

Richard Shorman

Chess

EINSTEIN ON LASKER

(Though not a chess player himself, Albert Einstein once expressed some cogent thoughts concerning the nature of Emanuel Lasker's relationship with the game he dominated for 27 years as world champion.)

"I met Emanuel Lasker at the house of my old friend, Alexander Moszkowski, and came to know him well in the course of many walks in which we exchanged opinions about the most varied questions. It was a somewhat one-sided exchange, in which I received more than I gave. For it was usually more natural for this eminently productive man to shape his own thoughts than to busy himself with those of another.

"To my mind, there was a tragic note in his personality, despite his fundamentally affirmative attitude toward life. The enormous psychological tension, without which nobody can be a chess master, was so deeply interwoven with chess that he could never entirely rid himself of the spirit of the game, even when he was occupied with philosophic and human problems. At the same time, it seemed to me that chess was more a profession for him than the real goal of his life. His real yearning seems to be directed toward scientific understanding and the beauty inherent only in local creation, a beauty so enchanting that nobody who has once caught a glimpse of it can ever escape it.

"Spinoza's material existence and independence were based on the grinding of lenses; chess had an analogous role in Lasker's life. But Spinoza was granted a better fate, because his occupation left his mind free and untroubled, while, on the other hand, the chess playing of a master ties him to the game, fetters his mind and shapes it to a certain extent so that his internal freedom and ease, no matter how strong he is, must inevitably be affected. In our conversations and in the reading of his philosophical books, I always had that feeling. Of these books, "The Philosophy of the Unattainable" interested me most; the book is not only very original, but it also affords a deep insight into Lasker's entire personality.

"But I liked Lasker's immovable independence, a rare human attribute, in which respect almost all, including intelligent people, are mediocrities. . . . I am thankful for the hours of conversation which this ever striving, independent, simple man granted me."

(Abridged from "Chess Review," May 1955, pg. 130).

White: Lasker. Black: Herzfeld.
Berlin, 1895.
King's Gambit Accepted

1 e4	e5	15 Rh5!	Bf4
2 f4	ef	16 gf(d)	Bf7
3 Nf3	g5	17 Qh2!(e)	Nd4
4 h4	g4	18 Rg1	Bh5
5 Ng5	d5(a)	19 Qh5	Ne7
6 d4!(b)	h6	20 Qg4	Kf7
7 Nf7	Kf7	21 f5(f)	Ne5(g)
8 Bf4	Bd6(c)	22 Qg6	Ke7
9 e5	Be7	23 Qf6!	Kd7
10 Bd3!	Bh4	24 Bf5	Nf5
11 g3	Bg5	25 Qf5	Kc6(h)
12 Qd2	Kg7	26 Rg6	Kc5
13 Nc3	Be6	27 Qd3	Qd7(i)
14 O-O-O	Nc6	28 b4!	Resigns(j)

(Modified notes by Bruce Hayden in "Chess Review", Feb. 1956, pg. 44)

- (a) Black varies from the classical win of the knight in the Allgaier gambit with 5. . . f6.
- (b) Lasker calmly ignores any attempt at variations on that win; for now if 6. . . f6, White can regain the piece by 7 Bf4 fg 8 Be5 Nf6 9 hg.
- (c) If Black wishes to provoke the closing of the center, he's being much too "scientific," for he lets White get in a useful move with gain of tempo. A better idea is 8. . . Nf6.
- (d) Most of the Allgaiers which reach the books show hairbreadth sacrifices by White as if the club is due to close and the lights to go out any minute. Lasker solidly builds up his central pawn phalanx and opens fresh lines against Black's king side.
- (e) Again, Lasker's move is based on solid positional reasons and control of more squares.
- (f) As Herzfeld realizes, White is busy with plans to sacrifice Black's pieces while still keeping up the pressure.
- (g) On 21. . . Ndf5 White transposes back into the game continuation with 22 Bf5 Nf5 23 Qf5 Ke7 (23. . . Ke8 24 Rg7) 24 Qf6, etc.
- (h) Otherwise, 26 Rg7 finishes Black off at once.
- (i) Black may be excused for preventing the immediate mate by attempting to bring what is left of his superior material into the fray and overlooking White's neat finish.
- (j) Lasker winds up with an announced mate in four moves: 28. . . Kb4 29 Qd4 Ka3 30 Nb1 Ka2 31 Qb2mate, or 29. . . Ka5 30 Qc5 b5 31 Qa3mate.

"CHESS IS A STRUGGLE"

Dr. Max Euwe, world champion 1935-37: Emanuel Lasker used to say that "Chess is a struggle." I fully agree with him. Lasker believed, and I think he was right, that the struggle on the 64 squares, the sport over the chess board, can be studied and advanced on a scientific basis.

The aesthetic side, in my opinion, takes place mostly in chess studies. Individual games played at tournaments may also be considered from the point of view of aesthetics, but one gets such an opportunity not too often. I think that it is impossible to consider every position from the point of view of art.

The main object in the game of chess remains the achievement of victory. This determines it as a sport. If any person were to make a weak move with the sole object of setting up a beautiful position, anyone would tell you that this is a bad move. ("Chess Review," Jan. 1961, pg. 1).

HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The fourth annual Northern California High School and Pre-High School Chess Championships and National Qualifier will take place at the Lockheed facility in Sunnyvale, March 17-18. Play will be in three sections, with prizes to top individuals and top teams (sum of four highest scores from one school): Varsity (6-round USCF-rated Swiss open), Jr. Varsity (6-round USCF-rated Swiss for players under 1400 or unrated) and Beginner (4-round unrated Swiss open for non-USCF members). Publicity assistance requested. Please contact Bryce Perry, Tournament Director, P.O. Box 11306-A, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306; phone (days), (415) 326-6200, ext. 4708.

CHESS CALENDAR FOR '79

CalChess Treasurer Bryce Perry has compiled and published a 1979 Calendar of Chess, containing better than two dozen black-and-white photographs, drawings and a brace of games from the Korchnoi-Karpov world championship. The birthdays and deathdays of nearly 200 famous and not-so-famous players are sprinkled throughout the calendar. Post-paid copies of this copyrighted wall calendar may be obtained for \$3.50 each from Bryce Perry, P.O. Box 11306-A, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306.