

# **Alexander Alekhine**

## **CHESS DUELS 1924 – 1926**

**198 Games Annotated by  
Alexander Alekhine**

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Translated and Edited by Ken Neat

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# Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	11
<b>PART ONE: GAMES PLAYED IN USA, 1924</b>	
<b>New York 1924</b>	
<b>First Round</b>	
1. D. Janowsky – J. R. Capablanca	13
2. F. Yates – Alekhine	14
3. F. Marshall – R. Reti	18
4. Ed. Lasker – G. Maroczy	21
5. S. Tartakower – E. Bogoljubow	23
<b>Second Round</b>	
6. Em. Lasker – J. R. Capablanca	28
7. G. Maroczy – A. Alekhine	29
8. F. Marshall – S. Tartakower	31
9. Ed. Lasker – E. Bogoljubow	33
10. F. Yates – D. Janowsky	36
<b>Third Round</b>	
11. A. Alekhine – Em. Lasker	39
12. J. R. Capablanca – Ed. Lasker	41
13. E. Bogoljubow – F. Marshall	42
14. R. Reti – G. Maroczy	44
15. S. Tartakower – F. Yates	46
<b>Fourth Round</b>	
16. D. Janowsky – Em. Lasker	49
17. J. R. Capablanca – A. Alekhine	52
18. E. Bogoljubow – R. Reti	56
19. S. Tartakower – G. Maroczy	59
20. F. Yates – Ed. Lasker	62
<b>Fifth Round</b>	
21. Em. Lasker – S. Tartakower	66
22. R. Reti – J. R. Capablanca	67
23. F. Marshall – F. Yates	70
24. G. Maroczy – E. Bogoljubow	72
25. Ed. Lasker – D. Janowsky	74

### **Sixth Round**

26. Em. Lasker – Ed. Lasker	77
27. J. R. Capablanca – S. Tartakower	83
28. A. Alekhine – D. Janowsky	85
29. G. Maroczy – F. Marshall	87
30. R. Reti – F. Yates	90

### **Seventh Round**

31. G. Maroczy – Em. Lasker	92
32. J. R. Capablanca – F. Yates	94
33. A. Alekhine – F. Marshall	97
34. R. Reti – Ed. Lasker	101
35. E. Bogoljubow – D. Janowsky	104

### **Eighth Round**

36. E. Bogoljubow – Em. Lasker	106
37. J. R. Capablanca – G. Maroczy	113
38. A. Alekhine – R. Reti	114
39. D. Janowsky – F. Marshall	118
40. S. Tartakower – Ed. Lasker	122

### **Ninth Round**

41. F. Marshall – Em. Lasker	124
42. E. Bogoljubow – J. R. Capablanca	128
43. S. Tartakower – A. Alekhine	130
44. D. Janowsky – R. Reti	133
45. F. Yates – G. Maroczy	135

### **Tenth Round**

46. Em. Lasker – R. Reti	139
47. F. Marshall – J. R. Capablanca	140
48. Ed. Lasker – A. Alekhine	143
49. F. Yates – E. Bogoljubow	148
50. D. Janowsky – S. Tartakower	150

### **Eleventh Round**

51. Em. Lasker – F. Yates	152
52. A. Alekhine – E. Bogoljubow	154
53. Ed. Lasker – F. Marshall	157
54. R. Reti – S. Tartakower	161
55. G. Maroczy – D. Janowsky	164

### **Twelfth Round**

56. Em. Lasker – D. Janowsky	167
57. A. Alekhine – J. R. Capablanca	171
58. R. Reti – E. Bogoljubow	172
59. G. Maroczy – S. Tartakower	174
60. Ed. Lasker – F. Yates	175

### **Thirteenth Round**

61. Em. Lasker – E. Bogoljubow	177
62. G. Maroczy – J. R. Capablanca	180
63. R. Reti – A. Alekhine	184
64. F. Marshall – D. Janowsky	186
65. Ed. Lasker – S. Tartakower	188

### **Fourteenth Round**

66. J. R. Capablanca – Em. Lasker	190
67. A. Alekhine – G. Maroczy	195
68. S. Tartakower – F. Marshall	197
69. E. Bogoljubow – Ed. Lasker	200
70. D. Janowsky – F. Yates	202

### **Fifteenth Round**

71. J. R. Capablanca – D. Janowsky	205
72. A. Alekhine – F. Yates	208
73. R. Reti – F. Marshall	210
74. G. Maroczy – Ed. Lasker	213
75. E. Bogoljubow – S. Tartakower	217

### **Sixteenth Round**

76. R. Reti – Em. Lasker	220
77. J. R. Capablanca – F. Marshall	224
78. A. Alekhine – Ed. Lasker	226
79. E. Bogoljubow – F. Yates	230
80. S. Tartakower – D. Janowsky	234

### **Seventeenth Round**

81. F. Yates – Em. Lasker	235
82. E. Bogoljubow – A. Alekhine	238
83. F. Marshall – Ed. Lasker	242
84. S. Tartakower – R. Reti	244
85. D. Janowsky – G. Maroczy	248

### **Eighteenth Round**

86. Em. Lasker – A. Alekhine	249
87. Ed. Lasker – J. R. Capablanca	251
88. F. Marshall – E. Bogoljubow	256
89. G. Maroczy – R. Reti	259
90. F. Yates – S. Tartakower	261

### **Nineteenth Round**

91. Ed. Lasker – Em. Lasker	263
92. S. Tartakower – J. R. Capablanca	265
93. D. Janowsky – A. Alekhine	267
94. F. Marshall – G. Maroczy	270
95. F. Yates – R. Reti	272

### **Twentieth Round**

96. Em. Lasker – G. Maroczy	274
97. F. Yates – J. R. Capablanca	277
98. F. Marshall – A. Alekhine	280
99. Ed. Lasker – R. Reti	282
100. D. Janowsky – E. Bogoljubow	285

### **Twenty First Round**

101. S. Tartakower – Em. Lasker	288
102. J. R. Capablanca – R. Reti	290
103. F. Yates – F. Marshall	292
104. E. Bogoljubow – G. Maroczy	295
105. D. Janowsky – Ed. Lasker	297

### **Twenty Second Round**

106. Em. Lasker – F. Marshall	301
107. J. R. Capablanca – E. Bogoljubow	303
108. A. Alekhine – S. Tartakower	306
109. R. Reti – D. Janowsky	308
110. G. Maroczy – F. Yates	310

### **Other Games 1924**

111. A. Alekhine – M. Pinkus, New York 1924	313
112. A. Alekhine – J. Monsky, New York 1924	315
113. A. Alekhine – A. Freiman, New York 1924	317
114. A. Alekhine – H. Steiner, New York 1924	318
115. Ruchnik et al. – E. Bogoljubow, Kiev 1924	321
116. P. Johner – R. Teichmann, Berlin 1924	324

**PART TWO:  
GAMES PLAYED IN EUROPE I. (1924-1925)**

**Hastings 1924-5**

117. S. Tartakower – H. Saunders	329
118. A. Steiner – D. Przepiorka	330
119. H. Saunders – E. Colle	331
120. G. Maroczy – R. Michell	332
121. F. Yates – J. Seitz	333
122. L. Steiner – F. Yates	336
123. E. Colle – A. Steiner	337
124. D. Przepiorka – J. Seitz	338

**Paris 1925**

125. E. Colle – A. Alekhine	340
126. E. Znosko-Borovsky – A. Alekhine	343
127. A. Alekhine – K. Opočenský	345
128. A. Alekhine – E. Colle	348

**Berne 1925**

129. O. Naegeli – A. Alekhine	351
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**Baden-Baden 1925**

130. A. Alekhine – E. Colle	355
131. S. Tarrasch – A. Alekhine	357
132. A. Nimzowitsch – A. Alekhine	359
133. A. Alekhine – J. Te Kolste	362
134. R. Reti – A. Alekhine	363
135. A. Alekhine – K. Treybal	365
136. G. Thomas – A. Alekhine	368
137. A. Alekhine – F. Sämisch	370
138. A. Alekhine – I. Rabinovich	373
139. J. Mieses – A. Alekhine	374
140. A. Alekhine – F. Marshall	376
141. E. Bogoljubow – A. Alekhine	378
142. A. Alekhine – A. Rubinstein	381

**Marienbad 1925**

143. K. Opočenský – A. Nimzowitsch	385
144. S. Tartakower – F. Sämisch	388
145. C. Torre – F. Yates	391

146. A. Rubinstein – D. Janowsky	392
147. D. Janowsky – F. Sämisch	394

### **Moscow 1925**

148. E. Bogoljubow – E. Grünfeld	396
149. J. R. Capablanca – Em. Lasker	397
150. R. Reti – F. Marshall	399
151. P. Romanovsky – J. R. Capablanca	400
152. F. Marshall – C. Torre	401
153. F. Marshall – Em. Lasker	402

### **Hastings 1925 – 6**

154. E. Colle – A. Alekhine	407
155. A. Alekhine – A. Seitz	409
156. M. Vidmar – F. Yates	411
157. A. Alekhine – F. Yates	414
158. D. Janowsky – A. Alekhine	416

### **Other Games 1925**

159. A. Alekhine – Spauce, Paris 1925	421
160. A. Alekhine – P. Potemkin, Paris 1925	422
161. A. Alekhine – R. Mikulka, Olomouc 1925	424
162. A. Alekhine – J. Novak, Prague 1925	425
163. A. Alekhine – K. Meck, Basel 1925	426

## **PART THREE:**

### **GAMES PLAYED IN EUROPE II. AND SOUTH AMERICA (1926)**

#### **Semmering 1926**

164. A. Alekhine – K. Treybal	429
165. J. Davidson – A. Alekhine	432
166. A. Alekhine – F. Yates	435
167. A. Rubinstein – A. Alekhine	437
168. A. Alekhine – E. Grünfeld	439
169. S. Tarrasch – A. Alekhine	440
170. H. Kmoch – A. Alekhine	441
171. A. Alekhine – R. Reti	443

#### **Dresden 1926**

172. F. Sämisch – A. Alekhine	447
173. A. Alekhine – M. Blümich	450
174. A. Nimzowitsch – A. Alekhine	452



175. A. Alekhine – S. Tartakower	456
176. A. Rubinstein – A. Alekhine	458

### **Scarborough 1926**

177. E. Colle – A. Alekhine	460
178. A. Alekhine – E. Colle	463

### **Birmingham 1926**

179. A. Alekhine – E. Znosko-Borovsky	464
180. J. Mackenzie – A. Alekhine	466

### **South America 1926**

181. A. Alekhine – B. Villegas, Buenos Aires	469
182. A. Alekhine – Piacentini, Buenos Aires	470
183. H. Nollman – A. Alekhine, Buenos Aires	471
184. A. Alekhine – R. Molina, Buenos Aires	474
185. L. Carranza – A. Alekhine, Buenos Aires	475
186. E. Zamudio – A. Alekhine, Buenos Aires	477
187. A. Alekhine – D. Ibanez, Buenos Aires	478
188. A. Alekhine – C. Portela, Buenos Aires	479
189. A. Alekhine – R. Illa, Buenos Aires	481
190. J. Gabarain – A. Alekhine, Montevideo	482
191. A. Alekhine – J. de Freitas, Montevideo	484

### **Alekhine – Euwe Match 1926-7**

192. A. Alekhine – M. Euwe, m/1, Amsterdam	486
193. M. Euwe – A. Alekhine, m/2, Amsterdam	489
194. A. Alekhine – M. Euwe, m/3, Amsterdam	492
195. M. Euwe – A. Alekhine, m/10, Amsterdam	496

### **Other Games 1926**

196. A. Alekhine – N. Schwartz, London	500
197. Fardon & James – A. Alekhine, Birmingham	502
198. M. Euwe – E. Colle, Amsterdam	504

## **APPENDICES**

Translator's Notes	506
Index of Sources	516
Index of Alekhine's Opponents	517
Index of other Players	518
Index of Openings	519



# INTRODUCTION

This is the third volume of our project to publish all the available games annotated by the fourth world chess champion Alexander Alekhine – not only his own games, but also games by other players for which he contributed notes in various publications. The first two volumes covered the periods 1893-1920 and 1921-1924.

The next three years, 1924-1926, saw Alekhine beginning his ascent towards the chess summit. First came the great New York tournament in the spring of 1924. Here Alekhine finished third behind Lasker and Capablanca, and he was then commissioned to write annotations to all 110 games, which first appeared in the German tournament book published in 1925. Translated versions in English and Russian appeared the same year, and a revised edition of the Russian book (1989) has been translated for this present work, thus providing a fresh English version of Alekhine's annotations.

Engaged with his literary activities, Alekhine played in no more tournaments in 1924, although soon after the New York tournament he gave a world record blindfold simultaneous display, a few games from which he annotated for his book *Auf dem Wege zur Weltmeisterschaft*, subsequently published in a Russian translation as *Na puti k vyschim shakhmatnym dostizheniyam*. Many games from later tournaments, in particular Alekhine's triumph in Baden-Baden (1925) and Semmering 1926 (where he finished second behind Spielmann) also appeared there, and have been translated for the present work.

During this period Alekhine annotated games for several periodicals, notably *Weiner Schachzeitung*, *Kagan's Neueste Schachnachrichten*, and also *Shakhmaty*, a private magazine published in Soviet Russia by Nikolai Grekov. Translations of all these have been included here.

Translator's notes have been given where it was felt appropriate. To avoid encumbering the text these have been inserted, with suitable cross-references, at the end of the book.

## PART TWO: GAMES PLAYED IN EUROPE I. (1924-1925)

Hastings International Tournament, December 1924 – January 1925\*

### Section 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<b>1 Maroczy</b>		1	½	1	1	1	1	1	<b>6,5</b>
<b>2 Yates</b>	0		1	½	1	1	1	1	<b>5,5</b>
<b>3 Seitz</b>	½	0		½	1	1	1	1	<b>5,0</b>
<b>4 Michell</b>	0	½	½		½	1	1	1	<b>4,5</b>
<b>5 Bolland</b>	0	0	0	½		0	1	1	<b>2,5</b>
<b>6 Price</b>	0	0	0	0	1		0	1	<b>2,0</b>
<b>7 Saunders</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1		1	<b>2,0</b>
<b>8 Dewing</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		<b>0,0</b>

### Section 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<b>1 Przepiorka</b>		0	½	1	1	½	1	1	<b>5,0</b>
<b>2 Steiner, E.</b>	1		½	½	1	1	0	1	<b>5,0</b>
<b>3 Tartakower</b>	½	½		0	1	1	1	1	<b>5,0</b>
<b>4 Sergeant</b>	0	½	1		½	1	½	1	<b>4,5</b>
<b>5 Colle</b>	0	0	0	½		1	1	0	<b>2,5</b>
<b>6 Norman</b>	½	0	0	0	0		1	1	<b>2,5</b>
<b>7 Saunders</b>	0	1	0	½	0	0		1	<b>2,5</b>
<b>8 Mackenzie</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		<b>1,0</b>

#### Game 117

S. Tartakower – H. Saunders

Hastings-B 1924/5 (2)\*

*English Opening A15*

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 b3 ♙g7 4  
 ♙b2 0–0 5 g3 d6 6 ♙g2 ♘bd7 7 0–0  
 ♘h5

Unfavourable. 7...c6 followed by  
 ...♙c7 and ...♖e8 was advisable.

8 ♙xg7 ♘xg7 9 d4 f5

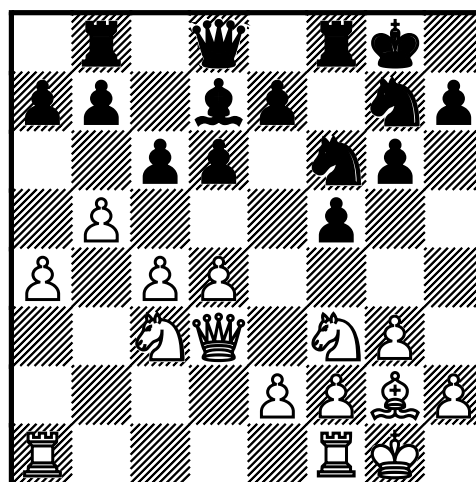
9...e5 was necessary.

10 ♘c3 c6 11 b4

White's strategy is clear: based  
 on the strong bishop diagonal g2–  
 b7, to open lines by a large-scale

pawn storm.

11...♘f6 12 a4 ♖b8 13 b5 ♙d7 14  
 ♙d3



14...♔e8?

Beginning an abortive counter-action. 14...♔c7 was correct, after which the black position is difficult to get at.

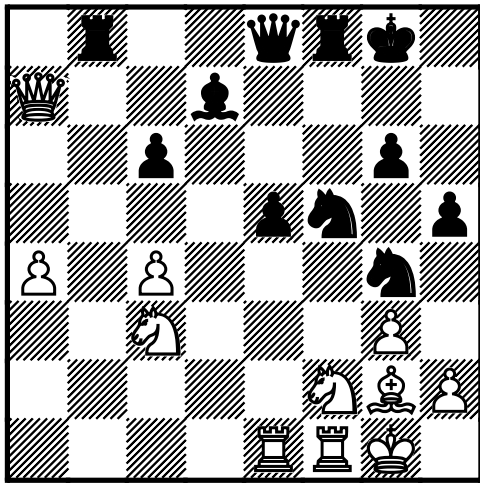
15 e4 e5 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 ♔d6

Now the disadvantages of the manoeuvre initiated with the fourteenth move become apparent: White invades on the d-file, and the e5-pawn is noticeably weak.

17...fxe4 18 ♘g5 ♘f5 19 ♔c7 e3 20 bxc6 bxc6

20...exf2+ 21 ♖xf2 ♙xc6 was better.

21 ♔xa7 h6 22 ♘ge4 ♘g4 23 ♖ae1 exf2+ 24 ♘xf2 h5



After the exchange of knights, in view of the weaknesses on c6 and e5 the endgame is untenable, so Black tries to complicate the play.

25 ♘xg4 hxg4 26 ♔c5 ♔f7 27 ♖xe5 ♙e6 28 ♙e4 ♖b2 29 ♔xc6 ♙xc4 30 ♙xf5 ♔a7+ 31 ♔h1 ♙xf1

Now follows a pretty conclusion. Tartakower has calculated further than his opponent.

32 ♔xg6+ ♔g7 33 ♙e6+

Black resigned.

(*Neues Wiener Journal*, 16 February 1925 p.8)

### Game 118

A. Steiner – D. Przepiorka

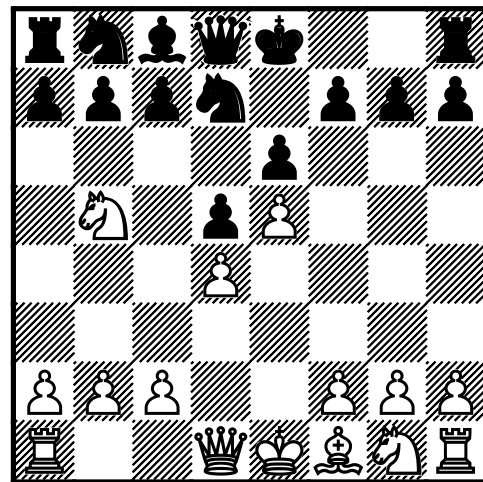
Hastings-B 1924/5 (2)

*French Defence C14*

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e5 ♘fd7 6 ♙xe7 ♔xe7 7 ♘b5

Nowadays 7 ♔d2 is rightly considered best, since White has no need to defend his central position with c2-c3. However, in this game White pursues a completely different plan.

7...♔d8



8 c4

This is the new move, which White obviously wanted to try. Although the text move was a complete success here, it is not worth imitating, since without

compensation he compromises his pawn formation and allows the opponent strong points in the centre.

**8...dxc4**

Obvious and best.

**9 ♕g4**

This queen move also doesn't make a healthy impression. 9 ♖xc4 0-0 10 ♘f3 etc. was more to the point.

**9...0-0 10 ♖xc4 ♕e7**

Now Black begins to play pretentiously. 10...a6 11 ♘c3 c5 was the obvious response to White's positionally suspect 8th move, and it would have secured Black a comfortable initiative.

**11 ♘f3**

This also covers the bishop threatened by ...♕b4+. Suddenly White is again quite satisfactorily placed.

**11...f5**

Highly questionable! 11...a6 12 ♘c3 (12 ♘xc7 ♘xe5) 12...c5 etc. was still appropriate.

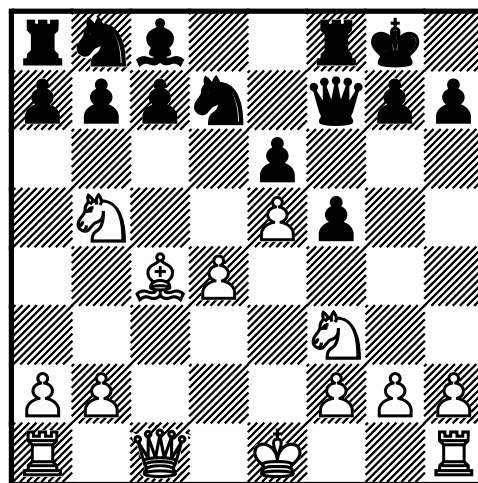
**12 ♕g5! ♕f7?**

Suicidal! With 12...♕b4+ 13 ♘d2 ♘b6 the game could still have been held, for example: 14 a3 ♕xb2 15 ♖b1 ♕c2 16 ♖b3 ♕c6 17 0-0 ♘a6, or 14 ♖d3 ♘d5 15 a3 ♕a5.

**13 ♕c1!**

A very nice deciding move, which leaves Black hopelessly placed, since he is unable to cover simultaneously the points c7 and e6 (after ♘g5). Of course, 13 ♘xc7 would have been insufficient on

account of 13...♘xe5.



**13...♘a6**

Or 13... ♘b6 14 ♘xc7!.

**14 ♘g5 ♕g6 15 ♘xe6**

Black resigned, since if 15...♕h8 there simply follows 16 0-0, when he cannot avoid the loss of the exchange with a hopeless position.

(*Wiener Schachzeitung* 1925 No.1 p.6)

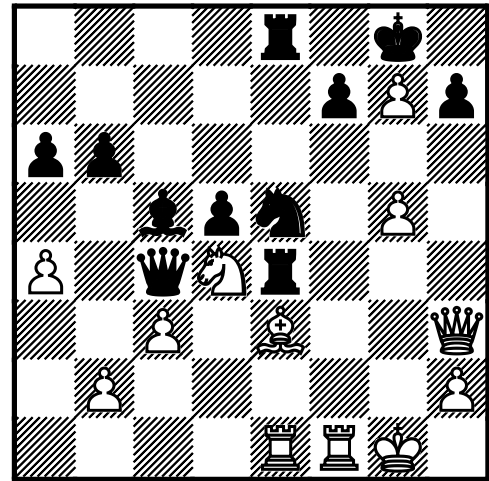
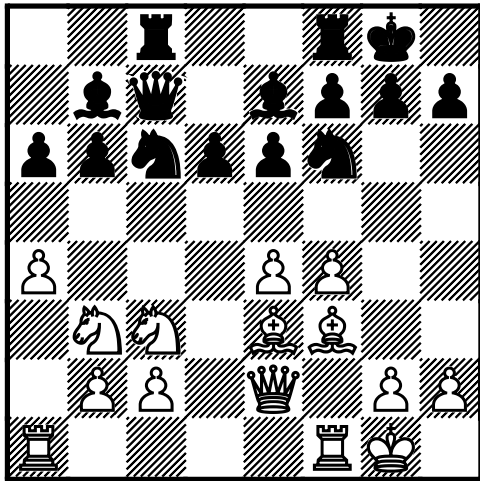
### Game 119

**H. Saunders – E. Colle**

Hastings-B 1924/5 (3)

*Sicilian Defence B85*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♖e3 e6 7 ♖e2 ♖e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘b3 a6 10 a4 b6 11 f4 ♖b7 12 ♖f3 ♕c7 13 ♕e2 ♖ac8**



### 14 g4?

A premature attack, to which Black correctly replies with an immediate counter-offensive in the centre.

Although White has not played the opening brilliantly, he nevertheless stands satisfactorily; he should have played 14  $\text{Rfd1}$  followed by the doubling of rooks on the d-file.

### 14... $\text{Nxb4}$ 15 g5 $\text{Nd7}$ 16 $\text{Kg2}$ d5!

An interesting pawn sacrifice, which it was nevertheless best for White to accept, since after the continuation chosen by him Black gains strong pressure in the centre; the danger for him on the kingside is merely illusory.

### 17 $\text{exd5}$ $\text{Nxd5}$ 18 $\text{Nxd5}$ $\text{Qxd5}$ 19 $\text{Qxd5}$ $\text{exd5}$ 20 $\text{Nd4}$

20  $\text{Qxd5}$   $\text{Qxc2}$  21  $\text{Qxd7}$   $\text{Qxb3}$  22  $\text{Qxe7}$   $\text{Tfe8}$  23  $\text{Qa3}$  was better, with chances of a draw.

### 20... $\text{Qc4}$ 21 f5 $\text{Qc5}$ 22 c3 $\text{Tce8}$ 23 $\text{Tae1}$ $\text{Td4}$ 24 f6 $\text{Tfe8}$ 25 $\text{Qh3}$ $\text{Ne5}$ 26 $\text{fxg7}$

### 26... $\text{Qd3}$ !

The decisive move. The second part of the game is conducted very consistently by Colle.

### 27 g6 $\text{fxg6}$ 28 $\text{Tf2}$

If 28  $\text{Ne6}$ , then not 28...  $\text{Tg4+}$  29  $\text{Qxg4}$ !  $\text{Nxb4}$  30  $\text{Qxc5}$   $\text{Txe6}$  31  $\text{Txe6}$   $\text{bxc5}$  32  $\text{Td7}$ ! etc., but 28...  $\text{Txe3}$ ! 29  $\text{Tf8+}$   $\text{Qxf8}$  30  $\text{gxf8Q+}$   $\text{Txf8}$  31  $\text{Qxe3}$   $\text{Nf3+}$  and wins.

### 28... $\text{Ng4}$ 29 $\text{Td2}$ $\text{Qc4}$ 30 $\text{Tde2}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ 31 $\text{cxd4}$ $\text{Txe3}$ ! 32 $\text{Txe3}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ 33 $\text{Qf3}$ $\text{Nxe3}$

White resigned.

(*Shakhmaty* 1925, No. 1, p.10)

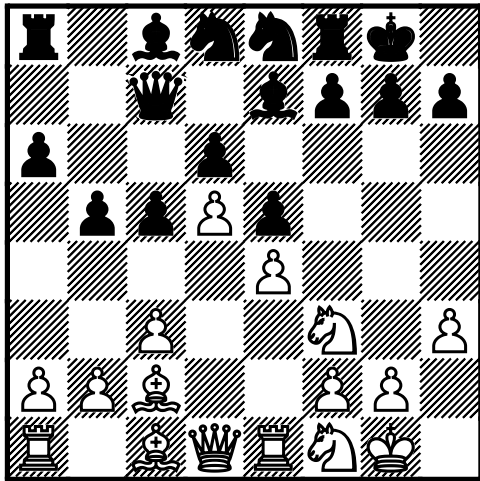
### Game 120

G. Maroczy – R. Michell

Hastings-A 1924/5 (4)

*Ruy Lopez* C98

### 1 e4 e5 2 $\text{Nf3}$ $\text{Nc6}$ 3 $\text{Qb5}$ a6 4 $\text{Qa4}$ $\text{Nf6}$ 5 0-0 $\text{Qe7}$ 6 $\text{Td1}$ b5 7 $\text{Qb3}$ d6 8 c3 $\text{Na5}$ 9 $\text{Qc2}$ c5 10 d4 $\text{Qc7}$ 11 h3 0-0 12 $\text{Nbd2}$ $\text{Nc6}$ 13 d5 $\text{Nd8}$ 14 $\text{Nf1}$ $\text{Ne8}$



28 f4 ♖e4 29 ♙xe4 fxe4 30 ♖xe4 ♙g7 31 ♖e3 b4 32 ♙b2 ♖af8 33 ♙e2! ♙f6 34 fxe5 ♙xe5 35 ♙xe5 dxe5 36 ♖f1 ♖xf1 37 ♙xf1 ♙g5 38 ♙e1 ♖e8 39 ♖f3 ♙f5 40 ♖xe5 ♙xh3+ 41 ♙g1 ♖g8 42 ♖f7+ ♙g7 43 ♖f3

43 g4 ♙xg4+ 44 ♖g3 ♙xg3+ 45 ♙xg3+ ♙xf7 would have been a mistake.

43...h6 44 ♖e5 ♖e8

### 15 ♖g3

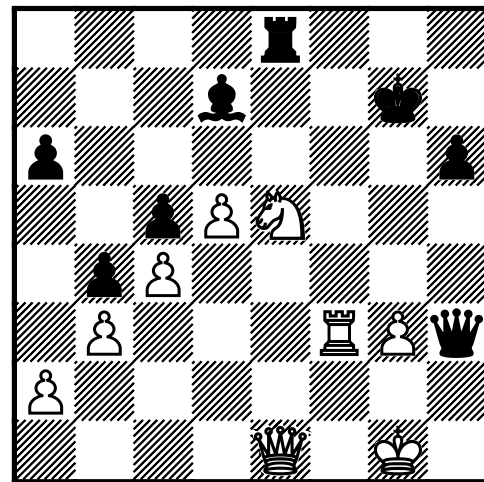
In such positions g2-g4 is more usual, but here Maroczy follows his old system, which, incidentally, he successfully adopted in his game with Cohn, Karlsbad 1907 – to allow the move ...f7-f5, and after the pawn exchange in the centre to operate against the illusory – in my view – weaknesses on e5 and f5. In this game he is also successful, but only thanks to several tactical mistakes by the opponent.

15...g6 16 ♙h6 ♖g7 17 ♙h2 f6 18 ♖g1 ♖f7 19 ♙d2 ♙d7 20 ♙e2 ♙h8 21 b3 f5

Not bad, but it was even better to prepare this advance with ...♖g8 and ...♖af8.

22 exf5 gxf5 23 ♖h5 ♖g8 24 c4 ♙d8 25 g3 ♙f8 26 ♙c3 ♖xh5 27 ♙xh5 ♖g5?

The decisive error, as a result of which a pawn is lost. Black should have played 27...♖g5 28 ♙e2 ♙g7 and ...♖g8 with double-edged play.



### 45 ♙f2!

An elegant concluding combination.

45...♙g4 46 ♖f7+ ♙g8 47 ♖g7+! ♙h8 48 ♖h7+

Black resigned.

(*Shakhmaty* 1925, No. 1, p.9)

### Game 121

F. Yates – J. Seitz

Hastings-A 1924/5 (6)

*Sicilian Defence B43*

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4



**a6**

Paulsen's system of defence, which, however, it is better for Black to employ only after the move  $\text{Nc3}$ , since in this position White could have advantageously played  $5 \text{ c4!}$ , nipping in the bud the opponent's attempts to obtain pressure on the c-file.

**5 Nc3 ♖c7 6 ♙d3 ♘f6 7 0-0 ♙e7  
8 ♙e3**

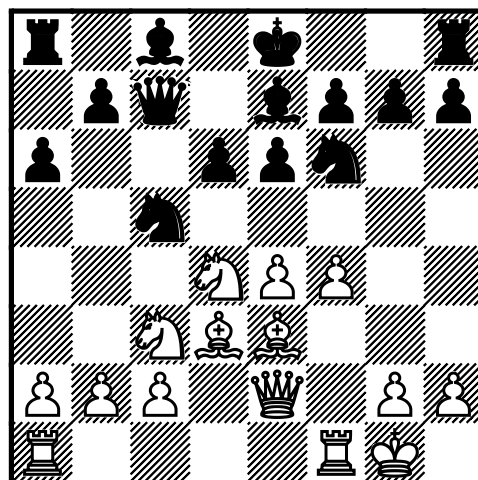
For the moment this move is not necessary, and it merely blocks the e-file. It was more energetic to prepare f2-f4 with  $8 \text{ ♖h1}$ , as Bogoljubow played in similar positions against Sämisch (Bad Pistyan 1922) and Rubinstein (London 1922).

**8...d6 9 ♖e2**

White plays too slowly. White not  $9 \text{ f4}$  immediately?

**9...♘bd7 10 f4 ♘c5(?)**

An intentional disregard for an old, but not yet obsolete (as some 'hyper-modern' maestros think) principle, according to which in the opening one should not without need make repeated moves with one and the same piece... By playing  $10...0-0$  followed by  $...b7-b5$  ( $...b7-b6$ )  $...♙b7$  etc. Black would have had a perfectly satisfactory game.



**11 ♘b3!**

The correct reply, after which Black faces an unpleasant dilemma: if he himself exchanges his knight for one of the opponent's minor pieces, the open c-file will be entirely in White's favour. But otherwise he has to reckon with the threat of  $\text{Nxc5}$  or  $\text{Bxc5}$  and e4-e5, thanks to which White gains a strong initiative in the centre.

**11...♙d7**

Also in chess one must have the courage to admit one's mistakes: the lesser evil was  $11...♘cd7$ .

**12 ♖ae1**

Already here  $12 \text{ Nxc5 dxc5}$   $13 \text{ e5}$  was very strong. However, there is indeed no need for White to rush.

**12...♖c8 13 ♘xc5 dxc5 14 e5 ♘d5  
15 ♘xd5 exd5 16 c3**

$16 \text{ c4}$  ( $16...dxc4$   $17 \text{ ♙xc4 ♙f5}$   $18 \text{ g4 ♙e4}$   $19 \text{ ♙xf7+}$ ) was also good. However, also after the move in the game Black appears to have no defence against the advance of the central pawns.

**16...h5**