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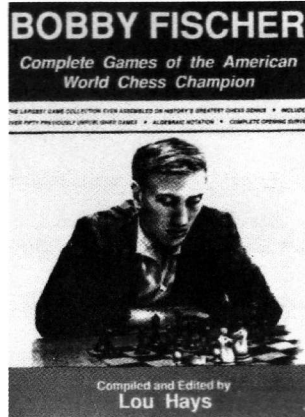
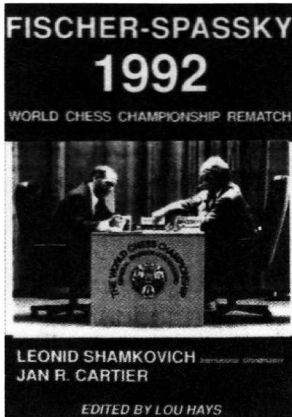
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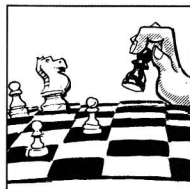
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EDITORIAL

Christopher Chabris
Timothy Hanke
Patrick Wolff

The house of chess journalism has many mansions. But it is safe to say that our publication is unique in the chess world. The word *American* in our title reflects our decision to emphasize the American point of view. The word *Journal* emphasizes our goals of seriousness (which should not be confused with solemnity) and objectivity (which will not preclude irreverence).

American Chess Journal is not a magazine with the latest news, games, and politics, but a collection of timeless contributions to the theory, history, and literature of the game. We bring you feature stories, profiles, debates, essays, reviews—articles you can read without a set—and detailed theory and analysis so interesting that you'll want to take out your board and pieces to study it. *American Chess Journal* is intended to be a prestigious, open forum where good chess writing will be published without chauvinism or prejudice of any sort.



Christopher Chabris

In this premiere issue we present two “on the scene” reports: Patrick Wolff on the Anand–Ivanchuk match in Linares, Spain, and Timothy Hanke on the “Revenge Match of the Twentieth Century” between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in Yugoslavia. Jonathan Yedidia analyzes the classic game Fischer–Keres, Bled 1961, in full detail. Hanon Russell opens his archive of historical documents to reveal the true story of the New York 1927 tournament. Jamie

Hamilton reviews the new chess movie *Knight Moves*, and Edward Winter, Fred Wilson, Bruce Leverett, and Christopher Chabris cover the latest chess literature.

For the future, we have exciting articles in preparation on endgame studies, chess in literature, and how computers are changing chess. Profiles, historical articles, and the best theory and analysis will be staples. If you want to contribute, please send a query. We are casting a wide net.

Who are we? Christopher Chabris and Timothy Hanke are both former presidents of the Harvard University Chess Club, where they

met. Chabris is a uscf master and former editor of *Chess Horizons*, the regional magazine of New England. He is currently writing a book entitled *The Fall of the Human Mind*, to be published by Harmony Books. Hanke was once selected Chess Journalist of the Year, and for two years edited *Chess Horizons*. Patrick Wolff is a grandmaster and an experienced chess writer, who unfortunately attended Harvard's archival school Yale. Nevertheless, we all get along, and we share the same reasons for being involved with *American Chess Journal*.

Why are we doing this? Chess is distinguished from other games in many ways, but one of the most striking is in its literature, a collection that is ancient in origins, vast, and growing at an accelerating rate. But longevity and quantity do not guarantee quality; in fact, nothing can. Carefully editing and properly rewarding writers can help, and that is what we want to do. We are conducting *American Chess Journal* as a nonprofit project to enhance chess literature in the long term, not to make money in the short term.

The *Boston Globe* recently predicted that *American Chess Journal* would become "the *Paris Review* of the chess world." We are proud of the comparison, but humbly suggest a different one. Three times a year the *Chess Informant* is snapped up by chess players who want the latest games from around the world. We hope that the chess world will just as eagerly turn to *American Chess Journal*, also published three times a year, for the latest in fine writing about all aspects of the game.

This will be our only editorial, ever. In future issues, this space will be filled with observations, comments, and brief items of interest that you submit. Among other things, we would like to hear from any historically-minded readers about a nineteenth-century publication called *The American Chess Journal*. But corrections, amplifications, and informed, articulate debate on any of the topics raised in our articles is always welcome. In short, we encourage your participation in searching for the truth and the beauty in chess, and we appreciate your support.

From now on, we will allow *American Chess Journal* to speak for itself. We hope you like it. ♁



Timothy Hanke



Patrick Wolff

Anand Upsets Ivanchuk in Linares Match

Inside the Winner's Training Camp

Patrick Wolff

It was early one morning in May when I got the wakeup call from Germany. The slow voice of Frederic Friedel said, "Good morning, Patrick. I have someone here who wants to speak to you."

Pause.

"Hi, Pat, how are you?"

The second voice was twice as fast, which makes sense, since it belongs to the fastest chess player I know, Viswanathan Anand. Anand wanted me to be his second for a match he was going to play in September against Vassily Ivanchuk. The match was going to be eight games at the normal international time control of 40 moves in two hours, followed by 20 moves per hour thereafter. He also wanted to know if I would train with him for one month beforehand.

Would I? I thought. You bet! I knew Anand fairly well from some tournaments we had played together, and I liked him very much. To train with a player of his calibre certainly sounded exciting. And to be an integral part of a match at that level ... Wow!

"Let me think about it, Vishy," I said. A grandmaster's got his pride. Over the next few days I solicited advice about whether to do it, and all the advice I got merely confirmed my first reaction. I called him back to accept. And that was the beginning, from my point of view, of the Anand-Ivanchuk match held in Linares, Spain, 20-30 September 1992.

Patrick Wolff is a Grandmaster and the Technical Editor of American Chess Journal.

Preparing to Train

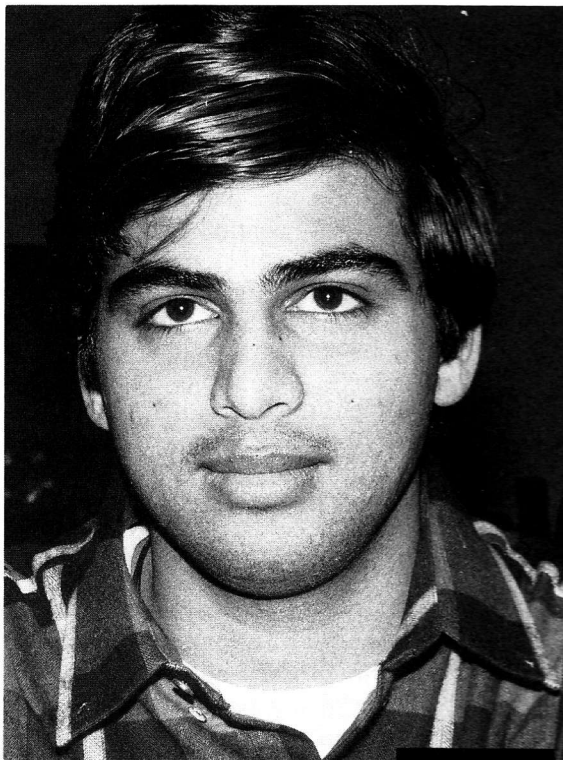
During the next few months I asked selected people for advice on how to do the job of a second. Everyone knows what the job of a chess player is: playing chess. Those of us who do this for a living have studied and worked at this job for years. But to be a second is a different kind of job. The analyzing part is easy—all chessplayers analyze with others at some point. But what kind of moral support should one lend? To what degree should one try to be a trainer? How should the second deal with overall match strategy? In general, what kind of relationship should one have with the player? I had no experience at all with such matters and wanted to do as good a job as I could.

I spoke to two people who were especially helpful. The first was IM John Donaldson, who has been a second and team trainer many times. He gave me an extremely good piece of advice: get to know the person you are working with well enough to gauge what kind of emotional environment he needs. Everyone is different; different chessplayers react to stress in different ways. A good second will know the player well enough to give him the environment he needs. John gave me a few examples of hypothetical responses to a loss that a player might have, such as one person needing to work very hard to “exorcise” the loss, while another might need to relax and forget that the game had ever been played.

As I think about that piece of advice, it sounds very simple. Nevertheless I consider it very profound, because it belies the notion that one could just learn the “proper” environment to create. It is important to be sensitive to each person’s needs.

The second person I talked to was IM Mark Dvoretsky. He is one of the top trainers in the world and has helped to produce several strong grandmasters from the Soviet Union. We worked together for a week at a chess camp teaching children. While we were there I told him about this match and asked him for his advice.

First I asked him for his assessment of Ivanchuk and Anand as chess



Viswanathan
Anand (1990)

players from a stylistic point of view. His view was that Ivanchuk is a strong strategist who can think deeply about a position, but can get lost in situations that need intuitive insight. Therefore, it is a bad idea to go for positions that can be “worked out” at the board, because he is the man to do it. Better to go for something a little bit crazy, where Anand’s fantastic intuition and broad calculating ability will come to the fore. This was a very interesting insight, although I’m not sure that we were able to use it to any real advantage. You always have to be careful with intricate theories of this sort, because when push comes to shove, winning games just comes down to playing good chess. Still, I think that his point had some validity to it, and I will come back to it later.

The second thing I asked him was in what context this match ought to be viewed. He was unequivocal: this should be seen as a training match for a possible future candidates match. Of course such a future match might or might not be against Ivanchuk, but the point is that Anand should start thinking now about going for the world championship. This is another point that I will come to later, because as it turns out Anand had his own thoughts on this matter.

I talked to one other person to solicit advice: Frederic Friedel. Frederic is one of the people who started ChessBase, and he has been something of an unofficial coach to Anand. Frederic and I have also been friendly for some time, although we are not nearly so close as he and Anand. I asked him for some clue to the information that John Donaldson told me I must have, i.e., what kind of environment does Anand need? We talked for some time, and he gave me some good insight into this matter. Without going into too much detail, I can say that basically Anand is a strong and stable person, and Frederic felt that what he needed most was a good friend and an occasional stimulus of his killer instinct. This was his insight, and from my experience I can say that I agree. Anand is basically a very nice and reasonable person, a good person to be with when working under great stress. My experience with him was very positive, and I have to think that he must be one of the easiest people to “second” for. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

In the final week before leaving to go to Spain, I spent some time looking over his games and Ivanchuk’s, especially in matches. This gave me some feel for their chessplaying, but I don’t know whether this time was particularly well spent. After all, I would soon get an intimate feeling for Anand’s style, and as for Ivanchuk, Anand has played him enough to know him fairly well. I was trying to get a sense of what match strategy Ivanchuk would employ, but in fact the conclusions I drew were completely wrong. I thought that Ivanchuk would vary his Whites, using 1 e4 and 1 d4 while keeping relatively close to his black defenses. This was almost completely the reverse of what he did in the match! The lessons are not to draw strong conclusions from little data, and never to rely too much on factors that a player can consciously change if he chooses.

Ivanchuk is a strong strategist who can think deeply about a position, but can get lost in situations that need intuitive insight, according to Dvoretsky.

A little more useful was the time I put into doing some research into the openings that Anand told me he wanted to use in the match, although really most of this work we did together in Spain. Both of us did some background research, but both of us found it to be of little value compared to the work we did together.

Finally, I took a look at all the games that Anand and Ivanchuk had played together before. I was heartened by the fact that Anand's score was +1! But this examination, too, proved to be of little value. Perhaps taking a lot of time to study the interplay of their styles would have proven more useful. But perhaps not. Good chess is good chess, and it's not clear that one could learn so much more from their games together, especially since they are so few (under 10), than from studying the respective bodies of their games separately.

Armed with all this advice, knowledge, and pseudo-knowledge, I boarded the plane to Spain on 21 August to begin our training.

Preparing to Play

I was met at Madrid's airport by Anand and his friend Mauricio Perea. Mauricio is a retired American executive who has been living in Spain for 20 years with his wife, Nieves. Every year they go the Linares chess tournament, helping to translate Spanish to English for the players, arranging everyone's living conditions, taking care of any extraneous details that come up. They are wonderful, pleasant people, and all the regular players in Linares like them very much. Mauricio is an avid chess player who is quite strong—perhaps more than 2300 FIDE strength. Anand met them at the Linares tournament and became very friendly with them. When he told them that he was coming to Linares to play the match with Ivanchuk, they invited him to stay with them.

The airline lost a piece of my luggage. This did not augur well, I thought, but the bag turned up a few days later intact.

When I arrived I was exhausted. Anand was also tired, having just arrived the day before, so we took it easy. But the next day we got right down to work. We decided upon a schedule of working six or seven days and then one rest day to be followed by another six or seven days of work. As it turned out, this was a very good rhythm for us to follow. We were able to work hard in the days we set aside to work, and the rest came at just the right time for us to recuperate. Every day we would start at about



Vassily Ivanchuk
winning the New
York Open in 1988

the same time, 11:00 AM, work until lunch at 2:30 PM, eat for an hour with Mauricio and Nevas, work another few hours, take a long walk, work some more, and then end with a late dinner often outside on the back porch around 9:00 PM. Usually we would take another long walk after dinner.

I was amazed at how intense the experience was. For one month I spent 80% of my waking hours with Anand. We talked about many things when we walked, or late at night before going to sleep, and in the process became good friends. But it was also a forced closeness, because after all we had no one else to talk to. It was super-concentrated. This is why I can't imagine how it would have been to work with someone with whom I didn't get along well. It might have been just impossible.

Remember that we were bound by much more than simply sharing the same space for a month. We were warriors preparing for a grand battle. We came up with endless jokes about Ivanchuk to trivialize him as an enemy. We discussed strategy and psychology and life plans. And most of all we analyzed and analyzed and analyzed. Often in his conversations I could see that a part of his mind was still working on the chess board. Sometimes I couldn't sleep because my mind was still turning over a piece of analysis we had done.

One night I lay awake because we had been working on a really tough problem for two days without making progress. At 3:00 AM I got up and went into the analysis room to work on the computer for an hour. Being still new at analyzing with ChessBase, I didn't know how to save the work I had done. I left a sign: VISHY, DON'T TURN OFF THE COMPUTER. I'VE DONE SOME ANALYSIS THAT MIGHT BE IMPORTANT. It turned out to be a large piece of the breakthrough we had been looking for. The next morning we hammered it out to completion. During lunch I realized that we had forgotten to consider one line, and I told Vishy about it. Instantly we were off on variations upon variations. Poor Nieves, who doesn't play chess at all, just looked up at the sky and said, "Oh Lord, they're at it again."

Marketing the World Championship

One of our most important conversations took place a few days before we finished our preparations. Anand and I had talked a few times about our own ambitions, and especially the idea that he might try to play for the world championship, but we had never really discussed what would be involved in reaching that goal. It was clear that he wanted some input, and I had been thinking about what to tell him.

"To begin with," I said, "you know I think that the way it is organized now is all wrong." One of our favorite topics of conversation was how chess ought to be marketed, and especially how the world championship ought to be organized. I told him, and he agreed, that the system used now is absurd. Why do we have all these candidates matches? They

Anand is a strong and stable person. What he needed most was a good friend and an occasional stimulus of his killer instinct.

are impossible to sell to a sponsor. One of the “secrets” of top chess is that although the money is quite reasonable, it is mainly due to patrons who receive very little business benefits for their money. Thus, the matches often change venues at the last minute and are subject to the whims of the patrons who hold them. If the matches can’t be sold, then why do we have them? Mainly, I think, because of the old fear that Soviet players would collude to produce a Soviet challenger to the title, plus some notion that it is absolutely vital to have a system that produces only the most qualified challengers. But the Soviet Union has collapsed now, and there is no Soviet state forcing players to throw games. Successful sports are more concerned with the marketability of qualifying events than the absolute purity of the process.

My conclusion is that chess would be much better served by completely changing the world championship system. In my view, the answer is to keep the interzonal tournament, and have the 13 top finishers qualify for a candidates tournament along with the loser of the last world championship match. The candidates tournament would be a single round robin held once every year (as would the interzonal). Such a tournament might be marketable to some degree. The top qualifier would then play the world champion in an eight—yes, eight—game match for the title. Again, none of this 24-game nonsense. An eight-game match is enough to be a legitimate test for the title, and also would be marketable, which is the key. As it stands now, a world championship match goes on so long that even chessplayers lose interest. An eight-game match could take place in about the same amount of time as the World Series, which would be short enough to capture some real interest. The world championship match would take place once a year.

If this system were adopted, not only could the game be better marketed, but also the Olympian task of playing a world title match would be reduced to manageable proportions. Now it takes tremendous resources to build the kind of team one needs to play for the world championship, resources that only one-time Communist Party favorites could command, or rich chessplayers assured of the \$2 or \$3 million pot of gold of the World Championship match.

Well, anyway, Anand and I had talked about this before, so he knew exactly what I meant. But as things stand now, if you want to go for the title you have to jump through the hoops.

I told him that if he wants to do it, he has to think *now* about going for it, and he has to be prepared for the work, sacrifice, and risk involved. Risk, because after all the chances are against any one player making it. Who is to say that Anand should make it ahead of Ivanchuk or Karpov or Gelfand, or maybe Shirov, or for that matter Short or Timman who are poised to challenge this year? Anyway, some kind of team would have to be assembled, and one’s chess development would have to be directed toward the goal. I say the latter because while it is certainly true that the

The odds are against Anand’s capturing the world championship, as they would be against any potential challenger, but I think he would have a good shot.

ultimate chess development is simply to get better, it is also true that the World Championship title is more than just the number-one ranking. It is a title held by a person, and ultimately to take that title requires beating all other challengers and then beating the champion, something that requires some sort of concerted effort. A perfect model of a chess player who understands this is Nigel Short, who in my opinion has done superbly at working toward the title to the exclusion of all else.

Anand and I talked at length about this and other related matters: what such a team should look like, what kind of attitude might be necessary, which people might be solicited for help, what my role might or might not be in the future, and more. We talked in depth, and then never talked about it again.

I don't know whether he will make that concerted effort to try for the title, nor do I know whether he could succeed if he did. The odds would be against him, of course, as they would be against any potential challenger, but I think he would have a good shot. His talent and capacity for hard work give him tremendous potential for further growth, and he is such a strong and stable person that I think he would handle the stress well. Time will tell.

On Being a Second

We took a break of several days at the end of our preparation before going to play the match itself. This let me write a few letters and reflect on what this match meant for me. It is a strange job to be a second, when you are a young chessplayer with some ambitions yourself. I have no serious ambitions toward the world title, because I recognize that I have no right to have them. Anand himself told me that he never started thinking about it seriously until, about two years ago, people began to tell him that he had a chance—as more and more people have told him since. I think that's a healthy attitude. If your results justify shifting your ambitions, then you should do so. If not, then work toward what is the next reasonable goal. At my stage now I still want to achieve a high ranking in chess and work toward my own "sporting results." Yet when you are a second, you have to think very differently. Your own form is not important, only that of the person you are seconding. Every day the most important things are the desires and ambitions of the "principal." Every day someone will talk about how wonderfully talented the person you are working for is, and how he will win, etc. Of course I was working for him and rooting for him more than the people telling me this, but I would also feel a tinge of jealousy at standing in the shadow of all that praise. (I must say that I think Anand realized this to some degree, because when we talked about the possibility of his playing for the World Championship, he asked me whether I could work for such a long time in that capacity. I told him that I didn't know. I wonder how many people in his position would be as sensitive to the feelings of a second.

I was amazed at how intense the experience was. For one month I spent 80% of my waking hours with Anand.

His ability to work with people is one more reason that I think he has a bright future.)

It is the strange paradox of the second that he must be strong enough to be of use to the principal, but not so strong that the principal should feel threatened. He has to be aware of his own feelings, but subordinate his own needs. I had anticipated some of these things, but the day-to-day experience of them was new. Fortunately I could call the U. S. to talk to friends, one in particular who is also a chessplayer, and I did so once or twice a week. This outside contact is very valuable. I noticed that Anand also talked to his family, particularly his sister, several times a week.

Finally came the day when we packed up everything to go to Linares. Mauricio and Nieves would arrive the next day and stay in the same hotel as we. After four weeks of training, we were ready to play the match!

Performance

We were promised a Rolls Royce limousine to chauffeur us to the hotel. When we got off the train in Linares, there were two taxis waiting for us. Oh, well. At least we made it to the Hotel Anibal intact.

The Hotel Anibal is owned by Luis Rentero, the patron of the Linares tournament and also the sponsor of this match. It is a nice hotel in a city that has no apparent need for a nice hotel, but somehow Rentero manages to keep its rooms filled. They say he is worth almost half a billion dollars, so I guess he must have pretty good business sense. He has more money than scruples, but I will come to that later.

After unpacking, the first thing we did was take a walk, of course. Anand showed me all around the Linares he had come to know from playing in the tournament twice. Most important, he showed me the paseo, a long walkway that all the chess players frequent. Several times during the match we found ourselves walking down one side of the paseo and met Ivanchuk and his second walking down the other side!

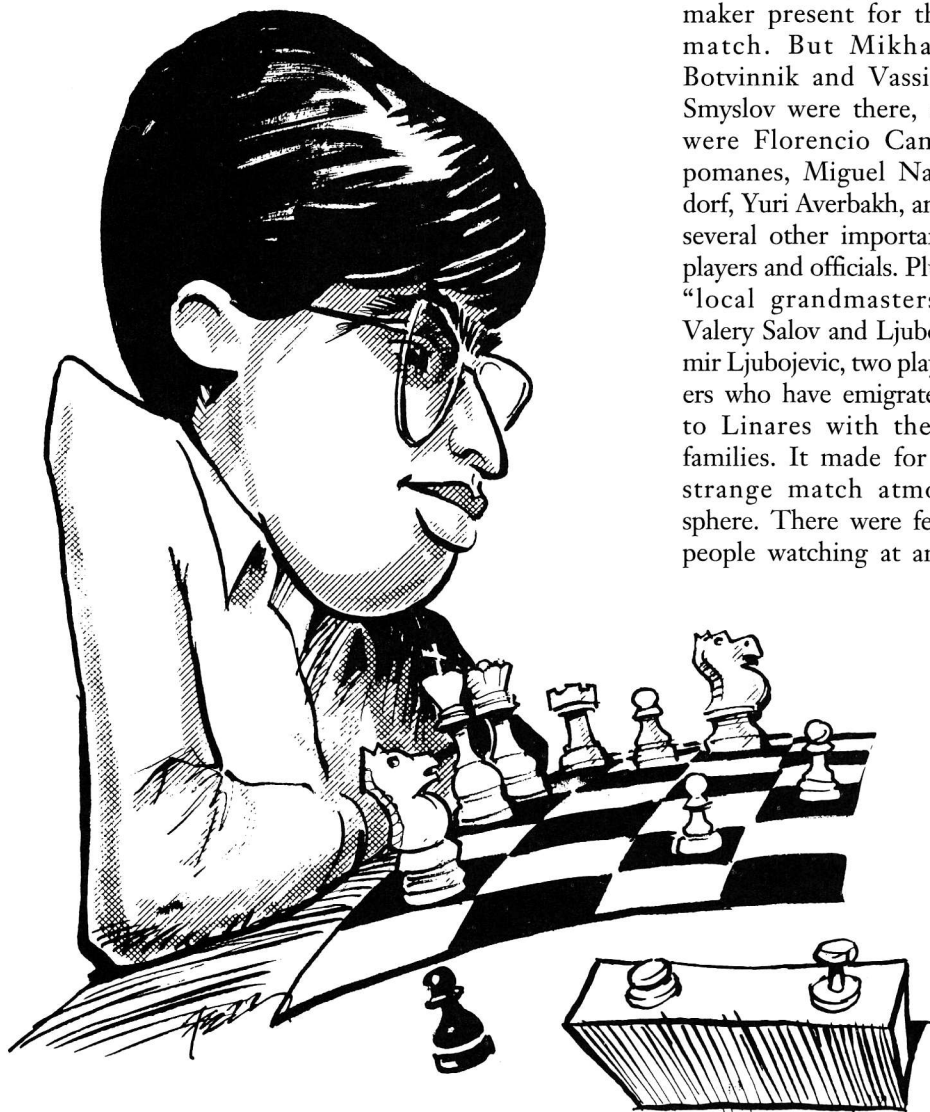
We were happy with our preparations. We thought that our work on Black had been excellent. Our White had been somewhat more sketchy. Instead of focusing on new ideas, we had really just decided what to play against possible opening choices. Our theory was that Black inevitably gets weaker during such a match, while White gets stronger. After all, Black has the advantage of surprise, and with the black pieces one can dictate the terms of the battle to a greater degree. But after the white pieces get to see what openings Black is playing, it becomes possible to discover new problems. As time goes on, White should be able to pose more problems than Black can handle in a short time. So we should be able to strengthen White as the match progressed, while we would need Black to be as strong as possible beforehand. In the two days we had before the first game, we worked on some more ideas for White, while tightening up a few weak spots for Black.

Several times during the match we found ourselves walking down one side of the paseo and met Ivanchuk and his second walking down the other side!

The opening ceremony was the evening before the first game. Rentero had invited a select group of chess luminaries to watch the match, but for the opening ceremony many Spanish chess officials also came, as well as the social set of Linares. I don't know whether this social set plays chess or not, but I guess a dinner party doesn't require chess skill.

Apparently Rentero had invited some other people who did not come. We had been told, for example, that Milos Forman and Oliver Stone would be coming. We were not told that they had merely been

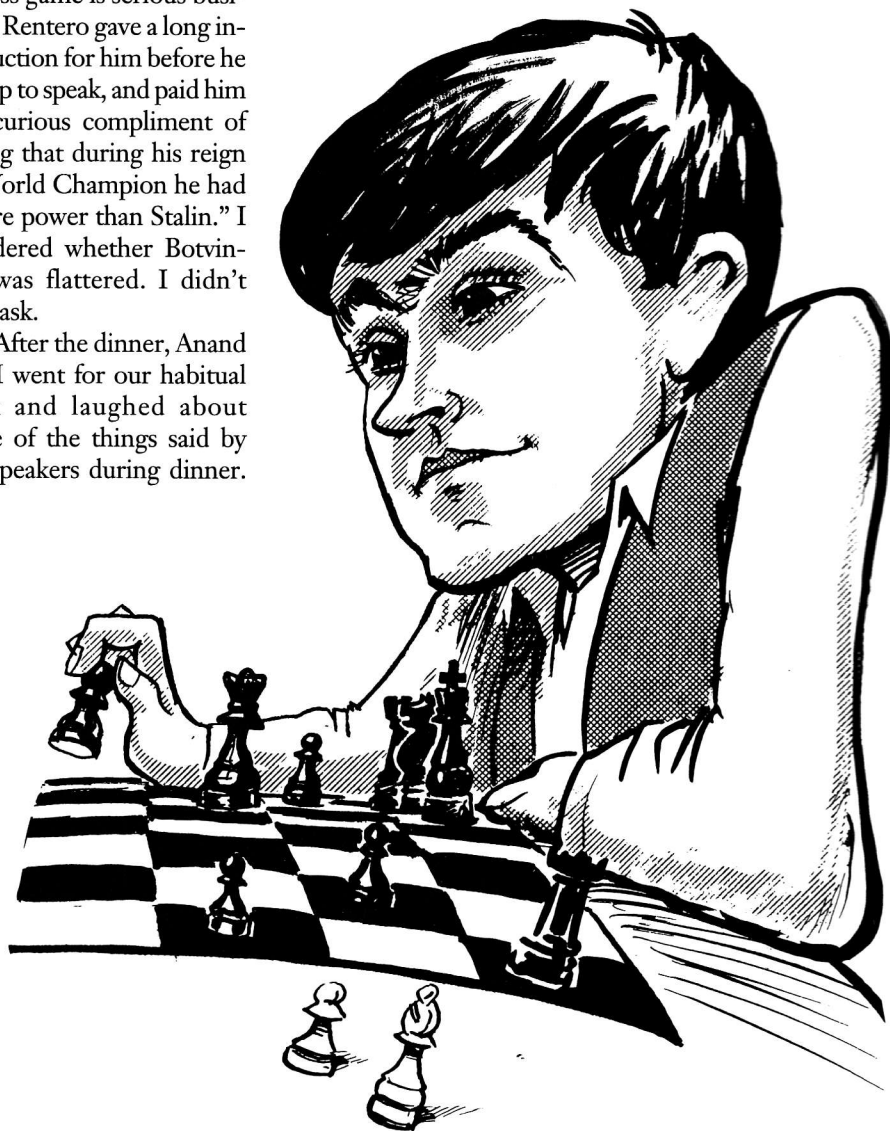
invited. I'm afraid that there was nary a filmmaker present for the match. But Mikhail Botvinnik and Vassily Smyslov were there, as were Florencio Campomanes, Miguel Najdorf, Yuri Averbakh, and several other important players and officials. Plus "local grandmasters" Valery Salov and Ljubomir Ljubojevic, two players who have emigrated to Linares with their families. It made for a strange match atmosphere. There were few people watching at any



one time—maybe a maximum of 25—but almost everyone who was watching had something interesting to say.

Mikhail Botvinnik had the most commanding presence of all the guests, even more impressive than Campomanes. Botvinnik apparently gives a small speech every time he arrives someplace, and this was no exception. He talked at the dinner about how good it was that “serious” chess be played between such “serious” players under such “serious” conditions. He is no fan of faster time controls; for him a chess game is serious business! Rentero gave a long introduction for him before he got up to speak, and paid him the curious compliment of saying that during his reign as World Champion he had “more power than Stalin.” I wondered whether Botvinnik was flattered. I didn’t dare ask.

After the dinner, Anand and I went for our habitual walk and laughed about some of the things said by the speakers during dinner.

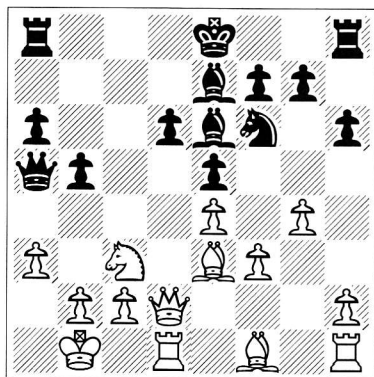


Neither one of us is as serious as Botvinnik, I'm afraid.

Even before the first game, we settled into what became our habitual routine. We would have breakfast at 9:30 AM. Then Anand would go for a walk, sometimes with me, sometimes without. Starting at 11:00 AM, we would work until 1:00 PM., when we would eat lunch. At about 2:00 PM we would finish lunch, when he would take some time alone. Before we got up from the table, I would always insist that we take a last look at things before the game, and he would always acquiesce to doing so after his time alone. At 2:45 PM I would stop by his room. Sometimes we would work, but most of the time we would just talk about general matters until 3:45 PM, 15 minutes before the game. He would leave to go to the playing hall; I would wish him luck; then I would show up five minutes after the game started at 4:00 PM. Right after the game we would take a long walk and talk about what happened, and then we would have dinner and goof off—or do some work if there was a problem that worried us.

Even as I wished him good luck and watched him walk off to the playing hall for the first game, I couldn't believe that after a month of preparation the match was finally starting! I must admit that I was nervous, and he must have been even more so, but things started off better than either one of us had dared to hope.

The games were played in the Hotel Anibal on the third and top floor, which is a private club room and lounge. During the Linares tournament, this area is used as the press room, while the players play in the auditorium where the dinner party was held. But this was such a private affair that there was no press room. Anand and Ivanchuk played in front of a small captive audience sitting in 24 chairs, each with the name of one of the specially invited guests. I arrived five minutes after the game started and took my seat to watch.



1 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (1), after 15 g4

IVANCHUK–ANAND, LINARES (M/1) 1992 SICILIAN DEFENSE B66

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♘f6 5 ♗c3
♗c6 6 ♕g5 e6 7 ♖d2 a6 8 0–0–0 h6 9 ♗e3 ♗xd4
10 ♗xd4 b5 11 f3

Perhaps surprised by Anand's opening choice, Ivanchuk plays a quiet and unambitious system.

11 ... ♙a5!? 12 a3 e5 13 ♗e3 ♗e6 14 ♖b1
♗e7 15 g4?! (D 1)

This move starts a bad idea. Ivanchuk wants to put pressure on Black's game, but he has missed Black's superb 17th move. White should play 15 ♗d5 and admit he has nothing.

15 ... ♗b8

Also possible was 15 ... b4!? 16 ♗a2 (16 ♗d5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♗b8

and 16 a**x**b4 ♖**x**b4 17 ♔d5 ♔**x**d5 18 e**x**d5 ♖**x**d2 19 ♖**x**d2 ♔d7 don't offer much) d5 with a mess, but the text move is sounder.

16 ♔d5

Now 16 ... b4 was really threatened!

16 ... ♖x**d2 17 ♔**x**f6+ (D 2)**

Better was 17 ♖**x**d2 ♖.

17 ... gx**f6!!**

This is a spectacular move, all the more impressive because Anand had to foresee it several moves ago. On the surface it seems completely anti-positional, and that is why Ivanchuk never even considered it. Why does Black give himself doubled pawns? The answer is that Anand has judged that White cannot stop Black from undoubling them. Black can trade the h-pawn and an f-pawn and then either the second f-pawn or the d-pawn. This will leave White with a useless h-pawn and a meaningless extra queenside pawn to fight against an overwhelming pawn duo. In fact, even if White had not pushed his g-pawn it would still be correct to recapture this way, although it would not be nearly as strong.

The resulting pawn structure can be compared to the Pelikan Sicilian, but in this position Black has the advantage of the "two bishops"—White's two bishops, specifically the dark-squared bishop, which is useless in the fight to blockade the black pawns on the light squares. If the piece on e3 were a knight, then White would have a firm blockade and a solid advantage. As it is, Black is better.

18 ♖x**d2 h5 19 ♖g1 h**x**g4 20 f**x**g4 ♔c4!!**

Another magnificent move! Visy told me afterward that when he saw this move he knew immediately that it was correct. On the surface, it looks insane to trade the "good" bishop for White's "bad" bishop, but the point is that Black must stop White from playing h2-h3 and ♔g2, which would blockade the pawns.

21 b3

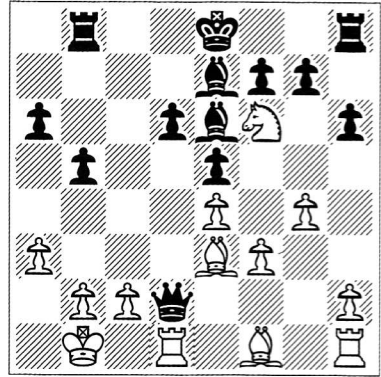
21 ♔**x**c4 b**x**c4 is clearly better for Black with the point that 22 ♖d5 is met by 22 ... ♖b5.

21 ... ♔x**f1 22 ♖**x**f1 ♖h3! (D 3)**

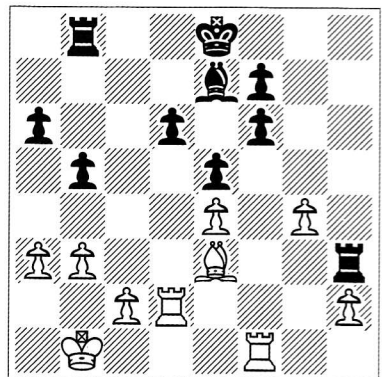
Simply 22 ... ♔d7 to bring the queen rook into play gives Black a clear advantage; the game move is more ambitious but it seems justified.

23 ♖e2

At this point Ljubojevic, who was watching the game, was walking around to anyone who would listen and ranting that both players were absolutely hopeless; first of all Black had made several terrible moves, and now White had missed his chance to consolidate



2 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (1), after 17 ♔x**f6+**



3 □ Ivanchuk–Anand (1), after 22 ... ♖h3

his "advantage" by 23 ♖g1. I challenged him on this, and we analyzed 23 ... ♗d7 24 ♜d3 (this was Ljubo's point). After 30 or 45 minutes where I took the black pieces and Ljubo, joined by a considerably less agitated Salov, took the white pieces, we agreed that after 24 ... ♝xd3 25 cxd3 ♜h8 26 ♜f3 d5! Black is equal, e.g., 27 ♖b2 d4 28 h3 f5! with counterplay.

After the game, Anand and I took a walk, and I mentioned this possibility to him. He turned it over for a few minutes, and then we continued walking. Yet another few minutes later, he looked up and pointed out that 24 ... ♜h4! is better. Here are two variations, both with the same essential idea:

a) 25 ♖g3 ♜g8 26 h3 ♝gh8 27 ♜ff3 f5! 28 ♝xf5 (or else White's position falls apart, e.g., 28 exf5 e4 29 ♜e3 d5 is horrible) ♝xh3 29 ♝xh3 ♝xh3 30 ♖f2 (30 ♝xf7? ♝h1 31 ♜f1 ♖g5 → as White will not be able to break the pin and will have to give the exchange, e.g., 32 ♜e1 ♖d2) ♖e6 and White will quickly lose either the g-pawn or the e-pawn and then the game.

b) 25 h3 ♝bh8 26 ♜ff3 f5! (Same theme!) 27 ♝xf5 ♝xh3 and the position is essentially similar the one in the last note.

Admittedly, though, Ivanchuk's 23rd move is listless, not even trying to stop Black from executing his plan.

23 ... ♗d7 24 g5

Carrying out Black's plan for him, but otherwise it's hard to see how White will save the pawn.

24 ... ♖e6 25 gxf6 ♖xf6 26 ♖d2 ♖e7!

Simplest and best. During the game Anand spent some time considering 26 ... ♖h4, but he didn't like giving White counterplay against the d-pawn with 27 ♖b4. In the audience, I was considering 26 ... ♜g8 27 ♜ef2 ♖e7 28 ♝xf7 ♜g4. Although it activates the rooks (and also keeps a large advantage), it trades the wrong pawn for the e-pawn. There is no hurry. Black can patiently trade the d-pawn for the e-pawn, and the f- and e-pawns will dominate the board. Black is statically winning.

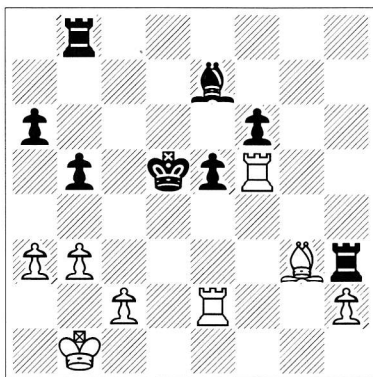
27 ♖e1 f6 28 ♖g3 d5 29 exd5+ ♗xd5 30 ♜f5

(D 4) ♖c6!

Black must still be careful! For example, 30 ... ♝b7 31 ♖xe5 ♖e6 (31 ... fx5 32 ♜fx5+ ♗d6 33 ♜e6+ ♗d5 34 ♜2e5+! ±) 32 ♖xf6+ =, or 30 ... ♖e6?? 31 ♖xe5! ♜e8 32 ♝xf6+.

31 ♜ef2?

This move surprised me, but of course it is horribly dreary to defend such a position. The only chance was for White to play 31 ♜f3 ♜h7 32 ♜c3+ ♖b6 to activate his rooks and drive the black king from the center. Note that Black should not play 32 ... ♗d7 33 ♜d2+ ♖d6 as after 34 ♜cd3 ♝b6 35 ♖f2 ♜c6 36 ♖c5 White gets a great deal of counterplay. But after the



4 ■ Ivanchuk-Anand (1), after 30 ♜f5

move Ivanchuk played, White's position is irretrievably lost.

31 ... ♖h6!

If White can sac the exchange on f6 he gets good counterplay.

32 ♖b2 ♖d7! 33 ♖e2 ♗d6! 34 ♖f3 ♖c8! (D 5)

Okay, I know that five exclaims in a row is a lot, but after all these accurate moves White has been completely deprived of counterplay.

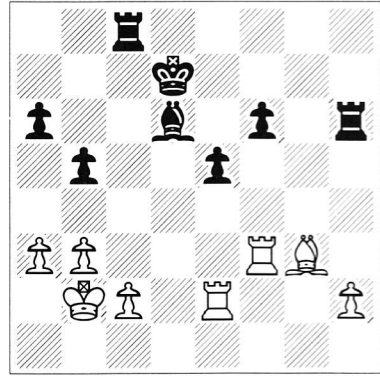
35 ♗e1 ♖e6 36 ♗d3 ♖h7 37 ♖g3 ♗c5 38 ♖a2 ♗d7 39 ♖c3 ♖cc7

Not 39 ... ♗d1? because of 40 ♗f2 ♗xf2 41 ♖xc8 ♗d4 42 c3.

40 h4 ♗d1 41 ♗f2 ♗d6 42 ♖g3 e4! 43 ♖xe4+ ♗e5 44 ♖xe5+

44 c3 ♖c2+.

44 ... fx e5 45 ♖b2 ♗d2 0-1



5 □ Ivanchuk–Anand (1), after 34 ... ♖c8

I was overjoyed after this game, as was Anand. I have rarely seen such a strong player so outplayed. I didn't know then that this would be the best game of the match, or that we would have plenty of troubles later on, although I could have guessed the latter. For now I was just thrilled that things were going so well.

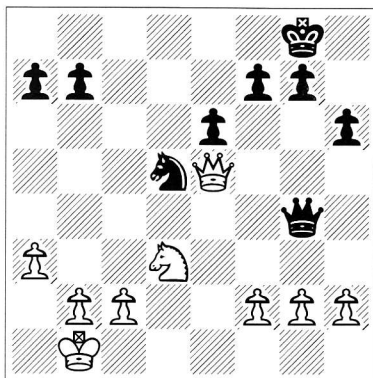
To start a match with one point and an extra White is an enormous advantage, and that was the situation we suddenly found ourselves in! The only problem was that we had no idea what Ivanchuk would play as Black. Anand would open with 1 e4, and we figured that Ivanchuk could play 1 ... e5, 1 ... c5, 1 ... e6, or 1 ... c6. Also, if he were to play 1 ... e5 or 1 ... c5, that still left us to face a possible Marshall Gambit, Zaitsev Lopez, Open Lopez, Dragon, Najdorf, Pelikan, or Rauzer. It's tough playing someone with such a broad repertoire! So we did the best we could to make sure that no matter what, Anand would take little risk and still have some chance to press with White. Being a point up was very nice since it took the pressure off to score with White.

In fact, Ivanchuk's opening choice in game two was unforeseen and well thought-out. Black's 13th move novelty was a good novelty. Ivanchuk equalized the game and even got a very slight initiative. But then he lost all his objectivity and blundered horribly (23 ... ♖g4??). With good technique Anand picked up the point, and now he had an incredible two-point lead after two games!

ANAND–IVANCHUK, LINARES (M/2) 1992

FRENCH DEFENSE C11

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 ♗g5 dxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♗bd7 6 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 7 ♗f3 h6 8 ♗h4 c5 9 ♗b5+ ♗d7 10 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 11 ♖e2 ♗e7



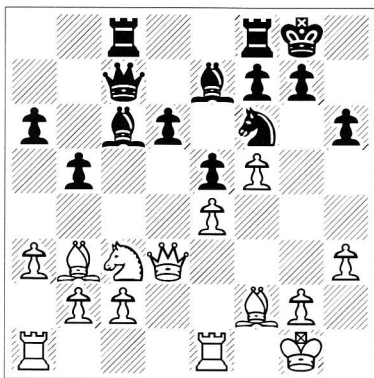
6 □ Anand-Ivanchuk (2), after 23 ... ♔g4

12 0-0-0 0-0 13 dxc5 ♖c6! 14 ♕b1 ♜fd8 15 ♜he1
 ♗xc5 16 ♗e5 ♜xd1+ 17 ♜xd1 ♜d8 18 ♜xd8+ ♗xd8
 19 ♗d3 ♗c4 20 ♗g3 ♗d5 21 a3 ♗f6?! 22 ♗e5!
 ♗xe5 23 ♗xe5 ♗g4?? (D 6) 24 ♗b8+ ♗h7 25
 ♗xb7 f5 26 ♗c6! ♗e4 27 g3 a5 28 ♗d6 a4 29
 ♗e5 ♗c4 30 ♗e2 ♗c6 31 ♗b4! ♗c5 32 ♗xe6
 ♗xb4 33 axb4 ♗xf2 34 c3 g5 35 ♗a2 f4 36 gx f4
 gx f4 37 b5 f3 38 b6 a3 39 ♗d7+ ♗g6 40 ♗d6+
 ♗h5 41 ♗xa3 ♗e3 42 ♗d5+ ♗h4 43 b7 ♗a7+ 44
 ♗b3 ♗b6+ 45 ♗c2 f2 46 ♗f5! 1-0

The first game Anand won because he outplayed his opponent. The second game Anand won because Ivanchuk's nerves betrayed him and he threw a draw

away. This was a terrible mistake, and it shows how important nerves are. After the second defeat we had no pressure on us. Anand could just play and not have to press overly hard. Ivanchuk, however, needed to make something happen with White right away. In that regard his choice of the Sozin makes perfect sense, but was very unlucky. We had foreseen the possibility that he would play this line, and had spent much time working it out to complete equality. Ivanchuk never had a chance to get

any advantage. After the game, Anand was ecstatic. "We just blocked him," he said, "We completely blocked him," putting his arms together as if he were warding off a vampire.



7 ■ Ivanchuk-Anand (3), final position

IVANCHUK-ANAND, LINARES (M/3)

SICILIAN DEFENSE B88

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3
 ♗c6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 ♗b3 a6 8 f4 ♗e7 9 0-0 ♗c7 10
 ♗e3 b5 11 f5 ♗xd4 12. ♗xd4 e5 13 ♗f2 ♗b7 14
 a3 0-0 15 ♗f3 ♜ac8 16 ♜fe1 h6 17 h3 ♗c6 18
 ♗d3 1/2-1/2 (D 7)

The fourth game was the last one before the first rest day. The match had a curious schedule: four games in a row, then a rest day, then three games in a row, then a rest day, and then the last game. Actually, Anand had been told before the match that it was going to be three, three, two, which would have made for a completely different match strategy. For example, the person to have Black in the first game would have then had an enormous advantage, as he could sneak in two Blacks before the first rest day gave an opportunity to analyze the opponent's openings. The new schedule was much fairer, but we were disappointed because we learned about it only after Anand drew the first Black!

Ivanchuk showed that his match strategy included changing his openings with Black, a very sensible strategy. He may be the most dangerous match player in the world, because his opening repertoire is so broad that he can literally prepare a different sharp opening for each game! Our strategy had been to anticipate any eventuality and prepare lines that minimized risk and still gave some chances to press. I had hoped that this line in the Pelikan did just that, and in fact I still believe that White had some chances for an opening advantage, but Ivanchuk played well and essentially neutralized White's play. So it was only a harmless draw with White. This was a minor setback, but on the other hand it was the worst thing to happen to us so far!

**ANAND-IVANCHUK, LINARES (M/4) 1992
SICILIAN DEFENSE B33**

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 ♗c6 6 ♗db5 d6 7 ♗f4 e5 8 ♗g5 a6 9 ♗a3 b5 10 ♗d5 ♗e7 11 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 12 ♗d3 ♗b7 13 ♖e2 0-0 (D 8) 14 0-0

If 14 c4! (also 14 ♗xf6!? gxf6 15 0-0-0 is interesting) then there are two options:

a) 14 ... b4 15 ♗c2 a5 16 ♗xf6 ± (16 f3 ♗g6 17 0-0 with a slight edge).

b) 14 ... bxc4 15 ♗xc4 d5 16 exd5 ♖xd5 17 f3 (17 ♗e3 ♖a5+) e4 (probably forced) 18 ♗xe4 (D 9):

b1) 18 ... ♗xe4 19 ♗xe7:

b11) 19 ... ♖fc8 20 ♖c1 (20 b3 ♖d4) ♖e6 21 ♗a3 ♗d5 22 b3 ♗xc4 23 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 24 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 25 bxc4 ± with the idea of 25 ... ♗c3 26 ♖d2.

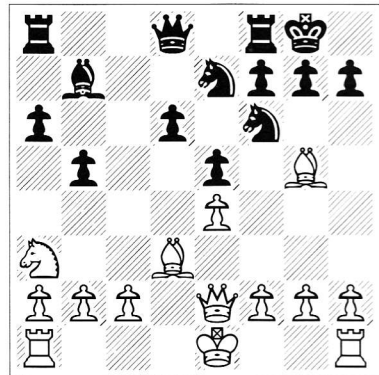
b12) 19 ... ♗f6 20 ♗xf6 ± with the idea of continuing 20 ... ♖fe8 21 ♗e5 ♖ac8 22 b3 (22 ♖c1? ♖e5).

b13) 19 ... ♖fe8 20 fxe4 (D 10):

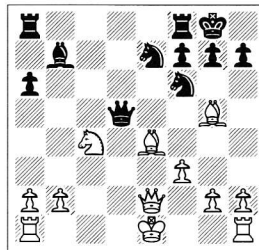
b131) 20 ... ♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 22 ♗c5 (22 0-0 ♖xe7 (22 ... ♗d3? 23

♗b6 ±) 23 ♖ae1 ♖e6 =) ♗xg2+ (22 ... ♖ac8 23 b4) 23 ♖f2 ♗xh1 24 ♖xh1 But Black has counterplay. If the rest of my analysis is correct, then this is Black's best after 18 ... ♗xe4.

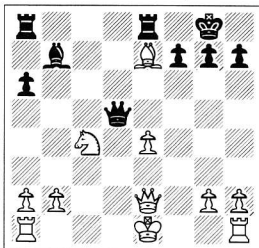
b132) 20 ... ♖b5 21 ♗d6! (21 0-0 ♖xe7 with compensation; 21 ♗a3 ♖xe4 22 ♗e3 ♖g5; 21 a4 ♖c6! with compensation [21 ... ♖b3? 22 ♗d2; 21 ... ♖d7 22 ♗c5 ♖xe4 23 ♗e3 unclear; if instead 22 ♗b6 ♖xe7 23 ♗xa8 ♖b4+ with compensation]) ♖xe2+ (21 ...



8 □ Anand-Ivanchuk (4), after 13 ... 0-0



9 ■ Analysis



10 ■ Analysis

♖b4+ 22 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 23 ♜xd2 ♜xe7 24 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 25 b3 ±) 22 ♜xe2 ♜xe7 23 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 24 b3 ♜e8 25 ♜f3 ♜be7 26 ♜he1 f5 27 ♜ac1 and White retains a nagging edge in the endgame. But I can't promise that this analysis is error-free!

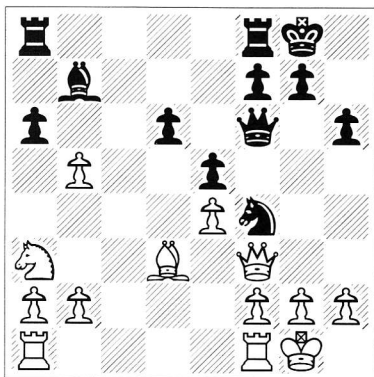
b133) Black can also play 20 ... ♖c6 immediately, instead of waiting for 21 a4 as in b1323 above. A possible continuation is 21 0-0 ♜xe7 22 e5 unclear, or less good 21 ♜a5 ♖e4 22 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 23 ♜c5 ♜xg2+ 24 ♜f2 ♜xh1 25 ♜xh1 ♜ad8 with counterchances. After 21 ♜a5, ♖b6!? 22 ♜xb7 ♜xe7 is interesting.

b2) 18 ... ♖xg5 19 ♜xb7 ♜ae8 (19 ... ♜ab8 20 ♜e4 ♜xe4 21 fx4 ♖c5 22 b3 Tough to evaluate. Black has compensation, of course, but it may not be enough. In this line after 19 ... ♜ab8, is 20 ♜xa6 possible? Probably not: 20 ... ♜ed5!? 21 0-0 [21 ♖d2 ♜fe8+ 22 ♜f2 ♖f5 and Black is a little better though it's unclear; if 22 ♜f1 ♖xd2 23 ♜xd2 ♜xb2] ♜f4 22 ♖c2 [22 ♖d2 ♜fd8] ♖c5+ 23 ♖f2 [23 ♜f2 ♖c6 24 ♖d2 ♜4d5 25 ♖a5 ♜a8 26 ♜b5 ♖c5 →] ♖c6 24 ♖a7 [forced] ♜a8 25 ♜b7 ♖c7 26 ♖e3 [26 ♖b6 ♖xb6 27 ♜xb6 ♜ab8; 26 ♖d4 ♜e6] ♜ae8 27 ♜e4 ♜6d5 28 ♖b3 [forced] ♜b8 29 ♖c2 ♜b4 with clear advantage to Black, with the idea 30 ♖d2 ♖xc4 31 ♖xf4 f5, or 30 ♖b3 ♜bd3) 20 0-0 ♖c5+ 21 ♜h1 ♜f5 (21 ... ♜ed5!? 22 ♖c2 ♜b4 23 ♖c3 ♜e2 with compensation) 22 ♖c2 unclear. The main line was a piece of fantasy by Anand and me after the game; the parenthetical notes are my analysis. My hunch is that Black has enough compensation after 21 ... ♜ed5, but the whole thing is fascinating, and critical for Black.

14 ... ♜g6

14 ... d5 15 ♜ad1!? was my idea, planning 15 ... d4 16 f4!, but I never asked Anand what he intended.

15 c4 h6!



11 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (4), after 18 ♖f3

15 ... b4 16 ♜c2 a5 17 f3 h6 18 ♜e3 ± (Wolff-Kuijff, Wijk aan Zee 1992).

16 ♜xf6

If 16 ♜d2!? (16 ♜e3 ♜xe4) b4 17 ♜c2 (17 ♜xb4 ♜xf4 18 ♖f3 ♜xd3 19 ♜xd3 ♜xe4=) a5 18 ♜fd1 ♖c7 19 f3 unclear. The point is that the dark-squared bishop is misplaced, but maybe it is not so important. Besides the one on move 14, this is the other crucial deviation from White's point of view.

16 ... ♖xf6 17 cxb5 ♜f4 18 ♖f3 (D 11) axb5

If 18 ... ♜xd3!? 19 ♖xd3 ♖g6 20 ♜fe1 (20 f3 d5 with compensation) and now:

a) 20 ... d5 21 ♖g3 (21 bxa6!?) ♖xg3 (the exchange is virtually forced here, but the "impression" of positions like these probably caused both

Anand and me to miss Black's defense later on) 22 hxg3 dx4 (22 ... d4 23 ♜c4 ±; 22 ... axb5!?) 23 exd5!?) b4 24 ♜c4 ±) 23 bxa6 ♜xa6 24 ♜c4. I'm

not really sure how to evaluate this one, but White is better.

b) 20 ... f5:

b1) 21 ♖b3+ ♜h8 22 bxa6 ♗xe4 23 f3 ♜fb8 ♞;

b2) 21 ♖g3 ♖xg3 22 hxg3 ♗xe4 (22 ... fxe4!?) 23 ♗c4 ♜f6

This position is a mess, but Black seems okay to me here. In the lines that I see he is holding his pawns together, and the bishop is quite strong.

b3) 21 f3 fxe4 22 fxe4 ♜f4 with counterplay.

Also possible was 18 ... ♖g6!? 19 bxa6 ♜xa6 20 ♗xa6 ♗xa6—with the initiative, but at a high cost! This was Ivanchuk's suggestion in the post-mortem. It looks extravagant, but there's no denying that at the very least White must play extremely accurately to prove anything.

19 ♗xb5 ♖g6 20 ♜fd1

If 20 ♜fe1 d5 21 ♗f1 dxe4.

20 ... ♗xd3 21 ♖xd3 ♗xe4 22 ♖g3 ♜fb8!

Anand missed this move in his calculation of 19 ♗xb5 and 20 ♜fd1 and I must admit that I missed it in my over-excited analysis of the game in progress. The routine 22 ... ♖xg3 23 hxg3 is much better for White.

23 ♗xd6 ♜xb2 24 ♗c4 ½-½

When things are going well, time just flies by. During the first rest day we continued to work on some opening problems that would never materialize, just in case Ivanchuk should happen to find that sub-sub-variation that we didn't completely trust ... In fact, the real challenges were coming up, but we could never have foreseen how they would arise. I tried to keep prodding Anand by telling him that I wanted him to get the same score in the second half of the match as in the first half! Looking back, though, I think that he was so surprised by how well he was doing that he began to get nervous. It felt as though he had played only one real game, the first. After all, the second game was decided by Ivanchuk losing his marbles on one move, the third game was just opening preparation, and the fourth game was (unintentionally) a quick draw with White. Yet "we" were +2 after four games in an eight-game match!

Meanwhile, Ivanchuk was hard at work trying to find a hole in our Black preparation. As I mentioned earlier, we had expected him to jump around with White, which is why we were working so hard on our other openings. In retrospect Ivanchuk's strategy seems to be correct. Put two equally strong camps to work on an opening and give them long enough, and eventually White will come up with more of the promising ideas. With Black it's better to be able to jump around a little bit. But still, watching videos in the local bar, me with a beer and Anand with a soda (he is a teetotaller), and relaxing after the first half of the match was over, we couldn't have been happier. The tough stuff was still to come.

We were intrigued as to whether Ivanchuk would try the Sozin again, perhaps the Velimirovic Attack, or go back to the Rauzer for the fifth game. We got our answer. Ivanchuk found an interesting way to

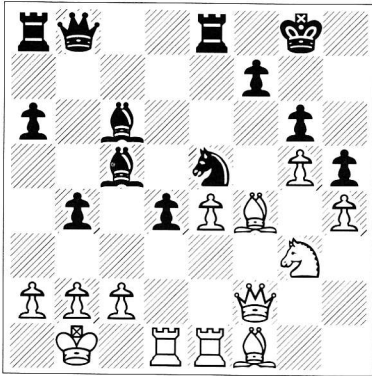
During the first rest day we continued to work on some opening problems that would never materialize, just in case Ivanchuk should happen to find that sub-sub-variation we didn't completely trust.

pose problems. Probably it is not objectively too dangerous, but in this game it was enough to make life difficult. After some inaccurate play by Anand, Black was worse. Ivanchuk missed several strong continuations, most notably 18 Qc5! which would have practically won the game, and 20 Qc4 which would have still kept a clear advantage. Over the next several moves he took a lot of time to play weak moves. After the game it became clear that he had seen most of the critical variations, but he had just been unable to get himself to play the best moves! After being in trouble for so long, Anand had trouble adjusting to having the advantage, and took a draw that he should have declined, as the final position is much better for Black after 26 ... Qg4 27 Kf3 Qd6 .

IVANCHUK-ANAND, LINARES (M/5) 1992

SICILIAN DEFENSE B66

1 e4 c5 2 Qf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qc6 6 Qg5 e6 7 Kd2 a6 8 0-0-0 h6 9 Qe3 Qxd4 10 Qxd4 b5 11 Qb1 Qb7 12 f3 Qe7 13 g4 Qc6 14 Qf2 Qb8 15 h4 b4 16 Qe2 e5 17 Qe3 d5 18 Qg3 d4 19 Qc1 g6 20 Qh3 Qd7 21 g5 h5 22 f4 0-0 23 fxe5 Qxe5 24 Qf4 Qc5 25 Qhe1 Qe8 26 Qf1 1/2-1/2 (D 12)



12 ■ Ivanchuk-Anand (5), final position

Anand was badly affected by the draw that he took in the fifth game. He knew that he had had a chance to kill Ivanchuk once and for all, and that he had passed it up. It's a strange thing, but often when you are in the lead for too long, you can start to freeze up. It's as if you are waiting for the blow to fall before you start fighting at full power again. Something like that is what happened to Anand in the sixth game. There is absolutely no question that Anand should have had a perfectly good game from the outset, but he played

listlessly and couldn't fix upon a plan to carry out. He would start with one plan, and then switch to another.

Strangely, Ivanchuk couldn't finish the job. His choice of opening was interesting; he kept a lot of tension in a strategically imbalanced game at the expense of being slightly worse out of the opening. This is not an enviable strategy to have to adopt, but given the match situation, he was probably right to do so. And in fact he played well to get a good position. And yet, once he got his good position, he missed many opportunities to make further progress. After both sides made some more mistakes, Ivanchuk fell into time trouble, and on the last two moves before the time control lost any chance to win when Anand alertly took advantage of an opportunity to force a draw. All in all, this was a bad game, but it had the effect of waking up Anand.

ANAND-IVANCHUK, LINARES (M/6) 1992

SICILIAN DEFENSE B93

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6
6 f4 ♗bd7 7 ♕e2 g6 8 0-0 ♕g7 9 a4 0-0 10 ♖h1!
(D 13)

I like White's last two moves very much. White should restrain ... b7-b5, and the king move looks most precise, as sometimes the queen bishop goes to f4 in one jump.

10 ... ♖c7

If 10 ... b6? 11 ♗c6 ♖e8 12 e5 +. After 10 ... e5
11 ♗b3 (11 ♗f3 ♗c5 =)

a) 11 ... exf4 12 ♕xf4 ♗e5 (12 ... ♗c5 13 ♕xd6
♗xb3 14 ♕xf8 +) 13 ♖xd2 and White has a pleas-
ant advantage.

b) 11 ... ♗c5?

b1) 12 fxex5? ♗fxe4 (12 ... ♗xb3 13 exf6 ♗xa1 14 fxg7 +-) 13
♗xe4 ♗xe4 = as 14 ♖d5 is met by 14 ... ♖h4!

b2) 12 ♗xc5 dxc5 13 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 14 fxe5 ±.

c) 11 ... ♖c7 12 f5!? with the initiative (also possible is 12 g4 exf4 13
♕xf4 ♗e5 14 g5 ± although it's messy).

11 ♕f3! ♖e8

After 11 ... ♖b8!? (11 ... b6?? 12 e5 wins):

a) 12 g4 e5 13 ♗b3 (13 ♗de2 exf4 14 g5 ♗e8 15 ♗xf4 is unclear)
exf4 14 ♕xf4 ♗e5 15 g5 ±.

b) 12 ♗d5 ♗xd5 (12 ... ♖d8 13 f5!? ±) 13 exd5

b1) 13 ... ♖c4 14 ♕e3! (14 ♗b3 ♗c5 15 ♕e2 ♖e4 =) ♗f6 15 b3
♖c3 16 ♖e1 ±.

b2) 13 ... ♖b6 14 ♗e2± (not 14 ♗b3 ♗c5 15 a5 ♖b4 with
counterplay or 14 c3 ♕xd4! 15 a5 ♖c5 16 cxd4 ♖c7 with counterplay).

Another idea was 11 ... e5 12 ♗b3, when:

a) 12 ... b6?!

a1) 13 ♖d3?! exf4 14 ♖d1 (14 ♕xf4
♗e5) ♗e5 15 ♖d6 ♖xd6 16 ♖xd6 g5 17 ♖xb6
♖d8 with compensation.

a2) 13 g4!? Attack! 13 ... exf4 (posi-
tionally forced) 14 e5 ♗xe5 (14 ... dxe5 15
♕xa8 ♕b7+ 16 ♕xb7 ♖xb7+ 17 ♖g1 g5 18
♖e2 ±) 15 g5 **(D 14):**

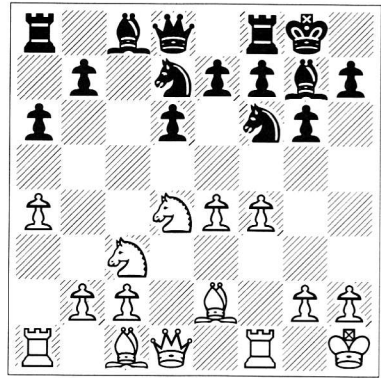
a21) 15 ... ♗xf3!? 16 gxf6

a311) 16 ... ♕b7 17 ♖xf3 (17

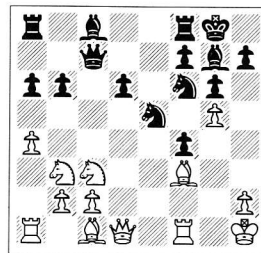
♗d5 ♗g5 18 ♖xf4 ♕h6) ♕xf3+ 18 ♖xf3 ♕xf6 19 ♗d5 ♖d8 20 c3 ±.

a312) 16 ... ♗g5 17 fxg7 ♕b7+ 18 ♗d5 ♖e8 unclear.

a22) 15 .. ♗h5 (16 ♗d5? ♖d8) 16 ♕xa8 ♕g4 17 ♕f3 ♗xf3



13 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (6), after 10 ♖h1



14 ■ Analysis

18 Bxf3 (or 18 $\text{Qd5 Bc4 19 Bxf3 Qe4 20 Qg2 Qxf3+ 21 Bxf3 Qc2+ 22 Qd2 \pm}$) Qc6 19 Qg2 \pm .

a3) 13 f5! This is the sensible move. White will follow up with g2-g4 with the initiative.

b) 12 ... $\text{exf4 13 Qxf4 Qe5 14 Qg5! \pm}$

12 Qb3

12 f5!? $\text{Qe5 13 Qg5 Qc4 (13 ... Qxf3 14 Bxf3 \pm; 13 ... Qd7 14 Qxf6) 14 Qc1!? \pm}$ with the idea of 14 ... $\text{Qxe4 15 Qxe4 Qxd4 16 Qd5 Qd8 17 f6! \pm}$.

12 g4 is risky in this position, e.g., 12 ... $\text{e5 13 Qb3 exf4 14 g5 (14 Qxf4 Qe5 15 g5 Qfd7 is unclear) Qh5 15 Qxh5 gxh5 16 Qd5 (16 Qxf4 Qxc3! 17 Qxd6 Qc4 18 Bxc3 Qxe4+ 19 Qg1 Qe5 with initiative) Qc4 (16 ... Qd8!? and White's position looks airy) 17 Qd2 Qc6 18 Qxh5 (perhaps better is 18 Bxf4 Qe5 19 Qxh5) Bxe4! (18 ... Qxc2 19 Bxf4 Qe5 20 Qf6+ Qxf6 21 gxf6 +) 19 Qxe4 Qxd5 20 Qf3 Qe5 21 Qxf4 Qh3 with compensation (22 Bf1 Bc8).$

12 ... Qb6

If 12 ... Bb8 (suggested by Botvinnik) 13 g4 (13 $\text{Qd5 Qxd5 14 exd5 b6 = [14 ... b5!?!] Qb6 14 g5 Qfd7 15 a5 Qc4 16 Qd5 Qd8 17 Qe2! b5}$ (the only move, because 17 ... Qxb2? 18 c3 wins for White) 18 $\text{axb6 Qxb6 (18 ... Qdx6 19 Qxb6 Qxb6 20 Qa5 \pm) 19 Qb4 Qc7 20 Qa5!?! \pm}$ (or 20 $\text{Qxa6 Qxa6 21 Bxa6 Qc4 22 Bf2}$).

13 Qe1

After 13 $\text{Qe2?! Qe6 (13 ... Qc4 14 a5! Qd7 15 e5! dxe5 16 fxe5 Qxe5 17 Qf4 \pm) 14 Bf1 Qc4 15 Qf2 Qbd7 (15 ... e5 16 Qe3 Qbd7 17 Qd2 \pm)}$, we arrive at the position that Vishy told me turned him off to 13 Qe2 . But after 16 Qe3 , White seems slightly better to me.

13 ... Qc4

13 ... Qe6!?!

14 Qe2?!

Around here I realized that this wasn't going to be one of Anand's better games. Perhaps 14 a5 was better.

14 ... b6

14 ... Qd7 15 a5 was the position Vishy was hoping for with 14 Qe2?!

15 $\text{Qd3 Qb7 16 Qe2 Bc8!}$

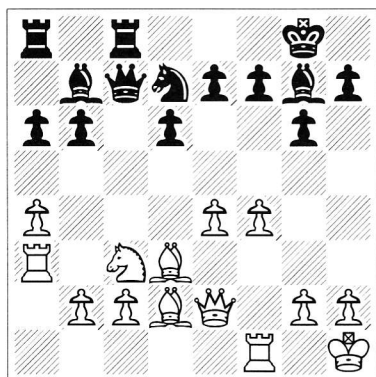
Quite nice, to keep the a8 rook defending the a6 pawn. The position is now equal.

17 Qd2 Qxd2

If 17 ... Qa5 18 Qf3 .

18 $\text{Qxd2 Qd7 19 Bf3?! (D 15)}$

None of the spectators liked this move, and I must say that I agree. The point is to protect the c3 square in some variations, but the problem is that whenever Black breaks in the center, White is going



15 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (6), after 19 Bf3

to miss his rook on the silly a3 square. One idea is 19 $\text{Bae1!?$ Qc5 (19 ... e6 20 f5) 20 f5 Perhaps this is still equal. White can meet any queenside action with pressure on the e7 and f7 points. 20 ... $\text{Qxc3!?$ 21 Qxc3 Qxa4 22 Ad4 is unclear.

Another idea is 19 $\text{Qd5!?$, the subject of much analysis by Salov, Ljubojevic, and myself during the game. We looked at 19 ... Qxd5 20 exd5 20 ... Qxb2 21 Ba2! Qc3 22 Qxc3 (22 Qxa6 Bxa6! 23 Qxc3 Bca8 unclear) Qxc3 23 Aa6 Bc7 24 Ab5 \pm , but after instead 20 ... Qc5 (the move that turned Vishy off to this idea) 21 c3 Qxd3 22 Qxd3 Qc4 Black is a little better.

19 ... e6!?

19 ... Qc5 20 b4 (20 $\text{Ae3!?$ results in a strange configuration to prefer over Ad2 and Be1 with an extra tempo to boot, but maybe White is still equal here) Qxd3 21 cxd3 \mp .

20 Qd1 Qc5 21 Ac3 Qxc3 22 Qxc3 Be8

22 ... d5! (Ljubojevic) 23 e5 (23 exd5 exd5 \mp as Black threatens to push d5-d4 and bring a rook to e8 so White has problems; 23 Baa1 dxe4 24 Qxe4 Qxe4 25 Axe4 Axe4 26 Qxe4 Qxc2) d4 24 Qe4

a) 24 ... Qxd3

a1) 25 Qf6+? Qg7 26 Qxd3 (26 cxd3 Qc2 27 Qg4 Qxb2 28 Baa1 Bc2 \rightarrow ; 26 Bxd3 Qxc2 27 Bd2 Qxa4 28 Qg4 Qc4 \mp) Qxc2 27 Qh3 h5 \rightarrow .

a2) 25 cxd3 Qc2 26 Qc2 Bxc2 27 Bb3 probably holds.

b) 24 ... Qxe4 25 Axe4 Axe4 26 Qxe4 Qxc2 27 Qxc2 (27 Qxd4 Bc5 \mp) Bxc2 28 Bb3 Bd8 29 Bxb6 (29 Bd1 Bc4 \mp) d3 30 Bd6 Bxd6 31 exd6 Bc6 with clear advantage to Black.

23 Baa1 Bac8

23 ... e5 or 23 ... f5!?

24 Bfe1 (D 16)

24 Bae1 would take the sting out of 24 ... e5 because of 25 f5, but would strengthen 24 ... f5 because the rook on f1 would like to protect the a-pawn or go to the d-file.

24 ... f5

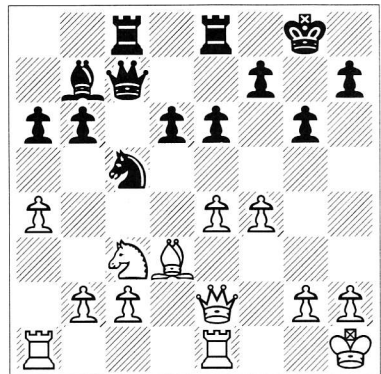
If 24 ... e5 White can try 25 Qf3 (25 Qf2 exf4 [or 25 ... Qe6 \mp] 26 Qxf4 Be5 when Black's game is very pleasant) f5 with the idea of 26 Qg3 (26 Ac4+ Qh8 27 Qd5 Qxd5 28 Qxd5 fxe4 29 Axe4 Qxe4 30 Qxe4 Qxc2) fxe4 27 Qxe4 Qxe4 28 Axe4 Axe4 29 Bxe4 Qxc2 . Best may be 25 f5 gxf5 26 Qh5! but 25 ... d5 is satisfactory for Black.

25 Bad1

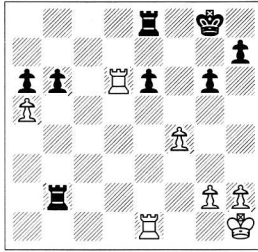
If 25 e5 dxe5 26 Qxe5 Qc6 \mp ; if 25 exf5 gxf5 \mp (or 25 ... $\text{exf5!?$ \mp).

25 ... fxe4 26 Qxe4 Qxe4

If 26 ... $\text{Axe4!?$ 27 Axe4 d5 28 Ad3 , then: a) 28 ... Qxa4 29 Axa6



16 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (6), after 24 Bfe1



17 ■ Analysis

♖a8 30 ♜b5 ♞e7 31 ♞x d5; b) 28 ... ♜xf4 29 ♜xa6 ♞a8 (29 ... ♜xa6 30 ♜xa6 ♞xc2 transposes to the game) 30 ♜b5 ♞ed8 31 ♞f1; c) 28 ... ♞a8 29 ♜g4.

27 ♜xe4 d5?!

27 ... ♜xe4 28 ♜xe4 ♜xc2 29 ♜xc2 (29 ♜b4 d5 30 ♜xb6 ♞b8 31 ♜xa6 ♞xb2) ♞xc2 30 ♞xd6 ♞xb2 31 a5 (D 17). This endgame is not fun for White:

a) 31 ... ♞b8 32 ♞dx e6 bxa5 33 ♞xa6 ♞e2 (33 ... ♞b1 ♞g1 ♞) 34 ♞g1 ♞a2 (34 ... ♞b5 misplaces the rook) 35 ♞a7 with counterplay. Black will try to push the a-pawn to a3 and then protect it with the rook on b3, but White can meet this plan by making luft and then menacing the king on the back rank.

b) 31 ... bxa5 32 ♞xa6:

b1) 32 ... ♞c8 33 ♞xa5 ♞cc2 34 ♞g5. Even this is unpleasant.

b2) 32 ... ♞b5 33 ♞g1 ♞c8 (33 ... ♞f7 34 ♞a1 = or 33 ... ♞b4 34 g3 =) 34 ♞ax e6 ♞b2 34 ♞e8+ ♞e8 36 ♞xe8+ ♞f7 37 ♞a8 =.

b3) 32 ♞a2 33 h3 (33 ♞g1 or 33 g3 meets 33 ... ♞f7 ♞ with the idea of 34 ♞e5 ♞b8) ♞a4! and White still faces a difficult defense.

28 ♜d3 ♜xf4 29 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 30 ♜xa6 ♞xc2 31 ♜b5! ♜b8 32 ♞xd5 ♞xb2 33 ♜xb2 exd5 (D 18) 34 ♞d1?

34 ♞xe8+ was a clear way for White to draw, but Anand made a funny oversight in his calculations over this move. After 34 ... ♜xe8 35 ♜xb6 there could follow:

a) 35 ... ♜xa4 36 ♜d8+ ♞g7 37 ♜e7+ ♞h6 38 ♜e3+ ♞h5 (38 ... g5 39 ♜e6+ =) 39 ♜f3+ =.

b) 35 ... ♜e1+ 36 ♜g1. When I asked Anand why he didn't play this line, he said, "Oh, ... ♜e1 isn't mate!" Now:

b1) 36 ... ♜a5 37 ♜d4.

b2) 36 ... ♜b4 37 ♜a1 d4 38 a5 ♜c3 39 ♜g1 =.

b3) 36 ... ♜e4 37 ♜d1 (37 a5 ♜a4 38 ♜e1) d4

38 a5 (better is 38 ♞g1) d3 39 a6 d2! -+.

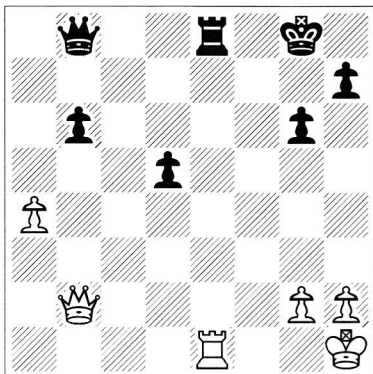
b4) 36 ... ♜c3 37 h3 (37 ♜b6 ♜a1+) d4 (37 ... ♞g7 38 ♜a7+ ♞h6 39 ♜e7 with counterplay) 38 a5 d3 39 a6 ♜a5 40 a7 d2 41 ♜d4 =.

34 ... ♜d6

Black now had only a couple of minutes to reach move 40.

35 ♜d4 ♞e5

If 35 ... ♜c5! 36 ♜xc5 (36 h3 ♞e1+ 37 ♞h2 ♜c7+ 38 g3 ♞e2+ 39 ♞h1 ♜xg3 40 ♜xd5+ ♞g7 -+; 36 ♞g1?? ♞e1+ 37 ♞f2 ♞xd1 -+; 36 ♜d2 is possible but surely Black has made substantial progress) bxc5 37 ♞g1 (37 a5 d4 38 a6 ♞a8 39 ♞a1 ♞f7 40 ♞a5



18 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (6), after 33 ... exd5

c4 →) d4 38 ♖c1 (38 ♖f2 ♖a8 39 ♖a1 ♖f7 →) ♖c8 39 a5 (39 ♖f2 ♖f7 →) c4 40 ♖f2 (40 a6 d3 →) ♖f7 →+;
36 h3 ♖e6

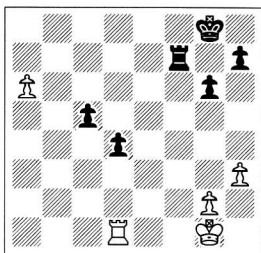
If 36 ... ♖f6 37 ♖h2.

37 ♖h2 ♖d6 38 ♖h1 ♖f5 39 ♖g1 (D 19) h5?

Better is 39 ... ♖c5 with the idea of 40 ♖xc5 bxc5 41 a5 d4 42 a6 ♖f7 (**D 20**) when:

a) 43 ♖b1 d3 ♣.

b) 43 ♖c1 ♖c7 44 ♖b1 d3 (44 ... ♖a7?? 45 ♖b8+ ♖f7 46 ♖b7+; 44 ... c4?? 45 ♖b8+ ♖f7 46 ♖b7) 45 ♖b8+ ♖f7 46 ♖b7 ♖xb7 (46 ... ♖e7 47 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 48 a7 d2 49 a8/♖



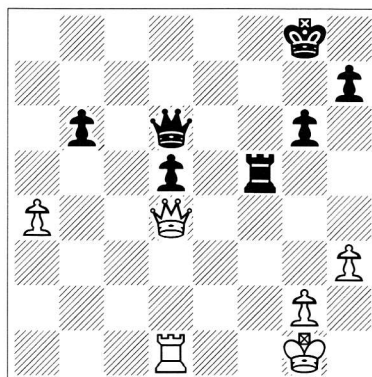
20 □

Analysis

41 ♖xc5 bxc5 42 a5 ♖f4

If 42 ... ♖f7? 43 a6 c4 44 ♖b7! c3 45 ♖a7! and White wins! If 42 ... ♖f6 43 ♖b6; or 42 ... ♖f8 44 ♖b5 ♖c8 45 a6 ♖a8 ♖xc5 =.

43 ♖b5 ♖c4 44 a6 ♖a4 45 ♖xc5 ♖xa6 46 ♖xd5 ½-½



19 ■ **Anand-Ivanchuk (6), after 39 ♖g1**

c) 43 ♖a1 ♖a7 44 ♖c1

(44 ♖f2 ♖f7) ♖xa6 45 ♖xc5 ♖f7 ♣ 46 ♖d5 ♖a4 47 ♖d7+ ♖e6 48 ♖xh7 d3 49 ♖f2 ♖e4 50 ♖h8 ♖d5.

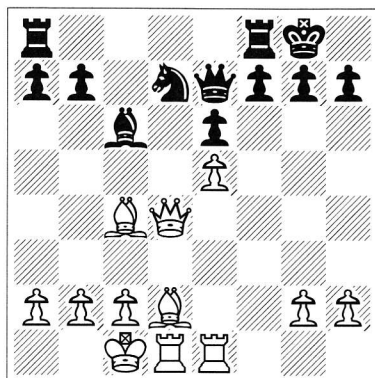
40 ♖b1! ♖c5

If 40 ... ♖f6 41 ♖b5; if 40 ... ♖f6 41 ♖xf6 (41 ♖xb6?? ♖f1+) ♖xf6 42 ♖b5 ♖d6 43 ♖f2 = with the idea of ♖f2-e3-d4.

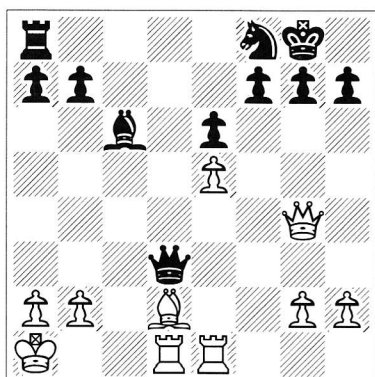
Sometimes you hold the game you should lose and lose the game you should hold, and that's exactly what happened in game 7. Anand wanted to put Ivanchuk off guard, so together we worked out another line of the Rauzer with which we both have some experience. Our preparation was generally quite good, although of course only one line was tested in the game. Black got a slightly worse position, but nothing too bad to hold by any means. And for a while Anand played well. But a fatal miscalculation led him down a bad path, and by the time he realized where he was it was too late. Ivanchuk, to his credit, played a good game.

If we can be criticized for one thing, it is perhaps that we chose a bad variation in which to fight Ivanchuk. From an objective standpoint, it is fine for Black, and indeed Anand was satisfied with the position he got. But remember what Dvoretzky told me about the players' strengths and weaknesses? Yes, the position was fine, but it was not the right kind of position for us to fight in. That can be seen by how well Ivanchuk played, by the fact that he avoided time trouble, and by the mistake Anand made.

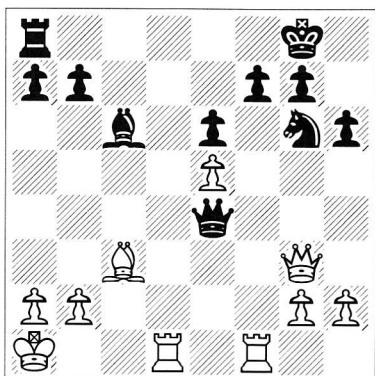
Well, maybe. Or maybe Anand just made one error that ruined a good position. Either way, it was a tough setback.



21 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (7), after 17 ♖he1



22 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (7), after 22 ♖a1



23 □ Ivanchuk–Anand (7), after 25 ... ♖e4

IVANCHUK–ANAND, LINARES (M/7) 1992 SICILIAN DEFENSE B65

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 e5 dxe5 13 fxе5
 ♗c6 14 ♗d2 ♘d7 15 ♘d5 ♖c5 16 ♘xe7+ ♖xe7
 17 ♖he1 (D 21) ♗fd8!?

The position after White's 17th move has been reached many times in grandmaster chess. Black's last move begins an interesting idea to combat White's play.

18 ♖g4 ♘f8 19 ♗d3 ♗xd3!

This is the point. Otherwise, White's attack will be too strong.

20 cxd3 ♖d7 21 ♖b1!?

Strange as it seems, this move is a novelty. White gives up the d-pawn, which blocks the rook anyway, rather than being forced to part with the a-pawn or the g-pawn.

21 ... ♖xd3+ 22 ♖a1 (D 22) ♖f5

This is the first point at which Black must come up with a new move. Some alternatives:

a) 22 ... ♗d5 23 ♗e3! (23 ♗h6? ♖g6; 23 ♗b4 ♖a6 24 ♗a3 is unclear) ♖a6 24 ♗a3 and Black's pieces do not coordinate well.

b) 22 ... ♖c2 23 g3 (23 ♗b4 ♖xg2 24 ♖xg2 ♗xg2 25 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 26 ♗d7 g6 27 ♗g1 ♗c6 28 ♗e7 ♖g7 =) ♗d5 (23 ... ♘g6 24 ♗b4; 23 ... ♖f5 24 ♖d4 is possible now that the g-pawn is no longer attacked; 23 ... ♗d8 24 ♗h6 ♗xd1+ 25 ♗xd1 ±) 24 h4 ♘d7 25 h5 ♘c5 26 ♗h6 g6 27 ♖f4 ±.

23 ♖g3

If 23 ♖xf5 exf5 24 ♖f1, then neither a) 24 ... ♗xg2 25 ♗xf5 with continuing advantage to White after 25 ... ♗d8 26 ♗f2 or 25 ... ♘e6; nor b) 24 ... g6 25 g3 ♘e6 26 ♗h6 ± e.g., 26 ... ♗e8 27 ♗d6 ♘c5 28 ♗fd1 ♗xe5 29 ♗d8+ ♗e8 (29 ... ♗e8 30 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 31 ♗d8 ±) 30 ♗d5; but c) 24 ... ♗e4! with the idea that 25 ♗de1 can be met by 25 ... h5.

23 ... ♘g6 24 ♗c3 h6

24 ... ♖f4 25 ♖xf4 ♘xf4 26 g3 ♘d5 is better for White, but 24 ... ♗d5! was worth consideration.

25 ♗f1 ♖e4 (D 23) 26 ♗d2

Critical here was 26 ♖f2:

a) 26 ... ♖f5? 27 ♖xf5 exf5 28 ♗xf5! ♗xg2 (28 ... ♘h4 29 ♗f2

♖×g2 30 ♖g1 +) 29 ♖d7! ♕h3 (29 ... ♖f8 30 e6+) 30 ♖f×f7 ♕×d7 31 ♖×d7 ♖f8 32 a4 +.

b) 26 ... ♖f8 27 ♖×a7 (27 g3 ♖×e5 28 ♖de1 ♖d3, or 27 ♖d2 ♖×e5 28 ♖e2 ♖g4 is insufficient) ♖×g2 (27 ... ♖×e5?? 28 ♖de1 +) 28 ♖f2 and it's not clear whom the imbalance in the pawn structure favors, although the continuing pressure on f7 is uncomfortable for Black.

c) 26 ... ♕d5!? 27 ♖×f7+ (27 ♖d4 ♖×g2 28 ♖×f7+ ♖h7 unclear) ♖h7 and even though Black has lost the f-pawn he has succeeded in generating a lot of play. White has to deal with both ... ♖c4 and ... ♖f8, and is certain at least to lose back the g-pawn.

26 ... ♕d5 27 b3

If 27 ♖f2 ♖c4, or 27 ♖df2 ♖a4.

27 ... ♖c8 28 ♖b2 a6 29 ♖df2 ♖c7 30 ♖e1 ♖h4 31 ♖×h4 ♖×h4 32 ♖d1! (D 24) ♖g6

The g-pawn is verboten: 32 ... ♖×g2?? 33 ♖×d5, or 32 ... ♕×g2?? 33 ♖d4.

33 g3 ♖e7 34 ♖d4

If 34 ♕b4!? ♖c6 35 ♕d6 ♖d7 36 g4 To stop ... f5. 36 ... f6!? 37 ♖e1 ♖d8 leads to an interesting and unclear position. Black must maintain the pressure on the bishop and can't easily move his king, e.g. 37 ... ♖h7 38 e×f6 ♖×d6 39 f7, or 37 ... ♖f7 38 ♕c5, but at the same time White can't get the bishop out of d6 or let go of e5 and it's not clear how White makes any progress.

34 ... ♖c6 35 ♖df4 ♖d7 36 h4 (D 25) h5?

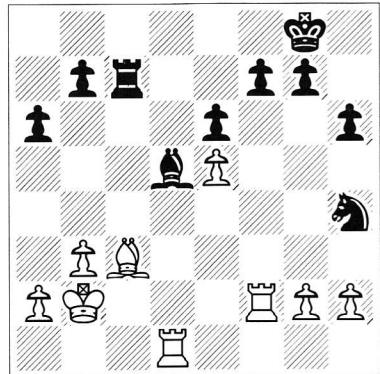
So far both players have been playing well, and the character of the game has changed very little since the opening; White is slightly better but Black is solid. With this move, though, Anand starts a faulty idea based upon a miscalculation. Better was 36 ... g6! as suggested by Leontxo Garcia during the game, and by Anand afterward. Black is still very solid, and while White is a little better (only White is trying to win) Black should be okay.

37 g4! h×g4

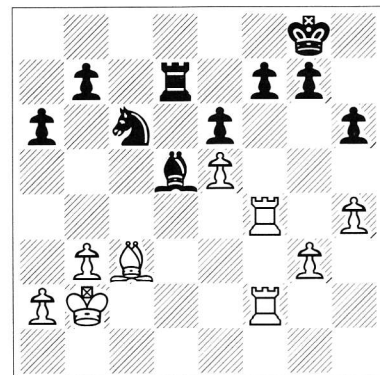
Anand suggested that 37 ... ♖e7! would have been a better move, so that after 38 g×h5 (38 ♖×f7 h×g4) ♖f5 Black limits the scope of White's rooks at the cost of a relatively unimportant pawn, although of course White must have made progress since move 36.

38 ♖×g4 ♖e7 39 h5 ♕c6

Anand originally intended 39 ... ♖f5 but then saw that after 40 ♖×f5! e×f5 41 ♖×g7+ Black has no defense: 41 ... ♖×g7 42 e6+ ♖f8 43 e×d7 ♖e7 44 h6+; 41 ... ♖f8 42 h6+; or 41 ... ♖h8 42 e6! (42 h6 ♕e6 =)



24 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (7), after 32 ♖d1



25 ■ Ivanchuk–Anand (7), after 36 h4

♙×e6 43 h6! and Black cannot stop the threat of 44 ♖×f7+ ♜g8 45 h7+ queening, e.g. 43 ... ♜d8 44 ♖×f7+ ♜g8 45 ♖g7+ ♜f8 (45 ... ♜h8 46 ♜d7+) 46 ♙b4+ ♜e8 47 h7 +.

With the text move Black tries to regroup, but the opening of kingside lines constitutes a fatal weakening of Black's position.

40 h6 ♗g6 41 h×g7 ♜×g7 42 ♙b4

Good enough to win, and maybe best, although during the game I thought that bringing this piece to f6 would be even stronger.

42 ... ♙d5 43 ♙d6 b6?!

Black must lose in the long run, but if he wants to try the idea of pushing ... f5 then he should do it without touching the queenside and weakening the a-pawn.

44 a4 b5 45 a5 f5!? 46 e×f6+ ♜f7 47 ♙e7 e5 48 ♖h2 ♗×e7 49 ♖×e7 ♖×e7 50 ♖h6 e4 51 ♖×a6 1-0

While we were upset by this game, by the second rest day other things were happening that were more upsetting by far. Both players were receiving a fee to play the match. That was in the contract that Rentero offered each player at the end of the Linares tournament to entice them to play. But Anand had had some hesitations, because his schedule was already busy enough without committing six weeks of his year to this match. So Rentero sweetened the pot by offering a bonus to Anand to sign right away. Anand decided that the bonus alleviated his doubts, and so he signed. But the bonus was written into the contract by Nieves Perea and not by Rentero directly. This might seem strange, but in fact she did the same thing all the time for Rentero when dealing with chessplayers. Her signature was as good as his, and when the contracts were sent to the players to play in the Linares tournament, it was she who signed them. So even though Rentero, who had made the offer personally, had not signed the contract to that effect, the fact that Nevas had signed it for him assured Anand.

But it turned out that Rentero had "forgotten" that he had offered this bonus, and he even suggested that maybe Nieves had put it into the contract herself because she was Anand's friend! It wasn't his signature, he said, so it wasn't legally binding. Anand was furious, as were all of us in his camp, but there was nothing to do.

Nor was this the end of Rentero's shady dealings. He had also promised the players a "special prize" for winning. He refused to specify what that prize was, but several times in front of others he mentioned this prize. The Swiss magazine *Die Schachwoche* even reported that the prize was \$2,000 and a new Mercedes Benz! But now that the end of the match was imminent, what did the prize turn out to be? The trophy on display in the front lobby, which Rentero had the gall to suggest was worth \$3,000. I've seen that trophy up close. If it was worth \$100 then it was overpriced. Once again a chess sponsor was manipulating the

**I looked at him
and said, "Anand,
I want you to do
so much damage
to this guy that
they'll have to use
dental records to
identify him."**

chessplayers, and there was nothing anyone could do. I hope that Rentero will not do anything like this in the future, but I know that I would get everything signed in his own handwriting, preferably in blood.

But the big eighth game was finally upon us. Anand and I had talked at length about opening strategy and psychology, and we had prepared as well as possible. Now it was up to him. At 3:45 PM, the moment that we parted company before the game, I looked at him and said, "Anand, I want you to do so much damage to this guy that they'll have to use dental records to identify him." He smiled and said, "Okay, Pat." As he walked off, I told him, "Remember, dental records!"

ANAND-IVANCHUK, LINARES (M/8) 1992 FRENCH DEFENSE C12

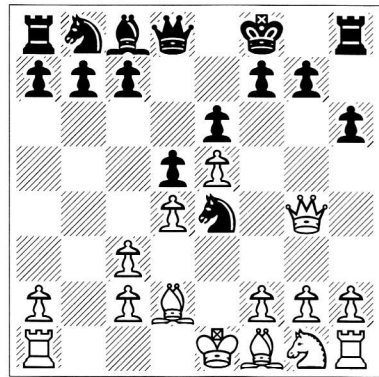
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙b4! 5 e5 h6 6 ♗d2 ♗xc3 7 bxc3 ♗e4 8 ♚g4 ♚g8!! (D 26)

What goes into a good opening choice? It cannot merely be the objective merits of an opening, because all openings are equal anyway if you just go deep enough. Many different objective and subjective factors go into an opening choice, and the stronger the opposition and the more time to prepare, the more important that choice becomes. Imagine being in Ivanchuk's situation. He needed to win the last game with Black against a very strong opponent who would prepare himself very well. I can't think of a more difficult challenge in a single game. What to play?

Anand and I considered this question too, of course, not only from our perspective but also from the opponent's to try to anticipate his choice. From our perspective, we recognized that the first move was pretty much given, and so the flexibility to choose was with Ivanchuk. The one thing that was resolved was that no matter what Anand would play to win just like a normal game. (That's why 3 exd5 never came into consideration!) But what would Ivanchuk play?

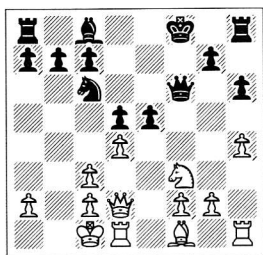
We had guessed that his strategy in general was to play a different opening in each game, and since Anand had not had any trouble with White yet, we figured he would stick to that strategy. We thought that either he would pull some very sharp Sicilian out of his hat, or that he would essay 1 ... e5 for the first time in the match.

Well, we were wrong. I must admit that this opening never crossed our minds, but it is a staggeringly brilliant choice. Of course Ivanchuk is gambling that White won't play 3 exd5, but by making the option so blatant, he makes it hard for Anand to be so shameless. Who wants everyone to see that he chickened out of a real fight in a prestigious match? So the risk for Ivanchuk is very low. Meanwhile, Ivanchuk achieves a strategically imbalanced game, which is exactly what he needs. And by



26 ♖ Anand-Ivanchuk (8), after 8 ... ♚f8

choosing this rare sideline, he has a good chance that Anand won't remember what the best line is. It so happens in this variation that if White doesn't play accurately, he can easily be worse—and the line is so old (much of the critical analysis was done before World War II!) and so rare that it's not a bad gamble. Finally, as I hope to show below, even the "official refutation" is not so clear at all, so there's plenty of scope for home analysis. In short, this opening choice is the single best opening choice for an important game that I have ever witnessed. It is a testament to one of Ivanchuk's greatest strengths, his incredibly broad knowledge of chess.



27 ■ Analysis

9 ♖f3?!

This is not correct. The critical line begins with 9 h4! and now:

a) 9 ... f5 (a rare sideline suggested by Euwe) 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 ♗f3 ♗c6 12 ♖f4 ♗xd2 13 ♖xd2 e5 14 0-0-0 (**D 27**) (Two alternatives are given by ECO: 14 dxе5 ♗xe5 15 ♖xd5 ♗xf3+ 16 ♖xf3 = Taimanov, and 14 ♗b5 exd4 15 ♗xc6 dxc3 16 ♖xd5 bxc6 17 ♖c5+ ♖e7+ ± Liberzon–Prohorovic, USSR 1959) and now Black has two moves that I know of:

a1) 14 ... e4 15 ♗e5 ("±" ECO) ♗xe5 (15 ... ♗e6 16 f4) 16 dxе5 ♖xe5 17 ♖xd5 ♖xc3 and now neither 18 ♗c4 ♖a1+ 19 ♗d2 ♖f6 unclear, nor 18 ♖d8+ ♗f7 19 ♖xh8 ♖a1+ 20 ♗d2 ♖d4+ = promise anything clear, and even 18 ♖xe4 ♖a1+ 19 ♗d2 ♖f6 is messy.

a2) 14 ... exd4 15 cxd4 ♗g4 (15 ... ♗f5 is only ± according to Taimanov, which looks about right) 16 ♗e5! ♗f5 (16 ... ♗xe5 17 dxе5 embarrasses the queen bishop and the d-pawn, as 17 ... ♖xe5 18 ♖b4+ wins) 17 g4 ♗c8 18 g5 ♖d6 19 ♖f4+ ♗e8 20 ♗e1 + Tringov–Sliwa, Marianske Lazne 1962.

b) 9 ... c5 and now:

b1) 10 ♗d3?! ♗xd2 11 ♗xd2 ♖a5 (11 ... c4?! is generally premature early on in these lines, because White is too far advanced on the kingside, and this is a perfect example of that. After 12 ♗e2 ♗d7 13 ♗f3 [13 ♗h3!? also looks good and even seems more consistent] 13 ... b5 14 ♖f4 ♗b6 15 a3 ♗a4 16 ♗hb1 is given as ± by Barczay, who writes the C12 section of ECO, from the game Fuchs–Barczay, Berlin 1968 (*Informant* 6/284). Nevertheless, compare this ... c4 push with the possibilities later on!) 12 ♗f3 (If 12 ♗h3 then 12 ... cxd4 speeds up Black's counterplay considerably compared to the 10 ♗h3 lines. See below.) ♗c6 13 ♖f4 b6? (Black must improve either here or last move. ECO suggests 13 ... cxd4, which is certainly a reasonable start.) 14 ♗g5!! ± from Sabanov–Mnacakanjan, USSR 1971 (*Informant* 11/177), a great game.

b2) 10 ♗h3! (**D 28**) leaves Black three main moves:

b21) 10 ... ♗c6 11 ♗d3 ♗xd2 12 ♗xd2 c4 (12 ... cxd4 13

cxd4 ♖b6 14 ♖g3 g6 15 ♖e2 ± (Keres) 13 ♖e2 ♖e7 14 ♖f4 ♖d7 (14 ... ♖g6!?) 15 ♖h5 ± Yates–Znosko–Borovsky 1928.

b22) 10 ... cxd4!? 11 cxd4 ♖b6 12 ♖f3 ♖c6 (12 ... ♖b2 13 ♖b1 ♖xa2 [13 ... ♖c6!]) 14 ♖d3 ±) 13 ♖d3 and now:

b221) 13 ... ♖xe5? is cute, but is really just a losing mistake after 14 ♖xe5! (14 dxe5?? ♖xf2+ 15 ♖d1 ♖xd2+!) ♖xd4 15 ♖f4! ♖xa1+ 16 ♖e2 +— according to Keres.

My analysis confirms this: 16 ... ♖f6 17 ♖b4+ ♖e8 (17 ... ♖g8 18 ♖g3) 18 ♖b5+ +—; or 16 ... f6 17 ♖g6+ ♖g8 18 ♖xe4! dxe4 (18 ... e5 19 ♖xd5+ ♖h7 20 ♖e4 f5 21 ♖xe5) 19 ♖d6 ♖h7 20 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 21 ♖f8+ ♖h7 22 ♖g3 f5 23 ♖xh6!

b222) But a better move is 13 ... ♖xd4: 14 ♖xe4 (14 ♖e3? ♖xf3+ with the point that 15 ♖xf3+ ♖b4+ is —) dxe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖xf3+ (15 ... ♖f5 16 ♖b4+ is ±, but 15 ... ♖c6 is not so clear) 16 ♖xf3 ♖d7 and since White can't win the b-pawn right away with 17 ♖b3 because of 17 ... ♖c6, it's not clear how big White's advantage is, although with the king and rook on the wrong side of each other, White should have more pressure than he needs to compensate for his pawns.

b23) 10 ... ♖a5 11 ♖d3 ♖xd2 12 ♖g3! g6 (12 ... ♖g8 13 ♖xd2 cxd4 14 ♖h7) 13 ♖xd2 cxd4 (13 ... ♖c6? 14 ♖xg6! +— ECO) 14 ♖xd4 ♖c6 15 ♖f4 d4 16 ♖f3 ♖xc3+ 17 ♖e2 ♖xa1 (17 ... ♖e7 18 ♖xd4 is given as ±, Sachsenmaier–Keres, correspondence 1934) 18 ♖f6 ♖g8 19 h5 is given by Maroczy (!) as +—, and I think that this is correct, for example 19 ... g5 (19 ... ♖h1 20 h×g6 ♖g7 21 ♖h3 +—; 19 ... ♖g7 20 ♖xg6 —) 20 ♖xg5! h×g5 (20 ... ♖xg5 21 ♖xg5 h×g5 22 h6 —) 21 ♖f3 ♖xe5 (21 ... ♖e8 22 ♖xf7+ ♖d8 23 ♖xg8+ ♖c7 24 h6 —) 22 ♖d8+ ♖g7 23 h6+! ♖xh6 24 ♖f6+ and quick mate.

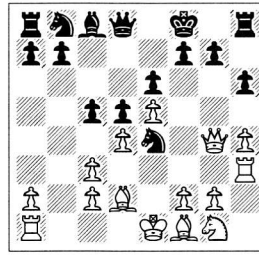
9 ... c5 10 ♖d3 ♖xd2 11 ♖xd2 ♖c6

Already the opening has been a complete success from Black's point of view. He has achieved a strategically imbalanced position and is way ahead on the clock at this point. (When Ivanchuk is ahead on the clock against Anand you know that something strange is going on!)

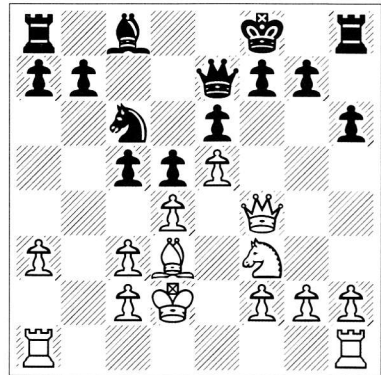
12 ♖f4 ♖e7 13 a3?! (D 29)

I don't like touching the queenside. Although it's true that the move played keeps the queen out of a3, I prefer either getting on with the kingside play with 13 h4 or opening the center with 13 d×c5!?

A funny thing happened now. I was looking at the game with various players, including most notably Ljubojevic, who was absolutely con-



28 ■ Analysis



29 ■ Anand–Ivanchuk (8), after 13 a3

vinced that Black was better after 13 ... c4. Ivanchuk's second, Felix Levin, came into the analysis room, and said that they had looked at this position (or one almost the same) the day before, and that Black's idea was to play 13 ... c4 and follow up with ... ♖e8-d8-c7 and then play on the queenside. White of course has to play on the kingside to compensate, e.g. h4-h5, g4-g5 etc. A very interesting strategically complex battle would take place where Black can easily be better—everything depends on timing. While we were analyzing this general plan, we kept waiting for ... c4 to happen. But it never did, and Ivanchuk was taking a lot of time not playing what he had prepared.

13 ... ♗d7 14 ♖hb1?!

Once Black pushes ... c4, the rook will be misplaced here.

14 ... b6?!

14 ... c4!

15 ♖e3?

Better was 15 dxc5 ♖xc5 (15 ... bxc5 16 ♖b7 generates some counterplay) 16 ♗d4 with the idea that 16 ... ♖c8 runs into 17 ♗a6.

15 ... ♗a5?

15 ... c4!

16 ♖e1?

16 dxc5 bxc5 17 ♖e1 =.

16 ... ♖c8

Now 17 dxc5 ♖xc5 is not such a great alternative for White.

17 ♖f1 ♖e8?

17 ... c4!

18 ♖g1 ♖d8?

Levin must have been tearing his hair out, and I must admit that I was both worried and puzzled. If Ivanchuk had decided that he needed to gain some time before starting the plan they had worked out the day before, he has done it by now. White is totally misplaced to start the compensating kingside action he needs once Black closes the queenside.

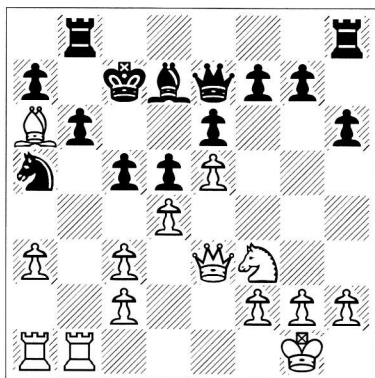
But for some reason Ivanchuk has decided to change his plan. By this point I think that Anand had some idea that Ivanchuk actually didn't intend to push the c-pawn, so he just waits for the logical follow-up to Black's last several moves.

19 h3 ♖c7? 20 ♗a6! ♖b8 (D 30) 21 dxc5! ♖xc5

21 ... bxc5 22 c4 d4 (22 ... dxc4 23 ♗d2; 22 ... ♗xc4 23 ♗xc4 dxc4 24 ♖c3 ♖b6 25 ♖a5 ♖b7 26 ♗d2 with a brutal attack) 23 ♖d2 ♗c6 24 c3 and White is better.

22 ♗d4 ♗c4

This is good enough, but Black could also play 22 ... ♗c6!? (22 ... ♗c6 23 ♖f4) with the idea that 23



30 □ Anand-Ivanchuk (8), after 20 ... ♖b8

♖f4 f5 is possible: 24 e×f6+ (24 ♘b5+ ♕d8 25 ♘d6 g5 ♜) e5 25 ♖g3 g×f6 26 ♘b5+ ♕d8 and Black stands well.

23 ♖f4

23 ♘xc4!?

23 ... ♖hf8 24 ♖b4 b5 25 ♖ab1 (D 31)

If 25 a4 b×a4 26 ♘xc4 ♖×b4 (26 ... d×c4 27 ♘b3!) 27 c×b4 ♖×c4 ♜.

25 ... ♖b6?

Now drifting into serious time trouble, Ivanchuk loses his last chance to hold onto equality by 25 ... ♘×a3, and now:

a) 26 ♖a1 ♖×c3 ♜.

b) 26 ♘b3 ♖×c3 ♜.

c) 26 ♖e3!?

c1) 26 ... ♖e7? 27 ♘×b5+ ♘×b5 (27 ... ♘×b5 28 ♖×a7+; 27 ... ♖×b5 28 ♖×a7+ ♕d8 29 ♖×b5 +) 28 ♖×b5 +.

c2) 26 ... ♖b6 27 ♘×b5 ♘×b5 (27 ... ♘×b1 or 27 ... a5 is met by 28 ♘×d7+ winning) 28 ♖×b5+ (28 ♘×b5? ♖×e3 29 ♘×a7+ [29 ♘d4+ ♖c7 30 f×e3 a5 ♜] 29 ... ♖c7 30 f×e3 ♖×b4 31 ♖×b4 [31 c×b4 ♖a8 →] 31 ... ♖b8 →) ♘×b5 29 ♖×b5+ ♖×b5 30 ♘×b5 ♖×b5 31 ♖×a7 ±.

c3) 26 ... ♖b6 27 ♖a1 ♘c4 (27 ... ♖×a6 28 ♖c1 gives enough compensation, but not 28 ♘b3 ♖b6) 28 ♖e2 unclear.

d) 26 ♖b3 ♘c4 27 ♘×b5+ (27 ♘×b5 a5 →) ♘×b5 28 ♖×b5 (28 ♘×b5 a5) ♖×b5 29 ♖×b5 ♖c6! (29 ... ♖a3 30 ♖b7+ ♖c6 [30 ... ♕d8 31 ♖h4+] 31 ♖×a7 ± as 31 ... ♖b6 is met by 32 ♖d4+ and 31 ... ♖c5 is met by 32 ♖×f7) 30 ♖b7+ (30 ♖d4 ♖×a6 31 ♖c5+ ♕d7; 30 ♖h4 ♖e8) ♖×b7 31 ♘×b7 ♖×b7 and I don't see any better than forcing the draw with, for example, 32 ♖g4 ♖g8 33 ♖f4.

26 ♘×b5+ ♘×b5 27 ♖×b5 ♖×a3

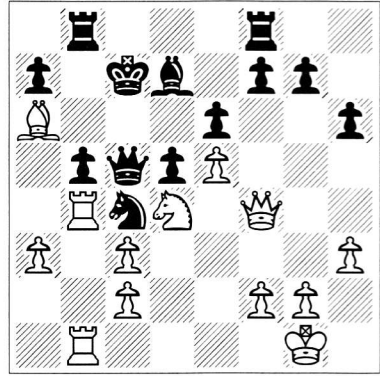
Now 27 ... ♖×b5 28 ♖×b5 ♖c6 is the same as before but White has an extra pawn!

28 ♖×b6 ♘×b6 29 ♖d4! ♖b8 30 ♘b5 ♖b7 31 ♖b3 ♖e7 32 ♘a6 ♖b8 33 c4 d×c4 34 ♘xc4 ♖d8 35 ♖e4

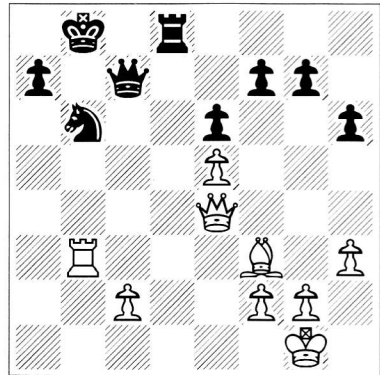
Up to now Anand has played excellently, but here even better was 35 ♖e3! as 35 ... ♖b8 loses to 36 ♖×b6+ a×b6 37 ♖×b6+ ♖c8 38 ♘a6+ ♕d7 39 ♖b5+ ♖c7 40 ♖b7 mate and 35 ... ♖d1+ 36 ♖h2 ♖b8 37 ♘a6 is also horrible.

35 ... ♖b8 36 ♘e2 ♖c7 37 ♘f3 1-0 (D 32)

In this very difficult position, Ivanchuk's flag fell.



31 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (8), after 25 ♖ab1



32 ■ Anand-Ivanchuk (8), final position

The moment the game ended, I came up to Vishy and told him, "I'm proud of you." He looked up a little sheepishly and said, "I wouldn't be proud if I were you, it wasn't a very good game."

"Oh, it was a piece of crap," I said, waving my hand dismissively. "He could have played ... c4 at any point and been better. But that's not the point. It doesn't have to be pretty. You beat him. And I'm proud of you."

Linares, Spain, September 1992

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Viswanathan Anand	India	2690	1	1	½	½	½	½	0	1	5
Vassily Ivanchuk	Ukraine	2720	0	0	½	½	½	½	1	0	3

Ivanchuk played White in odd-numbered games.

Parting Ways

When a long chess tournament ends, there is always a feeling of loss, no matter how well it went. People go their separate ways. An activity into which you have been pouring all your emotions suddenly ends, leaving you feeling empty. I have had the feeling many times, and have become used to it after a tournament. But I was not prepared for the stronger feeling after this match ended. For six weeks I had defined myself as Anand's second. Everything I did was on his behalf, helping first to prepare for and then to play this match. The end, even though expected, came suddenly.

We had dinner together with Señor and Señora Perea to celebrate Anand's triumph. We remembered all the funny and difficult moments, and laughed at them all. We said over and over again what a splendid victory it was, and I think that we almost couldn't believe it had really gone so well. Probably the disbelief was strongest for Anand and me, the two people at the table who had worked the hardest to win the match. I think that Anand felt it most of all.

A chess match can always be dissected and analyzed until nothing is left but the mistakes. Often the winner is the least forgiving of all the analysts. This match had some great chess and some bad chess; it had its magnificent moments and its humorous ones; there was much to appreciate and to criticize. But any analysis must yield this as its final conclusion: While both players have much to be proud of and will have splendid careers, this match was a tremendous triumph for Anand, perhaps his greatest to date. He will have many more triumphs to come. We may even see our next world champion come from India. ♣

Finding Bobby Fischer

Timothy Hanke

Unlike today's younger chessplayers, I actually remember Bobby Fischer in his prime.

I was born in 1958, the same year that Bobby won his first U. S. Chess Championship at the age of 14. When I was six or seven my father taught me the moves. At first chess was just one game among many to me. I was fortunate in having a set of games-playing friends; we would spend entire dreamy days stretched on the living-room rug, playing game after game of Monopoly, checkers, Chinese checkers, parcheesi, Stratego, in a pinch even Candyland or the mindless card game War (higher card wins). I was no infant chess prodigy—my father always beat me, which would put me in a rage—but soon I noticed something different about this game. It was sterner, more austere and unforgiving. The cardboard squares and plastic pieces were immediate to the senses, yet remote in their hints of an abstract world of geometry and force. When you picked up these beautiful, enigmatic black and white pieces, you seemed literally to hold your fate in your hands.

Years passed, my family moved several times, my friends changed, I stopped playing chess and even began to forget how the pieces moved. When I was 12 and on the verge of high school, Bobby Fischer—of whom I had not heard before—won the Palma Interzonal by 3½ points, won his World Championship Candidates quarterfinal match against the Soviet Mark Taimanov by the score of 6–0, and won the semifinal match against the Dane Bent Larsen by the same 6–0 score. In all, counting the first game in the Candidates' final match against Soviet Tigran Petrosian, Bobby Fischer won 20 games in a row against the best chessplayers in the world (except for the World Champion Boris Spassky, of course). I read about Bobby in *Newsweek* and *Life* and began to follow his exploits avidly. Here was an American hero in the intellectual realm! American popular culture is mostly anti-intellectual, distrusting brains

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and worshipping brawn. There are plenty of role models for aspiring football players, but bright kids in America don't have many heroes.

Bobby Fischer became one of my heroes. I began to play chess again. On 30 August 1972, I turned 14—a good hero-worshipping age—and two days later Bobby Fischer won the Chess Championship of the World.

I made friends my age who had been similarly energized by this American world champion, and a few of us became scholastic chess stars. None of us went further, but we were all briefly touched by the fierce glow of Bobby Fischer's bright spirit. I was more than touched—I was marked for life. Although I have not achieved great things as a player, Bobby Fischer gave me the precious gift of a true and lasting appreciation for the game of chess. Occasionally I think of the millions of people in America and all over the world to whom chess is a stranger, and I feel sorry for them.

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It was a tragedy not just for Bobby Fischer but for American chessplayers when Fischer resigned his world championship title in 1975. Some people defend Fischer to this day, contending that he was done out of his title by scheming Soviets and a complicit FIDE. The Soviets were certainly schemers and FIDE may have been complicit, but there is little doubt in my mind that Fischer had become a paranoid recluse out of touch with reality. He did himself more damage than anybody else could have. Like many American chessplayers, I ached for him and for the void that he had left in all our lives.

Over the years, I adjusted to the new status quo. "Fischer sightings" were extremely rare, and "ufo" acquired a new meaning: "Unconfirmed Fischer Observation." Strange stories circulated about Fischer's research into the fabled "World Jewish Conspiracy" (although he is half-Jewish himself), his alleged collection of Nazi memorabilia, his life on the street in Pasadena as a virtual bum. He refused to allow a dentist to work on his deteriorating teeth, rumor said, for fear that electronic listening devices would be implanted in his head. According to another story, he gave all of his World Championship prize money to a religious cult. It made no sense to most people that he would choose to live in obscure poverty when he could have made millions of dollars at any time by playing chess again. Like Morphy in his later days, Fischer saw enemies everywhere (including Time-Life, the U. S. government, Jews, FIDE, and of course the Russians) and filed bizarre lawsuits to combat their plots. He disowned most of his old friends. Rumor said that he would not open any letter unless it was addressed to "Bobby Fischer, World Chess Champion," and contained a check for \$1,000. (Or was it \$100,000? Anyway, how could he know whether there was a check inside until he opened the letter? A vexing paradox that my friends and I joked about.) A few times, we heard, Fischer was visited by other grandmasters, who would play five-minute chess with him and return to the world of light to report that

Fischer's chess strength remained prodigious, and had perhaps even entered a higher realm; supposedly the Canadian GM Duncan Suttles lost a hundred games in a row to him. We heard little from Fischer directly, except for a peculiar production titled *I Was Tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse!* (exclamation point is in the title). Apparently Fischer had been picked up by the police as a suspicious character shortly after a local crime. Refusing to give the police his real name—he was going by “Robert D. James” around this time—he was arrested and put in jail. The battle of wills continued for 10 days, during which time Fischer, becoming cold in his cell, tore open his mattress and crawled inside. The police eventually released him, billing him for the mattress.

Occasionally a Fischer match was rumored—against Karpov, or Miguel Quinteros, or Anand of India, or the Champion of Hong Kong. All the “comebacks” came to nothing. Fischer the player gradually but apparently irrevocably slid into the world of mists and legend. Anatoly Karpov's star rose, remained ascendant for 10 years, and finally fell as the new phenom Garry Kasparov replaced Karpov at the top of the chess world. One by one, Fischer's great rivals died: the Soviets Paul Keres, Tigran Petrosian, Mikhail Tal, and the American Sammy Reshevsky. Even Boris Spassky entered semi-retirement; only a handful of players remained active from Fischer's day. Well, at least we had the memories.

In 1992, 20 years after Fischer beat Spassky in Reykjavik, the wildest rumor yet began to circulate. *The New York Times* broke the story that Bobby would come back against his old rival Boris Spassky in a “World Championship” match for \$5 million, to be contested under Fischer's proposed 1975 rules, in the war-torn and impoverished country of Yugoslavia. Philip Dorsey wrote whimsically in the July/August newsletter of the Rochester (New York) Chess Center,

The first thing we must notice is that Fischer is reported to have *signed* a written contract to play a match with Spassky. Fischer has always been notorious for never signing his name to anything ...

Second: Boris Spassky has *confirmed* that there is a contract and that he has received an advance. You remember Boris, the guy all of America (including Fischer) liked and trusted back in '72, even while it rooted for Fischer to win.

Third: Fischer has actually appeared in public recently, leading to speculation that he still exists in the physical world after all these years.

Fourth: It is the 20th anniversary of the original “Match of the Century.” The new match is scheduled to begin on September 2, the day after the 20th anniversary of Fischer's disappearance from formal competition. Further, the site and tournament rules are just what Fischer would have wanted for the 1972 match: 10 games to win with draws not counting and in Yugoslavia, where Fischer wanted the 1972 match to be held—in fact, half of the match will be in Belgrade, the city which originally was to host half of the 1972 match as part of a compromise between Fischer and Spassky. Everything fits.

Finally, no one seems to believe that this match will occur, which, of course, is very strong evidence that it will.

Fischer the player gradually but apparently irrevocably slid into the world of mists and legend.

Chessplayers greeted the rumors of the impending match in Yugoslavia with a mix of long-pent-up excitement and serious doubt. As I remarked to Dorsey in August, "It's like Lucy yanking the football away from Charlie Brown—we've seen this too many times before."

There was a surreal quality to this match that gripped the attention of the world even as it flouted logic. Even before the match began, the *New York Times* was treating it as page-one material. Whatever else can be said about Bobby Fischer, he knows how to get attention. Chess journalist Larry Parr told me the week before the match, "Fischer is a genius at getting publicity. For years, Kasparov has tried and failed to interest the U. S. media and public in chess. All Bobby has to do is open his mouth, and it's front-page news."

It isn't that simple, of course. Kasparov has had some media success in this country, despite the great handicap of not being an American player. For a few years Kasparov was even idolized by many Americans as a "good Russian" in contrast to the "bad Russian" Karpov. However, as great a chessplayer as Kasparov is, he is too outgoing and available to the public to be really fascinating. If you want to know what Kasparov thinks about anything at all, just ask and he will tell you. No mystery there.

With the reclusive Fischer it's a different story. Fischer detests the media even while he manipulates it; it is very difficult to get physically close enough to ask him a question, and he does not answer, or possibly even open, most of his mail. In *Bobby Fischer vs. the Rest of the World*, Brad Darrach perhaps spuriously quotes Fischer as saying in 1972, "I'm gonna get a bumper sticker made up, and I'm gonna paste it on my forehead. It's gonna say, *I will not give any interviews.*"

Merely discovering where Fischer *is* at any given time is extremely difficult. A highly-suspicious loner, Fischer tends to treat all social encounters as potential traps to be avoided. By playing Garbo and "wanting to be alone," he has consciously or unconsciously provoked the public to pursue him endlessly. People might not like what they got if they ever caught up to him, because Fischer has notoriously scanted his obligations to his fans: Darrach quotes him again as saying, "Why should I do anything for the public? What has the public ever done for me?"

Fischer has more than once been called a "monk," and the religious metaphor is not inappropriate. He has always treated chess with the solemnity of a sacred rite, proving himself a faithful devotee by his many wars waged against infidel Russians, chess organizers, and others who have fallen away from the Truth as he sees it, as well as by enduring the hair-shirt of his extreme demands on himself and the self-flagellation of his long retirement. Many observers have remarked upon the high seriousness in his relationship with the game. An interview in the Hungarian weekly magazine *168 Hours* (22 September 1992) quoted Dr. Peter Popper, a psychologist, as saying, "I believe that Fischer is convinced that if there were a chess God, then Fischer would be His prophet."

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Prophet or not, the 1992 Fischer certainly looked very different in news photos from the 1972 version. The gaunt, hollow-eyed, and hollow-cheeked 29-year-old, whose predatory appearance accorded well with his temperament and chess style, had metamorphosed into a sort of bad-tempered Burl Ives: balding on top with a scruffy beard, and stout—perhaps 50 pounds heavier than in his prime. In his bestselling biography *Profile of a Prodigy*, recently optioned to Hollywood, Frank Brady quoted the young Fischer: “Your body has to be in top condition. Your chess deteriorates as your body does. You can’t separate body from mind.” So what did the new Fischer’s body say about his mind? Perhaps nothing more than the old adage expresses: at 20 you have the body you were born with; at 50 you have the body you deserve.

The chess world had also changed since 1972, but according to Fischer, he was still the World Champion. He insisted that his rematch with Spassky be billed by the organizers as a world championship match, and it was. When it was pointed out to Fischer at a news conference that he had not played anybody for 20 years, he said: “No, that is not exactly correct. Nobody has played *me* for 20 years.” Of course, many chess champions have behaved with similar arrogance—or perhaps solipsism is an even better word in this case. Everyone has heard the story of the drunken Alekhine, stopped at a European border in the 1930s because he had no passport. “I am Alekhine, chess champion of the world,” he declared grandly. “I have a cat called Chess.” The gentlemanly Boris Spassky had an ego, too. Darrach writes about an incident in the Caucasus Mountains, where Spassky and his trainer Nei were preparing for the 1972 match with Fischer:

One night on a narrow mountain trail, Spassky and Nei came face to face with a small herd of wild buffalo, [consisting of] four cows and a calf. Ordinarily not aggressive, the cows stood their ground because of the calf. Nei suggested that he and Spassky should move aside and let the animals pass, but Spassky set his jaw stubbornly. “No! *They* must give way,” he cried, caught up in an extravagant fantasy of power, “because *I am a grandmaster!*” It was only with difficulty that Nei persuaded him to back down.

Even if Fischer considered the 1992 event a world championship match, nobody else did, including Spassky, who apparently played for two reasons: first, because he considered it his moral obligation to facilitate Fischer’s return to the game; and second, because of the money. Some people have suggested that Spassky secretly thought he might be able to win, and thereby redeem his earlier loss. The organizers did, in fact, bill this remake of the “Match of the Century” as the “Revenge Match of the Twentieth Century.” Spassky was even quoted in one place as snarling, “I’m going to send him back where he came from—the past!” but this statement seems completely out of character and also ignores the fact that Spassky is even older, by six years, than Fischer.

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Perhaps the most surreal aspect of the 1992 match was its location in Yugoslavia, or what was left of Yugoslavia as the country disintegrated in the post-Tito, post-communist era. As Dorsey noted in his article, Fischer was somehow transported in a time machine “from a focal point of the Cold War in 1972 to a flash point of the ‘New World Order’ in 1992 ... Fischer seems to be drawn toward controversy as if it had a gravitational pull on him, or as if he had a gravitational pull on controversy.” It was surreal enough to have a shooting war in Europe in 1992, but to have Bobby Fischer pop up only 50 miles from the front, to play a \$5 million chess match after 20 years of seclusion, with a clause in his contract specifying that he might “choose a new venue if gunfire can be heard at the rematch site” ... well, Dali’s landscapes featuring limp watches, horses with breasts, and bicyclists in the desert begin to look almost reasonable by comparison.

Fischer was somehow transported in a time machine from a focal point of the Cold War in 1972 to a flash point of the “New World Order” in 1992.

Whether Fischer’s participation in this match would be ethical or even legal was another matter. It was clear that the match would be a propaganda coup for the hardline Serbian government, which hoped to scrape the tarnish off its own reputation by hosting a major international sporting event. Like the ancient Roman emperors who kept the common people happy with the political formula of “bread and circuses,” the Serbian government also hoped to distract its people from the horrors of war and the hardships imposed by international economic sanctions.

For the sake of completeness and clarity, it may be useful to review briefly the political situation in the country which proposed to host this chess match. The former Yugoslavia, or “land of the south Slavs,” has shrunk since 1990 by the departure of several former provinces which have declared independence. The breakup of the Yugoslav state—long held together by the glue of Marshall Tito’s personality—is not surprising, because people in the various provinces have always thought of themselves more as members of a federation than as citizens of a common state. The boundaries of the provinces also represent rough divisions among various ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Muslims, and Albanians.

The name of Yugoslavia is still used by a rump state consisting of two provinces, Serbia and Montenegro, both of which are ethnically predominantly Serbian. It was this vestige of the country that would host the Fischer–Spassky rematch.

The first half of the match was scheduled for the Adriatic resort of Sveti Stefan, in Montenegro. Montenegro is the small, mountainous province on the west (and only) coast of the country, bordering the Adriatic Sea with a population of 600,000. The climate is Mediterranean and the landscape resembles the most beautiful parts of the California coast. Palm trees, fig trees, olive trees, and oleanders are native to the region. Homes have stucco walls and orange-tiled roofs. The economy is based on agriculture and tourism. The Montenegrins live in a country



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blessed by nature and geography, but politically doomed to dependence on its larger neighbor, Serbia.

The second half of the match was scheduled for Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and of Yugoslavia. Serbia has 10 million people and much more territory than Montenegro. The climate is less hospitable: hotter in summer and colder in winter. Serbia has no coastline; the Serbs would view it as strategic suicide to allow Montenegro to secede from the uneasy union peacefully. Furthermore, the Serbian government, run like Montenegro's by former communists, controls the military. On pretext of protecting the interests of Serbs who live beyond the borders of Serbia, the army and air force have intervened with horrific results in the former Yugoslav provinces of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Whatever the Serbian arguments, it is clear that Serbia has violated the borders of its new neighbors, and in early 1992 the United Nations imposed severe economic sanctions on Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav match site was surprising to observers in many respects, but maybe it shouldn't have been. As Dorsey put it, Fischer—who has so often been “predictably unpredictable”—was in this case being “unpredictably predictable.” Fischer has always liked Yugoslavia. The people are big chess fans and Fischer has always been a hero there. In

fact, Belgrade was where Fischer wanted to play Spassky in 1972. The final match site of Reykjavik, Iceland was a compromise imposed on the players by FIDE.

The 1992 match conditions, too, should have come as little surprise. So-called “unlimited matches” have been in disfavor in the chess world since FIDE President Florencio Campomanes stopped the marathon, 48-game Karpov–Kasparov match in February 1985. Fischer, of course, doesn’t care what the chess world or anybody else thinks. He has insisted since 1975, when his conditions caused FIDE to strip him of his title, that he would only play a world championship match under what have been called the “Steinitz rules.” Under the Steinitz rules, the match is won by the first player to win 10 games, draws not counting, with the champion retaining his title if the score reaches 9-9. (These rules were used in the world title matches Steinitz–Zukertort 1886 (10–5), Steinitz–Chigorin 1889 (10–6), Steinitz–Gunsberg 1890 (10–6), Steinitz–Chigorin 1892 (10–8), Lasker–Steinitz 1894 (10–5), and Lasker–Steinitz 1896 (10–2)).

The severe drawback to unlimited matches is their potential great length when drawn games predominate. Alekhine–Capablanca 1927 (6–3) had 25 draws, while Karpov–Kasparov 1984-85 (5–3) had 40 draws without reaching a decisive result. Note that these latter two matches were only being played to six wins; imagine if they had been played to 10! Perhaps Steinitz and his contemporaries were less worried about playing to 10 wins because draws were less frequent then. Today, both human endurance and public interest are taxed greatly by an unlimited match. Meanwhile, the schedules of other major events, including possibly the next world championship cycle, can be disrupted by such a match. Last but not least, the organizers of unlimited matches have serious logistical problems in renting a hall, obtaining sponsorship, and managing all other details when a match’s duration is completely uncertain.

Oblivious as usual to the problems that he causes others, Fischer doesn’t care if his rules cause a match to drag on for months. For him chess is a total commitment and all other matters are of secondary importance. He especially likes the fact that both players must fight all the way to the end; one player cannot win a game or two and then close out the match with draws. Most other chessplayers, mere mortals that they are, view with relief the guaranteed closure of a limited match. From the sporting point of view, a “closed match” also gains in drama; the pressure of a deadline raises tension and excitement in the final games. It seemed that the whole world was briefly transfixed by the 24th game of Kasparov–Karpov 1987, when Kasparov came from behind to retain his title by winning the last game.

Who is right, Fischer or the rest of the world?

It is possible that Fischer has partly solved the problem of an unlimited match’s length by introducing the no-adjudgment rule. The inordinate length of an unlimited match, in which the winner is the player

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left standing at the end of the match, is now mitigated by the inordinate length of each individual game, in which the winner is the player left standing at the end of the game. Blunders caused by exhaustion may shorten the match while lowering the quality of play. Of course, there is one unqualified advantage to the no-adjudgment rule: it prevents the players from benefiting by the adjudgment analysis of their seconds—or by the analysis of computers. With these legally-sanctioned methods of cheating no longer relevant, the better—and more physically-fit—player must prevail. The pendulum in chess seems to be swinging from art toward sport. For all his apparent perversity, Bobby Fischer continues to make important contributions to the game.

Last of all, perhaps we should not have been surprised that Fischer chose Boris Spassky as his comeback opponent. Fischer has always liked and respected Spassky as a person. Also, Spassky likes and understands Fischer perhaps as well as anybody does. Spassky is one of the few players in the world who has both the stature and the patience to deal with Fischer. Not least important, Spassky has ceased to be much of a factor in the chess world, and he was available for an open-ended engagement. The facetious Dorsey put it this way:

Fischer always said that if he ever returned to chess, his first match would be against someone who was not among the world's best players. Sure enough, as if he had a second appointment with destiny, Boris Spassky has qualified himself for this honor by languishing in the lower half of just about every tournament he has played in recently, to the extent that he has played at all.

Bobby Fischer Found

As a boy in July 1972, I wasn't in a position to go to Iceland and watch the big chess match. But GM Robert Byrne, chess columnist for *The New York Times*, was predicting that Fischer would hold the title for 12 years. Surely one day I would see Bobby Fischer play a world championship match—probably at a site much closer to home than Iceland. Back then, Iceland seemed like the far side of the moon to me. We all looked forward confidently to the Age of Fischer, who had once said, "When I win, I'll put my title on the line every year, maybe even twice. I'll give players a chance to beat me."

Fischer did not play at all, resigning his FIDE title in 1975, and new chess stars emerged. At first, many Americans looked down upon the "impostor" Karpov and his tainted title. The 1978 Korchnoi-Karpov match, a 6-5 squeaker played while the defector Korchnoi's family was prevented from leaving the Soviet Union, was an unconvincing title defense. In 1981, however, Karpov beat Korchnoi soundly. By then Karpov had also established himself as that rarest of birds in the chess world—a world champion who played often and with almost unbroken success. Perhaps no world champion had ever been so dominant—though Karpov never came close to Fischer's stratospheric Elo rating.

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Eventually my chess friends and I realized that the Age of Fischer was behind, not before us. We shifted gradually from anticipating his future achievements to remembering his past glories.

Then, after 20 years ... the "Yugoslavia thing," as George Bush might put it. If this match was really going to come off, I wanted to go see it. Watching Bobby Fischer play chess was something I could tell my grandchildren about: *Nowadays the machines can beat anybody, but back in 1992, I saw the best human chessplayer there ever was ... Bobby Fischer.* I was also proud of Fischer for conquering the inner demons that had paralyzed him for so long. Yes, chess had suffered from Fischer's long absence, but who had suffered more than Fischer himself? I had fantasies of meeting Bobby Fischer in person and telling him, "American chessplayers are proud of you for coming back."

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My fantasies were tempered by realism. When Anatoly Karpov had heard the early rumors of Fischer-Spassky II, he had said: "I'll believe it when the first chess piece is moved." Karpov himself had endured several fruitless match negotiations with Fischer, even after 1975. Taking my cue from Karpov, who surely knew Fischer better than I did, I decided not to buy an airplane ticket until the first piece was moved. Of course, Fischer could always walk out on the match later, but I decided not to worry about that.

Also of some concern to me were the moral implications of attending this match. Yugoslavia, or what was left of it, was an international outlaw. The United Nations had imposed an economic embargo. When the shady Serbian entrepreneur Jezdimir Vasiljevic announced the match in July 1992, he called it a triumph over the U. N. embargo. "By bringing Fischer to Yugoslavia, we have broken the blockade in the most spectacular manner," he said. Did I want to lend my support, as a spectator and journalist, to such an event?

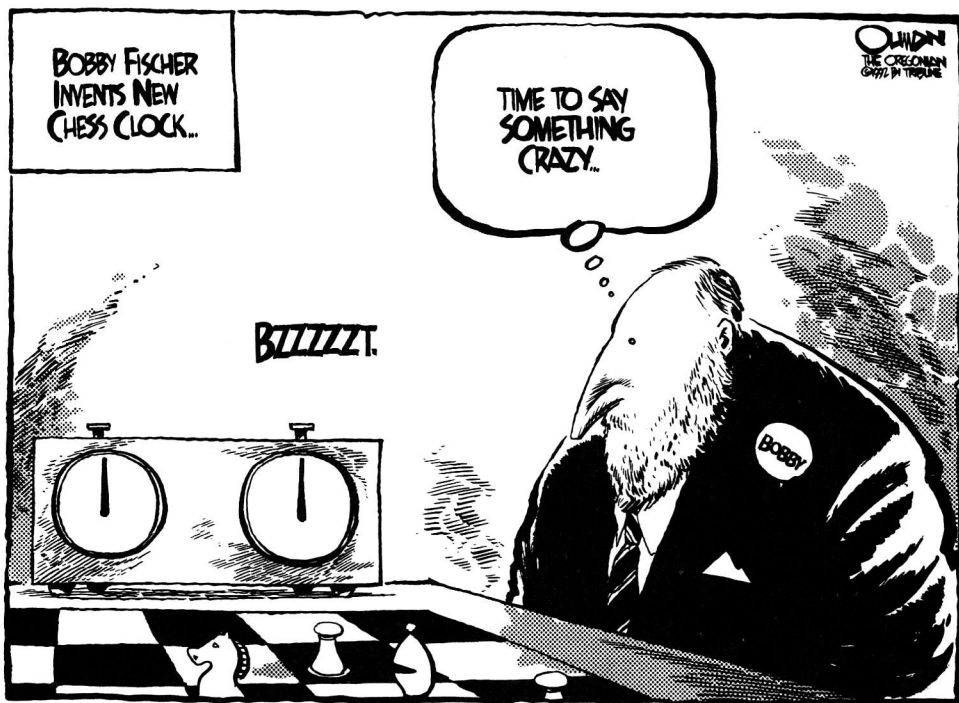
And what about the organizer himself? All kinds of rumors about Vasiljevic swirled in the Western press. "I want to remain mysterious," he said. "A man of mysterious origins." A native Serbian, Vasiljevic apparently left his country at age 18 and worked all over the world in a variety of jobs. Somehow he amassed a fortune. He returned to Yugoslavia in 1987 and founded the Jugoskandic import-export company and the Jugoskandic Bank. Controlling the bank gave him liquidity to pursue his various schemes—which was fortunate, since he must have had trouble with his import-export business after the U. N. imposed its embargo. Then again, maybe not so much trouble as one might think: there were published reports that he had bought Israeli arms for Serbian troops. War-profiteering reputedly pays well. Last winter, Vasiljevic acquired a lease on the resort island of Sveti Stefan and a few other nearby seaside hotels from the Montenegrin government, for \$570 million to be paid over five years. That is how the first half of the match came to be scheduled there.



So Vasiljevic was holding a multimillion-dollar international chess match in defiance of U. N. sanctions, possibly financed with blood money, or even—who could say?—with the hard-earned savings of innocent bank depositors. I rationalized my own very minor role in the proceedings by telling myself, “This is about chess, only chess.”

The match’s opening press conference, which I read about back in the United States, further dimmed my euphoria. As all the world knows now, Fischer put on quite a display before the large crowd of journalists. When asked, “Are you worried by U. S. government threats over your defiance of sanctions?” he reached into his briefcase for a letter. He said, “This is the order to provide information and cease and desist activities from the Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC, August 21, 1992. So,” Fischer continued, “here is my reply to their order not to defend my title here.” Holding up the letter, he spat noisily on it, and said, “That’s my answer.” The startled journalists stared at one another.

But Fischer was only warming up. When asked whether he supported the U. N. sanctions against Yugoslavia, he began a rambling diatribe against the world body for not being tough enough on Israel. In response to another question, he said, “To me, real communism, the Soviet communism, is basically a mask for Bolshevism, which is a mask for Judaism.” This would certainly be news to the millions of Jews who suffered for generations under Soviet communism. Perhaps Fischer hasn’t gotten out much recently, but he also seems not to have noticed the demise of the Soviet Union and its communist system.



But wait, there's more. Fischer also accused Karpov, Kasparov, and Viktor Korchnoi of fixing their world-championship matches dating back to 1978. He promised to write a book exposing the grand conspiracy. "These criminals ... have absolutely destroyed chess by their immoral, unethical, prearranged games. These guys are really the lowest dogs around." (Speaking only as a journalist, I must say that Bobby Fischer is almost too good to be real. Who could invent a guy like this? Who could make up all the crazy stuff he says?)

Afterward, the American press reflected the disgust and dismay that most people felt about Fischer's extraordinary actions and remarks. *The New York Times* editorialized against him, and even the U. S. Chess Federation issued a pious news release deploring Fischer's political views and disavowing any connection with the Yugoslavia match. (Throughout the match, *Chess Life's* coverage of the biggest chess story in 20 years was conspicuously poor. No cover was devoted to the Fischer-Spassky match and the story itself was buried deep in the magazine.)

Other U. S. press reactions were similar. *Newsweek* wrote, "He's back—chunky and weathered after two decades in seclusion but still brimming with nastiness. Fischer used the occasion to rant about Jews, chess players, and the government. With luck, we'll hear from him again—in 2012."

The Philadelphia Daily News wrote an editorial titled, "Fischer: Please

go back into seclusion.” Part of it ran, “One-time chess prodigy-brat Bobby Fischer—now paunchy, middle-aged chess boor Bobby Fischer—has spent 20 years living in cheap California hotels. It’s clear that he spent some of his time in hiding figuring out even more ways to gross out the civilized world. The world can be forgiven if it wishes an errant mortar would miss a few Bosnian kids and land in Fischer’s lap. Barring that happy event, we can at least hope Fischer is still his old self, and will get mad enough to treat us to another 20 years of seclusion.”

Time published an essay with a more generic title, “Memo to the Gods: Never Come Back.”

Foreign reactions, however, were not all negative. Seoul’s *Korea Times* wrote, “When Fischer left 20 years ago, he took chess with him.”

From London’s *Daily Telegraph*: “Imagine that you can hear the end of Schubert’s ‘Unfinished Symphony’ or Beethoven’s 10th, or see the missing arms of Michelangelo’s *Venus*. These are the feelings that Fischer’s return brings to the world’s chess players.”

From Switzerland’s *Tages Anzeiger*: “Is Fischer a fool or a king? Genius or lunatic? This is a theme for Shakespeare, Brecht, Fellini, or Herzog, for all those who feel a contradiction between the soul and society.”

Russian journalists noted ironically: “Fischer used to be an American hero and a Russian state enemy. Now he is an American state enemy and a Russian hero.”

The Belgrade daily *Politika*, not surprisingly, burred with joy at the prospect of a Fischer match in Yugoslavia. However, we may judge the integrity of that publication by its analysis of the Balkan crisis, printed in the 21 September English-language edition: “Turkey is shipping arms through Macedonia in order to re-establish the Ottoman Empire. The Bosnian fighting is over re-establishing the Austro-Hungarian Empire.”

I felt mostly sadness. Fischer’s grip on reality has always been loose. GM Samuel Reshevsky once explained Fischer’s mind by saying, “We all have the same amount of room in our heads for information [drawing a square in the air]. Fischer’s head is almost entirely filled with information about chess, leaving this much [drawing a small square in one corner of the large square] for other things. So he is very good at chess, but not so good in other areas.”

Fischer’s limited non-chess understanding has been further warped by his lonely, peculiar life, first as a chess prodigy and then as a professional chessplayer. As a boy, he seems to have become accustomed to imposing his will on others by force on the chessboard. Perhaps the distinction between the chessboard and the rest of life blurred in his mind. Eventually Fischer was quoted as saying, “Chess *is* life.”

It is worth mentioning that Fischer’s anti-Jewish remarks at the press conference should not have been so surprising. The reaction of the official chess establishment was certainly disingenuous. For 30 years at

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least, he has been on the public record with a negative attitude toward Jews. In the notorious 1962 *Harper's* magazine article by Ralph Ginzburg, the 18-year-old Fischer was quoted as saying, "There are too many Jews in chess. They seem to have taken away the class of the game. They don't seem to dress so nicely, you know. That's what I don't like."

The remarkable fact, of course, is that many of the greatest chessplayers in modern times have been Jews, including the great world champions Emanuel Lasker and Mikhail Botvinnik. The Jew David Bronstein tied Botvinnik 12–12 in a world title match. The Jew Mikhail Tal won the title from Botvinnik, then lost it back a year later. Former world champions Vasily Smyslov and Boris Spassky are both reputed to have some Jewish blood. Fischer himself is half-Jewish—indeed, because his mother is Jewish, he is Jewish by Jewish law. Garry Kasparov, the current FIDE world champion, is half-Jewish on his father's side (born Garry Weinstein, as a child he conveniently adopted his mother's Russian surname). The phenomenal Polgar sisters are Jewish. It has been a longstanding joke in the chess world to rank players thus: the best players are Jewish Russians; the next best are non-Jewish Russians; then Jewish non-Russians; and last of all, non-Jewish non-Russians. The Jewish phenomenon in chess is remarkable and perhaps deserves further study and explanation. Unfortunately, Fischer's early feelings of personal antipathy seem to have developed along irrational, not to say fantastic lines.

We need not go back to 1962 for published evidence of Fischer's anti-Jewish bias. In 1984, Fischer wrote an open letter to the publishers of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, asking that his entry be removed. He said that he was not, nor had he ever been, a Jew, and he advised them to "try to promote your religion on its own merits—if indeed it has any!" He signed the letter, "Bobby Fischer, The World Chess Champion." The letter has been published in various places since 1984. In 1988 Fischer sent a photocopy of it to Edward Winter for publication in *Chess Notes*, a sign that he still felt strongly about the subject.

On Wednesday, 2 September, I heard from a friend that the first moves of Game 1 of the match had been transmitted around the world. Soon I heard that Fischer had won in fine style. Caught up in the excitement and trying to ignore my own misgivings, immediately I began to plan my trip to Yugoslavia.

I had much to figure out in a short time, including how to pay for things in Yugoslavia. The local branch of American Express tried to sell me traveler's checks—"You can cash them anywhere," the woman told me brightly—but I had my doubts. I called the office of the president of American Express, and received blunt advice: "Bring goods to barter."

I ended up buying three money belts and stuffing them all with U. S. dollars. Travelling with all my money in cash, on my person, was worrisome to me, but there was no good alternative.

The press reported worsening economic and social conditions in

Yugoslavia—*The New York Times* mentioned roving gangs and an increase in violent crime—but as an infantryman in the U. S. Army National Guard I figured that I could cope with most situations. One of my buddies in the Guard generously offered to lend me his expensive body armor, to protect against shrapnel or small-arms fire. I declined because it was too bulky. However, I gratefully accepted my sergeant's offer of a case of Army rations. When I asked him if it was really all right for me to take the food, he justified this taxpayer subsidy by saying, "It's a war zone, ain't it?"

In the end, after some false leads, I followed the same route that American GM Yasser Seirawan and other chess journalists had found independently. I flew overnight from Boston to Brussels, and on the next day to Budapest. Budapest was my introduction to Eastern Europe, and it presented interesting contrasts. I saw heavy-set old women with wrinkled faces, wearing cheap baglike dresses and scarves wrapped around their heads. But the younger generation looked remarkably smart and chic, like characters out of an MTV video. The cars were stubby little machines, shrunken by the high cost of gasoline in Europe. Everybody smoked cigarettes.

From Budapest—my language difficulties increasing as I penetrated deeper into eastern Europe—I traveled overnight by bus to Belgrade. In odd contrast to American buses, there was a stewardess on the bus who handed out snacks to the passengers, but there was no toilet and only two rest stops in 11 hours!

The bus was delayed for three hours at the Serbian border, mainly because the border guards had to process thousands of returning Serbs who had driven across the border to buy gasoline in Hungary. They were pushing their cars through the long line at the border to save gas. I saw several Yugos—almost extinct in the American automobile market, but still surviving in their native habitat.

I had a tense few minutes when the border guard carefully inspected my passport. Naturally, I was the only American on the bus—proud but nervous. "You cannot enter," he told me in good English. "Your visa has expired." This was impossible, because I had just gotten the visa and it was good for one year. The stewardess took my side and argued my case successfully. The bus rolled into Serbia and on to Belgrade.

Arriving in downtown Belgrade at 4:15 AM local time, I located a currency dealer on the street and converted some of my dollars to dinars at a black market rate. When I boarded a new bus to the airport, I noticed that the ticket had a printed price of 80 dinars, but a rubber stamp had raised the price to 1,000 dinars. *That's real inflation*, I thought.

At the airport I bought a roundtrip ticket to Tivat, a town in Montenegro near Sveti Stefan. As my bags passed through the x-ray machine, the guard jumped up and pulled me aside.

"Excuse me, sir, what is in your bag?"

One of my buddies in the National Guard generously offered to lend me his body armor, to protect against shrapnel or small-arms fire.

“Just food, clothing, and books.”

“No guns?”

“No, no guns.”

“All right, you may go.” Losing interest, he gestured me through the gate dismissively. I didn’t know whether to feel relieved or offended that I had been so casually judged harmless.

In Tivat the weather was hot. As I rode buses south to Sveti Stefan, the Adriatic Sea broke far below on the rocks to my right, and stark mountains rose to my left. It was the most beautiful coast I had ever seen. Later a man I met said to me, “God was too good to us, and we haven’t got enough money to spoil it all.”

In the early afternoon, I arrived in the village of Sveti Stefan on the mainland. I located a small, attractive, and surprisingly cheap pension. Only \$7.50 a day for a two-bedroom suite with bath and kitchenette, with lush green vegetation climbing over the railings of the balcony, from which I had a clear view of the Adriatic. Unshaven, dirty, and exhausted after three days of travel, I lugged my heavy bags containing clothing, books, cameras, tape recorder, and Army rations through the village. I passed Yasser Seirawan sitting at an outdoor cafe with a pretty young woman and another man. All three of them looked cool and elegant; Grandmaster Seirawan glanced at me curiously. I decided that the time was not right to introduce myself.

With my gear secured in my room, I fell asleep for about six hours. When I woke it was dark again. I decided to wash up and take a walk. Before leaving my room, I made a quick meal off Army rations.

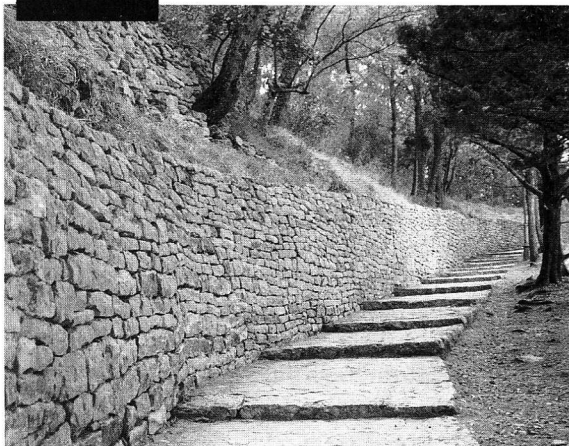
I left the pension and walked through the village in the cool evening, crushing ripe figs underfoot. It was late September, the end of the summer resort season. I walked past the shops of the village, all closed now. Earlier I had noticed the words NON-STOP painted prominently on the window glass of some shops. In Yugoslavia it has long been customary

for retail businesses to keep morning and evening hours, closing from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. These days more businesses are staying open in the afternoon, NON-STOP.

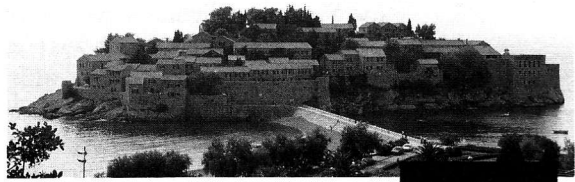
Two cafes were still open. I looked inside for Seirawan but didn’t see him. In fact I did not see him again, so he must have left town. Pretty, dark-haired, sun-tanned girls in short skirts sat with well-dressed young men. The radio music had a wild gypsy lilt. I didn’t linger; none of it was relevant to the mission.

Grandmaster Seirawan glanced at me curiously. Unshaven, dirty, and exhausted, I decided that the time was not right to introduce myself.

The path to the island.



A mile beyond the village, I knew, lay the island of Sveti Stefan where the two players were ensconced with their retinues. Supposedly the “island” was connected to the mainland by a 100-yard-long bridge built on a sandbar. I headed out of the village and into the darkness, along a stone path that seemed to lead in the right direction.



The island of Sveti Stefan.

I found myself walking in darkness along the sea. The path passed through avenues of tall straight pine trees, wound over rocky crags and down again. My senses were heightened as I walked in the dark over unfamiliar terrain and neared my final goal. I felt that I had traveled not just thousands of miles from home but through 20 years of time—it had taken me that long to find the hero of my youth.

Climbing over a rise, suddenly I saw the black bulk of the island across the sea. It looked just like the pictures I had seen—a great fortified castle on a rock, surrounded by water except for a narrow, ramrod-straight footbridge to the mainland. Then, like a disorienting anachronism in a Monty Python movie, the red letters of a neon sign flashed on the high wall of the castle: SVETI STEFAN HOTEL.

I followed the path down to the bridge and crossed it. At the end was a gate with a guard. Guessing that there must be a restaurant inside, I told him that I was going in to supper. He waved me through the stone archway. Inside was a labyrinth of narrow stone passageways. Alleys and steep stone steps led up in every direction. Sveti Stefan looked like what it was: a restored medieval town.

Immediately I had to stand aside, as a procession marched down a broad flight of steps to the gate. I saw several well-built men in dark suits, whom I later learned were bodyguards; a few pretty young women in high heels and fashionable dresses with deep décolletage; other men whom I did not recognize; and one man whom I did recognize—Bobby Fischer, bulky and bearded, looking natty in an expensive blue suit. He glanced at me suspiciously and, I thought, truculently as he passed. The entire group was whisked away in a small fleet of Mercedes automobiles.

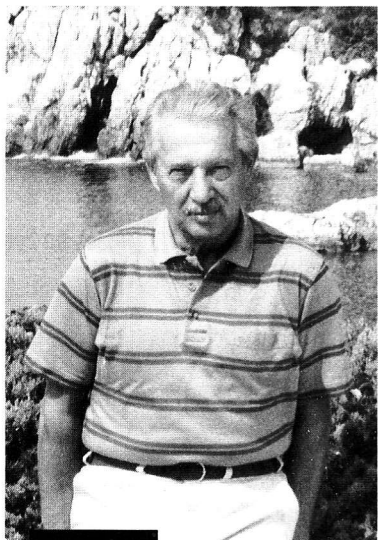
It was unusually good luck to glimpse Fischer on my first night in town, but suddenly I felt confused. Why had I come here? What had I expected to find? I was a chessplayer, not a paparazzo—I should be home studying and playing, not chasing after a man who cared nothing for me and would probably despise me if he even knew of my existence.

My spirits depressed by such thoughts, I walked slowly back to my room, which seemed small and mean after the splendor of the island. The match was at the halfway point with Fischer leading 5–2; the players and officials were on break. I would have a week to ask questions and gather information before everyone left for Belgrade.

I felt that I had traveled not just thousands of miles from home but through 20 years of time—it had taken me that long to find the hero of my youth.

Interview with Svetozar Gligoric

GM Svetozar Gligoric served as the match judge in case of disputes. Before the interview, which was conducted during the one-week break in Sveti Stefan, Gligoric told me with a laugh: "There are no disputes, so I have no work to do!" His wife was with him, and he seemed to be enjoying the sun and relaxing atmosphere of the small luxury resort.



Svetozar
Gligoric

Gligoric was the strongest Yugoslav player for about 20 years, from 1951 to 1970. He won or shared the national championship 11 times and played in 14 Olympiads, winning the gold medal for best score on first board at Munich 1958. He played in seven interzonal tournaments and was three times a Candidate for the World Championship. His best-known book, *Fischer v. Spassky* (1972), sold 200,000 copies. In *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer included four games against Gligoric.

Let the reader beware: the opinions expressed to me by Gligoric may have been less than candid. Like others in Sveti Stefan who were close to Fischer, he seemed fearful of doing or saying anything that might anger the mercurial American.

Our discussion went straight to the point.

Why do you think that Bobby Fischer came back to play at this time? For many years he has had offers of millions of dollars to play.

Well, not really. There were always some obstacles. I too was surprised, but perhaps it was the first time that all of his conditions had been met. The first condition was recognition of his title by the organizers. The second was adoption of the Steinitz system, a match to 10 wins with him keeping his title at 9–9. That was the system on which he has insisted ever since 1972. FIDE made a mistake in not meeting his claims. The third condition was a large prize fund, better than any that has ever been offered to other players.

Will he ever play in tournaments again?

No. He is afraid that the other players will make arrangements to influence the results. He will play matches if he plays.

It must be difficult to find a sponsor who is willing to put up so much money for somebody who is so temperamental—who might not show up, who might walk out.

I would not say that he is temperamental. There is some misunderstanding between public opinion in the United States and Robert Fischer himself. I think that he feels neglected in his own country.

Neglected? By whom?

Well, he was the World Champion; he didn't receive any support from the government, any official recognition. He has had 20 years of

living very modestly. In exile, I would say. Even if he didn't play, he deserved some attention.

It was difficult to find him.

Yes, that's true. But something could have been done. He had lawyers; he had some friends. They could have been contacted.

A national magazine called Sports Illustrated sent a reporter to California to look for him. It wasn't easy.

I myself had no contact with Bobby for 12 years, although we are very good friends—I think—and the moment we renewed contact it was a good relationship, just the same as it ever was. He is a very simple man in his behavior. He is honest, sincere, and whatever he says—that is what he really believes. It might not always be right, but he really believes it; it is not something calculated.

Who do you think he will play next?

If he plays, I would think he could play many people, including [Judith] Polgar, Anand, Timman, Short, and for the title, Kasparov.

Do you think that they would agree to play Bobby?

Bobby is the one to decide. They should come looking for him.

If Bobby wins a few matches, do you think we will have a situation in the chess world like there used to be in boxing, with two world champions?

That is possible. If that happens, there would be nothing wrong. It would be good for chess.

How strong do you think that Bobby is now?

He is extremely strong. However, he is very impatient during the games. What he has lost in an absence of 20 years, I think he can regain in six months. I am referring to practical aspects, like calculating forced variations. In depth of understanding he already exceeds Spassky.

Do you think that this is a period of playing into form?

Yes, but it is quite possible that he will regain his full strength. He wants to be even higher than he was. He is a man of extremely good health, very strong, with a very fresh mind. If you look at the photos, that's not him. He looks much younger in person.

When Fischer prepared for the 1972 match, he said, "Mind and body are one." He trained at a resort in New York in the Catskills, where he played tennis, punched a bag, and also studied chess. But now he's 20 years older, he's put on a lot of weight. Do you think he will try to get in good physical shape?

He is in good physical shape. When he stands up, he doesn't look heavy, and he is stronger than he ever was before. He was slim then—he is not slim anymore, but he is extremely strong. His health is better than you might think.



Sveti Stefan has one gas pump. Jezdimir Vasiljevic has the key.

It seems that Fischer is dictating all the details of this match. I don't think that many other players would put up with that.

Well, I wouldn't say that he is dictating, just offering very fair terms, and Spassky realizes that. For instance, I will start with the prize fund. Out of this \$5 million, Fischer could have been guaranteed, let us say, \$4 million, and the rest would be offered to his rival. He didn't want it that way. He wanted to split the money into winner's and loser's shares. If he loses the match, he will not get as much money as Spassky. So it's very fair. Despite his prestige here, he does not want special privileges. I don't know this, but I think they were given the same advance for this match.

Also, he made this beautiful chess clock. I have tried it many times—it is beautiful, another touch of genius. It will improve chess play very much, preventing time pressure which can cause terrible blunders.

What do you think about Fischer's proposal to change the rules of chess? [Fischer has proposed shuffling the position of the pieces on the first rank before every game.]

It's an idea. I am against it, because I do not think that the game can be exhausted. He wants to make things more difficult for computers, and he wants to make sure that each player is using his own imagination. It's a healthy ambition, but I wouldn't want any other form of chess myself.

How well is Spassky playing?

Despite some slips, I think that he has played very well, better than many people expected. He has often had the initiative. You should not underestimate a former world champion. He's a very strong player, although his rating may be lower than it used to be.

You are a very strong player, of course. Are you able to judge the level at

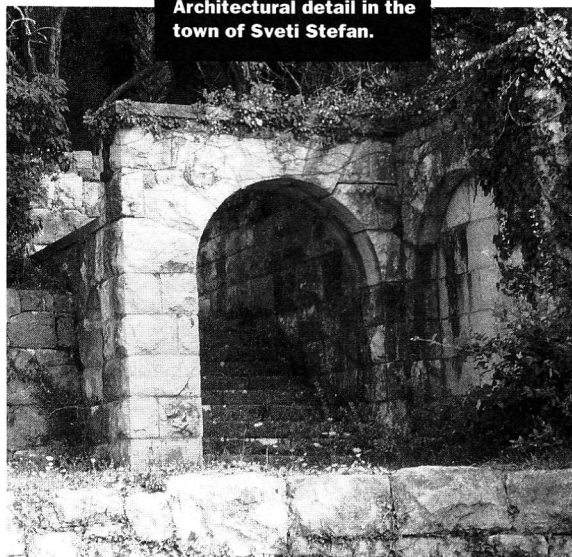
which Fischer and Spassky are playing? Can you attach any Elo numbers?

Yes. Well, I don't like to think in numbers. I don't think that either one of them has shown his maximum strength by now. Spassky has played a great deal in the years since the Reykjavik match, but very seldom lately. Also, [he has played] with diminished ambitions, which is very important. Now I think that he plays with ambition. He has a proper opponent and excellent conditions. It is the opportunity of his life.

Do you think that Fischer can achieve the same Elo level as 20 years ago?

Not only that, but even higher.

Architectural detail in the town of Sveti Stefan.



Do you know if he spent the last 20 years studying chess, or what did he do?

I'm sure he did. I don't think it was in the same way that one does while playing in official competitions, but nevertheless he followed new ideas, and he knows almost all the games of Kasparov, Karpov, and the others. What he didn't do, I think, was specifically to prepare himself—that's the point. He is doing that now, and he will improve every day.

Do you think that there is a psychological burden on Spassky, a burden of history? Here is Fischer coming back after 20 years—

I think the only problem is that Spassky was surprised! [laughing] Surprised that this match could happen, and under such wonderful conditions. He said to me, "If somebody told me that the Martians have landed, I would believe that, too." He is psychologically confused by a situation that doesn't look like reality. I think he will recover in the second half. He played well in the beginning of the match, and now he has the chance to rest. He fought even in the first game, which he lost because he was surprised at the method Fischer applied. It looked like an old-fashioned method that nobody recognized as a dangerous one. He found a very good way to get counterplay.

His team is good, too—GMS Balashov and Nikitin. Balashov knows all of Fischer's games by heart; he earned a degree in chess science in Moscow. Nikitin was Kasparov's most confidential second for at least 13 years. So Spassky chose the people who could serve him best.

Fischer has GM Torre. How did he select Torre?

He has been friendly with Torre's family for many years. Torre is an honest man, and Fischer trusted him. That was the most important thing. Of course, Torre is a very strong player and he is well acquainted with the development of ideas and contemporary chess theory.

In what part of the game do you think that Fischer is weakest right now? What does he need to work on? Or is it just his form?

I don't see anything serious. He might not be acquainted with certain new ideas, but he has many sources of information including the computer. It is only a matter of time. He will be on top of it.

Who is this girlfriend of Fischer's? Is she really a girlfriend?

I cannot say that [laughing], I am not Fischer. I think that their friendship began with her asking for chess lessons. She lived in the United States; her father was a Hungarian diplomat in New York.

Walking in the woods one day, I came upon this unoccupied villa surrounded by black-and-white tiles. I thought of Alice's words in *Through the Looking-Glass*: "I declare it's marked out just like a large chessboard!"



Did he agree to give her chess lessons?

What I heard was that he didn't answer for a long time. But being a conscientious man, he decided to reply. He is a very fair man, and he saw a young girl who wanted help. He didn't answer her for maybe a year; then she repeated her plea and he answered her. That is how they became acquainted.

Just one last question, about the organizer of this match, Mr. Jezdimir Vasiljevic. Who is this man and how did he get all this money for a chess match?

We have had several successful private banks [in Yugoslavia] in the past several years, and one of them is his Jugoskandic Bank. I think that he has spent a great deal of time outside this country, and speaks many languages. Financially he is very knowledgeable. He is very successful, that's all I know. And he is a kind of enthusiast. He likes to surprise the world.

How did he get the idea for this match?

He talked to me about six months before he met Fischer, knowing that I have been friendly with Fischer. I gave him only one piece of advice: if he should offer Fischer a bigger prize than anybody else had ever gotten in chess, it might influence him to think about playing again.

A few months passed and I didn't hear from Mr. Vasiljevic, so I assumed that the match idea was just a way to get some cheap publicity for the bank. First he says that he wants to support a match for Fischer, then he does nothing and gets free publicity.

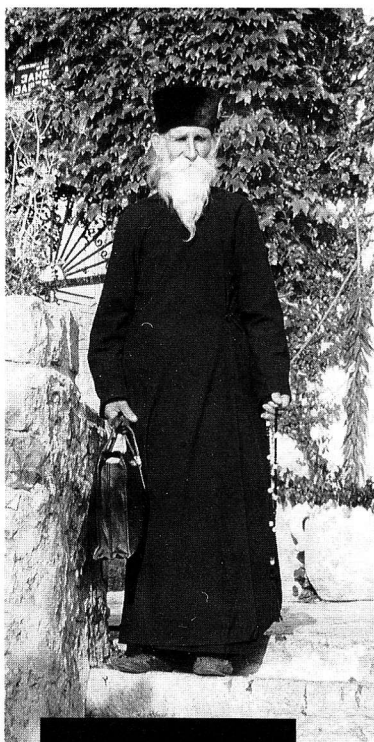
But what happened next was that he really pushed this idea by himself. He persuaded Fischer to play, and we are grateful.

Snooping Around

Gligoric was apparently reluctant to speak frankly about Fischer and the shadowy angel of this match, Jezdimir Vasiljevic, for fear of word getting back to them.

Other people in Sveti Stefan were blunt. "I am glad the match is done here," said a man I met, whom I will call Savo. "It was a comedy. I did not like it." Savo was a native Montenegrin and a chess fan, like all Yugoslavs. He spoke to me freely on condition that I not identify him. "Don't say my name in your article," he told me with a laugh, "just say 'a man I met.' Otherwise I will get into trouble."

Like many Serbs, Savo was an Americanophile who remembered U. S. help in World War II. "Tears ran down my cheeks," he told me emotionally, "when we heard that Kennedy was shot." He told me,



I met an Orthodox priest who invited me back to his monastery, where we shared a bottle of plum brandy.

"People are the same everywhere. But I don't understand what our leaders are doing. Nobody understands it." Over a bottle of Slovenian wine, he said, "We are waiting for the Americans. I think they should carpet-bomb around Sarajevo to destroy the Serbian positions, and make a corridor to Split.

"The worst thing," said Savo as we watched the Miss Croatia Pageant on TV one night, "is that now we all hate each other. Serbs hate Croats, Croats hate Musselmen [Muslims], and Musselmen hate Serbs and Croats. Why?

"Two years ago we had a vote in Montenegro, whether to stay allied with the communist system in Serbia. We preferred to stay. Now, whenever I see a long line for petrol or some other big problem, I laugh and say, 'See? You wanted it, and you got it!'"

Savo told me something I also heard from other Yugoslav sources: after signing a five-year lease on Sveti Stefan with the Montenegrin government, Vasiljevic had made only the first month's payment. Even though he had technically defaulted, he continued to run the town as his private domain. I saw him several times at the hotel but decided to keep a low profile. Like all foreign visitors to Yugoslavia, I had been issued a domestic passport listing my local residence. If Vasiljevic decided I was troublesome, my position would be weak.

I did talk to the pleasant young man who managed the payroll for Vasiljevic's Sveti Stefan operation. Drafted for a year of military service like all young Yugoslav men, Dejan had been a truck-driver in the Serbian Army in 1991. He was shot in the stomach in occupied territory and almost died. After six months in the hospital, he returned home to Sveti Stefan and went to work for Vasiljevic. He told me impatiently, "In America, the journalists are paid well to tell you only one side. We are not the only ones shooting!" I replied, "I don't doubt it." To myself I said: "I like you, but if you invaded my country, I would shoot you, too."

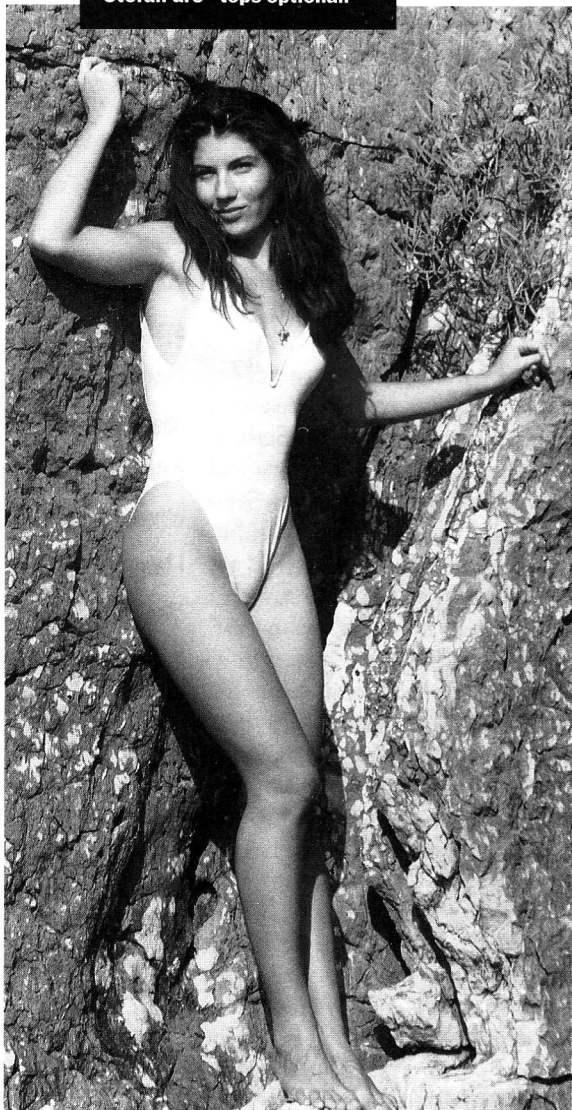
As we walked one day along the stunning beaches, over the immaculate lawns, and through the shady olive groves of the resort, workmen repeatedly called to Dejan in Serbo-Croatian. He told me ruefully, "Wherever I go, the workers want to know when they are getting paid and how much." He added, "I think that being a *zbornalist* is the perfect job." Looking at the view around us, I was inclined to agree.

One night I was woken by gunfire outside my window. Not having brought the body armor, I left the investigation to others and went back to sleep. In the morning my landlord apologized for the disturbance, explaining, "It was only my neighbor, who is celebrating the birth of a son after two girls. You will not think we are very civilized, but that is the custom in Montenegro. I do not approve of it. It is prohibited by the authorities, but as you can see, people still do it." My landlord, like nearly all the people I met in Serbia and Montenegro, was gracious and friendly. "Think of yourself as one of the family," he said often during my stay.

"Two years ago we voted to stay allied with the communist system in Serbia. Now, whenever I see a long line for petrol or some other big problem, I laugh and say, 'See? You wanted it, and you got it!'"

One afternoon while I loitered near the reception desk of the Sveti Stefan Hotel, Boris Spassky walked in and placed a call to Fischer's room. Like any good reporter, I eavesdropped. Spassky said, "Ah, Bobby, how are you doing, I hope I did not disturb you. We are going to row around the island in a small boat. Balashov is swimming but it is too far for me. Do you want to come? They have paddle-boats; you can have one. Up to you, up to you. Yes, of course, you can decide later. We will call you again when

Most people come to Sveti Stefan not for chess, but for the beaches and beautiful blue waters of the Adriatic. Like the rest of the Yugoslav coast, beaches in Sveti Stefan are "tops-optional."



we go. See you. Goodbye." Spassky hung up the phone, and with a rumbling laugh said to the desk clerk, "He's so lazy!" I have reported this one-sided telephone conversation verbatim because these were the only words I ever heard Spassky speak. I was prevented by his "team" from approaching him directly. Apparently both players signed contracts with Jugoskandic specifying that for the duration of the match they could only make statements through approved channels. Spassky was, however, kind enough to sign a couple of books for me.

I could have monitored both players more closely. Knowing that Spassky went out every morning to swim, I did not approach him then or try to take pictures. Obviously I am not a born journalist, because I thought the man deserved some time to himself.

Fischer, too, sometimes went for a swim behind the island, I learned from the girlfriend of one of his bodyguards. She told me, "Bobby is a very strange man. When he swims with his bodyguard, he does not know how to turn back." I asked her what she meant. She said, "He just swims straight out to sea. His bodyguard has to tell him when to turn around."

She also told me, "Fischer says that he will never marry. He needs all of his time for chess." I remembered a story told by Hungarian player Laszlo Szabo, quoted recently in a Hungarian source. According to Szabo, at the Buenos Aires 1960 tournament (the only international event in which Fischer scored less than 50%) he stayed in a room next to Fischer's. "One night, a grandmaster took a lady up to him. I do not know how long she stayed there. The next morning, though, when we stepped out of our rooms at the exact same moment, Fischer said: 'Chess is better.'"

After my first night in town, I saw Fischer in Sveti Stefan three more times. The first time was in the dining room of the Sveti Stefan Hotel. I was having dinner and he ducked through quickly, dressed in a brown suit and tie, probably on his way to some secret room where he could dine in his customary seclusion.

The second time I actually found him. Bored and looking for action, I was lurking in a part of the hotel where I knew I shouldn't be. Something was going on; I could see bodyguards posted and hotel staff scurrying about. I eluded the guards and by some fatal attraction found myself entering a small private room. There was Bobby Fischer sitting at a small table, eating his breakfast at 2:00 PM, and talking intensely with another man seated across from him. Fischer looked up at me, an unauthorized stranger who had just approached within five feet, and our eyes locked. Then I noticed the bodyguard rapidly coming toward me, stage right, and I realized that there was no future for me in this room. I apologized and departed, and was not pursued.

The third and final time was the day that Fischer, Spassky, and their entourages left Sveti Stefan. A gaggle of onlookers had gathered at the footbridge, tipped off by the fleet of Mercedes that something was about to break. They were Yugoslavs on holiday, hoping like me to catch a glimpse of fame.

I had time for one fuzzy photo. Spassky is on the left in the picture, stepping up onto the low wall of the footbridge to get around the car blocking his path. Fischer, wearing his sunvisor and looking directly at the camera, is visible just behind



Saint Stephen stands watch on the wall of the monastery chapel.

The circus leaves town.



and to the viewer's right of Spassky. The match organizer Vasiljevic is barely visible in the background to the viewer's left of Spassky. Quite visible in the right foreground is an angry bodyguard with his arm and voice raised, shouting at me. Moments later he and one of his pals seized me and demanded that I give up my film. They escorted me away to a quiet place where we talked. I absolutely refused to give up my film, and now that we were out of the public eye they did not insist. Perhaps they were more concerned about putting on a good show in front of their famous guest. We parted, I think, in mutual embarrassment.

The Match Result

This article is not the place for a detailed analysis of the moves played in Fischer–Spassky II. The world knows that Fischer won fairly easily, 10–5 with 15 draws. The play of both competitors was uneven—sparkling at times, feeble at other times. Perhaps the playing schedule was partly to blame. Four match games a week for eight weeks is a heavy load, and every game was played to the end—as long as eight hours without breaks.

However, there is no doubt that both players have seen better days. For example, even those observers who praised Fischer's conduct of the first game, a Ruy Lopez Breyer Variation, have pointed out that Spassky's failure to capture *en passant* on b3 was a mistake that the younger Spassky would not have made. Fischer, who claims to have studied the games of Kasparov and Karpov deeply and found proof of their "cheating," completely missed Spassky's 25... f5 in game five and lost. The ... f5 idea was prominent in Karpov's games of the last world championship cycle; too bad Fischer didn't put his study time to better use. The Deep Thought II computer poked several holes in both Fischer and Spassky's play.

Most people were primarily interested to see how well Fischer would play after a 20-year layoff. After the first game, Miguel Najdorf said, "This showed that Fischer has not been sleeping for 20 years. He will win this match by a bigger margin than the 12½–8½ of Iceland."

In fact Fischer won by a five-point margin, the same as in Reykjavik if we ignore his forfeit loss in game two of that match, but the 1992 match was 10 games longer. And Spassky is currently rated 2560, 100 points lower than he was in 1972. Using the standard formula, Fischer's performance rating in the 1992 match was 2627. However, it is hard to evaluate a player's rating on the basis of one match against one player. In a match, particularly one in which draws do not count, neither player minds a draw. According to the originator of the rating system himself, Arpad Elo, ratings are only statistically valid when derived from play against varied opposition—the more games against the more players, the more valid the rating. On the evidence of this match, Fischer may still be in 2600 FIDE range on his good days. On his bad days, especially in passive positions like the one he got in game four, he shifts pieces aimlessly to and fro like a baffled commercial chess computer.

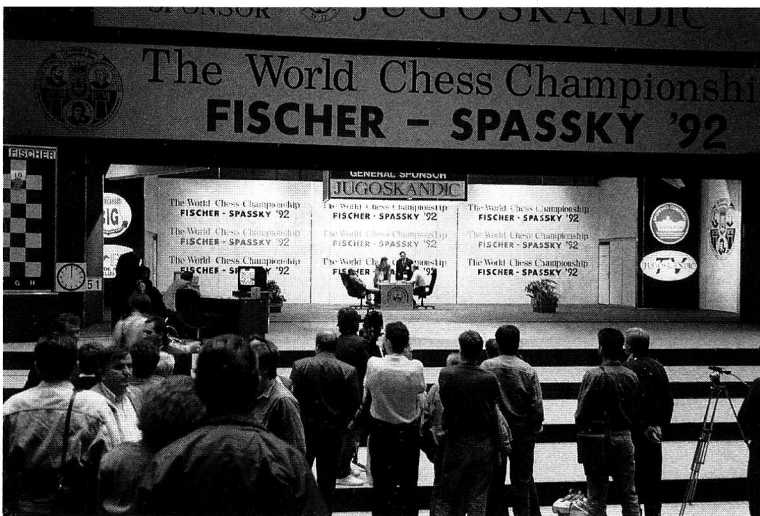
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GM Lev Albut, a noted chess teacher, believes that the intense practice of the match is bound to boost Fischer's practical strength significantly, perhaps after a three-month lag while Fischer's brain absorbs the lessons. This opinion accords with the experience of many players.

Spassky, of course, was not the most testing opponent. He was appropriate for this match because Fischer knew and trusted him, and he could be relied upon by all parties not to disturb Fischer by expressing any upsetting opinions of his own. According to Oscar Panno, "Fischer chose Spassky because Kasparov would walk over him. The match does not have any meaning, because Bobby is close to 50 and he will not be able to play against someone on Kasparov's level." In contrast to Panno, Seirawan suggested that Spassky may not have brought out Fischer's best play. "Fischer is friendly [with Spassky] and doesn't have the real aggression needed for a chess fight."

Spassky played with more verve than we have seen from him in recent years, but it is clear that he no longer considers himself a chess professional. His mode of dress was revealing of his attitude toward this match. At the beginning in Sveti Stefan, both players dressed in suits and ties to uphold the image of the ersatz "World Championship." In Belgrade, Spassky began to relax. During the 12th game, for example, he wore a plain white shirt open at the collar. When not on move, he padded around in slippers, looking less like a dangerous sporting opponent than somebody's grandfather who had wandered onto the stage by accident and was trying to find an exit. Oddest of all, he confessed at the 19 October press conference in Belgrade that he liked to spend as much time as possible during the game offstage in his private box, "to be alone. Sometimes I sleep a little bit or eat or just think. It's quite comfortable."

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The Sava Center in Belgrade.

Spassky's play may have been hampered by psychological factors. He admires Fischer, even feels affection for him, and wants Fischer's comeback to succeed. At the press conference in Sveti Stefan at the halfway point, Spassky described his reaction to Fischer's innovation 7 b4 in the 11th game: "I was a little surprised, and at the same time I became very happy. I realized that Bobby was playing like a young man, and it was my principal goal to make him stronger and stronger in every game." These are the words of a trainer, not an opponent.

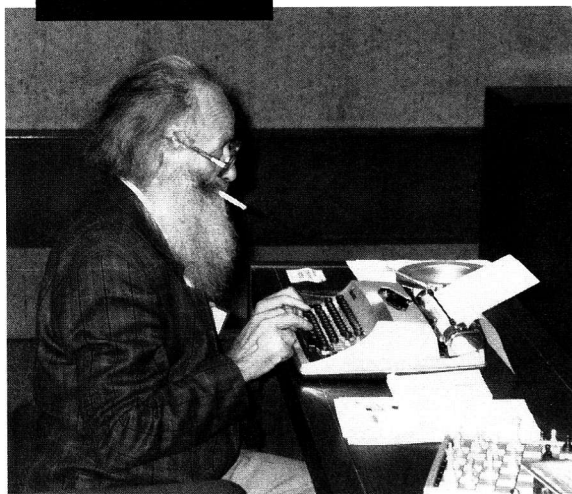
"I realized that Bobby was playing like a young man, and it was my principal goal to make him stronger and stronger in every game."

In the 19 October press conference, Spassky was even more explicit: "I'm ready to fight and I want to fight, but on the other hand I would like Bobby to win because I believe that Bobby must come back to chess and show his best. So I'm trying to give him excellent training."

Sadly, Fischer needs more help than a chess trainer can provide. Partway through the match, he was asked: "What do you think about your play so far?" His answer was, "Well, I think I'm doing quite well considering that I've been blacklisted for the last 20 years by the World Jewry." At other moments during the match, he spoke with surprising realism, even humility. After drawing game three, he said, "This was maybe an off day for me. I hope it was an off day." After playing even worse to lose the next game, he must have been terribly disappointed. But he said to the post-game interviewer, "That's chess, you know. One day you give a lesson, next day your opponent gives you a lesson."

Most experts felt that the quality of play in this strange match was below top-flight GM praxis, but said that Fischer showed signs of his old brilliance. More experience will be needed, they agreed, before he can be written off entirely as a pretender to Kasparov's throne. GM Jan Timman suggested, "He has the strength but maybe not the concentration."

A chess journalist plies his trade in the Sava Press Center.



GM Lev Polugayevsky said, "It is very important that he should continue to play after this match is over, and in due time he will again be on the very top." Fischer says that he will not play in any tournaments, but several top players, including Short and Anand, have recently expressed interest in playing a match with him.

The Anand-Ivanchuk match (see previous article), between the fifth- and second-highest-rated players in the world respectively, was held in Linares, Spain while Fischer and Spassky were playing in Sveti Stefan. Some top players

disparaged the “outdated” play of Fischer-Spassky II and pointed to the Linares event as “the real thing.”

GM Ljubomir Ljubojevic, who attended the Linares games, dissented strongly: “That’s nonsense. Boris and Bobby are playing real chess, eternal chess, while the match between the two representatives of the youngest generation was boring and full of errors. I also disagree with those who say that Bobby and Boris can’t play modern variations. That doesn’t mean a thing. One could just as well say that young players can’t play the older variations. The whole truth is that Fischer is playing a very strong game, Spassky is just a trifle weaker, while Anand and Ivanchuk were, to be honest, a complete disappointment.”

Timman was “not in the least satisfied” with the Fischer-Spassky games, but praised Linares as “a very good match—the games were of the highest quality.” GM Nigel Short, on the other hand, said: “I completely disagree with Timman about the Anand-Ivanchuk match. It was a normal match with a lot of blunders. People have been critical of blunders in the Fischer-Spassky match, but all matches are full of blunders.”

At a post-match press conference, Fischer didn’t tip his hand as to his next move. He claimed not to be worried about U. S. prosecution for breaking the economic embargo on Yugoslavia and refusing to pay tax on his winnings. “I’m happy to be back playing chess,” he said. He also mentioned that Kasparov had sent him a letter a few years back, signing it “your co-champion.” An objective person might consider this a rather charitable gesture by Kasparov to indulge Fischer’s humor. But Fischer raged to the press, “He is not my co-champion! He is a criminal, he should be in jail!” Once again, Central Casting couldn’t have found a more provocative actor for this particular role.

At the closing ceremony, the packed audience chanted “Bobby, Bobby,” as Fischer and Spassky embraced on stage. “I thank the wonderful Yugoslav people. You’ve been a great audience,” the victor told them. Fischer wept discreetly, wiping away a tear.

It is moving to consider Fischer’s naked humanity beneath the armor of his warped personality. Despite all the problems he has caused and may yet cause, he has suffered much, and he greatly risked both his legend and his troubled psyche by returning to public competition after so many years. Psychologist Peter Popper, quoted earlier from an article



In Kalemegdan, Belgrade’s great park, it seemed that every bench was occupied by chessplayers, and every game had its own small crowd of spectators.

"I see human greatness in undertaking an adventure like this at age 50, accepting the risk of failure."

in the Hungarian newsmagazine *168 Hours*, said in the same article, "I see human greatness in undertaking an adventure like this at age 50 [*sic*], accepting the risk of failure. I perfectly understand if Kasparov calls Fischer's comeback laughable—one cannot leave for decades without a negative effect—but I think there is still something wonderfully beautiful in this resurrection in a psychological sense. It is a very humane, touching, and hopeless revolt against time, aging, and the performance deterioration that accompanies aging."

The American public seems to have reacted with enthusiasm to Fischer's return to the board, if not to his politics. In a press release, the U. S. Chess Federation noted "a dramatic increase in chess interest attributable to this match." Sales of boards, sets, and books were up. Anecdotal evidence indicated that players who dropped chess after Fischer's retirement were returning to the game.

Deconstructing the Fischer Myth

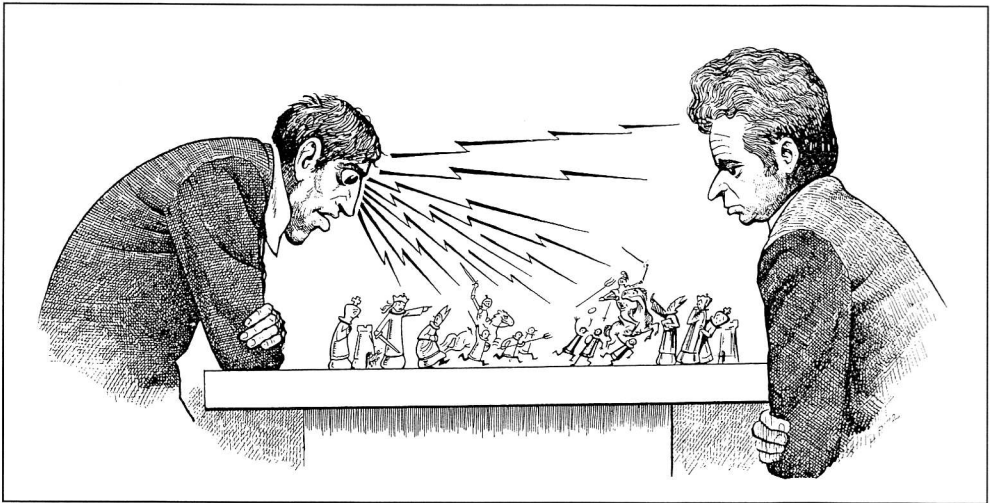
Bobby Fischer—or Robert James Fischer as he now prefers to be called—has returned to competitive chess after 20 years. How can we make sense of this? Many of us, perhaps most of us, were convinced that he had entered forever into the mists of history; we feel almost as if a statue in the park had stepped down off its pedestal and spoken to us. Now we must examine the changed situation and try to deconstruct the Fischer myth to get at the man and reality.

Even in his youth, Bobby Fischer had begun to wrap himself in legend. Winning the U.S. Championship at age 14, qualifying for the Candidates Tournament at age 15, scoring a perfect 11–0 in the 1963–64 U.S. Championship—these exploits were all mere preludes to his incredible play on the path to the World Championship in 1970–72. Who will ever again win 20 games in a row from the world's strongest grandmasters? Who will ever again score 18½–2½ in three Candidates Matches? Comparable deeds had never been done before, and it seems unlikely that Garry Kasparov or anybody else will match them in the future.

After his retirement in 1972, Fischer's most important legacy was the elevated chess consciousness of ordinary people everywhere. By fighting for good playing conditions and large prize funds, he helped to raise the public status of chess, especially in America. At the same time, his immature and unbalanced personal behavior made many dislike him, and convinced the man on the street—if he had needed any convincing—that chessplayers were brilliant but abnormal, a breed apart.

Fischer's extraordinary energy and complete devotion to the game were key ingredients of his success. Boris Spassky once described to a friend the effect of Fischer's psychic force:

It was the game at Siegen [1970 Olympiad], you know, the last game we played [before the 1972 match]. We were in the fifth hour. He was lost, ruined, not a chance! I knew it, he knew it. But he sat there—almost an



hour!—calculating, calculating, calculating! Inside, he was screaming. He was pale, like a dead man, but this force was going through him like millions of volts. I could feel it smashing and smashing at me across the board. Well, it had an effect, I can tell you that. Five or ten minutes—all right. But an hour! In the end, *I* was the one screaming inside. When you play Bobby, it is not a question if you win or lose. It is a question if you survive. (Quoted in Darrach, *Bobby Fischer vs. The Rest of the World*.)

However, Fischer was not quite the Nietzschean superman his legend makes him out to be. Despite his own frequent loud claims—starting in his teenage years—to be the best chessplayer in the world, he was unable to win the World Championship until 1972, when he was 29.

Let us examine these claims. Why didn't Fischer win the world championship earlier?

His first realistic opportunity came in the 1963 cycle; Fischer would have turned 20 in March of that year. He never got to play Botvinnik for the title because he played badly at the Curaçao Candidates Tournament in 1962, eliminating himself from the cycle by finishing fourth. Fischer's critics have often cited this failure as proof that he was not yet good enough to beat the world's best players, faulting especially the sterility of his opening play. We will never know how fair this criticism is, because he was obviously not in good form at Curaçao. He played well below the level of his +13=9 score at the Stockholm Interzonal, which he had won by 2½ points. After Curaçao he wrote a furious article in *Sports Illustrated*, "The Russians Have Fixed World Chess." Apparently he was bitterly disappointed and desperate to find a scapegoat. As Fischer's biographer Frank Brady has written: when things go wrong, Bobby Fischer is not the man to blame himself. History's current verdict: the Soviets normally colluded to some extent, but Fischer's failure at Curaçao was largely his own fault.

"He was pale, like a dead man, but this force was going through him like millions of volts. I could feel it smashing and smashing at me across the board."

Could Fischer have won the world championship in 1966? Strangely, Fischer chose not to compete in this cycle, although FIDE adopted the new format of elimination matches in preference to the former candidates tournament in part because of Fischer's complaints, which were widely echoed. Fischer was probably not Spassky's equal in 1966—indeed, he never won a game from him before the 1972 match—and perhaps not Petrosian's either, although we shall never know because Fischer refused to compete in the 1964 Amsterdam Interzonal. It is worth mentioning that Fischer played little during the 1964–66 period, while the Danish GM Bent Larsen was dazzling the chess world. Leaving the Russians aside for the moment, Fischer may not have been even the best Western player in the mid-1960s. It is impossible, of course, to leave the Russians aside. The English master Leonard Barden wrote in *The Guardian* in 1967,

Mental and emotional stability are at least as important in chess as in other fields; it is useless to claim greatness for a player who is too neurotic to show up at the board.

Starting with the Candidates' at Curaçao in 1962, where he claimed the Russians cheated during their games with him [not an accurate representation of Fischer's claims: he said that they played for draws against one another], he has had only mediocre success. Fischer reappeared in international tournaments at Havana 1965, and from then until Monaco 1967, he had played ten games against Russians, winning only one, with five defeats. It is ominous if a world title claimant can score only 30 percent in a series against his main rivals.

Fischer forfeited his opportunity to play for the title in 1969 due to his own mental and emotional instability. Mental and emotional stability are at least as important in chess as in other fields; it is useless to claim greatness for a player who is too neurotic to show up at the board. While leading the 1967 Tunis Interzonal, he dropped out after a series of acrimonious disputes.

Fischer apologists like to argue legalistically about Fischer's "rights" in cases like this, but they miss the forest for the trees. Throughout his career, Fischer has habitually argued over details, making large problems out of small matters. Behaving in a brusque, abusive, and generally unpleasant manner, he has insisted on everything that he thinks is due to himself without considering the imposition on other people. Many observers have suggested that Fischer enjoys the feeling of power he gets by making constant demands. (At Sveti Stefan, he required the organizers to raise the height of all the toilets in the hotel one inch. The psychologists would have a field day with that one.)

It is not surprising that when he actually has had a valid case to make, many people have been unwilling to listen. In a 1962 *Harper's* magazine article about Fischer, Ralph Ginzburg summed up the problem as diplomatically as anyone could: "I brought up a number of his most publicized controversies and asked Bobby for his side of the story. In each case he was able to present what sounded like perfectly reasonable explanations for the position he had taken. Whether or not he subsequently damaged his position by obstinacy and unwillingness to

compromise is another question ... It is this rigid adherence to principle—to the point of self-destruction—that seems to characterize almost all of his difficulties.” This observation was not only accurate in 1962, but prescient of Fischer’s later career.

In 1972 Fischer finally won the world championship by defeating Spassky in a match that had even more action off the board than on it. Fischer made trouble about the site, the prize fund, the organizers, and FIDE, and alienated many of his own friends and supporters by his bizarre personal behavior. The match was delayed while he dithered in New York, reluctant to fly to Iceland. If FIDE President Euwe had not postponed the start of the match, Spassky would have won by forfeit before it had even begun. More than once, Spassky and his team were on the verge of walking out. According to some sources, Spassky was actually ordered home by Pavlov, the Chairman of the Soviet Sport Committee, but courageously defied authority because he felt a sporting obligation to the chess world.

After losing the first game and forfeiting the second, Fischer refused to play the third game on the stage in the auditorium, even after all film cameras had been removed. Apparently he was disturbed by the *idea* of the non-existent cameras and was generally angry at the organizers. He insisted on playing away from the audience in an ill-furnished back room of the building, the infamous “ping-pong room.” If Spassky had refused to play in this room, as he had every right to do, Fischer would probably have forfeited another game and eventually the match. (FIDE President Euwe had already ruled by telegram that Fischer would lose the match if he did not show up to play the third and fourth games.) Surprisingly, Spassky agreed to play chess in the ping-pong room.

Not surprisingly, considering the psychological position of total control that Fischer had been allowed to establish, Spassky lost this game and went on to lose the match. Fischer had everybody in Iceland over a barrel: the Russians, who would look like cowards if they went home; the organizers, who had spent buckets of money on the match; and his own team of helpers, who had sweated blood to drag Fischer this far and invested years of their lives in the effort.

When we look back at the 1972 match and all of Fischer’s shenanigans, we wonder not why it took him so long, but how he ever became World Champion. We wonder why so many rules were bent or broken and so many social and ethical norms were ignored to accommodate him, and why so many worthy people devoted so much time and energy to the thankless task of promoting his erratic progress toward the title.

Let’s also consider the events of 1975, which I believe call for a fresh interpretation. Fischer tried to impose his conditions for the title match on the challenger, as if he were an old-time champion in the bad old days before FIDE took over in 1948. FIDE is not a perfect solution to the

“It is this rigid adherence to principle—to the point of self-destruction—that seems to characterize almost all of his difficulties.”

problems of organizing world chess, but modern chess under an international federation is preferable to the age of buccaneering world champions who reigned at their own pleasure, playing only when and whom they chose.

This is a heretical statement for an American, but I believe that Fischer might well have lost to Karpov in 1975. Karpov had recently defeated Spassky in their Candidates match by a very impressive 4–1 score, although his victory over Korchnoi in the Candidates final was narrow. (We must remember that Spassky was very strong in those days: he had won the 1973 Soviet Championship convincingly and had defeated Robert Byrne 3–0 in the Candidates quarterfinal match.)

In 1975, in contrast to Karpov, Fischer had not played in three years. The evidence indicates that he spent much of that time completely away from chess, involving himself in the Worldwide Church of God, a fundamentalist religious cult to which he apparently gave much of his 1972 prize money. Fischer had withdrawn from chess before, but never for so long and never so extremely. In his past comebacks he had always begun shakily. Looking at the evidence, can any objective person argue that Fischer would have had an easy time against Karpov, the strongest active player in the world, who was a thorough professional, in top form, totally focused on the 1975 match, and backed by the resources of the Soviet chess machine?

Despite his arrogance, Fischer must have had an inkling that Karpov would be trouble. Hence his absolute insistence on the Steinitz rules. We can easily imagine his reasoning (Brooklyn accent added for emphasis): *Sure, I'm gonna lose a few games at first. Can't be helped. But 10 games? Naaah.* Viewed in this light, many things become clearer, including Fischer's continued adherence to the Steinitz rules. As more time passed, the need to play himself into shape became ever more critical.

The Fischer myth not only obscures the reality of his sporting record, but hinders honest attempts to describe his playing style. He has been called a great attacking player and the most knowledgeable student of the openings ever (perhaps leaving out Kasparov, who benefits from team research and ChessBase).

The reality is somewhat different and deserves to be explained better. While Fischer has always been an extremely *aggressive* player, all-out for the win, his style is classical in the sense that he strives for clarity in the position. He will not usually take tactical risks, preferring to play rationally and coldbloodedly; his games are not known for irrational or speculative Tal-like eruptions. It can be illuminating to read Tal's notes to Fischer's games, in which Tal mentions various tactical avenues that Fischer might have taken but avoided in the interest of clarity and simplicity.

As for Fischer's openings, it may be true that he was the world's greatest specialist in such openings as the Poisoned Pawn and Ruy Lopez,

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and perhaps even in overall knowledge. However, while his 1972 match with Spassky proved Fischer's versatility, it did not clearly establish the success of his openings. David Levy writes charitably in *How Fischer Plays Chess*, "The psychological effect of switching openings so often, and choosing lines that he had never before played, was a masterpiece of judgment. Not only did Spassky's psyche have to survive the traumatic period before the match when nobody knew whether or not Fischer would actually come to Iceland, but it also had to recover from the surprise of playing a completely new opponent." Another interpretation of events is possible: Fischer was driven to seek refuge in a variety of lines, especially as Black, because he could not trust his own favorite variations. Spassky busted Fischer's Poisoned Pawn in game 11, and Fischer never dared trot out his favorite King's Indian Defense. Instead we saw Fischer playing Alekhine's Defense, the Pirc, and the Sicilian Kan against 1 e4, and a variety of defenses against 1 d4. The official Soviet view as stated by Vasily Panov in 64 was, "Spassky surpassed Fischer in opening preparation, but the American was much more energetic and precise in the middlegame."

What openings would Fischer have chosen against Karpov, that monster of quiet precision, in 1975? If Fischer ever seriously intended to play that match, which some people doubt, he must have been concerned about the state of his openings. Fischer with the black pieces would have had to shore up his own favorite variations or continue to rely upon confusing his opponent by the wide range of his repertoire. Karpov, on the other hand, was a great specialist of the Caro-Kann Defense, an opening that gave Fischer fits.

Let's jump ahead to 1992, a year of comebacks in the sports world. The tennis legend Bjorn Borg is trying to come back at age 35. At last check, he hadn't won a set against anybody. Swimming legend Mark Spitz tried to come back but failed to make the 1992 U. S. Olympic team.

Spitz is an interesting case because his era exactly parallels Fischer's. Fischer beat Spassky in 1972 and retired, while Spitz won seven gold medals in the 1972 Summer Olympics and retired. Everybody who remembers Fischer-Spassky 1972 also remembers Spitz's famous best-selling poster, displaying the tanned and grinning athlete in his swimsuit, standing with hands on slim hips, wearing all his gold medals around his neck. *If you've got it, flaunt it*, Spitz seems to be saying, which is apparently the reverse of Fischer's philosophy. Bobby Fischer and Mark Spitz appeared in facing full-page photos in *Life* magazine in 1972. They also appeared on the same Bob Hope show together in 1972. (Fischer's line as he loped on stage was, "There aren't any cameras around here, are there?")

We know what happened to Bjorn Borg and Mark Spitz in 1992. Bobby Fischer's return has been more lucrative, but how do we assess his sporting prospects?

We know what happened to Bjorn Borg and Mark Spitz in 1992. Bobby Fischer's return has been more lucrative, but how do we assess his sporting prospects?

Garry Kasparov is quoted in the latest issue of *New In Chess* as saying, "One of my worries is the destruction of the Fischer legend. It hasn't disappeared for me and I hope it hasn't disappeared for you, but it may disappear for young players like Kramnik and Lautier, who will say, 'What kind of chess is this? 1972? Was this a great player?' Because he is now playing the same as he was 20 years ago. Like Borg playing tennis with a wooden racket." Kasparov added, "Now he's someone from the past. He doesn't belong to our world. He's an alien." (Kasparov likes to demonize his potential opponents. Before his last match with Karpov, *The New York Times* quoted the world champion's bizarre characterization of Karpov as "a creature of darkness," who was "not even like a human being.")

Under pretense of showing concern for Fischer's legend, Kasparov damns him with faint praise. He also muddies the true issues. It is pure foolishness to assert that Fischer is "now playing the same as he was 20 years ago." As Mikhail Botvinnik said during the recent match, "This is not the Fischer we used to know, the Fischer who used to fascinate us with his play. He was a virtuoso of calculation. That Fischer is no more, nor can he be."

The image of Borg with his wooden racket is similarly false and misleading. Chess is not played with any equipment other than the human mind. Opening fashions may have changed in 20 years, but the basic ideas of chess have not. GM John Nunn said, "There are not many differences between chess today and chess 20 years ago. Some of the openings are different, but chess does not change much."

There are more tournaments and more good players today, but strong chessplayers are strong regardless of fashions. Fischer himself holds a similar view. When he published his own list in 1963 of the top 10 chessplayers of all time, he included Paul Morphy, writing "Morphy's natural talents would be more than sufficient for him to vanquish the best 20th-century players." (Fischer added significantly, "As is well-known, Morphy gave up the game in 1859. His disillusionment was more with chessplayers than with chess.") Similarly, I believe that Emanuel Lasker at his best would be dangerous to the top players in the world today. At New York 1924, the 55-year-old Lasker swept aside all the Hypermoderns and took first place (+13=6-1) ahead of the World Champion Capablanca. Nor can we doubt that Mikhail Botvinnik at his peak would also be very strong today. So would Fischer—perhaps even stronger than Kasparov, although we can never know.

Even today Fischer is only 49, certainly not too old to play top-flight chess. Lasker was six years older in 1924. Botvinnik was 49 when he recaptured the world championship from Tal in 1961. Korchnoi at 47, playing the best chess of his life, came within a game of beating Karpov for the title in 1978. And Smyslov played in the 1984 Candidates finals at age 63!

William Hartston, an international master and psychologist, has suggested that motivation is a more significant factor in chess strength than age.

William Hartston, an international master and psychologist, has suggested that for many people, motivation is a more significant factor in chess strength than age. It usually happens that older players have already achieved their goals or have at least reconciled themselves to a certain place in the chess scheme of things. Hence we note that many older players, with Spassky being a classic case, play with less ambition and declining practical results. In cases where motivation remains strong—as in the case of Lasker, who had fierce pride and may have needed the money in his later years; and Korchnoi, who defected from the Soviet Union and had a burning desire to wreak vengeance on its chess establishment—practical strength does not decline linearly with age. Sometimes it remains relatively constant for long periods, as Botvinnik's may have in the 1950s; sometimes it may even increase, as Korchnoi's seems to have in the 1970s.

The effect of Fischer's 20-year layoff is a unique imponderable, but one may reasonably conclude that he is neither too antiquated nor too old to play against today's best. He needs more practice and study, but according to Gligoric, his physical health and stamina are excellent. In the recent match with Spassky, Fischer took no time-outs. Unfortunately, there is the problem of his mental health. There can be no doubt that Robert Fischer's mind is under a cloud that has grown darker over many years.

It is a matter of debate whether or how much Fischer's evident mental illness affects his chess play. According to the famous and oft-quoted dictum of Reuben Fine, who was once a strong grandmaster and later became a leading psychoanalyst, "Psychosis does not materially affect chess ability." In other words, it doesn't matter how crazy you are—you can still play chess. As Jerry Sohl wrote in his humorous book *Underhanded Chess*, in the chapter "How to Play Against Weirdos":

Psychiatric literature is replete with classic cases of world champions and international grandmasters who exhibited bizarre, even psychotic behavior and still continued to win their games. So the next time you encounter strange behavior at the chess table remember that behavior *per se* has nothing to do with the game.

According to Sohl, one of his chess opponents was a young man with the unnerving habit of stating in a voice that dared denial: "I am the birthless and the deathless, the omnipotent, omniscient, ever glorious one. I am he! I am he!" This has essentially been Fischer's view of himself for at least 30 years, and in his glory days he had the stats to back it up.

Today it's a different story. The chess world recognizes Kasparov as a worthy world champion. Fischer may not agree, but Fischer will have to prove his point not with strong words but with strong chess moves. As Lasker once said, "On the chessboard the merciless fact, culminating in checkmate, contradicts the hypocrite."

However, even if Fischer is able to put aside his irrational and self-

According to Reuben Fine, "Psychosis does not materially affect chess ability." In other words, it doesn't matter how crazy you are—you can still play chess.

destructive personality when he sits at the chessboard, the problem—as always—is getting him to the chessboard. He has already set a number of absurd conditions for a match with Kasparov, including a demand that Kasparov pay Fischer for alleged pirate editions, by Kasparov's Soviet publisher, of Fischer's book *My 60 Memorable Games*. Such conditions all but guarantee that the match can never be held.

What are the practical chances that Fischer will mend his ways? He has just won the biggest money prize in the history of chess, which can only reinforce his megalomania. Even if the U. S. government somehow gets its hands on him, takes away all his money, and tosses him in jail for a spell, what then? He has already proved by voluntarily enduring years of isolation and poverty that he can't be budged by adversity. We also have the evidence of his *Pasadena Jailhouse* memoir that he is a willing martyr to his own strange causes.

Kasparov has reasons enough to be irritated with Fischer, of whom he also recently said, "Here sits this poor fellow with whom one cannot talk normally, and what's more he plays bad chess." But even when he plays bad chess, Fischer gets offers of millions of dollars for his matches, bad-mouthing Kasparov all the while, as Kasparov struggles to put together a budget for his own 1993 title match. What could be more absurd, and more frustrating for Kasparov?

Perhaps Kasparov's best chance for a good paycheck is a match with Fischer. However, it seems likely that this "alien" as Kasparov calls him, this exasperating man "from the past" who nevertheless has the audacity to live, breathe, and play chess in the present, will ultimately preserve his myth by avoiding a clash with reality as FIDE (and most of the world) sees it. Tortured in the jailhouse of his own mind, Fischer will continue to lash out at "Soviet communists," "World Jewry," and the "criminals who have ruined world chess." He will stridently assert his claim to the world championship while skirting a match with the man who has legitimately replaced him at the top.

The Fischer King

In a medieval romance by Chrétien de Troyes, the young knight Parzival meets a king crippled by a mysterious wound. He is called the Fisher King because he spends all of his time in a boat fishing, waiting for his wound to heal. The Fisher King keeps the Holy Grail in his enchanted castle. Thus we have the story's central paradox: although the Fisher King possesses the Holy Grail, it cannot heal him.

In the 1991 film *The Fisher King*, director Terry Gilliam created a modern version of the medieval tale. Gilliam's Fisher King, played by the puckish Robin Williams, is not physically but mentally defective. Formerly a college professor (perhaps an unlikely model of sanity), he suffered a shattering mental trauma when his wife was murdered before his eyes. Now he lives a mad but cheerful life on the streets of New York,

Fischer gets offers of millions of dollars for his matches, bad-mouthing Kasparov all the while, as Kasparov struggles to put together a budget for his own 1993 title match.



alternately nourishing and torturing himself with visions, and dreaming of finding the Holy Grail on the upper East Side. (In an odd congruence, the young Bobby Fischer told his interviewer Ginzburg that someday he wanted to have his own exclusive chess club, with “class”: “The Robert J. Fischer Chess Club. It’ll be in a part of the city that’s still decent, like the upper East Side.”)

In September 1992, four games into Fischer–Spassky II, William Nack’s article “The Fischer King” appeared in *Sports Illustrated*. The clever title was apparently inspired by last year’s movie. From whatever source, the title was certainly inspired. Sveti Stefan was an enchanting site for a chess match of mythic proportions, an island of astounding peace and natural beauty located only an hour’s drive from the vicious Balkan war. Like all fairy-tale castles, Sveti Stefan was a difficult and perilous place for real people to find.

And Robert James Fischer himself was indeed a grievously wounded “Fischer King.” Long ago he captured his Holy Grail. Now he was shut up in a medieval castle, besieged by real and imagined enemies, the self-styled ruler over an invisible kingdom of black-and-white abstractions.

Who will heal this Fischer King? ♣

Besieged by real and imagined enemies, Bobby Fischer is the self-styled ruler over an invisible kingdom of black-and-white abstractions.

ANALYSIS

Fischer–Keres, Bled 1961

Jonathan Yedidia

Amidst all the excitement generated by the return of Bobby Fischer to the world chess scene, and the attention lavished on the latest Fischer games, we should remember that there exists a vast treasure trove of practically unanalyzed “early” Fischer games. Aside from those treated by Fischer himself in his *My 60 Memorable Games*, remarkably few of his games, especially those from before 1970, have been studied seriously.

The Fischer student has at his disposal a choice of game collections, including the original descriptive notation *Bobby Fischer’s Chess Games* edited by Wade and O’Connell; the figurine algebraic notation *Fischer’s Chess Games* from Oxford University Press, which incorporates some light Informant-style notes from a variety of sources; in German, *Die Gesammelten Partien von Robert J. Fischer*, edited by Christiaan M. Bijl; and the latest and most complete, algebraic notation *Bobby Fischer, Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion*, edited by Lou Hays with very light annotations by John Hall. *Bobby Fischer: Profile of a Prodigy*, by Frank Brady, also includes 90 of his games with what could be termed “entertaining” annotations.

And it is certainly worthwhile to go back and take a closer look at these games, for as Raymond Keene points out in his introduction to *Fischer’s Chess Games*, “Fischer is one of the few players of whom it can be said that virtually every game in which he is involved is worthy of publi-

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cation and full of interest.” The game analyzed here, played against Keres in Bled 1961, is one example.

In 1931, Alexander Alekhine won an important international tournament in Bled, ahead of Bogolyubov and Nimzovich. Thirty years later, in 1961, Bled hosted the Alekhine Memorial tournament, which attracted so many of the world’s strongest grandmasters that it was hailed as the “tournament of the century.” The Soviet Union sent Tal, Keres, Petrosian, and Geller, while the United States was represented by Bisguier and Fischer. Other strong grandmasters included Darga, Donner, Gligoric, Ivkov, Matanovic, Najdorf, Olafsson, Pachman, Parma, Portisch, and Trifunovic.

Recently deposed World Champion Mikhail Tal showed that he had recovered his form after his defeat in the rematch against Botvinnik by capturing first place. The real sensation of the tournament, however, was the second-place finish of the eighteen-year-old Fischer, who was the only contestant who did not lose a game. Every game he played was an exciting struggle, and he would later include four of his victories (against Tal, Geller, Petrosian, and Trifunovic) and one of his draws (against Gligoric) in his *60 Memorable Games*. Gligoric was sufficiently impressed to declare that “Bobby is going to be world champion.”

The one Soviet who was barely able to survive with a draw against Fischer was the veteran Paul Keres, who was still at the height of his powers, and who ultimately tied for third place with Petrosian and Gligoric. Their game was played in the sixteenth round (out of nineteen), when Fischer was tied for the lead with Tal. It has not been seriously analyzed (at least in in any publication that is easily accessible to modern chessplayers), and while it was not error-free, it was certainly a hard-fought struggle worthy of both combatants.

The game features an opening that is still of great theoretical importance to the Two Knights variation of the Caro-Kann Defense, a middlegame with a strategic positional phase followed by a complicated and exciting tactical phase, and finally an instructive endgame.

FISCHER–KERES, BLED 1961

CARO-KANN DEFENSE B11

1 e4 c6

Keres probably used the Caro-Kann Defense, which was somewhat unusual in his repertoire, because, as he later wrote, he believed that Fischer’s “judgment of a variation ... seemed not to be quite correct.”

2 ♠c3 d5 3 ♠f3

Fischer once again resorts to his then-favorite Two Knights variation against the Caro-Kann, even though he had suffered two defeats with it against Keres in the 1959 Candidates tournament. In fact, Petrosian, Smyslov, Olafsson, and Benko also played the Caro-Kann against Fischer in that tournament, and every time, Fischer reliably responded with the

Two Knights. As he explains (in his annotations to his draw against Petrosian from that tournament), the purpose of this line is to exclude the Classical 4 ... ♖f5 variation. For example, after 3 ... dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗f5?! (4 ... ♗f6 or 4 ... ♗d7 are playable) 5 ♗g3 ♗g6? (5 ... ♗g4 6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♖f3 only gives White a small advantage) 6 h4 h6 7 ♗e5 ♗h7 8 ♖h5 g6 9 ♗c4 (also good is 9 ♖f3 ♗f6 10 ♖b3, winning material as in Lasker–Muller, Zurich 1934) e6 10 ♖e2, “Black has a terrible game” (Alekhine–Bruce, Plymouth 1938). Black can also fall into this trap through a transposition: 3 ... dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗h5 (after 5 ... ♗xf3, White again has a small advantage) 6 ♗g3 ♗g6? 7 h4!

3 ... ♗g4

In 1959, Olafsson tried 3 ... ♗f6?! against Fischer, and got a bad position after 4 e5 ♗e4 5 ♗e2 ♖b6 6 d4 c5 7 dxc5 ♖xc5 8 ♗ed4 ♗c6 9 ♗b5 a6?! 10 ♗xc6+ bxc6 11 0–0 ♖b6 12 e6! fxe6 13 ♗f4.

4 h3 ♗xf3

An important juncture, where Black must choose between giving up the two bishops by 4 ... ♗xf3 and entering the sharp complications of 4 ... ♗h5. Both possibilities are considered adequate, but in the 1959 Candidates tournament, Keres, Petrosian, and Benko all chose 4 ... ♗xf3, and only Smyslov dared 4 ... ♗h5. That game continued 5 exd5 cxd5 6 ♗b5+ ♗c6 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♗e5 ♖c8 9 d4 e6 10 h4?! (10 ♖e2, preventing f6, is the main line. The current theoretical verdict, based on lines which extend beyond the 25th move, is that Black can maintain the balance) f6 11 ♗xg6 hxg6 12 ♖d3 ♖f7 13 h5 gxh5 14 gxh5 ♗ge7, and Black gradually took over the initiative, although the game ended in a draw.

5 ♖xf3

Now that Fischer has gained his beloved advantage of the two bishops, the strategic aims of the next few moves are determined. White wants to open up the game and create pawn imbalances, so that his two bishops can be put to use. As we shall see, Fischer succeeds in these aims when Keres backs down from a challenge on the thirteenth move.

5 ... ♗f6

The alternative 5 ... e6 allows White to try the promising pawn sacrifice 6 d4 dxe4 7 ♗xe4 ♖xd4 8 ♗d3. Nevertheless, an adventurous player of Black could test Suetin’s suggestions of 8 ... ♗f6 9 ♗e3 ♖xb2!? or 8 ... ♗d7 9 ♗e3 ♖d5 10 0–0–0 ♖xa2!?

6 d4

Here Fischer varies from his earlier 6 d3, which usually results in a slower maneuvering battle. He was apparently dissatisfied with the result of the opening of this game, for he later labeled 6 d4 as “inferior” and returned to 6 d3 in his game against Cagan in Israel, 1968. The idea of 6 d4 is to try to open the game up for the two bishops, but White must pay the price of either a pawn or some tempi.

6 ... dxe4 7 ♖e3 (D 1)

The pawn sacrifice 7 ♗xe4?! is now dubious because of 7 ... ♖xd4 8

Qd3 Qbd7! threatening Qe5 (Fischer).

7 ... Qbd7

Black can try to hang onto his pawn with 7 ... Qa5 , but after 8 Qd2 Qf5 , White has a choice between recovering the pawn by 9 g4 Qf3 (9 ... Qg6? 10 Qg2 with advantage for White, Kopleva–Kupchik, 1960) 10 Bg1 followed by Qg2 or playing for an attack with 9 0-0-0 e6 10 f3!? exf3 11 g4 Qa5 12 Qc4 as in Mesing–Nemet, Yugoslavia, 1967.

7 ... Qd5 also plays into White's hands: 8 Qxe4 Qxc3 9 bxc3 Qd7 10 Bb1 Qc8 11 c4 e6 12 Qd3 Qe7 13 0-0 and White is better (Boleslavsky).

8 Qxe4 Qxe4

Suetin suggests 8 ... e5 , and claims that after 9 Qxf6+ Qxf6 10 f4!? Qxf4 11 Qxf4 exf4 12 Qxf4 Qb6 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 "Black has no trouble," but White's game looks preferable. Keres's plan is straightforward and good.

9 Qxe4 Qf6 10 Qd3 Qd5!

This centralization of the queen is very strong, as it strengthens Black's control of a complex of important light and central squares, and disrupts White's development. Fischer cuts off his discussion of this game in his notes to the 1959 Petrosian game by judging this position as equal, which seems like a fair evaluation.

Other moves would give White at least a slight advantage. For example: 10 ... e6 11 Qe2 Qe7 12 0-0 0-0 with a white edge (Boleslavsky) or 10 ... Qb6 11 Qe2 e6 12 0-0 Qe7 13 c4 Qd8 14 Qe3 c5 15 Bfd1 0-0 16 Qb3 and White had a strong initiative in Mesing–Shamkovich, Timisoara, 1972. If 10 ... Qd6 11 Qe2 e5!? White has the strong reply 12 Qe3!

11 c4

The only way to make progress. The ending after 11 Qb3 0-0-0 12 Qxd5 cxd5 is equal.

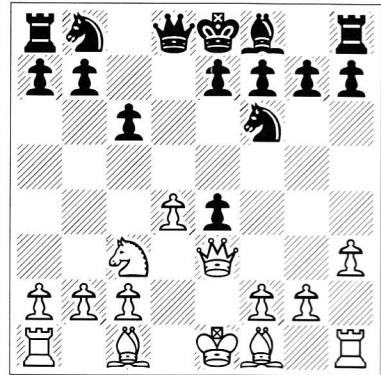
11 ... Qd6 12 Qe2 e5 13 d5!? (D 2)

Now 13 Qe3 runs into 13 ... Qb4+! , while 13 dxe5 Qxe5 essentially concedes equality. Fischer instead offers a dangerous-looking pawn sacrifice which Keres should have accepted.

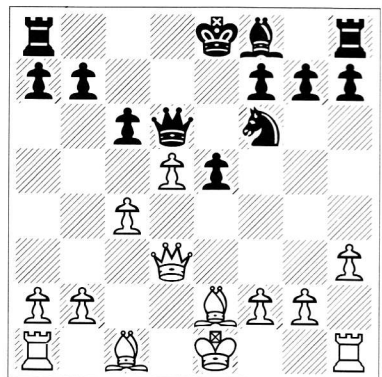
13 ... e4!

After 13 ... cxd5! 14 cxd5 Qxd5 15 Qxd5 Qxd5 16 Qb5+ Qe7 17 0-0 , White has enough compensation for the pawn so that he should not lose, but not enough for any advantage. After Keres's move, however, White has a small but clear advantage, with the two bishops and a queenside pawn majority.

14 Qc2 Qe7



1 ■ Fischer–Keres, after 7 Qe3



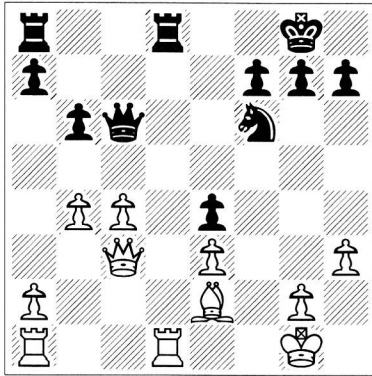
2 ■ Fischer–Keres, after 13 d5

Of course, taking the pawn now is suicidal: 14 ... cxd5? 15 exd5 ♖xd5? (15 ... ♗e7 16 ♗b5+ ♖f8 17 0-0 is also good for White) 16 ♖a4+.

15 dxc6 ♖xc6 16 0-0-0 17 ♗e3 ♗c5 18 ♖c3 b6 19 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 20 b4 ♗xe3

Both sides have been making reasonable, straightforward moves. Now Fischer makes a committal decision to strengthen his control of the center, but at the cost of weakening his king's position.

21 fxe3!? (D 3) ♖c7 22 ♖d4



3 ■ Fischer-Keres, after 21 fxe3

The logical followup, trying to gain control of the d-file.

22 ... a5?!

Keres is seeking active counterplay down the a-file, but this move weakens his b-pawn too much. Better is 22 ... ♖xd4 23 exd4 ♗d5 24 ♖e1 (24 ♖d2 e3!) ♗f4 with reasonable play. Of course, White can play 22 ... ♖xd4 23 ♖xd4 ♖d8 24 ♖c3, but if Fischer wanted that position, he could have had it with an extra tempo by playing 22 ♖d8+.

23 a3 axb4 24 axb4 h5!?

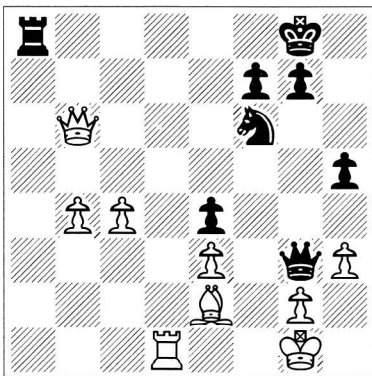
Certainly 24 ... ♖xa1+ 25 ♖xa1 ♖xd4 26 ♖xd4 (26 exd4!? h5 is obscure, but it seems that Black has sufficient counterplay with his e-pawn) is to be considered, although White would have any chances that

exist because of the two weaknesses on b6 and e4. Keres prefers a position where he has some offensive possibilities.

25 ♖ad1 ♖xd4 26 ♖xd4! ♖g3!?

With his last few moves, Keres has followed up on his double-edged plan of attacking White's weakened king-side. Now he is fully consistent and jettisons a pawn. Since the tactics that follow seem to win for White, his decision can be questioned. Nevertheless passive defense with a move like 26 ... ♖c6 or 26 ... ♖c8 is highly unpalatable. White could maneuver against Black's pawn weaknesses and Black would have few or no counterchances. If Black wanted to defend passively, he should have exchanged off both rooks when he had the chance two moves ago.

27 ♖xb6 (D 4) ♖a2



4 ■ Fischer-Keres, after 27 ♖xb6

Over the course of the next few moves, Keres must decide how to prosecute his counterattack. His two basic options are to aim for ♖a3, ♖xe3, and ♖e1 or to try to activate his knight by h4, ♗h5, and ♗g3. He begins by correctly choosing the latter plan, but then he could have switched over to the former plan when given a good opportunity. Move order and the

exact placement of the pieces are very important for the next few moves, as the variations can be decided by a single tempo. Here Keres forces back the white bishop to f1 and rejects the immediate 27 ... ♖a3 because of 28 ♖c5! ♖x3 29 ♖d8+ ♖h7 30 ♖f5+ ♖g6 31 ♖xg6+ ♖xg6 32 ♖f2, when White has a big advantage. This response to the ♖a3, ♖x3 plan is a recurrent theme.

28 ♖f1 h4

Keres tries to activate his knight via h5, while solidifying his control of g3 for possible perpetuals. If he checked first with 28 ... ♖f2+ to force White's king to the inferior square h1 (because 29 ♖h2 ♖g4+ draws), then 29 ♖h1 h4 30 ♖b8+ ♖h7 31 ♖e5! would cross him up, as 31 ... ♖x3 loses to 32 ♖f5+ ♖h6 33 ♖d8, while 31 ... ♖a3 meets 32 c5 ♖x3 33 c6 ♖xh3+ (33 ... ♖e1 similarly loses after an exchange of rooks and ♖f5+) 34 g×h3 ♖f3+ 35 ♖g1 ♖x3 36 ♖f5+ ♖ any 37 c7 and wins. (The desperate 28 ... ♖g4 also fails after 29 ♖d8+ ♖h7 30 h×g4 f6 31 ♖d6.)

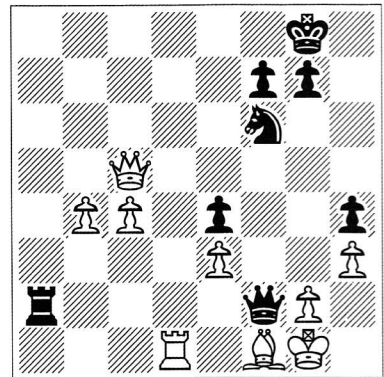
29 ♖c5 ♖f2+ (D 5)

At first sight, 29 ... g6?? looks attractive, as it prepares ♖h5 while maintaining the black queen's guard over e5, but White can simply refute it with 30 ♖d8+ ♖h7 31 ♖f8, and there are no perpetuals (31 ... ♖f2+ 32 ♖h2 ♖g3+ 33 ♖h1; 31 ... ♖xg2+ 32 ♖xg2 ♖e1+ 33 ♖f1 ♖g3+ 34 ♖h1 ♖f3+ 35 ♖g2; or 31 ... ♖xg2+ 32 ♖xg2 ♖x3+ 33 ♖f1 ♖c1+ 34 ♖f2 ♖c2+ 35 ♖g1 ♖c1+ 36 ♖f1). Keres's move forces Fischer to decide now whether his king belongs on h2 or h1.

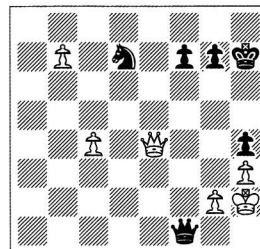
30 ♖h1?

Fischer makes the wrong choice, and spoils his chance for a well-played victory. The king should be on h2, so that when Black plays ♖xh1, it is not check. Thus, 30 ♖h2! prevents the defense that Keres uses in the game, as again 30 ... g6?? is met with 31 ♖d8+ ♖h7 32 ♖f8, whereas 30 ... ♖h7?, preparing 31 ... g6, is much too slow: 31 b5 g6 32 ♖g5! ♖h5 33 b6, and Black is lost.

If, after 30 ♖h2! Black tries 30 ... ♖a3, then 31 b5 ♖x3 32 ♖e5! (not 32 ♖c8+? ♖h7 33 b6 ♖b3 34 b7 ♖f4+ when Black is fine) ♖e1 (What else? If 32 ... ♖b3 33 c5 and the pawns roll while White's queen defends everything from e5) 33 ♖x3 ♖x3 34 b6! ♖x3 35 b7 ♖d7 36 ♖e8+ ♖h7 37 ♖x3+! (D 6) and now 37 ... f5 38 ♖xh4+ ♖g6 39 ♖d4!; 37 ... ♖g8 38 ♖e8+ ♖h7 39 ♖x3+; and 37 ... g6 38 ♖xh4+ ♖g8 39 ♖d8+ ♖h7 40 ♖x3+ all ultimately lose for Black when his checks run out.



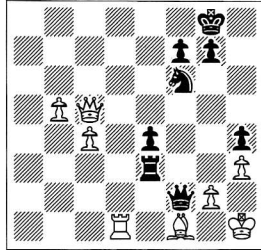
5 □ Fischer-Keres, after 29 ... ♖f2+



6 ■ Analysis

Finally, if 30 ... ♖g3+ 31 ♔h1 ♖a3 32 b5 ♖x3 33 ♗c8! ♔h7 34 ♗f5+ ♗g6 35 ♗xg6+ ♔xg6 36 c5 and White's pawns should decide.

30 ... g6



7 □

Analysis

Keres is perhaps “too consistent.” He could have switched back to the ♖a3, ♖x3 plan now that his queen is guarding f5 and White’s king is misplaced. After 30 ... ♖a3! 31 b5 ♖x3 (**D 7**), White has to be very careful, or he might even lose. Some possibilities:

a) 32 ♗c8+? ♔h7 33 b6 ♔h5! and Black wins; i.e. 34 b7 ♔g3+ 35 ♔h2 ♖e1! 36 b8/♗ ♔xfl+ 37 ♔h1 ♔g3+ 38 ♔h2 ♗g1 mate.

b) 32 b6 ♖xh3+ 33 g×h3 ♗xc5 34 ♖d8+ (34 b7? ♗b6) ♔h7 35 b7 ♗f2 36 ♖g2 is a draw, e.g. 36 ... ♗e1+ 37 ♔h2 ♗g3+ 38 ♔g1 ♗e1+ 39 ♖fl ♗e3+ 40 ♔h1 ♗f2! (this variation was suggested by Patrick Wolff).

c) 32 ♗e5 ♖e1 33 ♖x3! ♗x3! 34 ♔g1 e3 35 b6 ♗f2+ 36 ♔h2 ♗xfl 37 b7 ♔d7 38 ♗x3! (38 ♗e8+ ♔h7 39 ♗xd7 ♗f4+ with perpetual check) and now Black can either defend with 38 ... ♗f6 39 b8/♗+ (39 ♗e8+ ♔h7 40 ♗xd7 ♗e5+ draw or 39 c5 ♗d8!) ♔xb8 40 ♗e8+ ♔h7 41 ♗xb8 ♗d4! 42 ♗c7 ♔g6 (Wolff) or even try 38 ... ♔f8! when 39 c5 runs into ♗b5!, while 39 ♗g5 can be met by 39 ... ♔e8 with the idea of 40 ♗xh4 ♗b1 41 ♗h8+ ♔f8 or by 39 ... ♗e1 with the possible continuations 40 ♗d8+ ♗e8 41 ♗xd7 ♗e5+ or 40 c5 ♗g3+! 41 ♗xg3 h×g3+ 42 ♔xg3 ♔b8.

Of course there are other possibilities, but Black’s threats fully balance White’s after 30 ... ♖a3!

31 ♗e5!

Simultaneously paralyzing the knight, tying down Black’s queen, and improving the placement of White’s own queen.

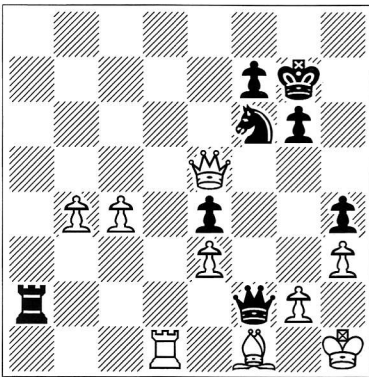
31 ... ♔g7 (D 8)

Black protects his knight to free his queen. Also possible is 31 ... ♔h7!, which aims for ♔h5, and forces 32 ♗f4 ♗xfl 33 exf4, when Black can probably hold by continuing with 33 ... ♔h5! as discussed in the next note with the king on g7. Keres may have decided against this possibility because he most feared 32 ♗f4!?

even after 31 ... ♔g7; and after the exchange of queens, the king is somewhat better placed on g7 than h7, as it defends the f7 pawn and is one step closer to the queenside.

32 c5

32 ♗f4!? is an interesting alternative, but Black can probably hold a draw with correct play. Avoiding the exchange of queens by 32 ... ♗b2 33 b5 just leaves Black with a bad game, so 32 ... ♗xfl 33 exf4, and then:



8 □

Fischer-Keres, after 31 ... ♔g7

a) 33 ... e3? fails after 34 ♖e1 (34 ♙d3? ♜d2! 35 ♜xd2 exd2 36 ♙c2 ♜f8! 37 ♜g1 ♗e4 38 ♜f1 ♗c3) ♗e4 35 ♜g1 (not 35 ♜xe3? ♗g3+ 36 ♜g1 ♖a1 37 ♖f3 ♜f6 and Black's king arrives in time to handle the queen-side pawns) ♗g3 36 ♙d3 ♖a3 (otherwise White wins the e-pawn for nothing) 37 ♜xe3 ♗f5 38 ♜f2 ♗xe3 39 ♜xe3 and White has a big advantage.

b) After the stronger 33 ... ♗h5!, Black seems to have sufficient defensive resources. For example, 34 b5 e3! 35 b6!? ♗g3+! (not 35 ... e2? 36 ♙e2 ♗g3+ 37 ♜h2 ♗xe2 38 c5 and Black is hard-pressed to stop the pawns, e.g. 38 ... ♖b2 39 ♜d7 ♗xf4 40 b7 ♗e6 41 c6 [threatening ♖e7] ♜f8 [41 ... ♗c5 42 c7 ♖xb7 43 ♖xf7+; 41 ... ♜f6 42 ♜d6] 42 ♜d6 ♗c7 43 ♜d8+ ♜g7 44 b8/♙) 36 ♜h2 ♗xf1+! 37 ♖xf1 ♖b2 38 c5 (38 ♖e1 ♖xb6 39 ♖xe3 ♜f6 is a drawn rook ending) ♖b5 39 ♖c1 e2, when 40 c6 is met by 40 ... ♖xb6 41 c7 ♖c6. The same idea also works if White pushes his c-pawn instead of the b-pawn. White's best chance to mix it up is probably 34 c5 e3 35 ♙b5!?! but after 35 ... ♗xf4 (**D 9**) Black is probably OK.

Other possibilities for White can be dismissed: Passive defense of the e-pawn by 32 ♜c3?! is met by 32 ... g5, when Black has sufficient counterplay through his threat of 33 ... g4 and 34 ... h3, while 32 b5 transposes into the next note after 32 ... ♜xe3 33 c5.

32 ... ♜xe3 33 c6

Pushing the b-pawn does not work: 33 b5 ♖c2 34 b6 (34 c6 transposes to the game) ♖xc5 and the queen is forced onto a worse square. For example 35 ♜d6 ♗e8 36 ♜e7 ♖c1 37 ♖xc1 ♜xc1 38 ♜e5+ f6 or 35 ♜a1 (35 ♜b2 ♖c8) ♖c8 36 b7 ♖b8 37 ♜a8 ♜f4 and Black successfully blockades the b-pawn.

33 ... ♖c2 34 b5

34 c7? ♜b6! 35 ♜d6 ♜f2 backfires for White.

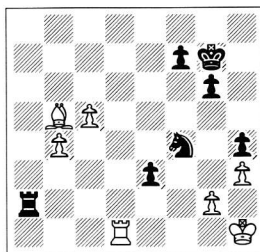
34 ... ♖c1 35 ♖xc1

34 ♜d6? is met by 34 ... ♗h5. Black's active defense seems to be coming just in time.

35 ... ♜xc1 36 ♜g1 e3 (**D 10**) 37 c7?!

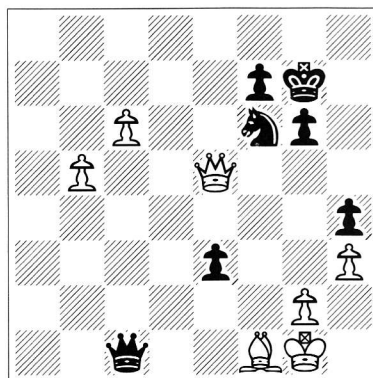
37 b6! is more clever. After 37 ... ♜xc6 (37 ... e2? is pointless: 38 ♜xe2 ♜xc6 39 ♜b2 and Black has given up the e-pawn for nothing) White has two tries:

a) 38 ♜c7?! is tricky, but is nicely met by 38 ... ♜d7, and now 39 ♙e2 (39 ♙c4 ♜d1+ 40 ♜h2 e2 41 ♜xf7+ ♜h6 42 ♙xe2 ♜d6+!; 39 ♜a7? ♜d4; best is backing up with 39 ♜e5! [suggested by Mark Dvoretzky] and Black does not seem to have anything



9 □

Analysis



10 □

Fischer-Keres, after 36 ... e3

better than repeating positions with 39 ... ♖c6) 39 ... ♗d2! is OK for Black after the following alternatives:

a1) 40 ♖b5, 40 ♖a6, or 40 ♖f3 e2 41 ♖xe2 ♗xe2 42 b7 ♘d7!, while 40 ♖c4 is met by the similar 40 ... ♗f2+ 41 ♖h2 e2 42 ♖xe2 (42 ♗xf7+ ♖h6 43 ♖xe2 ♗xb6) ♗xe2 43 b7 ♘d7.

a2) 40 b7? ♗xe2 41 b8/♗ ♗f2+ 42 ♖h2 e2 43 ♗cc8 ♗g3+ and Black wins.

a3) 40 ♖f1? ♘e4! 41 b7 (41 ♗e5+ f6 and the knight is taboo) ♘g3+ 42 ♗xg3 hxg3 43 b8/♗ ♗c1+ 44 ♖d1 ♗xd1 mate.

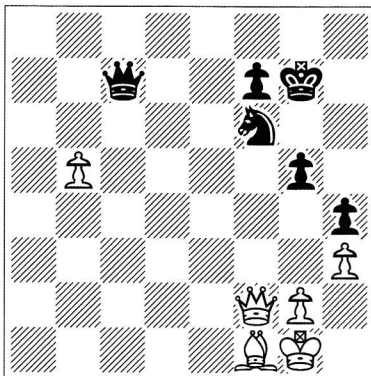
b) 38 ♗b2! (Wolff) and now 38 ... ♗b7 is hopeless for Black after 39 ♖e2 g5 40 ♖f3 ♗b8 41 b7 ♖g6 42 ♗c2+ ♖g7 43 ♗c8, so Black's best chance is 38 ... ♖h7 (or 38 ... ♖h6) 39 b7 ♘d7 40 b8/♗ ♘xb8 41 ♗xb8 and White has good winning chances, although there are certainly many problems left to overcome.

37 ... e2 38 ♗xe2 ♗xc7 39 ♗f2 g5 (D 11)

Safer than the counterattacking 39 ... ♗e5?!, which immediately centralizes the queen, but at the cost of an important pawn. 40 b6 g5 transposes to the game, but White can try 40 ♗xh4 g5! 41 ♗c4! (41 ♗f2 g4! 42 hxg4 ♘xg4 43 ♗h4 f5 draws) ♗e3+ 42 ♖h2 g4 43 ♗d3 and the issue is still not completely clear.

40 b6?!

This makes it easy for Keres to set up a fortress, based on the queen at e5 and the knight on b8. This is the key idea in the position: Even if the white pawn arrives at b7, if Black can position his knight on d7 or b8 and his queen on d6 or e5, while holding onto his



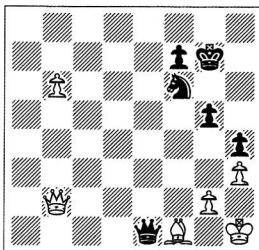
11 □

Fischer-Keres, after 39 ... g5

kingside pawns, he will draw. White's only way to proceed against the fortress will be to attack with both queen and bishop against Black's king, but after any deep foray by the queen, he will be exposed to a perpetual check. The position is drawn in any case, but Fischer could have posed more problems for Keres with either 40 ♗d4! or 40 ♗e3!?, maintaining control of both b6 and e5, while making threats against the kingside.

After 40 ♗d4!?, Black needs to find the defense 40 ... ♗d7! 41 ♗b2 (41 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 can be held easily by Black; while 41 ♗e5 is met by 41

... ♗d5) ♗e6! (threatening to set up a blockade on b6; trying to set up a ♗d6, ♘b8 fortress by 41 ... ♗d6 or 41 ... ♖g6 fails after 41 ... ♗d6 [♖g6] 42 b6 ♖g6 [♗d6] 43 ♗c2+ ♖g7 44 ♗c7 ♗d4+ [44 ... ♗d7 45 ♖e2 followed by ♖f3 and ♖c6] 45 ♖h2 ♘d5 46 ♗d6 and Black's fortress is broken.) 42 b6 ♗e3+ 43 ♖h1 (43 ♗f2 ♗e5 transposes to the game) ♗e1 (D 12) and now 44 ♗e2 ♗xe2 45 ♖xe2 leads to a drawn endgame after 45 ...



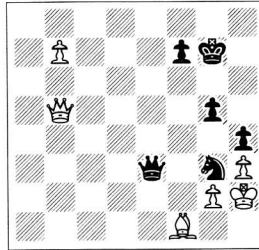
12 □

Analysis

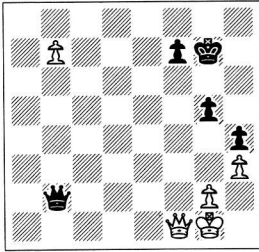
♠d7 46 ♜b7 ♜f5 (Black can maintain a blockade on both sides of the board) while after 44 ♜b5!?

♠e4 45 ♜b7 (45 ♜e5+ ♜f6! 46 ♜e7+ ♜g6 47 ♜h2 ♜g3+ draws) ♠g3+ 46 ♜g1 ♜e3+ (46 ... ♠xf1? 50 ♜xg5+! picks off a pawn) 47 ♜h2

(D 13) ♠xf1+ (47 ... ♜c1?? backfires after 48 ♜e5+ [not 48 ♜b8/♜?? ♠xf1+ 49 ♜g1 ♠g3+ 50 ♜f2 ♠d2+ 51 ♜f3 ♜c3+ 52 ♜g4 ♜f5+ 53



♜xg5 ♜f6+ with a **13 ■ Analysis**



14 □ Analysis

perpetual] ♜f6 49 ♜e7+ ♜g6 50 ♠d3+ ♜f5 51 ♜e6+ ♜g7 52 ♜e5+ ♜f7 53 ♠c4+! ♜g6 54 ♜e6+ ♜g7 55 ♜f7+ ♜h6 56 ♜f6+ ♜h7 57 ♠g8+ 48 ♜xf1 ♜e5+ 49 ♜g1 (or ♜h1) ♜b2 **(D 14)**, and Black draws as White's king is cooped up in a pawn formation that favors a perpetual. For example, 50 ♜f5 ♜c1+ 51 ♜f2 ♜b2+ 52 ♜e3 (the entire h1-a8 diagonal is mined) ♜b3+ 53 ♠d4 ♜b4+.

After 40 ♜e3!?, Black must be careful not to fall for 40 ... ♜g3? 41 ♜d4! when he is tied up, but should instead should simply respond with 40 ... ♜h6! Then after 41 ♜d4 ♠d7! or 41 ♜b6 ♜d6, White cannot break through.

40 ... ♜e5! 41 ♜b7 ♠d7 42 ♜d2 ♠b8 (D 15)

This is given as example #1562 in the queen endings volume of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings* and is evaluated as a draw, with the rest of the game given as the "analysis." In fact, there is not much else to say. Black has established a nice "dynamic fortress."

43 ♠e2 ♜f6 44 ♠f3 ♜e6 45 ♠g4+ ♜f5 46 ♠d1 ♜f6 47 ♜d8+ ♜g6 48 ♜g8+ ♜h6

48 ... ♜f6?? 49 ♜h8+ ♜e6 50 ♠b3+.

49 ♜f8+ ♜g6 50 ♜b4 ♠c6 51 ♜d2 ♠d8!

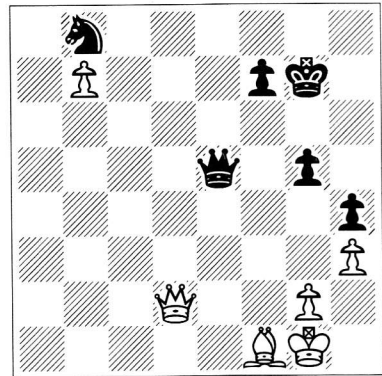
Black seizes the opportunity to simplify.

52 ♠f3 ♠xb7 53 ♠xb7 ♜a1+ 54 ♜h2

54 ♜f2 ♜a7+.

54 ... ♜e5+ Draw

A fair conclusion to a hard-fought game. ♠



15 □ Fischer-Keres, after 42 ... ♠b8

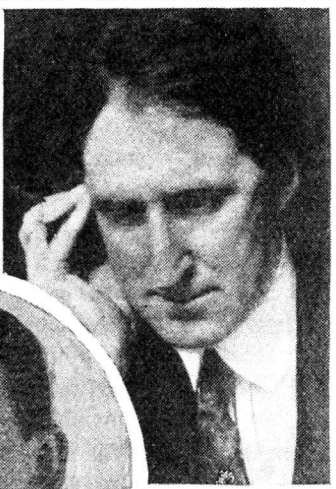
The Sextet of Grand Masters

New York International Chess Tournament

February 19. to March 19, 1927.



Aron Nimzowitch
~Denmark~



Frank J.
Marshall
~United
States~



Dr. Alexander
Alekhine
~France~



Rudolf Spielmann
~Austria



Dr. Milan Vidmar
~Jugoslavia



Jose R.
Capablanca
~Cuba

New York 1927

Documentary Evidence Answers Lingering Questions

Hanon W. Russell

The chess tournament held at the Hotel Manhattan Square in New York City from 19 February to 22 March 1927 has taken its place as one of the most famous of all time. In those days, the world in general and the United States in particular was experiencing a financial boom. It would be over two years before that bubble would burst.

In the chess world, the great Cuban Jose Raul Capablanca appeared virtually invincible. Since winning the championship from Emanuel Lasker in 1921, he had posted a record of 34 wins, 26 draws and only three losses in four international tournaments—a 75% winning percentage against the strongest opposition. He was also the most popular player in the world. There was no one in sight (or so it was thought) to challenge his supremacy in the near future.

With documentary evidence from the Russell Collection, this article will address three major areas of interest about the legendary New York 1927 tournament: its basic organization and financial arrangements; the popular misconception that the tournament was a “candidates tournament,” (the idea that the winner, or runner-up if Capablanca won, would be entitled to a championship match with Capablanca); and the reason why Lasker did not play.

Copyright © 1992 Hanon W. Russell. All rights reserved. *Hanon W. Russell publishes the International Chess Calendar. He is also known for his translations from Russian into English, including Tal's account of the 1960 world championship match, and for the Russell Collection, the largest private collection of historical chess documentation in the world. He lives in Milford, CT.*

Organization

On 25 October 1926, at 5 PM, at the Hotel Ansonia in New York, encouraged by tournament organizer extraordinaire Norbert Lederer, six of the most influential men in American chess met with the world champion to discuss holding an international chess tournament in New York City. Lederer had been the principal organizer of the great New York 1924 tournament, won by Lasker ahead of Capablanca. Julius Finn, Albert Hallgarten, Arthur Meyer, and Leonard Meyer had been instrumental in creating and organizing an American chess federation. Hermann Helms was publisher of the *American Chess Bulletin*, the major U. S. chess magazine of the time.

As the minutes state, "It was decided after discussion to try to organize and finance a Chess Tournament, to be called New York International Grand Masters Tournament 1927, to be held in New York City in March, 1927" (item #891 in the Russell Collection). The memory of the success of the powerful New York 1924 event was still fresh in the minds of the organizers, particularly Lederer, and they were eager to put together a tournament that would have at least as much stature in the eyes of the chess public.

The reigning world champion was on the committee, and efforts were made to attract the strongest players possible. The initial group of six invitees consisted of Capablanca, Alekhine, Bogolyubov, Nimzovich, Vidmar, and Marshall. If any of these players should not be able to participate, Spielmann, Tartakower, and Reti were to be considered. At least three other players were worthy of consideration. One of them, the Hungarian Geza Maroczy, was to be the tournament's chief arbiter. Max Euwe of The Netherlands was not considered; it is likely that his true strength was not yet realized by the organizers or even by the other players. Finally there was the immediate past world champion Emanuel Lasker, who had won the great New York tournament just three years earlier. Why he did not play will be discussed later in this article.

Finances

Out of the approximately \$12,000 budget for the tournament, Capablanca would receive a \$2,000 retainer. This was in keeping with Capablanca's usual practice of insisting on an appearance fee. (He had received \$1,500 as a fee for playing in the New York 1924 tournament.) In today's dollars, these fees were substantial.

Two days after the committee's meeting, Lederer reported the sum and substance of the meeting to Maurice Kuhn in Chicago. Kuhn headed the fledgling National Chess Federation and was invited to be on the Honorary Committee (Russell Collection #483). He accepted. Within the next two weeks, solicitations went out from Lederer and others seeking funds. Among those who responded favorably to this request was Lessing J. Rosenwald.

The organizers were eager to put together a tournament that would have at least as much stature as New York 1924 in the eyes of the chess public.

Rosenwald's name may still be familiar to American chessplayers. A high-ranking executive of the powerhouse American retailer Sears, Roebuck and Company, then based in Philadelphia, he donated thousands of dollars over the years to promoting chess in the United States. After his death, the Rosenwald Memorial tournaments served for several years as *de facto* U. S. Championship tournaments. In the 1956 Rosenwald Memorial, a youngster by the name of Bobby Fischer, although finishing with a minus score, played what Hans Kmoch would dub "The Game of Century" against Donald Byrne. The following year the Rosenwald tournament formally became the U. S. Championship.

Lederer was well aware of Rosenwald's interest in sponsoring chess and took time to write more than just a short request for money. After recounting the details of planning to that date, Lederer finished with "I sincerely hope that you will not feel that I am imposing on your good nature if I ask your assistance and hope to receive your acceptance at your earliest convenience" (Russell Collection #1097). In correspondence dated 17 November 1926 (on Sears, Roebuck letterhead), Lessing Rosenwald donated \$500 to the funding of the tournament (Russell Collection #1096).

By this time fundraising was in full swing. Enough money had been raised to warrant opening a separate bank account for the tournament. The minutes of the meeting for 23 November 1926 (Russell Collection #890) indicate that negotiations were being held with the Hotel Manhattan Square and the Hotel Alamac; the latter had been the site of the New York 1924 tournament.

Bogolyubov's Response

By the end of November 1926, the tournament committee was beginning to receive replies from the players whom they had contacted. For the most part, the players were enthusiastic about the tournament. Richard Reti, for example, knew that he was not one of the invitees, but wrote in a letter dated 29 November 1926 (Russell Collection #1050) that he would be attending the tournament as a journalist and would like to play even if invited at the last minute. Vidmar accepted by telegram (Russell Collection #1286), as did two of the alternates, Spielmann (Russell Collection #1060) and Tartakower (Russell Collection #1194).

Ukrainian Grandmaster Yefim Bogolyubov was the only one of the six original invitees who was not enthusiastic about playing. His reply to the invitation, by letter of 9 December 1926 addressed to Capablanca (Russell Collection #78), is most interesting and reads in full:

Dear Mr. Capablanca:

I have just received your kind letter of November 30th, and I thank you for your information. I notice you and the tournament committee have entirely wrong ideas about the matter.

The prizes in the New York Tournament of 1927 appear to me not very large. Even the sum of \$2,000 as a first prize is insufficient to induce

**Ukrainian
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Yefim Bogolyubov
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of the six original
invitees who was
not enthusiastic
about playing.**

me to put forth my best efforts. The reason is that from this money I could live at the most three quarters of a year with my family, although I have my own house.

It will not pay me to go to New York in inclement weather and to run the certain risk of not winning the first prize, but to have to content myself perhaps with second or third prize. As much as these prizes amount to, I can earn in Europe during the same time without any effort or risk.

In looking over the list of masters invited, I arrived at the conviction that this list is very disadvantageous for me. Apart from the fact that, for instance, Niemzowitsch is very hostile to me and lately has not missed any opportunity to harm me. I cannot expect fair treatment at the hand of Alekhine, Spielmann or Vidmar. Besides, I must say, as this matter has been mentioned by Mr. Lederer, that if Alekhine and Niemzowitsch play without retainer, I consider this self-confident. Alekhine, although he is an exceptionally successful master, has never had results even approaching my result in Moscow in 1925. If he later succeeds in arranging a championship match with you and succeeds in winning the same, which I consider highly unlikely, he can then demand even bigger amounts. For the time being, let us rather calculate with realities.

As far as Niemzowitsch is concerned, you know as well as I do that he, notwithstanding his fairly good results, is hardly a real grandmaster, so that I am really surprised that people make such a ridiculous fuss over him of late.

You will understand me. I shall be one of the participants who risks most in this tournament (you as champion have no risk at all) and I shall play for nothing and give the others a cheap opportunity to come ahead of me. No, I am not as altruistic as all that."

Now, to talk about the matter itself: I have already given in the first letter my MINIMUM conditions and am surprised that people are taking such unnecessary trouble to turn the discussion from the main point.

I have asked for only \$1,500, because in 1924, they invited me on my request; otherwise, I would have asked for \$100 per game.

When I made you the proposition regarding Moscow, I immediately told you the highest amount the committee was able to pay, as I do not like drawn out negotiations. The real reason why the committee of New York does not want to give me the sum demanded, it seems to me, is because the committee does not have any great interest in getting a real, first-class tournament together.

For this reason, I will repeat the conditions already mentioned as follows:

I am awaiting the decision of the committee accepting or refusing my conditions until December 31, 1926. If I do not receive at that time their acceptance, together with the retainer in advance, I will assume that my conditions have been declined. Propositions after that date, even if more advantageous than my demands, cannot be accepted any longer.

Kindly excuse me, but I am unable to give you a better answer, and I wish you and the tournament committee to be assured that they are personally esteemed.

Yours very truly
[E. D. Bogolyubov]

This was considered by some, Lederer in particular, to be insulting in tone. Keep in mind, however, that Bogolyubov had won the last great international tournament, the powerful Moscow 1925. In a followup

telegram (Russell Collection #76) he suggested that a match between him and Capablanca should be held instead of the “mediocre” tournament. He obviously thought that he was entitled to more than average consideration.

He did not get it. In a letter to Capablanca dated 21 December 1926 (Russell Collection #1574), Lederer discussed a variety of topics connected with the tournament. His opinion of Bogolyubov was not subject to any misunderstanding:

I think the man is stark crazy, the very idea is that of a moron and the expression ‘mediocre’ just amusing. Of course we are through with that bird and I am writing him that we are not interested in a match between you and him and that moreover the tournament is fixed and changes are not possible.

Subsequent writers, including J. Hannak in *Emanuel Lasker: The Life of a Chess Master* (p. 263), have written that Bogolyubov was not invited to the tournament. This is clearly incorrect. He was invited, but the tournament committee was unwilling to meet his demands.

Hotel Arrangements

By the end of 1926, much had been finalized. The Committee was proceeding on the assumption that Alekhine would play, and an agreement had been reached with the Hotel Manhattan Square (Russell Collection #727). This agreement is notable for its terms, which indicate that the hotel was, in effect, acting as a financial co-sponsor of the tournament, or at least as a guarantor against losses. Part of the contract stated: “If the total expenses of the Tournament ... shall exceed the total gross revenue ... you [i.e., the organizers] may subtract from the room rent ... a sufficient sum to balance such net deficit.” If subtracting all of the room rent still left the organizers with a loss, the hotel would pay the organizers up to \$1,000 in recompense. If there were still a deficit, the hotel would turn over to the organizers its share of the ticket sales to make up the difference. “The remaining deficit shall be borne by you without further contribution of any kind by us.”

How did the organizing committee extract such favorable terms? Sixty-six years later, it is hard to say. Perhaps Lederer had a special relationship with the owners of the hotel. Perhaps the owners were chess fans, like the hotel owners who have effectively co-sponsored recent U. S. Championships by offering extremely favorable financial terms to the USCF. Maybe the hotel saw the event as a “loss leader” that might attract other business. After all, these were the “Roaring Twenties” and Capablanca was a social lion in New York. The simplest explanation may be under



our noses: the organizers negotiated with two hotels. The Hotel Manhattan Square may have felt that it had to offer very good terms to get the business away from the competing Hotel Alamac, which had hosted the 1924 event.

Alekhine's Participation and the 1927 Title Match

Negotiations with Alekhine were not simple. He replied to Lederer's invitation in a letter dated 7 December 1926 (Russell Collection #1382):

My Dear Mr. Lederer,

Just having returned to Paris from Buenos Aires, I've received your letter of November 15 concerning the 1927 New York tournament. I request that you impart the following to the Organizing Committee along with my many thanks for the kind invitation.

Basically, I would like very much to participate in the tournament, providing that 1) it in no way be connected with the question of the world championship matches which in my opinion would fundamentally contradict the London agreement of 1922, and 2) the committee accepts my financial conditions, which would not be excessively high. I find myself compelled—since I am in touch with the world champion concerning a match in Argentina—to await the final ruling on this question, before I can give the Committee a definitive and exhaustive answer concerning my possible participation. And because, based on the letter to me from Mr. Capablanca of September 21st of this year, I expect a definitive answer from him just after January 1, 1927. I would, unfortunately, only be able to write you in detail immediately after receiving this.

With best regards,

I remain

[signed] A. Alekhine

With the financial arrangements squared away and the new year beginning, was Alekhine ready to accept his invitation? Not quite.

(The "London agreement," also known as the London Rules, was a document adopted on Capablanca's initiative by participants in the London 1922 tournament. It governed the conditions of future challenges for the world championship and the rules of the matches that would result. Among other detailed provisions, it specified that the winner of a world championship match would be the first to win six games, draws not counting.)

This is an important letter. It indicates that as early as the fall of 1926 Capablanca and Alekhine were close to finalizing their title match. Clearly the Capablanca–Alekhine match had not been set when the above letter was written, but Alekhine expected it would be soon.

According to minutes of the organizing committee's meeting on 15 December 1926 (Russell Collection #888), Capablanca and Alekhine were the only two players who were to receive any appearance fees. (Arrangements for the travel and lodging expenses of the other participants were also concluded at this time.)

With the financial arrangements squared away and the new year beginning, was Alekhine ready to accept his invitation? Not quite. Rumors abounded about the significance of the tournament. The January 1927 issue of the *American Chess Bulletin* announced, "... it is the inten-

tion of the committee to arrange a match for the world title between Capablanca and the winner of the tournament or the one ranking second." This view was apparently also reflected in a "program" of the tournament drawn up in advance and sent to the prospective players. The *ACB* statement is surprising in view of the fact that its editor Helms also sat on the tournament organizing committee. He must have been aware that the outcome of the tournament had no formal bearing on the title match.

Or did it still have such a bearing in the minds of some committee members? Billing the tournament as a qualifying event for a match with Capablanca was an obvious way to increase public excitement. While the organizers were trying to raise money, negotiate for favorable terms with hotels, and entice the best players from around the world to participate, it was in their interest to bill this as a "candidates event." We must not forget, too, that Alekhine and Capablanca had not definitely settled their match arrangements by the end of 1926, and it could be claimed that the proposed match was not a sure thing. After all, it was known that Alekhine had failed twice previously to back up his challenges with sufficient financial sponsorship.

For a time, events may have traveled on two parallel tracks, with Capablanca and Alekhine negotiating for a match while the New York 1927 organizing committee made its own preparations for an event which some of its members, at least, genuinely believed to be a qualifier for a match with the world champion. Capablanca, as a member of the committee, was in an equivocal position. On the one hand he was a signatory to the 1922 London Rules and he could hardly turn away a challenge from Alekhine, another signatory, if Alekhine could fulfill the conditions for a match. On the other hand, he would have found it awkward to debunk the claims of his friends and supporters in New York, who were working hard to put together the 1927 tournament.

We do not need to assume that anybody was being dishonest. Capablanca said in the fall of 1926 that he was willing to play Alekhine, and he did in fact play him in the fall of 1927. That Alekhine finished second in New York was probably less important to Capablanca than the fact that Alekhine had finally obtained financial backers for a match. If somebody other than Alekhine had finished second in New York, we can take the organizers at their word that they would have tried to organize a match between this player and Capablanca, presumably after the Capablanca-Alekhine match in Buenos Aires (Capablanca's letter to Lederer, quoted in full below, bears out this interpretation). However, Alekhine did finish second in New York and there was no need for the New York organizing committee to do anything at all.

Of course the issue was of great concern to Alekhine, who fired off a telegram to Lederer on 6 January 1927 (Russell Collection #1384) asking for clarification of the entire situation. Clarification came quickly.

"... it is the intention of the committee to arrange a match for the world title between Capablanca and the winner of the tournament or the one ranking second."

On 7 January 1927, Capablanca sent the following handwritten letter (Russell Collection #1569) from Havana to Norbert Lederer in New York (note the reference to the "programme" in the postscript):

Dear Lederer:

Yesterday I sent Alekhine the following cable: 'N. Y. Tournament has no connection whatsoever with our negotiations Capablanca'.

Today I have sent him a further cable as follows: "As written and cabled before our match will take place independent of result of New York Tournament provided all London Championship rules are met naming of treasurer at present unnecessary when you reach N. Y. will get together regarding referee, treasurer etc. Capablanca"

I believe it would be well for you to cable him to the effect that should the result of the N. Y. tournament bring to the fore another player outside of us two, the committee would then try to arrange a match between this third player and the winner of our match. I am afraid he is suspicious of us and wants to make a mountain out of a mole hill. I have, however, written to him a letter, several days ago, that should make matters quite clear. I am very sorry I am not in N. Y.

Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall leave Havana on Monday Jan. 31st arriving to New York on Wednesday the 2d of Feb. I shall go by train on the Havana Special. You can find out when this train will reach N. Y. Penn Station. The contract you sent me, I will take along as there are one or two points which should be changed. There will, however, I am sure, be no difficulty about it.

As regards Shipley, he said in his letter to me that he would contribute \$100 and guarantee \$100 more. I will take the matter up with him when I get to New York. Meanwhile I shall prepare the way from here.

Best regards

Yours

[signed] J. R. Capablanca

P.S. As regards Alek. you may say that the programme was gotten up by the committee before there was any assurance that our match would take place and that it is not the desire of the committee to interfere with it.

Apparently the correspondence and telegrams crossed in transit, as Alekhine was still unsure of what was going on as late as 14 January 1927, when he sent Lederer the following cable (Russell Collection #1385):

Cannot play unless committee officially cables me they cancel point programme about first and second winner as contradicting actual situation Capablanca having officially accepted my challenge confirming tournament will have no connection whatsoever our match Alekhine

Three days later, however, everything was in order. Once all the correspondence and telegrams reached their destinations, Alekhine's fears were allayed.

Spreading the "Candidates Tournament" Story

The original correspondence in the Russell Collection proves beyond a doubt that the title match between Alekhine and Capablanca was arranged prior to the beginning of the New York 1927 tournament. This

"Yesterday I sent Alekhine the following cable: 'N. Y. Tournament has no connection whatsoever with our negotiations Capablanca'."

makes Alekhine's later description of these events puzzling, when he claims in the introduction to the New York 1927 tournament book that he was virtually forced to play under conditions dictated by Capablanca. Without any further information, a reader might envision the domineering Cuban cracking the whip, humbling all who would dare to even think of challenging for his title, while he sneered "Play me on my terms or not at all!"

This passage from *Das New Yorker Schach Turnier 1927* (reprinted in 1963 by Walter De Gruyter & Co., Berlin, and translated from the German by Alex Cherniack), is worth reproducing in full:

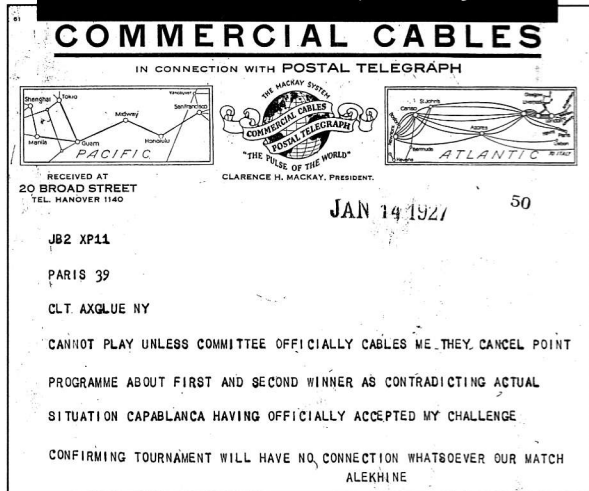
In the spring of 1926 there were two challenges to the then world champion—one from Nimzowitsch, the other from myself. It soon became obvious Nimzowitsch's challenge was "platonic"—he had very little financial support, and the conditions of his challenge could only be met in London. Such a challenge as his probably undermined all other challenges, since the heavy tournament schedule for the following year led the chess world to frown upon the practical value of a match.

Things stood differently with me. I sent a telegram to Capablanca in September from Buenos Aires; experience from my fruitless challenges in 1921 and 1923 had taught me to secure financial backing. I felt sure that the material conditions for my challenge had been met, and that the world champion would welcome such a match.

Capablanca, however, sent back something unexpected; instead of a direct reply, I received a rambling letter suggesting that I attend the New York tournament. The official program was enclosed, and it contained many curiosities: Dr. Lasker was not invited, the time control and number of playing hours were unusual (both of which would be very demanding in a future match with Capablanca), and finally the player who took first place (or second if Capablanca won) should be the official challenger for the World Championship. Because the world champion was so protected, the New York tournament did not generally make waves—certain masters though did protest, with whom this author concurs. But what good could a protest do after the deed had been done? The committee gave its blessing—the whole atmosphere of the decision making process made it irrevocable. The tournament is respected for its "official opinion" as proof that among the serious contenders one would be chosen as the Challenger.

Consequently the participants in this tournament from a sporting standpoint were in a truly paradoxical situation. The world champion risked nothing—a relatively poor showing could be put down as luck by

Cable from Alekhine to Lederer, 14 January 1927.



another player. In comparison, it was imperative for Nimzowitsch and me to finish in one of the two top spots; otherwise we would be out of the running for a title match with Capablanca for a very long time if not forever.

Due to these psychological handicaps, I seriously considered turning down the committee's invitation. I decided to attend chiefly for two reasons:

1. Capablanca had repeatedly and pigheadedly refused to give me and the Argentinian chess clubs a clear, definitive answer to my challenge. He made it clear through his letters and telegrams that I had to come to New York if we were to come to any sort of understanding.

2. My refusal would have been misinterpreted by the chess world—namely, that I was afraid of Capablanca. The resulting tournament would have been much easier for Capablanca; he would play whomever scored first or second, and all my organizing efforts in Buenos Aires would have fallen into the water. And so I went to New York in order to pursue my perhaps once in a lifetime chance for the World Championship, although I had few illusions about how difficult it would be.

Spielmann's contract to play, dated 24 December 1926.

Mr. Rudolf Spielmann

New York, Dec. 24th 1926

Wien, Austria

CONDITIONS OF PLAY

1. The Tournament shall be of not more than six players to be selected by the Tournament Committee.
2. Four rounds shall be played, each player playing four games with each other contestant—twice with the white pieces and twice with the black pieces.
3. The Tournament shall be played under the World's Championship rules adopted by the players at the London Congress of 1922.
4. The time limit shall be 40 moves in 2½ hours. Any player not having completed his 40th move on expiration of the 2½ hours shall automatically forfeit his game.
5. The playing hours shall be one sitting a day from 2:00 P. M. to 7:00 P. M., or such other hours as the executive committee shall decide.
6. Five games shall be played each week—the remaining two days being reserved for the play-off of unfinished games.
7. If necessary the executive committee may decide an additional day for the play-off of adjourned games after the 10th and 19th round.
8. The pairings shall be done by the Berger system and the number of the round to be played shall be drawn one day in advance. The rounds one to five, however, to be played first, followed by rounds six to ten, etc.
9. Each player shall hand the secretary at close of play a correct score of his game.
10. The scores of all games remain the property of the executive committee and no player shall report by cable the scores of any game played.
11. The players undertake not to write any annotation or publish any of the games played in book form for a period of one year after publication of the Official Tournament Book.
12. The prizes shall be as follows:—First prize, \$2,000. Second prize, \$1,500. Third prize, \$1,000.
13. Each non-prize winner shall receive \$50 for each won game and \$25 for each drawn game.
14. The executive committee reserves the right to add a fourth prize or raise the remuneration for non-prize winners should they find it expedient.
15. Each player is entitled to the sum of \$200 to cover all his incidental expenses.
16. The players from Europe shall in addition receive a return ticket from any European Port to New York.
17. All players shall receive free lodging and board in New York for the duration of the Tournament.
18. The executive committee reserves the right to dispose of any surplus funds left after payment of expenses of the Tournament for the organization of a championship match or other Chess Tournament.
19. The Tournament Director shall be in absolute charge of play and his instructions must be immediately complied with by every contestant.
20. Any player has the right to appeal from a decision of the Tournament Director within 24 hours of the incident in writing to the referee whose decision shall be final.
21. All other matters not connected with the play shall be referred to the Secretary and the players are entitled to appeal from any decision of the Secretary in writing within 24 hours of the incident to the executive committee whose decision shall be final.
22. The brilliancy and other special prizes shall be decided by the brilliancy prize judge whose decision shall be final.
23. The brilliancy prize judge shall have the right to consult any contestant or other Chess player in deciding such brilliancy and other special prizes.
24. No player shall offer a draw to his opponent direct but shall offer the same only through the Tournament Director who, however, is entitled to refuse such offer before completion of the 40th move should the position in his opinion warrant further play.
25. A player having offered a draw which has been refused by his opponent shall not repeat his offer.
26. All players will be enjoined by the Tournament Director to avoid all disturbance of their opponents during play and will be asked to conform strictly to the ethics of the game.

I hereby agree to participate in the International Grand Master's Chess Tournament, New York 1927, at the conditions stated above, and agree to leave the United States within the expiration date of my visa.

Accepted by the Executive Committee

Arthur D. Williams
Secretary

Rudolf Spielmann

This passage in the tournament book introduction must be one of the main reasons for the persistent belief that New York 1927 was a *de facto* candidates tournament. However, a more interesting question is what might have caused Alekhine to depict the situation as he did?

It must be remembered that the tournament book was written after Alekhine had won the world title from Capablanca. The Introduction from which the above passage is taken is titled "The New York 1927 tournament as prologue to the world championship in Buenos Aires," and is filled with criticism of Capablanca's play as well as his official dealings. Alekhine might well have wanted to make his ascent appear as difficult as possible, thereby rendering the accomplishment that much more noteworthy. He might also have resented Capablanca's insistence on total compliance with the 1922 London Rules. Also, making others believe that Capablanca had been unreasonable might eventually win him support if pressure began to mount

for a rematch, supposing Alekhine did not immediately agree to one. Finally, it cannot be denied that it simply makes for a better story. After all, what is more interesting—doing battle in one of the era’s premier tournaments for a chance to play the invincible Cuban, or playing in a strong tournament to fine-tune your skills for a title match already agreed upon?

Based on the original source material available, there is little question that Alekhine, when he wrote the introduction to the New York 1927 tournament book, was stretching the truth to the breaking point. Written sources, however, are not everything. We know that Capablanca was not only lazy but rather vain, and occasionally aloof in his dealings with lesser mortals. Contemporary custom, as well as the London Rules, which he had essentially dictated to his future challengers, placed much of the burden of arranging championship matches on the challenger; Alekhine may have felt frustration at having to bear that burden. Having received indications from the organizing committee that New York 1927 was a qualifying event—a stipulation that the organizing committee apparently never publicly retracted—he must have been nervous, and looking at matters from his angle it is hard to blame him.

Nevertheless his statements in the tournament book are regrettable. Looking back, it is difficult for us to determine what their effect was on Capablanca or what impact they had on rematch negotiations. It is certain that Alekhine’s retrospective statements cast the situation in a false light, which would mislead others for many years.

**Alekhine’s
retrospective
statements cast
the situation in a
false light, which
would mislead
others for many
years.**

Why Didn’t Lasker Play?

Everyone involved with New York 1927 realized what the presence of Emanuel Lasker would mean to the tournament. Harold Phillips, later president of the USCF, wrote to the organizing committee that he (Phillips) would not help with the tournament unless Lasker was invited. Lasker was not only the immediate former world champion, but just three years earlier had won the great New York tournament of 1924. He was still capable of playing world-class chess. Why was Lasker not even included in the short list of six players to be invited?

In fact the organizing committee, with Lederer at the helm, did not believe that Lasker would play. We can better understand their assumption by examining Lasker’s participation in the 1924 New York tournament and his stormy relationship with Lederer, who was the chief organizer of that tournament, too. A dispute between the two men had begun over an incident in the game which Lasker had lost to Capablanca in New York 1924.

Lasker later claimed that the clock used in that game was defective and that this defect had cost him time in his game with Capablanca, thereby contributing toward the loss. He further charged that when Lederer had realized the clock was defective, he failed to correct or

INTERNATIONAL GRAND MASTERS CHESS TOURNAMENT NEW YORK, 1927			
V R		24 Feb. 1927	
OPENING			
WHITE:	BLACK:		
<i>R. Capablanca</i>	<i>E. Lasker</i>		
WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK
1. P-K4	P-K3	1. P-K4	P-K3
2. P-KB4	P-N3	2. P-K4	P-K3
3. Nf-KB3	P-KK3	3. P-K4	P-K3
4. P-KK3	P-K4	4. P-K4	P-K3
5. N-K1	P-K4	5. P-K4	P-K3
6. P-K4	P-K4	6. P-K4	P-K3
7. Nf-K4	P-K4	7. P-K4	P-K3
8. P-K4	P-K4	8. P-K4	P-K3
9. Q-K3	P-K4	9. P-K4	P-K3
10. N-K4	P-K4	10. P-K4	P-K3
11. P-K4	P-K4	11. P-K4	P-K3
12. P-K4	P-K4	12. P-K4	P-K3
13. P-K4	P-K4	13. P-K4	P-K3
14. P-K4	P-K4	14. P-K4	P-K3
15. P-K4	P-K4	15. P-K4	P-K3
16. P-K4	P-K4	16. P-K4	P-K3
17. P-K4	P-K4	17. P-K4	P-K3
18. P-K4	P-K4	18. P-K4	P-K3
19. P-K4	P-K4	19. P-K4	P-K3
20. P-K4	P-K4	20. P-K4	P-K3
21. P-K4	P-K4	21. P-K4	P-K3
22. P-K4	P-K4	22. P-K4	P-K3
23. P-K4	P-K4	23. P-K4	P-K3
24. P-K4	P-K4	24. P-K4	P-K3
25. P-K4	P-K4	25. P-K4	P-K3
26. P-K4	P-K4	26. P-K4	P-K3
27. P-K4	P-K4	27. P-K4	P-K3
28. P-K4	P-K4	28. P-K4	P-K3
29. P-K4	P-K4	29. P-K4	P-K3
30. P-K4	P-K4	30. P-K4	P-K3
31. P-K4	P-K4	31. P-K4	P-K3
32. P-K4	P-K4	32. P-K4	P-K3
33. P-K4	P-K4	33. P-K4	P-K3
34. P-K4	P-K4	34. P-K4	P-K3
35. P-K4	P-K4	35. P-K4	P-K3
36. P-K4	P-K4	36. P-K4	P-K3
37. P-K4	P-K4	37. P-K4	P-K3
38. P-K4	P-K4	38. P-K4	P-K3
39. P-K4	P-K4	39. P-K4	P-K3
40. P-K4	P-K4	40. P-K4	P-K3

Capablanca's scoresheet from his win against Alekhine. (Facing page: Alekhine's scoresheet.)

replace the clock until it was too late. Lederer vehemently denied the charge. In an independent investigation conducted by an impartial panel, Lederer was exonerated.

Lasker remained unconvinced, and made a second claim related to the prize fund. He insisted that Lederer had assured him that any tournament surplus would be added to the money distributed to the prize winners. Whether or not this arrangement had really existed, it was moot because the tournament had lost money. But this fact did not satisfy Lasker, for Capablanca had been paid a substantial appearance fee; Lasker contended that without that fee, there would have been additional funds for the prize winners.

From the enormous amount of correspondence to, from, and about Lederer in the Russell Collection, it is apparent that he was an honorable man. When Lasker raised his charges, it was Lederer who immediately wrote to the National Chess Federation (Russell Collection #574) asking that a panel be appointed to investigate them. Lederer made it clear that until and unless his name and honor were vindicated, he would not consider working on organizing the New York 1927 tournament.

Lederer was fully aware of the importance and prestige that Lasker's participation would bring to the 1927 tournament, but neither he nor the organizing committee believed that Lasker would play, given the history of events just cited. However, despite the fact that he could not be very pleased about it, he made an extraordinary effort to convince Lasker to play. He enlisted the help of influential people in the United States and Europe, but Lasker was not persuaded. Finally, as the plans which were formulated had to be finalized, Lederer made one last effort. On 10 December 1926 he wrote a five-page typewritten letter in German to Lasker (Russell Collection #584). Lederer, whose first language was German (he was born in Vienna), wanted to make absolutely certain that he would not be misunderstood. Lederer's formal invitation to Lasker specified all the terms, financial and otherwise, being offered to Lasker as well as a strong plea for Lasker to relent and play in what was recognized even then as one of the world's great chess tournaments.

Alas, it was not to be. Lasker refused to accept the findings of the panel appointed by the National Chess Federation. He also would not let the matter rest. In the spring of 1927, after the tournament had finished, he wrote a long letter to various newspapers and journalists around the world (Russell Collection #581) detailing his version of events.

In his eyes, both Lederer and Capablanca were culpable. As a result of this dispute, one of the greatest tournaments of all time was held without one of the greatest players of all time.

Play Begins

Eventually the tournament committee received confirmation from six players: Capablanca, Alekhine, Vidmar, Nimzovich, Spielmann (who was selected to replace Bogolyubov), and Marshall. Contracts were in place with each player, with Capablanca and Alekhine given special consideration. Several of the original contracts are part of the Russell Collection, including those signed by Vidmar (Russell Collection #1275), Spielmann (Russell Collection #1156) and Nimzovich (Russell Collection #961).

The tournament itself was almost anticlimactic. Organization and funding allowed for a quadruple round robin of 20 rounds. Although Nimzovich and Capablanca were tied for the lead with 6½ after nine rounds, Nimzovich lost four of his next six games, leaving the champion to dominate the event. He finished at 14–6, scoring eight wins, 12 draws and no losses. Alekhine was 2½ points behind, having drawn three and lost one in his individual encounters with Capablanca.

Among the legacies of the play were the Manhattan Variation in the Queen’s Gambit Declined, in which Spielmann lost the First Brilliancy Prize game to Capablanca. Marshall introduced the Modern Benoni Defense, drawing with Capablanca before losing to Nimzovich in the Third Brilliancy Prize game, which was thought for a long time to have refuted the entire opening. Capablanca won a smooth positional game against Nimzovich on the black side of a Caro-Kann Advance variation, as well as a nice endgame against Vidmar. Alekhine received the Second Brilliancy Prize for one of his wins against Marshall, and Vidmar received the Fourth Brilliancy Prize for one of his wins over Nimzovich. (All of the original scoresheets are in the Russell Collection.)

It has long been thought that the ease with which Capablanca won this tournament contributed to his overconfidence in the title match with Alekhine, which began in Buenos Aires approximately six months after the end of this tournament.

At this point it is worth addressing some of the tournament’s minor mythology. In *The Chess Encyclopedia* (1990), Nathan Divinsky repeats several old allegations about Capablanca’s play during the tournament.

INTERNATIONAL GRAND MASTERS CHESS TOURNAMENT NEW YORK, 1927			
V. R.		24 febr. 1927	
OPENING			
WHITE: Alekhine		BLACK: Capablanca	
1. 22-24	27-26	41. 22-24	27-26
2. 22-24	27-26	42. 22-24	27-26
3. 22-24	27-26	43. 22-24	27-26
4. 22-24	27-26	44. 22-24	27-26
5. 22-24	27-26	45. 22-24	27-26
6. 22-24	27-26	46. 22-24	27-26
7. 22-24	27-26	47. 22-24	27-26
8. 22-24	27-26	48. 22-24	27-26
9. 22-24	27-26	49. 22-24	27-26
10. 22-24	27-26	50. 22-24	27-26
11. 22-24	27-26	51. 22-24	27-26
12. 22-24	27-26	52. 22-24	27-26
13. 22-24	27-26	53. 22-24	27-26
14. 22-24	27-26	54. 22-24	27-26
15. 22-24	27-26	55. 22-24	27-26
16. 22-24	27-26	56. 22-24	27-26
17. 22-24	27-26	57. 22-24	27-26
18. 22-24	27-26	58. 22-24	27-26
19. 22-24	27-26	59. 22-24	27-26
20. 22-24	27-26	60. 22-24	27-26
21. 22-24	27-26	61. 22-24	27-26
22. 22-24	27-26	62. 22-24	27-26
23. 22-24	27-26	63. 22-24	27-26
24. 22-24	27-26	64. 22-24	27-26
25. 22-24	27-26	65. 22-24	27-26
26. 22-24	27-26	66. 22-24	27-26
27. 22-24	27-26	67. 22-24	27-26
28. 22-24	27-26	68. 22-24	27-26
29. 22-24	27-26	69. 22-24	27-26
30. 22-24	27-26	70. 22-24	27-26
31. 22-24	27-26	71. 22-24	27-26
32. 22-24	27-26	72. 22-24	27-26
33. 22-24	27-26	73. 22-24	27-26
34. 22-24	27-26	74. 22-24	27-26
35. 22-24	27-26	75. 22-24	27-26
36. 22-24	27-26	76. 22-24	27-26
37. 22-24	27-26	77. 22-24	27-26
38. 22-24	27-26	78. 22-24	27-26
39. 22-24	27-26	79. 22-24	27-26
40. 22-24	27-26	80. 22-24	27-26
TIME:			
WHITE		BLACK	

Specifically, he writes (p. 143) that after 17 rounds, when Capablanca was assured by his 3½-point lead of clear first place, Capablanca

declared that he would draw his last three games (against Alekhine, Vidmar, and Nimzowitsch) in order not to affect the struggle for second place. It seems that Nimzowitsch played some bizarre moves and got into a bad position. Capablanca complained to the tournament director that unless Nimzowitsch played better, he (Capablanca) would be forced to win the game! Finally Capablanca actually dictated the last four or five moves, which Nimzowitsch played rather apprehensively, and the game was drawn.

Divinsky offers no sources for this story, but clues might be found in two places. First, in one of his regular articles for *The New York Times* during the tournament, on March 27, 1927, Capablanca wrote (quoted on p. 172 of *Capablanca* by Edward Winter):

The peculiar position in which we found ourselves with regard to the other three leading competitors made us decide to exert ourselves to play for draws unless our opponents threatened to win, since any defeat at our hands would put any one of them out of the running for a prize, without any benefit to ourselves.

Later in the same article, he wrote:

The same remarks about our game with Vidmar in a previous round [the paragraph above] apply to our game with Nimzowitsch [round 19], except that here we had a chance to win, of which we did not avail ourselves.

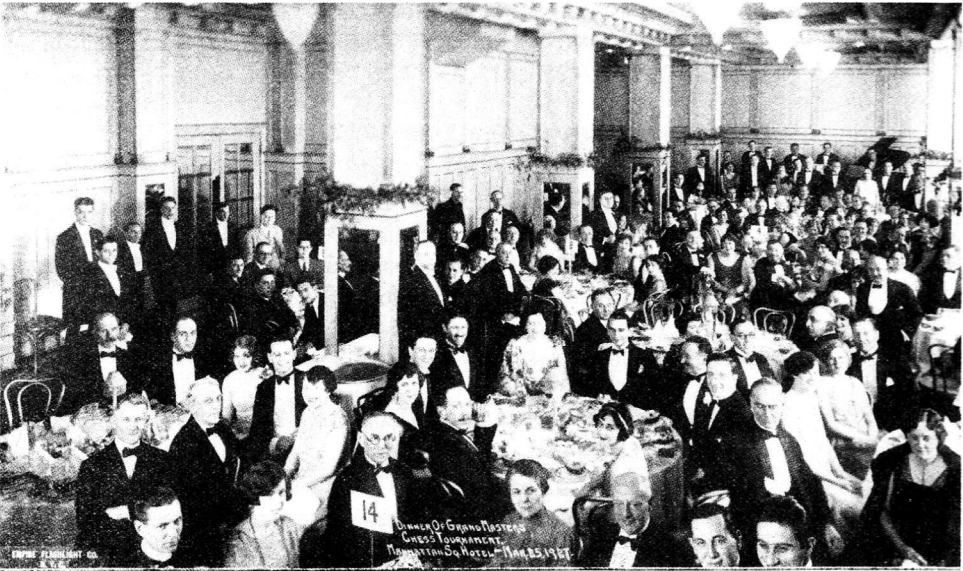
And Alekhine, in his notes to the Capablanca–Nimzovich game in the tournament book, observed (p. 159), “This move [21 Kg2] shows conclusively that Capablanca showed absolutely no interest in winning this game. 21 Rd6 would have won very easily.”

This practice of deliberately playing for draws—even when wins were available—may seem like an unusual one, or at least an unusual one to admit to, but note that Capablanca did not say that he “announced” his intentions in advance. In his article written after the event was over, he merely reported his state of mind while the event was still in progress. But even more importantly, the brief note quoted above is the only time Alekhine comes even close to mentioning what Divinsky alleges about

NEW YORK TOURNAMENT SCORE TABLE

PLAYERS	Capablanca	Alekhine	Nimzowitsch	Vidmar	Spielmann	Marshall	Total Won
Capablanca	0	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	14
Alekhine	½	0	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	1 ½	11 ½
Nimzowitsch	0	½	0	1	1	1 ½	10 ½
Vidmar	½	½	0	0	½	1 ½	10
Spielmann	½	½	0	½	0	½	8
Marshall	0	½	0	½	0	½	6
Total Lost	6	8 ½	9 ½	10	12	14	60

THE PLAY BY ROUNDS



SCENE OF THE BANQUET IN HONOR OF THE MASTERS

the last three rounds—although Alekhine’s Introduction was essentially a 16-page indictment of Capablanca for all sorts of other faults and misdeeds. One would think that if Capablanca had behaved so outlandishly at the tournament, Alekhine would have used it to bolster his case (unless Alekhine decided that telling the whole story would make Capablanca look too Olympian). Contemporary coverage of the event in the *American Chess Bulletin* makes no mention of any of the charges. Thus, the most that can now be said with certainty, at least if we believe Capablanca himself, is that Capablanca played to draw in the last three rounds. Without more evidence, the rest is pure speculation.

Brilliance Prize Games

CAPABLANCA–SPIELMANN, NEW YORK 1927, Rd 13

QUEEN’S GAMBIT DECLINED D38

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 c4 ♘d7 4 ♗c3 ♗gf6 5 ♘g5 ♙b4 6 cxd5
 exd5 7 ♗a4 ♙xc3+ 8 bxc3 0–0 9 e3 c5 10 ♙d3 c4 11 ♙c2 ♗e7 12
 0–0 a6 13 ♗fe1 ♗e6 14 ♘d2 b5 15 ♗a5 ♗e4 16 ♘xe4 dxe4 17 a4
 ♗d5 18 axb5 ♗xg5 19 ♙xe4 ♗b8 20 bxa6 ♗b5 21 ♗c7 ♘b6 22 a7
 ♙h3 23 ♗eb1 ♗xb1+ 24 ♗xb1 f5 25 ♙f3 f4 26 exf4 1–0

ALEKHINE–MARSHALL, NEW YORK 1927, Rd 18

NIMZOINDIAN DEFENSE E21

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 ♗e4 4 ♗fd2 ♙b4 5 ♗c2 d5 6 ♗c3 f5 7
 ♘dxе4 fxе4 8 ♙f4 0–0 9 e3 c6 10 ♙e2 ♘d7 11 a3 ♙e7 12 0–0 ♙g5

13 f3 ♖xf4 14 exf4 ♗xf4 15 fxe4 ♗xf1+ 16 ♗xf1 e5 17 ♔d2 c5 18 dxe5 d4 19 ♗f4 dxc3 20 ♗f7+ ♕h8 21 bxc3 ♗g8 22 ♗e7 h6 23 ♖h5 a5 24 e6 g6 25 exd7 ♖xd7 26 ♗f7 1-0

**NIMZOVICH-MARSHALL, NEW YORK 1927, Rd 17
BENONI DEFENSE A61**

1 c4 ♖f6 2 d4 e6 3 ♖f3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 ♖c3 exd5 6 cxd5 g6 7 ♖d2 ♖bd7 8 ♖c4 ♖b6 9 e4 ♖g7 10 ♖e3 0-0 11 ♖d3 ♖h5 12 0-0 ♖e5 13 a4 ♖f4 14 a5 ♖d7 15 ♖c4 ♖xd3 16 ♗xd3 f5 17 exf5 ♗xf5 18 f4 ♖d4+ 19 ♖e3 ♖xc3 20 ♗xc3 ♖f6 21 ♗b3 ♗xd5 22 f5 gxf5 23 ♖g5 ♖d4 24 ♖b6+ c4 25 ♗c3 axb6 26 ♗xd4 ♖g7 27 ♖ae1 bxa5 28 ♖e8 ♗xe8 29 ♗xf6+ ♖g8 30 ♖h6 1-0

**VIDMAR-NIMZOVICH, NEW YORK 1927, Rd 14
CATALAN OPENING E01**

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♖g2 ♖bd7 5 0-0 ♖d6 6 b3 c6 7 ♖bd2 0-0 8 ♖b2 ♗e7 9 c4 b5 10 ♖e5 ♖xe5 11 dxe5 ♖g4 12 e4 ♖gxe5 13 exd5 exd5 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♖xd5 ♗b8 16 ♖e1 ♗d6 17 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 18 ♗xf3 ♖h8 19 ♖ac1 ♖b6 20 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 21 ♗xf7 ♗g6 22 ♗xd7 1-0

This magnificent event belongs to a bygone era, a golden age of chess in America when a great tournament was also a great public event.

The Aftermath

The International Chess Grand Masters Tournament of 1927 was the last great international tournament to be held in the United States until the First Piatigorsky Cup in 1963. There are several reasons for this. The worldwide economic depression severely limited funding for grandiose events. After World War II, there was a new order in the chess world. The International Chess Federation (FIDE) had emerged as an organizing power, and the death of Alekhine permitted it to exercise authority. The locus of chess moved toward Central and Eastern Europe, and most major events of the 1950s were FIDE qualifying events for the world championship.

Because of the meticulous files maintained by Norbert Lederer, the premier chess organizer of his day, we can glimpse the inner workings of the legendary New York 1927 tournament. This magnificent event belongs to a bygone era, a golden age of chess in America when a great tournament was also a great public event. ♣

Silence of the Pawns

Jamie Hamilton

Knight Moves

Directed by Carl Schenkel, written by Brad Mirman, starring Christopher Lambert, Diane Lane, Tom Skerrit, and Daniel Baldwin
Republic Pictures, 1993, 108 minutes, rated R

Chess is so often portrayed inaccurately in the media that it's a minor thrill when you see they've set up the board correctly. To the untutored mind, it would appear a simple matter just to reproduce a grandmaster game if you're showing grandmasters playing chess, but I've only seen it done once, in the James Bond movie *From Russia with Love*. There's also some kind of law in Hollywood that if chess is involved, you have to show the following scene:

Two men hunched over a randomly ordered chessboard.

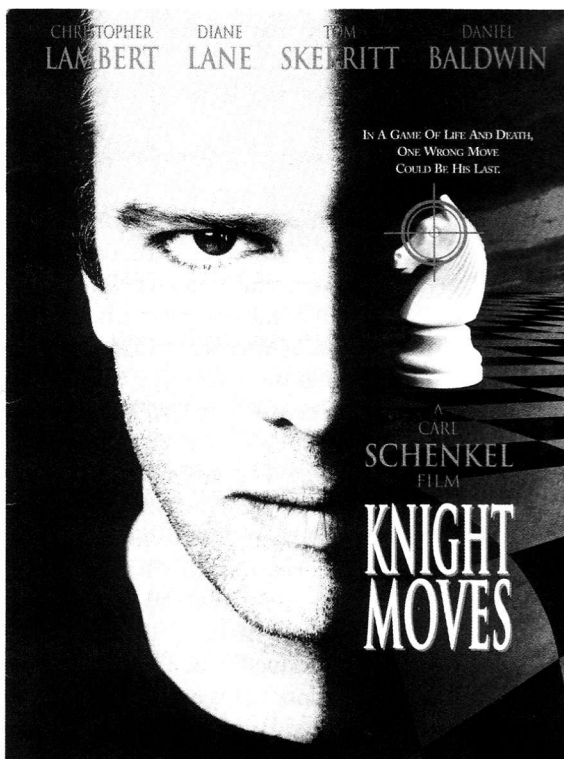
First Player (*reaches out, pushes a piece forward*): Check!

Close shot of second player, who glances up with a hunted look and makes a hurried move.

First Player (*leans over the board, gingerly lifts a piece, plants it calmly, announces triumphantly ...*): Checkmate!

Knight Moves, a chess-oriented movie scheduled for release in January 1993, of course includes this *de rigueur* scene. It's also got plenty of cliched characters, such as the small town "no-nonsense" police chief (played by Tom Skerrit), the fly-

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off-the-handle-at-any-provocation detective (Daniel Baldwin), and the inexperienced young female psychologist (Diane Lane) who falls in love with the prime suspect. You could almost assemble the movie from stock footage if it weren't for the main character: a top grandmaster who's in the lead at the world championship candidates' tournament.

Christopher Lambert, Lane's husband in real life, whom you may remember from his debut as Tarzan (in the *Greystoke* version), ascends the evolutionary ladder with ease to portray Grandmaster Peter Sanderson. His character is by far the most interesting in the movie, and has some solid lines, as when he echoes Kasparov's comments about the surprising psychological violence inherent in chess.

The movie is set on a small Pacific Northwest resort island where the world championship candidates tournament is being held. During the event, a serial killer begins stalking the town's young women, and initial clues point to Sanderson. Short of funds, and somehow without help from state or federal agencies, the local police enlist the psychologist to covertly assess Sanderson. Suppressing her own suspicions of his guilt, she promptly falls in love with him. With her Female Intuition and his Powerful Chess Mind, they go about deciphering the killer's clues.

The plot, however, just doesn't hold water, though there's a lot of it on the floor in some loosely justified basement scenes. In a promising opening scene—set perhaps by coincidence in 1972—in which a pen literally takes on the role of a sword, the film pokes gruesome fun at the emotional strains of junior chess competition. But the writers rapidly jump off the deep end and never swim back to shore. The way the clues are parceled out, the viewer never has any hope of figuring out the killer's game. The police behave with inexplicable arbitrariness, and the phone-trace angle just fizzles out. (They should have ordered caller ID from the phone company.)

It's nice to see a fashionably-dressed grandmaster in a romantic lead, with beautiful women falling into bed with him at the slightest provocation. (On the other hand, he is suspected of committing several extremely grotesque murders.) Chess players will probably be pleased to see the game contradicted on the big screen, but annoyed to see others reinforced (for one, the players are older than they should be), and at all the little mistakes only those in the know could pick up on.

Even though there is a "chess advisor" listed in the credits, the players make illegal moves and the positions shown don't match the announced moves. The people who made this movie obviously didn't take the time to get to know the chess world. Why, for example, would any writer make up chess opening names? *Knight Moves* is hardly the only production to do this; in fact, it seems to be the rule rather than the exception, but is it really possible to improve on the King's Gambit, the Poisoned Pawn Variation, the *Bogo-Indian*, for God's sake? (The writers

It's nice to see a grandmaster in a romantic lead, even if he is suspected of several murders. But the plot of this thriller just doesn't hold water.

of this movie had the poetic fancy to dream up the “Number Two Variation.”) To their credit, however, they did inadvertently illustrate the tendency of chess-book writers to overdo their clever quips and sayings: A key plot element involves the “three rules” of how to play chess proposed by a made-up famous player: “Carefully, carefully, carefully.” Maybe the writers came to movies from the real estate business.

The chess world has so many fascinating characters that it’s a shame more of them haven’t ended up on film. The real-life Gary Kasparov, for example, is much more compelling than Peter Sanderson. *Knight Moves* has one humorously superstitious grandmaster who wears a hat made of



aluminum foil, but he’s only a pale imitation of Viktor Korchnoi, whose match with Maroczy is the first concrete evidence of chess after death.

Director Carl Schenkel, who brought us such classics as *Silence Like Glass* and *Silhouette*, and Republic Pictures, generally a B-grade movie mill, probably intend *Knight Moves* for the rental market. If so, with any luck they’ll extend the two short sex scenes to create an unrated version and earn an “under-17 restricted” sticker on the video-store cassette box.

According to *Vanity Fair*, this film “threatens to do for chess what *Silence of the Lambs* did for dressmaking.” But certainly not what it did at the Oscars. *Knight Moves* isn’t a bad movie; it has some high points, but mostly it just goes by and then you forget about it. Still, chess players might want to see it even if they don’t add the sex scenes. ♣

BOOKS

Alekhine Renaissance

Edward Winter*A. Alekhine: Agony of a Chess Genius*

Pablo Morán, edited and translated by Frank X. Mur
Jefferson, NC: McFarland
AN, xiv + 314 pp., \$32.50 hardcover

Alekhine in the Americas

John Donaldson, Nikolay Minev, and Yasser Seirawan
Seattle, WA: International Chess Enterprises
AN, 47 pp. (oversized), \$8.95 paperback

The Games of Alekhine

Rogelio Caparrós and Peter Lahde
Brentwood, TN: Chess Scribe
FAN, iv + 385 pp., \$24.95 paperback, \$34.95 hardcover

Complete Games of Alekhine, Volume One

Jan Kalendovsky and Vlastimil Fiala
Olomouc, Czechoslovakia: Publishing House Moravian Chess
187 pp., \$36.00 (approx.) hardcover

Das Schachgenie Aljechin

Isaak Linder and Vladimir Linder
Berlin: Sportverlag
320 pp., \$18.00 (approx.) hardcover (in German)

Alexander Alekhine is remembered as one of the more prolific world champions in the literary realm. He wrote some 18 chess books, nearly all dealing either with individual events in which he participated or with specific phases of his career. Many later writers were thus able to produce Alekhine “best game” compilations on the basis of material effortlessly gleaned from the master’s books, and until recently there has been

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little attempt to go beyond this nucleus of familiar, not to say stale, material. But now, with 1992 marking the centenary of his birth, a number of authors have been striving—and indeed competing—to uncover further games and to research the nooks of Alekhine's life.

Among the key difficulties facing them are the intensity of his activity in numerous countries and the paucity of solid information, i.e. documentation, about certain aspects of his life (notably his Russian/Soviet period, up to the beginning of the 1920s). Chroniclers must also be prepared to tackle such issues as Alekhine's unlovely character traits and the sheer scale of his tragedy. No other world chess champion started life with more or finished it with less.

Frank and equitable treatment of personal matters was a characteristic of *Agonía de un Genio* by Pablo Morán, originally published in Madrid, 1972 by Aguilera. A revised and expanded English-language edition appeared in 1989 (*A. Alekhine: Agony of a Chess Genius*, edited and translated by Frank X. Mur). The book provides detailed coverage of Alekhine's various visits to Spain and Portugal, notably during the Second World War, as well as offering light reading on topics such as "The Nazism of Alekhine," "Alekhine the Man," and "Alekhine and Women." Above all, countless forgotten games are presented, most with annotations, though information about sources is lacking.

Insufficient use is made of Alekhine material that came to light between 1972 and 1989, and although the handsome English version is certainly much superior to the Spanish original, a further edition could doubtless be made better still. On the other hand, and to keep matters in perspective, it should be noted that *Agony of a Chess Genius* is vastly superior to nine-tenths of what passes for chess literature nowadays.

Geographical limits also determined the scope of *Alekhine in the Americas* by IM John Donaldson, IM Nikolay Minev, and GM Yasser Seirawan. The format is similar to the magazine *Inside Chess*, with much material (about 140 games, many annotated, plus contemporary comment) crammed into 47 pages. Despite a few rough edges, such as the lack of any indexing and some printing errors (e.g. an incorrect birthdate for Alekhine on p. 1, corrected in a quote on p. 2), the work has been edited well and reads smoothly. Like Morán's book, it concentrates on Alekhine's informal games, many of which appeared in the *American Chess Bulletin* but nowhere else.

"The authors of this work are not chess historians," declares the introduction (p. 1), yet within the book's self-imposed limits they demonstrate more scholarship than do many pretenders to that title. Their valuable reexamination of some of Alekhine's games and annotations in the light of 1990s praxis serves to highlight a fundamental problem in chess literature: the divide between masters and historians. The shrewd historian will realize that his lack of over-the-board mastery disbars him from the annotation of games and other similar practical tasks, and he

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will bear in mind the chess adage that “a weakness is not a weakness if it is unexposed and cannot be exploited.” Likewise, few masters possess adequate knowledge or research material to write usefully about chess history, though the *Inside Chess* team has shown that there are exceptions. How unfortunate that the two categories, historian and master, so seldom join forces.

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When forces are joined by persons who belong to neither category, the result is liable to be a book like *The Games of Alekhine* by Rogelio Caparrós and Peter Lahde. Part One has 953 tournament games, Part Two 214 match games, and Part Three 410 offhand games (a very small number, in a section which also fails to identify the types of events involved). Throughout the volume the games are presented without exact dates, precise sources, annotations, or information about possible score discrepancies, etc., and even the moves themselves are incorrect in many cases.

None of this deters the book from claiming on p. 385 that “Since the publication of his book *The Games of Capablanca*, in 1991, Caparrós fixed his mind in completing the only other great book missing in the chess literature: the Games of Alexander Alekhine” (quoted verbatim). It is regrettable that he did not fix his mind in correcting the countless grammatical/idiomatic solecisms and typographical errors (plus another wrong birthdate for Alekhine, this time on the back cover). The hallmarks of the presentation of games and results are inconsistency and loose thinking, and the lack of historical judgment is further shown by naive name-dropping (as when, on p. 93, the bare score of Alekhine’s widely published game against Dake is grandly headed “Contributed by GM Arthur Dake”).

While it is true that *The Games of Alekhine* furnishes the largest quantity of the Franco-Russian master’s games so far gathered within a single volume, other prospective authors had already accumulated hundreds more. In particular, many readily available tournament games have been overlooked by the Chess Scribe book, as have simultaneous specimens of decidedly better quality than the 19 “lost” games scraggly annexed to the end of the book, following a last-minute donation. *The Games of Alekhine* may have filled a gap in chess literature, but it has filled it poorly and temporarily.

A more ambitious project, with a correspondingly more venture-some title, has come from Czechoslovakia: *Complete Games of Alekhine* by Jan Kalendovsky and Vlastimil Fiala. To date, the first of four volumes has appeared, covering the years 1892–1921. In addition to 334 games, mostly unannotated but some with notes by Alekhine, there is a huge amount of biographical material, and the research is as prodigious as the presentation is shambolic. Typographical errors superabound, especially in the game annotations (“Black could decided the game by beatiful combination in his favour”—p. 29), despite three Americans being credited for correcting the translation.

The industry of Kalendovsky and Fiala is to be respected, but Volume One is an amorphous potpourri which propels the reader backwards and forwards through a maze of parts and subchapters. There is a surprisingly large number of factual errors (such as a crosstable on p. 66, where most of the totals do not add up). The lamentable typesetting and editing undermine the undeniable scholarship (e.g., the extensive use of Russian and Soviet sources to provide the most detailed portrayal yet of Alekhine's early years). One welcome point, though, is that much of the information is substantiated in footnotes. All too often authors offer "information" (in the broadest sense of the term) without any indication of their sources. Whether intentionally or not, this practice inevitably leaves the reader powerless to distinguish between fact and fable.

Footnotes are not a feature of *Das Schachgenie Aljechin* by Isaak and Vladimir Linder, a run-of-the-mill book all too similar to the father-and-son team's monographs on Capablanca (1988) and Lasker (1991) from the same publisher. It goes down the beaten track competently enough, neither better nor worse than would be expected from the brief, perfunctory bibliography on the last page. But what were the authors trying to achieve with any of the three books, given that they scarcely add to common knowledge? In the Alekhine volume, most of the standard games, habitual facts, and customary photographs are on parade yet again, and virtually the only novelty is that Alekhine's play during the Second World War is, for some reason, more or less ignored.

(Most of Alekhine's last chess writings are contained in *107 Great Chess Battles 1939-1945*, edited and translated by myself, originally published by the Oxford University Press in 1980 and reprinted by Dover Publications in 1992. Additionally, Batsford's 1989 compilation *Alekhine's Greatest Games of Chess*, containing his own two volumes on 1908-1923 and 1924-1937, plus C. H. O'D. Alexander's coverage of 1938-1945, is still in print.)

Alekhine's reputation has suffered greatly at the hands of general-purpose chess writers whose fondness for exaggerations and meretricious color has led them to focus on his personal weaknesses, real or imagined. (To use four euphemisms, Alekhine has frequently been accused of being uncandid, dissolute, intemperate, and racially partisan.) None of the above books makes any systematic attempt to analyze Alekhine the person or Alekhine the player, and it remains to be seen whether future authors can, in addition to providing reliable factual information, unravel some of the manifold paradoxes and contradictions.

For example, Alekhine dishonestly "improved" some game scores for immortality yet could write annotations that were merciless in exposing previously undetected errors in his own play. He produced a tournament book (of New York 1927) which was shamefully biased against Capablanca, yet he managed to remain reasonably objective in another one (Nottingham 1936) written when relations between the two masters

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were infinitely worse. Alekhine is frequently described as “immoral,” yet until the 1930s chess literature seldom contained an uncomplimentary word about him. Even his playing style is the subject of widely varying assessments by qualified commentators. Was it sound? Was it hypermodern? Was he relatively weak in endings?

Answers may be offered by other books on Alekhine being prepared now: the remaining volumes of the Kalendovsky/Fiala project, more from *Inside Chess*, works by C. Robinson and the late B. Reilly, as well as R. Verhoeven/L. Skinner. Whatever, it must be hoped that these books will show fewer signs of the disorderliness and haste that characterize some of the recent works discussed above. So far there has been teeming activity and comparatively little to show for it. But why the rush? After all, even the calendar-conscious can look towards a new publication target that should allow plenty of time for research, fact-checking, and proofreading: 1996 will be the 50th anniversary of Alekhine's death. ♣

Always Room for Improvement

Fred Wilson

The Oxford Companion to Chess, Second Edition
by David Hooper and Kenneth Whyld
Oxford University Press, New York, 1992
AN, vii + 483 pp., \$45.00 hardcover

The good news is that this new edition has replaced the first edition of 1984 as clearly the best, most accurate and interesting chess encyclopedia in English. It is vastly superior to earlier mediocrities, such as *The Encyclopedia of Chess* by Sunnucks (1970, 1976), *An Illustrated Dictionary of Chess* by Brace (1977), *The Encyclopedia of Chess* by Golombek (1977)—which does, however, contain excellent material by Heidenfeld and Soltis—and *The Chess Encyclopedia* by Divinsky (1990). It contains at least

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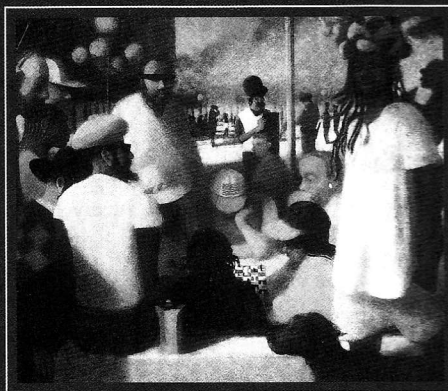
20% new material, with 73 more pages than the first edition, over 160 new, mostly biographical, entries (although, unfortunately, about 70 from the first edition have been deleted), an almost entirely new selection of illustrative games and compositions than those used originally, and, curiously, not mentioned in either the Preface or the dust-jacket, nearly all new portrait illustrations of the great players.

While the most important new grandmasters from Anand to Yudasin are given adequate coverage, it is odd to see such powerful, young British GMS such as James Plaskett, William Watson, David Norwood, and Joseph Gallagher, not to mention American Patrick Wolff (2595 FIDE) omitted. Articles on the great players have often been slightly revised and enhanced; for example, under "Alekhine" we now learn that he spoke proudly of his notorious anti-Semitic wartime articles (which he later disavowed) in a quotation from the Madrid newspaper *El Alcazar* on 3 September 1941. Under "Morphy" an ambiguous quotation from a letter by his secretary Edge, from which some have rashly inferred that he and/or Morphy were homosexual, has been replaced by an excellent contemporary description of Morphy's concerns about the Civil War by the famous publisher George Putnam.

Glancing at the "B" chapter, I note that both the Ossip Bernstein and Julio Bolbochan entries have been improved by including a well-chosen illustrative game of each: for Bernstein, his famous Brilliancy Prize victory over Najdorf at Montevideo 1954 (played when he was 72 years old!), while Bolbochan-Larry Evans, Helsinki Olympiad 1954 is a charming preachment against early pawn-grabbing by Black in the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

Opening nomenclature has been increased by hundreds of names (now 1327 variations and subvariations are given distinct identities), and new terms in composition and problem-solving have been added. The authors' painstaking accuracy regarding names, places, dates, and correct spelling has been carried over from the first edition. In short, in terms of

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO CHESS



DAVID HOOPER AND
KENNETH WHYLD

New Edition

This is far and away the most reliable historical reference work on chess in English. And it is beautifully produced. But there appears to be a clear anti-American bias.

factual correctness, this is far and away the most reliable historical reference work on chess in English. And it is also beautifully produced—strongly bound and printed on fine, coated paper. I urge anyone interested in chess history to buy it.

Therefore I am disappointed, but feel obliged, to now present what I perceive to be the bad news: There appears to be a clear anti-American bias in the book. While every possible 19th century British master has been included, both Max Judd and former U.S. champion Albert B. Hodges are omitted. Surely, perhaps some (or all) of, say, the third of a page devoted to “the master who never was,” G. H. D. Gossip, could have been used more fairly.

Some of the deletions from the first edition are truly astonishing, and at least three are indefensible. Arthur Bisguier, a still active professional grandmaster for 35 years and one of the most popular players, has been taken out. Why? Perhaps his FIDE rating and results have declined since 1984, but surely his place in history has not. And what about Andrew Soltis and Edmar Mednis, removed in the new edition despite their both being not only active grandmasters but also the two most popular and respected living American chess authors? Curiously, though, room has now been found to include biographies of Leonard Barden and William Hartston, two fine British chess writers. Of course, as a player Barden couldn't carry Bisguier's, Soltis's, or Mednis's clock, let alone clean it, and neither he nor Hartston can objectively be considered to have as distinguished a literary career as either Soltis or Mednis. This is not to say that Barden and Hartston do not belong in the *Companion*, only that they should not be inserted at the expense of three fine American grandmasters of varied talents.

This discrimination seems to assume a pattern with the deletions of former U. S. champion John Grefe and currently active American GM Ron Henley (one of Karpov's seconds), as well as the continuing omission of Irving Chernev. Irving was perhaps the most engaging and enthusiastic writer for beginning and average players, and the author of the most successful chess book in English, *Logical Chess Move by Move*, which has sold over half a million copies to date and is still in print! Perhaps it is meant as some sort of joke that Hooper and Whyld now see fit to include Fred Reinfeld, although they damn him with faint praise, and fail to list any of his books, not even *The Human Side of Chess* (1952), which I have always felt to be the most entertaining, subjectively-interesting history of the great players. Further evidence of the authors' disdain for American chess literature can be found in the entry for “periodicals,” which neglects to mention “among the more famous serials” both the *American Chess Bulletin*, edited by Herman Helms, which ran for 60 years (1904–1964), and *Chess Review*, edited by Israel A. “Al” Horowitz, which lasted 36 years (1933–1969). Words almost fail me.

But I believe that the joke is on Hooper and Whyld, who through

The presentation of contributions of the great players to the literature is strangely erratic. Even the writings of Euwe and Fine are given insufficient attention.

their odd choices only bring into question their own judgment and objectivity. Somehow they found nearly half a page to cover Eon de Beaumont, a famous French transvestite who once beat Philidor in a blindfold simultaneous exhibition, but no space for many important players and authors—not all of whom are American, it should be noted. The deletion of the exciting Soviet players Nikolai Riumin and IM Rashid Nezhmetdinov suggests that the authors' selection criteria tend more parochially towards the British and European than specifically against anything.

The inconsistency in the book's approach to chess writers and chess literature in general also goes beyond mere parochialism. Not only are the fine British writers Gerald Abrahams, Peter H. Clarke, and Bernard Cafferty still missing, but there is a strangely erratic presentation of contributions of the great players to the literature. For example, while the significant works of Lasker, Botvinnik, Alekhine, Steinitz, and Bronstein are adequately addressed, under "Keres," the super-grandmaster who probably was most able to engage the interest of both amateur and master alike, the only mention of his writings in the first edition (a largely superficial paragraph) has been removed! There is no mention of Jan Timman's *The Art of Chess Analysis* (1980), perhaps the best book in a period of several years, nor is there a word about John Nunn's well-known status as the most respected theoretical writer in the world today. Even the writings of Euwe and Fine are given insufficient attention.

Certainly there are always enormous organizational problems in creating an encyclopedic work: allocating space equitably, dealing with "unreasonable" publisher's demands for both brevity and comprehensiveness, curtailing one's personal prejudices in the interest of historical fairness and accuracy, etc. But it is difficult not to question the judgment of authors who included over 100 words on the strange suicide of the problem archivist W. R. Henry, and spent a full page repeating the 19 rules for chessplaying laid down by Joseph Bertin in 1735, but could not find space to even mention Hermann Helms, the longtime "Dean of American Chess."

I must reiterate, because perhaps I have not praised it enough, that the second edition of *The Oxford Companion to Chess* is overall an excellent work. I am saddened, though, to have to warn its potential readers that some of its omissions and conclusions are quite debatable. It seems that with historical works, just as with opening books, the final responsibility for deciding what is correct lies with the reader. Hooper and Whyld have certainly given us a new trove of material on which to exercise independent judgment. ♣

Ruy Lopez Roundup

Bruce Leverett

The Ruy Lopez for the Tournament Player

Gary Lane

Henry Holt, New York, 1992 (Batsford, London, 1991)

FAN, 240 pp., \$19.95 paperback

The Complete Spanish

Alexei Suetin, translated by Malcolm Gesthuysen

Henry Holt, New York, 1992 (Batsford, London, 1991)

FAN, 224 pp., \$19.95 paperback

Winning with the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation: Fischer's Weapon

Andrew Soltis

Chess Digest, Dallas, 1992

AN, 145 pp., \$16.50 paperback

English-speaking chess players have waited a long time for a replacement for Leonard Barden's one-volume work on the Ruy Lopez, published thirty years ago. In 1973 Chess Digest published a translation of the relevant sections of *Spanisch bis Französisch* by Keres, produced as cheaply as possible, but still valuable. In 1987 Batsford published Shaun Taulbut's *How to Play the Ruy Lopez*. This discussed the whole Ruy Lopez, but it was not quite the same kind of opening book. Each chapter analyzed one or more whole games, with discussion of side variations limited to those relevant to the analysis of the chosen games. Batsford must have liked this format, for they have now published *The Ruy Lopez for the Tournament Player* by IM Gary Lane (author of *The c3 Sicilian*, Crowood, 1990) organized along similar lines. But at the same time they have published GM Alexei Suetin's *The Complete Spanish*, an opening treatise in the traditional style that its author has practiced successfully for decades.

Both books give the appearance of being up-to-date, with citations of games through 1990, and the expected shifts of emphasis in the main variations. For instance, in the Closed Defense (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), the fashionable Zaitsev variation (9 ... ♗b7) is given plenty of space, at the expense of the older alternatives, the Chigorin (9 ... ♗a5), the Breyer

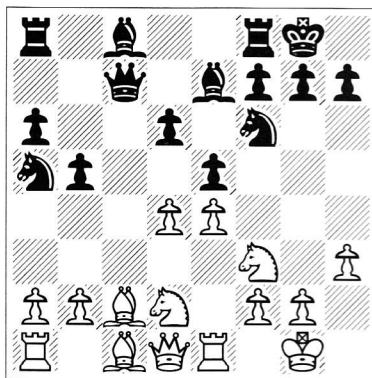
Bruce Leverett is a USCF Senior Master, the author of Sicilian Defense: Velimirovic Attack, and a contributor to the 13th edition of Modern Chess Openings. He holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Carnegie Mellon University, and lives in Pittsburgh.

(9 ... ♖b8), and the Smyslov (9 ... h6). Not surprisingly, given the difference in format, Lane discusses the whys and wherefores in greater depth. He has also, in some cases, done better trend spotting. For instance, he devotes part of a chapter to 9 a4 against the Closed defense, explaining the motivation (it discourages 9 ... ♗b7, which transposes into the Zaitsev with an extra tempo for White, who avoided playing 9 h3), and quoting several of Ljubojevic's games, including his nice win over Karpov at the Dubai Olympiad. Suetin dismisses the move, quoting only some analysis by Polugaevsky. Another example from the Closed defense is the line 9 h3 ♗a5 10 ♗c2 c5 11 d4 ♖c7 12 ♗bd2 cxd4 13 cxd4 (**D 1**) ♗d7. Lane analyzes the game Tal–Hjartarsson, Reykjavik 1986, which demonstrates the maneuver 14 ♗f1 ♖ac8 15 ♗e3 ♗c6 16 d5 ♗b4 17 ♗b1 a5 18 a3 ♗a6 19 b4! that put this variation under a cloud. Suetin quotes a less critical game in this case, but he evens the score by discussing 13 ... ♗c6, an important move that Lane doesn't even mention, and briefly addressing 13 ... ♗b7 and 13 ... ♖d8.

Constrained by his format, Lane could not have written as “complete” book as Suetin has done, so he had to sacrifice many of the more obscure sidelines. Some of the variations omitted, however, are not so obscure: 4 d3 against the Schliemann; 9 ... ♗e7 against 9 c3 in the Open; 11 c4 against the Breyer; and several lines in the Steinitz Deferred, including the Siesta (5 c3 f5), the kingside fianchetto, the Duras variation, and the lines with 5 0–0 ♗g4. At the cost of a few more pages, these omissions might have been corrected, doing justice to what is otherwise a thorough job.

Winning with the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation by the prolific GM Andrew Soltis is an example of another trendy format, the “repertoire book.” The usual idea is to prescribe one set of lines for one player (White in this case), and to examine only those lines. The opponent's replies must still be covered thoroughly, but in principle, the player hoping to learn enough about the Exchange Variation to start playing the White side will find it easier. He does not have to read about three or four alternatives at each move only to discard all but one.

In practice, the concept is disappointing. For example, after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5 0–0 f6 6 d4 ♗g4, Soltis recommends 7 dxe5, so he ignores the body of theory starting with 7 c3. His analysis of 7 dxe5 is quite promising, but what if it doesn't work for me? If I want to switch to 7 c3, I must find another book. This selectivity might be justified if the repertoire were based on some complex variation starting with 4 ♗a4, but the Exchange Variation does not have enough theory to justify the “repertoire” treatment; at the cost of a

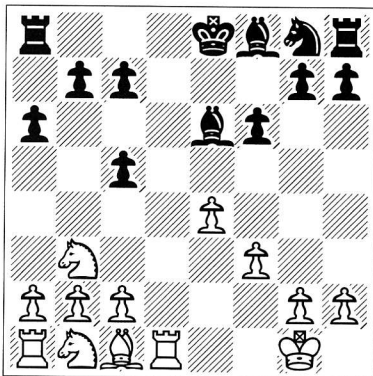


1 ■ How do they cover this position?

dozen more pages, Soltis could have produced essentially complete coverage of White's major alternatives, including the primitive 5 d4 with which Lasker bedeviled his rivals. However, in the variations covered by the "repertoire," the book is quite successful. I found no serious lapses of coverage, and the analysis is a model of helpfulness combined with depth and precision.

The last chapter, almost a third of the book, analyzes Fischer's nine recorded games with the Exchange variation. This nicely complements the opening book, especially as Fischer did not always adhere to the recommended "repertoire." Soltis's ability to dig deeply into historical background of variations and games, which enhances all his analysis, is shown best in this chapter.

By now the story of the ninth game of the recent Fischer–Spassky match has been widely circulated: Fischer sprang a novelty in the Exchange Variation, which Spassky was unable to handle; Fischer's move was not really new, having been played in an older game between Biyiasis and Vukovic; the older game appeared in print only in Soltis's book; and Ken Smith announced that the first copy of Soltis's book went to none other than Fischer. All very intriguing!



2 □ Fischer's weapon—the book itself?

The variation in question begins 1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5 0–0 f6 6 d4 exd4 7 ♗xd4 c5 8 ♗b3 ♖xd1 9 ♗xd1 ♗g4!? 10 f3 ♗e6 (D 2). Now, Suetin quotes one game, which continued with 11 ♗f4—a critical line, but not relevant to the Fischer–Spassky game. Soltis gives the whole Biyiasis–Vukovic game as his main variation: 11 ♗e3 b6 12 a4 ♗d6 13 a5 0–0–0 14 ♗c3 ♗b7 15 e5! ♗e7 16 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 17 ♗e4! (Biyiasis' new move), and Black has plenty to worry about. Lane gives the whole game Chandler–Ivanchuk, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, which continued 11 ♗e3 b6 12 a4 ♗e7! 13 ♗f4 c4 14 ♗d4 0–0–0 15 ♗c3 ♗xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗g6 17 ♗e3 ♗c5, with a quick draw in sight. Surely Lane's choice is more up-to-date than that of Soltis. But

Fischer played 11 ♗c3!, and after 11 ... ♗d6 12 ♗e3 b6 13 a4, the game transposed into Soltis's line. Neither Soltis nor Lane shows a full appreciation of this nuance, although Soltis at least mentions 11 ♗c3. The game continued 13 ... 0–0–0, but Kasparov (quoted in *Chess Life*) suggested that 13 ... ♗f7 "should equalize." Soltis shows that this is not easy, quoting several games and including his own analysis.

In general, in all three books I found little else to object to in the authors' analysis, choice of material, and pedagogical style. But once the manuscript leaves the author, responsibility begins to accrue to the editor, publisher, and (in Suetin's case) translator, and here the situation is different. The general state of editing in the chess book field is repre-

sented by Batsford and Chess Digest, who have been at it for donkey's years, and it is abominable. Suetin's book suffers less than Lane's and Soltis's, in which I found diagrams with pieces missing. For example, page 102 of Soltis shows the position after White's fourth move (4 ♖xc6), but White's king knight is missing; page 93 shows the position after 4 ♖xc6 dxc6 5 0-0 ♗d6, but Black's king knight and king rook are switched. Then there are the errors of spelling and typing. Editors are expected to know the difference between "principle" and "principal," but Lane's appears not to. Soltis's third chapter is subtitled "The Main Line Pin," but the top of each page announces "The Main Line Pine." But the blooper prize should probably go to Chess Digest for the front cover of Soltis's book, where the subtitle, "Fischer's Weapon," is preceded by the word "subtitle."

There are errors and omissions of a more substantive nature as well. The translation of Suetin's prose is stilted, occasionally to the point of saying as little as possible with as many words as possible, as in this example (p. 36): "For a long time this continuation was not popular. But now the situation is very different, as there has been intense development of the theory of this line." The author may not be entirely blameless, but the translator should have used more vigorous English prose. Given its organizational scheme, Lane's book desperately needs indexes of variations and players, but has neither. Some variations must be tracked down in unexpected corners. For instance, the line 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 b5 is given as a note in the chapter on the "Anderssen attack" (4 ... ♗f6 5 d3). The Steinitz Defense Deferred is summarily renamed the Steinitz Defense. By comparison, Suetin's book is generally more carefully organized, but there are still some lapses. The names "Classical Chigorin" and "Chigorin (Classical)" are given to two different variations. The Worrall attack (1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e2) gets several pages in one chapter, while the related 5 ♖e2 is dismissed by a brief note in another chapter, with no explanation of the issues of the move order (which Lane, however, does provide). Suetin's book benefits from an index of variations; indexes of variation names and players would also be helpful. Soltis' book is perhaps too short and focused to need an index.

The slapdash editing and publishing of all three books is unfortunate. But the quality of the authors' work shows through. Each of the titles is highly usable for its intended purpose, and I can recommend each one. It has been a good year for the literature of the Ruy Lopez. ♣

I can recommend each book, errors notwithstanding. It has been a good year for the literature of the Ruy Lopez.

The Polgar Sisters— Facts or Rumors?

Christopher Chabris

The Polgar Sisters: Training or Genius?

Cathy Forbes

Henry Holt, New York, 1992 (Batsford, London, 1992)

FAN, 178 pp., paperback, \$16.95

NNo task in writing is more difficult than the biographer's. To locate and assimilate all the available information on an individual, to decide what is relevant, to shape it into a coherent and objective narrative, to draw fair conclusions—all these obligations require mature judgment as well as considerable time.

Chess writers normally restrict their lives of the great players to collections of their best games, usually annotated, and sometimes accompanied by a brief biographical introduction, a chronology, or a list of results. Frequently the recounting of a player's life and career beyond the mere moves and crosstables is left to the player himself. The result can be a vain, self-justifying work, such as Capablanca's *My Chess Career*; or an unrevealing account that admits to a few minor mistakes but no major failings, like the recent *Karpov on Karpov*; or, at best, an entertaining behind-the-scenes set of anecdotes like Soltis's *Confessions of a Chess Grandmaster*. But it can never be considered authoritative or even-handed.

Occasionally, independent biographers have depicted great players in detail. Sometimes this amounts to simply gathering and translating primary source materials, without offering too much interpretation. Due to the paucity of simple documentation on important issues in chess history, such efforts (like Edward Winter's *Capablanca*) are vitally important. Only a few noteworthy attempts at full-scale biography have been made, most typically Frank Brady's two editions of *Profile of a Prodigy: The Life and Games of Bobby Fischer*, optioned last year for motion picture development. Characterized by careful research,



Zsuzsa Polgar

Christopher Chabris is Editor in Chief of American Chess Journal. Daniel Edelman assisted in the preparation of this article.

informed by a variety of sources, and including a selection of game scores, it set the standard for future chess biographies.

Ambitious Goals

Cathy Forbes, a British Women's International Master who has also published a book of her own games and poems, deserves credit for trying to go beyond the traditional "best games" format and include real biographical material in *The Polgar Sisters: Training or Genius?* In fact, she attempts to cover the lives and games of *three* players—Zsuzsa, Zsofia, and Judit Polgar—and to consider what underlies the unprecedented success these women have achieved in a male-dominated field.

The accomplishments of the Polgars are well known. Zsuzsa, the trailblazer, avoided competing in women-only events while her parents, Laszlo and Klara, resisted the Hungarian government's old-fashioned, segregationist policies. Eventually she became the third woman ever to earn the (male) grandmaster title. The second sister, Zsofia, is most famous for her score of 8½/9 and performance rating of 2879 in Rome 1989. The youngest, Judit, in winning the Hungarian championship in December 1991, broke Fischer's record to become the youngest GM ever. Now Zsuzsa has won the candidates tournament for the women's world championship; Judit is thought to be a future opponent for Kasparov or his successor; and Zsofia continues to work on her own GM title.

Forbes starts by asserting that no book published in any language deals "comprehensively with the games and careers of the Polgar sisters," implying that her goal is to redress the situation. But she admits that "giving an insight into the lifestyle and personalities of such young people is a sensitive and delicate matter," suggesting that she will take extra care to be accurate and equitable in discussing her subjects, the oldest of whom was 23 when the book was published.

Part One of the book considers what Forbes calls "The Polgar Experiment," Laszlo's announced plan to use his daughters to demonstrate the validity of his pedagogical theories, which stress the importance of training over innate talent in developing exceptional ability in any field. Part Two gives a chronological account of the careers of the sisters, with tournament results, games, and game fragments from all three woven into a single narrative. Forbes ends with a postscript on the prospects for each sister's career. An index of openings is included—as if this were a games collection rather than a multi-subject biography—but no indexes are provided for names or general terms.

Good Games, Bad Notes

The clearest strength of *The Polgar Sisters* is the collection of data it presents: about 80 complete games and many additional fragments through 1991, including several early efforts that would otherwise be considered "rare." Thus Forbes satisfies her goal of dealing with the

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sisters' games, but her selection is only a start at doing a "comprehensive" job. Besides more games, it could have included a larger proportion of draws and losses. Forbes is hardly the only author to choose quick wins and flashy combinations at the expense of less familiar games that might give more insight into a player's strengths and weaknesses, but a book should delve deeper than magazines and newspapers do.

A book should also feature annotations of greater substance than this randomly chosen example, which reads more like a soap opera plot than an explanation of a chess game: "White has played far too insipidly and Black has taken full advantage of this. Showing fine technique, [Zsuzsa] now ruthlessly exploits her advantage. Lobron, meanwhile, exhausts his allotted time in a vain attempt to escape her clutches" (p. 82).

The analysis also suffers from the annotation-by-result syndrome. For example, the last game in the book (pp. 170–171) is Tolnai–J. Polgar, a victory by Judit in the Sicilian Defense. According to the punctuation, Black makes two very good moves (!), and White makes no mistakes (?) or even dubious moves (?!). But why should White lose a game without making even a minor error? Judit's own notes in *Chess Informant 53* (game 173) are more logical. She proposes that her 18th move, awarded an exclamation point by Forbes, was actually questionable, and that Tolnai's bad reaction permitted her clever winning combination. With a better 19th move he could have gained a clear advantage, and Judit might not have become Hungarian champion or broken Fischer's record. Forbes's notes to this game make it seem more or less routine.

However, she generally avoids the common pitfall of offering reductive assessments ("aggressive," "positional," "precise") of the sisters' styles and tendencies. She also points out several of the questionable career moves the family has made, especially entering Judit in the Women's Olympiad, various junior competitions, and lucrative exhibitions where she "wastes time" and dulls her game by playing weak opponents, while fellow prodigy Gata Kamsky takes his lumps (but learns his lessons) from the world's best in Linares. Forbes does not stress this issue, but it can hardly be optimal for any player, male or female, to prepare for a future world championship match without a regular coach or trainer. The Polgars have many training camps and sessions with various grandmasters, but work with none on a consistent basis.

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Before *The Polgar Sisters* appeared, English readers could only piece together the Polgar saga from various newspaper and magazine articles, most of which were reports of tournaments rather than profiles or investigative pieces. As Forbes often reminds us, the seemingly intensive media coverage accorded the Polgars wherever they go is usually devoid of substance: "The actual chess was almost completely buried beneath a ton of hype" (p. 103) during a visit by Zsuzsa and Judit to England in 1988.

Forbes gets into trouble as soon as she ventures beyond the basic facts and dates. Her most shocking material is based on rumors and anonymous allegations.

When the entire family came to New York for the U. S. Chess Festival in the summer of 1992 the situation was repeated. The press likes to idealize itself as a band of independent investigators who pursue and develop stories in competition with one another. In reality, however, the press often acts as a chorus of voices all singing the same song—accomplished mimics, able to effortlessly report the same facts, descriptions, even quotations as everyone else. “Would-be Chess Queen: Visiting New Brunswick, Hungarian Vows to Face Champ,” said the *Newark Star-Ledger*. “All the Right Moves: Judit Polgar, 16, Could Be the First Woman World Chess Champion,” repeated *People* a few weeks later, with the addition of some nice photographs. Only Bruce Weber, whose article “Growing Up with Judit Polgar: Chess Moves Are Planned, Birthdays Happen” appeared in *The New York Times* (5 August 1992), went beyond the gee-whiz-a-young-female-grandmaster stereotype, but he missed most of the important issues about the Polgars, and was taken in like the rest by the “surprise” 16th birthday party that Judit actually knew about well in advance.

So Forbes deserves credit for presenting in chronological order a fair amount of material, including many quotations from published articles, on the sisters’ careers. Most readers will learn a lot about the Polgars from the book, simply because previous coverage has been so consistently shallow. The book’s format could be improved by separating the text from the games and adding transitions to produce a single narrative, but the entertainment value is already high.

Unfortunately, Forbes gets into trouble as soon as she ventures beyond the basic facts and dates. Then she comes across as the Kitty Kelly of the chess world, as her most shocking material is based on rumors and anonymous allegations.

According to Laszlo Polgar, who responded to written questions for this review, Forbes “never spoke to us about the book, never asked us for an interview, for information.” Certainly Forbes might have been turned down if she had approached the Polgars, but how could she know for sure? *The Washington Post* obtained an interview with Laszlo in 1991, despite his initial insistence on a \$2,000 fee, which was refused. Bruce Weber wrote his profile after attending Judit’s birthday party and going sightseeing with the family in New York City. Perhaps a warning from Forbes that a book would appear, interview or no, would have convinced the Polgars to allocate some of their time.

Of course, for a book-length work, what is necessary is repeated observation of the subjects over a period of months or years, at best as a “fly on the wall.” But a simple interview, at least to discuss a few key incidents and allegations, would have been infinitely better than the



Zsafia Polgar

approach Forbes apparently took, of placing almost total reliance on secondary sources and off-the-record quotations. One has to wonder about the reliability of a book that needs to report (p. 64) that Zsuzsa Polgar's favorite movie "has been rumoured" to be *Dirty Dancing*. Why not just ask? On page 79 we are informed of a conversation overheard in a bathroom. At least its source and subjects are fully identified, something that cannot be said for the passage (p. 173) where Forbes explains that the "impression" that Zsuzsa has "the least motivation or inclination" for chess

is strengthened in particular by the sensational rumour that hit the chess world in 1990: Sofia had rebelled. She had wanted to stop playing chess—at least, for a while.

Laszlo, so ran the story, had responded with displeasure. Under pressure, Sofia, despite clearly desiring greater freedom from what must have felt sometimes like a stifling, chess-dominated regime, gave in and continued to play chess. She had, however, discussed with a leading Grandmaster and his wife the possibility of staying with them for a time, presumably to remove herself from an overheated domestic situation, for a "cooling-off" period. In the end this did not happen, but the fact that Sofia was known to have contemplated it is highly significant. It is not that this episode indicates a lack of love for chess *per se* (any chess player's feelings towards the game can stray towards ambivalence), but what does come across clearly is a child needing a break from a circus in full swing.

Laszlo Polgar's reaction to this passage was an absolute denial: "Zsuzsa did not rebel in 1990, nor at any other time did she want to stop playing. We do not know from where Forbes got this." Probably the truth is somewhere in between the two accounts. Zsuzsa is certainly lower-rated than her sisters, and compared with their GM titles she has only one possible norm, from her phenomenal Rome performance. Nowadays, at 18, she seems to express a bit less excitement and fascination with the game. But to say she "rebelled" and wanted to cease playing entirely, especially to attach great importance to the idea, is irresponsible unless you present the proof, or at least also acknowledge that her family denies that the episode ever occurred. And without information on sources, or even the identity of the "leading grandmaster," the reader has no way to assess Forbes's credibility on the matter.

Of the many similar examples, this may be the most ominous (p. 49):

... from the mid-eighties unofficial whisperings and rumours began to sound a more disturbing note.

It was claimed, for instance, by players who had observed the children playing in competitive situations that their consistently high performance rate owed much to a cruder "pedagogical" motivant than those didactically expounded by Laszlo Polgar: namely, fear. "Fear of losing," said one Hungarian player, "is a great motivator. I myself always play my best when I am terrified of losing."

So far, only the usual rumors and anonymous comments. But Forbes continues:

Significantly, the young Maya Chiburdanidze was beaten by her elder sister when she lost a game, thereby instilling into the girl a well-founded aversion to defeat on the chessboard.

Their father, it is said, is angry when the girls do not do well. And when you consider that in a sense his entire life's work, in the final analysis, stands or falls on the achievements of his daughters, this is not such a surprising thought.

As before, Forbes claims "significance" for rumors she does not support, and here cannot even plainly state. She insinuates that Laszlo Polgar physically punishes his daughters for poor results, and implies that they are motivated to play so well by fear of losing rather than the thrill of victory, or plain love of the game. To leave less room for future reporting-by-rumor, perhaps the Polgars will become more friendly with the media as the sisters continue their remarkable progress. But one wonders what happened here to Forbes's professed sensitivity and delicacy.

Psychological Breakdown

If *The Polgar Sisters* offers a good first try at collecting the interesting games of its subjects, and an entertaining if unreliable account of their lives, it fails completely to live up to its lofty subtitle, *Training or Genius?*

Forbes spends 18 rambling pages on Laszlo Polgar's self-described "experiment" to test his "theory." She begins by describing Laszlo's Hungarian book *Bring Up Genius!* as "authoritative," and explains that his theory is that "there is no such thing as innate genius, and that the extent of a child's achievement is determined largely by educational methods (i.e., environmental factors)." This is not a theory, merely an opinion on a controversial psychological issue. Surely there is more to Laszlo's ideas, but hardly anything of substance is ever said about them. Forbes quickly moves on to dismiss Laszlo's critics in the following obtuse section (p. 15; note the skeptical quotation marks around "flaws" and the question mark after the title):

'Flaws' in the Theory?

Those claiming that the Polgar sisters do not prove anything of universal relevance might say things along the following lines:

a) Laszlo and Klara Polgar, both being teachers of clearly above average abilities, have produced three children genetically far above the average as their 'raw material' i.e. their methods would not work as well, or at all, with children inherently less bright. Or perhaps:

b) They are merely accelerating the rate of their children's development; the girls might well have a ceiling on their potential which will simply be reached earlier than if they had been traditionally educated.

She leaves out the most basic objection, that any study of human subjects with sample size three (or one), is unlikely to "prove" anything of any relevance. It can only illuminate the truth, suggest avenues of further investigation, and perhaps disprove the most absolutist positions, which are neither true nor widely held in most cases. In a section called "The Jewish Inheritance" she concludes that "of course" cultural factors, not

Forbes's feminist arguments have no significance in addressing scientific questions about the cognitive differences between men and women.

genetic ones, explain the historical success of Jews in chess. In reality, conclusive evidence is not available for either position.

Although she marshals no serious arguments, Forbes makes it clear that she endorses Laszlo's side of the debate over environmental versus innate influences on ability. In fact she must, since she next sets out to explain why women's chess ability is equal to men's. She refers for support to "unabashedly feminist arguments" and such experts as Simone de Beauvoir. But while these arguments and experts may be useful and authoritative in public policy or the social sciences, they have no significance in addressing real scientific questions—in this case, about general cognitive and neurological differences between men and women.

Nevertheless, Forbes quickly sets up a straw man (p. 18):

Many 'learned' articles, such as David Spanier's "Women are Check-mated" (*The Times*, 7th August 1984) have been devoted to the investigation of pseudo-scientific reasons for women's supposed inferior ability at chess. The so-called 'visual-spatial' theory, in particular, has received a great deal of attention.

... women perform worse than men in tests measuring 'visual-spatial' skills. Spanier then goes on to classify chess as a 'visual-spatial' game, and to infer that women are thus doomed to be weaker.

Of course, your rhetorical task is easier when you call newspaper articles "learned," reduce decades of psychological research to "so-called" theories with simplistic names, and fail to address any of the real scientific studies of the mental abilities of men and women. Forbes tries to "pick a few specific holes" in such "sexist theories," citing Laszlo, who supposedly cites Bela Bartok (why?) for his support: "Apply equal standards, please. Women ought to be free to do the same things as men ..." Does Forbes actually not understand that proposing a biological or psychological difference has nothing to do with altering standards or rights? If the clear consensus of psychology researchers is that men are relatively better at spatial tasks, and women relatively better at linguistic tasks, will she accuse them of advocating discrimination, and then cavalierly dismiss them with an exhortation to read Betty Friedan and correct their wrong thinking?



Judit Polgar

When Forbes does reach the topic of male attitudes towards female players, she strives to be fair-minded (p. 21): "Now I'm not suggesting that all male chess players are woman-haters and/or repressed homosexuals." Thanks for clarifying that.

Forbes is simply out of her depth throughout the first three chapters. Besides misunderstanding the nature of an experiment and how much can be generalized from a single example, she thinks that the existence of blind chessplayers disproves the "visual-spatial" theory, and she describes chess as more a "language" than a spatial task. Ignoring

scientific evidence to the contrary, she bases this last claim partly on her belief that chess is a “sister science” of computing, which has “programming languages”—overlooking the game’s much closer affinities with mathematics and music, which both have significant spatial aspects.

The final verdict on the lessons of the Polgars’ success awaits the progress of their careers. All we can say now is that their achievements so far refute the ridiculous claim that *all* women are incapable of playing chess against men at high levels, but it would be just as unwise to generalize from their example that *any* woman can do so. No one would claim that the mere existence of Nabokov, Cheever, and Updike disproves the idea that women generally have better verbal abilities than men. The Polgars’ extensive training and practice could actually make them the exceptions that prove the rules; without such a regime, the average woman might not be as skilled as the average man, and a player born without “genius” might never acquire surpassing talent for the game.

One Cheer for Forbes

The Polgars, especially Judit, have rapidly become some of the top draws in the chess world, surpassing Karpov and rivaling Kasparov as the most sought-after players (after Bobby Fischer, of course) for tournaments, exhibitions, product endorsements, and media interviews. Commenting on his newfound competition, Kasparov said (apparently in 1990, p. 149), “they are spoiling the professional chess world with their conditions. If the organizers provide such great conditions for potential talent this is very bad for professional chess ...” Naturally, Laszlo disagrees, claiming not that the sisters fully deserve as much as Kasparov, but that in reality they earn only “one or two percent” of what he receives. This sounds a bit low, but the whole dispute is silly. If chess is to become a truly professional sport, it will need to become more and more media-driven, and the players who are the biggest media attractions will earn the most money. There is nothing wrong with that.

But there is something wrong with a book that relies as extensively on hearsay and innuendo as *The Polgar Sisters: Training or Genius?* does, and an author who so thoroughly misunderstands and condescends to a field as Forbes does to cognitive psychology.

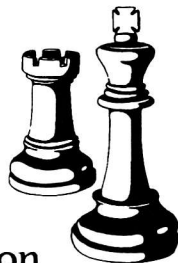
Even though Forbes’s book may not meet the standard set by Brady, I cannot agree with Laszlo Polgar’s final assessment—that it “strives to portray us in a negative light.” Forbes has produced an adequate selection of games, supplemented by an entertaining account of the sisters’ careers, that is slipshod in its reporting and reasoning but probably not malicious. Read it for the game scores, crosstables, and amusing first-hand anecdotes, but don’t take the rest seriously.

Forbes concludes by noting the undeniable charm of the Polgar sisters, and wonders what it is like for them to “wake, every day ... to the experience of genius.” It has to be better than the experience of training. ♣

Read *The Polgar Sisters* for the game scores, crosstables, and amusing first-hand anecdotes, but don’t take the rest seriously.

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