

Introduction to the First Edition

The aim of this book is to present a selection of the best and most entertaining chess games from the 20th Century, together with year-by-year accounts of the main chess news stories. It is intended as a book to dip into for both entertainment and instruction.

Chess does not exist in a vacuum, but rather reflects and is affected by events outside our 64 squares. With this in mind, the book also contains brief accounts of the events and achievements that made world news in each year.

In selecting the chess games to include, I have sought to strike a balance between presenting the best and most important chess games, and choosing less familiar material. All the games have been carefully analysed using both carbon-based and silicon-based brains, and in many cases the new notes differ substantially in their conclusions from the 'traditional' accounts of these games. I have for the most part avoided a discussion of the opening play, and join the games in the early middlegame. This, I feel, makes for the fairest comparison between different eras. How opening play has developed during the 20th Century is certainly an interesting topic, but to do it justice would require a whole book.

The chess news presented for each year falls into a number of broad categories. First comes the World Championship, and qualifying events for it, such as Interzonals and Candidates events. Next is news of the most important tournaments of the year, followed by team chess. In general, I have only mentioned

national championships when there is something exceptional to report, such as a player becoming Champion at an unusually early age. I have made an exception for the USSR Championships, as these were such strong events as always to merit attention.

Then I discuss notable achievements in junior, women's and correspondence chess, before listing notable chess-player births and deaths. Please note that I use square brackets when referring to future events, to distinguish them from the discussion of events of the year in question, for which the present tense is used.

In the non-chess world news I have focused on the stories that made the greatest impact on the world. Thus you will find most space devoted to scientific discoveries, inventions, conflicts, wars, disasters, social upheavals and technological breakthroughs. Naturally, I have devoted particular attention to events that had a major influence on the chess world, such as the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. I have aimed to provide enough concise information about each key issue to assist the reader to delve deeper into that topic.

I hope this book helps you become a better chess-player and proves to be a useful source of chess information. Perhaps setting chess history in its wider context will even spark an interest in other areas.

Graham Burgess
October 1999

Introduction to the Second Edition

What has changed in the 25 years since this book was written that might justify a new edition? Clearly the subject-matter, the 20th Century, has not altered one iota.

But our perception of the previous century, the lens through which we may view it, is now rather different.

Most obviously, we have a good deal of new technology. With a quarter of a century of advances in both software and hardware, we can now assess many positions far more definitively. Notably, we now have NNUE-based assessments and seven-man tablebases, as well as a vast amount more computing power and extraordinary improvements in the coding of chess engines. The chess content has been systematically checked for errors and improvements, and changes made in every case they were warranted. Often this led to a major expansion of the content, bringing to light extra nuances and even totally new verdicts.

As the examples in this book include some of the most famous chess games of all time, being able to provide new answers to their most vexing riddles is both instructive and of historical value. But don't worry: plenty of mystery remains, as the complexity of chess ensures that in many cases additional investigation simply leads to new and deeper questions.

But the revisions are not just of a tactical or technical nature. Strategic thinking also evolves, and in some cases the new notes place the decisions in this revised context. Throughout, where the notes are altered, I have striven to explain what new lessons can be derived.

The structure of the book is significantly different from the first edition. Originally, each year received exactly two full pages (or one in

the case of some war-time years). This looked very neat on the page, but was somewhat restrictive, and retaining this feature would obviously have made it impossible to include expanded analysis and explanations.

So the format for this edition is more free-flowing, with only each decade now a separate chapter, rather than each year. This change also allows for several hundred additional diagrams, and for every diagram to be placed in its 'correct' location in the text – there is no 'see diagram overleaf' (etc.) here. The photos that originally appeared in a separate 16-page glossy section now appear (along with those from the original cover) at the start of the decade to which they are most relevant. The new cover features images from the Dutch National Archive – a tremendous online resource.

The passage of time also allows the text to be improved in some other ways. I have updated the 1980s and 1990s with important births in those decades, as well as adding extra emphasis and detail to events (both chess and non-chess) that have had a longer-reaching influence than appeared the case back in 1999. I apologize if some of the theoretical physics and cosmology references are now even more confusing.

Naturally, all other known errors in the text have been amended. One part of the book that has not been changed is the Conclusion on page 289. Pretending to look into a crystal ball to talk about events that are already underway would have been too weird! So I have left it exactly as written in 1999.

Graham Burgess
Woodbury, Minnesota
June 2024

The Allies fail to reach agreement on the new borders for Germany. The USSR aims to make its own atom bomb. The situation in Europe remains tense.

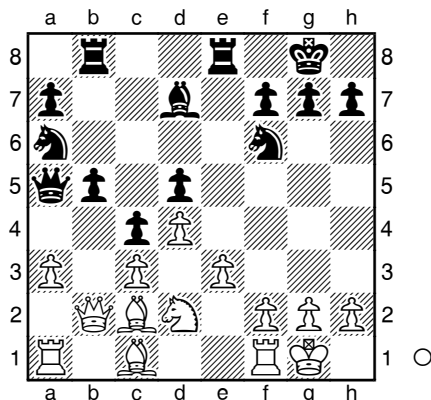
Britain grants Syria and Lebanon independence, and agrees to make India independent.

In the USA, an electronic computer is built. At the time, it is regarded as the world's first computer, since the Colossus machine was dismantled on the orders of Churchill once its work was completed, and the world is not to know of its existence, or that of the code-breaking station, until the 1970s.

1946

Alekhine dies • Botvinnik wins the first major international tournament since the 1930s

The first major post-war international tournament takes place at Groningen. Botvinnik wins with 14½/19, ahead of Euwe (14), Smyslov (12½), and Najdorf and Szabo (both 11½). This is one of Botvinnik's losses:



M. Najdorf – M. Botvinnik
Groningen 1946

White's position appears rather passive, but he has long-term chances due to his central majority and bishop-pair.

18 ♖f3!

Apparently White avoided 18 f3 due to the view that 18... ♖xe3? 19 ♖e4 ♖xe4 20 ♗xe3 ♖xc3 favoured Black. However, after 21 ♖fe1 (intending ♗d2) 21... ♖a4 22 ♖b1 White's

central and kingside dominance proves more important. Black should prefer 18... ♖c7 19 e4 ♖b6, as White's oddly bunched pieces are in no position to support his central advance.

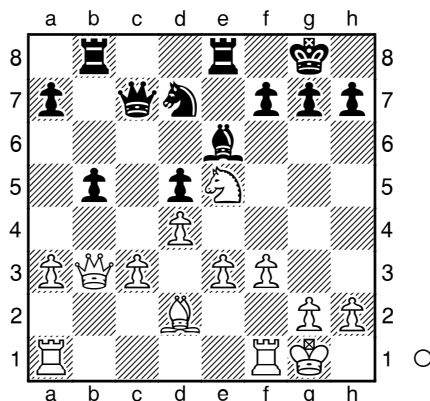
18... ♖c7 19 ♖e5 ♗e6 20 f3

The centre pawns rumble forwards.

20... ♖c5 21 ♗d2 ♖a4?!

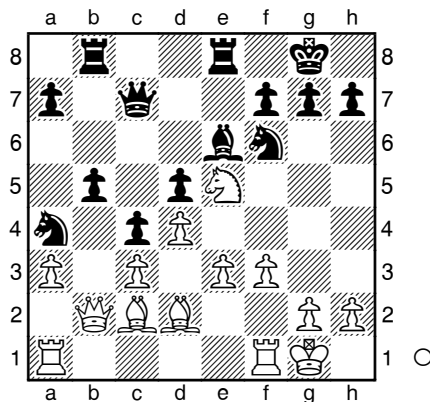
This is reminiscent of the game Botvinnik-Capablanca, AVRO 1938 (the finish of which we saw earlier). Hindering the e4 advance with 21... ♖cd7 22 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 23 ♖ae1 ♖b7 24 ♖b1 ♗c6 is more solid, but then 25 ♖e2, with ideas of g4 or ♗e1-h4, is promising for White.

A more radical idea is 21... ♖b3!? 22 ♗xb3 cxb3 23 ♖xb3 ♖d7 (D).



Black claims that his grip on the c4-square and better bishop (both are 'bad', but Black's is more mobile) provide positional compensation for the pawn.

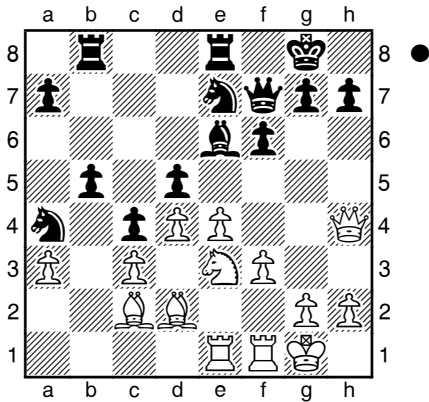
We now return to 21... ♖a4?! (D):



22 ♖b1 ♖b6 23 ♖e1 ♖d7 24 ♖h4 ♖f8 25 e4! f6 26 ♖g4 ♖g6 27 ♖h5 ♖f7 28 ♖ae1 ♖bb8 29 ♖e3 ♖e7

There are no good options. 29...♖b6 seeks to support d5 more securely, but 30 e5 is a strong reply.

30 ♖h4 (D)



Threatening 31 exd5.

30...f5

Hoping to block the position, but Najdorf is having none of it.

31 g4! f4

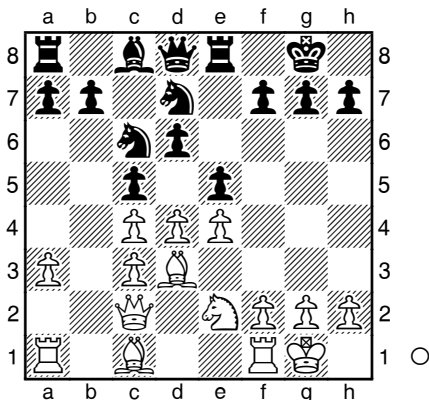
31...g6 fails since after 32 exf5 gxf5 33 gxf5 the d5-pawn is too weak.

32 exd5!

Now Black loses material.

32...♗g6 33 dxe6 ♜xe6 34 ♗xg6 hxg6 35 ♗g2 ♜be8 36 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 37 ♗xf4 ♜f6 38 ♖g5 ♗xc3 39 ♗xc3 ♜xf4 40 ♗g2 1-0

A further USA-USSR match (this time over the board, in Moscow) confirms the Soviets' superiority, though the margin of victory is reduced to 12½-7½ – with hindsight a success for the USA.



A. Denker – V. Smyslov

USSR-USA team match, Moscow 1946

White has a weakened structure, but this is outweighed by his central space, bishop-pair and kingside attacking chances. Critically, Black has failed to block the centre.

Denker gets in trouble in this game because he handles the position too statically. Modern players tend to view these positions almost in gambit style, willing to sacrifice or take on more 'weaknesses' to make the most of their dynamic pluses. The top players of the 1940s already perceived this, with Bronstein using aggressive kingside pawn-thrusts, and Botvinnik routinely opening the centre in visually 'unattractive' ways to unleash his pieces.

12 f4?!

12 ♗e3 followed by f4 is preferable.

12...b6?!

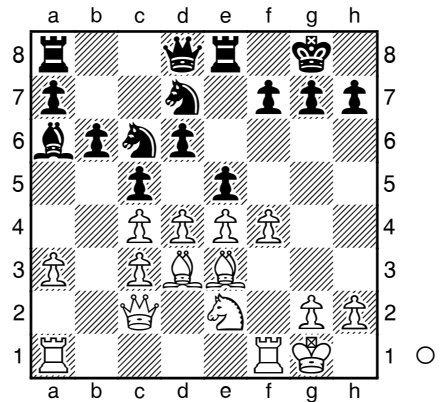
There is a natural reluctance to open up the centre 'for the white bishops', but 12...cxd4!? 13 cxd4 exd4 14 ♗b2 is playable; e.g., 14...♖f6 15 ♜ae1 ♗c5 16 e5 ♖h4 or even 14...♗c5!? with the point 15 ♗xd4 ♖b6 16 ♜f2 ♗xe4!?

13 ♗e3

13 d5 ♗a5 14 f5 b5! offers counterplay.

13...♗a6?! (D)

Too slow, as the attack on c4 can be ignored.



14 fxe5

After 14 d5!? ♗a5 Black gets no time to play ...exf4, since 15 f5! strongly threatens f6.

14...dxe5 15 d5 ♗a5 16 ♖a2?!

Too passive. After 16 ♗g3! the threats along the f-file far outweigh the loss of the c4-pawn.

16...♗f8 17 ♗g3 ♗g6 18 ♖e2 ♗b7 19 ♗f5 ♗d6 20 g3 f6 21 ♗xd6

After 21 h4 ♗xf5 22 ♜xf5 ♗h8 23 h5?! h6 24 ♜af1?! ♗f7 Black stabilizes the kingside.

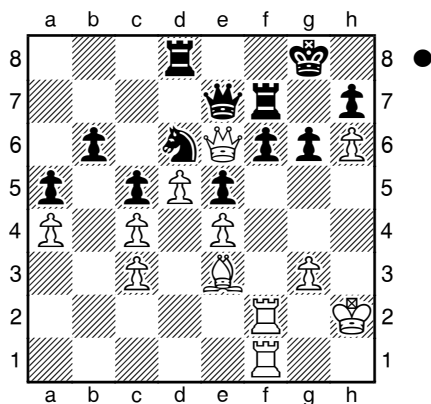
21...♖xd6 22 h4 ♜e7 23 a4 ♙c8 24 ♔h2 a5! 25 ♖g2?! ♙g4 26 ♙e2 ♙xe2 27 ♖xe2

White has traded his 'bad' bishop, but now Black's minor piece is far better than White's.

27...♞ad8 28 ♞ab1 ♜c8! 29 h5 ♞f8 30 ♞f2 ♞f7 31 h6 g6 32 ♞bf1 ♜e7 33 ♖g4 ♜d6

The culmination of Black's strategy. But White is not finished yet.

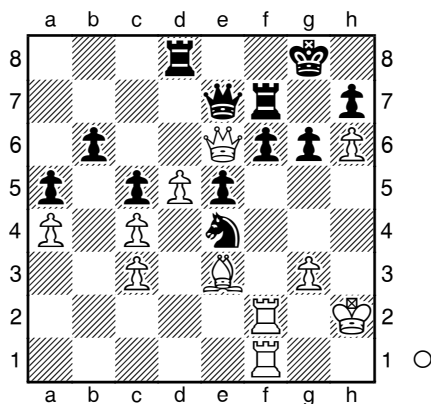
34 ♖e6! (D)



34...♜xe4

34...♖xe6 35 dxe6 ♞e7 is also no clear path to victory, since White resists with 36 ♞xf6 ♞de8 37 g4!. Everything just holds together for White: 37...♖xe6 (37...♜xe4 38 ♞f7) 38 ♙g2! (making sure a later ...♜xg4 won't come with check) and after both 38...♜xc4 39 ♙g5 ♜d6 40 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 41 ♙f6! ♜xe4 42 ♙g7 ♞e8 43 ♞b1 ♜xc3 44 ♞xb6 and 38...♜xe4 39 ♞f7 ♞6e7 40 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 41 ♞d1 ♙f8 42 ♞d8+ ♞e8 (42...♙f7 43 ♞h8 ♜f6 44 ♞b8) 43 ♞d7 ♜f6 44 ♞b7 ♜xg4 45 ♙g5 e4 46 ♖xh7 White is active enough to deny Black a win.

We now return to 34...♜xe4 (D):



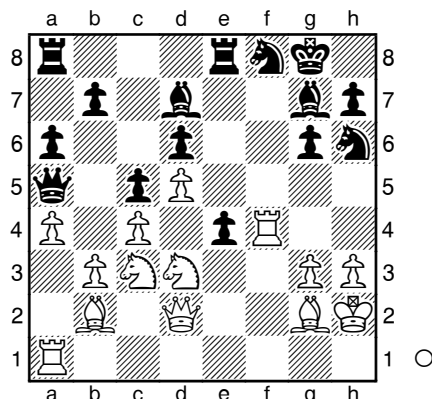
35 ♖xb6?

The exchange sacrifice 35 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 36 ♞xf6! ♜xf6 37 ♞xf6 is sufficient to draw, as the black rooks are too busy fending off both the d-pawn and threats to the black king. After 37...♞f7 38 ♞xb6 ♞f3 39 ♙g5 ♞e8 40 ♙g2 e4, Black lacks a real threat. White can play 41 ♞b5 and meet 41...♞xc3 with 42 ♞b7 and ♞g7+, etc.

35...f5! 36 ♞b2?! f4!

While White has been regaining pawns, Black has whipped up a fierce kingside attack.

37 ♖e6 fxe3 38 ♞xf7 ♖xf7 39 ♖xe5 ♜f6 40 ♞b8 ♜g4+ 41 ♔h3 ♜xe5 42 ♞xd8+ ♖f8 43 ♞xf8+ ♔xf8 0-1



V. Ragozin – I. Solin

Helsinki 1946

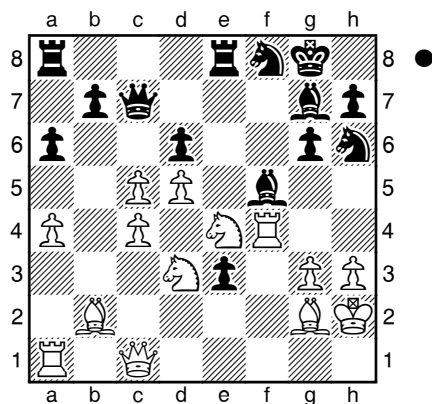
20 b4!

The idea is to block out the black queen.

20...e3!

20...cxb4? 21 ♜xe4 is appalling for Black as his g7-bishop will be exchanged off.

21 ♖c1 ♖c7 22 ♜e4 ♙f5 23 bxc5 (D)



23...♙xe4?!

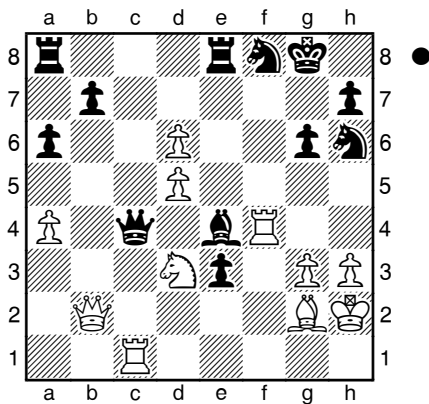
23...dxc5?! 24 d6 ♖f7 25 ♘g5 ♗d7 26 ♙d5+ ♖h8 27 ♗c3! ♙xc3 28 ♙xc3+ ♗g7 29 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 30 ♘xc5 is very good for White.

But 23...♙xb2! is a better move-order and keeps defensive hopes alive. Then after 24 cxd6 ♙xc1 25 dxc7, unlike in the next note, Black can halt the white pawns by 25...♙d2 26 d6 (or 26 c5 ♘d7) 26...♘d7, when the game is far from decided after 27 c5 g5 (this thrust is a key point in several lines), 27 g4 ♙xe4 28 ♙xe4 (28 ♗xe4 ♘f7) 28...e2 or 27 ♘d2 exd2 28 ♙xb7 ♙xd3. Instead after 24 ♗xb2 ♙xe4, White does not need to transpose to the game with 25 cxd6?!, but while both 25 ♙xe4 ♗g7 26 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 (threatening ...g5) 27 ♙g2 and 25 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 (25...dxc5 is riskier: 26 d6 ♗xd6 27 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 28 ♙d5+ ♘f7 29 ♗f1) 26 ♙xe4 ♗e8 27 ♙g2 remain difficult for Black, he still has plenty of resources.

24 cxd6! ♙xb2 25 ♗xb2?

25 dxc7! wins as after 25...♙xc1 26 ♗xe4! ♙d2 27 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 28 d6 the white pawns are too strong.

25...♗xc4 26 ♗c1 (D)



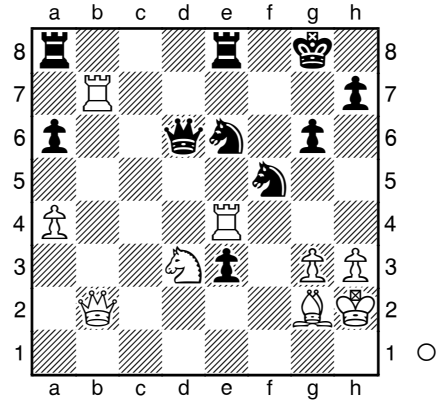
26...♗xd5?!

26...♗xd3?? loses to 27 ♗c7, but 26...♙xd3! leads to a draw. After 27 ♗fxc4 ♙xc4 28 ♗xc4 e2 there is no good way to stop the pawn so White must force perpetual check with 29 ♗c7 ♘f5 30 ♗f6 e1♗ 31 ♗f7+ ♖h8 32 ♗f6+. Of course, it is psychologically hard to consider giving up the queen, and Black may well have felt that the move he chose was advantageous.

27 ♗c7 ♘e6 28 ♗xe4 ♗xd6

28...♘f5? 29 ♗xh7 costs Black his queen.

29 ♗xb7 ♘f5 (D)



This sets up an exciting finish.

30 ♗f6 ♗xg3+ 31 ♖h1 ♘eg7 32 ♗g4 ♗d6??

32...♗f8 is the only move. Then 33 ♗xg7+ ♘xg7 34 ♗xg3 ♗xf6 35 ♙xa8 ♘f5 36 ♗g1 is an unpleasant ending for Black but one he has good chances of surviving, partly because the white bishop is the 'wrong' one for his h-pawn.

33 ♗xg7+ ♖h8 34 ♗h4! ♘xh4

34...♘g3+ does White no real harm: 35 ♖h2 ♘f1++ 36 ♖g1 ♗h2+ 37 ♖xf1 e2+ 38 ♖f2.

35 ♗xd6?! 1-0

Chess News in Brief

Najdorf dominates the Mar del Plata tournament, scoring 16/18.

Najdorf wins the Barcelona tournament with 11½/13, ahead of Yanofsky (9½).

Tigran Petrosian wins a match against the great study composer Genrikh Kasparian by a score of 8-6.

A radio match is contested between the UK and the USSR. The British perform surprisingly well, losing only by 6-18.

Alexander Alekhine (born 1892) dies in Estoril, Portugal. This scuppers a planned match against Botvinnik, and raises the question of how the World Championship should be decided.

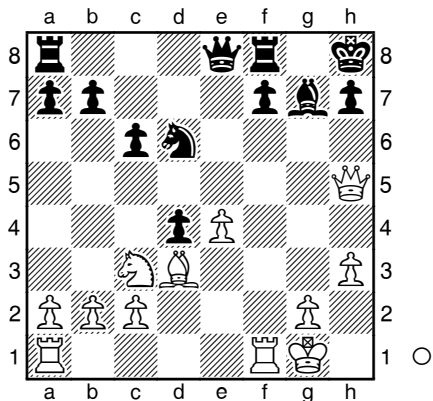
Arturo Pomar (born 1931) is Spanish Champion for the first of seven times.

World News in Brief

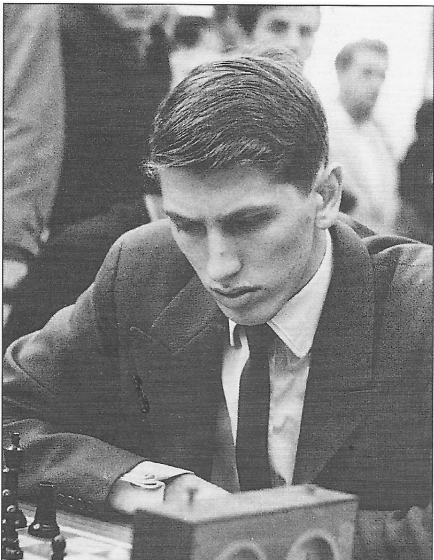
Churchill introduces the term 'Iron Curtain' for the frontier across Europe, separating the

1960s

1960: Tal becomes World Champion • Fischer has a mixed year	174
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1969: Spassky is World Champion • Karpov – a new Soviet star	196



White to play and win (1963)



Bobby Fischer, American chess superstar



Tigran Petrosian, World Champion 1963-9



Viktor Korchnoi, among the world’s top players for more than three decades



Mikhail Tal, about to beat Krogius at the 1962 USSR Championship



Tigran Petrosian strolls while Boris Spassky considers his move

of the ground crew and of the astronauts, enables the stricken craft to return safely to Earth.

US planes bomb the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos, and US troops attack Communist military bases in Cambodia.

The IRA explodes bombs in Belfast and snipers engage the British army in gun battles.

The Portuguese dictator Salazar dies.

Israeli troops raid Lebanon.

The Canadian government stands firm against Quebec separatists, who are resorting to violence and kidnapping.

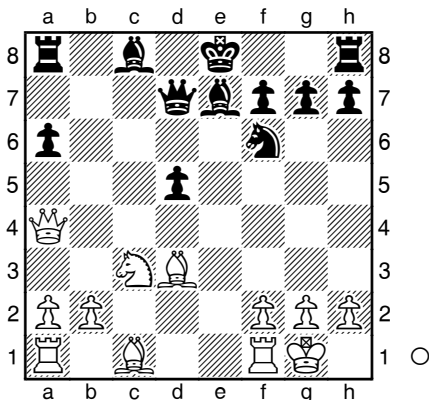
Biafra, lacking international support and facing mass-starvation, surrenders to Nigeria.

A typhoon and tidal wave kill 150,000 in East Pakistan.

1971

Fischer ruthless: 6-0 twice!

Fischer dominates the Candidates cycle. He scores unbelievable 6-0 (six wins, no draws, no losses) victories over first Taimanov and then Larsen. Petrosian (who edged out Korchnoi 5½-4½ in the semi-final, and whose quarter-final opponent, Hübner, resigned the match after seven games in protest at the playing conditions) initially holds Fischer at bay in the Candidates final, but four consecutive wins give Fischer victory in the match by the score 6½-2½. Thus Fischer qualifies to play Spassky for the World Championship.



R. Fischer – T. Petrosian

Candidates match (game 7), Buenos Aires 1971

13 ♖e1!

Fischer is not interested in winning an exchange by 13 ♖b5?! axb5 14 ♖xa8 0-0, as this allows Black a good deal of counterplay.

13... ♖xa4 14 ♘xa4

White aims to prove that the black a- and d-pawns are both serious weaknesses.

14... ♗e6 15 ♗e3 0-0

15... ♘d7 16 f4! g6 17 ♗f2! 0-0 18 g4! is most unpleasant for Black.

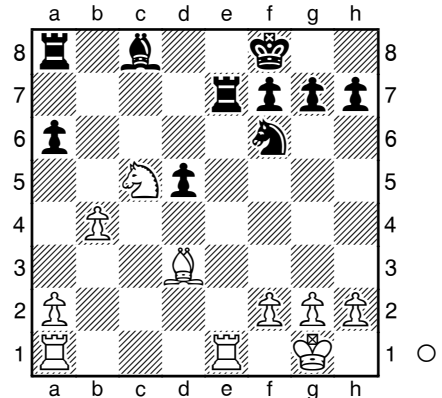
16 ♗c5!

The dark-squared bishop is the most likely black piece to become active.

16... ♖f8 17 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 18 b4!

Both fixing Black's pawn on a6, and securing the c5-outpost.

18... ♗f8 19 ♘c5 ♗c8 (D)



20 f3!? ♖ea7?!

Instead:

a) 20... ♖xe1+?! 21 ♖xe1 ♘e8 22 ♗f2 ♘c7 23 ♖c1 will be a grim defence for Black.

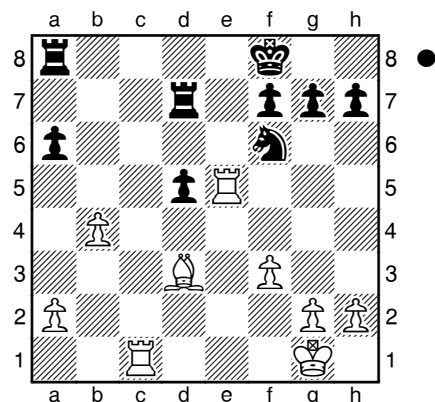
b) 20... ♘d7!? may offer more hope; e.g., 21 ♘b3 ♘e5 22 ♗f1 ♘c4!?

21 ♖e5! ♗d7 22 ♘xd7+?!

"The 'bad' bishop was holding Black's position together. Now his game disintegrates..."

At least, that was for many years the narrative attached to this celebrated game, and this non-dogmatic move in particular. But modern computer analysis has cast serious doubt on whether White really is winning in the resulting position, while suggesting that a steady move such as 22 a4!, retaining all White's strategic pluses for the time being, is objectively preferable. That said, it still feels heretical to criticize the move Fischer chose here!

22...♖xd7 23 ♖c1 (D)



23...♗d6?!

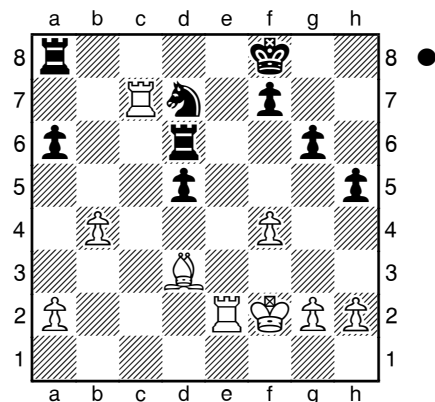
The first and main question is centred on 23...d4!, at least giving the pawn some potential counterpunching value. After 24 ♖cc5 ♗ad8 25 a3 ♗d5 (using the square vacated by the pawn) 26 g3 ♗c3 27 ♖f2 ♗b5 (exploiting the fact that White doesn't want to unleash the d-pawn) 28 ♖c6 ♗a7 White is obviously better, but it is far from easy to find a way forward that doesn't lead to an ending where Black might defend with supremely accurate play (i.e. computer-precise defence).

24 ♖c7 ♗d7 25 ♖e2 g6

After 25...♗e8? 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 ♗a7 ♗b8 28 a4 Black is tied up.

26 ♖f2 h5 27 f4?! (D)

This and the next few moves feature some inaccuracies revealed by modern computers, but these questions are less significant than the one on move 23. Here 27 h4! is one way to keep a clearer plus.



27...h4?!

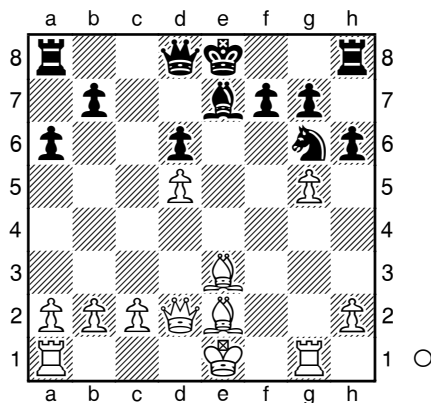
27...♗b6 28 ♖e7 (or 28 ♖ec2 ♗c4) 28...♗f6 29 g3 ♗c4 offers Black real drawing chances. In the pawn-up endings White can achieve, Black either achieves counterplay (especially in a four-rook endgame) or significant simplification.

28 ♖f3?! f5? 29 ♖e3 d4+ 30 ♖d2 ♗b6

Or 30...a5 31 bxa5 ♗xa5 32 ♖c8+ ♖g7 33 ♖c4 ♖f6 34 ♖ce8 ♗c5 35 ♖f8+ ♖g7 36 ♖f7+ ♖h6 37 ♖e7 ♗e4+ 38 ♖d1 ♗f6 39 ♖e6! (not 39 ♖f8? g5!).

31 ♖e7 ♗d5 32 ♖f7+ ♖e8 33 ♖b7 ♗xf4 34 ♖c4 1-0

Karpov and Stein share first place at the Alekhine memorial tournament in Moscow with 11/17, ahead of Smyslov (10½), Tukmakov, Petrosian (both 10), Tal and Spassky (9½). One of Karpov's wins is especially beautiful:



A. Karpov – V. Hort

Alekhine memorial, Moscow 1971

Black has just played 17...h6?!, attempting to remove the cramping g5-pawn.

18 gxf6 ♖h4+ 19 ♖d1

The white king turns out to be relatively secure here, whereas Black cannot castle safely.

19...gxf6 20 ♖xh6?!

White could certainly consider a different rook-lift with 20 a4! ♖g5 21 ♗a3!.

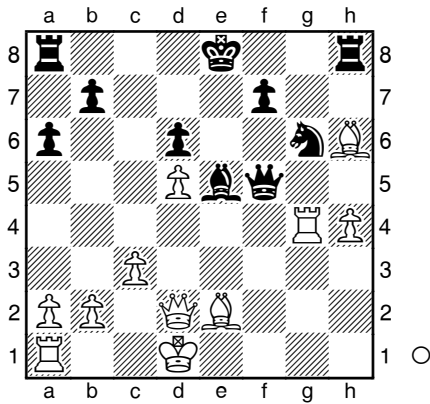
20...♖f6 21 c3 ♖e5 22 ♖g4!

The rook seems to be hanging in mid-air, yet it proves very well placed on the fourth rank.

22...♗f6 23 h4!

White consolidates his extra pawn, and now threatens 24 h5.

23...♗f5 (D)



24 ♖b4?!

Having secured White's kingside, the rook now probes the black queenside. But there was no pressing need to do so right now, and the rook does not appear more effective here. Again 24 a4! is good, challenging Black to find an equally useful and flexible move. 24...♞e7 25 a5 ♙f6 26 ♖aa4, 24...♙f6 25 h5 ♞e7 26 ♖f4 ♞e5 27 ♖f2 and 24...♞c8 (threatening ...♞xh6!) 25 ♙g5 ♞e7 (25...f6 26 ♞d3) 26 ♞d3! ♞xd3+ (26...f6 27 ♙d2) 27 ♙xd3 ♞xd5 28 ♙e2 all give White a pleasant game.

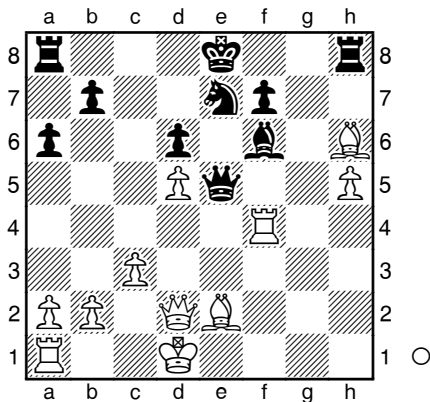
24...♙f6?

The immediate 24...♞e7! is better. 25 ♖xb7 runs into tactical problems such as 25...♞e4 26 c4 ♞xh6!? 27 ♞xh6 ♞xd5!, while after 25 a4 ♙g8, 25 ♙g5 f6 26 ♙e3 ♙g8 or 25 ♖c1 (threatening ♖xb7) 25...b5 it is far from clear White has any real advantage.

25 h5 ♞e7

25...♞e5?? loses to 26 ♖f4.

26 ♖f4 ♞e5 (D)



27 ♖f3?

Now Black could safely play 27...0-0-0! (when 28 ♙c2?? is impossible because of 28...♞xh6) with a roughly level game, so White should prefer 27 ♖f2!, with the point that 27...0-0-0 28 ♙c2! intends ♙g4+ and ♖e1 (or ♖e2). Then 27...♞xd5? is still bad, but now because of 28 ♙f3.

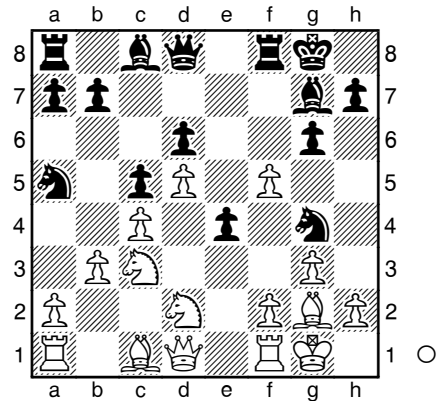
27...♞xd5? 28 ♖d3

The white rook now finds an ideal regrouping.

28...♞xh6 29 ♖xd5 ♞e4 30 ♖d3!

Threatening the black rook and queen.

30...♞h1+ 31 ♙c2 ♞xa1 32 ♞xh6 ♙e5 33 ♞g5 1-0



E. Geller – D. Velimirović

Havana 1971

Black has just played 12...e4?, a typical and ambitious King's Indian move.

13 f6!

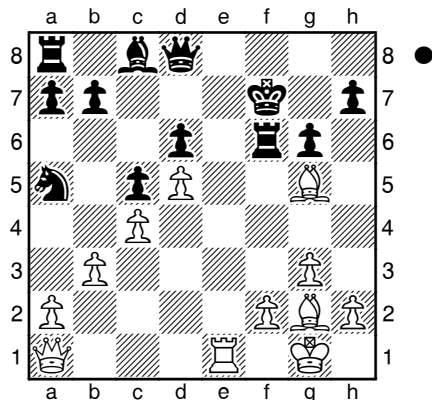
This is the move that White 'wants' to play, from a positional viewpoint.

13...♞xf6 14 ♞dx6?!

Geller's plan turns out to be a rook sacrifice. While a spectacular idea, it allows Black a very narrow path to salvation. Geller avoided 14 ♙b2! because of 14...e3 15 fxe3 ♞g4. Preferring to attack rather than defend is natural, but here White has a useful extra pawn, and after 16 ♞e2 there isn't much real 'defending' to do. After 16...♞xe3?! 17 ♖xf8+ ♞xf8, even 18 ♞de4? ♙d4 19 ♞d1 ♞c2+ 20 ♙xd4 ♞xd4 21 ♞d3 might yield some advantage due to the misplaced knight on a5, but far stronger is 18 ♞xe3! ♙d4 19 ♞xd4! cxd4 20 ♞ce4, with a decisive attack as the minor pieces stream into the black kingside. This would probably have

provided Geller with the crisp miniature victory that he was seeking!

14...♖xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♙xa1 16 ♙g5 ♙f6 17 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 18 ♖a1 ♖f7 19 ♖e1 (D)



19...♖b8?

19...♖h8! enables Black to hold the position. White has various ways to try to break through, but all he can do is regain material and reach a variety of endings where Black is in no real danger. For instance:

a) 20 ♙d2 even allows Black a choice, between 20...♖f8 21 ♙c3 (21 ♙xa5?! is met by 21...♖g8) 21...♖f5 22 ♖e4 h5 and 20...b6 21 ♙c3 ♙d7 22 ♖e3 ♖f8 23 h3 h6 24 g4 ♖e8 25 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 26 ♖f3 ♙f5 27 ♖c1 ♖g5.

b) After 20 ♖e3 Black must be very precise. 20...♙d7! 21 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖f3 ♙f5 23 ♖c1 (23 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 24 g4 ♙e5 gives Black an active king) 23...h5 24 h3 ♖d4! 25 ♖f4 ♖e5 26 g4 hxg4 27 hxg4 ♖h8! 28 gxf5 gxf5 29 ♖f1 and Black is just in time to defend the entry squares on the e-file: 29...b6! 30 ♖f3 ♖b7 31 ♖e3 ♖g7! 32 ♖e1 ♖f6! 33 ♖e6 ♖g5! and after 34 ♖c3 ♖h6 35 ♖g3 ♖xg3 36 fxg3 ♖g6 37 ♙f3 ♖xg3 38 ♙h5+ ♖g7 39 ♖e7+ ♖h6 40 ♖xb7 ♖xh5 White has managed to create a real imbalance, but the rook ending should be a draw.

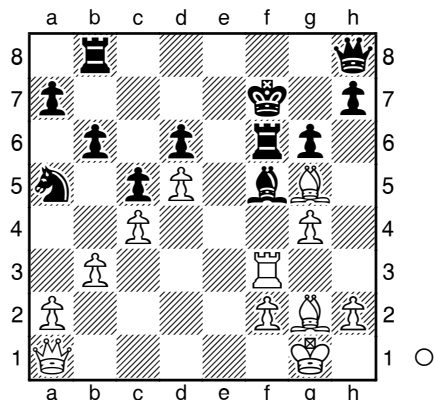
20 ♖e3!

20 ♖e8? ♖xe8 21 ♙xf6 ♖d7 22 ♙g5 ♖f5 gives White nothing better than a draw by 23 ♖h8+ ♖f8 24 ♖xh7 ♖f7 25 ♖h8+, etc.

20...b6

20...♙f5 21 h3 h6 (21...h5 22 g4 hxg4 23 hxg4 ♙xg4 24 ♙h3!) 22 ♙xh6 ♖h8 23 ♙g5 and g4 follows. 20...h6 is met by 21 ♙xh6 ♖h8 22 ♙g5 ♙f5 23 ♖f3 intending g4.

21 ♖f3 ♙f5 22 g4 ♖h8 (D)



23 ♙xf6

Deciding to cash in right away. This is good enough, but he could be even greedier with 23 ♙h3!.

23...♖xf6 24 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 25 gxf5 gxf5 26 ♖e3?

Here White did need to play 26 ♙h3!, when he has a big advantage in the ending due to the superior placing of his pieces. 26...b5?! then fails because of 27 cxb5 ♖xb5 28 ♙xf5. Instead 26...♖g8+ 27 ♖f1 ♖g5 avoids immediate material loss, but after 28 ♖e3 Black will be driven into passivity.

26...♖b7?

Had Velimirović already mentally resigned? The active 26...b5! was a golden opportunity to secure counterplay.

27 ♖e6+ ♖f7 28 ♙f3 ♖g8+ 29 ♖f1 ♖f8 30 ♙h5 ♖g5 31 ♖e8+ ♖g7 32 ♖e7+ ♖h6 33 ♖xb7 ♖xh5 34 ♖xa7 ♖xh2 35 ♖d7 ♖g5 36 ♖xd6 ♖f4 37 ♖e2 b5 38 cxb5 ♖e5 39 ♖d7 ♖h4 40 a3 ♖h3 41 f3 ♖d4 42 b6 ♖h2+ 43 ♖e1 ♖h1+ 44 ♖f2 ♖h2+ 45 ♖e1 ♖h1+ 46 ♖f2 ♖h2+ 47 ♖g3 ♖b2 48 b7 ♖xb3 49 a4 c4 50 a5 c3 51 a6 1-0

Chess News in Brief

Korchnoi wins the Wijk aan Zee tournament with 10/15, ahead of Gligorić, Petrosian, Ivkov and Olafsson (all 9½).

Keres and Tal share first place at the Tallinn tournament with 11½/15, ahead of Bronstein (11).

Korchnoi and Karpov share first place at the Hastings tournament (1971/2) with 11/15, ahead of Mecking and R.Byrne (9½).

Benoit Lecomte becomes the first person to swim the Atlantic.

An appalling train crash at Eschede (Germany) kills 96. A faulty wheel is the primary cause.

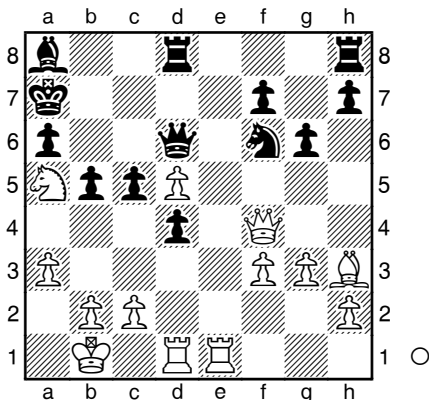
Hurricane Mitch devastates Central America.
Water is discovered on the moon.

Observations of Type 1a supernovae lead to the extraordinary and completely unexpected conclusion that the expansion of the universe is accelerating rather than decelerating. This prompts cosmologists to theorize about 'dark energy', an as-yet unexplained and undetected positive vacuum energy, as well as a 'Big Rip' model of the universe's future, and to reconsider exotic theories of gravity, such as the holographic principle, that may explain the observation in other ways.

1999

Kasparov reconfirms his dominance •
Three World Championships now in disarray

Kasparov wins at Wijk aan Zee with 10/13, ahead of Anand (9½) and Kramnik (8). He then wins the very strong (average rating 2735) double-round Linares tournament with 10½/14, ahead of Kramnik and Anand (both 8). These emphatic victories demonstrate that Kasparov's period of dominance in world chess has by no means finished.



G. Kasparov – V. Topalov
Linares 1999

24 ♖xd4! cxd4?

Unwisely, but in keeping with his style, Topalov chooses the ambitious move.

There are a number of safer options, of which 24...♙b6! gives White the greatest difficulty, as most replies leave Black at least a little better. With 25 b4! ♖xf4 26 ♖xf4 ♙xd5 27 ♖xf7 cxb4 28 axb4 ♙xb4 29 ♙b3 White will be able to thread his way carefully towards a draw.

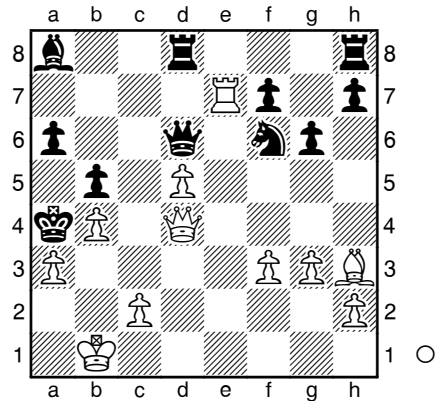
25 ♖e7+ ♙b6

25...♙b8? loses to 26 ♖xd4 ♙d7 27 ♖xd7.

26 ♖xd4+ ♙xa5

After 26...♖c5 27 ♖xf6+ ♖d6 28 ♙e6!! White wins; the point is 28...♙xa5 29 b4+ ♙a4 30 ♖c3 ♙xd5 31 ♙b2! intending ♖b3+, mating.

27 b4+ ♖a4 (D)



28 ♖c3

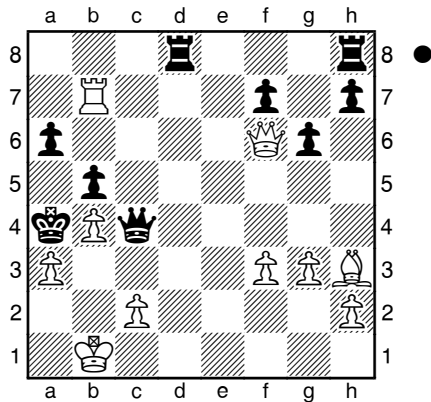
While this move wins (and in highly spectacular fashion!), a more accurate path to victory is Kavalek's 28 ♖a7! ♙b7 (or 28...♙xd5 29 ♖xa6+! ♖xa6 30 ♖b2) 29 ♖xb7 ♖xd5 30 ♖b6! a5 31 ♖a6 ♖a8 32 ♖e3 ♖xa6 33 ♙b2 and Black suffers ruinous losses.

28...♖xd5 29 ♖a7 ♙b7 30 ♖xb7! ♖c4

30...♙he8?! 31 ♖b6 ♖a8 32 ♙f1!, preventing ...♖c4, is winning for White. The key threat is ♖d6, and 32...♖e1+ 33 ♖xe1 ♙d7 34 ♖b7! wins, e.g. 34...♖xb7 35 ♖d1 ♙xa3 36 c3.

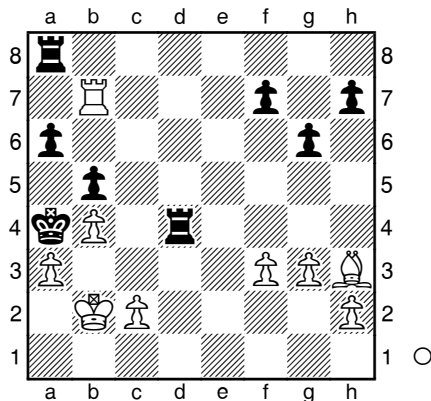
Instead, 30...♙e4?! 31 fxe4 ♖c4 32 ♖a7! ♖d1+ 33 ♙b2 ♖xc3+ 34 ♙xc3 ♖d6 35 e5 ♖b6 36 ♙b2 ♖e8 37 ♙g2 ♖d8 38 ♙b7 ♖d7 39 ♙c6! ♖d8 (39...♖xa7 40 ♙d5 and 41 ♙b3#) 40 ♙d7, with c4 to follow, is also a win for White.

31 ♖xf6 (D)



31...♔xa3?!

Now White is able to demonstrate the main and amazing line of his combination. From a practical viewpoint 31...♖d1+!? 32 ♕b2 ♖a8 33 ♕b6 ♖d4+ 34 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 (D) is a far better try.

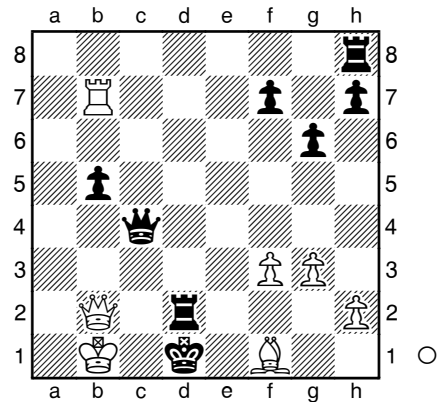


The obvious 35 ♖xf7?, presumed at the time to be a prosaic endgame win, should lead to a draw after 35...a5! 36 ♖e6 axb4 37 ♖b3+ ♔a5 38 axb4+ ♕b6 39 ♖xh7 ♖f8!, according to modern computers with access to seven-man tablebases. The same computers indicate a path to victory: 35 ♖d7!! ♖d6 36 g4!!, when a number of zugzwangs and paradoxical ideas lie ahead. For example, 36...♖f6 (36...h5 37 gxh5! gxh5 38 ♖f5) 37 f4! h6 (37...♖xf4?! 38 ♖c6) 38 h4! ♖d6 39 f5! g5 40 h5! is mutual zugzwang, and after 40...♖f6 41 ♖c7!, one line that shows why Black can't simply sit tight is 41...♖d6 42 ♖c8 ♖f6 43 ♖xf7!.

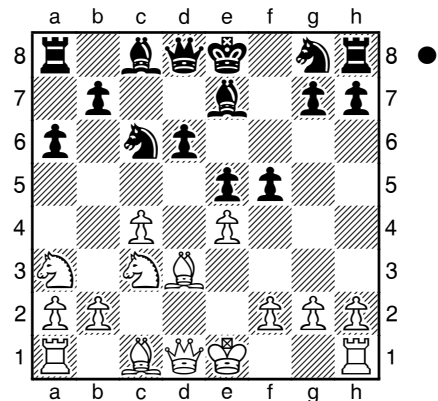
32 ♕xa6+ ♕xb4 33 c3+! ♕xc3 34 ♕a1+ ♕d2 35 ♕b2+ ♕d1 36 ♖f1! ♖d2 (D)

36...♕xf1 is mated by 37 ♕c2+ ♕e1 38 ♖e7+. The text-move apparently throws a

spanner in the works, but Kasparov has the perfect answer ready.



37 ♖d7! ♖xd7 38 ♖xc4 bxc4 39 ♕xh8 ♖d3 40 ♕a8 c3 41 ♕a4+ ♕e1 42 f4 f5 43 ♕c1 ♖d2 44 ♕a7 1-0



J. Nunn – I. Nataf

French League 1999

9...f4!? 10 g3 ♖f6?!

10...♖h6! is a good alternative, since if play continues in the same way with 11 gxf4 exf4 12 ♖xf4 0-0 13 ♖g3 (White is in no position to take advantage of Black's exposed king after 13 ♖xh6? gxh6), Black has the useful extra options 13...♖d4 and 13...♖h4.

11 gxf4 exf4 12 ♖xf4 0-0 13 ♖g3 ♖g4

Black's compensation for the pawn looks highly nebulous, but his play against the weakness of f2 is very real.

14 ♖e2?!

14 0-0?! is more natural, but Black will definitely have compensation due to the exposed position of the white king.