



C O L U M N I S T S

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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An Historical Serial

Part 1

This was probably the most unbelievable, most paradoxical draw ever scored in an international tournament - so wrote B. Vainshtein, in his book devoted to the creative output of the second World Champion, about the game between Emanuel and Edward Lasker, played 80 years ago at New York. That game, presented here for your consideration, incorporates such a wide variety of different events, that from my point of view it becomes a sort of multi-part serial, much like those presented to us daily on TV [Tr. note - Russian TV is, like its American counterpart, much given to the showing of "soap operas".] - except this one is a lot more substantial. And it is this historical serial that you are about to acquaint yourselves with.

Before beginning our examination, however, let's first consider why we study the classic games at all. In fact, it's not an easy question to answer - if, that is, you are not to be content with routine and most unimpressive conclusions, such as the one expressed by Lermontov's old veteran: "In our days, we had real men, not like this generation." You may find some interesting thoughts on this subject in a lecture by M. Shereshevsky in Dvoretsky and Yusupov's collection, *Training for the Tournament Player* - the first book in the "school" series written by Artur and myself.

Let's perform a thought experiment. Imagine, if you will, that every chess book has disappeared, as though it had never been written. The only thing left would be the factual record of chess history (names, dates, and crosstables), plus the huge computer database of every game ever played - some of



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those, perhaps, with fairly light annotations. Would we, under such circumstances, become seriously interested in events from decades ago? I would hardly think so, except out of simple curiosity (and of course, I am not talking about such exceptional people as chess historians, or the rare researcher like Robert Fischer). More likely, we would restrict ourselves to the more current games: there, the quality of play on the whole is higher, and the openings are more current.

And if that's the case, then the seditious thought I am about to express becomes more understandable, and that is: That the value of our classic legacy is not just in, and perhaps not so much in, the texts of the games themselves, as in their interpretation. The authors of articles and books have spent years selecting the most interesting and instructive games, out of the many that have been played; they have analyzed them, and corrected the analysis of their predecessors; they have interpreted the results of these analyses, and described for their readership the chess techniques and ideas which underlie the moves, and the motifs which induced the players to come to this or a different decision; they have drawn conclusions about the players' style, the general problems and methods of chessplay, etc., etc.

Such researches might not, perhaps, be so necessary for chessplayers of the highest level, who are themselves capable of interpreting the players' actions. But for all the rest (meaning the 99 and many hundredths' percent), without good commentary it is difficult to gain a proper idea of the game under discussion, which in turn makes it hard to get any significant benefit out of it. More than that - it's hard even to choose which game might be worth studying.

Let me give you one more example to illustrate my thinking. Many of you remember the 1953 Candidates' Tournament (won by Smyslov), and are familiar with the excellent games played therein. Now I can assure you that the 1959 Candidates' Tournament (marked by the triumph of Tal) was not one bit less combative and interesting (indeed, it was

considerably more so). Nevertheless, we remember much less of it - and why? Because the tournament book devoted to it is far less widely known, and was considerably less well written than the first book in the series.

Awhile back, I used a none-too-fortunate expression, "the proper conception of a game". Does such a thing even exist? Commentators may interest themselves in different aspects of the struggle; sometimes, they may hold diametrically opposing viewpoints on different phases. And finally, analytical errors are by no means uncommon - sometimes, these errors may powerfully affect the annotator's treatment of the game. This is how myths are created which can sometimes survive for decades. New analysis can occasionally dispel those myths - but not always. Sometimes, commentators are unaware of the conclusions drawn by their predecessors; and sometimes, authors merely copy other people's variations uncritically, occasionally without even citing the reference. In a word - we have problems enough in this department.

In my own books and articles, I am fond of comparing differing points of view, while adding the results of my own analyses and the findings of my students. As a result, one succeeds in obtaining a more universal impression of the material under study, while simultaneously dispelling, in the course of the work, a lot of established myths. (I do understand that my analyses are also not error-free; therefore, I am always grateful to my readership for any analytical corrections and additions.)

This is precisely the format we shall use to examine, in detail and without haste, the following entertaining encounter, which forms the theme of this article. The best-known commentaries to it come from A. Alekhine (from his tournament book). And there are some interesting ideas in the notes of one of the players, Edward Lasker.

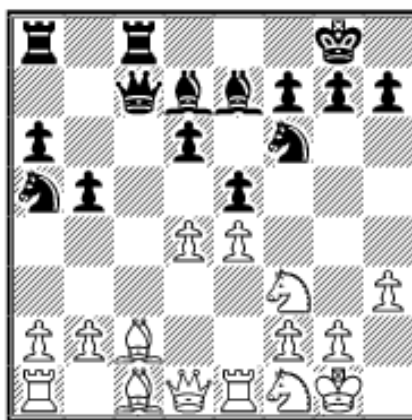
Em. Lasker - Ed. Lasker
New York, 1924

Serial 1: The Opening

1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3. Bf1-b5 a7-a6 4. Bb5-a4 Ng8-f6 5. 0-0 Bf8-e7 6. Rf1-e1 b7-b5 7. Ba4-b3 0-0 8. c2-c3 d7-d6 9. h2-h3 Nc6-a5 10. Bb3-c2 c7-c5 11. d2-d4 Qd8-c7

12. Nb1-d2 c5xd4 13. c3xd4 Bc8-d7 14. Nd2-f1 Rf8-c8

According to the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*, the main line here is 14...Rac8.

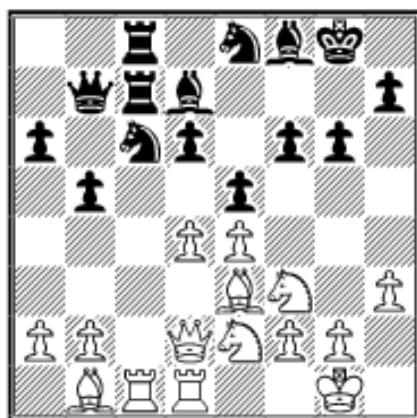


15. Re1-e2

Here White has also tried 15. Bd3 and 15. Ne3.

15. Bd3!? Nc6 16. Be3 Qb7 17. Ng3 Rc7 18. Rc1 Rac8 19. Bb1 Ne8 (Black wants to strengthen his center by ..f7-f6) 20. Qd2 g6 21. Red1 f6 22. Ne2 Bf8

(Maroczy -Reti, New York 1924).



On 23. a3 (intending Ba2+), Black has 23...b4! In Alekhine's opinion, White retains somewhat better chances after 23. Ne1!, intending to continue either with f2-f4 or with Bc2-b3+. Maroczy played the overhasty 23. Bc2?!, allowing the powerful reply 23...Na5!

The game continued: 24. Ng3 (24. b3 d5!, threatening 25...Ba3) 24...Nc4 25. Bb3 Kh8 26. Qe2 Nxe3 (26...Be6, followed by ...Bf7, was simpler) 27. Rxc7 Nxc7 28. Qxe3 Ne6 29. Ne2 b4? (White planned Nc3-d5, but the cure here is worse than the disease: Black weakens the queenside pawns and the important square c4) 30. Rc1 Rxc1+ 31. Nxc1 Qb6 32. Ne2 Bg7 33. Qd2 (threatening 34. de fe 35. Ng5) 33...Nf8 34. Qd3 h6 35. Bc4! a5 36. de de. The game continuation was 37. Nd2?! f5! =. Instead, Alekhine recommends 37. Nh4 (threatening 38. Qd5) 37...Kh7 38. g4, followed by Ng2-e3-d5, with great advantage.

15. Ne3!? Nc6 16. a3 a5 17. d5 Nd8 18. Bd2 a4 19. Bb4 Bf8 20. Bd3 Nb7 21. Qe2 Qb6 22. Nd2 Nc5 23. Kh2 g6 24.

Rac1, with a small advantage. (Fischer - Bisguier, US Championship 1958/59).

15...Nf6-h5!?

With this move, Black sacrifices a pawn - but is it correct? This is what we shall learn (or perhaps we shall not!) in the following chapter.

Quieter alternatives were: 15...b4 16. Bd3 Qb8, intending Bb5 (Alekhine), and 15...Nc6 - in both cases, White would stand a little better.

Serial 2: Was the pawn sacrifice correct?



Black has just played 15...Nf6-h5.

"This move involves a very clever and interesting pawn sacrifice - which, unfortunately, turns out not to be correct." (Alekhine)

Here and later as well, Alekhine underestimated the dynamic resources hidden in Black's position. In Ed. Lasker's opinion, the pawn sacrifice was correct, in that the game's future course was riskier for White than for Black; indeed, at one point, he should even have lost. It appears to me that the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

16. d4xe5

Zvjagintsev had an interesting suggestion: the unexpected prophylactic move 16. Kh1!?! (White meets his opponent's plan by strategic, rather than tactical means). The reply 16...Nf4 is unfavorable, in view of 17. Bxf4 e5 18. Qd2 g5 19. e5; and the neutral 16...g6 runs into 17. Ne3! Nf4 18. Nd5 (now the point of the king move becomes clear: the rook cannot be taken with check) 18...Nxd5 19. ed Bf6 20. de de 21. d6, with advantage to White. Perhaps Black should play

16...Be6!? 17. d5 Bd7 18. Bd3 instead, but here too, White's position is preferable.

16...d6xe5 17. Nf3xe5!

"Dr. Lasker does not allow himself to be frightened by the approaching complications and quietly accepts the proffered gift. The following intricate combinations are splendidly handled by him until a winning position is reached."
(Alekhine)

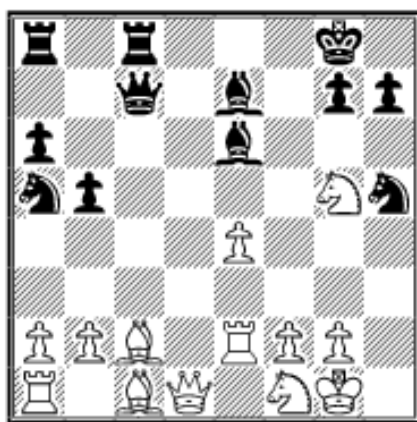
17...Bd7xh3

Yusupov is of the opinion that Black retains decent compensation for the pawn after 17...Be6!?, for instance: 18. Nd3 Rd8 19. b3 Rac8.

18. Ne5xf7 Bh3-e6

19. Qd5 was threatened. 18...Kxf7? is bad: 19. Qd5+ Be6 20. Qxh5+.

19. Nf7-g5



19...Be6-c4

As Ed. Lasker indicated, 19...Bxg5!? 20. Bxg5 Qe5 also deserved serious consideration, for example: 21. Bd2 Nc4 22. Bc3 Qg5, with the unpleasant threat of 23...Nf4.

White would do better not to remove his bishop from the c1-h6 diagonal: 21. Be3 Nc4 (21...Qxb2? 22. e5!) 22. Bb3 Rd8 23. Qe1 (or 23. Qc2), followed by 24. Rd1, and White's position is preferable (Yusupov).

The game continuation is more natural.

20. Bc2-d3

Em. Lasker is aiming for a tense position with countervailing pins. Let us examine the alternatives.

If 20. Re1, then 20...Nf4 21. Bxf4 Qxf4, when Black obtains the initiative (Ed. Lasker). Instead of exchanging at f4, White could try 21. Qg4!?



In reply, Black would appear to have only one way to exploit the hanging bishop at c2: 21...Bxg5 22. Qxg5 Nxg2! (22...Ne6 23. Qg4 Nd4 24. Bd1, with great advantage; 22...Ne2+ 23. Kh1 Nd4 24. Bd1, with great advantage) 23. Kxg2 Bxf1+ 24. Rxf1 Qxc2 25. Qd5+ Kh8 26. Rh1 Rc6!, with chances for both

sides.

But after 21. Nf3!?, the exchanging combination would not work: 21...Nxg2? 22. Kxg2 Bxf1+ 23. Rxf1 Qxc2 24. Qd5+ Kh8 25. Ne5 wins. If 21...Rd8, then 22. Bxf4 Qxf4 23. Qc1, with great advantage. A stronger reply is 21...Ne2+! 22. Kh1 Nxc1 23. Rxc1 Rd8, with counterplay.

Along with 20. Bd3 and 20. Re1, another move deserving consideration is 20. Rd2!? (hoping for 20...Bxg5?! 21. Rd7, with great advantage). Black replies 20...Nf4 21. Rd7 Ne2+ 22. Kh1 Qe5 23. Nf3 Qh5+ 24. N1h2 (or 24. N3h2) 24...Bf6, retaining compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

20...Rc8-d8

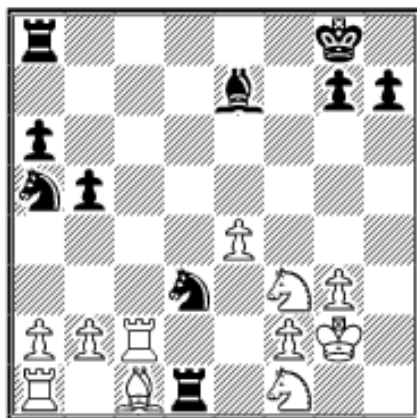


21. Re2-c2!

In answer to 21. Bxc4+ Alekhine recommends 21...Nxc4 22. Qb3 Nf4 23. Bxf4 Qxf4 24. Nh3 (24. Ne6 Qg4 25. Nxd8 Qxe2) 24...Qe5, "with drawing chances as in the actual game."

The variation 21...Qxc4! 22. Qc2 Qxc2 23. Rxc2 Rd1 24. Nf3 (24. Nh3 Rad8, with the threat of 25...Re1 and 26...Rdd1; 24. Ne6 Kf7 - Dvoretsky), in his opinion, is "less satisfactory" for Black. Alekhine is incorrect - the first-rank pin is extremely unpleasant.

Let's check it out: 24...Nf4! 25. g3 (25. b3 Nd3; 25. Rd2 Rd8) 25...Nd3 26. Kg2 (threatening 27. Ne3)



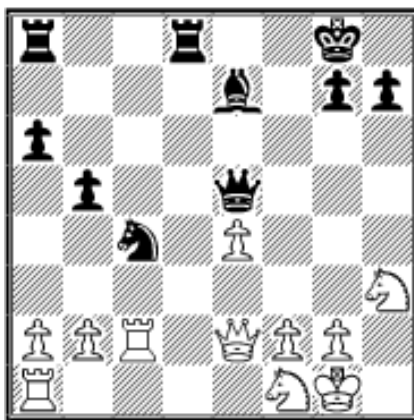
Ed. Lasker, analyzing this variation, continues 26...Rf8 27. N1d2? Bg5!! (the less spectacular 27...Bb4 is not inferior) 28. Nxc5? Rxf2+, and Black wins. He apparently overlooked that after 27. Ne3, Black cannot reply 27...Rxf3? because of 28. Rc8+ (or 28. Kxf3 Ne1+ 29. Ke2 Nxc2 30. Nxc2).

Instead of 26...Rf8?, Black has a stronger move, 26...Nc4!? 27. b3, and now either 27...Bf6 28. Rb1 Na3 (28...Nce5 29. Ne3 Nxf3 30. Kxf3 Re1! is another possible line) 29. Ne3 Ne1+ 30. Nxe1 Rxe1 31. Bxa3 Rxb1, with an unclear position; or 27...Nce5 28. Rd2! Rxd2! 29. N1xd2 (29. N3xd2? Rc8 wins; 28. Bxd2 Nxf3 29. Kxf3 Rf8+) 29...Ng4, with the initiative for Black (analysis by Zvjagintsev and Dvoretsky).

Still more convincing, however, is 26...Bg5!!, which leads to the immediate win of the exchange.

21...Nh5-f4 22. Bc1xf4

22. Bxc4+? is strongly met by 22...Qxc4!, for example: 23. Qxd8+?! (23. Bd2 Qd3) 23...Rxd8 24. Rxc4 Ne2+ 25. Kh2 Nxc4 and wins (Dvoretsky).

22...Qc7xf4 23. Ng5-h3 Qf4-e5 24. Bd3xc4+ Na5xc4 25. Qd1-e2

"Now White has a substantial pawn to the good and it is merely necessary to drive away the black Knight from his commanding post which in the long run cannot be prevented. The temporary control of the black squares does not compensate Black for the pawn." (Alekhine) I believe that, in fact, Black's positional

compensation for the pawn is quite sufficient.

25...Rd8-d4 26. f2-f3

Not a weakening White would like to make, but how was he to avoid it? On 26. Ng3 there is 26...Bh4! Yusupov's interesting suggestion 26. Re1!? Bb4 27. Rd1 Rxe4 28. Qd3 (intending 29. Ng5 or 29. b3) leads, after 28...Re8 29. b3 Nd6 or 29. Ng3 Re1+ 30. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 31. Kh2 Ne5, to a double-edged position.

26...Ra8-d8

Otherwise White would simplify by 27. Rd1.

27. Ra1-c1

Now Black must take some action against 28. b3.

27...Be7-c5 28. Kg1-h1

Worth considering was 28. Nf2!?, for example: 28...Qg5 29.

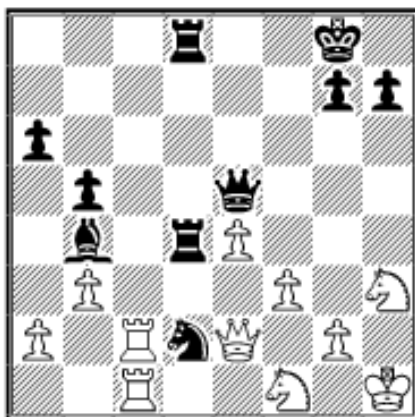
b3 Ba3 30. Rd1 Rxd1 31. Nxd1, with some advantage.

28...Bc5-b4 29. b2-b3 Nc4-d2

Inferior is 29...Nb6 30. Rc6 Ba3 31. R1c2 (Alekhine).

On 29...Nd6 Alekhine indicates 30. Ne3; but as we shall soon see, Black has the counterblow 30...Nxe4! If 30. Qe3, then 30...Ba3. The sensible course for White would be 30. Rc6!? a5 (30...Ba3 31. R1c2) 31. Qe3 Ba3 32. Re1, preparing f3-f4.

Serial 3: The combinative crisis of the middlegame, and an exchange of errors.



30. Nf1-e3?!

Alekhine awards this move an exclamation point. He writes: *"Now the threat is 31.Rd1, followed by driving the Bishop off the a5-e1 diagonal, with the gain of a piece, while the counter-combination of 30...Nxe4 31. fe Rxe4 would be neutralized by*

means of 32.Rc8."

But as a matter of fact, Ed. Lasker has pointed out that the counter-combination is not refuted, but actually leads to a win for Black: 32...Re8!! (but not 32...Rxc8? 33. Rxc8+ Kf7 34. Qf3+) 33. Rxe8+ Qxe8 34. Qd3 Rxe3 35. Qd5+ Kh8 (35...Qe6 36. Nf4! is inferior). *[In the 1961 Dover edition of the tournament book, Ed. Lasker notes that at the time, the flag on his clock was about to fall and, forced to move immediately, he dared not risk the sacrifice. - Tr.]*

Instead of taking the knight, White would have been forced to "take back his move" by 31. Nf1!, accepting a slightly inferior position after 31...Ng3+ 32. Nxc3 Qxc3 33. Qe6+ (33. Rc8!? Bf8 is slightly better for Black) 33...Kh8 34. Rc8 Bf8! (34...h6? 35. Qxa6) 35. Rxd8 Rxd8, with a slight advantage to Black; or 31...Ba3!? 32. Re1 (32. fe Rxe4 33.

Qf3 Bxc1 34. Rxc1 Rf8 35. Qd3, with a slight edge to Black) 32...Ng3+ 33. Nxc3 Qxc3 35. Qe6+ Kh8, and Black stands slightly better.

Let's examine the alternatives to the tempting, though objectively unsound 30. Ne3.

30. Nh2!? is possible, intending to meet 30...h5 with 31. Rc8, with a great advantage; or 30...h6 31. Ng4 Qg3 32. Rc8, also with a great advantage. Black should forestall the exchange of rooks by 30...Ba3! 31.Rg1 (31. Ng4? Qg3; 31. Re1 Bb4) 31...h5 - the active placement of his pieces assures him good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. White threatens nothing; while Black, besides pressure on the kingside, can also contemplate activity on the opposite wing by a6-a5-a4.

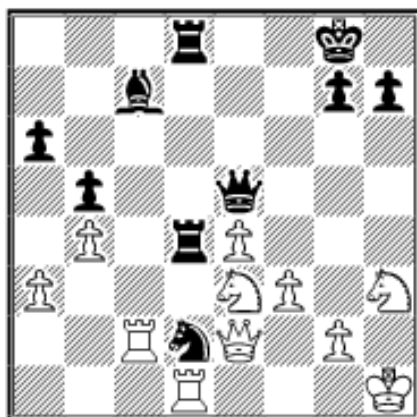
30...Bb4-a3?

A time pressure error. The time-control was at move 30; and with his flag hanging, Ed. Lasker made the first move he could think of. Now the situation changes completely.

31. Rc1-d1 Ba3-b4

Practically speaking, Black has just given his opponent two tempi. But he had no choice, as all other moves lose quickly. For example: 31...Bd6? 32. Ng4 (Alekhine), or 31...Qd6? 32. Nf5, or 31...Nxe4? 32. fe Bd6 33. Ng4! (stronger than 33. Nf1 Rxe4 34. Qd3 [34. Rxd6!? Rxe2 35. Rxd8+ Kf7 36. Rcc8, with a great advantage] 34...Bc7 35. Qxd8+! [35. Qf3? Rxd1 36/ Qxd1 Re1 and wins] 35...Bxd8 36. Rxd8+ Kf7 37. Ra8, with a great advantage) 33...Rxd1+ 34. Qxd1, and White wins.

32. a2-a3 Bb4-a5 33. b3-b4 Ba5-c7



Now White must select the most exact and clearest winning method. Not an easy task, when there are so many tempting choices at his disposal.

34. f3-f4!

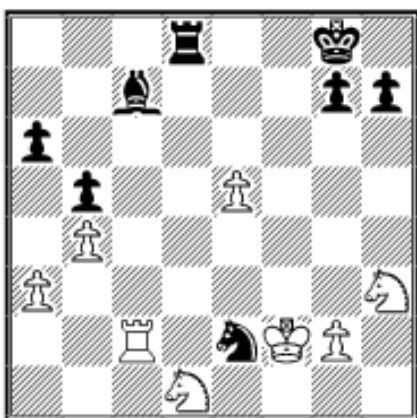
34. Ng4? fails against 34...Nxe4!
35. Rxd4 Ng3+ 36. Kh2 Nxe2+

37. Nxe5 Bxe5+.

34...Nd2xe4! 35. Kh1-h2!!

Not as convincing is 35. fe Ng3+ 36. Kh2 Nxe2 37. Rxc7 (37. Rxd4? Bxe5+) 37...Rxd1 38. Nxd1 Rxd1 39. Ng5 Rd8 40. Ra7. Ed. Lasker gives the continuation 40...h6 41. Ne6 Re8, but this would be bad, in view of 42. Rxc7+ Kh8 43. Rg6 Kh7 44. Rf6. 40...Re8 41. Rxa6 Nd4 would be tougher, although here too, Black's position remains difficult.

Zvjagintsev suggested 36. Kg1!? (instead of 36. Kh2)
36...Nxe2+ 37. Kf2 Rxd1 38. Nxd1



After 38...Rxd1 39. Rxc7, Black's position looks hopeless, but he has an excellent counterstroke: 38...Nf4!! 39. Rxc7 (38. Nxf4? Bxe5, with great advantage to Black) 39...Nxe3+ 40. gh Rxd1. If now 41. Ke3, then 41...Rh1 42. Ke4 Rxe3 43. Kd5 Rd3+ 44. Ke6 h5, with a sharp endgame. An interesting sideline is 41. e6 Kf8

(41...Rd8? 42. Ke3 Re8 43. Rc6 wins) 42. Rf7+ Ke8 43. Rxc7. Now 43...Rd3? 44. Rxe7 Rxa3 45. h4 a5 loses to 46. h5! (46. ba? Rxa5 47. h5 b4 48. h6 Rh5 49. Ke3 Re5+ or 49. Rh8+ Ke7 50. h7 b3 51. Rb8 b2! 52. Rxb2 Kxe6=) 46...ab 47. h6 Rh3 48. Ke2! The right line would be 43...h5! 44. Rd7!? (44. Rh7 Rd3=) 44...Rc1! 45. Rd6 (45. Rd3 Ke7 46.

Re3 Rc4) 45...Rc3 46. Rxa6 Rxh3, when Black should draw.

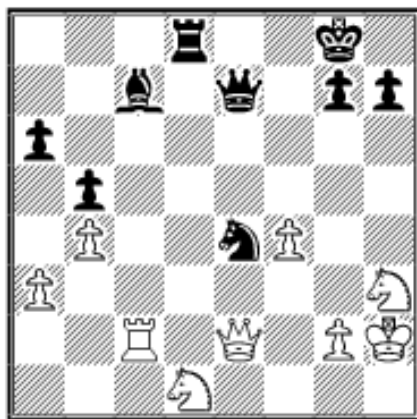
35...Rd4xd1!

Hopeless are 35...Qe7 36. Nf5 or 35...Qd6 36. Rxd4 Qxd4 37. Rxc7. And 35...Qxf4+ 36. Nxf4 Bxf4+ 37. g3 Nxg3 fails against 38. Qg4, winning.

36. Ne3xd1!

But not 36. fe? Bxe5+ 37. g3 R1d2.

36...Qe5-e7



37. Rc2xc7?

"With this move, White loses the fruits of his solid position play." (Alekhine) He could win by 37. Ndf2! Rd4 38. Qe3 Bb6 39. Rc8+ (39. Re2 is also sufficient) 39...Kf7 40. Nxe4 Rxe4 41. Qxe4 Qxe4 42. Ng5+.

37...Qe7xc7 38. Qe2xe4

The advantage remains with White, but it's not a win anymore - the position remains in play.

At this point, we have seen only half of this absorbing struggle (that is, by move count; going by the number of "serials" we have covered, it's less than half). We shall continue next month.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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