Tallinn, Estonia. At the chess club, the absorption of the players is shattered by the sounds of an air raid. Only one man declines to seek shelter, stating, "I am steeling my nerves for the world championship fight." He is Paul Keres. □

In our discussion of the turbulent 1930s we saw how the new players faced the problem of synthesizing the old and modern strategic ideas of position, and how Alekhine went beyond them to a new dynamic style.

There was one young player who stood aside from those refined strategic arguments. Rather, he played chess in the open, direct way that was dear to the old Romantic masters. With open games and gambits, he went for checkmate. His name was Paul Keres, and the chess world soon had to reckon him among its elite.

Keres was born in Narva, Estonia, in 1916. He fell in love with Caissa as a youth, and in countless correspondence games explored the creative possibilities of chess. At the Warsaw Olympiad of 1935 he made his international debut.

There he played the famous game against Winter, sacrificing first pawns, then a piece, for a devastating mating attack, to win in nineteen moves. Overnight, a new Morphy was hailed.

Although he soon learned the need for holding in rein this combinative flair when facing the grandmasters, Keres has remained through the years true to the grand tradition of attacking play that never ceases to delight the public. This is not to say that he flouts positional needs. But slow, closed games of maneuver are not to his taste. He often finds himself pitted against modern opponents with a technical approach. In 1937 he wrote, "True beauty in chess consists in an elemental struggle between totally different tendencies. . . . It is the multiplicity of the various styles of personalities that gives chess its magic attraction." How wonderfully human an idea of chess, how different from the disembodied exercise of the mechanists! Keres has a cold exterior at the chessboard that conceals the emotions raging within.



In many Keres games the opponent seems all too aware that he is facing one of the greatest attacking players of all time. He errs early, and soon collapses under a series of hammer blows. The Sicilian Defense, with its initial lag in development, is especially vulnerable to "Keres treatment." For such games, P. H. Clarke has coined the term *Sicilicide*.

White: Paul Keres

Black: Alexander Kotov

Budapest, 1950

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4

4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6
6	Be2	Qc7
7	Bg5	Nbd7
8	0-0	e6

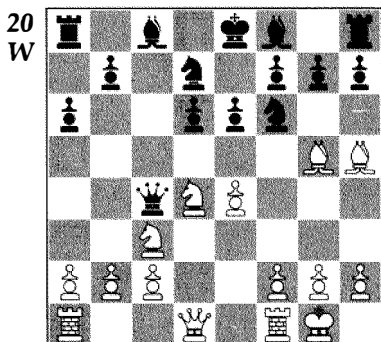
This order of moves against the Najdorf Variation is not dangerous if Black defends himself properly. But Keres has prepared an unusual way to confuse the opponent.

9 Bh5

The threat of 10 Nxe6 interferes with Grandmaster Kotov's comfortable plan of development. If 9...Nxb5 10 Qxb5 (renewing the threat) would give White a dangerous advantage in time; 9...Nb6 10 Bxf6 would allow a serious doubling of pawns. After 9...g6, White with 10 Be2 signifies that he has lost two tempi in order to "force" Black to fianchetto the f8-bishop, leaving the d-pawn somewhat weak—yet that is Black's correct and sound course. But it seems that Kotov is determined to develop his bishop on e7 and feels "uncooperative." Regret is immediate.

9 ... Qc4?

Kotov



Keres

10 Nxe6! Qxe6

Or 10...Nxe6 11 Qd5! (...Qxd5 12 Nc7 mate).

11 Nd5 Kd8

Instead, 11...Nxd5 12 exd5 Qf5 would better test White. Then the winning move is 13 Qe1+! Ne5 (or 13...Qe5 14 Qd2 Qf5 15 Rae1+) 14 f4 h6 15 g4! Qh7 16 fxe5 (Kmochny). Here we see why the queen must check on e1, not e2: 16...hxg5 17 exd6+ Kd8 18 Qa5+ and mates. Or 16...g6 17 exd6+ Kd7 18 Be7!

Did Keres foresee everything precisely when he sacrificed the knight? By no means. He has made clear that "a combination must not always be 100 percent correct to lead to success." He will not try to force positions or undertake something clearly unsound—but he will readily take risks in order to win games. In this case he estimated correctly, after long thought, that he would have better chances.

12 Bg4! Qe5

Or 12...Qe8 13 Qd2!

13 f4 Qxe4

14 Bxd7 Bxd7

Or 14...Kxd7 15 Bxf6 Kc6 16 c4 gxf6 17 Qa4+ and wins (Keres).

15 Nxf6 gxf6

16 Bxf6+ Kc7

17 Bxh8

And, with the Exchange and a pawn ahead, White wins easily. The remaining moves were 17...Bc6 18 Qd2 Bh6 19 Rae1 Qg6 20 Re7+ Kd8 21 Rfe1 a5 22 Bd4 Ra6 23 Qf2 Bf8 24 Bb6+ Kc8 25 Re8+ Bxe8 26 Rxe8+ Kd7 27 Rxf8 Black resigns.



Keres also knows how to gather small advantages until ready for the decisive breakthrough. Here is a game from one of the stellar events of all time, in which Keres captured first prize. It marked the definite eclipse of the old generation.

White: Paul Keres

Black: José Raúl Capablanca

AVRO Tournament, Holland, 1938

French Defense

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Nd2	

Keres naturally prefers the open positions resulting from the text move to the closed formations with e5.

3	...	c5
4	exd5	exd5
5	Ngf3	Nc6
6	Bb5	Qe7+

Capablanca chooses this unattractive move instead of the usual 6...Bd6, perhaps hoping to exchange queens for an early draw. But Keres gladly loses a tempo, knowing that Black's queen must soon move again.

7	Be2	cx d4
8	0-0	Qc7

This and Black's next move force him to lose another tempo on move ten. In a match game with Geller in 1968, Spassky chose 8...Qd8 without fully rehabilitating the variation.

9	Nb3	Bd6
10	Nbxd4	a6
11	b3	

Quite good, but Keres later suggested 11 c4!, for a quicker opening up of the game.

11	...	Nge7
12	Bb2	0-0
13	Nxc6	

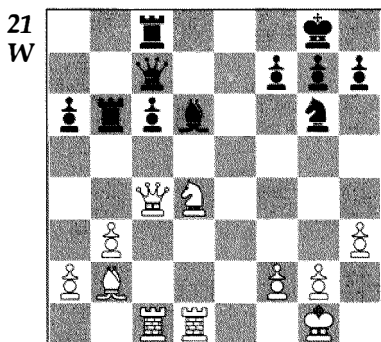
Temporarily strengthening Black's pawn formation, in order to undermine it forthwith.

13	...	bxc6
14	c4	Be6
15	Qc2	dx c4
16	Bxc4	Bxc4
17	Qxc4	Rfb8

Black tries to cover his queenside weaknesses only to find, after the knight maneuver White prepares with his next move, that the kingside is underdefended.

18	h3	Rb5
19	Rac1	Rc8
20	Rfd1	Ng6
21	Nd4	Rb6

Capablanca



Keres

An admission of faulty planning, for 21...Rd5 runs into 22 Nxc6! Rxd1+ 23 Rxd1 Qxc6 24 Rxd6! and White wins a pawn.

22 Ne6 Qb8!

The best defense. For example, 22...Bh2+ 23 Kh1 fxe6 24 Qxe6+ Kh8 25 Rd7 and wins.

Keres now rejects 23 Nxc7 Be5 24 Bxe5 Nxe5 (not 24...Qxe5 25 Qg4!) 25 Qc3 Kxc7 26 f4, and the shattered pawn position gives White excellent prospects. The move he chooses is also very good.

23 Ng5 Rb7
24 Qg4 Bf4
25 Rc4 Rb5

Again the misguided rook move. Necessary is 25...Bxg5 26 Qxg5, although White maintains strong pressure on all fronts.

26 Nxf7

The knight continues his charmed life, since if 26...Kxf7, then 27 Rd7+ wins. Later, Keres pointed out a simpler line, with 26 Rxf4! Rxc5 (or 26...Nxf4 27 Nxf7! Ng6 28 Nd6) 27 Qxc5 Qxf4 28 Rd8+ Rxd8 29 Qxd8+ Nf8 30 Ba3 c5 31 Qc8! followed by Bxc5 and wins. During the game he had seen only as far as 31 Bxc5?? Qc1+.

26 ... Re8
27 g3

More direct is 27 Nd8 Rxd8+ 28 Rxd8 Qxd8 29 Rxf4; but the suggested improvement after the text move, 27...Bxg3, loses to 28 fxg3 Qa7+ 29 Rcd4! (Reinfeld), and White has a winning attack.

27 ... Qc8
28 Rxf4 Qxc4
29 Rxc4 Kxf7

30 Rd7+ Re7
31 Rxe7+ Kxe7
32 Bxg7

With two pawns ahead, the rest is simple. The remaining moves are 32...Rd5 33 a4 Rc5 34 Rb4 Ke6 35 Kg2 a5 36 Rc4 Rxc4 37 bxc4 Kd6 38 f4 Black resigns.



Keres's devotion to chess was steadfast through the years. A host of tournament victories, including three Soviet championships, were his—yet the coveted chance at the world title always eluded him. In a succession of challengers' events, he gained second prize only—leading to the appellation Paul the Second. After age fifty his play remained powerful, but the very highest honors went to those with greater subtlety and defensive skill, Smyslov and Petrosian. If Keres used stealth, he would no longer be Keres.



In the Romantic attacking tradition, Keres preferred e-pawn openings, leading to open games. His theoretical books on these openings were definitive works. But he was also adept at steering d-pawn openings into formidable attacks. In the following game he seizes the moment to switch to a kingside offensive.

White: Paul Keres

Black: Vasily Smyslov

World Championship Tournament, 1948

Grünfeld Defense

1 c4 Nf6
2 Nf3 c6

3	Nc3	d5
4	e3	g6
5	d4	Bg7
6	cx d5	Nxd5

True to the spirit of the defense, which calls for activating the g7-bishop via a later ...c5 or ...e5. More solid, though, is 6...cx d5.

7	Bc4	0-0
8	0-0	b6
9	Qb3	Nxc3
10	bxc3	Ba6
11	Ba3	Bxc4
12	Qxc4	Re8
13	e4	b5
14	Qb3	Nd7
15	c4	Rb8

Here and on the next move, Smyslov rejects the level chances available from playing ...bxc4 followed by ...Qa5. This decision is courageous; he foresees that White's center will be overextended, but underestimates a different danger. . . .

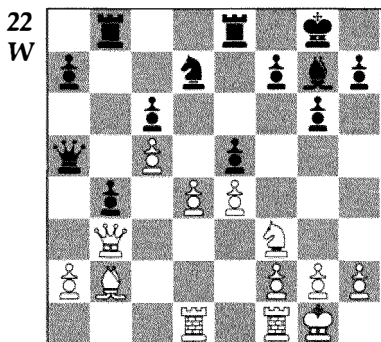
16	Rad1	Qa5?!
17	c5!	

Keres has courage too. He has said, "Who does not take a risk will never win a game!"

Events now proceed by force. White threatens to constrict the opponent seriously with e5, whereas Black tries to break up the center—only to confront a typical Keres onslaught on the kingside.

17	...	b4
18	Bb2	e5!

Smyslov



Keres

19 Ng5! Re7
20 f4! exd4

If 20...exf4, White gains a strong bind with 21 e5; or if 20...h6 21 Nxf7! Rxf7 22 fxe5 and wins.

21 f5!

Suddenly the situation is complex and fraught with danger to Black, and he is already pressed by the clock. The threats on f7 are most acute. Of the many possibilities, one line illustrating the hazards is 21...Bf6 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 Nxf7 Rxf7 24 e5 Nxc5 25 Qg3! Bg7 26 Rxf7 Kxf7 27 e6+ Nxe6 28 Qxb8 and Black's king is perilously exposed.

Keres, in his notes, later gave the best defense: 21...Qxc5! 22 e5! (better than 22 Nxf7 d3+ 23 Kh1 Qc2!) 22...Qxe5! 23 Bxd4 Qxd4+ 24 Rxd4 Bxd4+ 25 Kh1 Nf6, with sufficient material compensation and "fighting possibilities."

Smyslov chooses to drive White's queen from the dangerous diagonal.

21 ... Nxc5?
22 Qh3! h5(?)

After this move there is no hope. The only chance is 22...h6 23 f6 Bxf6 24 Rxf6 Nd7 (not 24...hgx5 25 Bxd4 Ne6 26 Rf5 gxf5 27 Qh8 mate) 25 Rd6 Qxg5 26 Rxd7 Rxd7 27 Qxd7 c5 and Black has some compensation for the piece.

23 f6 Bh6

Now 23...Bxf6 24 Rxf6 Nd7 is of no use; 25 Qg3! and wins.

24 fxe7 Bxg5
25 Qf3! f6

Or 25...Qxa2 26 Qg3 Be3+ 27 Qxe3 dxe3 28 Rd8+ and wins.

26 Bxd4 Nd7
27 h4 Black resigns

For if 27...Bxh4, then 28 Qh3 wins a piece. Woe to him who beckons a Keres attack!



Although quieter methods are often necessary against the elite, games of vintage Keres still made their appearance. The following game decided a match that determined a place in the next world challengers' event.

White: Paul Keres

Black: Effim Geller

Eighth Match Game, USSR, 1962

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nf3 d5
4 Nc3 c5

This choice of the Semi-Tarrasch Defense may already be considered an error by Grandmaster Geller, though a purely psychological one. It leads to just the sort of open, aggressive position that Keres loves.

5	cx d5	Nx d5
6	e3	Nc6
7	Bc4	Nxc3
8	bxc3	Be7

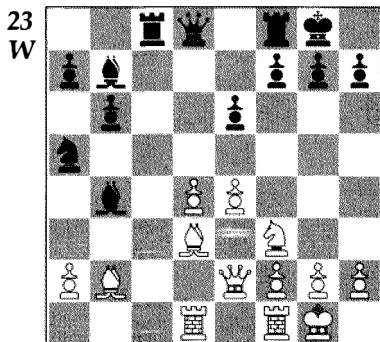
Black begins to drift into an uncomfortable setup. To be considered is 8...cx d4 9 cx d4 Bb4+, or if instead 9 ex d4, White can no longer reach the pattern of the game.

9	0-0	0-0
10	e4	b6
11	Bb2	Bb7
12	Qe2	Na5
13	Bd3	Rc8
14	Rad1	cx d4

Against White's imposing center and attacking chances, Black seeks exchanges in order to ease his game. But the text move, part of this plan, only makes the center more dynamic. Better is 14...Qc7. And Black's next move is consistent but ill-judged because it permits a thematic thrust.

15	cx d4	Bb4!?
----	-------	-------

Geller



Keres

16 d5! exd5(?)

After this move all of White's forces come alive. Geller has no more taste for patient defense than Keres. It is true that the original idea of 16...Bc3 is refuted by 17 Ba3 Re8 18 dxe6 Rxe6 19 Bc4. But 16...Qe7 is more prudent and better.

17 exd5 Qe7!

Weak would be 17...Re8 18 Ne5 f6 19 Qh5; or 17...Bc3 18 Bf5!, or 17...Bxd5? 18 Be4 Re8 19 Ne5 Rc5 20 Qd3, or 17...Qxd5 18 Bxh7+.

18 Ne5! f6

This move loses. While 18...Bc3 surrenders a pawn to 19 Bxh7+ Kxh7 20 Qd3+, it gives the most prolonged resistance. Interesting but inadequate is 18...g6 19 Qg4 (simpler is 19 Ng4 f6 20 Qxe7 Bxe7 21 d6! Bd8 22 d7 Rc7 23 Ba3—Keres) 19...Bc3 20 Bxc3 (also very interesting is 20 Rfe1!?) ...Rxc3 21 Rfe1 Qd6 (21...Qc5 22 d6!) 22 Qd4 Qc5 23 Qxc5 bxc5 24 d6! and White has the better endgame. A brilliant idea in the later line is 22 Nxg6!? hxg6 23 Re6 Bc8! 24 Bxg6! fxe6, but White has only perpetual check.

Geller's move, seeking to force the exchange of queens, is reminiscent of Lasker's play against Reshevsky (p. 71)—obstinate consistency in pursuit of an unsound plan. But Keres's idea of attack is supreme, because Black's pieces prove useless in the defense of the king.

19 Qh5! g6

Or else 19...h6 20 Qg6! fxe5 21 Qh7+ Kf7 22 Bg6+ Kf6 23 Bh5!, with an overwhelming attack.

20 Nxg6 hxg6

21 Bxg6 Qg7

There is no time to defend the denuded monarch. For example, 21...Nc4 22 Rd3! Bd6 23 f4 Bxf4 (or 23...Nxb2 24 Rg3 Qg7 25 Bh7+ Kh8 26 Bf5+ Kg8 27 Rxg7+ Kxg7 28 Qh7 mate) 24 Rxf4 Nxb2 25 Bh7+ Qxh7 26 Rg3+ Kh8 27 Qxh7+ Kxh7 28 Rh4 mate.

22 Rd3 Bd6

23 f4 Qh8

24 Qg4 Bc5+

25 Kh1 Rc7

26 Bh7+ Kf7

27 Qe6+ Kg7

28 Rg3+ Black resigns

Because checkmate follows, with Qh3.



To play over the games of Keres is to share in a rich creative legacy that retained its own special flavor for over three decades. They show the art of attack in our purely intellectual and symbolic medium.

The social scientists of our time are preoccupied with the all-too-pervasive phenomenon of man's aggression and its

evil consequences. In the artistry of Paul Keres, that most friendly and placid of fraternal competitors, we see expressed within the symbolic form of chess the elemental spirit of attack. The results are only positive for those initiated into our dramatic and aesthetic sport. The world would be a better place if all its wars were waged upon the battleground of sixty-four squares.



Keres always kept the faith, though he later admitted, "The older I get, the more I value pawns." In 1975, on his way home with the first prize from Vancouver and still much too young, Keres passed away. Having defeated nine (!) World Champions, he had long since joined the ranks of the immortals.

10

BRONSTEIN: THE JOY OF INVENTION

Chess is imagination. □

—David Bronstein

In the late nineteenth century, it was Tchigorin; in the early twentieth, Marshall; later, Rudolf Spielmann carried the mantle of a glorious tradition. In the 1940s, Caissa chose Bronstein to raise aloft the banner of her Romantic heritage.

David Bronstein was born in 1924 near Kiev, USSR. Before his adolescence was over he had fallen irretrievably under the spell of Caissa. Soon the Soviet chess world, already teeming with talented players, discovered the presence of an unexpected kind of new star. For in the up-to-date Soviet milieu, dominated by Botvinnik, with his precise scientific approach, here was a young man who had such audacity and love of creative chess that he actually essayed, in no less an event than the national championship, that discredited antique from the Romantic era—the King's Gambit! That is, a game abounding with scope for imaginative piece-play, daring sacrifices, and direct attacks upon the enemy king—utterly alien to all the methodical technique which had been built up since the time of

Steinitz. The new gladiator, with his flair for combination, was greeted with delight by a public sometimes bored with the works of the technicians. Here indeed was a player who sought to invent new paths, to whom chess was primarily a realm for unleashing the human imagination.



In the inventive search for new ideas, one often harks back to old ones as a starting point. It is not clear how much of this game Bronstein owed to preparation and how much to spontaneous inspiration. The finished product could have been played a century ago.

White: David Bronstein

Black: Pyotr Dubinin

USSR Championship, 1945

King's Gambit

1	e4	e5
2	f4!?	exf4
3	Nf3	g5

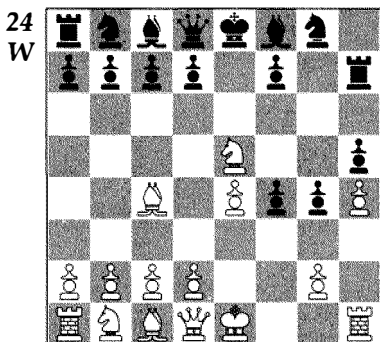
Shades of the old Italian masters! The opponent rises to the challenge in the manner of old, attempting to hold the gambit pawn at all cost.

4	h4	g4
5	Ne5	

Of the many intricate variations of an opening rich in possibilities, we have here the Kieseritzky Gambit. It is important now for Black to attend to his development; for example, with 5...Nf6 or 5...Bg7. Instead he permits White a dangerous lead with

5	...	h5?!
6	Bc4	Rh7?

Dubinin



Bronstein

Is there another recorded master game in which the first piece to be developed by one side is a rook? Necessary is 6...Nh6 7 d4 d6, and now White can choose between the “very strong” sacrifice on f7 (Keres) and the quieter 8 Nd3 f3 9 gxf3 Be7 10 Be3 Bxh4+ 11 Kd2 gxf3 12 Qxf3 and “White has an advantage filled with many worries” (Romanovsky). The text move provokes a “sacrifice” that proves decisive.

- | | | |
|----|-------|------|
| 7 | d4 | Bh6 |
| 8 | Nc3 | Nc6 |
| 9 | Nxf7! | Rxf7 |
| 10 | Bxf7+ | Kxf7 |
| 11 | Bxf4! | |

All of this was in the old *Handbuch*, which considered Black’s position helpless. Whether Bronstein found the moves over the board we do not know. Black’s next move only aggravates his situation, permitting the quick doubling of rooks on the f-file—an especially thematic exploitation of the King’s Gambit idea.

- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 11 | ... | Bxf4 |
| 12 | 0-0 | Qxh4 |

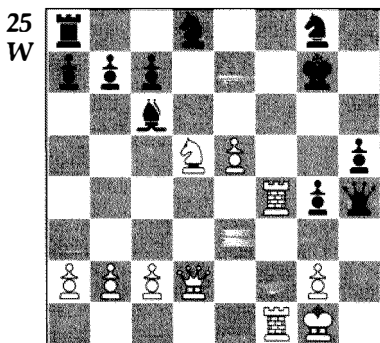
Directed against the penetration of White's rook to g5. But now Bronstein's attacking zest provides no respite.

13	Rxf4+	Kg7
14	Qd2	d6
15	Raf1	Nd8
16	Nd5	Bd7

Or 16...c6 17 Nc7! Rb8 18 Ne8+ etc.

17	e5!	dxex5
18	dxex5	Bc6

Dubinin



Bronstein

19	e6!	Bxd5
20	Rf7+!	Nxf7
21	Rxf7+	Kh8

Or 21...Kg6 22 Qd3+ and mate follows.

22	Qc3+	Nf6
23	Rxf6	Qxf6

The only way to avoid immediate checkmate.

24	Qxf6+	Kh7
25	Qf5+	Kh6
26	Qxd5	Kg6
27	Qd7	Black resigns

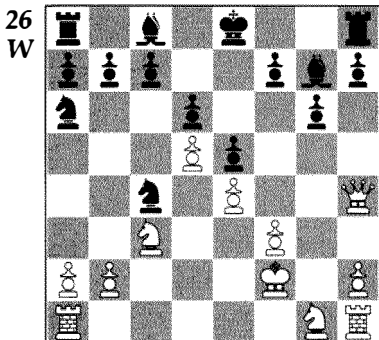
It is such games that make chess a spectator sport.



Like Tchigorin, Bronstein was far more than a nostalgic throwback to the Romantic past. He regarded each contest as a creative challenge, always seeking to produce something fresh. In a very old variation of the Two Knights Defense, he produced a startling new move against Rojahn at Moscow 1956: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Na5 6 d3 h6 7 Nf3 e4 8 dxe4!? A bombshell. In hundreds of previous games, no one before had thought of giving up a bishop for two pawns in this position! After 8...Nxc4 9 Qd4 Nb6 10 c4 c5 (better is 10...Bb4+, with good chances), Bronstein prevailed.

While the above was probably a lighthearted experiment, a profound contribution to opening theory occurred in Spassky vs. Bronstein, Amsterdam, 1956: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 (the strong Sämisch Attack vs. the King's Indian Defense) 5...e5 6 d5 Na6 7 Be3 Nh5 8 Qd2 Qh4+ 9 g3 Nxc3! (an extraordinary sacrifice of the queen—10 Bf2 is not playable because of 10...Nxf1 11 Bxh4 Nxd2) 10 Qf2 Nxf1 11 Qxh4 Nxe3 12 Kf2 Nxc4.

Bronstein



Spassky

Although theoretically Black lacks the material equivalent of a queen, the ingenious mind of Bronstein perceived that the general rule is not valid in this situation. While that game ended unsuccessfully, the soundness of this sacrifice is now well established.



Bronstein was in the forefront of the new dynamic ideas that have eclipsed the classical dogmas. He pioneered the dynamic possibilities of the King's Indian Defense in the following game, which is already recognized as a milestone in the evolution of chess theory. It devastates some classical assumptions.

White: Ludek Pachman

Black: David Bronstein

Prague-Moscow Match, 1946

King's Indian Defense

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | d4 | Nf6 |
| 2 | c4 | d6 |
| 3 | Nc3 | e5 |

4	Nf3	Nbd7
5	g3	g6
6	Bg2	Bg7

Now we have the King's Indian, which was "already dying out" in 1929, according to Reti, presumably because Black was getting cramped positions. White had more pawns in the center and therefore, by classical rules, the advantage. The resurgence of this now-popular defense is due to such dynamic treatments as Bronstein's.

7	0-0	0-0
8	b3	

This move seems a natural way to develop the c1-bishop. It was adopted also in a sister game, Zita vs. Bronstein, in the same match, and refuted in much the same way. But it was impossible for Pachman (who was to become a leading theoretician) to foresee trouble. By classical standards, White has no weaknesses. Today, 8 e4, followed by h3 and Be3, is preferred.

8	...	Re8
9	e4	

Preventing ...e4, but too committal. Bronstein's next move would have earned the censure of Dr. Tarrasch—he gives up the center, and soon creates a backward d-pawn.

9	...	exd4!
10	Nxd4	Nc5
11	Re1	a5
12	Bb2	a4!

Black's ninth move created potent possibilities for the g7-bishop on the long diagonal; the discomfort of its opposite is now revealed. If 13 or 14 b4 (the latter is the lesser evil), then ...a3 followed by ...Ne6, with good chances for Black.

13	Rc1	c6
14	Ba1(?)	axb3
15	axb3	Qb6!
16	h3	Nfd7

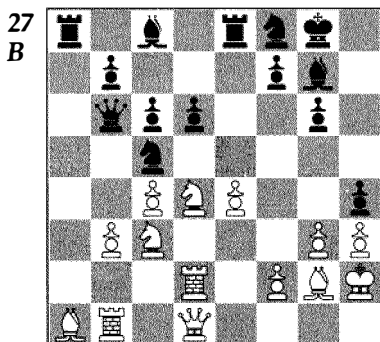
Suddenly the situation becomes clear. Black has tremendous pressure on the long diagonal, the open file, and the lines controlled by his queen. White's theoretical preponderance in the center is a mirage.

17	Rb1	Nf8
18	Kh2	h5

Preparing to challenge key squares on the kingside, with threats all over the board. The natural 19 f4 is now met by 19...h4 20 g4 Nce6, and White's structure begins to totter. Correct is 19 h4, but White decides on an incorrect maneuver, inviting a combination that he thought could be refuted.

19	Re2(?)	h4
20	Rd2?	

Bronstein



Pachman

Pressed on all fronts, White's position must give way. The dynamic energy of Black's game now explodes. (Note that

the natural 20...hxg3+? 21 fxc3 would vitiate the whole combination, as we shall see.)

20	...	Rxa1!
21	Rxa1	Bxd4
22	Rxd4	Nxb3
23	Rxd6	

White now hopes for 23...Nxa1 24 Nd5! Qxf2 25 Nf6+ Kh8 26 Nxe8, and the threat of 27 Qxa1+! saves the day.

But the gain of the backward pawn will give him no solace.

23	...	Qxf2!
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The point. If now 24 Qxb3 then ...hxg3+ 25 Kh1 Bxh3 26 Rg1 Bxg2+ 27 Rxg2 Qf1+ 28 Rg1 Qh3 mate. (If Black had exchanged his h-pawn on move twenty, all this would be impossible.) White can now keep the Exchange, but he loses too many pawns.

24	Ra2	Qxg3+
25	Kh1	Qxc3
26	Ra3	

Not 26 Rd3 Qc1.

26	...	Bxh3
27	Rxb3	Bxg2+
28	Kxg2	Qxc4
29	Rd4	Qe6
30	Rxb7	Ra8!

White's king is denuded. The rook will penetrate decisively on the third, second, or first rank.

31	Qe2	h3+
32	White resigns	

A revolutionary work, of the sort that causes edifices of outmoded thought to crumble.



Bronstein learned to temper his imaginative flair with the need for practical success. In the years 1948–1951 he rose to the combative heights, winning the right to face World Champion Botvinnik in a title match that happily brought together two opposing schools of chess thought. Leading by a point with only two games remaining in the match, Bronstein's sangfroid faltered in the twenty-third game, which he resigned in an endgame that still held out some hope. In the end, technique just barely prevailed over imagination, and a 12–12 tie left the title in Botvinnik's hands.*



A crucial encounter occurred in the last round of the candidates' event in 1950. In order to catch Boleslavsky, who led by a half-point, Bronstein needed a win at all cost, against Keres, the master of attacking play. Showing shrewd psychology, Bronstein sprang a new pawn sacrifice and placed his opponent on the defensive. The innovation was questionable, but the victory went on that occasion to the more resourceful fighter. Many would quibble, but the great Lasker would have approved.

White: David Bronstein

Black: Paul Keres

Budapest, 1950

Ruy Lopez

1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	a6
4	Ba4	Nf6

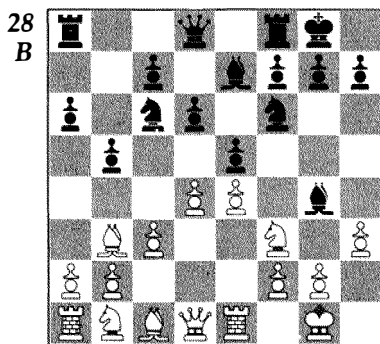
* Bronstein recently revealed that he sustained political pressures during his match against "Mr. Soviet Chess."

5	0-0	Be7
6	Re1	b5
7	Bb3	0-0
8	d4	

The first hint that something unusual is in store. If now 8...Nxd4? 9 Bxf7+! Rxf7 10 Nxe5 or 8...exd4 9 e5 Ne8 10 Bd5, White gets the advantage. But the routine line is 8 c3 d6 9 h3, to prevent the pin that Black now gets.

8	...	d6
9	c3	Bg4
10	h3!?	

Keres



Bronstein

Here is Bronstein's new move, which may have been an inspiration of the moment. Instead of the usual 10 Be3, he plans to give up a pawn for the two bishops and open lines—much as Keres likes to have. Bronstein forces his great opponent to accept an uncomfortable reversal of roles.

10	...	Bxf3
11	Qxf3	exd4
12	Qd1!	dxc3

13	Nxc3	Na5
14	Bc2	Re8
15	f4	b4
16	Nd5	Nxd5
17	Qxd5	c6
18	Qd3	g6
19	Kh1	Bf8
20	Rf1	Bg7

Black could simplify the battle with 20...d5 21 e5 Nc4 22 b3 Na3 23 Bxa3 bxa3, but then his extra pawn would hardly be significant.

21	Bd2	c5?
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Underestimating the danger of White's coming f5, which could be neutralized by 21...Bxb2 22 Rab1 Bg7 23 Bxb4 d5, with equal chances.

22	Ba4	Rf8
23	Rab1	Qb6
24	f5!	Bd4
25	Qg3	Nc4
26	Bh6	Bg7?

Black's king position is suddenly critical. More hope lay in giving up the Exchange with 26...Nxb2, with some chances for defense. Now White simply tightens an old familiar mating net.

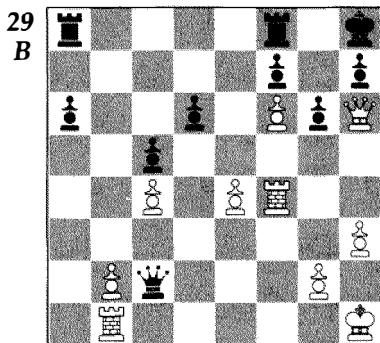
27	Bxg7	Kxg7
28	f6+	Kh8
29	Qg5	b3

A little diversion. Equally hopeless is 29...Qd8 30 Rf4 Rg8 31 Rh4 Qf8 32 Rh6, with Qh4 next.

30	axb3	Qb4
31	bxc4	Qxa4

- 32 Rf4 Qc2
 33 Qh6! Black resigns

Keres



Bronstein

Instead of 33...Qxb1+ 34 Kh2 Rg8 35 Qxh7+ Kxh7 36 Rh4 mate.

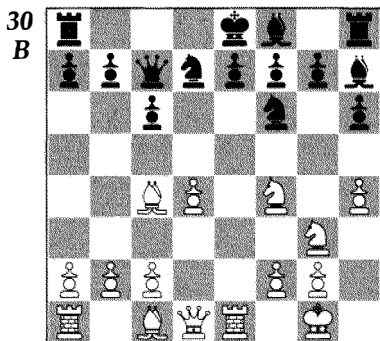
Thus Bronstein gained a tie for first, and after defeating Boleslavsky in a play-off match, won the right to challenge Botvinnik.



After becoming virtually "cochampion of the world" in 1951 at the age of twenty-seven, Bronstein somehow failed to reach again the very summit. The driving will-to-win, the powerful attacks that had marked his play became less evident. The inventive impulse continued, however, as is seen in the following position in Porreca vs. Bronstein, Belgrade, 1954.

The opening moves of a Caro-Kann Defense were 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6 6 h4 h6 7 Nh3 Bh7 8 Bc4 Nf6 9 Nf4 Nbd7 10 0-0 Qc7 11 Re1.

Bronstein



Porreca

How does Black proceed with his development? Castling would leave the f-pawn loose, while 11...e6 would allow the crushing 12 Bxe6. Bronstein solves the problem with a strikingly original move.*

11 ... Bg8!

Now Black can castle as he wishes, or play ...e6 without fear of sacrifice. Later in the game the bishop returns to h7 with normal play.

In later years Bronstein's play has shown a weakness for mere experimentation. The recent battles on the Olympus of chess have been waged without him. In retrospect, he has said of the fateful Botvinnik match, "Winning was not so important—but rather, it was important to show that his was not the only way to play chess."

The place of Bronstein in history is secure. He is one of the greatest creative players of all time.

* Later we unearthed a similar precursor: Treybal vs. Nimzovich, Semmering, 1926, with the pawn already on e6.

11

SMYSLOV: THE JOY OF DISCOVERY

Excessive subjectiveness . . . disturbs the logical development of a game of chess. □

—*Vasily Smyslov*

The chess of Botvinnik is rigorous intellectual struggle. Bronstein has the compulsion to create new ideas. Keres strives always for attack. While many a great player has sought to leave his unique imprint upon chess, indeed, even to shape chess to his own personality, with Smyslov all is serenity and balance, without forcing or eccentricity. Smyslov is the artist in harmony with his art, content to probe Caissa's secrets, wherever they may lead.

Born in Moscow in 1921, Vasily Smyslov grew up within the nourishing milieu of Soviet chess. His talent grew too, organically, without youthful flamboyance. Conscientiously he applied himself to his art. His career was one of gradual, steady growth, with no surfeit of first honors but much respectable achievement. Then, entering his thirties, as more and more secrets of chess unfolded themselves to him, he

rose to the heights, twice becoming challenger, and at last, in 1957, World Champion. Only a year later he lost the title back to Botvinnik, and thenceforth showed rather less power than before.

Smyslov has stated his philosophy clearly: A chess game is a work of art between minds which need to balance two sometimes disparate goals—to win, and to produce beauty. Mastery means “creative and scientific achievement.”



In his games Smyslov shows an antipathy to dogmatism, a practical willingness to mount a positional attack, to defend, to play a variety of systems, to explore freely and discover the possibilities of chess. One does not say, “Here is a typical Smyslov game,” but rather, “Here is a fine example of chess artistry.”

White: Vasily Smyslov

Black: Max Euwe

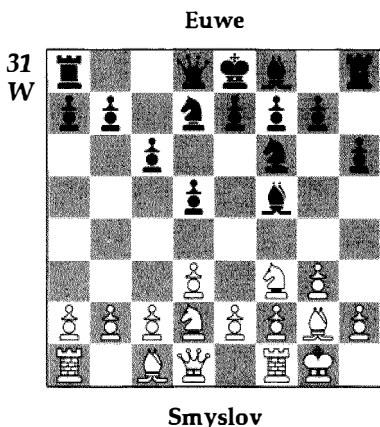
Zurich, 1953

King's Indian Attack

1	Nf3	Nf6
2	g3	d5
3	Bg2	Bf5
4	0-0	Nbd7

Against White's system, developed by the Hungarian grandmaster Gedeon Barcza, Black chooses an inadvisable order of moves, giving Smyslov the opportunity for an original pawn offer.

5	d3	c6
6	Nbd2	h6



7 e4!

Here it is. Smyslov evaluates the situation objectively and sees that he can give up a pawn for a sustained initiative. He is unlike Petrosian, who dislikes any risk or speculation, or Tal, whose sacrifices are often unsound. Smyslov is pragmatic, balanced.

7	...	dxe4
8	dxe4	Nxe4
9	Nd4	Nxd2

The alternative, 9...Nd6, could be answered with 10 Nc4.

10	Bxd2	Bh7
11	Bc3	Qc7

Already Black must be very careful. For example, 11...e6 12 Re1, with a decisive sacrifice in the offing (12...Qc7 13 Rxe6+! or 12...Nc5 13 Nxc6! or 12...Be7 13 Nxe6!). And on 11...e5 12 Re1 Be7? 13 Nxc6! bxc6 14 Bxc6 Rc8 15 Ba4! (not 15 Ba5 Rxc6!) gives White a winning attack. So Black hurries to castle. (Earlier, the sacrifice 11 Nxc6, recommended by Naj-

dorf and others, would be unclear: 11...bxc6 12 Bxc6 Bf5 13 Qf3 Rc8 14 Bc3 Rg8 15 Rad1 g6 etc.)

12	Qf3	e5
13	Rfe1	0-0-0
14	Nb3	f6
15	Ba5!	

For the pawn, Smyslov has only a slight lead in development and some pressure. He starts to probe the enemy's position for weaknesses, giving him no time to consolidate.

15	...	Nb6
16	c4	Rd3
17	Qh5	Qe7
18	Bf1	g6
19	Qe2	Rd7
20	Qe3	Kb8

Black would be glad to return the pawn in order to eliminate one of White's bishops. But White keeps up the pressure instead.

21	Rad1	Nc8?
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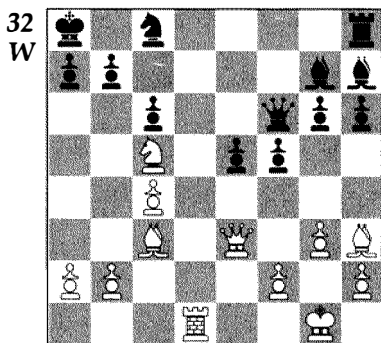
This was a good moment to develop and return the pawn via 21...Bg7 22 Nc5 Rxd1 23 Rxd1 Rd8 24 Rxd8+ Qxd8 25 Na4. But it seems that Euwe, too, wants to win.

22	Bh3	Rxd1
23	Rxd1	f5
24	Bb4	Qf6

An attempt to defend with 24...Qc7 fails to 25 Bc3 Bg7 26 Nc5 Rd8 27 Rxd8 Qxd8 28 Ne6 Qd1+ 29 Kg2 Bf6 30 Qxh6 Qh5 31 Qf8 (or 30...Qd7 31 Nf8), and Black's position falls apart.

25 Bc3 Bg7
26 Nc5 Ka8

Euwe



Smyslov

Also poor is 26...Nb6 27 Rd7! But now comes the elegant breakthrough. It comes in the sector of the king, but this is just in accord with the natural development of the attack—Smyslov is not a king hunter. Revolution climaxes evolution.

27 Nxb7! Kxb7
28 Rd7+ Ka8
29 Qc5

The decisive “quiet” move. There is now only one defense to 30 Bxe5. However, 29 Bg2, threatening 30 Rxc7, wins more quickly; for example, 29...Re8 30 Bxe5 Rxe5 31 Qxe5 Qxe5 32 Bxc6+ Kb8 33 Rb7+ Ka8 34 Rb6 mate (Najdorf).

29 ... Nb6
30 Rxc7 Qxc7
31 Bxe5 Qd7

Not 31...Qf8 32 Qxc6 mate. But now, after 32 Bxc6, White has regained all the sacrificed material, with a clear pawn

ahead. That, plus the two bishops, gives him an easy technical win. Black resigned on move sixty-eight.



Versatile Smyslov is also cool and tenacious in defense, ever alert to the chance of counterattack. His chief contribution to opening theory, the Smyslov Variation of the Grünfeld Defense, shows his idea of active counterplay: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Bg4 8 Be3 Nfd7!

Black is ready to strike back at the pawn center with pieces and to part with a bishop for a knight—very much in the style of Tchigorin.

In a late stage of his most impressive tournament, the candidates' event of 1953, Smyslov had to defend against Keres, one of the most dangerous attacking players, who needed to win at all cost. Here is that crucial game.

White: Paul Keres

Black: Vasily Smyslov

Zurich, 1953

Queen's Indian Defense

1	c4	Nf6
2	Nc3	e6
3	Nf3	c5
4	e3	Be7
5	b3	0-0
6	Bb2	b6
7	d4	cx d4
8	ex d4	d5
9	Bd3	Nc6
10	0-0	Bb7

By an unusual order of moves, a book position has been reached. The usual continuation is 11 Qe2, which allows

White to meet ...Nb4 with Bb1, retaining the bishop on an aggressive diagonal. Then there is the trap 11 Qe2 dxc4 12 bxc4 Nxd4?? 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 14 Nd5 Qc5 15 Bxf6 gxf6 16 Qg4+ Kh8 17 Qh4 f5 18 Nxe7.

11	Rc1	Rc8
12	Re1	Nb4
13	Bf1	Ne4

A judicious simplification.

14	a3	Nxc3
15	Rxc3	Nc6
16	Ne5	

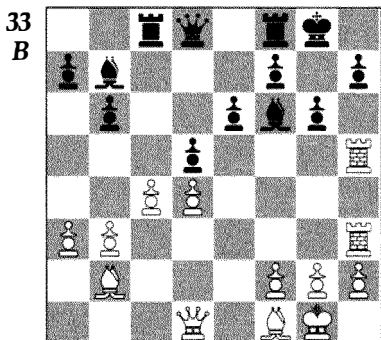
Keres commences a dangerous but unsound attack. Here he probably already intended the sacrifice of a rook.

16	...	Nxe5
17	Rxe5?!	

Correct but too drawish for his needs is 17 dxe5 dxc4, and the queens go. The die is now cast, because White's pawn center is weak.

17	...	Bf6
18	Rh5	g6
19	Rch3!?	

Smyslov



Keres

This critical juncture requires deep and complex calculation by both players. With the pressure of the ticking clock, the choice of correct moves in defense is always more difficult than for the attacker. Acceptance of the sacrifice is not wrong but would be fraught with many pitfalls. Omitting some of the many ramifications, best play would then be 19 ...gxf5 20 Qxf5 Re8 21 a4! Qd6! (necessary to prevent Ba3 and mate) 22 c5! Qf4 (again forced) 23 c6! Rxc6 (avoiding 23...Bxd4? 24 Qxf7+ Kf8 25 Ba3+ Bc5 26 Bxc5+ bxc5 27 cxb7 Rb8 28 Rf3 Qc7 29 Qh8+ Ke7 30 Rxf7+! Kd6 31 Qg7 and White will win) 24 Qxf7+ Kf8 25 Ba3+ Re7 26 Rg3 Ke8 27 Qg8+ Kd7 28 Rf3 Qxd4 29 Qb8 Bc8 30 Bxe7 Bxe7 31 Rxf7 "and Black's position is still not safe" (Clarke).

Principle says that the best answer to a flank attack is a counter in the center. To Keres's attempt to overwhelm his king, Smyslov calmly answers . . .

19 ... dxc4!
20 Rxf7

The rook cannot "hang" any longer, for if 20 bxc4? gxf5 21 Bd3 (21 Qxf5 is met now by ...Be4) 21...Rc5! 22 dxc5 Bxb2

23 Bxh7+ (or 23 Qxh5 Re8) 23...Kg7 24 Qxh5 Bc1! 25 Rg3+ Kf6 and the king escapes. Relatively best is 20 Rh6 (avoiding Black's next) cxb3 21 Qxb3 Qd5, but Black stands better.

20 ... c3!
21 Qc1

Not 21 Bxc3 Rxc3. After the text move, White hopes for 21...cxb2 22 Qh6 Qxd4 23 Rg7+ Bxg7 24 Qh7 mate, or 21...Bxg2?! 22 Bxg2 cxb2 23 Qh6 Rc1+ 24 Bf1 Rxf1+ 25 Kxf1 b1=Q+ 26 Kg2, and Black must be content with perpetual check with his extra queen.

21 ... Qxd4!
22 Qh6 Rfd8

Smyslov simply centralizes, while White's assault on the king, at its zenith, is shown to be a paper tiger. The rest is retribution.

23 Bc1 Bg7
24 Qg5 Qf6
25 Qg4 c2
26 Be2 Rd4
27 f4 Rd1+!
28 Bxd1 Qd4+
29 White resigns

Out of the dangerous morass of complications, Smyslov's vision proved clearer and forged the win.



It was inevitable that a personality without flamboyance, like Smyslov, must achieve the very highest honors before receiving his rightful acclaim. Though for many years overshadowed by the older Botvinnik, he proved himself able to

trade blows on quite equal terms in three long matches and dozens of games with "Mr. Soviet Chess." An example follows.

White: Mikhail Botvinnik

Black: Vasily Smyslov

World Championship Match, 1954

King's Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	g3	Bg7
4	Bg2	0-0
5	Nc3	d6
6	Nf3	Nbd7
7	0-0	e5
8	e4	c6
9	Be3	

This move became discredited as a result of Smyslov's innovation here on move 10. Standard is 9 h3.

9	...	Ng4
10	Bg5	Qb6!

A carefully calculated prelude to a prolonged episode of sharp play, for which Smyslov seems better prepared.

11	h3	exd4!
12	Na4	Qa6
13	hxg4	b5
14	Nxd4	

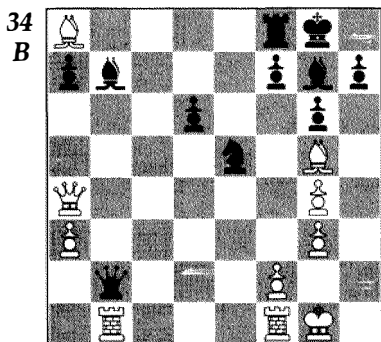
The best of several alternatives. For example, 14 Be7 Re8 15 Bxd6 bxa4 16 Nxd4 Ne5! with strong play. Black now regains his piece, and the next move sacrifices the Exchange for wide-open play.

14	...	bxa4
15	Nxc6!	Qxc6!
16	e5	Qxc4
17	Bxa8	Nxe5
18	Rc1	

White diverts the enemy queen from the kingside, where she could become dangerous after, for example, 18 Qxd6 Be6 19 Bg2 Qxg4 and ...Nf3+ to follow.

18	...	Qb4
19	a3	Qxb2
20	Qxa4	Bb7!
21	Rb1?	

Smyslov



Botvinnik

The pressure of finding correct moves in a series of complicated positions takes its toll. Whether Botvinnik made a simple oversight or a serious error of judgment here we do not know. The correct line, with a negligible disadvantage for White, lies in 21 Bxb7 Qxb7 22 Rc3! Nf3+ 23 Rxf3 Qxf3 24 Be7 and 25 Bxd6.

Smyslov now pawns his queen.

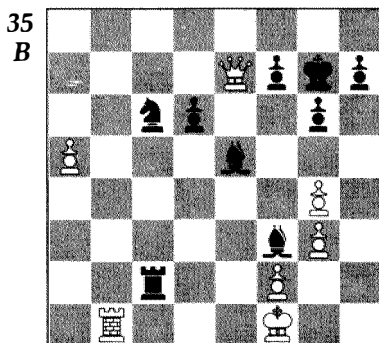
21	...	Nf3+
22	Kh1	Bxa8!
23	Rxb2	Nxg5+
24	Kh2	Nf3+
25	Kh3	Bxb2

The situation becomes very clear. Black's pieces, trained against a weakened king, completely outweigh the queen in this position. Black can win as he wishes—by direct attack or by utilizing the passed d-pawn.

26	Qxa7	Be4
27	a4	Kg7
28	Rd1	Be5
29	Qe7	Rc8
30	a5	Rc2
31	Kg2	Nd4+
32	Kf1	Bf3
33	Rb1	Nc6
34	White resigns	

For 34...Bd4 follows, with mayhem.

Smyslov



Botvinnik



The attainment of the very summit of the chess world in the contemporary era is an awesome achievement. It indicates a preeminence over not a handful of rivals as in times past, but over dozens of grandmaster players, each one a powerhouse of knowledge, ability, and ambition. Smyslov's tenure as world-title holder was limited to only a year, which seems characteristic of the time. Having achieved this utmost distinction in the world of chess, what incentive is there for unabated and tenacious effort when one is increasingly known as first among equals?

In later years Smyslov's play has become less acute, more pacific. A rumor has it that during a tournament in Havana he fell under the spell of the spirit of Capablanca, the great Cuban. Another says that he prefers his avocation, singing. More likely, Smyslov has become the serene and content chess artist, with no more worlds left to conquer.



In 1984 every chess veteran took heart when Smyslov, at the post-mature chessic age of sixty-two, found himself in the finals of the world candidates' matches. A peerless achievement, but evidently insufficient to merit inclusion on that year's Soviet Olympic team.

12

TAL: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MAGIC

Q. What binds a chess player to the chessboard?

A. . . . Just as one's imagination is stirred by a girl's smile, so is one's imagination stirred by the possibilities of chess. One recognizes the harmonious interplay, the beauty of combinations and thus is drawn to the chessboard.

Q. What was the secret of your training methods [in the victorious match against Botvinnik]?

A. My trainer told me a new joke before each game. □

—Mikhail Tal, 1961 (*quoted in Chess Life*)

A game has just ended, a game of sparkling combinations, unexpected sacrifices, witty and diabolical traps. The winner, a slight young man with striking black eyes, proceeds to analyze the victory with his opponent, surrounded by a throng of fascinated onlookers. In the opening phase he instantly reels off, from memory, a half-dozen previous master games from the same variation. In the

middle-game he shows alternative defenses for the opponent and the alternative combinations he had planned, some five and ten moves deep. The endgame is not reached. A grand-master suggests a better defense, one that might have rebuffed the attack. The young man agrees with a shrug. Winning the game was his concern, not scientific proofs. He leaves the playing hall and gaily responds to a noisy crowd of autograph-seeking admirers. The young man is Mikhail Tal.

He was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1936. It was not long before people knew that he would do extraordinary things. Fortunately for us, he grew up in a chess-oriented culture. On losing his first boyhood game, he felt the mysterious pull of chess, and determined "to meet it, and prove myself its equal."

Strangely enough, the early play of the man who would become the youngest official World Champion of all time did not stamp him immediately as one of Caissa's greatest talents. The reason is that he did not appear to have that natural feel for correct position play that characterized, say, Morphy and Capablanca. He lost his share of games through strategic errors. But in the rich Soviet chess environment one could easily learn technique. Tal on the other hand, had qualities that could never be learned: He possessed to a very high degree, combinative imagination, which he placed at the service of a superb fighting spirit and psychological insight.

Not long after he won the Soviet title at the age of twenty, people were saying, with ample reason, that "Misha" Tal had all the shrewd psychology of Lasker, the combinative genius of Alekhine, and the attacking spirit of Keres.

It was said of Lasker that he loved the risky situation, where both players hang on the precipice and victory goes to the more resourceful fighter, with sheer tactical genius as the deciding weapon; that he was a tricky psychologist who would make compromising moves in order to steer the bat-

tle in the direction of such crises. All this is true also of Tal, but much more so. Because in Lasker's day, overall strategic grasp and superior endgame technique went much further than they do today, and Lasker could gain most of his victories through these more routine methods. On the other hand, almost every game of the elemental early Tal is replete with strikingly original ideas and critical moments. That he himself sometimes slipped and lost is not surprising. But it soon became obvious that he could win more games in tournament competition than any other player in the world.

The readiness to accept the possibility of loss and cheerfully to go on to the next battle is not characteristic of modern masters. It is alien to the pure technician, who sees in losing either a shaking of the orderly principles on which his campaign is founded or the working of adverse and dark forces—Caissa the improvident refusing to nurture her loyal son.

But to Tal, chess was a joyful fight, a forum for bold and witty ideas. Caissa's affections are not to be monopolized. She delights most not in routine fidelity to her laws but in the gay and audacious warrior who risks much to gain her rewards.

The basis for Tal's approach was a wonderful sense of humor. To "Misha," chess was fun. Those privileged to know him knew that he was one of the most humorous of personalities. (He even wrote his university dissertation on Russian humorists.) Chess was, to him, the greatest but only one of life's many enjoyments. How then to become depressed at the mere loss of a chess game? The greatest boon of humor is to dispel one's own misfortunes. And Tal's humor spilled over into the very play of the game itself.

Many are the examples of his wit. One time, before a game with Najdorf, he casually went to the beach but carefully left his shoes outside the door of his hotel room so that the excitable Argentinian star would think he was busy preparing

an opening! Another time someone inquired of an American, in Tal's presence, how it was possible that young Bobby Fischer liked to read Tarzan books, since everyone knew that Bobby liked nothing that was unrelated to chess, and Tarzan did not play chess. Tal immediately retorted, his agile mind tripping ahead of his fluency in English, "Yes! Tarzan does not play chess—but Bobby knows—that if Tarzan did play chess—he would beat Cheetah!"

Let us proceed now to look at Tal's chessboard wit.



Keres has aptly characterized Tal's play as follows: "Tal enjoys excitement and hair-raising complications and in that kind of game he can find his way around better than anyone else."

The following typical Tal game occurred at a crucial time in his career. He seemed to be headed for an unsuccessful defense of his Soviet title, and even worse, toward failure to qualify for the World Championship Interzonal event. Faced with the formidable Geller, he had to win. The way he did it reveals why he quickly came to be recognized by the chess public as the world's most fascinating player.

White: Mikhail Tal

Black: Effim Geller

Twenty-fifth USSR Championship, Riga, 1958

Ruy Lopez

1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	a6
4	Ba4	Nf6
5	O-O	Be7
6	Re1	b5
7	Bb3	O-O

8	c3	d6
9	h3	Na5
10	Bc2	c5
11	d4	Bb7
12	b4	

To Black's novel eleventh move, then in vogue, White chooses a sharp response. More logical seems 12 d5, after which the bishop will have to lose two tempi by returning to c8. But such closed positions with protracted maneuvering are certainly not to Tal's taste.

12	...	cx b4
13	cx b4	Nc4
14	Nbd2	d5!

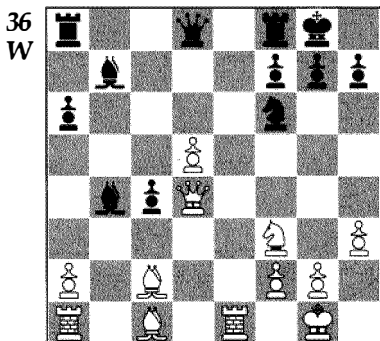
Geller, too, welcomes a sharp struggle. With this move the possibilities become too numerous for complete calculation. Both sides have open lines, the audience knows that two real fighters are ready for the fray . . . could we ask for more? (It will not be feasible to show all the alternative lines, but we shall get the flavor.) Now Tal disdains the quiet 15 Nxc4 bxc4 16 dxe5 Nxe4 17 a3, with a blockade on d4. The most dangerous possibility for Black in the coming phase will be a mating attack on h7 if he should move the knight away from f6.

15	exd5	exd4
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It is quite possible that Tal was already glimpsing something like the following: 15...Nxd5 16 Nxc4 bxc4 17 Nxe5 Bxb4 18 Rb1! Bxe1 19 Rxb7 Qc8 20 Rxf7! Rxf7 21 Bxh7+ Kh8? 22 Ng6+ Kxh7 23 Qh5+ Kg8 24 Qh8 mate. (This is just the sort of line he is apt to demonstrate with lightning rapidity during a postgame analysis.)

16	Nxc4	bxc4
17	Qxd4	Bxb4

Geller



Tal

The obvious move, and probably the best.

Now White's rook is attacked and 18 Rd1 suggests itself—after which capturing the d-pawn has its dangers for Black, but the chances remain balanced. But Tal is attracted always to the unbalanced, exceptional position where original and bold ideas hold sway. And usually such situations are brought about by sacrifices. So, in this position he chooses a move to which many of the leading players would devote little consideration.

18 Rb1!!?

Many players will give up a pawn speculatively, but for an offer of "hard" material most demand concrete compensation, such as an immediate decisive attack.

Not so with Tal, who once joked, "There are two kinds of sacrifices; correct ones, and mine." So even on this crucial occasion, against a staunch opponent, he gives up the Exchange merely for the sake of active piece play and a pawn on the sixth rank. Geller of course accepts.

18	...	Bxe1
19	Rxb7	Re8

Black could return material for an approximately equal endgame by playing 19...Qxd5 20 Qxd5 Nxd5 21 Nxe1 Rab8 (Tal), but Geller is fearless.

20 d6 Qc8
21 Bg5!!

Since Alekhine, only in the games of Tal do we repeatedly see one brilliant sacrifice after another. This one, however, should not be accepted; for example, 21...Qxb7 22 Bxf6 gxf6 (it is better to return material with 22...Qa7 23 d7 Qxd4 24 dxe8=Q+ Rxe8 25 Bxd4 Bb4 for an equal endgame) 23 Qh4! and White has a quickly winning attack despite having only a knight for two rooks (!), as Tal pointed out.

It is at such moments during Tal's games that an appeal usually has to be made to the audience for silence. Geller again finds the strongest answer—a counterattack.

21 ... Re2!
22 Rc7 Qe6
23 Nxe1 Rxe1+
24 Kh2 Rd8!

Tal seems to have found a foe who will not fall; for example, 24...Qe5+? 25 Qxe5 Rxe5 26 Bxf6 gxf6 27 d7 etc.

Now Black has blocked the d-pawn and is ready to answer 25 Re7 with 25...Qxe7 26 Bxh7+ Kh8! or 25 Bxh7+ Kxh7 26 Re7 Qxd6+ (not 26...Qxe7? 27 Qh4+) 27 Qxd6 Rxd6 28 Rxe1 Nd7.

25 Bxf6 gxf6??

A pity! Black deserved to draw via 25...Qxf6 26 Qxf6 gxf6 27 d7 Kg7 28 Bf5 Re5 29 Rc8 Rxf5 30 Rxd8 Rd5. Now he loses.

Such events are the basis for calling Tal a "sorcerer," "hypnotist," etc. (One grandmaster even made a point of wearing dark glasses when playing Tal, to avoid the evil eye!)

But a quite natural explanation is available. Tal's opponents are subjected to the attacks of an ingenious imagination. Normal moves are far between; constantly one must try to analyze long, dangerous variations in order to steer among manifold pitfalls. One never knows if one is facing a winning combination or a bluff. The clock races on, time pressure threatens.

Is it any wonder then that his opponents often err at critical moments? (There are even some who collapse against Tal simply because they are scared to death.)

26 Re7 Qxd6+

A move ago he had undoubtedly counted on 26...Qxe7, but he now sees 27 Qg4+—curtains. The rest is routine.

27	Qxd6	Rxd6
28	Rxe1	Rd2
29	Rc1	Rxf2
30	Be4	Rxa2
31	Rxc4	a5
32	Rc8+	Kg7
33	Rc7	Black resigns

Another pawn goes right away.



We do not know if Tal had tongue in cheek when he said, "A chess player is primarily an actor. He sits upon the stage wondering what move will most please the audience." But we can guess that he was gratified to receive for this game an unprecedented special prize as the most "interesting" played in the event. It shows off his unique talent with distinction.

White: Mikhail Tal

Black: Oscar Panno

Interzonal Tournament, Portoroz, 1958

Ruy Lopez

1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	a6
4	Ba4	Nf6
5	0-0	Be7
6	Re1	b5
7	Bb3	d6
8	c3	0-0
9	h3	Nd7
10	d4	Nb6
11	Be3	

The next year, against Olafsson, Tal would prefer 11 Nbd2 exd4 12 cxd4 d5 13 Bc2 Be6 14 e5, and Black is weak on the c-file. The defensive system has passed out of vogue.

White now has a positional threat of 12 dxe5 and 13 Bxb6, but Black plans to equalize by expanding on the queenside.

11	...	exd4
12	cx d4	Na5
13	Bc2	c5
14	e5	

Predictably, Tal wants a wide-open battle, and seeks to capitalize on the absence of the off-side knights from the defense of the king. Already there are pitfalls for Black; for example, 14...Nac4 15 exd6 Qxd6 16 Bg5! Bxg5 17 Nxc5 h6 18 Qh5 Qxd4? 19 Qxf7+ Rxf7 20 Re8+ Rf8 21 Bh7+ Kh8 22 Rxf8 mate. Panno now makes the best move, but takes so much time on it—an hour—that he sets the stage for future trouble with the clock.

14	...	dxe5
15	Nxe5	Nbc4
16	Qd3	

Naturally, Tal disdains 16 Qh5 g6 17 Nxg6 fxg6 18 Bxg6 hxg6 19 Qxg6+ Kh8 20 Qh6+, and White has no more than perpetual check.

If now 16...g6 17 Bh6, White has pressure. But, in fact, Black's position is quite all right.

16	...	f5
17	Bb3!	f4!

Good enough was 17...Bf6, but today the Argentinian grandmaster, known better as a deep strategist, rises to the occasion and trades blow for blow with his fierce opponent.

18	Bd2
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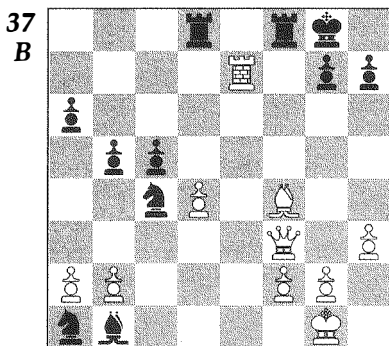
Ready to answer 18...Bf5 advantageously with 19 Bxa5 Qxa5 20 Qc3.

18	...	Nxb3
19	Nc6!	

Foreseeing the position four moves later, Tal, with his love of fantasy, probably would steer for it anyway, even if it were not the best practical chance, as here. Because after the normal 19 Qxb3 Be6, Black stands quite well. Tal therefore sacrifices a rook and two pieces for a queen and attacking chances. Black is forced to accept.

19	...	Nxa1
20	Nxd8	Bf5!
21	Qf3	Raxd8
22	Rxe7	Bxb1
23	Bxf4	

Panno



Tal

A weird position!

Botvinnik has said, "The player's greatest art consists in exploring the possibilities of bringing the game to a position in which the normal relative values cease to operate." And no machine could manufacture such positions as does Tal!

The normal values do not operate here because Black is threatened on g7 and his knights are more remotely placed than ever. Moreover, the queen is very dangerous when the opposing pieces and pawns are loose and scattered.

For example, the tempting 23...cxd4 fails to 24 b3 Bg6 (if 24...d3 25 Qg4) 25 bxc4 d3 26 Qg4 Rxf4 (better 26...d2 27 Rd7) 27 Qxf4 d2 28 Rxg7+! Kh8 (or 28...Kxg7 29 Qc7+) 29 Rd7! and White wins.

Panno continues his alert fight.

23	...	Rxd4
24	Qg4	Bg6
25	Qe6+	Bf7
26	Qf5!	Nc2!

After 26...Bg6? White can give up rook and bishop to get two rooks and two pawns: 27 Rxg7+ Kxg7 28 Bh6+ Kxh6 29 Qxf8+ Kg5 30 Qxc5+ Kh6 31 Qxd4.

27 b3 Bg6

Black is already in time pressure and here allows White to denude the king. Simpler is 27...Rd1+ 28 Kh2 Nd2, threatening perpetual check, with equality.

28 Rxg7+! Kxg7
29 Bh6+ Kxh6
30 Qxf8+ Kg5
31 bxc4 bxc4
32 g3!

With only the queen and pawns left, Tal still plots the enemy's destruction: f4+ followed by f5.

32 ... Be4
33 h4+ Kg4!

White could also get mated here!

34 Kh2

But now he threatens both 35 Qf4+ Kh5 36 Qg5 mate, and 35 f3+ Bxf3 36 Qc8+ Kh5 37 Qf5+ Kh6 38 Qg5 mate!

34 ... Bf5!
35 Qf6

Eschewing the gain of the bishop by 35 f3+ Kxf3 36 Qxf5+ Ke3 (37 Qxc2? Rd2+) because then Black's passed pawn promises him at least a draw. Who is winning this game?! All we can say is that Tal, as usual, is attacking.

35 ... h6
36 Qe5 Re4

Preventing mate in one, and still willing to give up the bishop to 37 f3+.

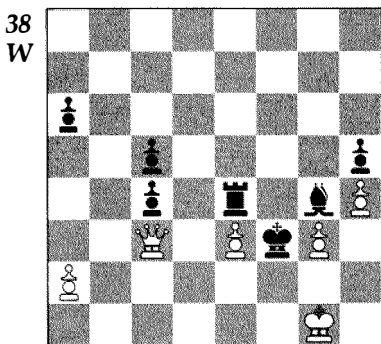
37 Qg7+ Kf3

38 Qc3+ Ne3

Easier is 38...Kxf2 39 Qxc2+ Kf3, and Black need have no fear. Now Black perhaps expects 39 fxe3 Rxe3 40 Qxc4 Re2+ 41 Kg1 Re1+ and draws. But the magician has some tricks left.

39 Kg1! Bg4
40 fxe3 h5!

Panno



Tal

Avoiding a last trap: 40...Rxe3? 41 Qf6+ Ke2 42 Qf1+ Kd2 42 Qf4! h5 44 Kf2.

41 Qe1 Rxe3?

Preventing mate in one, the obvious choice, but Panno's first bad move of the game, despite having already reached the time control! Probably he kept moving rapidly by sheer momentum, or had not kept track of the moves, as often happens. (Compare Geller's twenty-fifth move in the previous game!)

41...Re6 (interprotection) would draw easily, since White can make no progress whatever. But now he can get a passed pawn.

42	Qf1+	Ke4
43	Qxc4+	Kf3
44	Qf1+	Ke4
45	Qxa6	Kd4

But this time, by disdaining the obvious move, Panno may have given up his last chance to draw. Vukovic published a long analysis contending that Black can draw with 45... Rxg3+ 46 Kf2 Rf3+, since the White king cannot escape on the queenside, and after 47 Kg2 Kd4 the pawn can be stopped. However, there are too many ramifications for exact calculation.

46	Qd6+	Kc4
47	a4	Re1+
48	Kf2	Re2+
49	Kf1	Ra2
50	Qa6+	Kd4
51	a5	c4

Here, if 51...Be2+ 52 Qxe2 Rxe2 53 Kxe2 Kd5 54 g4! and the "useless" g-pawn wins.

52	Qb6+	Kd5
53	a6	Ra1+
54	Kf2	c3
55	a7	c2
56	Qb3+	Kd6
57	Qd3+	Black resigns

Because after 57...Ke6 58 Qxc2 Rxa7 59 Qe4+ the rook will fall to a check.

A great fighting game by both players reminiscent of the classic battle, Lasker vs. Napier, Cambridge Springs, 1904.

And so Tal went on to win the tournament and thus qualify for the candidates' event of 1959, together with Petrosian,

Fischer, and others. They left far behind a young Dane named Bent Larsen. . . .



While gifted with an excellent memory that enables him to hold at his fingertips almost the whole of recent opening practice, Tal has hardly been an opening innovator. He knows that the middle-game is the real arena where the vast majority of battles are decided by unaided skill. While naturally preferring double-edged lines, like the Benoni Defense, he is content to play any reasonable opening while getting ready for the "meat" of the game.

In this game, a gem which deserves more recognition, he quite willingly plays the Black side of a variation which, a few rounds earlier, had cost Polugayevsky a point in the face of White's sparkling attack, conceived by none other than Tal himself.

White: Alexander Nikitin

Black: Mikhail Tal

Twenty-sixth USSR Championship, Tbilisi, 1959

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6
6	Bg5	

This is the sharpest move against the Najdorf Variation. The usual answer is 6...e6 leading after 7 f4 Qb6 8 Qd2 Qxb2 9 Rb1 Qa3 10 e5 to some of the trickiest lines in opening practice since the heyday of the King's Gambit. But Black plays another move.

6	...	Nbd7
7	Bc4	Qa5
8	Qd2	e6
9	0-0	h6
10	Bh4	Be7
11	Rae1	

Tal prefers Rad1, which seems more logical. Now Black can use e5 as a strong point.

11	...	Ne5
12	Bb3	g5
13	Bg3	Bd7
14	f4	gxf4
15	Bxf4	Qc7
16	Nf3	

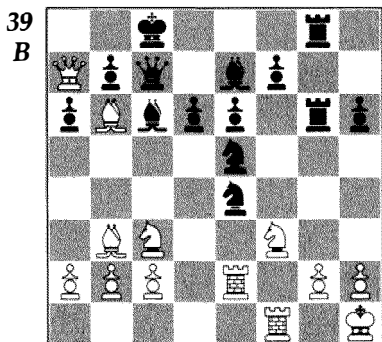
While grabbing the h-pawn would only play into Black's attacking hands, White here chooses from a variety of available plans an ineffectual series of moves that gives too much scope to the opponent.

16	...	0-0-0
17	Kh1	Rhg8
18	Be3	Bc6
19	Qd4	Rg6
20	Re2	Rdg8
21	Qa7?	

Having permitted Tal rapidly to develop powerful pressure on his g2, Nikitin now tries a counterattack, thinking his e-pawn is immune to capture. It requires a nine-move Tal combination to prove it an oversight! (Or perhaps Tal just looked at a few possibilities and instinctively felt that the attack against White's g2 must prevail.)

21	...	Nxe4!
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Tal



Nikitin

Inadequate is 22 Nxe5 dxe5 23 Rxf7 Nxc3 24 bxc3 Qd6! 25 Ba4?! Bxa4 26 Rd2 Qxd2! 27 Bxd2 Rxd2 28 Qa8+ (or 28 Rxe7 Rg1+ 29 Qxg1 Bc6+ 30 Qg2 Rxd2 and wins) 28...Kc7 29 Rxe7+ Kd6 and Black wins.

22 ... Nxc3!
23 Bxc7

White has no choice but to accept the queen, for if 23 Nxe5? Nxe2 24 Nxg6 Rxd2 25 Bxc7 Bxd2 mate.

23 ... Nxe2
24 Bb6 Rxd2

Tal has the material equivalent of a queen and, seemingly, an overwhelming attack. If 25 Nxe5, then ...Rg1 mate. But now the young Russian master fights back.

25 Ba4!

By undermining the defense of the b-pawn, White himself now threatens mate in four! But Tal has a necessary simplifying resource.

25	...	Rg1+!
26	Bxg1	Rxg1+
27	Qxg1	

Unless White returns the queen, the pieces will be all-powerful after 27 Rxg1 Bxf3+ 28 Rg2 Nf4 (compare Botvinnik vs. Smyslov, p. 123).

27	...	Bxf3+
28	Rxf3	Nxg1
29	Rc3+	Kd8
30	Kxg1	

It is not unlikely that Tal foresaw this very endgame position on move twenty-one. He has a slight material advantage in two (connected passed) pawns for the Exchange. He also controls enough terrain to minimize the activity of White's pieces. The bishop especially cannot come to grips with its opposite number, which lies on squares of a different color. So Black has fine winning chances.

30	...	d5
31	Rg3	Bg5
32	b4	

White makes matters worse, by weakening his pawns. Better is 32 c3 Nc4 33 Rg2, followed by returning the bishop to action.

32	...	b5
33	Bb3	f5
34	c3	Ke7
35	a4	f4
36	Rh3	Nc4
37	axb5	axb5
38	Kf2	Kd6
39	Ke2	

If 39 Bxc4 bxc4 40 Rh5 Bf6 41 Rxh6 Bxc3, Black's central-connected passed pawns march faster than White's foot soldiers on each flank.

39	...	e5
40	Bxc4	bxc4
41	Rh5	e4
42	h4	f3+
43	Kd1	Bf4
44	Rf5	White resigns

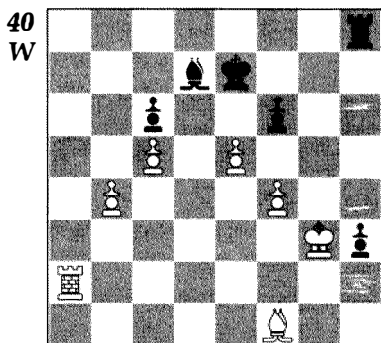
After sealing his move at adjournment, White convinced himself of the hopelessness of his plight; for example 44...Be5 45 Kc2 d4 46 cxd4 Bxd4 47 Rf8 c3 48 b5 e3 49 Rxf3 e2, and Black gets a new queen.

The two contrasting phases of this game give a very aesthetic impression, like the serene pastoral finish of a turbulent symphony.



The most striking ability that one first notices about Tal is the incredible rapidity with which he analyzes. Although he plays the most complicated and tricky games, he consumes less time than anyone else. Time pressure frequently happens in his games—to his opponents. Take this example of his analytical capacity.

Trifunovic



Tal

Palma, 1966

At this point it was time for Tal to seal his move. Although White is a pawn ahead, it is Black who has the advanced passed pawn, and White's queenside majority is blocked. Normal continuations seem not to work; for example, 45 Kh2 or 45 Rh2 fxe5 46 fxe5 Rh5, and Black draws.

In such a situation, after five hours of play an ordinary player would seal 45 exf6+ and retire to study the position for chances of winning. But Tal instead calculates a ten-move combination.

45 e6!!

An elegant sacrifice of a pawn, with an interference motif: Black's best chance is 45...Kxe6 (interfering with his bishop and thus losing his key pawn) 46 Bxh3+ f5 (forced) 47 Re2+ Kf6 48 Rd2. And White will win (Trifunovic) because both of Black's pawns obstruct his ("bad") bishop. Black instead plays the logical reply—but Tal has analyzed the situation with perfect accuracy.

45

Bxe6

46	Ra7+	Bd7
47	Kh2!	

Blocking Black's pawn, and threatening b5; for example, 47...Rh4 48 b5 Kd8 (or 48...cxb5 49 c6) 49 b6 Kc8 50 Ba6+ and wins. If Black's rook were not on the back rank he could save himself by 47...Kd8, which now fails to 48 Ra8+ Bc8 49 Ba6 Kc7 50 Bxc8 Rxc8 51 Rxc8+ Kxc8 52 Kxh3 Kd7 53 f5!, with an easily won king-and-pawn ending. Black tries another remedy.

47	...	Rh5
48	b5	Rxc5
49	Bxh3	

Every move now is forcing, played in precise order.

49	...	f5
50	bxc6	Rxc6
51	Bxf5	Rd6
52	Kg3	Ke8
53	Rxd7	Rxd7
54	Bxd7+	Kxd7
55	Kg4	Ke6
56	Kg5	Kf7
57	Kf5	Black resigns

Tal had calculated that after he cleared everything else off the board, his last remaining pawn would queen.



Above, an attempt was made to give a rational explanation of those uncanny moments when some of the greatest players have unexpectedly collapsed in critical positions brought about by the schemes of Tal. The next game, however, again defies a commonsense explanation.

Smyslov, the superb defensive master, plays with fire by repeatedly disdaining opportunities to simplify the game. He seems all too glad to reciprocate Tal's desire for a sharp, tense struggle. Then, in a crucial moment, he makes a surprising blunder and throws the game away.

The reason lies in Tal's indomitable will to win. Such a will can almost seem to be a tangible force bearing down against the opponent. But let us examine the game and see.

White: Mikhail Tal

Black: Vasily Smyslov

Candidates' Tournament, Bled, 1959

Caro-Kann Defense

1	e4	c6
2	d3	

Already the psychologist is at work, taking his opponent immediately out of the "book" in this tried-and-true defense.

2	...	d5
3	Nd2	e5

Somewhat dubious, enabling White to shift to a more open sort of game. Sound is 3...g6.

4	Ngf3	Nd7
5	d4!	

No real loss of time, because Black's knight on d7 will be seen to impede his development.

Nine of ten masters would have chosen 5 g3, but Tal is never beholden to rules. (In his game against Pachman, Bled, 1961, he did not touch a single piece in the first eight moves—1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 h4!? h6 5 g4 Bd7 6 h5!? c5 7 c3 e6 8 f4—and he won.)

The indicated reply is 5...exd4 6 exd5 cxd5 7 Nxd4.

Smyslov wants to avoid the isolated d-pawn, but concedes a big lead in development to White.

5	...	dxe4
6	Nxe4	exd4
7	Qxd4	Ngf6
8	Bg5	Be7
9	0-0-0	

Better is 9 Nd6+ Bxd6 10 Qxd6 Qe7+ 11 Qxe7+ Kxe7 12 0-0-0 with a superior endgame, but Tal prefers something more exciting. Is this bias a lack of objectivity? No—a warrior is entitled to use his own favorite weapons.

9	...	0-0
10	Nd6	Qa5

Simpler is 10...Nd5 11 Bxe7 Qxe7 12 Nxc8 Rfxc8 13 Bc4 N7b6, with only a minimal advantage for White. But now Black threatens both 11...Qxa2 and 11...Bxd6 12 Qxd6 Ne4. Tal meets the threats with a typically double-edged reply, and Smyslov is ready.

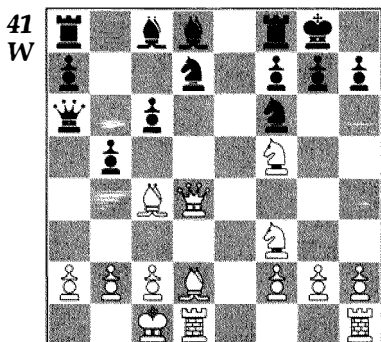
11	Bc4!?	b5!
12	Bd2!	

Not 12 Bb3? (to keep the a-pawn protected) ...c5 13 Qe3 Bxd6 14 Rxd6 c4, and Black wins a piece.

Now, instead of exchanging queens with 12...Qb6 or 12...Qa4 13 Nxc8 Raxc8 14 Bb3 Qxd4 15 Nxd4 Nc5, with an easy game, Smyslov maintains his threats.

12	...	Qa6!?
13	Nf5!	Bd8!

Smyslov



Tal

An important defensive move; for example, 13...Bc5? 14 Qh4 bxc4 15 Bc3! Qxa2 16 Rxd7 Bxd7 (or 16...Nxd7 17 Qh6!) 17 Nh6+ Kh8 18 Qxf6! gxf6 19 Bxf6 mate.

14 Qh4!? bxc4

15 Qg5!

Tal was determined to throw the queen into an attack on the enemy king. By sheer strength of will he has brought about this position, at the cost of a bishop.

The possibilities are too complex to calculate fully, even for Tal. On 15...Ne8 he has 16 Qxd8 Nef6 (not 16...Qxa2 17 Bc3 Nef6 18 Rxd7 Bxd7 19 Nh6+) 17 Qa5, with a better endgame in store. On 15...g6 16 Nh6+ Kg7 he has at least a draw with 17 Nf5+, and he may well win with 17 Bc3 Qxa2 18 Nh4!, according to Clarke's analysis. If 15...Nh5 16 Qxh5 Nf6 17 Qg5 Bxf5 18 Qxf5 Qxa2, Black has neutralized the attack and gained a pawn—but Tal has planned a finesse to deal with that, offering a piece again.

15 ... Nh5

16 Nh6+! Kh8

17 Qxh5 Qxa2!?

Blow for blow! Smyslov's move has been questioned by some commentators and seems to be a threat too easily met. The pawn shelter of the Black king must be kept intact, for if 17...Nf6? (or the immediate 17...gxh6) 18 Qc5 Nd7 19 Qd6 gxh6 20 Qxh6 Bf6 21 Bc3 Bxc3 22 Ng5! Bxb2+ 23 Kb1 and mates.

Soltis has refuted 17...Bf6 with 18 Bc3! Bxc3 19 Ng5 g6 20 Nhxf7+ Rxf7 21 Nxf7+ Kg7 22 Qf3 Bf6 23 Nd6. So Black is forced to accept a pawn-down ending with 18...Qb5 19 Nxf7+. Thus Smyslov's choice of 17...Qxa2 is fully vindicated.

18 Bc3 Nf6?*

Again a mighty opponent slips on the precipice to which Tal has led him! The correct defense clearly is 18...Bf6 19 Nxf7+ (better than 19 Ng5 Bxg5+ 20 Qxg5 f6 21 Qh5 Ne5!) 19...Kg8 20 N7g5 h6 (not 20...Bxg5+ 21 Qxg5!) 21 Ne6 Bxc3 22 bxc3 Rf6 and with both kings insecure, the position is unclear. White in this line could even go seriously astray, with 20 N3g5 Bxg5+ 21 Nxg5! Nf6! 22 Bxf6 Bf5! 23 Bc3 (or 23 Be7 c3!) 23...Qa4, and it is Black who has a powerful attack.

But Smyslov was somehow bound to make this error, faced with Tal's ferocious will to win.

19 Qxf7!

What Smyslov overlooked. The queen is now immune because of 20 Rxd8+ and mates, while if 19...Rg8 20 Qxg8+ Nxg8 21 Nf7 mate. So Black is forced to suffer decisive material loss.

19 ... Qa1+
20 Kd2 Rxf7

* Karpov later quoted an analysis by Nikonov showing Black emerging ahead after 18...Bc7! 19 g3 Nf6 20 Qh4 Bg4!, for example, 21 Nxg4 Ne4. White's fourteenth must now be considered dubious, and Black's seventeenth impeccable. Tal, of course, would hardly care.

21	Nxf7+	Kg8
22	Rxa1	Kxf7
23	Ne5+	Ke6
24	Nxc6	Ne4+
25	Ke3	Bb6+
26	Bd4	Black resigns

Tal's favorite game of the tournament.

This was the implacable play of a man who already sensed his destiny. He went on to win this event too and thus bring within reach Caissa's highest honor.



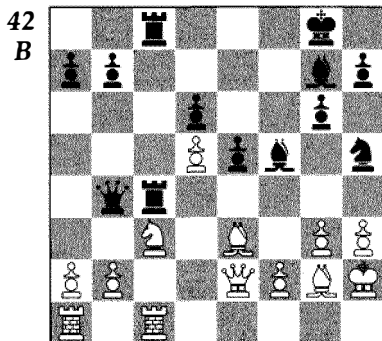
And so in 1960 it came to pass that Mikhail Tal faced Mikhail Botvinnik for the world title.

The expert prognosticators took stock. On the one hand, there was the mature Botvinnik, the superb technician whose knowledge of chess was unequaled, exemplar of three generations of Soviet players; on the other, the twenty-three-year-old Tal, the player of supreme brilliance in all the history of chess, called by Averbakh the apostle of a new psychological-combinative style, who had with magical ease swept aside every other aspirant.

The traditionalists said that Tal's brilliancies were incorrect, they did not stand the test of objective analysis; that he lacked strategic depth and endgame technique. Botvinnik, the great scientific thinker, would rebuff this brash youth.

The essence of that match was captured in one crystal moment, as early as the sixth game.

Tal



Botvinnik

White: Mikhail Botvinnik

Black: Mikhail Tal

World Championship Match, Moscow, 1960

Position before Black's Twenty-first move

Tal is already leading the match by one point. Having built up a good position with modest pressure on the queenside there is certainly no reason for him in this situation to take big risks. But he once said, "The chess fans, the spectators and the readers are only happy when the grandmaster risks, rather than just pushing wood." And so even on this Olympian platform he is not unconscious of a crammed theater and the telegraph keys carrying his every move to Riga, Kiev, Leningrad. . . .

21 ... Nf4!?

Rather than retreat the knight in answer to the threat of 22 g4, Tal surrenders it for a pawn and an open line for his g7-bishop. Can such a sacrifice succeed against the "iron logician"?

22 gxf4 exf4
23 Bd2

Not 23 Bxa7 Qa5 and the favorable regain of the piece.

But the important alternative is 23 a3 Qb3 24 Bxa7, to which the analysts have devoted much time. Tal's intention then was to play 24...Be5!, and he gives the following variations:

(a) 25 Kg1? b6 26 Qd1 Qxb2 27 Ra2 Rxc3! and Black wins.

(b) 25 f3 b6 26 Qd1 Qxb2 27 Ra2 Rxc3! 28 Rxb2 Rxc1 29 Qd2 Bxb2 30 Qxb2 R1c2 31 Qd4 Re8 32 Qxf4 Ree2 33 Qg3 Rxc2+, with a drawn ending.

(c) 25 Bf3 b6 (Black here can achieve approximate equality with 25...Ra8! 26 Qd1! Qxd1 27 Nxd1 Rxc1 28 Rxc1 Rxa7 29 Rc6 Bd4 30 Kg2 b5—analysis by Shamkovich in 1971) 26 Qd1 Qxb2 27 Ra2 Rxc3 28 Rxb2 Rxc1 29 Qe2 (not 29 Qd2 Be4!) 29...R8c3, and the sharp fight continues despite the fact that Black at the moment has only a rook for a queen! Baturinsky continues this analysis with 30 Bxb6 (or else 30 Rd2 Rb3 31 Kg2 Rc7 32 Bb8 Rc8 and Black should not lose—Konstantinopolsky) 30...Rxf3 31 Qxf3 Bxb2 32 Kg2 Be5 33 Ba5! Rc5 34 Qb3 “and Black does not entirely easily obtain a draw.”

With what abandon does Tal plunge into labyrinths of danger!

23 ... Qxb2(?)

The wrong follow-up of his sacrifice! Correct is 23...Be5 24 Bf3 (24 f3 Qxb2 gives Black more options) 24...Qxb2 25 Nd1 (a draw could result from 25 Rab1 Bxb1 26 Rxb1 Qc2 27 Rc1 Qb2) 25...Qxa1 and Black has adequate compensation for the piece.*

* Novotelnov suggested 25...Qa3 (1981).

24 Rab1!

A strong return offer of the Exchange. Now Black is in trouble, for if 24...Bxb1 25 Rxb1 Qc2? 26 Be4! Rxe4 (or 26...f3 27 Qxc4!) 27 Qxe4 Qxd2 28 Qe6+ White wins a rook. So Tal opens the way to obstruct the e-file via ...Be5+.

24 ... f3!

25 Rxb2?

A vital error. The crisis resolves in the by now familiar way—the “conjurer” triumphs again!

By playing 25 Bxf3, Botvinnik could have obtained the better game, with the continuation suggested by Flohr: 25... Bxb1 26 Rxb1 Qc2 27 Be4! Rxe4 28 Nxe4 Be5+ (or 28...Qxb1 29 Nxd6 Rf8 30 Qe6+ Kh8 31 Nf7+ Rxf7 32 Qxf7) 29 Kg2 Qxb1 30 Nxd6! Bxd6 31 Qe6+ Kg7 32 Qd7+ and White should win.

25 ... fxe2

26 Rb3 Rd4!

The point. The advanced pawn ensures the recovery of the piece, for if 27 Be3 Rxc3! 28 Rbxc3 Rd1.

27 Be1 Be5+

28 Kg1 Bf4(?)

Missing the quicker win with 28...Rxc3! 29 Rbxc3 Rd1 30 Rc4 Bb2. But everything is still secure, because if now 29 Ra1, then 29...Rxc3 followed by 30...Rd1, finis.

29 Nxe2 Rxc1

30 Nxd4 Rxe1+

31 Bf1 Be4

Protecting the b-pawn indirectly, via the threat of ...Bd3.

32	Ne2	Be5
33	f4	Bf6
34	Rxb7	Bxd5

And now 35 Rxa7 is ruled out by 35...Rxe2 36 Bxe2 Bd4+. So, with a pawn ahead and the better position, Black won easily in another twelve moves.



Tal went on to win the match convincingly. He later admitted to having used psychology, sometimes making bad moves, which made Botvinnik lose time.

The critique of the “experts” was correct as far as it went, but their prediction was wrong. Once again they had forgotten that chess is a human fight, an intellectual struggle not against any ideal of perfection—that is attained only in a few games of the best players—but against a flesh-and-blood opponent, a man with emotions, prejudices, blind spots. And so the worshippers of technique were confounded by the “merry magician.”

Some years later, Botvinnik attributed this result solely to Tal’s “computer-like” analytical ability, quite ignoring all the human factors. In the return match of 1961, he said he was able to reverse the results by getting Tal into closed positions with restricted piece activity.

After losing his world crown, a notable change and decline occurred in Tal’s play, which became more conventional. He no longer cared for the strain of continual tension. The brilliant ideas were no longer a daily routine, though he still drew the most affectionate audiences in the chess world.

He was now fighting his toughest battle, with the most relentless of opponents: ill health. But he still played chess like one who knows that checkmate is far off. In 1979 he tied for

first with Karpov in the star-studded Montreal International. In 1988 at St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, he miraculously won the World Blitz Championship.

Cumulative ailments, some self-inflicted, brought Tal's demise in 1992 in Moscow, at age fifty-five. One can imagine him seated at a celestial chessboard, mirthfully regaling the heavenly host, indulging all his vices with impunity while playing blitz games with the Almighty. And winning.

13

PETROSIAN: THE AGE OF THE ANTI-HERO

They say my games should be more “interesting.” I could be more “interesting”—and also lose. □

—*Tigran Petrosian*

At an airport in South America, a shy traveler alights. To his dismay, a noisy crowd hoists him to its shoulders, singing an Armenian song. The embarrassed recipient of this adulation wishes he were somewhere else. He is Tigran Petrosian, grandmaster of chess. In spite of himself, he is destined to become champion of the world.

In other days, great chess players easily surrounded themselves with mystery and legend that gave rise to heroic cults. The penniless Steinitz told Epstein, one of the wealthiest men in the world, “In chess, I am Epstein, you are Steinitz.” Capablanca declined to appear with the most famous actress of the time, saying, “Why should I give *her* publicity?” Alekhine once told a border policeman, “I am Alekhine, chess champion of the world. I need no passport.”

Imagine the trepidation of lesser mortals who sat down to play against such heroes, one called "invincible" or "the chess machine," another "the greatest attacking player of all time," and so on.

But in our day, the entire world has been transformed by technological revolution. In our own homes, through electronic miracles, presidents and kings enter and speak to us. We even take part in voyages to the moon, which is no longer alive for poets and lovers but a piece of dead rock for scientists to analyze.

Yes, it would seem that Reason has vanquished Romance. Even the brave astronaut whom we accompany, vicariously, to the heavens, we soon find to be a quite ordinary human being like ourselves. The only heroes left, it seems, are dead ones.

In chess, this trend of the contemporary world is well typified by Petrosian. In a field given to superlatives, he merits this one: the most modest World Champion of all time.

Unlike figures of the romantic past, who thrived on mystery, this champion was quite willing to reveal his thoughts to us. It was he, upon sitting down to challenge Botvinnik in 1963, who felt trepidation. He felt he was face-to-face with a national institution. In that first match game, he played like a "bad child." He didn't expect to be champion. It seems that he almost hoped to be eliminated earlier, so that he could write a book. Yet twenty-one games later he received the world crown. It was the triumph of an anti-hero.

It is no surprise perhaps that his origins were humble. He was born of Armenian parents in 1929, in Tbilisi, USSR. He was orphaned during the war and had to sweep streets in order to live. While chess is for many great players a means of defining one's identity, chess was at first for Petrosian a way out of misery. He used his food money to buy a chess book, which he kept under his pillow at night. Thus started the gradual, unspectacular rise to the top of a subtle and unique chess talent.

Petrosian's early play did not attract much attention. The flamboyant brilliancy of youth, displayed by many of the greats, was not to be found in his games. The open battle of cut-and-thrust was not for him. He was most influenced by the heritage of two great strategists—Capablanca, who represented pure, streamlined classicism, and Nimzovich, the creator of an ornate, Hypermodern system. From one of the latter's many little motifs, "prophylaxis," Petrosian took the germ of what was to become his own major contribution to the march of chess ideas—Prevention.

The philosophy developed organically through his own games. From the start, he was more preoccupied with the opponent's possibilities than with those of his own pieces. He seldom attacked, and many of his games seemed to end in draws almost without any effort to win. But it soon became known that he was very hard to beat. Heroic first prizes were rare for him, and so were bad results.

Petrosian deployed his forces not according to any dogma but flexibly, ready to meet any threat. Drawn-out piece maneuvers, impenetrable to the spectator, appear in his play. He hated to take risks. He seemed to be doing nothing, often repeating moves (implying willingness to split the point). He appeared at times to neglect good opportunities for winning.

The opponent first found all his aggressive intentions foiled, then was lulled into a feeling of complacency. He may have been offered a draw, especially if he retained attacking chances. But if he had made even the slightest weakness in his position, Petrosian's adversary had to be prepared to spend hours of often dull defending, lest it be converted into a loss. (One grandmaster opponent, saddled with a weak pawn, resigned long before a decision was in sight, saying he was tired of the "cat-and-mouse" game.)

Essentially, Petrosian's philosophy of Prevention was a negative one. Its tendency was defensive, but so deep and

subtle was Petrosian's strategy that he usually had no need to defend—the enemy's aggressive possibilities were anticipated, foreseen, and aborted long in advance of an attack. Once he felt completely secure and the opponent was suitably in the dark as to the real intentions of his long maneuvers, Petrosian began to gently probe the enemy position. Some have said that "Tiger" Petrosian waited for an avenue of entry, ready to spring and strike, or that he preferred, like a python, slowly to squeeze his victims to death. But the wittiest metaphor was proffered by Spassky: "Petrosian reminds me of a hedgehog. Just when you think you have caught him, he puts out his quills."



Let us now look at a typical and relatively lucid example of Petrosian's play. Characteristically, he chooses a rather closed opening system. He commits himself to no fixed plan, awaiting the opponent's intentions. Averbakh, restrained from real action, gradually loses the initiative and then falls on the defensive. Petrosian slowly tightens the noose. The opponent, faced with the grim prospect of a long and arduous defense, makes an outright error and collapses.

We are fortunate for this game to be able to refer to the winner's own revealing comments, which explain his thinking. The game helped him to become Soviet champion, on his eighth try.

White: Yuri Averbakh

Black: Tigran Petrosian

Twenty-sixth USSR Championship, Tbilisi, 1959

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6

3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6
6	Be2	e5

The Najdorf Variation, a Petrosian favorite. The aim is to restrain White's piece activity while waiting for the chance of a queenside expansion. The backward d-pawn and the weakness created on d5 are not easy for White to exploit.

7	Nb3	Be7
8	0-0	0-0
9	Bg5	Be6
10	Bxf6	Bxf6
11	Nd5	

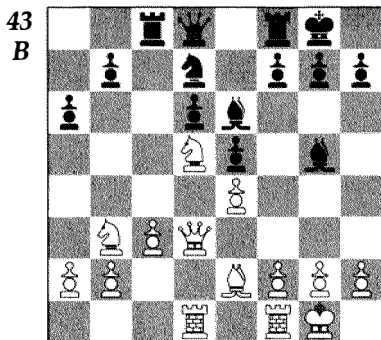
The exchange of pieces has increased White's control of the weak square, which he proceeds directly to occupy. Significantly, Petrosian calls this move "too direct"; more subtle, he says, would be 11 Qd3, forcing Black's knight to go to c6, a "less elastic" post.

11	...	Nd7
12	Qd3	Rc8
13	c3	Bg5!

Typically limiting White's options, deterring Nxf6+ or f4.

14	Rad1	
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Petrosian



Averbakh

14

Kh8

“A waiting move, which offers White the right of defining his next plan of play.” Quintessential Petrosian! If we did not know the identity of the Black player, we could now guess.

There is nothing wrong with White’s position. But, seeing no way to improve it, he now starts to lose the thread and go backward.

15	Bf3	g6
16	Ne3(?)	Rc6
17	Rfe1	Nf6
18	Qe2	b5
19	Ra1	Qb6
20	Nd2	a5
21	Ndf1	Rfc8

White’s passive play has permitted Black to make substantial progress toward the pawn break on b4. Now 22 Rec1 suggests itself, in order to answer ...b4 with c4. But instead, White allows his a-pawn to be artificially isolated.

22 a3 b4

23	cx b4	ax b4
24	a4	Qa7
25	Red1	Ra6
26	Rd3	b3!

Preventing White from consolidating with b3. The alternative, 26...Bd7, is met not by 27 b3? Bb5 but by 27 Rad1 Bxa4 28 Rxd6!

27	a5	Rcc6
28	Qd1	Qc7

Black wants to win the a-pawn, not just exchange it for the d-pawn. In order to retain material equality Averbakh now closes the d-file, thus covering up Black's only small weakness and saddling himself with two isolated pawns.

29	Nd5	Bxd5
30	exd5	Rc5
31	Rxb3	Raxa5

Stronger is 31...e4 32 Be2 Raxa5 33 Rxa5 Rxa5 34 Rb5 Rxb5 35 Bxb5 Qc5 36 Bc6 e3! But Petrosian was never in a hurry, nor was he a perfectionist. Always pragmatic, he was quite content in the knowledge that the opponent had permanent weaknesses.

32	Rxa5	Rxa5
33	Rc3	Qb6
34	Rb3	Qa7

Usually Petrosian liked to confuse the opponent by repeating moves. Typical would be 34...Qc7 35 Rc3 Qb6 36 Rb3 Qa7 (twofold repetition only). But here Averbakh was short of time.

35	Rb4	Kg7
36	h4	Bh6

37 b3?

A serious slip, shortening the game. After 37 g3, a long struggle would be in sight.

37	...	Ra2
38	Qe1	Qa5

The threat of 39 ...Bd2 is decisive.

39	Qb1	Ra1
40	Rb5	

Or 40 Ra4 Qxa4.

40	...	Qc3
41	White resigns	

The queen is suddenly trapped.



One should not think that Petrosian always won in the same way. Even one who does not play in the primary interest of art can play a beautiful game. Here is Petrosian's favorite effort. The highly original maneuver of the rook, which makes one-quarter of the moves of the game, shows real artistry.

White: Tigran Petrosian

Black: Mark Taimanov

Twenty-second USSR Championship, Moscow, 1955

Queen's Gambit Declined (Semi-Slav Defense)

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	d5
4	Nc3	c6
5	e3	Nbd7

6	Bd3	Bb4
7	0-0	0-0
8	Qc2	Bd6(?)

Inconsistent. The idea of Black's 6...Bb4 is to deter b3, which fortifies White's center. Better is 8...dxc4 9 Bxc4 Bd6, followed by ...e5.

9	b3	dxc4
10	bxc4	e5
11	Bb2	Re8(?)

Black's position is already uncomfortable, but 11...exd4 gives more prospects of defense.

12	Ne4!	Nxe4
13	Bxe4	h6
14	Rad1	exd4

Hoping to gain a respite via 15 Rxd4 Nf6 (16 c5? Nxe4). Instead 14...Qe7 would be answered strongly by 15 Rfe1.

15	Bh7+	Kh8
16	Rxd4	Bc5

Here is the point. Now 16...Nf6 is answered by 17 c5! Nxe4 18 Rxd6 Qe7 19 Rxe6. Alternatively 16...Qe7 runs into 17 Re4 Qf8 18 Rh4 Ne5 19 Ng5!, with a winning attack, for example, 19...f5 20 Bg6! Nxe6 21 Rxe6+ Kg8 22 Rxe6.

17	Rf4!	Qe7
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The defense is difficult. One possibility is 17...Rf8 18 Rd1 Be7 (preventing Rh4) 19 Ne5 Qe8 20 Rxd7! Bxd7 21 Rxf7!, and Black must accept a material deficit with 21...Qxf7, for if 21...Rxf7, then 22 Ng6+ Kxh7 23 Nf8+ Kg8 24 Qh7+ Kxf8 25 Qh8 mate.

18	Re4	Qf8
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Or 18...Qd8 19 Rh4 Nf6 20 Rd1 Qe7 21 Ne5! Be6 (21...Nxh7? 22 Rxh6! gxh6 23 Nxf7+ Kg8 24 Qg6+ and mates) 22 Rxh6!! gxh6 23 Nd7! Bxd7 24 Rxd7! and wins material, for if 24...Qe6, then 25 Bf5 gains the queen.

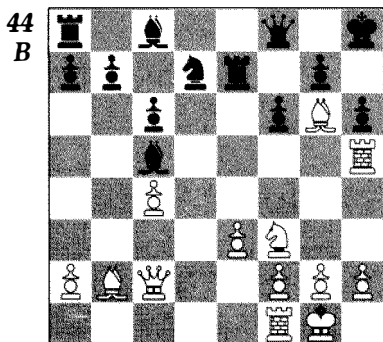
Petrosian can see deeply into tactical complexities, although usually for the purpose of avoiding them, as a ship's navigator steers away from a storm.

19 Rh4 f6

The threat of 20 Rxh6 necessitates this move, causing an ugly hole on g6. White need only bring the knight to bear on that square (first preventing...g5), in order to end all resistance.

20 Bg6 Re7
21 Rh5!

Taimanov



Petrosian

The rook reaches the end of its unique step-wise journey. The opponent's helplessness with almost all the pieces remaining on the board is reminiscent of the great zugzwang play of Nimzovich.

21	...	Bd6
22	Rd1	Be5
23	Ba3	c5
24	Nh4	Black resigns

There are too many Black pieces ready to be forked at g6. 24...Qd8 is met by 25 Bxc5, while 24...Qg8 runs into 25 Bh7!, followed by 26 Ng6+ and 27 Nxe7+

Petrosian, who called his games "old friends," said of this one: "I'll never forget the joy derived from the drawn-out maneuvers of my rook. . . . I believe an artist has the same feeling when he sees clearly that his idea has been realized on canvas."



Petrosian was an expert in the possibilities of closed positions. Routinely, he directed his play first at limiting the opponent's chances. Only after minimizing them did he undertake aggressive actions. In the following game we see his deep strategy.

White: Tigran Petrosian

Black: Lothar Schmid

Yerevan, 1965

King's Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	c5

This "Benoni" move cedes an immediate advantage in space to White. That is very much to the taste of Petrosian.

3	d5	d6
4	Nc3	g6
5	e4	Bg7
6	Bg5	

A favorite move of Petrosian's. (In a different sequence, it is called the Petrosian Variation.) The bishop doesn't do much, but it usually provokes Black to weakening pawn advances.

6	...	h6
7	Bf4	Qa5
8	Bd2	

Quite often Petrosian moved the same piece several times in the opening. In closed games, time is not of the essence. Now Black makes an unwise decision, blocking his bishop's diagonal and forfeiting the chance for freeing his game via ...e6.

In the next several moves, all of Black's chances of activity, particularly ...f5, are prevented.

8	...	e5(?)
9	Bd3	Nh5
10	Nge2	Nd7
11	g3	Nhf6
12	h4	h5

Black would like to ease his situation by exchanging bishops on h6. That solace is denied him.

13	Qc1	Ng8
14	Nd1!	Qd8
15	Qc2	Bh6
16	Ne3	Qf6
17	Rf1	Nb6
18	f3	

The slow buildup. The pawn will go to f4 only when the pieces are optimally placed.

18	...	Bh3
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19	Rf2	0-0-0
20	0-0-0	Kb8
21	Rh1	Bc8
22	Kb1	Ne7
23	f4	

Opening the first attacking front. Black can only await developments.

23	...	Nd7
24	Bc3	Qg7
25	a3!	

Preparing the second, on the other flank. Neither front alone might suffice for victory, but the need to guard both wings strains the defense.

25	...	f6
26	b4	Rdf8
27	Nc1	g5

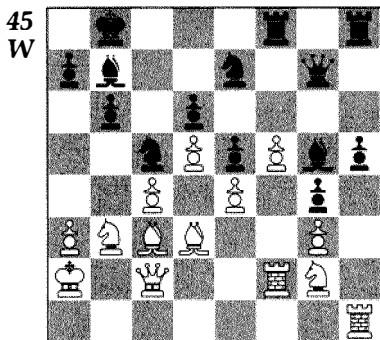
Dubious, since it gives White a protected passed f-pawn while making Black's h-pawn backward. But few players like to sit back passively while the attacker calls the tune, working the chances on both sides of the board. So the German grandmaster strives for some activity.

28	hxg5	fxg5
29	f5	g4
30	Ng2	Bg5
31	Nb3	b6
32	Ka2	Bb7?

Underestimating a possibility of White's. Necessary was 32...Bf6.

33	bxc5	Nxc5
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Schmid



Petrosian

This leaves the e-pawn critically underdefended, but 33...bxc5 34 Na5 also gives little hope, in the long run.

Petrosian normally shuns tactical skirmishes because they distract from the smooth flow of his deep strategy and introduce the dangerous element of chance. This policy conforms to the undercurrent of prevention that dominates his games. But when precise calculation leads to a clear result, he shows that his usual avoidance of combinational play is from no lack of ability.

Now his strategic play leads to a precisely calculated, tactical climax.

34	Nxc5	bxc5
35	Nf4!	Bxf4
36	gxf4	g3
37	Rg2	

Petrosian has calculated deeply and sees that he will conquer the vital e5-square before the opponent's connected passed pawns can become dangerous. If now 37...h4 38 fxe5 h3 39 exd6! hxg2 40 Rg1!, White wins easily.

37	...	Nc8
38	fxe5	dxe5
39	Qb2	Re8
40	f6!	

The passed pawn which Black neglected to blockade on move thirty-two now decides the game. Black's best is now 40...Qxf6, although after 41 Rxg3 one of his weak pawns will soon fall, and with it the game. Instead he lets Petrosian demonstrate the win that had to be foreseen on move thirty-five.

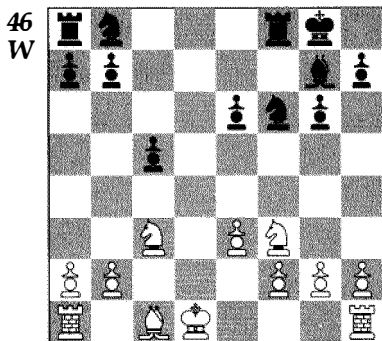
40	...	Qg5(?)
41	f7	Re7
42	Rh3	h4
43	Rgxg3!	Black resigns

Because 43...hxg3 44 Rxh8 Rxf7 45 Bxe5+ Ka8 46 Rxc8+ Bxc8 47 Qb8 is checkmate.



Petrosian's intuitive ability to minimize the opponent's attacking chances mystified no less a rival than Botvinnik in their title match. Having done so, Petrosian proceeded to seize upon the most minimal weaknesses in the enemy position. Characteristic was the fifth game, which began with these moves in a Grünfeld Defense: 1 c4 g6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 e3 (a modest move)...0-0 6 Be2 dxc4 7 Bxc4 c5 8 d5 e6 9 dxe6 (the exchange of queens into a slightly favorable ending guarantees at least a draw)...Qxd1+ 10 Kxd1 Bxe6 11 Bxe6 fxe6.

Botvinnik



Petrosian

White has a minimal advantage—the strong point on e4 for a knight, in front of Black’s isolated e-pawn. Perfect defense might have held the game, but Petrosian won in forty-eight moves. Thus he drew even in the match and went on to win.

Remarkably this very position had been foreseen before the match, and Petrosian told his second that he would win it. Such is his appreciation of the subtlest points of position.



To complaints that his play was dull and drawish, Petrosian was aloof. Creative, fighting, chess means the risk of losing; avoidance of loss was to him more important than winning. The spectacle of a World Champion who competed in tournaments without winning them disappointed a public that could not adjust to the age of the anti-hero.

To base one’s campaign on the capacity to foresee and forestall every threat of the adversary is an impressive and original contribution to the evolution of chess thought. But it is not a creative, artistic achievement. It is a negation of the beauty and richness of Caissa.

A wise man once told this writer, "It is not enough to live by preventing." Ultimately, Prevention cannot suffice. In the ever-fresh creative richness of chess, new attacking ideas will be conceived. In the stress of combat, the perfect defense will not always be found.

In chess, at least, we can be optimists and defy the trend of the modern world. Latter-day heroes with dreams of glory can still storm the chess Olympus.

And so, six years after ascending the throne, the anti-hero was conquered. Petrosian surrendered his crown to Spassky.



At San Antonio in 1972, Petrosian defeated me soundly. When I asked him where I'd gone wrong, he said he'd tell me "*mañana*." But tomorrow never came. Cancer snatched him from us in 1984. He was only fifty-five years old.

Five years later the magazine 64 solicited comments on him from his peers. Fulsome praise issued from each. Boris Spassky called Petrosian "the most talented player of our times."

14

LARSEN: THE VITALITY OF ROMANCE

Chess is a beautiful mistress to whom we keep coming back, no matter how many times she rejects us. □

—Bent Larsen

In the immediate postwar period, Bronstein arose in Russia as the most brilliant standard-bearer of the Romantic heritage. In the later years of the scientific Botvinnik era, a new creative star made his appearance from an unexpected quarter.

This young player did not always make high results in tournaments, but connoisseurs of chess began to seek out his games. For here was a competitor who treated every game as a new creative challenge. His very original opening play led to intricate mid-game fights. He tried always to win, eschewed the draw, and seemed immune to the pang of defeat. He is Bent Larsen, born 1935 in Denmark.

Even after he became a grandmaster, the prognosticators

didn't take him very seriously. His results were too mixed. Some joked that his greatest asset was overconfidence. Anyhow, who could expect that an individual from the West, who had no government support or systematic training, might some day pose a challenge to the Soviet colossus?

Yet to an artist who loves his art, great things are possible. Warning might have been taken from the following game.



Larsen ignores the "book" in order to strike out on new opening paths. Here he uses methods that are Rétiesque, luring Black into setting up a pawn center, which he proceeds to undermine and demolish. Finally, his opponent, one of the most powerful of the Soviet elite, suffers a rare destruction of his king position and a mating attack.

White: Bent Larsen

Black: Effim Geller

Copenhagen, 1960

King's Fianchetto Opening

1 g3

This Hypermodern move was played by Reti in a famous game against Alekhine. More recently, it has been popularized by the Hungarian-American Pal Benko.

1 ... d5

2 Bg2 e5

3 Nf3

Inviting Black to play a reversed Alekhine's Defense with 3...e4 4 Nd4 c5 5 Nb3 f5. But Geller doesn't bite.

3 ... Nc6

4 0-0(!) Nf6

Still no impetuous response. After 4...e4 5 Ne1 White is ready to counter with d3 and c4. Now a sort of reversed Benoni ensues.

5	c4	d4
6	d3	Bd6
7	Na3	0-0
8	Rb1	Re8
9	Nc2	a5
10	b3	

Preferable to 10 a3 a4 11 b4 axb3e.p.

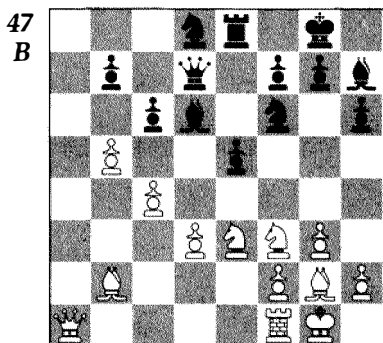
Now White is threatening the usual queenside expansion, which Black should abate via 10...Nb4 11 a3 Nxc2 12 Qxc2 Qe7 13 Qb2 c5. Instead Geller allows himself some luxuries, and the knight that he neglected to exchange is driven to a most awkward square.

10	...	h6(?)
11	a3	Bf5
12	b4	axb4
13	axb4	Qd7
14	b5	Nd8
15	e3!	dxe3

The pawn center begins perforce to fall apart.

16	Nxe3	Bh7
17	Bb2	c6
18	Ra1	Rxa1
19	Qxa1!	

Geller



Larsen

Shades of Reti! The e-pawn cannot long be maintained, while 19...Bxd3? 20 Rd1 e4 21 Bxf6 is very bad for Black. All of the White pieces now spring dynamically to action.

19	...	cx b5
20	Nxe5	Qc7
21	Nf3	Be7
22	Rc1	

Preparing Nd5, to obtain a passed pawn and strong pressure on the enemy g-pawn. Moreover, Black's queen lacks a safe haven in the center. If 22...Bxd3, then 23 Nd5.

22	...	bxc4
23	dx c4	Qb6
24	Nd5	Nxd5
25	cx d5	Bf8
26	Bd4	Qb3?

The defensive 26...Qb5 is necessary. Geller seems to underestimate the force of White's coming Nd7 and plays the rest of the game like one short of time.

27	Ne5	b5(?)
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Even now, 27...Qb5 is better. Already Black's choices are critically limited; for example, 27...Bf5 28 g4 f6 29 gxf5 fxe5 30 Bxe5 or 27...f6 28 Nd7 Qa3? 29 Bxf6! And the ending after 27...Qa3 28 Qxa3 Bxa3 29 Rc8 is bleak.

28 Nd7 Ba3

Relatively better is to give up a pawn with 28...f6 29 Bxf6! Bf5.

Now Larsen avoids the trap: 29 Rc3 Bb2 30 Rxb3 Bxa1 31 Bxa1 Re1+ 32 Bf1 Rxa1 33 Re3 Bf5! and Black survives. Instead he winds up the attack on the kingside. This is the last of three sectors of the battlefield that Larsen conquers successively in this game, from left to right.

29 Bxg7! Bxc1
30 Nf6+ Kxg7
31 Nxe8+ Kf8
32 Qh8+ Ke7

Also hopeless is 32...Bg8 33 Nf6.

33 d6+ Kd7
34 Nf6+ Kc8
35 Bh3+ Kb7
36 Qxd8 Qd1+
37 Kg2 Bd3
38 Bc8+ Ka8
39 Qa5+ Black resigns

The relentless king-hunt ends in mate, in two more moves.



In his early career, Larsen struck off on his own path, experimenting and exploring the limitless possibilities of chess. Never afraid to court peril or to lose, he progressively learned the limits between the enterprising and the merely foolhardy. His fearlessness is well shown by the next example.

White: David Bronstein

Black: Bent Larsen

Interzonal Tournament, Amsterdam, 1964

King's Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	Nc3	Bg7
4	e4	d6
5	Be2	0-0
6	Bg5	

The Averbakh Variation.

6	...	c5
7	d5	e6
8	Nf3	h6
9	Bf4	

This move is dubious. It is better to maintain the pin with 9 Bh4.

9	...	exd5
10	exd5	

Now 10 cxd5 is met by 10...b5! 11 Bxb5 Nxe4! 12 Nxe4 Qa5+.

10	...	Re8
11	Nd2	

To prevent ...Ne4, which would be a strong answer to 11 0-0. Also good for Black is 11 Qd2 g5 12 Be3 Ng4.

11	...	Nh5!
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Larsen rightly commits himself to a promising Exchange sacrifice: if 12 Be3 Rxe3 13 fxe3 Qh4+ 14 g3 Nxg3 15 Nf3 Qh3.

12	Bg3	Bg4
13	0-0	Nxg3
14	hxc3	Bxe2
15	Nxe2	Bxb2!?

Black's position is slightly better, because of his strong bishop. Instead of quiet development, Larsen hereby opens up myriad complications.

16	Rb1	Bg7
17	Rxb7	Nd7
18	Nf4!	

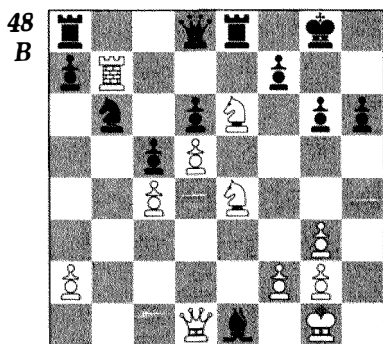
Bronstein declines to put the genie back in the bottle by retreating his rook, which could be answered strongly by ...Qa5. He permits it to be cut off, sensing that he can maintain it via counterthreats.

18	...	Nb6
19	Re1	Bc3!

Threatening the c-pawn and precipitating a crisis. Larsen had to foresee the coming sacrifice and estimate his counter-resources.

20	Ne4!	Bxe1
21	Ne6!	

Larsen



Bronstein

Black is at the moment a rook ahead, but his queen is virtually trapped by a knight which cannot be safely taken, while his king is suddenly threatened with mate. For example:

(a) 21...Rxe6 22 dxe6 fxe6 23 Qg4 Qe8 24 Nf6+.

(b) 21...fxe6 22 Qg4 Bxf2+ 23 Kh1! g5 24 Qh5 Re7 (or 24...Nd7 25 Rxd7) 25 Qg6+ Kf8 26 Nf6 Rxb7 27 Qg8+ Ke7 28 Qg7 mate.

(c) 21...Bb4 (hoping to have compensation for the queen) 22 Qf3 f5 23 Qf4! with an overwhelming attack.

How does Larsen avert disaster?

21 ... Bxf2+!!

A deflecting sacrifice. If it is refused by 22 Kh2, Larsen intends 22...Bd4! Then, with the bishop ideally placed, White has nothing better than to take the queen, after which Black has more than enough compensation. Moreover, the knight must stay on e4, in order to be able to answer 22...Qc8 with 23 Nxd6. Bronstein plays the best move.

22 Kxf2 fxe6
23 Qg4 Rf8+

The point of the bishop offer—Black now has time to defend against mate.

24 Kg1 Rf6

Larsen

49
W

Chessboard diagram for problem 49. White pieces are on g1, d1, a1, c2, f3, b2, c3, d3, e3, f4, g2, h3. Black pieces are on e8, g8, a8, c8, f8, b7, c7, d7, e7, f7, g7, h7.

Bronstein

25 Qh3?

A time pressure error that spoils Bronstein's daringly conducted game.

An analytical battle later swirled about this position involving the protagonists and others. Correct was 25 dx6, after which the legitimate result of the exciting fight, we can now say, would be a draw.

(a) 25...Qf8 26 e7 Rf1+ 27 Kh2 Qf5 28 Qxf5 Rxf5 29 Rxa7!
(Bronstein) ...Rc8 (or 29...Rb8 30 Rb7!—not 29...Re5?
30 Nf6+) 30 Nxd6 Re5 31 Nxc8 Nxc8 32 Ra8 Rxe7 33 Rxc8+
Kf7 34 Rxc5 Ra7 and Black draws the ending.

(b) 25...h5. This was Larsen's drawing line in reserve; e.g. 26 e7 Qxe7 or 26 Qh3 Qf8 and draws as in (a).

(c) 25...Nxc4(!?) Larsen later overestimated this move.

(c-1) 26 e7 Rf1+ 27 Kh2 (27 Kxf1 Ne3+ favors Black) ...
 Qe8 28 Qe2! Rf5 29 g4 Qf7! 30 gxf5 Re8 31 fxc6 (better than
 31 f6 d5 and Black leads—Larsen) ...Qe6 32 Qxc4! (Zaitsev's

claim that 32 Qf1 wins is refuted by 32...Ne5! 33 Nf6+? Qxf6) ...Qxc4 33 Nf6+ and 34 Nxe8 and Black must take a draw (I. Zaitsev).

(c-2) 26 Qh4 g5! 27 Qh5! Qf8 28 e7 Rf1+ 29 Kh2 Qf7 30 e8=Q+ Rxe8 31 Rxf7 Rxf7 32 Qg6+ Kf8 33 Qxh6+ Ke7 34 Nxc5 Ne5! 35 Qe6+ Kf8 36 Qxd6+ Rfe7 37 Qxc5 and White has a slight material advantage.

The move chosen falls far short.

25	...	Qf8
26	Ng5	Rf1+
27	Kh2	Rf5
28	Nxe6	Rh5
29	Qxh5	gxh5
30	Nxf8	Rxf8
31	White resigns	

A battle of two creative giants of our time. It shows the ever-fresh vitality of the Romantic heritage, a bulwark against those who would reduce chess to a stale technical exercise.



The above game helped Larsen to tie for first with Soviet stars no less luminous than Tal, Spassky, and Smyslov. Even in the absence of Fischer, Soviet hegemony was now clearly breached.

Larsen, a man of great intellect and universal interests, made hereabouts a courageous decision for anyone who lived in the capitalist world: He abandoned his studies in engineering and became a professional chess player. Only thus could he dedicate himself to his art and compete on equal terms with the best.

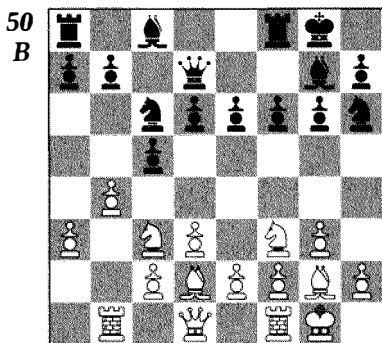
Free for independent study, he has brought forth a whole new opening repertoire divergent from contemporary the-

ory. He was, for example, the first grandmaster in decades to use the Bishop's Opening (1 e4 e5 2 Bc4) and Bird's Opening (1 f4). Playing the Dutch Defense against Olafsson at Beverwijk, 1961, his fantasy produced the following: 1 Nf3 f5 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 d4 Nf6 5 0-0 0-0 6 b3 b5!? 7 c4 bxc4 8 bxc4 c5!?

Nimzovich, a Danish resident, invented the opening. 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 b3. Larsen has introduced 1 b3, and refers humorously to the "Danish school" as antidote to certain pomposities emanating from the East. He calls 1 b3 the "Baby Orangutan." ("Orangutan" was Tartakower's name for 1 b4, which he played after visiting a zoo.)

Playing White against Calvo at Palma, 1968, Larsen went beyond Hypermodernism into "chess of the future": 1 g3 g6 2 Bg2 Bg7 3 Nc3 c5 4 d3 Nc6 5 a3 (offering to play a reversed Panno Variation of the King's Italian—with 5 or 6 e4 he could transpose into the Sicilian) 5...e6 6 Nf3 d6 7 Bg5 Qd7 8 0-0 f6 9 Bd2 Nh6 10 Rb1 0-0(?) (better 10...b6) 11 b4.

Calvo



Larsen

Larsen calls this the "Orangutan Delayed," recalling that the Hypermodernists regarded e4 as stronger on move ten than on move one; the same may be said for b4!

After the further 11...cxb4 12 axb4 Nf7 13 b5 Ne7 14 Qc1! e5 15 Qa3 Qd8 16 Rb4! Be6 17 Ra4 Nc8 18 Rb1 f5 19 b6! a6 20 Ne1, Larsen had much the better of this futuristic game, and went on to win.



The Second Piatigorsky Cup of 1966 was the most opulent and one of the strongest tournaments until its time. The ambitious Larsen made a superb bid for first prize, twice defeating the World Champion in beautiful games, only to be foiled by losses to lesser stars. These he tried to beat in drawn positions, omitting to use even an ounce of prevention. So he is called the “great optimist.” Indeed, objectivity in appraising his position, or, rather, his opponent’s chances, is not his forte. At that time I wrote, “Bent Larsen of Denmark is an astronomical phenomenon. Neither a warm sun that burns brightly at all times nor a constant reliable evening star, but a supernova that waxes often but blazes off, when, in the spirit of the great Marshall, the ambiguity of the split point repels him. Larsen must always hold both hands of the goddess.”



Larsen reached the top in the era of Petrosian. From all that has been said, it must be clear that their philosophies are diametrically opposed. Yet in this game, as if to show yet another facet of his versatile talent, Larsen beats him with some of the very weapons that Petrosian loves to use himself—Nimzovichian prophylaxis, restriction, blockade, and, finally, destruction. Devoid of tactical skirmishes, it is a flawless, strategic work of art.

White: Tigran Petrosian

Black: Bent Larsen

Second Piatigorsky Cup, Santa Monica, 1966

King’s Indian Defense

1	c4	Nf6
2	Nc3	g6
3	g3	Bg7
4	Bg2	0-0
5	d4	d6
6	e3	

A typically modest Petrosian move. Each side achieves a harmonious development in the opening phase.

6	...	c6
7	Nge2	a5
8	b3	Na6
9	0-0	e5
10	Bb2	Re8

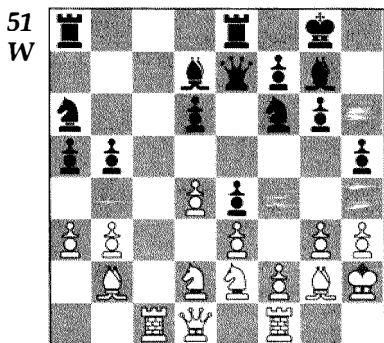
In latter days a fine endgame player, Larsen sees nothing to fear after 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 Qxd8 Rxd8 13 Na4 Nd7 14 Rfd1 Re8, followed by ...Nac5.

11	a3	Rb8
12	h3	h5
13	Qc2	Be6
14	Kh2	Qc7
15	Rac1	b5
16	cx b5	cx b5
17	Qd1(?)	

"Very passive. I expected 17 Ne4" (Larsen). The latter would have led to an even ending. Petrosian seems overly concerned about his b-pawn.

17	...	Qe7
18	Nb1	Bd7
19	Nd2	e4!

Larsen



Petrosian

Here is Black's first encroachment on enemy terrain. It restricts the white pieces, especially the g2-bishop, and gives him superiority in space for maneuvering.

20	Nf4	d5
21	Qe2	Qd6
22	Rc2	Rec8
23	Rfc1	Rxc2
24	Rxc2	h4!

Since 25 g4 is prohibited by ...g5, Black now obtains another advantage—the slight weakening of support for White's g-pawn. The latter is not yet even threatened—but the slow buildup of restriction of that pawn to its final destruction is the theme of the rest of the game.

25	Nf1	hxg3+
26	fxg3	b4

Fixing the queenside position. Larsen said that one idea of the move was ...Bc8-a6xe2, in order to undermine support of the g-pawn(!). White averts the possibility.

27	a4	Rc8
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28	Rxc8+	Bxc8
29	h4	

Probably necessary sooner or later to prevent ...g5. But the hole at g4 is a new weakness.

29	...	Nc7
30	Bh3	Bxh3
31	Nxh3	Bf8
32	Kg2	Qc6
33	Qd1	Bd6

The first piece trained on the fated pawn.

34	Nf2	Ne6
35	Bc1	Ng7
36	Bd2	Nf5

The second.

37	Kh3	Qc8
38	Kg2	

Desirable in itself would be 38 g4, but after 38...Nh6, followed by ...Nh7 and ...f5 or ...g5, the White king position falls apart. White can do nothing, only squirm as the noose is tightened.

38	...	Kg7
39	Nh1	Nh6
40	Be1	Qa6
41	Nf2	Nf5
42	Qd2	

Larsen here points out the possibility of 42 Bd2 Nh5 43 g4 Nxh4+ 44 Kh3 Nf3 45 gxh5 Qc8+ 46 Kg2 Qf5 and Black wins.

42	...	Bb8
43	Nd1	Ng4

44	Kg1	f6
45	Kg2	g5!

The beginning of the final phase, which requires the opening of the h-file. If White advances the pawn to h5 he will lose it.

46	Nf2	Ngh6
47	hxc5	fxg5
48	Nd1	Kg6!

The king will be needed for the blockade.

49	Nh2	g4
50	Qc2	Bd6

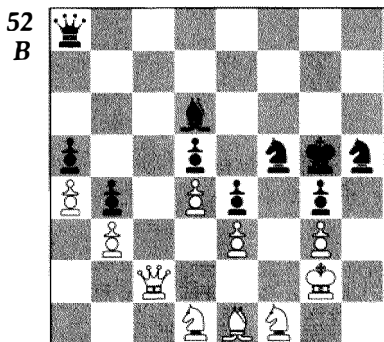
The White queen is permitted no activity until it is too late.

51	Nf1	Ng8
52	Nh2	Nf6
53	Nf1	Kh5
54	Nh2	Kg5
55	Nf1	Nh5
56	Bf2	Nf6
57	Be1	Nh5

After a little repetition in order to make the time control, the third attacking piece is brought to bear. Still, it seems that the pawn is defensible.

58	Bf2	Qa8
59	Be1	

Larsen



Petrosian

The evolutionary buildup of Black's pressure has reached its peak. The time is ripe for combination.

- | | | |
|----|---------------|--------|
| 59 | ... | Qh8! |
| 60 | Qc6 | Bxg3! |
| 61 | Bxg3 | Nhxf3! |
| 62 | White resigns | |

The finish could be 62 Nxf3 Qh3+ 63 Kf2 Qxf3+ 64 Ke2 Qxe3+ 65 Nxe3 Nxd4+ etc.

Of this strategic masterpiece, Larsen said he was much more proud than the next brilliancy. The reader may judge.



Petrosian came to this tournament fresh from his first, successful, world title defense. The chess public felt that an era of Prevention had descended. But here, the irresistible force of Larsen met the immovable object—and the object gave way.

This is the game that went round the world with a renewed affirmation of Caissa's beauty. (In fairness it should be said that Petrosian has also won his share of battles with his philosophic rival.)

White: Bent Larsen

Black: Tigran Petrosian

Second Piatigorsky Cup, Santa Monica, 1966

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	g6
5	Be3	Bg7
6	c4	

The Maróczy Bind. White gets a grip on the center and attempts to limit Black to three ranks.

6	...	Nf6
7	Nc3	Ng4
8	Qxg4	Nxd4
9	Qd1	Ne6

Black has employed a known simplifying method. But his only well-placed piece is the g7-bishop, whereas White has free play.

10	Qd2	d6
11	Be2	Bd7
12	0-0	0-0
13	Rad1	Bc6
14	Nd5	Re8

Black has no good plan, but must await White's initiatives. Petrosian here doubly protects his e-pawn. Larsen is, as usual, ready for active play.

15	f4	Nc7
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If 15...Nc5, then 16 e5 is both necessary and strong (16...Bxd5 17 Qxd5 b6 18 Qf3).

The preparatory 15...b6 is worth considering, although it gives White a potential a4-a5.

16 f5 Na6?!

Now that Larsen has committed himself and seemingly forfeited the chance for e5, Petrosian believes he can challenge the center and exploit the strong point at e5. The idea is plausible and not without ambition, but it proves too time-consuming.

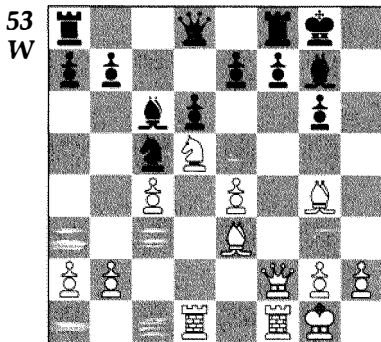
It is better instead to seek relief with 16...Nxd5 17 exd5 Bd7.

Black's kingside is insecure, but he has potential counter-play with ...b5.

Larsen is unimpressed by this preventive effort. He is ready for a sequence of forceful moves that dictate Black's replies.

17	Bg4!	Nc5!
18	fxg6	hxg6
19	Qf2	Rf8

Petrosian



Larsen

A rich position! Here again we see the perennial collision of two conflicting concepts of chess.

In the subtle mind of Petrosian, where control of key squares is paramount, Black's serpentine maneuvers have neutralized the attack, and he is ready with the counterthreats of ...Nxe4, e6, and perhaps ...f5 to assert dominance in the center. If White plays 20 Bxc5 dxc5 21 Nf6+ (or 21 Qxc5 Bxd5 22 Rxd5 Qb6 with a likely draw) 21...Bxf6 22 Rxd8 Raxd8 23 Qe2 or 23 Qc2 Rd4, Black has ample compensation for the queen. A technician would conclude that White's attack has spent itself.

Larsen, on the other hand, has part of his spiritual ancestry from the old Romantic players who delighted in the quest for beautiful combinations. They cared not for scientific certainties. In pursuit of their ideal they were willing to risk much more than "trifles" like weak squares and pawn deficits. So, faithful to the goddess whose favor he always expects, Larsen finds a striking way to continue the attack.

20 e5!!

An extraordinary sacrifice, the point of the last three moves. It opens no new line but merely diverts Black's g7-bishop to a square from which it must soon move again. Thus the move only gains a single tempo. But after Black has used two moves to play his rook from f8 back to f8, and three tempi to get his knight from e6 to c5, this single tempo more makes a crucial difference. If Black declines the pawn he is positionally lost.

20	...	Bxe5
21	Qh4!	Bxd5

The enemy rook must be given this aggressive outpost on d5, for if 21...Re8, then 22 Rxf7! Kxf7 23 Qh7+ and mates.

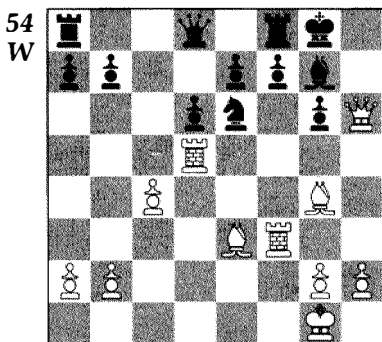
22 Rxd5 Ne6

Black scurries to protect his king. 22...e6 23 Qxd8 would lose two pieces for a rook. On 22...Ne4 23 Rf3 Bg7 (had White

played 20 Qh4 Bxd5 21 Rxd5 Nxe4 22 Rf3 the same position would have occurred with *Black* to move—a key difference of one tempo) 24 Rh3 Nf6 25 Bf3, White's threats of Rb5 and Bh6 are decisive.

23	Rf3!	Bf6*
24	Qh6	Bg7

Petrosian



Larsen

Apparently, Black has repulsed the attack. It seems that White can do no better than repeat the position with 25 Qh4.

The stage is set for one of the most beautiful moves in the history of chess.

25 Qxg6!!

A rustle of excitement spreads through the audience—Larsen has sacrificed his queen against the World Champion!

The worshipper of Caissa can make no greater offering

* In their book 4 X 25 (Estonia, 1975), Keres and Nei justly queried this move, and proposed a better defense: 23...f5 24 Rh3 Kf7 25 Bxf5 gxf5 26 Qh5+ Kf6 27 g4 Ng7! 28 Bg5+ Ke6 29 Qg6+ Bf6 30 gxf5+ Kd7 31 Bxf6 Rxf6 32 Qxg7 Qg8, and Black escapes into an endgame with only a slender pawn-minus. Thus they preferred 17 b4. Caissa had other plans.

than to part with the powerful lady of his chessboard army. The sacrifice of the queen is a recurrent theme in Larsen's games. It must have for him a potent symbolic meaning.

Black's reply merely adjusts the position of the enemy rook from f3 to f4. (If 25...Nc7, then 26 Qxg7+! and mate in two.)

25	...	Nf4
26	Rxf4	fxg6
27	Be6+	Rf7

The alternative is 27...Kh7 28 Rh4+ Bh6 29 Bxh6 Rf5 (to stop mate in one—if 29...g5 30 Rxg5 Qb6+ 31 c5) 30 Rxf5 gxf5 31 Bf7!! e5 32 Rh3 Qb6+ 33 Kh1 and mate follows with Bf8.

28	Rxf7	Kh8
29	Rg5!	b5

Or 29...Be5 30 Rxg6 Qa5 31 Rh6+ Kg8 32 Rff6+ Kg7 33 Rfg6+ Kf8 34 Rg8 mate.

30	Rg3	Black resigns
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For mate can be averted only by giving up the Black queen.

A new evergreen game, which will go on delighting generations of chess players long after the recondite achievements of Prevention have been relegated to the dusty textbooks.



In 1967, Larsen set a modern record by winning four major tournaments in succession. And in 1971, for the third successive time, he reached the semifinals of the world challengers' matches. Thus, he gave pause to those "realists" who regarded as quixotic any aspiration to shift the center of chess gravity away from Moscow.

Yet ultimate honors will go not only to competitors who reach the very summit but to lovers of chess who enrich our enjoyment of the royal game and the evolution of chess thought. Like a certain great Russian player at the turn of the century, Larsen both reaffirms the Romantic heritage of the past and points toward a future of fresh creative artistry at a time in history when opposing ideas seem to hold sway.

In Larsen's games we can indeed recognize the creative stature of a new Tchigorin.

15

SPASSKY: THE SECRET OF CAISSA

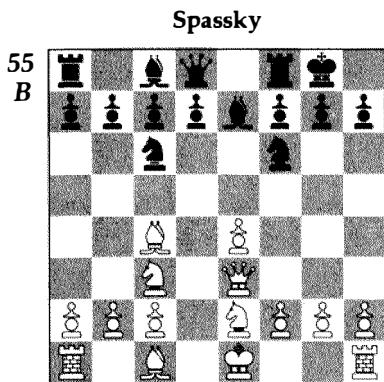
Chess, with all its philosophical depth, its aesthetic appeal, is first of all a game in the best sense of the word, a game in which are revealed your intellect, character, will. □

—*Boris Spassky*

If one is mystically inclined, one may detect the hand of Caissa at work during the wartime siege of Leningrad. For a certain young child, born there in 1937, was among those fortunate enough to be evacuated from that beleaguered city. Many years later, Boris Spassky would become the supreme player of the symbolic wargame.

Spassky comes from the nation of Russians, a people celebrated for their warmth of heart. And one can perceive in his play that expansive passion of the legendary Russian soul, which has historically been transmuted into the highest works of art. In the games of Boris Spassky one does not see the pusillanimous ideas of the greedy hoarder of points but rather the bold creative thrust of a lover of Caissa.

His talent was, of course, early recognized and cultivated. Rare is the Soviet player who makes his international debut at the age of sixteen. Yet Spassky did so at Bucharest in 1953, where his fine win against Smyslov heralded an important new talent. There he showed daring and forceful ideas in the following position:



Troianescu
Bucharest, 1953

White's premature development of the queen meets with a sharp response.

7 ... Ng4!

8 Qd2

8 Qg3 is met powerfully by 8...d5! and 9...Bh4.

8 ... Bc5

9 Nd1

If 9 0-0, then 9...Qh4 wins.

9 ... Qe7

10 f3 Qh4+!!

Seemingly losing a piece, but Spassky has seen more deeply.

11	g3	Nge5!
12	gxh4	Nxf3+
13	Kf1	d5!

The first point—threatening mate in one and attacking the bishop.

14	Kg2	Nxd2
15	Bxd5	

Now Black's knight appears trapped.

15	...	Bg4!
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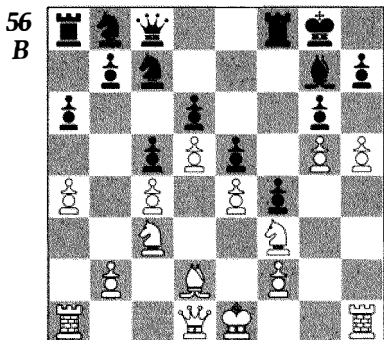
The point of his tenth move. The piece is rescued, and after 16 Bxd2 Bxe2 17 Nc3 Bh5 Spassky enjoys the better endgame. After further sharp skirmishes, he won on move forty.

Ideas of brilliance and high originality were to become a Spassky trademark. In the following position he played one of the most incredible moves ever recorded (Averbakh vs. Spassky, USSR Championship play-off, 1956, before Black's sixteenth move):

16		Nc6!!? (<i>see diagram opposite</i>)
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Who else would have thought of giving up a piece for a mere pawn in such a position, with only the remotest prospect of an attack?

Spassky



Averbakh

Spassky reasoned so: Black has a very cramped position, without counterplay. With normal moves he will be squeezed to death and lose on the h-file. Positionally, he is already lost.

But after giving up the knight he at least has an open file and can get one piece to a decent square, with ...Ne6-d4. Spassky's idea is so unusual that the audience must have clamored for the demonstration board to be corrected.

(Astonishingly, Grandmaster Averbakh could not capitalize on his extra piece. After many vicissitudes, the game resulted in a draw after seventy-three moves.)

It became clear that Spassky is no dogmatist but belongs to the creative school.



It is an old device of psychological combat to confront the opponent with his own favorite weapons. But in choosing that romantic game, the King's Gambit, against Bronstein, its most recent champion, Spassky was paying tribute to his adversary and saying, in effect, "Let's combine ideas and produce something entertaining, perhaps beautiful, like the games of the Romantic era."

White: Boris Spassky

Black: David Bronstein

USSR Championship, 1960

King's Gambit Accepted

1	e4	e5
2	f4!?	exf4
3	Nf3	d5
4	exd5	Bd6
5	Nc3	Ne7

Typically, Bronstein wants to explore something unusual. More usual is 4 or 5...Nf6.

6	d4	0-0
7	Bd3	Nd7
8	0-0	h6(?)

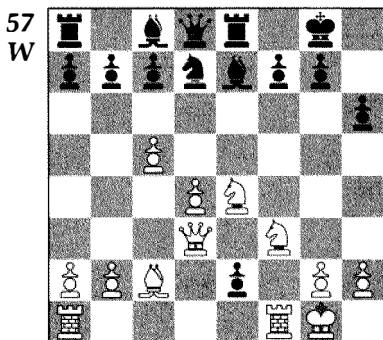
A waste of time, and weakening. Perhaps he intends ...g5, but White now develops a big initiative. Indicated was 8...Nf6.

9	Ne4!	Nxd5
10	c4	Ne3
11	Bxe3	fxe3
12	c5	Be7
13	Bc2	

Preparing a banal mating threat pointing up the drawback of Black's eighth move. Now too risky for Black is 13...f5 14 Ng3 f4? 15 Qd3.

13	...	Re8
14	Qd3	e2

Bronstein



Spassky

Bronstein uses the (doomed) pawn as a deflecting device, to gain time. White can maintain a good game without risk by 15 Rf2 Nf8 16 Ne5 Be6 17 Re1. But Spassky is a young man who already feels the lure of immortality.

15 Nd6!!?

He spares not a moment in the attack, even at the cost of a rook! In this situation normal values are out of joint, and one tempo is indeed equal to a rook. Only an extraordinary chess mind could make such a deduction.

15 ... Nf8?!

Everybody in the world would capture the offered rook first and look later—except Bronstein! But here his penchant for being different probably costs him the game. The correct defense was pointed out by Spassky later: 15...exf1=Q+ 16 Rxf1 Bxd6 17 Qh7+ Kf8 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 Qh8+ Ke7 20 Re1+ Ne5 21 Qxg7 Rg8 22 Qxh6 Qb6 23 Kh1 Be6 24 dxe5 d5 and the Black king can be subjected to no worse than perpetual check.

16 Nxf7! exf1=Q+

17 Rxf1 Bf5

The rook didn't run away, but the knight has, for 17...Kxf7 18 Ne5+ Kg8 19 Bb3+ leads to mate. So Black uses his bishop like the man in the Russian folktale who throws his child to ravening wolves—gaining only a moment's respite.

The best practical chance lay in 17...Qd5 18 Bb3 Qxb3 (not 18...Qh5 19 Nxh6+ Kh8 20 Nf7+ Kg8 21 N7g5+ Kh8 22 Bf7 and 23 Bxe8) 19 Qxb3 Be6, with three pieces for the queen. Still, after 20 Nxh6+ Black's pawn deficit should tell.

18	Qxf5	Qd7
19	Qf4	Bf6
20	N3e5	Qe7(?)

Black could prolong his resistance by returning the Ex-change here (20...Bxe5 21 Nxe5 Rxe5).

Now he loses quickly because there is nothing to counter White's powerful bishop on the white squares.

21	Bb3	Bxe5
22	Nxe5+	Kh7

Or 22...Kh8 23 Qe4 (threatening 24 Rxf8+) ...g5 24 Rf7 Qd8 25 Qh7+ Nxh7 26 Ng6+ Kg8 27 Rd7+ Re6 28 Bxe6 mate.

23	Qe4+	Black resigns
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The queen goes on 23...g6 24 Rf7+ while 23...Kh8 leads to mate in four starting with 24 Rxf8+

A game of chess as it used to be played before the advent of the era of technique.



Sacrifices abounded in young Spassky's games, but they were not, to him, almost a compulsion, as with Tal. They flowed out of his natural desire for attack. As he matured he perfected the art of getting sustained attacks as consistently as the great Keres. With the white pieces he became very hard

to stop. Here he overwhelms an opponent known for defensive ability.

White: Boris Spassky

Black: Larry Evans

Olympiad, Varna, 1962

King's Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	Nc3	Bg7
4	e4	d6
5	f3	

While Petrosian employs this Sämisch Variation for a slow spatial squeeze, Spassky uses it for a wide-open onslaught on the enemy king.

5	...	c6
6	Be3	a6
7	Qd2	b5

A defensive system shown to be effective by the American Robert Byrne.

8	0-0-0	bxc4(?)
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But this exchange, certainly before White's bishop has moved, is ill-advised. Better is 8...Qa5 9 Kb1 Nbd7, leaving the question of castling fluid.

9	Bxc4	0-0
10	h4	d5(?)

Theory calls for a central reaction to White's flank attack. But 10...h5, to slow it down, would be wiser at this point.

11	Bb3	dxe4
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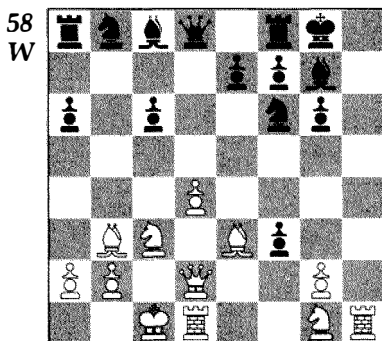
12 h5!

Spassky is in his element. Pausing to recapture the e-pawn would stall the attack after 12 fxe4 Bg4.

Now 12...Nxh5 loses quickly to 13 Bh6; for example, 13...Ng3 14 Bxg7 Nxh1 15 Bxf8 Qxf8 16 Nxe4 Bf5 17 Rf1, and a piece is trapped.

12 ... exf3
13 hxg6 hxg6

Evans



Spassky

14 Bh6!

A move that shows Spassky's sangfroid. When one gives up a second pawn one is committed to rapid success of the attack or likely ultimate loss. Even in the most crucial encounters Spassky does not hesitate to risk defeat. He is a superb fighter whose nerve never fails.

If he stopped for 14 Nxf3, then Evans could defend with 14...Ng4.

14 ... fxg2
15 Rh4!

Maintaining the threat of mate in three. If 15...Nh5?, then 16 Rxb5 gxb5 17 Qg5.

15	...	Ng4
16	Bxb7	Kxb7
17	Qxb2	Nh6(?)

The U.S. Champion clings to his extra material tenaciously. Relatively best is to return some of it with 17...Rh8 18 Rxb4 Bxb4 19 Qxb4 Qd7, when White's pieces still give him a mid-game advantage. Other tries are quickly refuted, such as 17...Ne3 18 Qh2 Rh8 19 Rxb8 Qxb8 20 Qe5+ or 17...f5 18 Nf3 Rh8 19 Rdh1 Rxb4 20 Rxb4 followed by Qh3 or Ng5 with an overwhelming attack. But it was not easy to see that the attack is already decisive after the text move.

18	Nf3	Nf5
19	Rh2	Qd6

Hoping to fish in troubled waters via ...Qf4+. Inconsequentially better is 19...Qc7, while 19...Rh8 loses to 20 Bxf7!, and 19...Ne3 to 20 Qg5.

Spassky's concluding moves are direct and devastating.

20	Ne5	Nd7
21	Ne4	Qc7
22	Rdh1	Rg8

Or 22...Nf6 23 Bxf7 and mates.

23	Rh7+	Kf8
24	Rxf7+	Ke8
25	Qxb6	Nxe5

Or 25...Rxb6 26 Rh8+.

26	Rf8+	Black resigns
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It is mate next.



The following game is the last and best of a most remarkable trio, all occurring in one match. Spassky conceived a broad strategic plan in the Closed Variation of the Sicilian Defense. He conceded the queenside to Black, staking all on a kingside attack. With striking consistency he had won the first two games via sparkling sacrifices against the king's field.

White: Boris Spassky

Black: Effim Geller

World Challengers' Match, USSR, 1968

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nc3	d6
3	g3	Nc6
4	Bg2	g6
5	d3	Bg7
6	f4	Nf6

Stubborn adherence to the same defensive system. In the next game Geller would at last play the more elastic 6...e6 and 7...Nge7, with a satisfactory result.

7	Nf3	0-0
8	0-0	Rb8
9	h3	b5
10	a3	

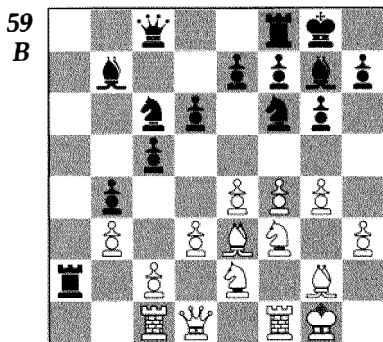
As usual, Black advances on the queen's wing, White on the king's. Spassky's contribution here is the idea of a3, leading to opening of the a-file, which Black uses to penetrate with his pieces. Routinely, White leaves the a-pawn untouched, but it is later subject to attack, or Black forces through ...b3 or ...a3. Spassky's original idea amounts to the sacrifice of a file. He counts on his kingside buildup.

10	...	a5
11	Be3	b4
12	axb4	axb4
13	Ne2	Bb7
14	b3	

The first new move—the previous game had seen 14 Qd2. White assumes a stable pawn chain whose base, the c-pawn, he holds until it ceases to have importance.

14	...	Ra8
15	Rc1!	Ra2
16	g4	

Geller



Spassky

White's attack on the other side modestly begins. It is not at all clear which will prevail first. (See Reti's poetic discussion of a similar situation in the famous game Pillsbury vs. Tarrasch.)

Now Black makes a queen maneuver that is finally not very effective, leaving all too few defenders for the king. The immediate 16...Na7 or 16...e6 should be tried.

17 Qe1 Qa6
18 Qf2

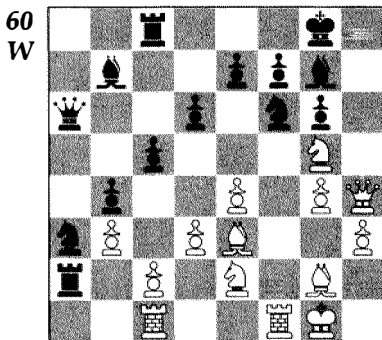
Avoiding the trap, 18 Qh4? Rxc2! 19 Rxc2 Qxd3 and White's game suddenly falls apart.

18 Na7(?)

Here Geller misses the last good chance for ...e6 (not fearing the complications after 19 e5 dxe5), and embarks on a knight maneuver to which there is no defense—except a winning attack.

19 f5 Nb5
20 fxg6 hxg6
21 Ng5 Na3
22 Qh4 Rc8

Geller



Spassky

Black gives his king necessary space before capturing the doomed c-pawn. The slow evolution of White's attack has reached its peak—a combination is again called for.

23 Rxf6! exf6
24 Qh7+ Kf8
25 Nxf7!!

Spassky mercilessly denudes the Black king. If now 25...Kxf7 26 Bh6 Rg8 27 Nf4! d5! 28 exd5! f5 29 Ne6 and White, still a rook down for the moment, wins easily; for example, 29...Rxc2 30 Rxc2 Nxc2 31 Bxg7, etc.

25 ... Rxc2

Too late! There is no defense.

26 Bh6 Rxc1+

27 Nxc1 Kxf7

Or 27...Bxh6 28 Nxh6 Ke8 29 Ng8 Kf8 30 Ne7 and mates.

28 Qxg7+ Ke8

29 g5!

The quiet move that gains two connected passed pawns and thus decides the game, for if 29...fxg5 30 Bxg5, mate would be forced.

29 ... f5

30 Qxg6+ Kd7

31 Qf7+ Kc6

32 exf5+ Black resigns

For after 32...Kb6 33 Bxb7 Qxb7 34 Qxb7+ Kxb7 35 f6 White wins in a walk.

The Black knight stands irrelevantly at a3, in mute testimony to the folly of pawn-hunting while one's king is in mortal danger.



At the age of nineteen, Spassky qualified for the world championship candidates' tournament, but this stage eluded him in the next two cycles. His ambition and love of chess did not slacken in this period, despite some bitter disappointments. He broadened his mastery, acquiring experience in

various systems, including closed games. Then in 1966, after decisive match victories over some of the greatest players, he won the right to face World Champion Petrosian in a title match.

In that first challenge a change seemed to have come over Spassky. His usual dynamic attacking game was not in evidence. He went in for closed and maneuvering positions, known to be Petrosian's forte. He seemed to admit tacitly that his own favorite weapons were not subtle enough to beat the Great Preventer, and he sought to meet Petrosian on the latter's own terms. Spassky stretched his versatility too far and lost narrowly to the Champion.

Spassky was soon taken to task by disappointed partisans of the Romantic school, who hinted at betrayal. What they failed to appreciate was the monumental ambition and psychological courage behind his strategy—he attempted to mount the world throne as master of all facets of chess—the universal player.

Spassky was not daunted by this setback. He could not abandon his high ambition for Caissa's most coveted honor; he loved her too much.

And so, two years later, he battled his way through three more grueling challengers' matches to a second title contest, which he preceded by a study of chess psychology. Instead of the trench warfare of the first match, Spassky forced the play whenever possible into open channels and sought a wide attacking scope. Causing a sensation, he successfully brought out the committal Tarrasch Defense, with its active piece play, as a surprise weapon. Here is the crucial and quintessential game of the match.



Although Spassky took an early lead with aggressive play, Petrosian fought back by steering the conflict into his own preferred channels. Before this nineteenth game, Spassky

holds only a one-point lead. If Petrosian wins it and goes on to tie the match, he will retain the title.

The situation is highly dramatic: This game may climax for Spassky a career of Herculean effort to reach the chess summit. Lesser hearts than his would be filled with trepidation, inclined toward caution.

We shall instead look for the stuff of which heroes are made.

White: Boris Spassky

Black: Tigran Petrosian

World Championship Match, Moscow, 1969

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6

The champion's choice of defense is not without courage. He perhaps hopes that the challenger will overextend himself.

6	Bg5	Nbd7
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Black avoids the risky 6...e6 7 f4 Qb6 8 Qd2 Qxb2, hoping to keep the game more closed.

7	Bc4	Qa5
8	Qd2	h6

The usual continuation is 8...e6. Spassky now gains time by exchanging the bishop for a knight.

9	Bxf6!	Nxf6
10	0-0-0	e6
11	Rhe1	

The opening of the e-file is now in the air, perhaps via a piece sacrifice on d5. The move presses Petrosian to declare his intentions with the king.

11	...	Be7
12	f4	0-0
13	Bb3	Re8
14	Kb1	

White's last two moves are somewhat slow. However, the bishop was exposed on c4 to ...b5-b4, or to a queen move. The king move both raises the possibility of 15 Nd5 Qxd2 (no check) 16 Nxe7+ and safeguards against such surprises as 14 f5? Ng4! threatening 15...Bg5.

14	...	Bf8
15	g4!?	

Spassky attacks fearlessly.

15		Nxg4!?
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It seems that Petrosian wants also to win! Otherwise he would not accept the pawn offer and expose his king to the coming onslaught, against his instincts. A reasonable defense lay in 15...e5 16 Nf5 Bxf5.

16	Qg2	Nf6
17	Rg1	Bd7

After 17...Kh8 18 Rdf1 (not 18 f5 exf5 19 Bxf7 Re7) ...Qc7 19 f5 e5 20 Nde2, Black could stabilize the position, keeping his extra pawn. But then White would occupy d5 with a knight and retain the edge.

Petrosian rarely underestimates the opponent's threats. Behind his conduct of this game may lurk a subconscious idea that his sojourn with destiny is running out.

18	f5	Kh8
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Here 18...exf5 is met strongly by 19 exf5, and 18...e5 is refuted simply by 19 Nde2 (not 19 Qg6? Kh8!), threatening both 20 Qg6 and 20 Rxd6 (if not for the bishop on d7, Black could then defend with 19...Qc7).

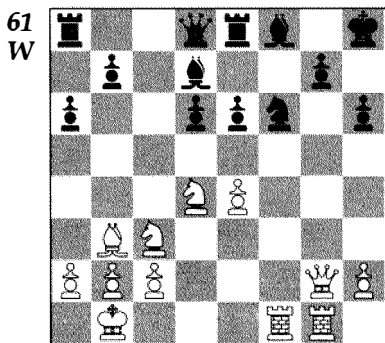
19 Rdf1 Qd8?

It was too late for 19...e5 because of 20 Ne6! fxe6 21 fxe6 Bxe6 22 Rxf6. But much hope would remain after 19...Qe5. This move also defends the knight while deterring e5. Black would be ready for 20 Nf3 Qc5 or 20 fxe6 Bxe6 21 Bxe6 fxe6 22 Nf3 Qh5. The verdict would be in doubt.

The text move gives Spassky the opportunity for an elegant combination.

20 fxe6 fxe6

Petrosian



Spassky

Or 20...Bxe6 21 Nxe6 fxe6 22 Ne2 e5 (or else 23 Nf4) 23 Bf7, White wins the Exchange, for if 23...Re7?, then 24 Rxf6.

21 e5! dxe5
22 Ne4! Nh5

Any other knight move allows 23 Rxf8+, while 22...exd4 23 Nxf6, with 24 Qg6 next, is devastating.

23 Qg6! exd4

It is a pity that Petrosian avoids 23...Nf4, letting Spassky demonstrate the beauty and depth of the combination initiated on move twenty-one. There would follow 24 Rxf4! exf4 25 Nf3! Qb6 (otherwise comes 26 Neg5, with mate or win of the queen) 26 Rg5!! (in the middle of a mating attack, a defensive move—not 26 Rg2? or 26 Rg4? Qb5! and Black, by a counterthreat of mate, gains time for ...Qf5) 26...Bc6 (or 26...hxxg5 27 Nxxg5 and mates) 27 Nf6 Be4 (Black has nothing) 28 Qxh6+ gxh6 29 Rg8 mate (Geller).

Perhaps Petrosian wishes to limit the heroic dimensions of Spassky's victory.

24 Ng5 Black resigns

For if 24...hxxg5 25 Qxh5+ Kg8 26 Qf7+ Kh8 27 Rf3, there is no salvation.

This win, in the great attacking tradition of Marshall, Alekhine, and Keres, virtually settled the match. Four games later, Caissa had a new World Champion: Boris Spassky.



Spassky's odyssey to the summit was the most difficult and taxing in chess history. In its course he had to fight no fewer than eight individual matches against some of the world's best chess players, seven of which he won. From the first unsuccessful challenge, in which his strategic psychology was in conflict with his true nature as a chess artist, he rose to greater creative heights. His ultimate victory is a striking vindication of the creative approach to chess.

This achievement stems from Spassky's realization of Caissa's secret: Each artist must follow the truest promptings

of his inner nature. Only by fidelity to that secret will each fulfill his potential in chess.

Spassky's destiny was to reign supreme, a beacon to all those lovers of our game for whom chess remains a beautiful art.

16

FISCHER: THE LIMITS OF GENIUS

They have almost ruined chess. □

—Robert James Fischer

Chess has historically flourished among peoples at their peak of culture and influence. Thus the king of games thrived more than a millennium ago under the Persians, and later the Arabs. Just as Europe in the Middle Ages became a dominant focus of culture, the chess center of the world gravitated to Europe. In the mid-twentieth century, with Russia emerging as a foremost world power, the chess capital moved eastward.

Across the ocean in the United States, whose citizens were world leaders in many fields, chess was somehow alien. There had been nothing like the Old World aristocracy, who could while away leisure hours in plush drawing rooms with the game of kings and knights.

The individualistic pioneer life of the United States was not conducive to a game of intellectual pretensions. The aggressive drive that conquered a continent had no need of a symbolic outlet. And so the salon game par excellence,

though it claimed the utilitarian interest of founding father Benjamin Franklin, lacked popularity in the new nation.

Still, some people played chess in America. When Paul Morphy appeared in the mid-nineteenth century to conquer the best players of the Old World, a small but proud fraternity of chess players welcomed him home. But there was no official world title then, and Morphy's career was all too brief. His endgame in life was a tragedy.

A chess tradition, nourished by the sojourn of European champions, slowly grew up in the land. Near the turn of the century a new American star, Harry Nelson Pillsbury, burst upon the international chess horizon. After some sensational triumphs, he too declined and suffered a premature death.

In the 1930s, U.S. teams dominated the Olympic events. Nevertheless, the most coveted title of the chess world, the individual world championship, eluded the American reach. After the war, Reuben Fine submitted to the economic realities and dropped out of professional chess. Samuel Reshevsky carried on a gallant fight to gain the summit, against heavy Soviet odds, and missed.

American society is not hospitable to the chess player, for many reasons. The building and selling dynamic has little esteem for a purely aesthetic and intellectual pursuit, or a sport without spectacle. The artist in our country has been an alienated figure, seeking his fulfillment abroad or eking out a difficult existence in his homeland. Likewise the chess player.

The arts in America—and chess is no exception—struggle for the patronage of the wealthy. In our value system a young man who would like to devote his life to chess faces heavy societal and economic pressure to do something more conventional.

Reti observed in 1922 that "the majority of people imagine a chess master as being a townsman who passes his life in an atmosphere of smoke and play in cafés and clubs: a

neurasthenic individual, whose nerves and brains are continuously working at tension: a one-sided person who has given up his whole soul to chess."

The majority of Americans know little of chess masters but think of chess as a game for "brains" or elderly men who spend hours on each game. Sport connotes to them a physical contest only. It is inconceivable that an American chess player could be elected Sportsman of the Year, as happened not long ago to the chess champion of Yugoslavia.

Yet chess interest increases in our country. A still small but growing group of Americans devote themselves to the game. To many, chess is life. Even if they must work at other jobs to live, these are chores secondary to the true love of Caissa.

Given that the American milieu is basically uncongenial to chess, one personality appears as a reaction against American attitudes and is yet uniquely American, for he has carried individualism to its utmost limit. This is only one of the paradoxes of Bobby Fischer, whom many regard as the greatest chess genius of all time. He is also the most enigmatic; some fear he will be the most tragic.



Robert James Fischer was born in Chicago in 1943. Those interested in personal psychology will note that he never knew his father. After a divorce, his mother, Regina, took energetic and capable charge of the child. One can debate the attachment of significance to the Latin meaning of her name—"Queen." But her child was to be touched by destiny in the royal game.

At age six he learned the moves, but he only succumbed to the fascination of the game some four years later, at an age when boys seem to be especially vulnerable to Caissa's lure. By good fortune he was living in New York, home of famous clubs, where his very special talent was soon recognized and tested against strong opposition.

At the age of twelve he was already playing at master strength. At thirteen he won the national junior championship. But more important events were occurring under the surface.

Bobby Fischer was making an internal pact. From that time on, chess was life itself, chess was almost the universe to him. And Caissa would reciprocate in ample measure such devotion.

The American chess community made an important discovery when Fischer played the following game.



There are certain games in chess history which propel huge waves of recognition throughout the chess world. They are so spectacular that the international lines of communication unite in the pronouncement: A great new star is born.

Just such recognition greeted this game, played by the thirteen-year-old Bobby Fischer.

After one slip by his opponent, Bobby uncorks the sharp play that later would make him universally feared.

White: Donald Byrne

Black: Robert Fischer

New York, 1956

Grünfeld Defense

1	Nf3	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	Nc3	Bg7
4	d4	O-O
5	Bf4	d5

An automatic reaction to White's last would be 5...d6. But Bobby now wants the Grünfeld.

6 Qb3

White is mixing two systems. His fifth and sixth moves don't conveniently mesh. More consistent is 6 Rc1.

6	...	dx c4
7	Qxc4	c6
8	e4	Nbd7
9	Rd1	

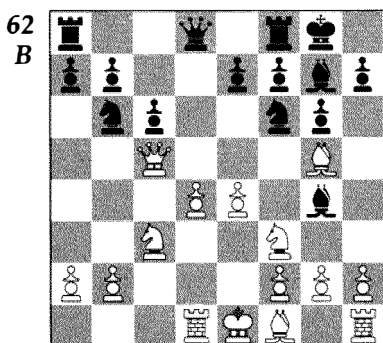
Fortifying the d-pawn, since the queen's bishop is not at the natural square, e3. If 9 e5 Nd5! 10 Nxd5 cxd5 11 Qb3 (11 Qxd5? Nxe5!). Nb6 followed by ...Bf5 or ...Bg4, Black has a comfortable game.

9	...	Nb6
10	Qc5	

Placing the queen on a vulnerable square. Safer is 10 Qd3 Be6, with approximate equality.

10	...	Bg4
11	Bg5?	

Fischer



D. Byrne

Perhaps worried that Black will get clear equality after 11 Be2 Nfd7 12 Qa3 Bxf3 13 Bxf3 e5 14 dxe5 Qe8, Byrne ne-

glects his development. Thus he becomes the last opponent to play Fischer without caution.

The g5-bishop and queen are now in position to be forked; only the c3-knight must be deflected.

11 ... Na4!!

This is how you launch an attack that will catapult you to world fame.

White's objectively best reply is to acquiesce with 12 Nxa4 Nxe4 13 Qb4 Nxg5 (not 13...Bxf3 14 Bxe7) 14 Nxg5 Bxd1 15 Kxd1 Bxd4 16 Ke1, when, despite his insecure king and slight material deficit, the minor pieces give him chances to cope.

12 Qa3 Nxc3
13 bxc3 Nxe4!
14 Bxe7 Qb6!

Not 14...Qe8 15 Rd3! (If White's queen had played to b4 on move twelve, this defense would lose to 15...c5! 16 Qxb7 Nd6.)

Fischer's bold Exchange sacrifice makes Byrne's predicament stark. White faces disaster on the king-file; for example, 15 Be2 Rfe8 16 0-0 Qc7 17 Bh4 Nxc3 and Black wins a clear pawn, or 15 Bd3 Nxc3! The depth of the boy's concept is shown by the line he gave on acceptance of the Exchange: 15 Bxf8 Bxf8 16 Qb3 Nxc3! (a recurrent theme) 17 Qxb6 axb6 18 Ra1 Re8+ 19 Kd2 Ne4+ 20 Kc2 Nxf2 21 Rg1 Bf5+ and, with ample material and a dominating position, Black should win.

But the imaginative Byrne has yet a drop of poison left.

15 Bc4!?

If 15...Rfe8, White castles out of trouble. But now comes a second combination that gains a clear pawn—with the queen as stakes!

15

Nxc3!!

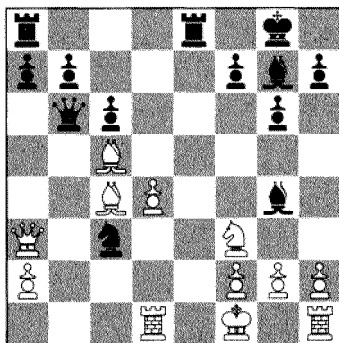
If now 16 Qxc3 Rfe8 or 16 Bxf8 Bxf8 17 Qxc3?? Bb4. But, after Byrne's next move, it appears that Fischer has overcombined.

16 Bc5

Rfe8+

17 Kf1

Fischer

63
B

D. Byrne

Black has won a pawn, to be sure, but his queen and knight are both attacked. The obvious 17...Nb5 is met by 18 Bxf7+! winning the Exchange (18...Kh8 19 Qd3), for if 18...Kxf7 19 Qb3+ Be6 20 Ng5+, White wins outright.

The stage is set for the move that went round the world.

17

Be6!!

The point!

If now 18 Qxc3 Qxc5! or 18 Bd3 Nb5, Black keeps his extra pawn with an easy win, while 18 Bxe6 leads to "Philidor's legacy": 18...Qb5+ 19 Kg1 Ne2+ 20 Kf1 Ng3+ 21 Kg1 Qf1+ 22 Rxf1 Ne2 mate! The interpolation of 18 d5 Bxd5 would change little, for if then 19 Rxd5 Qb1+ and mates.

In a "show me" mood, White accepts the queen.

18	Bxb6	Bxc4+
19	Kg1	Ne2+
20	Kf1	Nxd4+
21	Kg1	

Or else 21 Rd3 axb6 22 Qc3 Nxf3 23 Qxc4 Re1 mate. The king is pitifully entrapped by the multiple discovered checks.

21	...	Ne2+
22	Kf1	Nc3+
23	Kg1	axb6
24	Qb4	Ra4!

The final point of Fischer's combination, which makes his material advantage overwhelming. White cannot defend his rook. After 25 Qxb6 Nxd1 26 h3 Rxa2 27 Kh2 Nxf2, Byrne played it out until checkmate on move forty-one.

Fischer's later career justified Kmoch's grandiloquent description of this game as the Game of the Century.

A great American hope, once personified by Morphy, later Pillsbury, was reborn.



Fischer's promise was not long in finding fruition. At the age of fourteen he astounded and delighted his admirers by becoming Champion of the United States.

The immensity of this achievement makes it unique in chess history. All the strongest American players were vying for the title—yet it went to a fourteen-year-old child who marched through the event without a loss and thus gained a place in the World Championship Interzonal Tournament of 1958. No major national championship had ever been gained by one so young.

American chess players, who are not sentimental toward their masters, could not deny the thrill of Fischer's achievement. They began to think unthinkable thoughts and to re-

vive an old dream that had been considered impossible since the access of Soviet hegemony—the dream of an American World Champion.

Such grand ideas, circulated in the chess clubs and even the popular press, were bound to have their reverberations in the mind of an adolescent. It is, after all, considered quite normal for the young to have grandiose ambitions. In maturity we are supposed to abandon such ideas.

Those who indulged themselves in useless carping about some of Fischer's later actions should ask themselves: How does one react at the age of fourteen when the world proclaims him to be an unprecedented genius of his field?

Fischer believed what people said about him. But their predictions were superfluous: Fischer himself was the truest believer of them all. He threw himself into chess as if nothing else mattered. He devoured every bit of chess literature he could find, studied and analyzed incessantly, abandoned school. He dedicated himself to chess, for chess he loved. And so far Caissa had given him nothing but the pleasant exhilaration of triumph.

And what chess he could play! He knew nearly everything about certain openings, adding his own discoveries. His middle-game was streamlined, like the early Capablanca, and sparkled with brilliant attacks, like Alekhine. He was always sharp and aggressive but rarely overextended himself because he had an innate grasp of positional correctness. He had no disdain for endgame play; when it arose, he could flawlessly probe for hours, seeking to extract every last winning chance from a position.

Yet many are the players who can conduct a good attack. When the sun is shining, they excel. But let their position be buffeted by storms and they go under. Fischer is not among them. The most impressive example gained from encounters with him is the concentration, the intense will that he ex-

pend in an uncomfortable position. Here he holds on fiercely until the attack relents, and then he strikes back mercilessly with the counterattack. Once when he had succeeded in salvaging a precarious position, a reporter asked him if he had feared losing. Fischer replied, "Don't even mention losing to me. I can't stand to think of it!"

Aversion to loss doesn't lead him, however, into cautious maneuvering, the well-known "wood-shifting" in which some of the foremost players sometimes indulge. There is one characteristic of his play that sets him apart from all others: He *always* plays to win. That means, in practice, that he will play out a minimal advantage for a hundred moves even when he has already clinched first prize. It means that he almost never accepts a draw. And in a long, arduous tournament he never paces himself via short, "grandmaster" draws.

The fact that Fischer is such a fierce fighter makes puzzling the fact that he once omitted from a listing of the ten greatest players of all time the legendary name of Emanuel Lasker, whom he called a "coffeehouse player." For Lasker was the prime exponent of chess as a fight. A minor uproar ensued as the devotees of Lasker rose to defend his memory.

I believe that the explanation lies in Fischer's reluctance to credit a very real component of chess play, particularly his own—the brute killer instinct. Fischer recognizes chess as an infinitely absorbing medium of beautiful ideas. A Fischer game is a logical organic whole whose tactical moments flow naturally from correct strategy, and not opportunism. Chess is not for him a means to an end, be it for some a livelihood, a subsidized sport, a forum for testing philosophic hypotheses, or an outlet for baser emotions. To Fischer, chess is an end in itself.

Now let us see more of his creative art, and the progress of the dream.



Fischer's total dedication to chess led him to intense study of the openings, even those popular in olden times. From an early preoccupation with a few pet lines he extended his repertoire to include an occasional surprise weapon, such as the King's Gambit. With White, he always opened with the e-pawn "on principle."

Here is an example of one of his extraordinary contributions which upset current theory.

White: Robert Fischer

Black: Svetozar Gligoric

Candidates' Tournament, Yugoslavia, 1959

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	d4	cxd4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	d6
6	Bc4	

Adoption of the Sicilian Defense against Fischer is an act of courage and doubtful wisdom. It calls forth here his favorite deployment of the f1-bishop—the Leonhardt-Sozin Attack.

The normal reply is 6...e6; the sharpest, 6...Qb6; while 6...g6 runs into 7 Nxc6 bxc6 8 e5 (8...dxe5?? 9 Bxf7+).

Gligoric wants a Dragon formation.

6	...	Bd7
7	Bb3	g6
8	f3	Na5

Simplification with 8...Nxd4 is indicated (Fischer). But

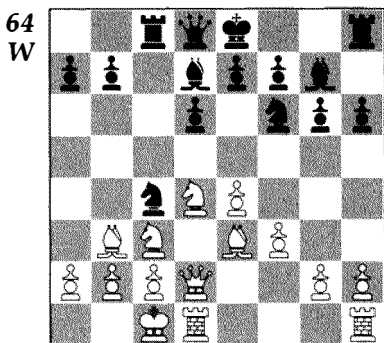
Black follows a known system, designed to neutralize White's coming kingside attack.

9	Bg5	Bg7
10	Qd2	h6(?)

Falling in with White's finesse of developing the c1-bishop first to g5 in order to provoke a pawn weakness. To be sure, 10...0-0 allows a powerful attack with Bh6 and h4-h5. Black should act on the queen-wing and leave the king in the center for a while.

11	Be3	Rc8
12	0-0-0	Nc4

Gligoric



Fischer

Similar positions had been reached in numerous games. Invariably, White here snapped off the knight, preserving the strong e3-bishop, which bears down on h6 and threatens the exchange of Black's key defensive piece—his black-squared bishop.

The sixteen-year-old Fischer, faithful in his own ideas, here smashes an assumption hallowed by grandmaster practice.

13 Qe2!

An extraordinary innovation. Everyone before had underestimated in this kind of position what Fischer proceeds now to demonstrate—the strength of the b3-bishop.

13 ... Nxe3

14 Qxe3 0-0?

A real case of “castling into it”! Much better is 14...Qb6 or ...Qa5. Fischer’s strategy has lulled Gligoric into a false sense of security. Now comes direct attack.

15 g4 Qa5

16 h4 e6

Sooner or later necessary, to prevent Nd5. But the weakening of the d-pawn is important. Keeping the h-file closed with 16...h5 17 g5 Ne8 18 f4 leads to a cramped game.

17 Nde2 Rc6

18 g5 hxg5

19 hxg5 Nh5

Knowing Fischer, one can now confidently await an Exchange sacrifice to open up the h-file and get to the king. When the position presents the chance, he is a relentless king-hunter.

20 f4 Rfc8

21 Kb1 Qb6

22 Qf3 Rc5

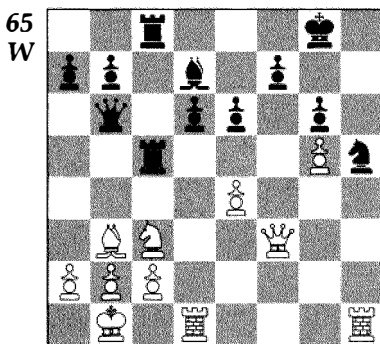
23 Qd3!!

The attempted breakthrough with 23 f5 is now unclear. White “tickles” the d-pawn. If Black defends it with 23...R5c6 or ...Bf8, then 24 f5, in conjunction with Nd5 and/or Rxf5, becomes powerful, as Fischer has shown.

But Fischer's move involves the sacrifice of a pawn and the Exchange, requiring deep foresight.

23	...	Bxc3
24	Nxc3	Nxf4
25	Qf3	Nh5

Gligoric



Fischer

After 25...e5 26 Ne2! White smashes through all obstacles.

26	Rxh5!	gxh5
27	Qxh5	Be8

The king cannot escape: 27...Kf8 28 Qh8+ Ke7 29 Qf6+ Ke8 30 Rh1 etc. But now he threatens to do so.

28	Qh6!	Rxc3
29	bxc3	

Black is able to meet 29 Rh1 with 29...Qd4, while one commentator's "improvement," 29 g6, is refuted by 29...Rxb3!

29		Rxc3
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Black can put up more resistance with 29...Qe3, but after either 30 Rh1 Qxc3 31 g6 Qg7 32 Qh2! (Bronstein) or 30 Rd3

Qf4 31 Rh3 Qe5 32 g6 Qg7 33 gxf7+ Bxf7 34 Qh4 Kf8 35 Qh8+ Qg8 36 Qf6! (Barcza), White's attack prevails.

30	g6	fxg6
31	Rh1	Qd4
32	Qh7+	Black resigns

The Dragon was seldom adopted against Fischer again.



By qualifying at the age of fifteen for the world challengers' tournament, Bobby Fischer became the youngest grandmaster in history. He "merely" finished fifth in that event, which brought together the strongest aspirants for the world crown. The progress of the dream was in good order, even ahead of schedule.

On the home front he continued to sweep all before him, compiling a string of national championship victories without parallel in chess history.

The crescendo of stirring achievements began one day to be punctuated by discordant notes. There were complaints by Fischer on matters of chess administration, unusual requirements raised before he would consent to play. These were facilely explained as the eccentricities of a prodigy.

The first public crisis occurred during a match with Reshevsky in 1961. It broke up in acrimony in a dispute over scheduling. Opposing Fischer's will were such elements as the convenience of patrons and the legalistic approach of arbiters. Genius was not permitted to have special prerogatives! An unfortunate notion was here introduced: the idea of forcing Fischer to be reasonable. He was not to be forced. He seemed to believe, I am Caissa's Chosen. Though the world protest, I go my own way. She will vindicate me. And within his scheme of values, he was right.

Such experiences reinforced the isolation of a young man who had cut himself off from conventional American life in order to devote himself to his true love, chess.

While the Soviet colossus continued its reign over world chess, utilizing every advantage of collective effort, one individualist stood against it. His limitless potential and imminent challenge were well appreciated. Fischer's still uninterrupted ascent reached another milestone in 1962, when he took the Interzonal, far ahead of his Soviet competitors. Thus he won a rare accolade from their usually grudging spokesman: "Fischer is going to be World Champion!"

So an American dream found its Russian echo and became an international topic. Few skeptics remained. The realm of Caissa now teemed with a cult of believers. And the ranks of the faithful spanned from Moscow to California, from grandmasters to amateurs.

The dream neared its crisis at the tropical West Indian island of Curaçao, site of the candidates' event of 1962. Many confidently expected Fischer's upward surge to continue. Fischer himself, the truest believer, expected to win the tournament and become, at the age of nineteen, official challenger for the world title.

Fischer's approach to this marathon event was vastly different from that of the five Soviet participants. While they paced themselves with a succession of friendly and perfunctory draws, he played every game intensely for the win. Taxing himself, he made some errors upon which his well-rested opponents were quick to seize. Consequently, he won many games but could finish no higher than the middle. First place devolved on the anti-hero Petrosian. Fischer, the child of destiny, had been stopped.

Most of us in maturity learn to defer our dreams. When reality does not conform to our hopes and desires, we postpone them. But to Fischer, the setback in Curaçao took on a

sinister aspect: Justice had been denied. What was rightfully his had been taken away. His framework of thought did not include the possibility that he had suffered just a temporary reversal, that he shared human frailty. Were evil forces at work? Soon he published his accusation, "The Russians Have Fixed World Chess."*

There was enough objective evidence to confirm his feeling of grievance. Fischer vowed never again to take part in a system of world championship competition "rigged" in favor of one nation.



Later that year, in this disturbed atmosphere, he showed his enduring capacity for sparkling play. On the day before this game against Najdorf was played, Fischer said that he would defeat his famous opponent in twenty-five moves.

Sheer bravado? Colossal egotism? Psychological warfare with the impressionable Najdorf? Or was it mystic faith? Faith indeed Fischer had. And many fellow believers. What he failed to announce beforehand, however, was the unveiling of one of the strikingly original gems of the creative tradition in chess.

White: Robert Fischer

Black: Miguel Najdorf

Olympiad, Varna, 1962

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6

* *Sports Illustrated* 20 (August 1962).

Courageously, Najdorf plays his own patented variation. Fischer, always well prepared, essays an unusual response, which usually aims for a quick kingside advance. (Classical rules would call for a developing move.)

6 h3 b5

An impetuous move that meets with a typically sharp Fischer reply. Convenient would be 6...e6 7 g4 h6

7 Nd5!?

Moving a developed piece again—something Morphy would not have done. Already Fischer has a new plan—to hem in Black's c8-bishop after 7...Nxd5 8 exd5. The normal response, 7...e6, proves disadvantageous after 8 Nxf6+ Qxf6 9 c4.

Fischer, in his notes, later said that Black's best move is acceptance of the offer 7...Nxe4! 8 Qf3 Nc5 9 b4! (better than 9 Nf6+ gxf6 10 Qxa8 Bb7) 9...e6 10 bxc5 exd5 11 Qxd5 Ra7, and this double-edged position Fischer assesses as even.

Against Fischer, few would risk such complications. Najdorf instead permits a weakening of his pawn structure.

7 ... Bb7(?)
8 Nxf6+ gxf6
9 c4!

Continuing his vigorous treatment, Fischer gains time and open lines at the cost of a pawn.

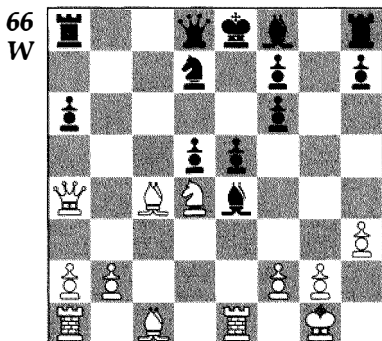
9 ... bxc4
10 Bxc4 Bxe4
11 0-0 d5
12 Re1 e5?

Black is being pressed in the center, so he tries to block it up. Already sacrifices are in the air; 12...Rg8 13 Rxe4! dxe4

14 Qh5! The best defensive hope would be 12...dxc4 13 Rxe4 Qd5 14 Qf3 e6 (Fischer).

13 Qa4 Nd7

Najdorf



Fischer

Or 13...Qd7 14 Bb5.

14 Rxe4!

An elegant speculative sacrifice that nicely shows Fischer's magisterial command of the entire board. There is no question of his seeing through to the finish; instead, he grasps that the unassailable, beautifully placed knight on f5 will be worth more than a rook. Meanwhile the Black king, trapped in the center, will be buffeted by the pieces on open lines.

14	...	dxe4
15	Nf5	Bc5
16	Ng7+	Ke7
17	Nf5+	Ke8

The king has been deprived of the castling right. How now to continue the attack?

18 Be3!

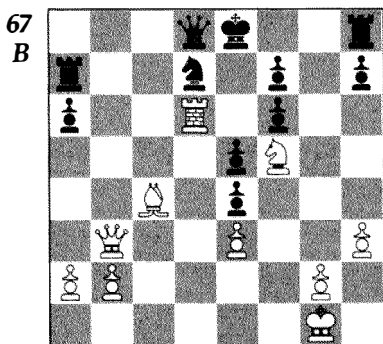
The attack will wait a move! Fischer, with utter simplicity, merely exchanges away Black's key defensive piece.

18	...	Bxe3
19	fxe3	Qb6
20	Rd1	Ra7
21	Rd6	Qd8

Najdorf is without resource: for example, 21...Qxb2 22 Bxf7+! Kxf7 23 Rxd7+ Rxd7 24 Qxd7+ Kg6 25 Qg7+ Kxf5 26 Qg4 mate.

22 Qb3

Najdorf



Fischer

Black is powerless to resist direct attack, for if 22...Rf8 23 Ng7+ Ke7 24 Qa3, it is all over.

22	...	Qc7
23	Bxf7+	Kd8
24	Be6	Black resigns

Just in time, for after 24...Rb7 (if 24...Qc8 25 Qb6+ Rc7 26 Rxd7+) 25 Qa4 Qc8 26 Qa5+ Ke8 27 Qxa6 Kd8 28 Bxd7

Rxd7 29 Rxd7+ Qxd7 30 Qxf6+ Kc7 31 Qxe5+ Kb6 32 Qxh8 Qxf5, White is three pawns ahead in an endgame (Fischer).

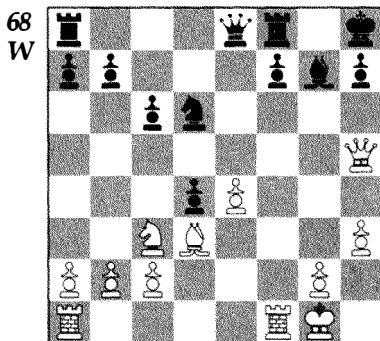
The streamlined, economical conduct of this game by Fischer was worthy of the young Capablanca.



The chess world was now confronted with a disturbing paradox: Fischer, widely acclaimed as Caissa's most promising talent, refused to compete for her crown. In his infrequent appearances he did not cease to dazzle.

In the following position he produced a move that is unsurpassed in all chess history for beauty and originality.

Benko



Fischer

New York, 1963–1964

If 19 e5 f5, White achieves nothing.

Fischer played 19 Rf6!!.



There are certain peak performances in chess history of a select few who tower so much over their contemporaries that they sweep all before them. Such a moment in Fischer's career occurred in one U.S. Championship in which he defeated

all eleven opponents, without allowing even a single draw to several grandmasters.

This game, against one of his toughest rivals in that event, shows an irresistible force. From a nearly symmetrical opening position Fischer concocts an overwhelming attack within a few moves.

White: Robert Byrne

Black: Robert Fischer

U.S. Championship, New York, 1963–1964

Grünfeld Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	g3	c6
4	Bg2	

With this and the next move, White contents himself with equality. The previous meeting between the same opponents went 4 d5 b5 5 dxc6 bxc4 6 cxd7+ Nbx d7 7 Bg2 Rb8, and Black's piece activity counterbalanced his isolated pawns.

4	...	d5
5	cx d5	cx d5
6	Nc3	Bg7
7	e3	0-0
8	Nge2	Nc6
9	0-0	b6
10	b3	Ba6
11	Ba3	Re8
12	Qd2	

The near-symmetry suggests that we are about to witness a few more perfunctory moves and an amicable conclusion. Yet Fischer now seizes upon a risky plan to inject dynamic chances into the game.

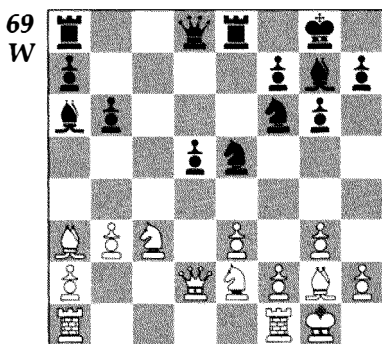
White could have avoided trouble with 12 Rc1 or even 12 f4.

12 ... e5!

Fischer is fearless and always plays sharply to win. The move played requires exceptional judgment. No ordinary master would so weaken his d-pawn against a top opponent. Byrne must have been surprised indeed. Fischer, with the capacity of genius to perceive the elements of an exceptional situation, correctly estimates that his dynamic chances justify the risk—although, as we shall see, he might have based it on a faulty calculation.

13 dxe5 Nxe5

Fischer



R. Byrne

14 Rfd1?

The wrong rook. An international controversy arose over the results of the correct move, 14 Rad1. Fischer originally gave the continuation 14 Rad1 Ne4 15 Nxe4 dxe4 16 Bxe4 Qxd2 17 Rxd2 Nc4 18 Bxa8 Nxd2 19 Rd1 Nc4 20 bxc4 Rxa8, stating that Black has the better endgame. Then Grandmas-

ter Averbakh, avenging various Fischer refutations of Soviet analyses, pointed out a gigantic error: 20 Bc6 wins for White!

Fischer later admitted to being stunned and spending hours just staring at the position, "not willing to let my brilliancy go down the drain." The remark shows his purity of devotion to chess. It is not the final, flashy sacrifice by which he judges himself, but the correctness of all the preceding play.

At last he found 14 Rad1 Qc8!, an indirect defense of the d-pawn, which enables Black's initiative to continue. He gives the following possibilities:

(a) 15 Nxd5 Nxd5 16 Bxd5 Rd8 17 f4 Rxd5! 18 Qxd5 Bb7! and White must enter an inferior endgame with 19 Qd8+ in view of 19 Qd2 Qh3.

(b) 15 Qc1 Ne4! 16 Nxd5 Bxe2 17 Bxe4 Kh8! 18 Qxc8 Raxc8 19 Ne7 Rcb8 and Black wins the Exchange for a pawn.

(c) 15 Rc1 Qd7! 16 Rcd1 Rad8 and Black has gained a free move.

(d) 15 Bb2 (relatively best) ...Qf5 and "Black keeps the initiative."

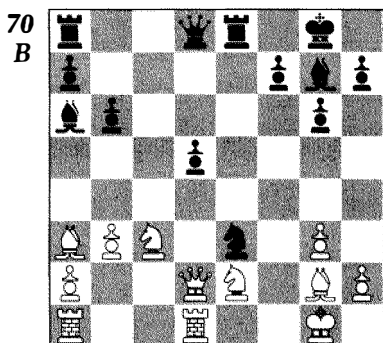
14 ... Nd3
15 Qc2?

Byrne must have seen what was coming and dismissed it as unsound. But surely Fischer would not lightly place his knight on an untenable square. Better was 15 Nf4 or 15 Nd4 but after 15...Ne4, Black keeps a bind.

In fact, Fischer has calculated a ten-move combination.

15 ... Nxf2!
16 Kxf2 Ng4+
17 Kg1 Nxe3
18 Qd2

Fischer



R. Byrne

Byrne has seen this far and assumed his position to be sound. If Black takes the Exchange, the White pieces will predominate. But Byrne has overlooked the strength of Fischer's next move, which he described as a "shocker."

18 ... N×g2!

19 K×g2 d4!

Forcing open all the lines to the king.

20 N×d4 Bb7+

21 Kf1

On 21 Kg1, then 21...Bxd4+ 22 Qxd4 Re1+! (the point) and wins. Also without hope is 21 Kf2 Qd7! followed by 22...Qh3 with a winning attack.

21 ... Qd7!

22 White resigns

Fischer planned the following finish: 22 Qf2 Qh3+ 23 Kg1 Re1+! 24 Rxe1 Bxd4 and mates.



As he entered adulthood, the paradox heightened: Although Fischer, more than anyone alive, had merged his identity with chess, he withdrew increasingly from chess play. He raised conditions which organizers were not prepared to meet: financial and physical arrangements, safeguards against all fortuitous results. For example, he declared that a match should be decided only by six outright wins—a prohibitive condition unless one plans for a contest of months.

The world labeled him an eccentric; by his own lights, the world was wrong if not malicious. When the rules of world championship competition were drastically changed to answer his objections, he nevertheless refused to take part. An essay appeared called "The Self-Mate of Bobby Fischer."*

Yet the dream remained alive, and nourished itself on further legendary accomplishments of its hero. The most heartening of these emerged at the powerful Piatigorsky Cup Tournament of 1966. On finding Fischer in last place after the first half, some of his most loyal admirers became alarmed. They could only marvel at his performance in the finish—he put together a succession of victories which nearly brought him first prize. It was the greatest comeback in chess history.

Then Fischer consented to enter the World Interzonal in Tunisia, in 1967. As he moved quickly out in front, optimism again reigned—only to be smashed. He withdrew in another dispute over scheduling. (This matter is complicated by his adherence to an esoteric religious sect, with strict sabbath observance.)

To think of Bobby Fischer is to think of contradictions—purity and complexity, disarming innocence and shackling suspicion, consummate talent and tantalizing reluctance. He surpasses all in comprehending the chess pieces, but trails in

* Eliot Hearst, "The Self-Mate of Bobby Fischer," *Chess Life* (July 1964).

understanding himself. Somehow his conviction of the highest destiny is yet admixed with a hint of foredoom.



The decade of the 1970s opened on a note of high hope, at least in the chess world. Fischer was persuaded to compete in the Interzonal at Palma de Mallorca, and swept through it to the world championship candidates' matches.

Fischer then amazed the world by demolishing his first two match opponents by the unheard-of scores of 6–0. A Soviet journal declared, "A miracle has occurred" (inadvertently heralding the imminent, unprecedented appearance of a chess player on the cover of the most popular U.S. photo magazine). At one point his winning streak reached the phenomenal total of twenty consecutive games.

His brilliance now muted, Fischer was playing a sort of chess hardly ever seen in the contemporary era. He seemed to be approaching a category ascribed only to the legendary Capablanca—freedom from chess error.

In the final candidates' match of 1971, Fischer's aura of invincibility was pierced early. After five games the score was equal, and ex-champion Petrosian was the "moral" leader. Then Fischer unleashed another winning streak, sweeping the last four games. He seized the time and so became the official world championship challenger for 1972.

The dream waxed strongly again in American chess lovers. To them, one tragic Morphy was enough. One could search chess history in vain for a match more charged with anticipatory excitement than the encounter to come: Fischer vs. Spassky. No one could ask for a more stirring combative spectacle than these two consummate, creative, fighting players in their prime of life.

But Fischer was already succeeding in his most important struggle, whose resolution had always lain in his hands alone. That is Fischer's struggle with himself.

A specter was haunting Soviet chess, the specter of Bobby Fischer.

The rest has become the best-known chapter in chess history. Fischer's decisive victory over Spassky was a boon to the popularization of chess in most of the world. Yet the uproarious action away from the board interfered with the artistic harmony of the play, chiefly the champion's.

Chess ideas were nonetheless enriched on the level of opening theory, where Fischer confronted his opponent with a number of sharp innovations. Outstanding was the sixth game, in which Fischer sprang the major surprise of the Queen's Gambit and won in truly classical style.

Of Fischer's reign, bounties were expected. But in 1975, for reasons to be seen, the king, in effect, abdicated.

White: Robert Fischer

Black: Boris Spassky

World Championship Match, Reykjavík, 1972

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 c4(!)

One of several opening surprises that Fischer prepared for this match. He had tried this move only twice before.

1	...	e6
2	Nf3	d5
3	d4	Nf6
4	Nc3	Be7
5	Bg5	0-0
6	e3	h6
7	Bh4	b6

Tartakower's Defense, Spassky's tried-and-true favorite, with which he had never lost.

8 cxd5 Nxd5

9	Bxe7	Qxe7
10	Nxd5	exd5
11	Rc1	Be6
12	Qa4	

So different from Fischer's usual attacks. He threatens with 13 b4 to "squeeze" Black's backward c-pawn.

12	...	c5
13	Qa3	Rc8
14	Bb5	

Borrowed from Furman vs. Geller, USSR, 1970. It's directed at ...Nd7, which Black needs to keep the c5-pawn a fixture.

14	...	a6
15	dx c5	bxc5
16	0-0	Ra7?!

The same rook-disconnecting move that his second, Geller, had chosen. Geller had recommended 16...Qb7, while 16...Qa7 is also satisfactory.

17	Be2	Nd7
18	Nd4!	Qf8?!

A lesser evil was 18...Nf6 19 Nb3 c4, ceding the d4 strong point in the endgame.

19	Nxe6	fxe6
20	e4!	d4?!

Spassky relies on a solid pawn center but allows the bishop to go to c4 and doesn't see that his king side will crumble. Best was 20...c4, hoping to defend his pawns. Now he hopes for ...e5.

21	f4	Qe7
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22 e5! Rb8

And not 22...Nb6 23 f5 exf5? 24 Qb3+ winning the knight (K. Smith).

23 Bc4 Kh8

24 Qh3 Nf8

More active, thus less painful, is 24...Rxb2 25 Bxe6—but then “White’s center pawns are too menacing” (Evans).

25 b3 a5

26 f5 exf5

27 Rxf5 Nh7

A trap: 28 Rf7? Ng5 winning the Exchange.

28 Rcf1 Qd8

29 Qg3 Re7

30 h4 Rbb7

31 e6 Rbc7

32 Qe5 Qe8

33 a4

Irrelevant? Fischer lets Spassky know how helpless he is.

33 ... Qd8

34 R1f2 Qe8

35 R2f3 Qd8

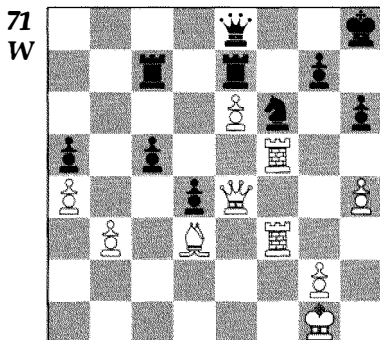
36 Bd3 Qe8

37 Qe4!

At last, the deciding threat: two rook checks, then Qh7, mate.

37 ... Nf6

Spassky



Fischer

38	Rxf6!	gxf6
39	Rxf6	Kg8
40	Bc4	Kh8
41	Qf4	Black resigns

The end is near. For example, 41...Kg8 42 Qxh6 Rh7 43 Rf8+ Qxf8 44 e7+ Rf7 45 exf8=R mate. When Spassky joined in the applause, Fischer was so moved that he "had to go away." With this win he seized the lead and would never be caught.



For two decades after the sensational match in Reykjavík, the chess world longed in vain to see Fischer play again. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) repeatedly denied him the rules he demanded for title matches—only to adopt them later, for others. Fischer wanted princely sums to make one appearance, prohibitive prices for just an interview. This writer was involved in a project to teach chess by recording that would have brought the new champion half a million dollars. He turned it down. Why? "What if I make an over-

sight? Ten years from now the Soviets could attack me for it." So much for the myth of Fischer's greed. Eschewing the riches set to fall into his lap, he retreated to a shadowy, remote, solitary existence. He remained in touch with the family of a minister of a church-cult, before its breakup and his disillusionment. Journalists opined that he spent his time reading conspiracy theories.

But he was also keeping up with chess developments. Just twenty years after being crowned, Bobby Fischer miraculously materialized in wartorn Yugoslavia, to play a second "world title" match with his friend Spassky. He had his own rules: draws did not count, ten wins would decide, and they would use his patented chess clock, which eliminated blitz finishes and adjournments. A record \$5 million purse was put up by a dubious Serbian quasi-banker to rescue the prestige of his nation.

Spitting on a U.S. government prohibition on "trading" with an outlaw nation, accusing Karpov and Kasparov of fixing all their games, giving vent to his trite ideas of persecution by "world Jewry," Fischer earned the opprobrium of the press. But, after all, we are interested in chess. He won easily, 10-5, with fifteen draws. Spassky seemed programmed to repeat 1972 and offered meager resistance in several games, while Fischer mostly prevailed with old methods, though he slipped unusually often. The verdict: The messiah of chess had not returned, rust was showing, but who else could have lain off for two decades and then played like one of the world's top ten? Fischer received a laurel for "keeping" his world crown, while Kasparov offered insults for the quality of play. Threatened with arrest if he returned home, Bobby lost his protector, Vasiljevic, who fled the country after investors stormed the Jugoskandic Bank, whose collapse revealed a gigantic pyramid scheme. Reported to have lost all or part of his fortune, Bobby remained calm at the eye of the

storm—had not every chess master in Yugoslavia led a charmed life? Alas, Yugoslavia is no more. But Belgrade's *Chess Informant* survives, and boasts a very famous reader, born half a century ago in Chicago, one who gained this accolade from his friendly rival, Mikhail Tal: "Fischer is the greatest genius to descend from the chess heavens."

17

KARPOV: THE PROFITS OF PRECISION

Style? I have no style. □

—Anatoly Karpov

Let us examine the effects of the tumultuous Fischer-Spassky match of 1972. Spassky's lopsided defeat propelled shock waves through the Soviet chess and sports establishment. As expected, he, and to a lesser extent other Soviet grandmasters, were made scapegoats. He was castigated in the press, criticized by a high State committee, and restricted for many months from playing abroad. For the chess elite, accused of indolence, the screws were tightened all along the line.

Notably, every one of the leading players was obliged to take part in the 1973 Soviet Championship. It is ironic that the brilliant winner of this strongest championship ever held was none other than the much-maligned Boris Spassky. Yet a year later many of the best players were again shunning the arduous event. A more relaxed regime had evidently returned:

Fischer had already resigned his FIDE world title. The tide of global chess dominance was returning to its "natural" direction. But let us look at the sequel of the big match farther west.

Fischer's dramatic victory, with the unprecedented purse of a quarter-million dollars and a leap in chess interest throughout the world, seemed to signal a new era for the ancient game. Euphoria in the United States reached such heights that chess masters, writers, and teachers quickly decided that they now had a viable profession.

Much of their calculation presupposed the active appearance of the World Champion in various activities. But this factor failed to materialize. So, although chess maintained such a level of activity as never before, the immediate prospect of a status as secure as in lands where chess is state-supported proved an illusion. And the news that Fischer would not defend his title in 1975 crushed some remaining optimists.

Fischer's insistence on a title match of unlimited duration to be decided by ten wins, draws not counting, won a grudging ratification from proud delegates of FIDE, but the adamant official Soviet opposition to his key demands, plus his own refusal to compromise his convictions, doomed the match. So keen was the desire of the Soviet side to regain "their" world championship, fight or no, that the resources of three state ministries were mobilized to influence voting delegates. In the showdown vote, Fischer's demand that the champion retain his title in case of a 9–9 tie, with the purse to be split equally, was defeated. It would have required the challenger to score at worst ten wins to eight in order to wrest the title. The vote was a regrettable victory of authoritarianism over the cause of chess progress, reviving the old fallacy of "teaching Fischer a lesson." It nullified the second-largest purse in the history of sport—\$5 million, offered by the Philippines—and deprived the chess world of its triennial feast.

Never before did a man give up so much money on a question of principle. Since all the world champions in the Soviet era entered their matches with built-in advantages, Fischer would accept no less. But his seeming demand for a two-game advantage resulted in epithets like "outrageous," "unsportsmanlike," etc. Grandmaster Flohr wrote, "Is Fischer quite sane?"

These charges need an answer. Charles Kalme, a mathematician and chess master, has proved that the 9-9 tie provision is in fact *easier* for the challenger than the old 12-12 tie rule in the twenty-four-game matches where draws counted. Because there, in the 11½-11½ situation, a mere draw means sudden death to the challenger's hopes.



FIDE proceeded to nominate a new World Champion. Anatoly Karpov, who had won the right in a series of matches to challenge Fischer, was only twenty-three years old, a model product of the Soviet system.

To characterize the contribution of one so young was an unexpected task, imposed by the vexing battle of the chess politicians described above. Early evidence suggests that Karpov, the first World Champion crowned without winning a title match, was less sanguine about his status than are the Moscow bureaucrats who captured it for him.

The critic's task in approaching Karpov's chess is eased by the fact that he has played, from the start, like a competitive veteran. Which is to say he was never attracted by combinative beauty (like, for example, his contemporary, the ingenious Ljubojevic of Yugoslavia), only by the quiet accumulation of points. Thus he was called "very mature." But there is a great deal to be said for youth. Young men who behave like their fathers, pursuing careers instead of pretty girls, are not beloved.

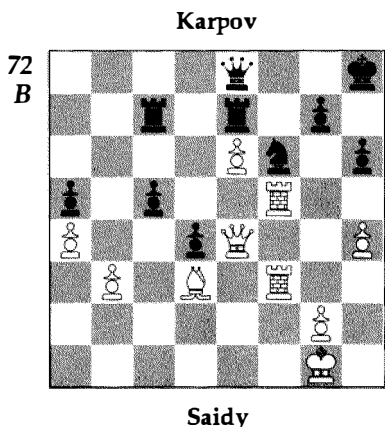
Karpov was born in 1951 in Zlatoust, in the Ural Mountains, and made steady progress after learning the moves at age four. At twelve he made the happy discovery of a book of Capablanca's games, and his future seemed set. From the greatest of all classicists, "Tolya" took the basis of his own play. With his later nurturance in the bosom of Soviet chess, including lessons with Botvinnik himself, his big talent was assured of development.

What if one took a minor Capablanca, grafted onto him a strong will to win, and added all the interim opening knowledge as elaborated by the Soviet school? Some would posit, An invincible human chess machine. But no—one would have merely a studious Capablanca who tried harder. Of such stuff heroes today cannot be made.



Before my first game with Karpov, at San Antonio in 1972, I looked over dozens of his past efforts. I found there excellent technique in the exploitation of small advantages and a very low number of lost games. But where were the sacrificial attacks characteristic of a youth touched by destiny? Nowhere to be found! Something in this Russian soul was missing; but it surely wasn't the desire for points, which he piled up with admirable efficiency.

For nearly five hours in our game, each side essayed a series of maneuvers without real effect. On move thirty-seven the following position presented itself:



Here White's chief disadvantage is on the clock; he is in time pressure. Instead of the expected occupation of the open file, Karpov played:

37 Rd8

A subtle move, with an important positional point. In the time available it was beyond me! An easy reply was 38 Qe2. Instead, I played the obvious.

38 Ra1? b3!

Karpov played the last move immediately. It forces the exchange of White's c-pawn and thus a small but possibly decisive weakness in White's pawn formation, which became evident after the further moves 39 Ra6 bxc2 40 Qxc2 Nd5. In the remainder of the game, Karpov played successfully against the loose pawns, forced further weaknesses, and won.

There are two remarkable things about this game. First, only a player with a fine positional sense would see how serious is the weakening of White's position after the threatened ...b3. Second, only a competitor of eminent practicality

would play a move harmless in itself (37...Rd8) and dangerous only against the opponent in time shortage.

The game below is both Karpov's favorite and one of his most enterprising efforts. He departs, just once, from total calculation, and indulges in a small speculative risk. It should be approached not as typical Karpovian chess but as a hint of that streak of brilliance that lies dialectically hidden within every clever technician.

White: Anatoly Karpov

Black: Boris Spassky

Match of Three Teams, Moscow, 1973

Ruy Lopez

1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	a6
4	Ba4	Nf6
5	O-O	Be7
6	Re1	b5
7	Bb3	d6
8	c3	O-O
9	h3	

These opening moves are as banal nowadays as the Orthodox Queen's Gambit a half-century ago. Spassky now plays the vogueish knight retreat of Breyer's, and Karpov chooses the less direct advance of one square.

9	...	Nb8
10	d3	Bb7
11	Nbd2	Nbd7
12	Nf1	Nc5
13	Bc2	Re8
14	Ng3	Bf8

15	b4	Ncd7
16	d4	

Otherwise Black will free his game by achieving ...d5 himself. He will now remain slightly cramped as long as White's central pawn phalanx persists.

16	...	h6
17	Bd2	Nb6
18	Bd3	g6

The first new move! All the rest has been played before. Such is the burden of accumulated knowledge in today's competition. But there is plenty of chess left.

19	Qc2	Nfd7
20	Rad1	Bg7

With the threat of the freeing ...d5, Spassky's maneuvers have posed a problem, which Karpov solves in the direction of clarity.

21	dxex	dxex
----	------	------

Spassky's refusal to exchange pieces here with 21...Nxe5 and two moves later indicates that he does not want a draw.

22	c4	bxc4
23	Bxc4	Qe7!?

Spassky must think it too laborious to deal with the problem of the backward c-pawn via 23...Nxc4 24 Qxc4 Rc8 followed by ...Qe7, ...Bf8 if needed, and ...c5. He hastens to advance it forthwith, at the cost of letting the Spanish bishop survive. But Karpov plots an unexpected sacrifice of the Exchange.

24	Bb3	c5
25	a4!?	c4

Weak is 25...cxb4 26 a5 when White has a potent Bxb4! in reserve. Now, of course, not 26 Bxc4? Rac8.

26	Ba2	Bc6
27	a5	Ba4
28	Qc1	

So White must lose the Exchange for a pawn and some indeterminate attacking chances. A great, sacrificial risk in the romantic tradition? Hardly. But probably bigger than any Karpov had taken thus far in his brief career.

28	...	Nc8!?
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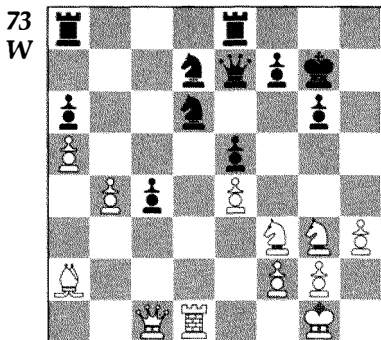
A major alternative is 28...Bxd1 29 Rxd1 Na4 30 Bxh6 Bxh6 31 Qxh6, when Karpov has pointed out a winning attack on 31...Nc3 32 Bxc4 Nxd1 33 Qxg6+. But his statement that 31...Nf8 32 Rc1 gives White "beautiful attacking chances" appears highly debatable. After either 32...Rac8 or 32...Qxb4 Black ought to maintain the balance without difficulty, thanks to the fine defensive knight on f8.

29	Bxh6	Bxd1
30	Rxd1	Nd6?

A move that loses with amazing swiftness! It has a tactical point (31 Bxg7 Kxg7 32 Qd2 Rad8 33 Qxd6? Nf8) but misses another. Karpov gives as best 30...Ra7, with White having "more than adequate" compensation for the Exchange after 31 Bxg7 Kxg7 32 Qxc4.

31	Bxg7	Kxg7
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Spassky



Karpov

32 Qg5!

The queen enters powerfully, exploiting the fact that a trade of queens would cost Black a knight. The threat is now 33 Rxd6 (Qxd6? 34 Nf5+), so Spassky acquiesces in a lethal weakening of his king position.

32	...	f6
33	Qg4	Kh7
34	Nh4	Black resigns

The dual pressure on the queen-file and the kingside is unbearable. If 34...Nf8 35 Nxf6 Nxf6 36 Qh5+ Kg7 37 Rxd6 or 34...Rg8 35 Bxc4 Rg7 36 Rxd6 Qxd6 37 Nhf5 and wins (Karpov).

Just a few months before the latter game, the loser was censured by a high state body and pilloried in public print for losing the world crown to an American. Stern measures were adopted to get the elite Soviet players to produce. The game itself was a harbinger of the future.



By the time of the Nice Olympiad the following year, Karpov was already riding high. At the chessboard he was invinci-

ble. Away from it he was cool and assured, even as his fate in the history books was being decided upstairs by FIDE. In the arena, he produced this lesson.

White: Anatoly Karpov

Black: Wolfgang Unzicker

Nice, 1974

Ruy Lopez

1	e4	e5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	a6
4	Ba4	Nf6
5	O-O	Be7
6	Re1	b5
7	Bb3	d6
8	c3	O-O
9	h3	Na5
10	Bc2	c5
11	d4	Qc7
12	Nbd2	Nc6

A common alternative is 12...cxd4. Now Karpov elects to close up the center, while cramping Black's pieces.

13	d5	Nd8
14	a4	Rb8
15	axb5	axb5
16	b4	

Reestablishing a tension on the queenside. We shall see why White wishes to induce ...c4. Now the West German grandmaster concentrates only on contesting the a-file, ignoring for the rest of the game the chances for counterplay with ...Ne8, ...g6, ...Ng7, and ...f5.

16	...	Nb7!?
----	-----	-------

17	Nf1	Bd7
18	Be3	Ra8
19	Qd2	Rfc8
20	Bd3	g6
21	Ng3	Bf8!?

Again, active play is 21...Ne8.

22	Ra2	c4?!
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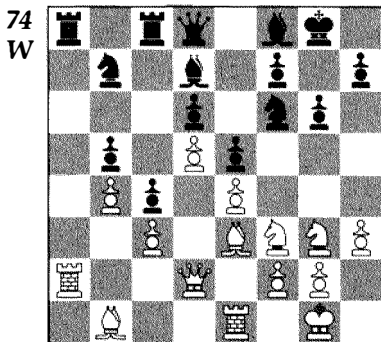
Too long tickled by the pressure on his c-pawn, Black improperly ends the tension. The advance will allow an unsuspected resource to White. It is not known why Unzicker rejected 22...Rxa2 23 Qxa2 cxb4 24 cxb4 Qc3, and neither 25 Qb1 nor 25 Qa7 need be feared. Throughout the game he plays as passively as one mesmerized.

23	Bb1
----	-----

Karpov shrewdly retards his battle for the open file in order to maintain prophylaxis against ...Ne8 and ...f5. Now Black prepares to capture the file.

23	Qd8
----	-----

Unzicker



Karpov

24	Ba7!
----	------

Here is the unusual resource. Karpov uses the bishop as a shield behind which to double rooks, maintaining the specter of decisive penetration. Such simple stratagems are Karpov's stock in trade.

24	...	Ne8
25	Bc2	Nc7?!

The correct plan is 25...Ng7 and ...f5.

26	Rea1	Qe7
27	Bb1	Be8
28	Ne2	

Despite White's dominance of the queenside, Black has all the vital points there defended. Karpov proceeds to open another front, cognizant that cramped pieces can only defend so much.

28	...	Nd8
29	Nh2	Bg7
30	f4!	f6?!

Black seems determined that none of his pieces shall venture for the rest of the game beyond the second rank. The last chance for activity lies in 30...exf4, with a strong point on e5.

31	f5	g5
----	----	----

Setting up a barrier that proves illusory. Bad would be 31...gxf5 32 exf5 Bf7 33 Be4 followed by a kingside pawn-roller, but a better try is the flexible 31...Nf7.

32	Bc2	Bf7
33	Ng3	Nb7

Unfortunately for Black, he cannot sustain 33...h5 in view of 34 Bd1 Qe8 35 Qe2.

34 Bd1 h6

Weakening the g6-square, but in any event White would always be able to break through with h4 in the longer run. The Spanish bishop now achieves a happy end, making way for the entry of the queen. Meanwhile Black is reduced to marking time.

35	Bh5	Qe8
36	Qd1	Nd8
37	Ra3	Kf8
38	R1a2	Kg8
39	Ng4	Kf8
40	Ne3	Kg8
41	Bxf7+	Nxf7
42	Qh5	Nd8

Likewise losing is 42...Nh8 43 Qxe8+ followed by Nh5, Ra5, and Bb6.

43	Qg6	Kf8
44	Nh5	Black resigns

The apples will soon fall, as with 44...Qf7 45 Ng4 Ne8 46 Ra5, and Black cannot defend all his pawns on both sides of the board. In the execution of White's attack, Tarrasch himself could not have done better.



Amassing tournament successes that won him the chess "Oscar," Anatoly Karpov rose with all swiftness to become, at age twenty-two, a candidate for the world championship. In the ensuing matches against Soviet countrymen in 1974, he disposed easily of Lev Polugayevsky, and then inflicted a stunning defeat on an off-form Boris Spassky. In the finals he

faced the veteran counterpuncher Viktor Korchnoi, in what was billed as a spellbinding clash of styles.

The first Karpov-Korchnoi match deserves attention chiefly as the negative of a good match, of how to select a champion. When Muscovites, the world's most avid chess fans, desert the playing hall, something must be wrong. What was wrong was the elevation of the draw to a new preeminence: of the twenty-four games, there were a record nineteen draws.

With sharp openings home-prepared against an unsuspecting opponent, Karpov took an early lead of two wins. Enter the reign of the half-point. Under the rules, each draw brought the leader closer to victory, and he made no effort to achieve the five wins which alone could decide the match before the twenty-four-game limit. The dull, pusillanimous course of this match was a strong argument for Fischer's insistence that in the world championship draws should not count, only wins. Despite Korchnoi's lethargic choice of openings, he missed probable wins in three games before his too-late resurgence. At last, Karpov eked out the victory, 3-2. He thus gained the right to face Fischer, and wound up with the world crown later by default, under FIDE rules.

Thanks to official myopia, a deeply unsatisfactory situation descended upon the chess world. There were now two popes: one in Rome and one in Avignon. But the faithful were not fooled. Besides the editors of *Pravda*, few people regarded Anatoly Karpov as the best chess player in the world.

Karpov, a member of the Central Committee of the Kom-somol, could well afford to sit back, content with the artificial laurel that his system had fought so hard to obtain for him. But any tendency to complacency could not fail to be disturbed by one gnawing thought: He had never played a game of chess with Bobby Fischer.

With respect to chess ideas, Karpov makes no pretension to brilliant imagination or artistry. His praxis contributes a rather one-sided lesson to the student: the latest installment in the annals of precise positional science. A survey of hundreds of games reveals that he wins them by: persistent accuracy. He may play, say, forty correct moves while his opponent is playing thirty-nine correct and just one dubious move. The latter may be sufficient to weaken a pawn or a key square to an extent which, in Karpov's hands, eventually proves lethal.

Karpov's games carried us back to a prior chapter in chess development, when great thinkers were perfecting the now classical principles of positional play. To these, nothing remains to be added; Karpov may only reap the profits of their application, and he does it better than his rivals.

One admired his proficiency in grinding down the opposition, but not the beauty or originality of his conceptions. He is a fitting representative of the Soviet bureaucracy, whose prestige he served to reinstate.

The relentless daily pursuit of the practical, the drive to accumulate ever more points within the realm of safety, cannot per se inspire us. Indeed, over the reign of Karpov loomed again the shadow of the anti-hero.

18

KORCHNOI: THE PERILS OF PROVOCATION

The human element, the human flaw and the human nobility—those are the reasons that chess matches are won or lost. □

—Viktor Korchnoi

Viktor Korchnoi, who by dint of unrelenting combat ascended to the pinnacle of world chess, has single-handedly reversed one datum of the Soviet school—he indicted the Soviet system, hitherto thought to provide the best of all possible environments for the cultivation of chess excellence, as the enemy of his creative career. He proved his contention by rising at a mature age to the greatest heights, only after forsaking his homeland.

This privileged citizen, four times the winner of the formidable championship of the USSR, honed and rewarded by that redoubtable chess school, had the effrontery in 1976 to declare that he was not State property: He defected to the West. He thus precipitated the most spiteful organized cam-

paign of persecution in the history of chess and completed the politicization of the sport. The Moscow bureaucrats branded him a greedy, immoral renegade and sought to ruin him. The concerted campaign began with a denunciatory statement to which the names of all but a few brave Soviet grandmasters were appended; progressed to a demand that FIDE exclude him from world title competition and a boycott of all tournaments to which he was invited; and culminated in the egregious imprisonment of his son for two and a half years in the Gulag, on a charge of draft evasion. Igor Korchnoi's real offense was his and his mother's demand to emigrate and reunite the family, permitting Korchnoi to fight on fair terms. Moscow relented only after Korchnoi had been forced to contest his second bitter title match with Karpov under unfair psychological duress. After six years of worry, disappointment, and numerous international petitions, Korchnoi could see his family again.

The appreciation of the summit chess of the post-Fischer era (one uses this term with regret) is inseparable from the political sideshow that forever impinged on the chessboard struggle. Not, to begin with, a very felicitous mix of styles, the Korchnoi-Karpov encounters were creatively modest and ultimately vitiated by their atmosphere of mutual animosity. The first, to determine the challenger to an elusive Fischer in 1974, "succeeded" chiefly in elevating the draw to unprecedented dominance: 79 percent of the twenty-four games played.

The 1978 title match in Baguio, the Philippines, was enmeshed in psychological warfare, replete with covert agents, gurus, parapsychologists, and propagandists. Karpov's late inability to dispatch his opponent from a series of winning positions, like some reluctant picador, allowed Korchnoi's superior endgame technique to erase a 5-2 deficit. But an anticlimax ensued, when Korchnoi chose a disastrously risky

defense in Game 36 and succumbed, 6–5. The tremendous resources of Karpov's nationwide "team" in opening preparation were but another evidence of the inequity of his battles with Korchnoi. The decisive, glaring weakness in Korchnoi's armor, however, was his habitual joust with time trouble.

Korchnoi led a tireless propaganda struggle to gain his family's freedom, calling Karpov their jailer, while continuing to vanquish a series of other aspirants for the world crown. His colossal match record claimed, by late 1983, no lesser victims than Reshevsky, Tal, Geller, the Brazilian classicist Henrique Costa Mecking, Petrosian (thrice, as against one defeat), Spassky (as against one defeat), Lev Polugayevsky (twice), the temperamental Robert Hübner, Germany's greatest star since the heyday of Lasker and Tarrasch, and Hungary's Lajos Portisch.

At the inception of the 1981 title match in Merano, an aide to Korchnoi telephoned Leningrad and reported (it was not later confirmed) that son Igor had just been assaulted in his prison camp. The effect on Korchnoi's concentration and objectivity can easily be imagined. Unrecognizable, he proceeded to lose three and a half of the first four games by inexplicable blunders and misjudgement. Even though Korchnoi's two later wins were the most interesting of the affair, Karpov's ultimate victory, by 6–2 with ten draws, was inevitable.

Although Karpov, a widely traveled and successful tournament competitor and hero of the Soviet press media, held doubtless prestige and influence on youth, his crown remained tarnished. He received it not by outplaying Fischer, but by outmaneuvering him politically, and kept it through historically Pyrrhic victories over a persecuted opponent. His defenders insisted he could do nothing against the State machine. (Was he not part of it?) But we are speaking of acts of

commission, not omission. Karpov once offered a deal to Grandmaster Boris Gulko if he would “merely” stop staging hunger strikes with his wife, former USSR Women’s Champion Anna Akhsharumova,* and drop the demand to emigrate. For another example, the magazine 64 falsified the official 1982 FIDE list of the world’s top-rated players to omit the names of the defectors Lev Alburt, Igor Ivanov, and Tatyana Lemachko, and even the legal emigré to Israel, Alla Kushnir. A Mikhail Botvinnik would not have permitted such rewriting of history à la Orwell’s 1984. The chief editor of 64 was Karpov.

Karpov’s quiet, inactive strategy, awaiting the exploitation of unprovoked errors, thrice sufficed to prevail over Korchnoi’s complex, committal, counter-attacking style, spiced by continual precipice-walks with the time clock. Karpov, the icy-cool pragmatic favorite of the statisticians, if not the fans, was usually ready to pounce when Korchnoi, the furious seeker of intricate victory in the vortex of time pressure, inevitably faltered. An example is Game 17 at Baguio, in which Korchnoi outplayed his rival all across the board and reached a favorable ending, only to fall into a simple mate.

Korchnoi has cited Emanuel Lasker as his hero, and indeed both raised the elemental spirit of the fight to prime importance. But Korchnoi’s play is complicated by another factor to which Lasker was not prey, of which his “common sense” was not capable: the capacity to expend an hour’s thought over a single opening move, attempting to probe a known position deeper than anyone before, only to play at “blitz” speed during the crucial moves thirty to forty, willy-nilly, with the inevitable deterioration in performance. (At

* In the 1982 Soviet Women’s Championship, Akhsharumova had the temerity to try to regain her title, by beating Nana Ioseliani on time. But her win was annulled by the remote and shameless All-Union Board of Referees.

blitz, grandmasters have lost even to chess-playing computers.) Reflex is no substitute for thought. Psychological conditioning under the right trainer can alleviate such a behavioral disorder (let us call it what it is—this author, a chronic sufferer from this distortion of reality, is qualified to speak). Revolving around the twin delusions of perfectionism (on move eight) and omnipotence (on move thirty-eight) it costs points. The quest for ultimate truth ends as mere odds-giving, to any opponent who manages his time rationally.

To borrow six-time U.S. Champion Walter Browne's quip about Fischer and himself: Within the red walls of Moscow, Karpov was the god of chess, Korchnoi the devil. The vast administrative, technical, and police apparatus of the Soviet State was mobilized to keep its conformist Russian working-class-origin champion, a member of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, ascendant over the cosmopolitan, part-Jewish ingrate who had breached the conspiracy of silence.

Connoisseurs of chess strategy prefer Korchnoi's play. Prone to risk-taking, he will grab a pawn and withstand an onslaught to emerge on top in the endgame, or alternatively build a slow, ornate aggression on the queenside. Wide-open king's-pawn games and crude assaults on the king he abandoned in youth. He prefers those defenses that defy classical principle and seek not equality but counterattack. We may assert that if his encounter with an unreinforced Karpov were conducted on a platonic plane, Viktor would be the victor. But in the real world the supreme pragmatist, not so much a personality as the personification of a social system with just one idea—winning—defeated the individualist who always seemed to have one idea too many.

What the chess world needed now was relief from the encroachment of politics on our global community; a safeguarding of the rights of all players to live and pursue their

craft where they wish; a return to chess for the sake of the art of chess. The turning away from the Korchnoi-Karpov era was most salubrious for our game.

White: Viktor Korchnoi

Black: Miguel Najdorf

Wijk aan Zee, 1971

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	c4	Nf6
2	Nc3	e6
3	Nf3	d5
4	d4	c5

The Semi-Tarrasch Defense, leading to a rather more open position than is Korchnoi's wont. But with White's preponderance in the center and kingside attacking chances opposed by Black's queenside superiority, it will provide the dynamic imbalance that he favors.

5	cx d5	Nxd5
6	e4	Nxc3
7	bxc3	cx d4
8	cx d4	Bb4+
9	Bd2	Bxd2+
10	Qxd2	0-0
11	Bc4	

The well-known simplifications have eased Black's task, but the ideas of Polugayevsky have fortified the attack, chiefly the potential pawn offer d5, exd5; e5, aiming at the king.

11	...	b6
12	0-0	Bb7
13	Rfe1	Nd7

14	Rad1	Rc8
15	Bd3	Re8
16	Qe3	Rc3
17	e5!?	

Far from a mere tactical threat of Bxh7+, here is a typically Korchnoian plan, highly committal. For it renders the d-pawn backward (permanently so?) and cedes a strong point on d5, in order to keep the black knight away from f6 and pursue the kingside attack. "A characteristically uncompromising decision," according to British Champion and psychologist William Hartston.

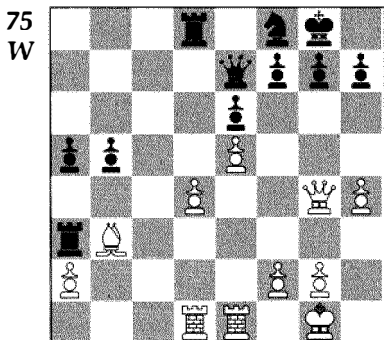
17	...	Qc7
18	Ng5	Nf8
19	Ne4	Bxe4
20	Qxe4	Rd8
21	h4	Qe7?!

The ebullient Argentine veteran underestimates White's chances. Better was 21...Rd5 22 Qg4 Qd8 23 Be4 Rd7 24 Re2 Rc4 25 Red2, and White would be too preoccupied with his backward pawn to exploit his superior minor piece.

22	Qg4	Ra3
23	Bc4	b5
24	Bb3	a5?!

Retrenchment was in order, but Najdorf is under the illusion that he can prevent in this way the thematic breakthrough.

Najdorf



Korchnoi

25 d5!!

Strategically obvious, this move requires a calculation twelve moves deep, at the end of which Korchnoi must foresee that an endgame minus one horse is won. One may imagine that he spent most of his remaining time on it, even though the correct reply, 25...exd5, would avail him no more than a quiet positional edge. Najdorf "bites."

25 ... a4?

26 dxe6

And not 26 d6? Qa7! (27 Qb4? axb3).

26 ... axb3

27 exf7+ Kh8

If 27...Kxf7 28 Rxd8 Qxd8 29 e6+, White wins easily.

28 Rxd8 Qxd8

29 axb3

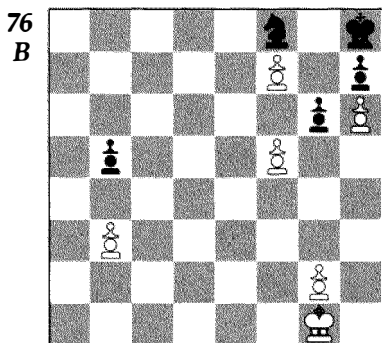
And not 29 e6? bxa2 30 e7 Qxe7.

29 Qe7

30 e6 Ra6
31 f4!

The "quiet" point! The logical continuation is now 31...Rxe6 (or 31...Nxe6 32 Rxe6 Rxe6 33 Qxe6) 32 Rxe6 Qxe6 (or 32...Nxe6 33 Qxe6) 33 Qxe6 Nxe6 34 f5 Nf8 35 h5 g6 36 h6!

Najdorf



Korchnoi (Variation)

Compare this position with the previous diagram. In the former one Korchnoi had to foresee the latter and know that in the ending Black would be helpless against the inroads of the White king. Deep and elegant: Korchnoi's mind at its best. Najdorf now hopes only for a "swindle."

31 ... h6
32 f5 Nh7
33 Rc1 Ra8
34 Qf4 Nf6
35 Qc7 Qb4

Now, with 36 Qc5, White could compel resignation, as the passed pawns prove irresistible. But Korchnoi has only seconds left in which to complete five more moves, and seeing a "beautiful win," he plays it.

36 Qc8+!? Kh7

Avoiding 36...Rxc8 37 Rxc8+ Kh7 38 f8=N+! Kg8 39 Ng6+ Kh7 40 Rh8 mate.

37 Qxa8??

Zeitnot takes its toll; the magisterial drama descends to farce.

37 ... Qd4+

38 Kf1 Qf4??

Najdorf misses his chance for salvation via perpetual check: 38...Qd3+. Time trouble is the usual explanation for such lapses. Also, the player in a losing position often resigns internally before the fight is over and thus is not alert to a last opportunity. He plays on fatalistically, just for the audience's sake. Now the game resumes its proper track.

39 Ke2 Qe5+

Or 39...Qxc1 40 f8=N+!

40 Kd1 Black resigns

Korchnoi's guillotine (clock flag) remains erect, and his king will soon outrun the checks. The threat of underpromotion decides.

Such a Korchnoi work embodies more artistry (and, alas, more nervous strain) than a dozen models of technique.



Emanuel Lasker intentionally chose modes of play least congenial to a particular antagonist, in contradistinction to Steinitz's assertion that his opponent might as well be a robot. In the following crucial contest, Korchnoi sprang a prepared sacrificial line, in order to throw the superb attacker,

Spassky, into discomfiting defense. This tribute to Lasker's psychology presaged unprecedented psychological warfare between the players, wherein each in turn refused to sit down at the board during several games of the match.

White: Boris Spassky

Black: Viktor Korchnoi

World Candidates' Match, Belgrade, 1977

French Defense

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Nc3	Bb4

The double-edged Winawer Variation signals an uncompromising battle.

4	e5	c5
5	a3	Bxc3+
6	bxc3	Ne7

A key alternative is 6...Qc7, so as to answer 7 Qg4 with ...f5. This was the second match game. Spassky would try several alternatives on moves seven and eight in later games, until Korchnoi switched in the fourteenth to 1...e5.

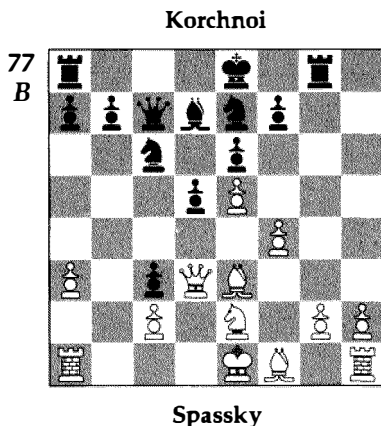
7	Qg4	cx d4
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The pawn offers begin. In compensation, Black counts on quick development and open lines. The older 7...Nf5 8 Bd3 h5 9 Qf4 is comfortable for White. Spassky accepts and goes over to the defense. In Game 12 he would choose 8 cxd4.

8	Qxg7	Rg8
9	Qxh7	Qc7
10	Ne2	Nbc6
11	f4	Bd7

12 Qd3 dxc3
13 Be3

One of several known alternatives, preparing to consolidate with 14 Nd4 but running into Korchnoi's bombshell.



13 ... d4!
14 Bf2

This product of surprise and long thought has the look of overrefinement. Perhaps a sterner test of the innovation would be 14 Nxd4 Nxd4 15 Qxd4 Nf5 16 Qc5 or 15...b6 16 Bf2.

14 ... 0-0-0
15 Nxd4 Nxd4
16 Qxd4 b6

According to Korchnoi's second, Raymond Keene, unclear is 16...Bc6 17 Qxa7 Rd2 18 Bb6 Qb8 or 17 Qxc3.

17 Bh4

Spassky strives to simplify. Weak now would be 17...Nf5
18 Bxd8 Nxd4 19 Bxc7 Nxc2+ 20 Kf2 Nxa1 21 Bd6.

17	...	Bb5
18	Qe4	Bxf1
19	Rfxf1!?	

Ever courageous! It was wiser to take a draw with 19 Qa8+
Kd7 20 Rd1+ Nd5 21 Rxd5+ exd5 22 Qxd5+ Kc8 23 Qa8+
with perpetual check.

19	...	Rd5!?
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Equally so! A counter-perpetual could be had with
19...Rd2 20 Bxe7 Rgxf2 21 Bd6 Qb7 22 Qc4+ Kd8 23 Rd1
Rge2+ 24 Qxe2 Rxe2+ 25 Kxe2 Qe4+ 26 Kf2 Qxf4+ etc.
(Keene).

20	Bxe7	Qxe7
21	Rf3	Kb8
22	Kf1!?	

Better than 22 Rxc3 Qh4+ 23 Kf1 Rd2. But Najdorf's sug-
gestion, 22 g3, is easier; for example, ...Rd2 23 Rxc3 Rgd8
"with equal chances" (Keene).

22	...	Rd2
23	Rf2	Rgd8
24	Qf3	Rxf2+
25	Kxf2	Rd2+
26	Kg3	

Too dangerous is 26 Kf1 Qc5. Spassky's king safety con-
tinues to give him anxiety and push him into unwanted time
pressure, as Korchnoi pummels him with alternating direct
threats. Now, not 26...Rxc2 27 Qd3.

26	Qd8
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27	Qe4	Qg8+
28	Kh3	Qh8+
29	Kg3	Qg7+
30	Kh3	Rd8

Since the g-pawn is solid on g2, Black forces it to advance. Spassky now has only five minutes left for ten moves; Korchnoi has fifteen.

31	g4	Rh8+
32	Kg3	Qh6
33	Qg2	Qh4+
34	Kf3	Rd8

Back again! Eschews the draw with 34...Qxh2

35 Qg3?!

Spassky starts to crack under the pressure. Better was 35 Rf1 (Gligoric) ...Rd2 36 Rf2 Rxf2+ 37 Qxf2 Qh3+ 38 Qg3 Qf1+ 39 Qf2 with a draw.

35	...	Qe7
36	g5?	

Now the balance is tipped. Jettisoning the extra pawn with 36 Re1 might allow White to "hang on by means of a very exact defense" (Keene).

36	...	Rd2
37	Kg4	Qb7
38	Qxc3	

Loses, but after the somewhat better 38 Rg1 Rxc2 or ...Qe4 the king's exposure, too, appears fatal.

38	...	Rg2+
39	Kh3	Rf2
40	Kg4	Qe4

41 White resigns

For if 41 Qg3, then ...Rg2. A thousand Yugoslav chess fans bestowed upon this battle of Titans a five-minute standing ovation.



In a long book on Karpov's ascendancy called *Uralskii Samotsvyet*, Alexander Kotov, the late *éminence grise* of Soviet chess, managed to avoid all mention of the hated name Korchnoi (just as the Russian book of the Kiev 1978 tournament succeeded in making Lev Alburt a nonperson in classic Orwellian style and thus omitted one-eighth of the games). Unfortunately for the rewriters of history, Korchnoi fights on, an embodiment of the Laskerian principle of struggle. Although by the narrowest of margins fate denied him his highest ambition, he is a living reminder that vigor, vitality, and victory are not the exclusive province of youth.

19

KASPAROV: THE REBIRTH OF CREATIVITY

I try to play, always, beautiful games . . . always I wanted to create masterpieces. □

—Garry Kasparov

The Karpov era was not without its benefits to the chess world. While one might have wished for a leader of more imagination (and magnanimity), no one could have asked for a more active, and successful, tournament competitor, whose deeds so well fitted the publicity needs of his sponsors.

The often arid tranquillity of his praxis was even punctuated by uncommon flashes of brilliance. Against Polugayevsky, the speculative sacrifice of two pawns; against Hübner, a whole rook with a none-too-certain outcome (he won both games). But most often the public was left with the impression of a streamlined, inexorable boa constrictor, a Petrosian with a lust for points, a human computer programmed with the utmost in opening team preparation.

Botvinnik, a septuagenarian who appeared to have discarded all cautious diplomacy, gave an interview in 1983 with a startlingly negative assessment of Karpov:

When he became world champion he pressed all creative chess players in the Soviet Union into his service. When a master became known for his ideas about a certain opening he was brought to Moscow and was instructed to do some more research on that opening for Karpov, and to put his findings on paper, of course in the utmost secrecy. In short, we can see Karpov as an exploiter of other people's ideas. His ability to use these ideas is not at issue, but he himself is about as fertile as a woman who has been sterilized.

In the 1970s no real threat to Karpov's supremacy appeared. Korchnoi could challenge on the intellectual but not the competitive level. Tal was too erratic. Spassky, Petrosian, Larsen were in relative eclipse. In the West, only an uncompromising fighter like Holland's Timman or Yugoslavia's ingenious Ljubojevic could occasionally set Karpov back. The ultraquiet Andersson of Sweden could aspire to 90 percent draws against the champion, who edged him in 1984 in the second USSR vs. Rest of the World Match, won by the Soviet side against a suboptimal world team, 21-19.

But now Karpov has been eclipsed. Despite itself, the bureaucratic machine culled from beyond the Caucasus a redemptive genius imbued with passion. His name is Garry Kasparov.

Kasparov was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, on April 13, 1963. His Jewish father, K. M. Weinstein, and Armenian mother, Klara Kasparian, used to pass time by solving chess problems. One evening, they were stumped; the next day, the six-year-old "Garik," who had never been taught the game,

provided the solution. When quizzed, he reinforced this bit of magic by naming all the squares of the board.

A year later the father died, and the boy's name evolved into Kasparov. Perhaps a useful change, when one is destined to confront an all-Russian symbol.

Soon, Garik was playing chess at the inevitable Pioneer Palace, where he became known for his impetuous quickness. A great boost—something of which Western youth could only dream—was his selection for tutelage at Botvinnik's famed chess school in Moscow. There the retired "Mr. Soviet Chess" taught the boy to *think* before moving (here he added, invidiously, lest you end up like Larsen or Taimanov). Botvinnik approved the youngster's natural selection of Alekhine as a model.

Astonishing successes followed, usually at a younger age than anyone before: junior champion of the USSR at twelve; Soviet master at fourteen; winner of his first major international event, Banja Luka, at sixteen—sufficient to alert the chess world to an extraordinary phenomenon. At seventeen the grandmaster title was confirmed. At eighteen co-champion of the USSR, the youngest in history. Only Fischer and Spassky had rivaled such precocity (in the youths of Reshevsky and Capablanca, such stern tests did not exist). Thus it was no surprise when, at nineteen, Kasparov became a candidate for the World Championship, by winning the Moscow Interzonal.

But the warm international following that he promptly amassed did not spring from the counting of points. No, it was the artistry of his style that captivated us. Here was the brilliance of the speculative sacrifice, a genius for attack and combination reminiscent of the young man's hero, Alekhine. The more brutal, direct attacks of the open game (1 e4) were eschewed. Kasparov's offensives were subtler, starting most often with 1 d4 and first engaging the opponent positionally

on the queen's wing. Often the maintenance of the initiative involved a sacrifice of a pawn or more. Only then did tactical wizardry assert itself against the king. Withal, an exultation in the harmony and beauty of the attack, restrained by no fixation on provable soundness, but rather a daring willingness to risk much in order to probe the limits of the imagination.

The greats of our era vary in their attitudes to the struggle. Petrosian saw the chessboard as a minefield to be neutralized, for the sake of avoiding loss. Karpov acts as haughty ruler of the battlefield who may or may not deign to allow the opponent to draw. Tal played to unleash storms that would lethally cloud the vision, and let the devil take him who commits the last oversight. Beauty was a by-product of their plans and occurred with greater or lesser frequency. But Kasparov plays for the sake of beauty in chess. Thus, he is beloved.

But creativity is not all spontaneous. The other aspect of Kasparov's work is his unflagging research into the intricacies of the opening. He has not kept all his discoveries to himself. Moreover, he has not omitted to philosophize on the nature of chess—unusual in one so young. In *My Games*, the first such book from a player of nineteen years of age, he briefly but forcefully sets forth his views. He makes so bold as to assail the reigning mystique of Karpov, whom he taxes with overemphasizing the sportive side—the “pragmatism” of results which “detracts from the content of chess” in the late 1970s. He announces a new stage of creativity, and affirms his allegiance to the still-unfolding battle of ideas. “The discussion of ideas will go on and on, for truth can only be born of debate, and it won't be hard to note just how devoted to chess this author's heart is. . . .”



At a tender age Kasparov played games like the following, which led Botvinnik to announce, "The future of chess lies in this boy's hands."

White: Elmar Magerramov

Black: Garry Kasparov

Training Match, Baku, 1977

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	Nf3	Nf6
2	d4	e6
3	c4	d5
4	Nc3	Be7
5	Bg5	0-0
6	e3	h6
7	Bh4	b6
8	Qb3	Bb7
9	Bxf6	Bxf6
10	cx d5	ex d5
11	Rd1	

White's idea in this line of the Tartakower Variation is to blockade Black's d-pawn and bottle up the queen's bishop behind it. If 11 Bd3 c5! 12 dxc5 Nd7, Black has good play. But now Garik tries this "experiment" anyway.

11	...	c5?!
12	dxc5	Nd7
13	c6?!	

Acceptance of the pawn sacrifice by 13 cxb6 was not really risky. To Kasparov's intended further offer, 13...d4!? 14 Nxd4 Qxb6, White could immediately trade off the strongest unit by 15 Qxb6 Nxb6, and then by 16 f3! make clear that Black has enough for one but not two pawns.

13 ... Bxc6
14 Nd4?

This hasty pseudoblockade is inferior to the simple 14 Be2 or the sharp 14 Nxd5 Nc5 15 Nxf6+ Qxf6 16 Qc3.

14 ... Bxd4!
15 Rxd4!?

Giving Kasparov his element. But if 15 exd4 Qg5 16 g3 Rfe8+ 17 Be2 Qg4, extricating his king will cost White a pawn.

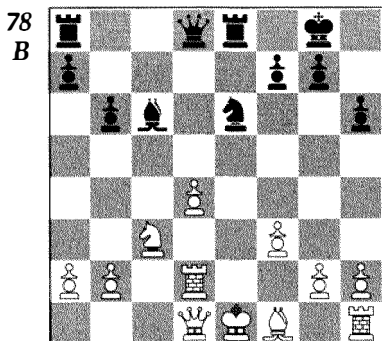
15 ... Nc5
16 Qd1 Ne6
17 Rd2 d4!

At the cost of a pawn, to Kasparov trifling, he suddenly starts a strong attack, punishing White's lag in development.

18 exd4 Re8
19 f3

Hoping to find safety for the king at f2. Hopeless would be 19 d5 Nf4+ 20 Be2 Nxg2+ 21 Kf1 Bd7!; for example, 22 Kxg2 Qg5+ 23 Kf1 Bh3+ 24 Ke1 Qg2 and wins (Kasparov).

Kasparov



Magerramov

19 Bxf3!!

Glory to the Tartakower bishop, which introduces a long, forced sequence.

20	gxf3	Qh4+
21	Rf2	Nxd4+
22	Be2	Nxf3+
23	Kf1	Qh3+
24	Rg2	Nh4
25	Rg1	Rad8
26	Qe1?	

White could resist much longer with 26 Qa4, and if ...Nxc2 27 Rxc2 Re5 28 Qg4, with only a slight material deficit in the ending.

26	...	Rd3!
27	Qf2	Nf3!

Near-zugzwang! If 28 Bxd3 Nxc2 is mate. Or 28 Qg3 Nd2+ 29 Ke1 Rxc3 30 Rxc3 Nf3+ 31 Kf2 Nxc1 and wins.

28	Rh1	Rde3
29	Rg1	Kh8

A gratuitous "prophylactic" move. If 30 a4 a6 etc. Now comes the last threat, which marks the end.

30	Rh1	b5
31	White resigns	



At the highest levels today, genuine struggles often resemble wrestling matches in which both sides grapple and perspire to little avail—a draw being the likeliest result. Sweden's Ulf Andersson is one of the most difficult grandmasters to defeat outright. Here Kasparov achieves one of

his favorite games with his now-familiar method, a timely pawn offer for the attack.

White: Garry Kasparov

Black: Ulf Andersson

Tilburg, 1981

Queen's Indian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	b6
4	a3	

That this modest move of Petrosian's is today considered a "weapon" testifies to the refinement of opening theory. It steps up the contest for e4, which square Black now sacrifices.

4	...	Bb7
5	Nc3	Ne4!?
6	Nxe4	Bxe4
7	Nd2!?	Bg6!?

Andersson thinks to fortify his kingside, now bereft of a horse. But paradoxically the bishop may best serve this purpose from b7.

8	g3	Nc6?!
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Preferable is 8...c6 9 Bg2 d5 10 0-0 Be7 11 e4, with only a small edge for White.

9	e3	a6
10	b4	b5

A deep and tranquil strategist, Andersson hatches a plan to regain some space. (White cannot now win the b-pawn because the protection of his own will become illusory.)

11	cxb5	axb5
12	Bb2	Na7

The plan discloses itself. Black wants to play ...d5 followed by ...Nc8-d6-c4 and equalize. There is no "normal" way to stop it.

13	h4!	h6?!
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Absorbed in maneuvering, Black does not reckon with what's coming. A better defense is 13...h5, but then castling will be difficult after, for example, Be2.

14	d5!	
----	-----	--

Kasparov's patent! (Compare the previous game.) He makes real, speculative sacrifices to intensify the struggle, never demanding a clear, guaranteed result. Here the opponent's plan is scotched, and he will be forced, for the sake of development, to weaken his kingside in the face of the now powerful QB.

14	...	exd5
15	Bg2	c6
16	0-0	f6

If 16...f5, to stop the opening of the e-file, White disposes of several attacking plans: Nd2-f3-e5 or d4; f2-f3 and e3-e4; h4-h5 and g3-g4; a timely a3-a4. Probably there is no longer a secure defense.

17	Re1!	
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Clever timing. The immediate 17 e4 would permit ...dxe4 18 Bxe4 Bf7, with a chance to consolidate.

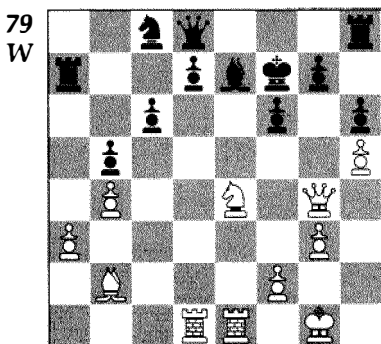
17	...	Be7
18	Qg4	Kf7
19	h5	Bh7
20	e4	dxe4

21 Bxe4 Bxe4
22 Nxe4

With the fall of the defender of g6, Black cannot manage to castle artificially. No hope lies in 22...Rf8 23 Rad1 d5 24 Nxf6! or 22...Re8 23 Qg6+ Kf8, and now the attack proceeds with the elegant 24 g4! followed by the irresistible Ne4-g3-f5. Finally, if 22...d5 23 Rad1 Qc7 24 Qg6+ Kf8 (or 24...Kg8 25 Bxf6) 25 Nxf6 Bxf6 26 Bxf6 Qf7 27 Bxg7+ Qxg7 28 Qd6+ Kg8 29 Re7 Qg4 30 Rd4 and mates. Now, foreseeing a combinative finish, Kasparov brings up the last reserve force.

22 ... Nc8
23 Rad1 Ra7

Andersson



Kasparov

Andersson may appear to be holding on, but Kasparov now proceeds to destroy his position root and branch (echoing again the previous game, with its piece sacrifice on f3).

24 Nxf6!! gxf6

Or 24...Bxf6 25 Qg6+ Kf8 26 Bxf6 gxf6 27 Re6! and wins.

25	Qg6+	Kf8
26	Bc1!	d5
27	Rd4!	Nd6
28	Rg4	Nf7
29	Bxh6+!	Ke8
30	Bg7	Black resigns

The h-pawn decides. The supersolid Andersson, who had never before sustained this sort of defeat, exclaimed, "I will not play with Kasparov any more!"



Through the global network of chess columns and magazines, such sparkling performances swiftly gained thousands of fans for the youth from Baku. But no sooner had he made a reputation for sustained brilliance than Kasparov began to show forth other facets of his rounded gift. The next game, against the subtlest master of strategy, is dear to his heart.

White: Garry Kasparov

Black: Tigran Petrosian

Bugojno, 1982

Bogoindian Defense

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	Bb4+
4	Bd2	Qe7
5	g3	Bxd2+
6	Qxd2	0-0
7	Bg2	d5
8	0-0	dx c4

This decision to open the long diagonal for White's bishop and, soon, two files for his rooks, proves fateful. Will Black

succeed in both safeguarding his b-pawn and developing his own bishop?

9 Na3 c5

Also acceptable is 9...Rd8 10 Qc2 c5.

10 dxc5 Qxc5

11 Rac1 Nc6

12 Nxc4 Qe7?

Such a small mistake, but already the decisive one. Kasparov gives 12...Rd8 13 Qc2 Bd7 14 Qb3, with only a minimal edge for White. Now we shall witness a rare spectacle: The supreme expert on limiting the opponent's scope will find himself progressively reduced to helpless wood-shifting.

13 Nfe5 Nxe5

14 Nxe5 Nd5

Herewith Black solves the problem of the long diagonal. But the second task, development, continues to elude him. If now 15 Bxd5, then ...Rd8.

15 Rfd1 Nb6

16 Qa5! g6

17 Rd3 Nd5

Already there is no useful move to be found! If 17...Rd8, then 18 Qc5! with an outcome like the actual game (conquest of c7). Black's offer of a pawn on d5 is illusory.

18 e4 Nb6

19 Bf1!

At first sight, a mysterious move. Kasparov shows the reason for it: if instead 19 h4?, then ...f6! 20 Nc4 Nxc4

21 Rxc4 b6 22 Qc3?! Ba6 23 Rc7 Qxc7 24 Qxc7 Bxd3, with unclear results. Now the d3 rook is protected, and White maintains his iron grip. A second point of 19 Bf1 reveals itself at the end.

19 ... Re8

Kasparov gives here Black's only chance to breathe, but at the cost of a clear pawn: 19...f6 20 Nc4 Bd7.

20 Rdd1 Rf8
21 a3 Kg7
22 b3!

Delicately tightening the vise.

22 ... Kg8
23 a4 Rd8

Facing Rc5 and Qc3, Petrosian loses heart.

24 Qc5 Black resigns

For after 24...Qxc5 (note that 24...Rxd1 is no check!) 25 Rxd8+ Qf8 26 Rxf8+ Kxf8 27 Rc7 f6 28 a5!, White forces decisive material gain.

Connoisseurs had to look twice to verify that Petrosian had played the *Black* pieces. Kasparov manifested his rapid appropriation of broader weaponry. In the next year's candidates matches he would, as the clear favorite, show his ability to adopt his opponent's preferred weapons and defeat them: Alexander Belyavsky with tactics, Korchnoi with the Catalan Opening and positional finesse, Smyslov with endgame skill. He seemed to be recapitulating, astonishingly early in his career, the all-around evolution of the great Alekhine.



Botvinnik has bestowed on Kasparov the honorific title of “research player,” that is, one like himself. With this designation he means to praise those who trouble to exert the arduous work of home investigation and elaboration of new theoretical weapons. Fittingly, the most striking practical example of Kasparov’s research work occurred in Botvinnik’s own Radio Match Variation of the Queen’s Gambit Declined. This ultrasharp double-edged sword requires full preparation by both sides.

In two successive twin games of the 1981 Soviet Championship, Kasparov won on the white side of this variation. What was remarkable were the extreme depth of his pregame analysis, his ability to refute a surprise blow at the board, and his daring to repeat the line against an opponent only too forewarned. In the first, having prepared twenty-eight(!) moves deep, Kasparov was confronted with Gennady Timoshchenko’s novelty, 22...Na5. After fifty-three minutes, Kasparov found 23 b3!, promptly sacrificed a piece, and pressed home his attack in forty-three moves. When players converged for the postmortem, Yevgeny Sveshnikov argued that 30...Be5 would have saved Black.

Next round, Yosif Dorfman reentered the lion’s den: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 dxc4!? (credited to Botvinnik in 1945, but the line, up to move twelve, had already occurred in Szabo vs. Euwe, Hastings, 1938–1939) 6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6 8 Bh4 g5 9 Nxc5 hxc5 10 Bxc5 Nbd7 11 exf6 Bb7 12 g3 c5 13 d5 Qb6 14 Bg2 0-0-0 15 0-0 b4 16 Na4 Qb5! 17 a3! Nb8 18 axb4 cxb4 19 Be3 Bxd5 20 Bxd5 Rxd5 21 Qe2 Nc6 22 Rfc1 Na5!? 23 b3! c3 24 Nxc3 bxc3 25 Rxc3+ Kd7 26 Qc2 Bd6 27 Rc1 Qb7 28 b4! Qxb4! 29 Rb1! Qg4 30 Bxa7!! Be5!? (the supposed improvement—ghost of Bilguer take note!—Timoshchenko had played 30...e5, but after 31 Qa2! missed, according to Kasparov, the best practical chance, 31...Qf5; Dorfman parries the threat of 31 f3 with the bishop check) 31 Rc5! Rxc5

32 Bxc5! Nc6 33 Qd3+! Kc8 34 Rd1 Nb8 35 Rc1! Qa4 36 Bd6+ Nc6 37 Bxe5 Rd8 38 Qb1! Rd5 39 Qb8+ Kd7 40 Qc7+ Ke8 41 Qxc6+ Qxc6 42 Rxc6 Rxe5 43 Rc8+ Black resigns.

Whoever expected this game to put the quietus on the variation lacked historical background. Two years later, facing Kasparov in the Soviet Team Championship, Tal the fearless would vary with 22...Ne5! and draw an exciting battle in, again, forty-three moves. Neither was that the last word. Later that year at Nikšić, Yugoslavia's Predrag Nikolic would give Tal many uneasy moments with the earlier 17 dxe6 Bxg2 18 Kxg2! The battle of chess ideas continues apace, with unflagging vigor.



One day at the 1982 Luzern Olympiad, with the Soviet team scheduled to play Switzerland, World Champion Karpov elected to take a rest. Thus Kasparov got his first encounter with Korchnoi. The history of bitterness between Korchnoi and the Soviet establishment, and the prospect of their 1983 match for world challenger, imparted passion to this game, the most uncompromising struggle in years. While no flawless example of chess art, it has seldom been equalled for complexity or fearlessness, the outcome in doubt until the last *Zeitnot*-plagued moments.

The lead was taken by Kasparov, who chose to play a known piece offer in the ultrasharp Modern Benoni Defense. The game proved dauntingly complex, its analysis filling many pages in journals and books, with several versions by the winner alone. Space, due modesty, and an aversion to plagiarism prompt the writer to confine his comments on it to mere punctuation marks. The untutored observer may marvel at its concatenation of brilliant strokes, somewhat as if uncomprehending ancient man had viewed a supernova in the heavens.

Korchnoi-Kasparov: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 Bg7 4 Bg2 c5 5 d5 d6 6 Nc3 0-0 7 Nf3 e6 8 0-0 exd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 a4 Re8 11 Nd2 Nbd7 12 h3 Rb8 13 Nc4 Ne5 14 Na3 Nh5 15 e4! Rf8!? 16 Kh2 f5?! 17 f4 b5! 18 axb5!? axb5 19 Naxb5 fxe4 20 Bxe4! Bd7! 21 Qe2! Qb6! 22 Na3 Rbe8 23 Bd2? Qxb2! 24 fxe5? Bxe5 25 Nc4 Nxb3! 26 Rxf8+ Rxf8 27 Qe1! Nxe4+ 28 Kg2 Qc2!? 29 Nxe5 Rf2+? 30 Qxf2! Nxf2! 31 Ra2! Qf5 32 Nxd7 Nd3 33 Bh6? Qxd7 34 Ra8+ Kf7 35 Rh8?! Kf6! 36 Kf3? Qxh3+ 37 White resigns. A titanic struggle reminiscent of the game Em. Lasker-Napier, Cambridge Springs, 1904.

THE FIRST KARPOV-KASPAROV MATCH

When he faced Karpov in Moscow in late 1984, the twenty-one-year-old Kasparov became the youngest player ever to contest a match for the world title. Let's examine this historic encounter, which seemed to be not a single match but two.

In the first of these the dizzying trajectory reversed itself. Through overconfidence, unsound aggression, missed chances, and the unwise choice of the Tarrasch Defense, Kasparov found himself after just nine games at the brink of disaster, with no wins and four losses. Two more setbacks would lose the match.

Suddenly there commenced a "new" match in which Kasparov's pieces appeared to be propelled by a different mind. He got hold of his nerves and determined to prove that he could not be beaten if he took no risks. With White he hardly tried at all, and with Black he held firm through the longest streak of consecutive draws in history: seventeen. Most were of the bloodless "grandmaster" sort, with no real clash, in as few as fifteen moves. According to the rules, draws did not count, but contrary to Fischer's projection, the spirit of combat did not wax but waned. Kasparov was revealing yet an-

other personality, quite unsuspected—the psychologist of boredom.

Complacent, Karpov was in no hurry at all for the “inevitable” coup de grâce. He appeared to resolve to deal the youth a devastating defeat by denying him even one win, and in Game 27 collected his fifth point. One could now get 500-to-1 odds on the outcome. Only in Game 32 did Kasparov manage his first-ever win over the champion. But then the plateau of draws continued with fourteen more.

Of the last thirty-seven games, thirty-five had ended in draws! As the Moscow fans groaned and hooted, this record could not help but resurrect the old question of the “draw death.” But after one subtracts those games which were aborted and notes those in which wins were missed, one can see that chess, even at the very highest level, is far from being played out.

Now the strain of five months of struggle took its toll on Karpov. He lost two games in succession. With White in the forty-seventh he was unrecognizable, and he succumbed in a queenless mid-game. In the forty-eighth Kasparov attacked the Russian Defense and won a pawn-up ending. Abruptly, the score had narrowed to 5–3, and fans hoped for a miracle. Soviet officialdom, ever zealous to protect its all-Russian model champion, summoned *deus ex machina*.

There was another “Russian Defense” not to be found in Kasparov’s and Keene’s *Batsford Chess Openings*. What went before was not very arresting chess, a listless marathon. The chief achievements of the match were done in advance homework—the refinement of opening theory. But still, it was chess. What came now was something else: politics.

In a somewhat chaotic on-site appearance, FIDE president Florencio Campomanes stunned the world by declaring the match at an end. He explained that it had become a

mere test of "endurance" and had "exhausted the physical, if not the psychological resources of not only the participants but of all those associated with the match." (How tired were the officials?) He ordained a rematch, to start seven months later.

This finish was bound to kindle the noisiest controversy in the history of the game, and to satisfy no one except bureaucrats and psychiatrists. An angry Kasparov exclaimed, "The chess world simply cannot accept this kind of ending." Campomanes suspected the young man of insulting him in Russian. Karpov wrote a letter asking for prompt resumption of the match, to no avail. FIDE, born in order to regulate the world championship, was, through arbitrariness in this same domain, in danger of losing its legitimacy.

THE KARPOV-KASPAROV REMATCH OF 1985

From a vexatious fiasco to the very best World Championship match ever played. An accolade not lightly bestowed. But every hope expressed for a primordial clash of styles at the highest level was realized in the rematch. Two factors made it radically different from the first encounter: the revision of the rules and the creative maturation of Kasparov. The limitation of length to twenty-four games meant that whoever lagged in points must shun draws.

At the same time, Kasparov had learned his lesson well in the "Karpov University": He could not attack recklessly. Attacks must be filtered through a finer prism. He adopted therefore a style of controlled aggression, full of surprises to keep Karpov off-balance, that proved relentless.

The champion, kept guessing and improvising answers to innovations, found himself in the rare predicament of time shortage. Confronting it, the precision machine known as Karpov suddenly revealed its loose wiring.

Chess fans accustomed to bilateral nervous errors or else quick draws at the chess summit could now marvel at a level of play without precedent. Kasparov uncorked his first surprise in Game 1 by allowing the Nimzo-Indian Defense, then countered with Oleg Romanishin's eccentric 5 g3. Caught off guard, Karpov took too much time to fall into a bad ending, and succumbed in forty-two moves. In the colossal struggle of Game 2, Kasparov sacrificed two bishops for a rook in a Sicilian, narrowly missing victory. In Game 4, despite a surprise improvement on a line from the first match, he was perhaps too optimistic, and was ground down to equalize the score.

Only in the fifth game did Kasparov revert to thoughtless aggression, giving up a pawn for no attack at all. But having fallen behind, he did not again resort to the steady-drawing strategy of the first match. He commenced an incredible series of correct pawn sacrifices: in five consecutive games, in eleven out of the last nineteen games! Never before at the summit has anyone displayed such audacity. It varied from clever drawing stratagems to stunning attacking speculations, throwing in an Exchange here and there. In the climax of Game 9, he ingeniously gave up a second and a third pawn to force a draw. Karpov had never before borne the brunt of such unremitting pressure, and in Game 11 responded with an elementary blunder. The score was again even, 2-2.

But no one was prepared for Kasparov's bombshell in Game 12. In a hackneyed Sicilian position, seen thousands of times before, he reached into his home laboratory and pulled out a daring pawn sacrifice on move eight. Karpov evaded the issue by promptly returning the gift, for a draw. When the situation arose again four games later, Karpov's analysis had told him he could hold onto the gift. Thus the stage was set for a masterpiece.

White: Anatoly Karpov

Black: Garry Kasparov

Game 16, Second Match, Moscow, 1985

Sicilian Defense

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	e6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nc6
5	Nb5	d6
6	c4	Nf6
7	N1c3	a6
8	Na3	d5!??!

The pawn offer that had electrified the entire chess world. Based upon the offside horse, Black seizes the initiative. Critics up to the level of grandmaster formed a chorus of praise for Kasparov's originality in finding such a surprise. Only months later did the truth seep out of Hungary: The sacrifice had been played twenty years before by Peter Dely vs. Karoly Honfi in the national championship.

9	cx d5	ex d5
10	ex d5	Nb4
11	Be2	

Better than Honfi's 11 Qa4+, which should have lost. In Game 12, Karpov had played 11 Bc4, and after ...Bg4! (not 11...b5 12 0-0!) 12 Be2 Bxe2 13 Qxe2+ Qe7, Black soon regained the pawn and drew in eighteen moves. The day after the present game, the Yugoslav master Velickovic published a long analysis advocating 11 Bc4 Bg4 12 Qd4! and if ...b5 13 Ncxb5! (Tal later gave 13 h3 Bh5 14 0-0 bxc4 15 Re1+ Be7 16 d6) ...axb5 14 Bxb5+ Bd7 15 d6, with a winning attack. Moscow pounced on the Belgrade analysis, and in subse-

quent games Kasparov eschewed 2...e6, unwilling to tempt fate. We may infer that he acquired serious doubts about his sensational sacrifice.

Karpov's new move is designed to return the extra pawn for a good initiative, reducing the bombshell to a cheap fireworks display. But Kasparov has seen deeper.

11 Bc5!?

No! The sacrifice is to be permanent, real. The young man again courts tension and imbalance. The older one disdains such speculations. Willing to bear the onus of defense, Karpov counts on extra material to prevail in the end.

12 0-0!?

Next year, facing van der Wiel at Brussels, Karpov would improve with 12 Be3! Bxe3 13 Qa4+ Nd7 14 Qxb4 Bc5 15 Qe4+ and should have won. There will be ample reason to lament this failure to remove Black's advanced knight.

12 ... 0-0
13 Bf3

Now and several times to come, Karpov spurns a chance to give back the pawn for equality; for example, 13 Bg5 Nbx d5 14 Nxd5 Qxd5 15 Bxf6 Qxd1 16 Rfxd1 gxf6. Kasparov reckoned correctly that Karpov wanted to win.

13 ... Bf5
14 Bg5 Re8
15 Qd2?!

And here was the last chance to activate the bad knight: 15 Nc4 Bd3 16 a3 Bxc4 17 axb4 Bxb4, restoring material balance with mutual prospects.

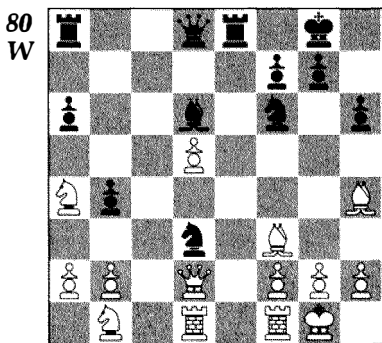
15 b5

16 Rad1 Nd3

"A monstrous centralized octopus" (Keene). Now Kasparov recommends 17 d6 Ra7 18 Nd5, or the Exchange sacrifice, 17...Qxd6!? For White will never succeed in dislodging the octopus 17 Be2? Nxf2 18 Rxf2 b4. His own horses become more pitiable.

17 Nab1 h6
18 Bh4 b4
19 Na4 Bd6

Kasparov



Karpov

Only now does Kasparov start to "play." Why? Because this very position was anticipated in his pregame analysis! His prospects are excellent since, as he observes, "the wonderful duo of ...Bf5 and ...Nd3 completely paralyzes all three white major pieces."

20 Bg3 Rc8
21 b3 g5!

Forward on all fronts! The threat of ...g4 prevents the freeing Nb2. Now, if 22 h4, ...Ne4 (or ...Nf4) keeps a strong attack (Kasparov).

22	Bxd6	Qxd6
23	g3	Nd7!
24	Bg2	

If 24 Nb2, Kasparov had ready 24...Qf6 25 Nxd3 (or 25 Nc4 N7e5 26 Nxe5 Nxe5 27 Be2 Bd3!) ...Bxd3 26 Qxd3 (or 26 Bg4 Ne5!) ...Ne5, trapping the queen in mid-board. But now Black tightens an iron grip on the position.

24	...	Qf6
25	a3	a5
26	axb4	axb4
27	Qa2	Bg6
28	d6	

Alas, too late now for propitiation!

28	...	g4!
29	Qd2	Kg7
30	f3?!	

With shortage of time, the frantic desire to ease the cramp only hastens the end.

30	...	Qxd6
31	fxg4	

There is no more help, for if 31 Nb2 Qd4+ 32 Kh1 Qxb2 33 Qxb2 Nxb2 34 Rxd7, doubling Black's rooks on the seventh rank is lethal.

31	...	Qd4+
32	Kh1	Nf6
33	Rf4	

Or 33 h3 Re3!, maintaining the pressure. But now the central concentration of Black forces a material upheaval.

33		Ne4
----	--	-----

34	Qxd3	Nf2+
35	Rxf2	Bxd3
36	Rfd2	

White achieves full value for the queen. If only the inept cavalry were posted, say, on g1 and h3, protecting the king....

36	...	Qe3!
37	Rxd3	Rc1!
38	Nb2	Qf2
39	Nd2	Rxd1+
40	Nxd1	Re1+
41	White resigns	

Kasparov has proclaimed this game his best creative effort “as regards the grandiosity of the overall plan” and “my supreme creative achievement” because the opponent was a “super-class player.” The ghost of Alekhine no doubt agreed.

The “overwhelming” (Kasparov) tension was released with Karpov’s capitulation. The Muscovite crowd, whose sympathies were shifting from the local favorite to the southern youth, now shook the Hall of Columns in a standing, cheering ovation. It sensed a revolution in the making.



In Game 19 the challenger’s unorthodox approach to the Nimzo-Indian again confused the champion, who drifted into a hopeless position at adjournment. A confident Kasparov took the novel action of exposing his sealed move to the assembly. He now led by two points. But it was his turn in Game 22 to blunder in time pressure—characteristically with an overactive checking move. Karpov had brought the championship within one win of retention.

A year of arduous struggle came down to one last game. In Game 24, Kasparov needed only a draw to achieve his am-

bition. With Black, most would choose a solid defense, since Karpov was hardly one to unleash a bold offense. With a serpentine Scheveningen Sicilian, Kasparov invited Karpov to assail his kingside. Karpov, out of character, moved a rook to h3, with a nebulous attack.

Suddenly Kasparov pitched a pawn, radically shifting the focus of play. Facing dethronement after a ten-year reign, Karpov eschewed a repetition, but fell under a withering counterattack. With just three minutes left for five moves, he shed a piece, and on move forty collapsed. Two moves later, the World Champion resigned the game, the match, and his crown. Garry Kasparov, with a score of five wins, three losses, and sixteen draws, stood up and let the waves of delirious applause lap over his muscular frame. At age twenty-two he was the thirteenth and the youngest World Champion in chess history.

KASPAROV-KARPOV MATCHES III, IV, AND V

The two bitter antagonists were fated to face each other continually for the rest of the decade. Karpov, without much trouble, would dispose of other candidates and end up confronting Kasparov again—only to be tantalized by the narrowest of setbacks, leaving the title intact.

In his autobiography, Kasparov proclaimed his ascendancy to be one with Gorbachev's Communist reforms. Only later would he evolve to unabashed capitalism, even taking leadership in the movement for free-market democracy and bankrolling the campaign of President Yeltsin.

The London half of the 1986 match was marked by an exciting tactical battle in the Grünfeld Defense of Game 11, which played out to a draw. In the Leningrad half Kasparov seized a three-point lead, only to drop three games in a row. Incredulous, he accused an aide of betrayal—with scant evi-

dence. Then he won the twenty-second game with a pretty queen-and-knight mating battery, and prevailed, 12½–11½.

At Seville in 1987, Kasparov's incessant concerns with FIDE and Russian politics took their toll, and he found himself behind by one point upon starting the twenty-fourth and last game. To the surprise of all he adopted the quiet Reti opening, yielding only equality. But Karpov erred in time pressure, dropped a pawn, and allowed Kasparov with a 12–12 tie to keep his crown. What enormous change from their first match in staid Moscow: A mere half-point now could not only alter chess history but ordain the flow of millions of dollars!

In New York and Lyon in 1990, Kasparov's sparkling imagination returned. With the King's Indian he twice sacrificed the Exchange, once the queen for two pieces, yielding two well-fought draws. In the later stages he resurrected the Scotch Opening. At last he won, 12½–11½.

Kasparov had consistently demonstrated his superiority over his most formidable opponent, not by overwhelming him but by dint of irresistible will and mastery of dramatic finishes, confident in every crisis of calling upon requisite reserves of strength. It was inconceivable to him that Karpov should ever wrest back the world crown, for he imagined himself to be history's child, the "child of change," as he titled a book.

The title match of 1993 mercifully presented Kasparov with a fresh young challenger, who had downed Karpov: England's Nigel Short. The predicted lopsided result was 12½–7½, with Short managing only one win. The clock had ruined some brilliant attacks by Short, who deserved more points. Kasparov had wrested the event away from FIDE, which made a debacle of a rival match in which Karpov beat Timman. The organizational future of the World Championship was in grave doubt.

No chess player in all prior history had made and broken organizations, garnered vast wealth, acted as political king-maker, addressed a rally of twenty thousand folks in a Moscow square. Nor can we recall one targeted for a paternity suit by a blond actress and sought after for network television and appointed contributing editor of the *Wall Street Journal*. And surely none ever had to charter a plane to evacuate dozens of associates from his native Baku during an anti-Armenian pogrom (in January 1990). And all the while he developed new surprises in the Grünfeld Defense and won nearly every superstrong tournament that he entered. We await a Hollywood movie.

Let us forgive this hero his excesses of ego, as he immensely enriches the art and profession of chess and increases its popularity worldwide. But one may wonder about that mythical day in the chess pantheon when he meets Steinitz, who died a public ward. What could they say to each other?

20

THE FUTURE OF CHESS

We have charted the march of chess ideas from their origin to the present. We have focused special attention on the great players of our time and their unique contributions to chess ideas.

In chess also there is a dialectic of opposites. Throughout history two basic approaches, tendencies, schools of thought can be discerned: the technical and the creative. These two estimable opposing tendencies still contend for dominance in the world of chess.

Chess history has developed in cycles. Its optimistic datum is just this: Every time the technical school succeeded in confining and restricting chess within new limits specified by scientific discoveries, great creative artists and thinkers have appeared, defying prescribed rules and striking out in new and unsuspected territories for the adventurous spirit.

Thus in chess is relived the age-old tension between matter and spirit, control and freedom, domination (mastery of chess) and love (chess as mistress).

This tension between the two opposite approaches exists within each great player. It usually resolves itself in one direction or the other. Some occupy the extreme ends of the

spectrum. It is at the creative pole that new ground is being broken, and we lovers of chess are continually being enriched.

The observer views incredulously the effort toward a computer World Champion—the very concept is a mechanistic exaggeration of the technical side of chess. Carried to its realization, it would mean a sterile end for the rich march of chess ideas that we have traced.

No. We look forward not to a mechanical world but to the continuance of the dramatic, human struggle of ideas, and to new artistic achievements. In the world of the future, if people use their capacity to bring about the democratization of culture and a vast increase in leisure time, chess cannot fail to capture the interest of new millions, and develop even further, a never-ending intellectual challenge, and a delight to the side of man that will always love beauty.



The above words closed *The Battle of Chess Ideas*, and two decades later they need no change.



In 1960, the author was part of the U.S. team that won the World Student Championship in Leningrad. Our team returned home elated, to civic honors, but no one had any grandiose illusions of having demonstrated some superiority of our social system. The official Soviet reaction to their temporary setback bespoke a different psychology. Discipline was meted out to team members, including young Boris Spassky. Soon after, the authorities mounted a new scholastic campaign to manufacture chess champions, drawing a protest by International Master Vasily Panov in *Izvestia*.

The totalitarian mentality could not accept the simple fact that on that one occasion the U.S. team was superior and deserved its victory. Ideologists held that Soviet society was invincibly set on a historic mission toward supremacy in all aspects of life. Any reversal on that path could not be due to any defect in the system—it must be blamed on the error or perfidy of individuals.

History repeated itself in the wake of Spassky's 1972 rout by Fischer. Contrary to our expressed hope, Moscow received him icily, castigated him in the press, and barred him from going abroad for over a year. Meanwhile his strongest colleagues were compelled to end their "soft" life and take part in the Soviet Championship. (The winner in 1973: a reborn Spassky.) His relationship with the bureaucracy reached a new low in 1983, when he won the Linares tournament and had the temerity to do so ahead of Karpov. Today, Spassky represents his adopted homeland, France.

The chess world was deprived of the 1973 vision of Brazil's mercurial star Henrique Costa Mecking: "Only the young generation of fearless fighters can destroy the Fischer myth. . . . You must not let him impose on you his style, which is like snake poison. The old-fashioned way, heavy with security devices, incessant tiptoeing on shallow waters of draws, offers no hope against Fischer." Nonetheless, the worldwide impetus of the Reykjavík match was without precedent. In the West, young masters defied the economic facts of life by pursuing their art in record numbers. Britain, for so long a second-rate chess power, provided material incentives and soon commenced to produce grandmasters. In 1984 they ascended to silver medalists in the Olympiad.

Meanwhile the Third World showed its muscle as never before. In 1982 a Filipino, Eugene Torre, won a place among the candidates for the world title. In 1984 China, where some Soviet tutelage had sufficed to set off a boom in Western

chess, rose to a tie for eighth place in the Olympiad, alongside tradition-steeped chess powers like Yugoslavia and Holland. Today India, the cradle of chess, boasts a young superstar, Vishy Anand.

Before the 1980s, an unaided chess professional could keep track of all important new games played. But now their geometrical multiplication in a plethora of tournaments has ushered in the era of the "chess base" computer, which can store and retrieve limitless data and present them forthwith to the preparing competitor or compiler of opening monographs. In the debate over the potential of chess-playing computers, the author remains a skeptic. They can defeat human champions in rapid games and excel in very simplified endings like queen vs. rook, but will a computer ever beat the World Champion? Not likely, unless positional feel and artistry can be reduced to counting or it develops true heuristic function (learning from experience). We human beings need not feel threatened by the specter of a computer Frankenstein's monster. Let us merely enjoy and exploit this marvelous educational tool.

For many years Soviet Georgia monopolized women's events. With organization and devoted coaching, the Georgians manifested the grandmaster potential of girls and women. Yet in an era when dozens of grandmasters mushroomed into hundreds, no one considered women's World Champions Nona Gaprindashvili and Maya Chiburdanidze a threat to the "super" grandmasters. Centuries-old male chauvinism prevailed at all levels. Once Fischer called all women players "weakies," saying he could spot any woman a knight. (Tal retorted: "Fischer is Fischer, but a horse is a horse.") More sophisticated theories were aduced, from brain science and psychoanalysis.

One family from Budapest has now confounded every traditional notion about women in chess. Psychologist Las-

zlo Polgar and his wife Klara, a teacher, decided to educate their three daughters at home. Beyond general knowledge and numerous languages, Zsuzsa, Zsofia, and Judit learned chess—intensively. The eldest established her status as a solid grandmaster in her late teens. The middle sister won an open master tournament in Rome ahead of scores of men. But the youngest, Judit, was quickly recognized as phenomenal. Her style contradicted old stereotypes about feminine passivity; its lack of dogma and its sharp tactical abandon were spectacular. She was born in 1976. Just fifteen years and five months later, she fulfilled all the norms for the title of (men's) grandmaster, beating Fischer's record by a month. And a year later, in a ten-game match, she defeated Boris Spassky, who proclaimed her "a great player, a player of the future." Admitted male chauvinist Garry Kasparov, take heed.



The realm of chess, where justice always prevails and aggression is transmuted into artistry, is a symbol of the world that ought to be. We look to chess—immortal, ever-growing, helping to unify fractured humanity—for refuge and unending satisfactions.

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ANTHONY SAIDY, born in Los Angeles in 1937, ranked among the top ten chess players in the United States for many years, B.R.I.* He played third board for the U.S. Olympic team in 1964. His individual titles include Canadian Open Champion (1960) and American Open Champion (1967 and 1992).

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In *The March of Chess Ideas* Anthony Saidy, an International Master, explores what has captivated millions of people about the royal game since ancient times.

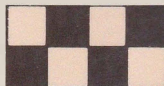
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