

**From Vienna to Munich to Stockholm**

**A Chess Biography of  
Rudolf Spielmann**

Grigory Bogdanovich

**From Vienna to Munich to Stockholm: A Chess Biography of Rudolf Spielmann**

**Author: Grigory Bogdanovich**

Translated from the Russian by Ludmila Travkina

Typesetting by Andrei Elkov

© LLC Elk and Ruby Publishing House, 2023 (English version). All rights reserved

Follow us on Twitter: @ilan\_ruby

[www.elkandruby.com](http://www.elkandruby.com)

ISBN 978-5-6046766-7-7 (paperback), 978-5-6046766-8-4 (hardback)

## Contents

<b>Index of Games</b> .....	5
<b>Introduction</b> .....	10
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	10
<b>Chapter I. The Life of Rudolf Spielmann</b> .....	11
<b>Chapter II. I'm Coming After You!</b> .....	27
1. How an attack begins .....	27
2. Attack along the f-file .....	34
3. The pawn nail .....	58
4. The role of an isolated pawn in an attack .....	66
5. Horwitz bishops .....	69
6. Attack on the king stuck in the center .....	81
7. Attack with same-sides castling .....	103
8. Attack with opposite-sides castling .....	114
<b>Chapter III. Defensive Skills</b> .....	123
1. Composure .....	123
2. Building a positional fortress .....	126
3. Defense with tactical blows .....	128
<b>Chapter IV. Positional Play</b> .....	131
1. Fights for squares, files, and diagonals .....	131
2. Restriction play .....	140
3. The exposed queen .....	159
4. Play with flank pawns .....	163
5. Passed pawns .....	181
6. Prophylaxis and centralization .....	183
7. Queenside pawn majority .....	185
8. Square retention strategy .....	200
9. Positional sacrifices .....	204
10. Non-identical exchanges .....	233
<b>Chapter V. Opening Passions</b> .....	258
1. How Spielmann punished for inharmonious piece development .....	258
2. Provocations .....	270
3. Extended fianchettoes .....	272
4. A fruitful opening idea .....	278

5. The death of an opening variation .....	283
6. The greying King's Gambit .....	285
7. The Viennese Waltz .....	302
8. A 100% score .....	315
9. French studies .....	324
10. Pillsbury's formation .....	332
11. The modernist maneuver of the white knight in the Meran Variation ...	334
<b>Chapter VI. Endgame Play .....</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Chapter VII. The Costs of Style .....</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>Chapter VIII. Entertainment is Nearby .....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Chapter IX. Did Spielmann Agree With the DAUT Principle? .....</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Chapter X. Was Rudolf Spielmann a Cynic? .....</b>	<b>387</b>
<b>Chapter XI. Scalps of the Greats .....</b>	<b>404</b>
<b>Chapter XII. The Thorny Path to Immortality .....</b>	<b>432</b>
<b>Chapter XIII. Rudolf Spielmann's Swan Song! .....</b>	<b>436</b>
<b>Chapter XIV. Tactics .....</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Afterword .....</b>	<b>442</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>443</b>
From the Sickbed of the King's Gambit .....	443
Playing Career in Tables .....	457

### Index of Games

Game	White	Black	Opening	Year
1	Bernstein	Spielmann	Vienna Game	1905
2	Schories	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1905
3	Dyckhoff	Spielmann	Fragment	1921
4	Spielmann	Eliskases	Fragment	1936
5	Davidson	Spielmann	Queen's Pawn Opening	1932
6	Spielmann	Em. Lasker	Fragment	1935
7	Spielmann	Swiderski	Fragment	1906
8	Spielmann	Pirc	Slav Defense	1931
9	Kmoch	Spielmann	English Opening	1928
10	Spielmann	Leonhardt	King's Gambit	1912
11	Bogoljubov	Spielmann	Fragment	1927
12	Wagner	Spielmann	Fragment	1903
13	Spielmann	Forgacs	Evans Gambit	1910
14	Pirc	Spielmann	Dutch Defense	1931
15	Spielmann	Bergsma	Fragment	1938
16	Havasi	Spielmann	Fragment	1934
17	Spielmann	Tartakower	Fragment	1921
18	Spielmann	Tarrasch	King's Gambit	1923
19	Rubinstein	Spielmann	Alekhine Defense	1925
20	Spielmann	Przepiorka	Fragment	1906
21	Spielmann	Tartakower	Sicilian Defense	1923
22	Spielmann	E. Cohn	Italian Opening	1907
23	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Old Indian Defense	1932 (m/9)
24	Spielmann	Flohr	Fragment	1935
25	Bernstein	Spielmann	Queen's Gambit	1906
26	Spielmann	Tartakower	Caro-Kann Defense	1910
27	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Four Knights Opening	1919
28	Spielmann	Patay	Sicilian Defense	1926
29	Spielmann	L'hermet	French Defense	1927
30	Spielmann	Schenk	Queen's Gambit	1933
31	Spielmann	Hoeningler	Caro-Kann Defense	1929
32	Spielmann	Duras	French Defense	1905
33	Mieses	Spielmann	Scotch Game	1910
34	Spielmann	Reti	Fragment	1912
35	Spielmann	Weenink	Four Knights Opening	1923
36	Spielmann	Pirc	Fragment	1932
37	Grunfeld	Spielmann	Grunfeld Defense	1934
38	Tarrasch	Spielmann	Fragment	1906
39	Spielmann	Chekhover	Queen's Indian Defense	1935
40	Spielmann	Pirc	Queen's Gambit	1935
41	Spielmann	Speijer	Fragment	1910
42	Spielmann	Rubinstein	Fragment	1928
43	Spielmann	Duz-Khotimirsky	Fragment	1911
44	Spielmann	Marshall	Fragment	1912
45	Spielmann	Tartakower	Fragment	1921
46	Spielmann	Beutum	Sicilian Defense	1928

Game	White	Black	Opening	Year
47	Machate	Spielmann	Fragment	1927
48	Spielmann	Gruber	Fragment	1929
49	Preusse	Spielmann	Blumenfeld Gambit	1927
50	Burn	Spielmann	Fragment	1912
51	Spielmann	Tarrasch	Scotch Game	1912
52	Asztalos	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1913
53	Spielmann	Gromer	Spanish Opening	1931
54	Spielmann	Tartakower	Old Indian Defense	1913
55	Spielmann	Von Bardeleben	King's Gambit	1908
56	Spielmann	Marshall	King's Gambit	1914
57	Spielmann	Thomas	King's Pawn Opening	1925
58	Tartakower	Spielmann	Fragment	1921
59	Bogoljubov	Spielmann	Fragment	1932 (m/6)
60	Bogoljubov	Spielmann	Fragment	1932 (m/8)
61	E. Cohn	Spielmann	Fragment	1911
62	Spielmann	List	Sicilian Defense	1926
63	Weenink	Spielmann	Fragment	1931
64	Spielmann	Stoltz	Queen's Pawn Opening	1932
65	Spielmann	Romanovsky	Fragment	1925
66	Spielmann	Brody	Fragment	1908
67	Leonhardt	Spielmann	Fragment	1920
68	Spielmann	Rubinstein	Fragment	1911
69	Spielmann	Wahle	French Defense	1926
70	Spielmann	Mieses	Scandinavian Defense	1914
71	Spielmann	Schenkein	Fragment	1914
72	Spielmann	Havasi	French Defense	1928
73	Spielmann	Muller	Fragment	1928
74	Spielmann	Maroczy	Queen's Gambit	1929
75	Spielmann	Levitsky	Vienna Game	1912
76	Stoltz	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1932
77	Spielmann	Yates	Fragment	1931
78	Reti	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1913
79	Loven	Spielmann	Grunfeld Defense	1935
80	Spielmann	Tartakower	Fragment	1925
81	Spielmann	Stahlberg	Fragment	1930
82	Schenkein	Spielmann	Bird's Opening, From's Gambit	1910
83	Rubinstein	Spielmann	Benoni Defense	1912
84	Spielmann	Nimzowitsch	French Defense	1928
85	Spielmann	Grunfeld	Queen's Gambit	1929
86	Spielmann	Thomas	Queen's Gambit	1929
87	Spielmann	Rubinstein	Queen's Gambit	1933
88	Spielmann	Reggio	Vienna Game	1906
89	Rubinstein	Spielmann	Fragment	1930
90	Post	Spielmann	Fragment	1907
91	Spielmann	Saemisch	Nimzo-Indian Defense	1929
92	Teichmann	Spielmann	Queen's Gambit	1909
93	Capablanca	Spielmann	Queen's Gambit	1927
94	Marco	Spielmann	Fragment	1922

<b>Game</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Year</b>
95	Schmitt	Spielmann	Blumenfeld Gambit	1927
96	Spielmann	A. Steiner	Sicilian Defense	1930 (m/1)
97	Hromadka	Spielmann	King's Gambit	1914
98	Spielmann	Levenfish	King's Gambit	1925
99	Stahlberg	Spielmann	Fragment	1935
100	Spielmann	Duras	Vienna Game	1907
101	Spielmann	Walter	Caro-Kann Defense	1928
102	Spielmann	Landau	Alekhine Defense	1933
103	Spielmann	Pokorny	Fragment	1932
104	Becker	Spielmann	Slav Defense	1926
105	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Fragment	1932 (m/5)
106	Przeziorka	Spielmann	Fragment	1906
107	Spielmann	Tartakower	Caro-Kann Defense	1909
108	Treybal	Spielmann	Fragment	1912
109	Treybal	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1922
110	Spielmann	Koltanowski	Fragment	1924
111	Spielmann	Carls	Caro-Kann Defense	1925
112	Spielmann	Nielson	French Defense	1924
113	Spielmann	Maroczy	Vienna Game	1907
114	Spielmann	Stoltz	French Defense	1930
115	Tartakower	Spielmann	Fragment	1926
116	Tarrasch	Spielmann	Fragment	1914
117	Przeziorka	Spielmann	Fragment	1922
118	Spielmann	Janowski	Fragment	1926
119	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Sicilian Defense	1932 (m/7)
120	Spielmann	Saemisch	Fragment	1925
121	Spielmann	Colle	Nimzo-Indian Defense	1929
122	Pirc	Spielmann	Fragment	1931
123	Spielmann	Hoeningler	Fragment	1933
124	Spielmann	Nimzowitsch	Caro-Kann Defense	1905
125	Spielmann	Sterk	Hungarian Defense	1913
126	Spielmann	Vajda	Nimzo-Indian Defense	1928
127	Wolf	Spielmann	Sicilian Defense	1932
128	Spielmann	Muller	Semi-Slav Defense	1933
129	Spielmann	Reti	Budapest Gambit	1919
130	Leonhardt	Spielmann	French Defense	1927
131	Grunfeld	Spielmann	Pirc Defense	1922
132	Johner	Spielmann	Queen's Gambit	1922
133	Nielson	Spielmann	Slav Defense	1924
134	Spielmann	Mieses	Queen's Gambit	1910
135	Tarrasch	Spielmann	Spanish Opening	1912
136	Spielmann	Grunfeld	King's Gambit	1922
137	Spielmann	Jacobsen	King's Gambit	1923
138	Spielmann	Eljaschoff	King's Gambit	1903
139	Spielmann	Bernstein	King's Gambit	1903
140	Spielmann	Wadling	King's Gambit	1940
141	Spielmann	Moeller	King's Gambit	1920
142	Spielmann	Prokes	Vienna Game	1908

<b>Game</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Year</b>
143	Spielmann	Englund	Vienna Game	1912
144	Spielmann	Flamberg	Vienna Game	1914
145	Spielmann	Yates	Vienna Game	1925
146	Spielmann	Saemisch	Sicilian Defense	1923
147	Spielmann	Sterk	Sicilian Defense	1938
148	Spielmann	Landau	Sicilian Defense	1938
149	Spielmann	Oskam	French Defense	1923
150	Spielmann	Schmidt	French Defense	1938
151	Spielmann	Kieninger	French Defense	1922
152	Wolf	Spielmann	French Defense	1923
153	Spielmann	Pirc	Queen's Gambit	1935
154	Spielmann	Erdelyi	Semi-Slav Defense	1934
155	Spielmann	Alekhine	Fragment	1911
156	Spielmann	Rubinstein	Fragment	1919
157	Flamberg	Spielmann	Fragment	1912
158	E. Cohn	Spielmann	Fragment	1912
159	Lange	Spielmann	Fragment	1904
160	Spielmann	Rubinstein	Fragment	1923
161	Spielmann	Reti	Fragment	1925
162	Marshall	Spielmann	Fragment	1929
163	Spielmann	Schlechter	Vienna Game	1906
164	Spielmann	Ahues	Fragment	1926
165	Nimzowitsch	Spielmann	Fragment	1929
166	Menchik	Spielmann	English Opening	1929
167	Stoltz	Spielmann	Fragment	1930
168	Spielmann	Berndtsson	Sicilian Defense	1933
169	Botvinnik	Spielmann	Caro-Kann Defense	1935
170	Teichmann	Spielmann	Slav Defense	1923
171	Mattison	Spielmann	Fragment	1929
172	Spielmann	Znosko-Borovsky	Fragment	1907
173	Spielmann	Barasz	Fragment	1912
174	Spielmann	Prins	Spanish Opening	1933
175	Spielmann	Dekker	French Defense	1934
176	Rubinstein	Spielmann	Dutch Defense	1912
177	Leonhardt	Spielmann	Scotch Gambit	1906
178	Spielmann	Janowski	Fragment	1907
179	Spielmann	Reti	Fragment	1921
180	Spielmann	Maroczy	Vienna Game	1922
181	Euwe	Spielmann	Budapest Gambit	1922
182	Vukovic	Spielmann	Blumenfeld Gambit	1922
183	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Vienna Game	1920
184	Spielmann	Teichmann	Sicilian Defense	1907
185	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	Fragment	1921
186	Bogoljubov	Spielmann	Fragment	1920
187	Alekhine	Spielmann	Fragment	1923
188	Alekhine	Spielmann	Fragment	1926
189	Spielmann	Capablanca	Fragment	1925
190	Capablanca	Spielmann	Slav Defense	1928



<b>Game</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Year</b>
191	Capablanca	Spielmann	Queen's Gambit	1929
192	Spielmann	Nimzowitsch	Latvian Gambit	1926
193	Tarrasch	Spielmann	Four Knights Opening	1910
194	Rubinstein	Spielmann	Yusupov-Rubinstein System	1928
195	Spielmann	Nimzowitsch	Nimzowitsch Defense	1920
196	Sjoholm	Spielmann	Blumenfeld Gambit	1941
197	Spielmann	Koehnlein	Tactic	1904
198	W. Cohn	Spielmann	Tactic	1907
199	Spielmann	Fahrni	Tactic	1910
200	Spielmann	Strassl	Tactic	1912
201	Kolste	Spielmann	Tactic	1925
202	Spielmann	Yates	Tactic	1926
203	Hoenlinger	Spielmann	Tactic	1929
204	Spielmann	Harum	Tactic	1933
205	Spielmann	Fuss	Tactic	1934
206	Landau	Spielmann	Tactic	1936
207	Spielmann	Zinner	Tactic	1937
208	Spielmann	Van Scheltinga	Tactic	1938
209	Spielmann	Grunfeld	King's Gambit	1923
210	Spielmann	Wolf	King's Gambit	1923
211	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	King's Gambit	1923
212	Spielmann	Tarrasch	King's Gambit	1923
213	Spielmann	Bogoljubov	King's Gambit	1923

## INTRODUCTION

*I dedicate this work to the memory of my coach, the most exciting chess player in the history of the Komi Republic, Roman Bogdanovich Dzhangarov*

This is my third chess biography of great players of the past. I have already published books with Elk and Ruby on Szymon Winawer (jointly with Polish chess historian Tomasz Lissowski) and on Efim Bogoljubov (in two volumes). As in the two books mentioned above, the main focus of my book about Rudolf Spielmann is a detailed study of the great chess player's games. Although I did not immerse myself in historical research about his life, I nevertheless managed to unearth some little-known facts. There are also games in this book that have not appeared in databases. As an appendix, you can find a fascinating article written by Spielmann *From the Sickbed of the King's Gambit* dating to 1923-24. I am not aware of an English version of this article being published previously.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Tomasz for providing me with interesting information about Spielmann's life.

### Abbreviations

AA – Alexander Alekhine  
 AN – Aron Nimzowitsch  
 BB – Benjamin Blumenfeld  
 EB – Efim Bogoljubov  
 GB – Grigory Bogdanovich  
 IB – Igor Bondarevsky  
 NG – Nikolai Grigoriev  
 PR – Peter Romanovsky  
 RR – Richard Reti  
 ST – Savielly Tartakower  
 VK – Viktor Korchnoi

# Chapter I

## The Life of Rudolf Spielmann

**5 May 1883 Vienna – 20 August 1942 Stockholm**

*“A man in the dark in a picture frame so mystic and soulful”*  
*Ure et al., 1980*

Rudolf Spielmann is known as an Austrian chess player, but I think that such a definition is open to debate. Is it just because he was born in Vienna and lived in the city for a long time, playing at the Chess Olympiad for the Austrian team, that he is called Austrian? That is all true; however, he started his chess career in Germany, where he spent almost half of his life, feeling right at home in the chess environment of Munich. Obviously, one should not understate the importance of the Austrian capital in his biography. Vienna was the location of much of his chess career as well as other parts of his life: on the one hand, there were chess tournaments and his cooperation with *Wiener Schachzeitung*; on the other hand, he saw military service in the Austrian army.

Information on Spielmann’s birth was cited by Ulrich Grammel in an article “Biographische Skizze uber Rudolf Spielmann” in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* in 1972. He provided the following record from the Vienna cadastral register of citizens (Katasterblatt der Wiener Heimatrolle):

“Rudolf Spielmann, born May 5, 1883, of the Jewish faith, unmarried, resident of Vienna 8, Langegasse 46/9. Chess master (father: Moritz Spielmann, mother: Cecilia Neustadt). Obtained Austrian citizenship and at the same time municipal rights in Vienna: June 17, 1931; previously held rights in Nikolsburg, Czechoslovak Republic”. (After World War I, the city of Nikolsburg was called Mikulov and was located in South Moravia, which belonged to Czechoslovakia.)

Note that a month later, in July, he played in the Prague Chess Olympiad for the Austrian team. And, as we can see, on perfectly legitimate grounds.

However, there was speculation in the Czechoslovak press of the time that he had previously agreed to represent the team of that country at the Olympiad, but that at the last moment he changed his mind and obtained Austrian citizenship.

Let us also cite another important fact: in the annals of chess history, it is noted that only German chess players and one Austrian – Spielmann – took part in the 25th Congress of the German Chess Union in 1927. Once, he was not allowed to participate in a tournament only for German chess players, since he had Czechoslovak citizenship (see the above-mentioned document). Spielmann was outraged and even sent a letter to *Wiener Schachzeitung* in 1929,

which he signed “master from Germany”. As an argument, he cited that he had participated in the congress. So I think that it is fair to call him an Austro-German (or German) chess player. Still, let’s not get fixated on passport matters.

Now we turn to another favorite question of chess biographers – where the hero learned his trade. So which chess schools did Rudolf Spielmann attend? It’s often affirmed that this outstanding grandmaster belonged to the Vienna chess school, the leader of which is considered to be the first world champion and founder of the positional chess school, Wilhelm Steinitz. Of course, Spielmann’s famous work published in German in 1935 *Richtig opfern* (the English version is named *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess*) points to Rudolf Spielmann belonging, rather, to the combinational chess school, which of course he did not found (Paul Morphy and Adolf Anderssen among others appeared earlier). It should be added that Savielly Tartakower placed Spielmann second in chess history in combinational talent after Morphy.

While studying Spielmann’s work, you catch yourself thinking a seditious thought: was his play typical of the Vienna chess school? What are the criteria for belonging to a particular chess school, anyway? The place of residence? Indeed, Spielmann was born in Vienna, but his chess career kicked off in Munich. Moreover, during the first years of Spielmann’s participation in tournaments, the Vienna non-chess press spoke of him as a “chess player from Berlin” or “from Munich”. He appeared in Vienna as a chess player in 1907, intending to take part in an international tournament, and before that the young Spielmann showed up in several German tournaments. He spent much of his life in Munich and, as has already been noted above, he was not a mere observer of chess life in the city, but even played for the Munich team in correspondence matches against other cities. A little-known fact is his participation in a correspondence match with Edinburgh. Doing so was not similar to playing a tournament, which you perform in and then leave: it requires an extended stay in the city.

Here is what Spielmann said: “At all the congresses of the German Chess Union in 1904-1914, I was an official representative of Germany and represented Munich chess specifically”, and then, “Until 1924, Munich was my permanent residence, then I moved to Vienna”. Moreover, according to press reviews before 1914, it was clear where he permanently resided at the time.

Back in the spring of 1914, his reviews of that year’s St. Petersburg and Baden gambit tournaments were published in *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten*. However, in that same year, Georg Marco mentions Spielmann’s participation in the gambit tournament in Baden as a representative of Vienna. If then we take a look at an article written by Tartakower about the Marienbad tournament of 1925, we find out that Spielmann appears there as a German chess player.



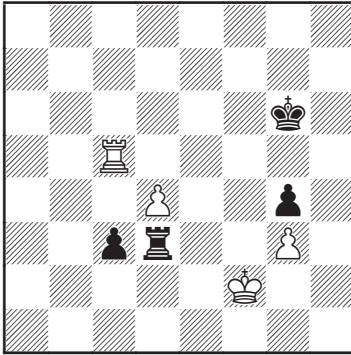
Spielmann's close friend was probably well informed of the situation with his official status. And even though, as we noted above, Spielmann called himself a "master from Germany" in his letter to *Wiener Schachzeitung* in 1929, he played for Vienna in a match against Budapest in 1930. Moreover, he played for Austria at the 1931 Olympiad in Prague.

Interestingly, he played on second board in Prague, behind Ernst Grunfeld. The personal score between them up until then was in favor of Spielmann (5:4), and Spielmann's results were more impressive. However, since Grunfeld had consistently led the Austrian team since 1927, Spielmann probably did not object. Moreover, Grunfeld had no qualms about playing in minor Viennese tournaments, whereas Spielmann avoided them. At that tournament, Grunfeld achieved a 60% result on first board in 15 games, while Spielmann scored 62.5% on second board in 16 games. Their results were hence approximately equivalent. But the very next year at the Olympiad in Folkestone, Spielmann was no longer playing for the team. There was no place for him in it, and the team put in a mediocre performance. In a letter to *Wiener Schachzeitung*, Spielmann explains the result as being due to the absence of him, Kmoch and Berger from the team.

However, in 1935 he played for the Austrian team again at the Warsaw Olympiad, although he had left Vienna by then. He would return to Vienna again, but only to play in a tournament or give a simultaneous display or lecture.

So, what about his style? Chess players, like ordinary people, can be divided into two "types": practical and, obviously, impractical players. The latter are called romantics in chess. Rudolf Spielmann was one of those. The creative process of the game was the priority for him, while attempts at practicality were less important for him than for most chess players. But he was perfectly "human", too: sometimes he would agree to a draw when he could still fight for victory. Alexander Alekhine said of him, in his review of the 1929 Carlsbad tournament in *Shakhmaty* No. 9 that year: "Spielmann's biggest sporting defect as a chess master was the excessive peacefulness that sometimes manifested itself. [...] Another feature of his character hindered Spielmann, namely, he thought that some masters were better than they actually were".

74.♖d6 ♗f5 75.h6 ♔g8 76.♖d7  
 ♔h8 77.♔g1 c3 78.♖c7 ♗f3 79.♔g2  
 ♖d3 80.♔f2 ♖f3+ 81.♔g2 ♖e3  
 82.♔f2 ♖d3 83.♖c5 ♔h7 84.♖xd5  
 ♔xh6 85.♖c5 ♔g6



86.♔e2! *The simplest way to demonstrate the impossibility of black winning – EB.*

86...♖xg3 87.♔f2! ♖h3 88.♔g2  
 ♖d3 89.♔h2 ♔f6 90.♔g2 ♔e6  
 91.♔h2 ♔d6 92.♔g2 ♖d2+ 93.♔g3  
 c2 94.♔h4! ♖g2 95.♔g5! ♖g1. Or  
 95...g3 96.♔g4 and so on.

96.♖xc2 ♔d5 97.♔f4 ♔xd4  
 98.♖d2+. Draw agreed. Staunton  
 taught us that you need to play  
 correctly at the end of the game, but  
 that it is impossible.

The next game, with an energetically played opening, fine positional play in the middlegame, a spectacular tactical blow and confident conversion of the advantage against one of the greatest players in history, is among Rudolf Spielmann's best achievements.

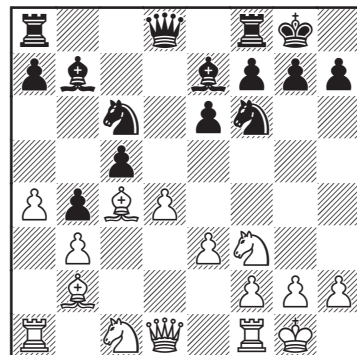
*No. 190. Slav Defense*  
**CAPABLANCA – SPIELMANN**  
 Bad Kissingen 1928  
*Commentary by Savielly Tartakower*

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗f3  
 dxc4 5.e3. There are many drawbacks  
 to the prophylactic move 5.a4.

5...b5 6.a4 b4 7.♘a2 e6 8.♙xc4  
 ♙e7. Spielmann, a great connoisseur  
 of openings, prefers the early  
 development of the kingside here,  
 instead of the popular 8...♘bd7 and  
 9...c5, or even 8...c5 and 9...♙b7,  
 which, however, prematurely (before  
 castling!) weakens the b5 square.

9.0-0 0-0 10.b3. White's strategy,  
 which includes his following two  
 moves, is often implemented via this  
 variation. However, it was probably  
 better to play 10.♙d2 or even 10.♖e2,  
 followed by e3–e4 and ♙g5 (as in the  
 Alekhine – Tarrasch game, Hastings  
 1922), although this advance of  
 white's king's pawn has its drawbacks.

10...c5 11.♙b2 ♙b7 12.♘c1 ♘c6



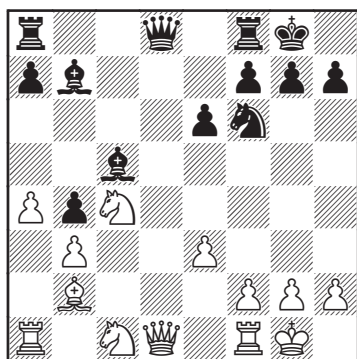
Here is the second opening  
 subtlety: instead of the usual

continuations 12...a5 or 12...♘bd7, the development in the text allows black to prevent the blocking move 13.a5, while enabling himself to undertake an advantageous operation via ♖c6-a5xc4.

**13.dxc5.** A premature exchange, instead of which, as Capablanca later stated, it was correct to continue via 13.♘d3.

**13...♘a5!? 14.♘e5.** An attempt to hold onto the pawn would fail after something like 14.♘d3 ♖xc4 15.bxc4 a5, and then 16...♖c8. The pawn would still be lost and he would have allowed the creation of a strong passed b4 pawn for his opponent.

**14...♘xc4 15.♘xc4 ♙xc5**

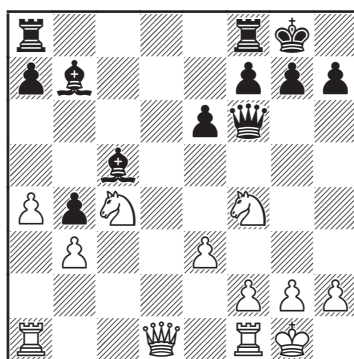


Black has already overcome all of his opening difficulties and has a great position thanks to his long-range bishops, since now he is not scared of either 16.♙xd8 ♖fxd8 17.a5 ♙a6, or the immediate 16.a5 ♙e7! Therefore, with his next move, white tries to take away bits of space from his opponent.

**16.♘d3 ♙d5 17.♘f4.** A cautious Capablanca avoids the move 17.f3 that would weaken his position – GB.

**17...♙g5 18.♙xf6.** Bitter acceptance that otherwise, after 18...♖fd8 and 19...♘d5, black's knight can become a more active piece than the proud b2 bishop. In general, only by playing for simplifications can white hold back the fury of his opponent's attack.

**18...♙xf6**



**19.♖c1.** With the minor threat of 20.♘a5, attacking both bishops. But black still has control, and he decides not to give up any of the positions he occupies.

**19...♖fd8 20.♙h5 ♖ac8 21.♖fd1.**

*The attack 21.♘a5 no longer frightens black, for example: 21...♙a6 22.♖xc5 ♙xf1 23.♖xc8 ♖xc8 24.♙xf1 ♖c1+ 25.♙e2 ♖c2+ 26.♙f3 e5 and so on – GB.*

**21...g6 22.♖xd8+ ♙xd8 23.♙e5.**

*This allows black to move his bishop to the long diagonal with tempo. The move 23.♙g4 was more cautious – GB.*

**23...♙e7!? 24.h3.** One of

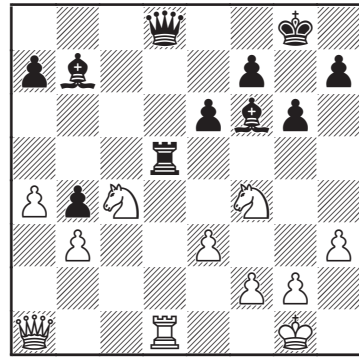


Capablanca's favorite "waiting" moves, which, however, does not frighten the energetic Spielmann!

24...♖c5!      25.♚a1      ♘f6

26.♖d1. This intermediate spark unintentionally lights a whole fire. He should have politely retreated the queen 26.♚b1, avoiding the worst, although even then black with his two strong bishops (against the two knights) and the "hydraulic" b4 pawn stood much better.

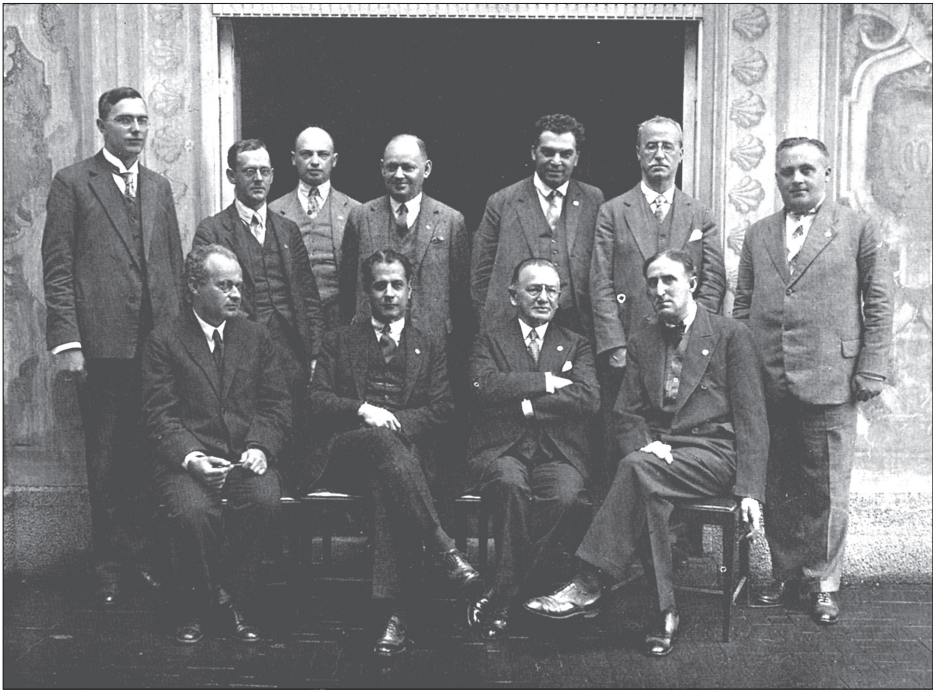
26...♗d5! With this brilliant and obviously unexpected response, black breaks the peaceful course of the game that had been followed until now.



27.♖xd5. After 27.♘b2 ♖xd1+ 28.♚xd1 ♚xd1+ 29.♘xd1 ♘e4 black also achieves a won position — GB.

27...exd5 28.♘e5? A consequence of losing his composure.

The continuation 28.♘b2 d4!? 29.♚d1 g5! was more resilient, but even

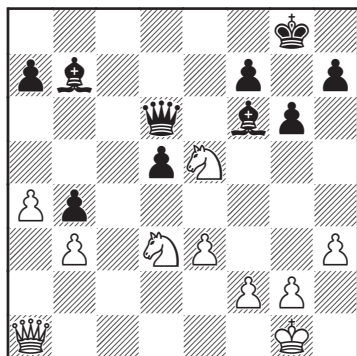


Bad Kissingen 1928. Sitting (left to right): Nimzowitsch, Capablanca, Tarrasch, Marshall; standing: Euwe, Yates, Tartakower, Spielmann, Reti, Mises, Bogoljubov.



*in this case, black has a huge advantage due to the strength of the two bishops – GB.*

28...♖d6! 29.♘fd3



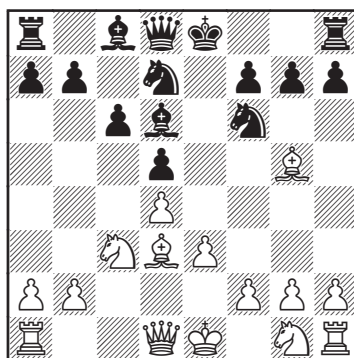
29...♖a6! White loses due to the pin along the long diagonal, aggravated by the failed mutual defense of the knights – GB.

30.♖e1 ♖xe5 31.♘xe5 ♖xe5 32.♖xb4 ♖d3 33.♖c5 ♖b8 34.b4 ♖b7 35.b5 h5 36.♖c3 ♖c4 37.e4 ♖e7 38.exd5 ♖xd5 39.a5 ♖e4. *Jose Raul Capablanca resigned! The Cuban ex-world champion was outplayed in his own style! – GB.*

Master Benjamin Blumenfeld provided a flattering assessment of the following duel: “The game is characteristic of Spielmann’s attacking style. It stands well in comparison with the best games of Alekhine in his match with Capablanca.”

No. 191. *Queen’s Gambit*  
**SPIELMANN – CAPABLANCA**  
 Carlsbad 1929  
*Commentary by Aron Nimzowitsch*

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♖g5  
 ♘bd7 5.e3 c6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♖d3  
 ♖d6



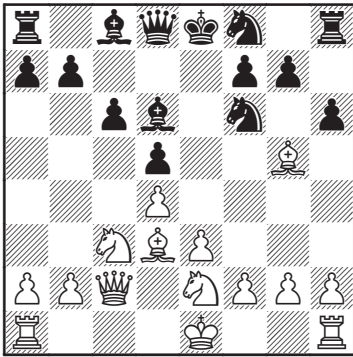
Capablanca deliberately plays the opening so that Spielmann gets an attack, because he considers his opponent tired after a long tournament and unsettled by his defeat in the previous round; therefore, his attack does not seem scary to him. But Capablanca, as we will soon see, made a mistake, and this psychological mistake cost him a share of the first prize.

8.♘ge2 ♘f8. It is possible to maneuver in the rear without much risk. It is even possible to stop completely the development process in your own camp without much harm, but only if the game is closed. But in our case, the game is only ostensibly closed, because e3-e4 can open the position at

any moment. That is why black's strategy should be recognized as fundamentally wrong.

9. ♖c2 h6. We consider 9... ♗e6 to be the relatively best move, for example: 10. 0-0-0 ♖a5 11. ♗xf6 gxf6 12. e4 dxe4 13. ♘xe4 ♗e7 or 10... ♗e7 11. f3! ♖a5! 12. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13. e4? dxe4 and ♗xa2. In other words, it was necessary to take preventive measures against the threatened e4.

But since Capablanca is a specialist in prophylaxis, it would be our right to formulate the above as follows:



“In the position after the 9th move, Capablanca could still save the game by systematically playing like Capablanca!”

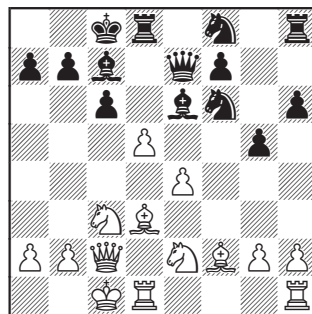
Firstly, not “... ♗xa2” due to b2-b3. Secondly, Nimzowitsch is focusing only on carrying out e3-e4. With the early development of the c8 bishop on e6, white can carry out the immediate break with the f-pawn: f2-f4, and the threat of f4-f5 will hang over black like the sword of Damocles. Nowadays, preference is given to 9... ♗g6, followed

by h7-h6, temporarily refraining from developing the light-squared bishop, which allows black to neutralize the threat of f2-f4 – GB.

10. ♗h4 ♖e7. This position of the queen makes e3-e4 even stronger.

11. a3. Resolutely refusing to advance the e-pawn immediately, since 11. e4 could be followed by 11... g5 12. ♗g3 dxe4 13. ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14. ♗xe4 ♗b4+ or 13. ♗xd6 ♖xd6 14. ♘xe4 ♗xe4 15. ♗xe4 ♖b4+ 16. ♘c3 ♖xd4 with an unclear position.

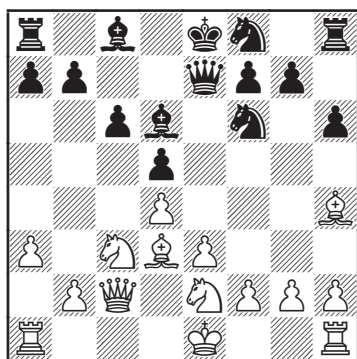
And yet we consider the move 11. a3 superfluous, since it was possible to castle instead, for example: 11. 0-0-0 ♗e6 12. f3 0-0-0 13. e4 g5 14. ♗f2 dxe4 15. fxe4 ♗c7 (15... ♗g4? 16. ♗g1) 16. d5



After 16... cxd5 17. ♘b5 a6 (18. ♗c5 and then ♗d6 was threatened) white can choose between winning the exchange 18. ♗c5 ♖d7 19. ♘xc7 ♖xc7 20. ♗e7 and a bold attack via 18. ♘a7+... So now we see that 11. 0-0-0 followed by f3 plus e4 led to advantageous complications for white. If Spielmann instead chose

the overly cautious 11.a3, then in his justification we could say: 1) he was not familiar with the f2-f3 plus e3-e4 construction, which in this variation was used only once, namely in my game with Romi (London 1927), and 2) it seemed important to Spielmann from a psychological point of view to inspire himself that he should not carry out the attack in his old carefree style of youth! I remember Tarrasch wanted to assure the chess world that Lasker wins by hypnosis. What an antediluvian view! In a fight against a strong opponent, no hypnosis will help. Convincing yourself is another matter. It really can do a lot! But let's get back to the game.

*An interesting note made by Nimzowitsch, which I shortened a little, without giving the attack variations with the move 18.♖a7+. The reason is that modern analysis has revealed significant flaws in them – GB.*



11...♗d7. Again, an incomprehensible move. Why not 11...♗e6? If 12.e4, then 12...dxe4 13.♖xe4 g5 14.♗g3 ♗xg3 15.hxg3

♘d5 and 0-0-0. In this game, Capablanca makes a number of “anticonsolidating” moves – an extremely rare phenomenon for him.

*Above all, we will note that the following order of moves was more accurate: 12...g5!? (instead of 12...dxe4) 13.♗g3 dxe4 14.♖xe4 ♗xg3, since in this case there is no intermediate 14.♖xd6+ (instead of 14.♗g3) 14...♙xd6 15.♗g3. And again, Nimzowitsch considers only the immediate e3-e4 for white, although with the bishop on e6, as I mentioned above, white has other good opportunities at his disposal. Among other points, the development of the bishop to d7 prevents the plan with f2-f3 and e3-e4 which is dangerous for black. So it's too early to criticize Capablanca, even if you are Nimzowitsch! – GB.*

12.e4. With this move, white gets the advantage: the black pieces are placed poorly, and after the opening of the game they will not be able to gain strength quickly enough – RS.

12...g5. 13.e5 was threatened. After the immediate 12...dxe4 13.♖xe4 black will have to play under more unfavorable circumstances than after 12...g5, as he must prevent the doubling of the pawns on the f-file. Black's kingside looks quite ugly! – Max Euwe.

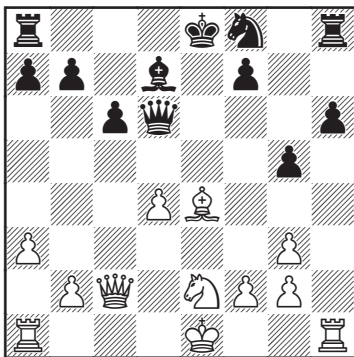
13.♗g3 dxe4 14.♖xe4 ♖xe4. He should have finally thought about consolidation. It's dangerous to joke with Spielmann for so long! It was necessary to play 14...♗xg3 15.hxg3

♘d5. The bishop should have been placed on e6 to reinforce the d5 knight with the idea of preventing all of this.

15. ♖xe4 ♖xg3 16. hxg3. Now black lacks harmony; above all, he needs blockaders of the d4 pawn. And it would be great to have a bishop on e6 or a knight on b6 to then play ♘d5 or ♖d5.

*What has white achieved? Outwardly little; his d-pawn is weak, meanwhile black is not lagging behind him in development. In fact, black's position would have been quite solid had his kingside not been so thoroughly shaken up. Now black can castle long, but this will give his opponent the opportunity to play d4-d5 – Max Euwe.*

16... ♖d6?! Completely ruining the game. It was necessary to continue 16... 0-0-0 (17. d5 ♖b8 18. dxc6 ♖c8). But even in this case, by continuing 17. 0-0-0 and then 18. ♘c3 white would, of course, have maintained his positional advantage.



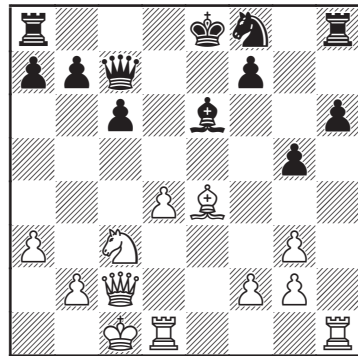
17. 0-0-0 ♖e6?! Now black is in a difficult position, for example, the

move 17... 0-0-0 would be met by 18. d5 c5 19. ♘d4!?, and if 19... ♖b8, then 20. ♘c6+! – GB.

18. ♘c3. Threatening 19. d5 cxd5 20. ♘b5 and 21. ♘c7+.

*Now there is no defense against the terrible threat of a d4-d5 break; in the case of 18... ♖d5 white plays 19. ♖xd5, followed by 20. ♘b5. The move 18... ♖c8 is first followed by the preparatory move 19. ♖he1 – RS.*

18... ♖c7

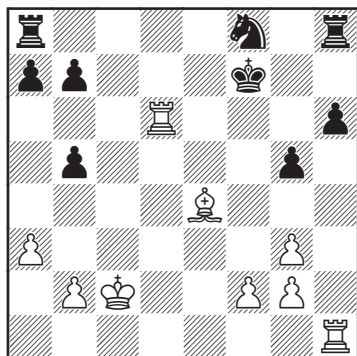


19. ♘b5. *It was more energetic to play 19. d5!?, and after 19... cxd5 20. ♖xd5 not 20... 0-0-0 due to 21. ♖xb7+! ♖xb7 22. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 23. ♖e4+ and so on – GB.*

19... ♖d7. After 19... ♖b6 20. ♘d6+ the black king gets stuck in the center – GB.

20. d5! cxb5 21. dxe6 ♖c8 22. exf7+ ♖xf7 23. ♖d6 ♖xc2+ 24. ♖xc2. After white's successful breakthrough, the disharmony of black's formation becomes even more pronounced: the a8 and h8 rooks stand awkwardly (i.e. disconnected), the b7 and h6 pawns

are loose, and most importantly, white is preparing to centralize all his forces (i.e., they occupy the middle of the board).

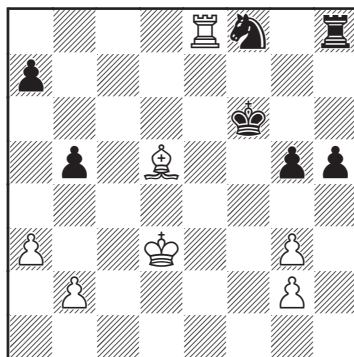


**24...Rxe8.** According to Nimzowitsch, this is the best chance – GB.

**25.♙xb7.** We would prefer 25.f3, after which black would have nothing to move with; the central e4 bishop would not let the f8 knight out of his den. But Spielmann seems to be tired of playing for the position: he remembers the past and furiously attacks his enemy's king, not caring at all about the fate of his pawns.

**25...Rxe2+ 26.♚d3 Rxf2 27.♖e1.** White's threat is as follows: **28.♙d5+ ♚g7 29.♖e7+ – GB.**

**27...Rf6 28.♙d5+ ♚g6 29.♖xf6+ ♚xf6 30.♖e8 h5.** After **30...♞g6 31.♖xh8 ♞xh8 32.♚d4** black's pawns on the queenside perish, and the white bishop controls the situation on the kingside. Black is unable to save the bishop vs knight endgame with play on both flanks – GB.



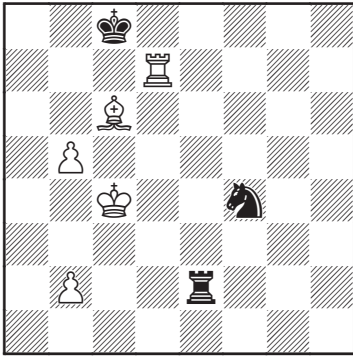
**31.♖a8.** This was a poor choice, too. Spielmann suddenly forgets his newfound wisdom. He needed to play the centralizing **31.♚e4**; for example: **31...♞g6 32.♖e6+ ♚g7 33.♚f5** with a win or **31...h4 32.g4.**

*It was simpler to play 31.♚c3 h4 32.♚b4 with dominance of the queenside – GB.*

**31...h4 32.gxh4 gxh4 33.♖xa7 ♚e5 34.♙c6 h3 35.gxh3 ♖xh3+ 36.♚c2 b4 37.axb4.** It is not easy to win anymore. White should not let the black king ensconce itself on the dark squares (for example, if the white pawn were on b5, the black king on c5 would save the endgame).

**37...♞e6.** With proper play in the endgame (31.♚e4! instead of the weak 31.♖a8) this knight would never have broken free.

**38.♙a4 ♞f4 39.♖e7+ ♚d6 40.♖d7+ ♚e5 41.♙c6 ♖h6 42.b5 ♖d6 43.♖e7+ ♖e6 44.♖c7 ♚d6 45.♖c8 ♖e2+ 46.♚c3 ♖e3+ 47.♚c4 ♖e2 48.♖d8+! ♚c7 49.♖d7+ ♚c8. 49...♚b6 50.♖b7+ ♚a5 51.b4+ ♚a4 52.♖a7# – GB.**



50. ♔c5! ♖xb2 51. ♔b6 ♖e2  
 52. ♖c7+ ♔d8 53. ♖d7+ ♔c8  
 54. ♖d4! ♞e6 55. ♙b7+ ♔b8 56. ♖c4  
 Black resigned.

*This far from flawless game is still very interesting and [...] is characteristic of both Capablanca and Spielmann. Capablanca discovered in it that he has a strange perception of the neo-romantic playing style. Apparently, he believes that consolidation does not play a big role in it. And indeed, he misses consolidating opportunities several times. On the other hand, Spielmann initially showed a desire for consolidation (11. a3), but when it came to the endgame, he suddenly forgot that he should have applied centralization, which is one of the main tenets of consolidation play. As a result, he barely managed to win. In some moments, however, he showed brilliance and beauty.*

*In summary, let's say that both Capablanca and Spielmann have changed their playing style in recent years. Capablanca has apparently fallen in love with neo-romanticism, while Spielmann has discovered a positional talent in himself. But both of them are*

*still showing a certain uncertainty in the application of an uncommon method of playing. The further development of their style is very difficult to predict – AN.*

The year before, in Bad Kissingen, Spielmann also won against Capablanca. In fact, he was the only master to record two tournament victories over the Cuban. Here is what Alekhine wrote about their meeting in 1929: “This game was conducted by Spielmann very skillfully. From the first to the last move, Capablanca could not oppose anything to the Hungarian grandmaster’s attack.” After this victory, the score between them was even. Their last historic meeting at the Moscow International Tournament in 1935 ended in a draw. A decent result against one of the strongest chess players of all time.

In the next game, Spielmann defeated the Great Reformer Aron Nimzowitsch. He can also be considered a problematic opponent for Spielmann. This is especially noticeable towards the end of their rivalry, in the last years of Nimzowitsch’s relatively short life. If at the beginning and in the middle of their unspoken competition they took turns capturing the edge – first Spielmann was ahead, then Nimzowitsch, then Spielmann caught up with him – at the end of their confrontation Nimzowitsch began to break away. Nimzowitsch, whose analytical mind surpassed even that of the world champions of that epoch and enabled him write the seminal