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EMANUEL LASKER

VOLUME II CHOICES AND CHANCES
CHESS AND OTHER GAMES OF THE MIND

Edited by Richard Forster, Michael Negele, and Raj Tischbierek
With a foreword by Vladimir Kramnik

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FOREWORD BY VLADIMIR KRAMNIK



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CONTENTS

Foreword—My Thoughts on Lasker VII

Vladimir Kramnik

Editors' Preface IX

Richard Forster, Michael Negele, and Raj Tischbierek

CHAPTER 1

A Biographical Compass: Part II 1

Michael Negele and Richard Forster

CHAPTER 2

Lasker in Holland 69

Richard Forster, Michael Negele, and Bob van de Velde

Exceptional Popularity 70 Lasker among the Dutch 72 The Beginning: Amsterdam 1889 75

Back in 1898 and 1908 76 Friendly Match with Speijer 79 Negotiations with Capablanca in 1920 81

De Telegraaf and W.A.T. Schelfhout 83 The Chess Tours of 1920 and 1923 86 The Réti Rivalry 91

Lasker, the Businessman 93 Triumphant Receptions in 1924 and 1929 97 Starting All Over 99

Final Performances in 1935 and 1937 102

Appendix by Floribert Baudet: Han Baudet—A Remarkable Friend 104

CHAPTER 3

Lasca—A Strategic Mind Game 119

Wolfgang Angerstein

From Bashni to Lasca 119 The Rules of the Game 125 Tactical and Strategic Considerations 130 Lasca between the Wars 133 Lasca from a Mathematical Perspective 142 Emanuel Lasker and his Game 145

Appendix by Wolfgang Angerstein & Richard Forster: Checkers and Salta 147

Inspired by Checkers: Salta 150 Lasker and the Salta Hype 151

Appendix: Four Games of Lasca and Salta 157

CHAPTER 4

Lasker and Go 165

Theo van Ees and Hans-Christian Wohlfarth

On the Origins of Go 167 How Go Found its Way to Europe 169 Go Pioneer Oskar Korschelt 171

Go Gaining Traction in Germany 174 Emanuel Lasker and the Go Scene in Berlin 179

A First Periodical on the Game of Go 183 Lasker as a Go Tournament Player 187

A Critical Examination of *Brettspiele der Völker* 196

Appendix: A Game of Go by Lasker 206

Some Additional Remarks from a Modern Perspective 209

CHAPTER 5

Lasker as a Bridge Expert 215

Bob van de Velde

Whist—A Short Historical Digression 215 The “Deschappelles Coup” 218 Bridge Psychology 221 Bridge from the Chess Player’s Perspective 223 First Contacts with Bridge 223 Evaluating Honor Cards 228 International Recognition and Acquaintance with Culbertson 232 Lasker as a Bridge Reporter 236 Lasker’s First Published Deal 240 Lasker’s First Book on Bridge 242 On Bridge in Holland 243 Two Games by Lasker 249 Lasker’s Expertise in the Mirror of His Time 252 “Grand Coup” 254 Unfulfilled Hopes 256 More Books on Bridge 260 A Drama and a Battle 262 Brilliant Ideas 264 Bridge in Lasker’s Last Years 266

CHAPTER 6

Emanuel Lasker and Game Theory 271

Jörg Bewersdorff

Game Theory: What is it About? 271 Board and Card Games—A Game-Theoretic View 273 Lasker on Games and Struggle 279 Lasker On Baccarat 281 Lasker on Poker 286 Experimental Games Analysis 291 Complete Analysis of Combinatorial Games 293 Lasker On Multi-Player Games 300 Lasker’s Impact 302 Summary 303

CHAPTER 7

The New York 1924 Tournament 307

John Donaldson

CHAPTER 8

The New York Controversy 333

Richard Forster

A Chronological Account 336 Assessment 356 Conclusions 363

CHAPTER 9

Emanuel Lasker—The Man to Beat 369

Mihail Marin

Lasker’s Most Dangerous Opponents 369 Mährisch-Ostrau 1923 397 Moscow 1925 421

APPENDIX

Illustration Sources 438 Bibliography 440 General Index 445

A BIOGRAPHICAL COMPASS: PART II

Michael Negele and Richard Forster

AT THE END OF 1901 EMANUEL LASKER HAD EVERY reason to be proud of himself. He was the undisputed chess world champion, and the previous year he had, after much meandering, successfully finished his academic education by obtaining a doctoral degree in mathematics from Erlangen.¹ At the age of thirty-three he stood at a major crossroads: should he strive for a serious university career and try to settle down, perhaps founding a family—or stick to his Bohemian lifestyle, touring the world as the supreme chess champion that he was?

The expectation of his father and his mother was not in doubt, despite their very different natures. Emanuel, who was occasionally at odds with his father, the unambitious and idealistic dreamer Michaelis Aron Lasker, appeared to lean more towards his mother Rosalie, born Israelsohn, a practical, energetic woman.² She was, from what we know, not unlike the overprotective *yiddishe mame*, the possessive “super mother,” full of high ambition and constantly pushing her children, especially the sons, to ever greater success. Both parents clearly wished for their youngest son to choose a career in science, ideally becoming a university professor.

But to enter the traditional academic career path in the German Empire was virtually impossible for a Jew with such a nonconventional background. Lasker had voiced his resentment against the local university system early enough.³ According to one account, a job at a German university was once within reach but fell through when he refused to convert to Christianity:

He refused to accept a teaching position in a German University which required him to renounce Judaism and be

General note: This text repeatedly refers to Lasker’s correspondence with his wife Martha and others. Unless noted otherwise, these letters (xeroxes and originals) were consulted in the Autograph Collection of the Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, or in the Jurgen Stigter Collection, Amsterdam.

1 For Lasker’s years as a student of mathematics, see volume I of the present series, pp. 191–193.

2 See volume I, pp. 16f. It is also noteworthy that Lasker’s doctoral dissertation was dedicated to his mother alone.

3 For example, see the interview with the *Berliner Tageblatt*, 11 September 1895 (volume I of the present series, p. 38).

baptized. While not a strict orthodox Jew and despite his love for Germany, he considered this procedure to be intolerant and refused to submit to it.⁴

But even with more zealous effort and with further sacrifices, a full professorship would have been extremely hard to obtain. Just the process of completing and publishing a “habilitation” (the necessary academic prerequisite for becoming a professor in Germany and most other European countries) could constitute an insurmountable hurdle for Jewish academics, as shown by several examples from Lasker’s own circle of acquaintances.⁵ Also, Lasker was well aware of the obstacles encountered by his mathematical mentor and friend Adolf Hurwitz when he was trying to obtain a full professorship in Germany.⁶

Although Lasker was hardly very religious, his Jewish heritage was part of his personality:

He accepted certain Jewish social ideals: the scholastic man, the middle-class, professional man, and the philanthropic man. He held to these standards all his days. For Emanuel Lasker, philosophy was a profession, and a scholarly, generous life was best. ... The influence of Jewish family religious practices also was present but less direct in his life.⁷

Anti-Semitism was prevalent in the German Empire long before the Nazis. Hostility was the order of the day for many Jews, whether they sought conversion or not, and a scandalous event in the summer of 1903 served Lasker and his family as an acute reminder. The victim of the affair was his cousin Hermann Abraham. He was Lasker’s senior by twenty-one years and an uncommonly charitable person.⁸

After the sudden loss of two children in an accident, he decided to take care of other children in the future. So, he opened soup kitchens for poor children. The first for ten to twenty. From this small beginning grew kindergartens, camps, homes, hospitals, and resort places at the seashore and in the mountains. Thousands and thousands of children got education and health there. Even when that man broke

4 Gallagher, Lasker, p. 11 (based on personal communication with Lissi Danelius, Lasker’s step-granddaughter). This was possibly the 1910 opportunity in Berlin mentioned on page 40 below.

5 Among the Jewish scientists demonstrably hampered in their professional development were Ludwig Schlesinger, Edmund Landau, and Issai Schur (see Vogt, *From Exclusion to Acceptance*). In 1897, the total number of full Jewish professors at German universities was just 17, and it barely rose until the outbreak of World War I despite considerable economic growth (Rowe, “Jewish Mathematics” at Göttingen, p. 428).

6 Hurwitz’s candidacy for a professorship in Göttingen in 1892 had failed for obscure reasons (*ibid.*), and he eventually accepted a position in Zurich. For Lasker’s relationship with Hurwitz, see volume I of the present series, pp. 189f., and also p. 46 below.

7 Gallagher, Lasker, pp. 116f.

8 For his relationship to Lasker, see volume I of the present series, p. 87.

both legs, he continued his work and directed all affairs from his sick bed until his 85th year.⁹

Abraham had come to Berlin at age 17 and founded a textile shop. His business became extremely successful, and after a quarter century he sold it for half a million Marks. Living off the interest from his fortune, he was able with great dedication to advance the development of his children's kitchens. In 1893 he founded a *Verein für Kindervolksküchen und Volkskinderhorte* (League for Children's Soup Kitchens and Shelters) and started collecting money for feeding the poor children through appeals for donations, benefit concerts, and charity bazaars.¹⁰ His aggressive marketing was a thorn in the side of conservative social policy makers and, above all, the anti-Semites. The latter refused to accept selfless humanitarianism from a rich Jew, and they were convinced that a business scheme stood behind it.

When Abraham broke both legs on 3 March 1903 during preparations for an event in the Philharmonic Hall, his supporters—mostly ladies of the upper class—concocted the idea to have him honored on the impending tenth anniversary of his charity. Their idea was well received by the authorities, and on 28 July the Emperor endorsed the presentation of the Prussian Crown Order Fourth Class to this much deserving Jewish citizen. Even before the official award of the Knight's Cross in mid-August, vehement anti-Semitic protests arose. Abraham was badly slandered in the press and accused of greed for profit. Malevolent detractors openly accused him of “putting his concerns into the public sphere through blatant self-promotion.”¹¹

It must have sounded all too familiar to Lasker.¹²

*

9 Lasker, *Biographical Mosaic*, p. 98. In fact, Abraham's two daughters Eugenie (1868–1877) and Rosa (1869–1870) died seven years apart.

10 A charity exhibition by Lasker is described in volume I of the present series, p. 37.

11 The affair is described in detail in Dehne, *Private Wohltätigkeit und Antisemitismus um 1900*.

12 Both in Europe and in America, Lasker repeatedly faced criticism for allegedly being greedy and demanding exorbitant fees. Already Lasker's school teacher Kewitsch had noticed in him “a tendency toward ambition, toward public notoriety” (*WSZ*, September–October 1908, p. 279). See also volume I of the present series, p. 71.



Lasker's cousin Hermann Abraham (1847–1932) had made a fortune, when he decided to fully devote himself to helping poor children. His overt and successful humanitarianism made him the target of nasty anti-Semitic attacks.



Emanuel Lasker about 1902.

The *Belle Epoque* around 1900 brought prosperity to many parts of Europe. In Germany, at least the upper classes profited from the economic growth which in no small measure was owed to the “iron chancellor,” Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898). It was an optimistic time, inviting bold plans and enterprising spirits.

Lasker, too, was going through some transformations. His outward appearance was delicate, and his behavior often seemed lethargic.¹³ A contemporary had written in 1901:

Emanuel Lasker, the current world champion, has the habit of only speaking when he is addressed. He once lived in London, in a most fashionable hotel, and yet went around with torn clothing and damaged trousers. Alongside his enormous knowledge, the invincible champion has a salient trait: he is too modest to ever assert something positive. His style is always: “Don’t you think, it could...” or “Couldn’t it be, that...” etc.¹⁴

As he grew older, Lasker started sporting a full beard and assuming a somewhat more polished and assertive manner.

1902 Lasker spent the new year of 1902 in Berlin, where he saw his mother. After the death of her husband, she had left Berlinchen and moved in with Amalie.¹⁵ A few days later, back in Manchester, he started teaching mathematics as an assistant lecturer at Owens College.¹⁶

Lasker’s contract at Owens College was not extended beyond the summer of 1902. Although he was comfortable in the Manchester chess scene, which in 1901 had afforded him both a weekly chess column¹⁷ and a twelve-month engagement as “coach” of the North Manchester Chess Club, he

13 “He is of a boy-like puniness and of an exceedingly delicate build. His chest and neck are exceptionally narrow. But his head, which displays an extremely luxuriant crop of hair, is powerful and interesting. The narrow nose has a noble sweep; the mouth, outlined in fine lines, is covered by a jaunty full mustache; and his expression is extraordinarily grave. Lasker smokes incessantly, and likely primarily for that reason has developed the yellow, almost tinged with green, complexion, which gives him a sickly appearance.” (*DSZ*, September 1896, p. 285)

14 *Deutsche Salta-Zeitung*, November 1901, p. 266.

15 Mother and daughter first lived at Luisen-Ufer 41, Berlin. Then, from 1903 until her passing in 1906, Rosalie Lasker lived at Neanderstraße 16.

16 See volume I, pp. 125f. and 195.

17 Why the column ended after one year, remains unclear. The explanation given was rather mysterious: “This chess column is destined to die at the end of the year, the growing pressure on the space of the news having in the end proved too much for its vitality.” (*Manchester Evening News*, 27 November 1901)

LASKER AS A BRIDGE EXPERT

Bob van de Velde

COMPARED TO CHESS, RESEARCH ON THE ORIGINS and history of bridge is still in its infancy. The basic rules of chess have remained virtually unchanged since the end of the 15th century, and its further development is documented in solid cultural-historical studies. By contrast, card games such as whist and bridge still await historical work of comparable caliber.¹

To be sure, modern contract bridge emerged only at the end of 1925, and thus is not even a century old. But the oldest card games, such as *trionphe*, *hombre*, *ruff-and-honors*, which must be regarded as predecessors of whist and bridge, date back to the 16th century. Although a chess player can effortlessly replay and appreciate even the oldest recorded games, the knowledge of today's bridge player is limited to the version called *contract bridge*. A game of the slightly older *auction bridge* can only be comprehended if one has studied its scoring rules. This hurdle hampers the wider community's interest in both the immediate and more distant forerunners of bridge. Presumably, it is also the reason for the scarcity of in-depth historical studies, even of the rather short period in which contract bridge has been played. Learning more about Lasker as a bridge player is doubly challenging as only relatively sparse source material has been preserved on his bridge activities.

WHIST—A SHORT HISTORICAL DIGRESSION

In the game of *whist*, one of the important predecessors of all versions of bridge, the two competing pairs merely endeavored to play their 13-card hands in the best way in order to

1 A relatively recent, though no longer entirely topical, review of the development of the game of bridge can be found in Manley, *Encyclopedia of Bridge*, pp. 1–46, specifically 1–13. A more comprehensive work is Laderman, *Bumblepuppy Days*. On the latest discoveries, see B. van de Velde, “The name of the game: The results of Hans Secelle’s research” in the *Bulletin of the International Bridge Press Association*, no. 622 (November 2016), pp. 13f. The Belgian bridge and chess historian Hans Secelle is currently preparing a book on the origins of bridge.

take the most tricks. In later variants of the whist family, a preliminary stage was added to the play: the so-called “bidding.” With this, an “exchange of information” element was introduced that became ever more important.

The rules outlining the way the cards are to be led in contemporary contract bridge are still the same as in whist. Nonetheless, the playing technique has undergone great developments from whist to bridge. With the dummy, who reveals his cards at the beginning of the play, brand new elements have been added, which can be used for sophisticated plays that are less dependent on chance. For the declarer and the opponents, moreover, information becomes available that is revealed during the bidding. This makes contract bridge a true mental contest with results that, compared to whist, are much less determined by luck and more by probabilities.

It attests to the high skill of 19th-century whist players that most of today’s important situations and counter-measures in bridge were already known, and published, in the era of whist. Not without pride, masterful whist players therefore tended to speak of “scientific whist,” meaning the application of probabilities and the exploitation of specific card distributions by certain standard maneuvers.²

THE “DESCHAPELLES COUP”

It is in these standard maneuvers that the “mental processes in chess and bridge” are closest to each other.³ To understand

why the game of bridge began to grow so dear to the world chess champion Emanuel Lasker in the mid-1920s, a certain understanding of the similarities and differences between chess and bridge is indispensable.

To start with, consider this deal.⁴

The players seated NS have, after first bidding ♠ and ♣, reached a final contract of 3 NT with South as the declarer, who therefore must take 9 tricks. This is an irresponsibly high contract as becomes immediately clear after West leads ♦ K, whereby he shows that he definitely also has ♦ Q with either ♦ J or ♦ 10–9, or both, in his hand.

♠ A Q 10 4 ♥ A J ♦ 8 7 5 4 ♣ 8 6 3	N W E S	♠ 9 8 7 6 5 ♥ K 10 7 5 ♦ A ♣ A 4 2	
♠ 3 2 ♥ Q 8 6 ♦ K Q J 9 6 3 ♣ 7 5			
♠ K J ♥ 9 4 3 2 ♦ 10 2 ♣ K Q J 10 9			

2 Pole, *Theory of Whist*, and Pole, *Philosophy of Whist*. The Englishman William Pole (1814–1900), who went by the sobriquet “The Philosopher of Whist,” was in many respects for whist what Lasker was for chess.

3 Abrahams, *Not Only Chess*, pp. 120–132.

4 Taken from Manley, *Encyclopedia of Bridge*, p. 449. For a short introduction to the rules of bridge see pages 216–217.

Therefore, since EW evidently has at their command all high \diamond -cards, they should—depending on the distribution—be able to take at least 4 tricks in \diamond (namely when the suit will have no more disproportionate distribution than 4:3 for EW). The $\clubsuit A$ of East is then the 5th trick, and hence the undertrick, since the declarer will make no more than $13 - 5 = 8$ tricks.

However, the declarer seems to be favored by luck. The \diamond -distribution blocks EW, because East has the $\diamond A$ only as a singleton. He is thus forced to take the first trick but cannot play \diamond again. How can East let his partner make a trick in time to ensure that he makes his winning \diamond -tricks? East realizes that with $\clubsuit A$ he will automatically get to lead if the declarer, who must collect \clubsuit -tricks to make his contract, leads this suit. But then East must immediately be able to lead to his partner West, or it will be too late (the declarer takes otherwise 4 \clubsuit -tricks, 4 \spadesuit -tricks, and $\heartsuit A$). Therefore, the next card which East plays is crucial for the further course of the game. If West himself has a high card in \clubsuit , he can be just in time to lead with it. On the other hand, if West only commands a high card in \spadesuit , this is useless because this card can always be beaten by the dummy (North).

Consequently, an opportunity—at first sight surprisingly—presents itself only in \heartsuit ; in this suit, $\heartsuit A$ and $\heartsuit J$ are visible in North. In order to blow the contract, it is not enough that West holds $\heartsuit Q$, because it can be taken anytime by North with $\heartsuit A$. Hence, it would be useless to lead a low \heartsuit . East must take special measures: the $\heartsuit K$, although not accompanied by the next higher or lower card, is played. Ordinarily, this king would be able to win a sure trick, since it is behind North's $\heartsuit A$. However, East has now to sacrifice his $\heartsuit K$ in the hope that West has $\heartsuit Q$. The trick goes to North, who has a choice: If the declarer decides to take the $\heartsuit K$ with $\heartsuit A$, East will soon afterwards take the $\clubsuit A$ and then lead a low \heartsuit . This is aimed towards the now promoted $\heartsuit Q$ of West, which takes the trick, after which this player cashes all his \diamond -tricks.⁵ The best that declarer can do is to take his four spade tricks, thereby incurring four undertricks (since he merely takes $13 - 8 = 5$ tricks). If he does not do so, the defenders are in a position to take even 9 tricks (two in \heartsuit , six in \diamond and one in \clubsuit).

If, however, the declarer decides not to take the $\heartsuit K$ —a true Trojan horse—and instead plays $\heartsuit J$ (thereby “ducking” or “holding up” the ace), then East continues the attack in \heartsuit in the next trick. $\heartsuit A$ then lies alone on the table and must

⁵ In contract bridge, one “cashes” a card by playing a winning card while on lead.

EMANUEL LASKER—THE MAN TO BEAT

Mihail Marin

AFTER REIGNING SUPREME FOR SOME FIFTEEN years, Lasker started to meet ever more dangerous, younger rivals. In his matches against Steinitz, Marshall, Tarrasch, and Janowski, he was never in any real danger and beat all of them roundly and squarely. But a few years before World War I his dominant position in the chess world started to come under pressure. In the famous match against Carl Schlechter he managed to save his title just in the nick of time, and around the same time a second possible challenger, the Pole Akiba Rubinstein, reached the peak of his career, winning one tournament after another. In the end a third, still slightly younger man was to be Lasker's toughest challenger—one that he could not overcome. In the heat of Havana in 1921, Lasker lost his world championship title after 27 years to José Raúl Capablanca. And yet Lasker kept an enormous playing strength. Although he played only three tournaments in the 1920s, he remained the man to beat, and age seemed to matter nothing to him. In the first tournament examined here, in Mährisch-Ostrau (now Moravská Ostrava) in 1923, he was already 54!

LASKER'S MOST DANGEROUS OPPONENTS

Despite his crushing match victories over Marshall, Tarrasch and Janowski in the first decade of the 20th century and his uniquely long reign as a world champion, Lasker's supremacy was not as undisputed as it might appear. In the absence of an organized system for selecting the challenger and clear rules for the title match, there were at least two players in that period who did not become world champion even though they might have deserved it.



Carl Schlechter (1874–1918) brought Lasker to the brink of defeat in their 1910 world championship match. When the *Deutsche Schachzeitung* published his portrait in January 1909, editor Johann Berger praised Schlechter's fine results in the recent Vienna and Prague tournaments, stressing his stamina: "Probably he has the full mental and physical capacity required for a monstrous competition of 30 games." In the end, financial reasons dictated a much shorter match duration. Fixed at ten games, it became the shortest match in the history of the world championship.

Emanuel Lasker

Carl Schlechter¹

Berlin, 10th match game

8, 9, and 10 February 1910

To many observers, the Austrian grandmaster Carl Schlechter was mainly a “drawing machine” because of his safe style and his very few losses. But Schlechter was a very strong positional player. He achieved a series of outstanding successes from 1906 onwards, which made him a natural candidate for a title match with Lasker. The negotiations started in 1908, but it was not until two years later that the match finally took place.

With the match limited to ten games, Schlechter faced perhaps the most difficult conditions ever imposed on a challenger. Much has been written about the circumstances of the final game. Schlechter was leading by one point, and it has been speculated that the Austrian needed to win that final game, too, as only a two-point lead would have earned him the championship. However, this hypothesis—which might explain Schlechter’s enterprising play but would indeed be unique in the history of the championship—lacks firm corroboration, and the latest research hardly supports it.²

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♠f3 ♠f6 4 e3 g6!?

Schlechter resorts to a then virtually unknown variation which was later named after him, even though a few earlier examples exist.

5 ♠c3 ♗g7 6 ♗d3 0-0 7 ♖c2

Lasker apparently wishes to avoid the pin after ... ♗g4.

Curiously, in one of the first recorded high-level games with the Schlechter System, White adopted a similar policy with 7 ♠e5. In Pillsbury–Gunsberg, Hastings 1895, this was also the start of a plan similar to the Pillsbury Attack in the Queen’s Gambit, based on f2–f4 and so on.

Both moves are correct from a strategic point of view, but from a modern perspective they are premature for dynamic reasons. Therefore, the current main line goes 7 0-0 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♖xf3, since White players have eventually found ways of keeping at least some pressure thanks to the bishop pair.

7 ... ♠a6³ 8 a3 [#1, see next page]

1 References: Reinfeld/Fine, *Lasker’s Chess Career*, pp. 136–139; Kasparov, *Predecessors*, vol. 1, pp. 178–187; Hübner, *Lasker–Steinitz*, pp. 200–225 (this chapter is an updated version of several articles by Hübner on the Schlechter match that had previously been published in 1999 in the German magazine *Schach*).

2 For a discussion, see pages 37f. in the present volume—*eds*.

3 This was the move order given in most of the contemporary sources, also by Lasker in *Pester Lloyd*, 11 February 1910, and *New York Evening Post*, 23 March 1910. Nevertheless, Lasker’s annotations in *Ost und West*, April 1910, cols. 235–238, as well as in *Tidskrift för Schack*, May 1910, pp. 117f., had a different move order: 7 ... dxc4 8 ♗xc4 b5 9 ♗d3 ♠a6 10 a3 etc.—*eds*.

8... dxc4

It was not until Vienna 1922 that Austrian grandmaster Ernst Grünfeld unveiled “his” opening to defeat the future world champion, Alexander Alekhine. In 1910, Schlechter could thus not have known the “Grünfeld spirit.” Had the present game been played a dozen years later, Black might have played the typical Grünfeld move 8... c5, which completely equalizes the game.

Still, appending a “(?)” to Schlechter’s last move, as Robert Hübner did, seems exaggerated.

9 ♖xc4 b5

A highly committal move and objectively not the strongest.

Max Euwe recommended 9... ♖c7, but this would obviously be insufficient for complete equality.

Instead, Black had a second opportunity to undermine White’s center: 9... c5! 10 d5 (The only challenging answer, as after 10 ♖xa6 Black has 10... cxd4 11 ♖xb7 ♖xb7, with an edge—Hübner.) 10... ♖g4! (Before switching to ... b7-b5 it is useful to provoke the knight’s retreat to a passive square.) 11 ♖d2 (11 o-o offers Black good play on the dark squares: 11... ♖xf3 12 gxf3 ♖c7 13 e4 ♖fe8, followed by ... ♖d6, with such plans as ... ♖d4, ... b7-b5, or ... e7-e6. If 11 ♖e5 ♖f5, Black has the initiative as 12 e4? ♖xe4 loses a pawn.) 11... ♖d7!? (Black can also choose the straightforward 11... ♖c7 12 e4 e6 13 d6!?—otherwise Black would have an easy game—13... ♖xd6 14 h3 ♖h5 15 g4 ♖xg4 16 hxg4 ♖xg4, with three pawns for a knight and better development.) 12 o-o ♖b8 13 e4 (White cannot favorably prevent the queenside expansion, for after 13 a4 ♖b4 14 ♖b3 ♖e8 Black seizes the initiative.) 13... b5 14 ♖e2 ♖c7, with the better development and excellent counter-play.

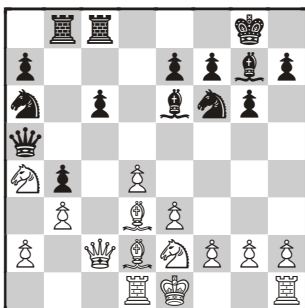
10 ♖d3 b4

This plan was severely criticized by several commentators,

M. Euwe – A. Alekhine

4th match game, The Hague 1935

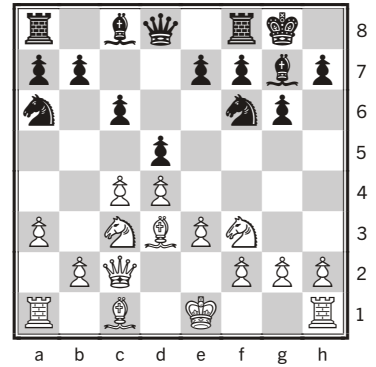
after 15 ♖g1-e2



but it is quite interesting. Engines are somewhat skeptical, but in practical play things become very double-edged.

After his loss to Grünfeld in 1922, Alekhine himself included the new opening in his repertoire and created such gems as the fourth game of his 1935 match with Euwe. One may find some similarities between Schlechter’s and Alekhine’s plans, even though

#1 after 8 a2-a3



Schlechter's play was not as forceful as that of the fourth world champion:

15... c5 16 ♟×a6 ♞×a6 17 ♜×c5 ♞b5 18 ♜f4? ♟g4 19 f3 e5 20 ♜fd3 e×d4 21 f×g4 d×e3 22 ♟×e3 ♜×g4 23 ♟f4 ♟c3+ 24 ♜d2 ♞×c5 25 ♜×c5 ♞×c5 26 ♟×b8 ♞e7+, winning the queen and later the game.

Referring to this game Max Euwe's biographer wrote that "Alekhine combined like a devil."⁴ This is, unfortunately, what Schlechter failed to do in the most important game of his life.

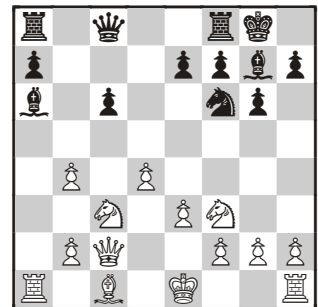
Nonetheless, Hübner was right when he recommended delaying concrete action by 10... ♞a5, threatening ... ♜b4 and keeping the pawn breaks in reserve.

11 ♜a4

Lasker avoids the complications arising from 11 ♟×a6 ♟×a6 (11... b×c3 would allow Black to gradually equalize, but this is not what Schlechter was aiming for; for instance, 12 ♟×c8 c×b2 13 ♟×b2 ♞×c8 14 o-o ♜d7 15 ♞ac1 c5 16 d5 ♟×b2 17 ♟×b2 ♞b6 18 ♞e2 c4 19 ♞×c4 ♞b5 20 ♞c2 ♞×d5, with a probable draw.) 12 a×b4 ♞c8. [#]

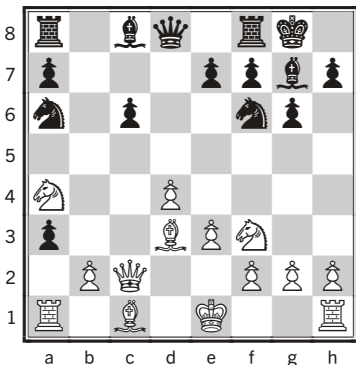
According to Vladimir Vučković, author of the famous book *The Art of Attack in Chess*, the threat of ... ♞g4 promises Black excellent compensation. The following analysis more or less supports this assessment: 13 ♟d2 (Preparing to defend the b4-pawn. 13 h3 is too slow as it allows 13... ♜d5, while 13 ♞a4 ♞g4 14 ♞g1 ♟b5!

after 12... ♞d8-c8 (analysis)



also offers Black active play: 15 ♜×b5 c×b5 16 ♞×b5 ♞ab8.) 13... ♞g4 14 ♞g1 ♞c8. White has gained two tempi but lost the right to castle, and Black can be quite content with the outcome of the opening. Similarly, if 13 e4 ♞g4 14 ♞g1, Black can continue 14... ♞c8, and completing White's development remains a challenge.

#2 after 11... b4×a3



11... b×a3 [#2] 12 b×a3

This time, the complications would be simply bad for White: 12 ♞×c6? ♞a5+ 13 ♞c3 (13 ♞e2 ♜b4 14 ♞×a8 ♜×d3; or 13 ♟d2 ♜b4 14 ♟×b4 ♞×b4+ 15 ♞e2 ♟d7, winning the a4-knight.) 13... ♞×a4 14 ♞×a3 ♞d7 15 ♟×a6 ♟×a6 16 ♞×a6 ♞fc8 17 ♞d2 ♜e4 18 ♞d1 ♞b5 19 ♞a3. White's king is stuck in the center and Black can start a winning attack with 19... e5.

4 Münnighoff, *Euwe*, p. 118.

12 ... ♖b7?!

This leaves Black passive in a position that is strategically inferior because of the backward pawn on c6. Good or bad, 12 ... c5!?—similar to Alekhine’s central break—was called for. [#]

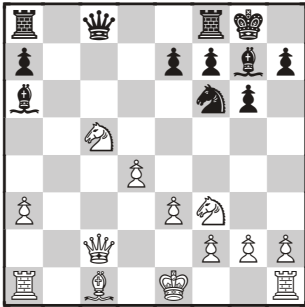
after 12... c6–c5!? (analysis)



13 ♖×a6 (The only way to fight for an advantage. If White is happy with a draw, he can also simplify the game with 13 ♖×c5 ♖×c5 14 ♖×c5 ♖b7 15 0–0 ♖d7 16 ♖g5 ♖×f3 17 g×f3 e5—otherwise White would consolidate and keep his extra pawn—18 ♖×d8 ♖f×d8 19 d×e5 ♖×e5 20 ♖e2 ♖×f3+ 21 ♖×f3 ♖×a1 22 ♖×a8 ♖×a8, and Black’s advantage is purely symbolic.)

13 ... ♖×a6 14 ♖×c5 ♖c8 (a familiar pattern). [#]

after 14... ♖d8–c8 (analysis)



15 ♖d1! (Only this paradoxical retreat, almost as if correcting Lasker’s premature queen development early in the opening, allows White to keep an edge. If 15 ♖a2, Black can answer with another familiar maneuver: 15 ... ♖g4 16 ♖g1 ♖c8, while if 15 ♖e5 ♖d5 16 ♖a4 ♖×e5 17 ♖×a6 ♖d6, Black either retrieves the pawn or else invades on the c-file.) 15 ... ♖b8

16 ♖×a6 ♖×a6 17 ♖e2 ♖×e2+ (Otherwise the initiative would evaporate even faster.) 18 ♖×e2 ♖e4 19 a4 ♖fc8 20 ♖a3 ♖c3+ 21 ♖d3 ♖×a4 22 ♖d2, with somewhat better chances for White in the ending.

Over the board, finding the best moves would not have been easy for Lasker.

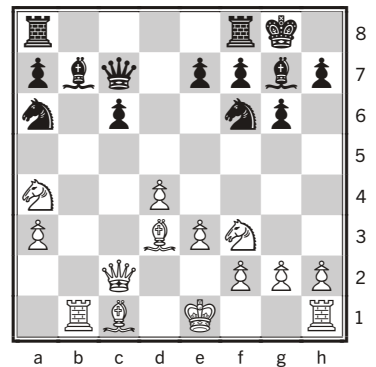
With his last move Schlechter planned to play ... c6–c5 under better circumstances, but the further course of the game shows that the bishop does not manage to create threats along the long diagonal, and it soon returns to c8 to defend the kingside.

13 ♖b1 ♖c7 [#3] 14 ♖e5?! [#4, see next page]

Slightly premature as White has not yet completed his development and the knight is somewhat loose on e5.

Simpler and stronger was 14 0–0, allowing the opponent to play 14 ... c5. [#, see next page]

#3 after 13 ... ♖d8–c7



GENERAL INDEX

Italics indicate pages that (also) contain a picture of the subject.

Games of Chess (with Annotations)

Alekhine, Alexander, 313–317
Bogoljubow, Efim, 416–420
Capablanca, José Raúl, 318–324, 393–396
Euwe, Max, 399–407
Ilyin-Zhenevsky, Alexander, 421–431
Lasker, Emanuel, 313–329 (3 games), 370–436 (8 games)
Rubinstein, Akiba, 382–392
Schlechter, Carl, 370–381
Spielmann, Rudolf, 432–436
Tarrasch, Siegbert, 407–415
Tartakower, Savielly, 325–329

Other Games (by Lasker)

Bridge: 240f., 250–252; with S. Landau, 249f.

Go: Dueball, Felix, 206–213

Lasca: Baudet, Henry, 157f.

Salta: Bartmann, Georg, 162f.

Abele (Göppingen, Go player), 189
Abraham, Hermann (cousin), 2f., 3
addresses, in: Berlin, 45f., 184, 191, 225; New York, 26; The Hague, 101, 244
Adelaar, Maurits, 140
Ahrens, Wilhelm (mathematician and writer), 142f., 273f., 295f., 296
Ahues, Carl, 181, 190, 191, 192
Akibo, Dr. (interpreter), 194
Alekhine, Alexander: annotations, 321; A.V.R.O. exhibition tour, 103; on Bogoljubow, 336; bridge player, 266f.; Capablanca, negotiations with, 333, 345; Düsseldorf 1908, 107; Euwe, matches with, 98, 102, 399; game against Lasker (annotated), 313–317; game fragment, 371f.; games with, 60; Go player, 190; Lasker on, 102f., 115; New York (1924), 308f., 331; New York (1927), 333; New York tournament books, 311; offhand games with, 59; pictures, 63, 98, 267, 306, 310, 334, 347, 362, 385; tournaments with, 61f., 91, 331, 383; Zurich (1934), 357
Alfonso, King of Spain, 276
Allemang, Dean (mathematician), 299
Alliance Israélite Universelle, 40
Anderssen, Adolf, 308
Angel Amenabar, Miguel, 19
anti-semitism, 2f., 72, 85, 232, 239, 266
Argentina: Buenos Aires, 38, 40f., 42, 48f.; Club Argentino de Ajedrez, 40f.; Lasker on, 41
Aristotle, 58
Arrias, Eduard: on Baudet, 104, 110, 135; drawing of Lasker, 96; Lasca, 136f.; Lasker's landlord, 93; pictures, 71, 136; relationship with, 93, 101f.
Arrias, Lucie, 94
Arrias-Berkhof, Maria Jacoba Engolina, 101, 136, 137
articles by Lasker in the daily press: *B.Z. am Mittag*, 36, 47, 50, 51, 56, 224f.; *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 342f.,

348; *Essener Zeitung*, 227, 342f., 348; *New York Evening Post*, 349; *New York Times*, 17; *Pester Lloyd*, 36, 44, 370; *Saturday Review* (London), 36; *De Telegraaf*, 359. *See also* columns by Lasker
d'Aumérie, Frederik Lodewijk Gualtheri, 71, 74
Australia, 34
Austria-Hungary: Café Central (Vienna), 31; Vienna chess club, 20, 30, 36, 37
Austria-Hungary, places: Aussig (now Ústí nad Labem), 28; Budapest, 44; Carlsbad (now Karlovy Vary), 47, 53, 92; Mährisch-Ostrau (now Moravská Ostrava), 92, 94, 308, 369, 397–420; Marienbad (now Mariánské Lázně), 47, 53; Pilsen, 28; Pistyán (now Piešťany), 55; Prague, 27, 28; Vienna, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 79, 368, 381
A.V.R.O. (radio broadcasting corporation), 103, 117
Babb, Jerry, 7f.
Bamberger, Georg (brother-in-law), 12, 46, 124
Bamberger, Jacob (father-in-law), 11, 12
Bamberger, Jacob Moses (philosopher), 12
Bamberger, Levin Michael (banker), 12
Bamberger, Lina (mother-in-law), 11, 12
Bamberger, Louis (banker), 12
Bamberger, Ludwig (brother-in-law), 12
Bamberger, Ludwig (politician), 12
Bamberger, Martha. *See* Lasker, Martha
Bamberger, Michael Levin (banker), 12
Bamberger-Mossner, Rebecca, 12
Bamberger, Willy (brother-in-law), 12, 45
Banks, Neville (checkers player), 149
Bardeleben, Curt von, 153
Bartmann, Georg A., 156; pictures, 152, 153, 155; Salta game, 162f.
Baudet, Ernest Henri Philippe (son of Han), 107, 109, 110, 112f., 114, 116, 116f.; game against Lasker, 115
Baudet, Ernestine (wife of Han): economic difficulties, 11f.; friendship, with, 101, 110f.; letter to, 116; marriage, 108; marriage, second, 111, 115; mysticism, 116f.; pictures, 108, 109, 110, 112, 136; support for, 112–114; visits to, 114–116
Baudet, Gilbert (grandson of Han), 107, 112, 114
Baudet, Henri Philippe (father of Han), 104
Baudet, Jeanne Josephine Henriette (“Puck,” daughter of Han), 108, 110, 114; pictures, 109, 112, 114, 116
Baudet, Pierre Joseph Henry (“Han”), 104–117; academic career, 107–110; boat incident, 110; Capablanca on, 107; chess career, 105–109; chess problem by, 90; contributor to Las-

ker's game magazine, 296; death, 89, 110f., 137; education, 104; exhibition opponent, 77, 106; friendship with, 74, 109; games of Lasca (annotated), 157–160; Lasca, 110, 135–137, 139, 157–160; *Lasca-Zeitung*, editor of, 140; Lasker on, 111; letter to, 113; marriage, 108; Nim, 294; pictures, 74, 105, 108, 111, 112, 135, 136; Sprague, correspondence with, 143f.
Bauer, Johann Hermann, 75
Beasley, Henry (bridge player), 245, 246
Befie, Bernard Wolff, 105
Begas, Gottfried, 125
Belinfante, Johan Jacob, 136
Bellanger, Pierre (bridge player), 258, 260
Bendix, Kurt (bridge player), 245, 247, 248
Benima, Levi, 106
Bening, Otto, 71
Berger, Paul (bridge player), 245, 248
Bergson, Henri (philosopher), 62
Berman, Abraham A., 26, 35
Bernhardt, Sarah (actress), 156
Bernstein, Ossip: friendship with, 60; games with, 59; Lasker on, 59; pictures, 60, 175, 385; student in Berlin, 176; tournaments with, 32, 383
Bertrand, Joseph (mathematician), 282f., 283
Bielski, Fritz, 94, 95
Bielski, Günther, 94, 95
Bigelow, Horace Ransom, 339, 346
Biographical Mosaic. *See* Lasker, Martha: memoirs
Bird, Henry Edward: playing checkers with, 147
Birts, Ivor Watkins (bridge player), 248
Bismarck, Otto von (German chancellor), 4
Blackburne, Joseph Henry, 154, 383, 385
Black Monday and Black Tuesday, 99
Blackwood, Easley (bridge player), 264, 269
Blair, Louis, 38
blindfold chess, 5, 7, 17, 19
Block House, Inc., 133–135
Blumenthal, Oskar, 181
Bobrov, Pavel Pavlovich (checkers player), 150
Bogatyrchuk, Fyodor, 437
Bogoljubow, Efim: annotations, 430, 436; A.V.R.O. exhibition tour, 103; Euwe, match with, 99; game against Lasker (annotated), 416–420; New York (1924), 336; New York (1927), 334f., 366; pictures, 306, 417; tournaments with, 331, 420, 437
Bolle, Pieter D. (publisher), 86, 242, 256
Borel, Emile (mathematician), 272, 276f., 277, 283, 303
Borel, George (bridge player), 245, 247, 256
Bosworth, Phyllis (bridge player), 248
Botvinnik, Mikhail: game fragment, 391f.
Bouton, Charles Leonard (mathematician), 90, 272, 274, 294, 295f., 298, 307, 331, 410

- Bouton, Christopher Bell (checkers player), 150
- Brazil: Bahia, 40; Rio de Janeiro, 40; Santos, 40
- Bricker, Jack (mathematician), 144
- bridge, 215–269; academy, 267; Anglo-American matches, 232, 233f., 245; asking bids, 265, 269; auction bridge, 230; in the Baltics, 257f.; bidding conventions, 231, 232, 243, 253, 260, 262f., 264f.; *Blue Book*, 234, 236, 256, 259; bridge literature on Lasker, 268, 269; bridge studio, 244; certificate from Culbertson, 235; at chess tournaments, 225, 263f., 266f.; columns by Lasker, 227, 230, 232; comparison to chess, 220, 227, 236, 237f., 255, 263; composition, 253, 254f.; contract bridge, 230, 231; contributions to, 228–231, 246, 264f., 268f.; controls, checking, 264f., 268f.; Deschappelles Coup, 218–220, 221; earnings, 256f.; estimating probabilities, 224, 225, 228, 231, 236; fifth suit, 267; finessing, 221f.; in France, 258; games and endgames, 218–220, 221f., 240f., 249–252, 253–255; German champion, 253; in Germany, 238, 258; in Great Britain, 233, 265f.; in Holland, 99f., 242, 243f., 255f., 259; honor tricks, 230; Lasker as tournament director, 238; Lasker, learning the game, 224f.; Lasker on bridge, 221f., 224f., 226, 227, 236–238, 261–265; Lasker's strength, 236f., 241, 247–249, 258, 268; literary works by Lasker, 261–265, 265f.; neglect by chess writers, 223, 235; origins, 215, 218; partners, 242, 244f., 247, 252, 258, 263; psychology, 221f., 237, 250–252; reporting, 232, 233, 236–238, 258; role in Lasker's life, 223; rubber bridge, 217, 256f.; ruffing, 250; rules, 216f.; scoring, 231f.; silent bidding indicators, 246, 248, 269; teaching, 96, 225, 232f., 235, 267f., 269; teaching style, 231, 242f., 260f., 263, 269; tournaments, 237, 238, 244–252, 252f., 258; trick-taking focus, 231; in the United States, 267f.; value of cards, 228–231, 262, 268
- Bridge Academy Dr. Emanuel Lasker, 267f.
- British Chess Magazine*: Capablanca's article and refusal to print Lasker's reply, 308, 343
- Brodsky, Adolph (violinist), 5
- Brodsky (bridge player, Berlin), 245
- Bródy, Miklós, 153, 154
- Broughton, Luke D. jr., 14
- Bryant, Arthur A., 339
- Buller, Walter (bridge player), 232, 233
- Burn, Amos, 5, 32, 75, 385
- Buschke, Albrecht, 21
- Büttgenbach, Konrad Heinrich, 151f., 154, 156
- C**able matches, Anglo-American, 48
- Cafés. *See under* Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, Holland, Russia
- Caland, J. (bridge player), 258
- Canada, 25, 134
- Capablanca, Gloria, 310
- Capablanca, José Raúl: Alekhine, match negotiations with, 333; on Baudet, 107; beating Lasker at rapid chess, 23, 67; bridge player, 263; ceding world championship title to (1920), 88; clock incident, 317, 338f., 344, 359f.; controversy with, 49–51, 84, 307f., 329f., 335, 342–352, 366f.; debut at the Manhattan Chess Club, 16; fee for New York tournaments, 357, 358, 364; first encounter with, 16; first game with, 20; first tournament game with, 61; games against Lasker (annotated), 318–324, 393–396; game fragment, 405; Go player, 190; Havana 1927 tournament, 351; joint endgame composition, 64; Lasker, letter to, 351; Lasker on, 39f., 45, 50f., 63, 351f., 367; on Lasker, 67, 87, 346, 366; London (1913), 57; London (1919), 81; London (1922), 307; London rules, 309; match rumor (1910), 40; match challenge (1911), 45, 48–52; match with (1921), 84f., 88f., 110, 307, 392; match revenge, 307, 350f.; Moscow (1925), 403, 419; *My Chess Career*, 84; negotiations with (1919/20), 74, 81f., 86, 109; New York (1924), 308, 310f., 329–331; New York (1927), 333f., 341, 348; pictures, 50, 63, 306, 318, 324, 334, 337, 340, 347, 365, 385, 395; rapid match (1914), 63f.; reconciliation (1914), 62; tournaments with, 47, 61f., 329, 331, 383, 437
- Carlsen, Magnus, 436
- Cassel, Hartwig, 11, 14, 39
- Cassirer, Ernst (philosopher), 53
- Cauer, Detlef (mathematician), 143, 144
- Chajes, Oscar, 312
- checkers (draughts), 147–150; drawing tendency, 140, 149; in Holland, 69, 149; Lasker games preserved, 150; Lasker on, 147, 149; in Lasker's encyclopedia, 149; in Russia, 119, 148, 150; in the United States, 147f.; variants and comparison with Lasca and Bashni, 128f., 145
- Chéron, André, 277
- chess and mental illness, 17
- chess openings: Alekhine's Defense, 407; English Opening, 325; King's Indian Defense, 399; Queen's Gambit, 313, 432; Ruy López, 382, 393, 416; Sicilian Defense, 421; Slav Defense, 318, 370, 428
- Chess Player's Scrapbook*. *See under* magazines by Lasker
- chess problems: Lasker as a solver, 89
- chess professionalism, 17, 57, 108
- Chess Weekly*: as a rival to *Lasker's Chess Magazine*, 26f., 35
- Chigorin, Mikhail: Memorial tournament, 31, 79f.; picture, 9; Rice Gambit match with (1903), 9; Salta, 154; tournaments with, 12
- clock incident (1924), 317, 338f., 344, 359f.
- Coffin, George S. (bridge player), 253f.
- Cohn-Feiler, Dorothea, 12
- Cohn, Emil (Martha's first husband), 6, 10, 12, 28f., 38
- Cohn, Erich, 32
- Cohn, Isidor, 12
- Cohn, Louis, 339
- Cohn, Martha. *See* Lasker, Martha
- Cohn, Simon Jacob, 12
- Coltof, Jacob, 95
- columns by Lasker, in: *Denken und Raten*, 227, 230, 238; *Gartenlaube*, 232; *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 232, 238, 242, 246, 253, 257, 258, 259; *Hamburger Illustrierte*, 232; *Manchester Evening News*, 4; *New York Evening Post*, 25, 27, 44, 49, 52; *Ost und West*, 52, 370; *Pester Lloyd*, 44, 47, 52, 59; *De Telegraaf*, 83–86, 97f., 111, 344; *Vossische Zeitung*, 59, 64, 80f.; syndicated column, 48
- consultation games, 5, 20, 31, 59, 91
- controversies: Arriais, 100; Capablanca, 49–51, 81f., 84, 307f., 329f., 335, 342–352, 366f.; financial demands, 57; London (1922), 343; Maróczy, 21f., 345f., 360f.; New York (1924/1927), 333–367; Rueb, 100; Schelfhout, 86; war articles, 80f.
- Conway, John Horton (mathematician), 294
- Cook, Eugene B., 26
- copyright on games, 24, 30, 44, 56f.
- “Cora” (actress), 45
- Cortlever, Nicolaas, 72
- court case: referencing Lasker, 303
- Cuba: Lasker on, 19
- Cuba, places: Havana, 19, 20, 45, 51, 82, 110, 113, 307, 351, 369, 392, 395
- Culbertson, Ely: acquaintance with Lasker, 232–236; asking bids, 269; *Blue Book*, 234, 236, 259; comparison with, 256, 265, 267; honor tricks, 230f., 262; on Lasker, 223, 258, 268; letter of endorsement, 235; letters from, 259; picture, 234; system, 243, 252f., 260
- Culbertson, Jo, 234
- D**alton, Basil (bridge player), 253
- Dalton, Jack (bridge player), 245, 248
- Danelius, Lissi Ellen (step-granddaughter), 2
- Davidson, Jacques, 86, 91
- Davies, Rika (bridge player), 267
- Denmark, 81, 133, 135; Copenhagen, 28
- Deschappelles, Alexandre Louis Honoré Le Breton, 220
- “Deschappelles Coup” (bridge), 218–220, 221, 262
- Deutsche Schachzeitung* on Lasker's death, 72
- Dien, Emanuel van, 71, 75, 99
- Dinger, Willem Nicolaas, 70
- dinners and receptions, 20, 24, 49, 62, 79, 86, 97, 98f., 102
- Dittus, Jacob E., 354
- Dohna, Hilda zu (bridge player), 232
- Domville, Sir Guy (bridge player), 245
- Dorgelo, Henk (physicist), 100
- draughts. *See* checkers
- draws, forbidden before move 45: 311
- Druijvesteijn, Aernout Cornelis, 80
- Dueball, Felix (Go player): best Go player in Germany, 177–179, 186; game against Lasker (annotated), 206–213; Go nights, 190–192; Ilmenau tournament, 188f.; in Japan, 193f.; marriages, 177, 195; on Max Lange, 175; pictures, 164, 175, 193, 194, 195, 196, 200, 204; rediscovery of Go, 176f.

- Dueball, Fritz (Go player), 164, 193, 200
- Dueball, Hertha, 195
- Duras, Oldrich, 32
- Dutch colonies, 70, 93, 96, 108, 115
- D.P. Dutton (publishing house), 293
- Duz-Khotimirsky, Fyodor, 32, 437
- Dyckhoff, Eduard, 175
- E**
- Edwards, Glen, 356
- Einstein, Albert, 100
- "Emanuel Lasker A Biographical Mosaic." See Lasker, Martha: memoirs
- England, Frank (bridge player), 237f., 245, 248
- Enklaar van Guericke (physician)
- Frederik Adriaan, 115, 116
- Epelstein, Helmut (nephew), 7
- Epelstein, Schachna (brother-in-law), 7
- Escher, Reinder Johan (Lasca player), 136, 137
- Esser, Johannes, 106, 107, 108
- Essmann, August, 152
- Estonia: Dorpat (now Tartu), 32; Reval (now Tallinn), 32
- Ettlinger, Alfred, 16
- Euwe, Max: Alekhine, matches with, 98, 102, 266, 353, 399; A.V.R.O. exhibition tour, 103; Baudet, friendship with, 108; Bogoljubow, match with, 99; Dutch tournaments, 109; exhibition opponent, 88; game against Lasker (annotated), 399–407; game fragments, 371f., 391f.; Lasker on, 98, 102f.; on Lasker, 72, 92; Maróczy, match with, 92; match prospects, 76; mathematical paper, 281; pictures, 71, 84, 92, 98, 110, 330, 398; *Telegraaf* column, 98; tournaments with, 91, 420
- "Farbe" (company), 95
- Fedoseev, Vladimir, 314
- fees, prices, stakes, and salaries, 20, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 54, 56, 57, 60f., 63, 70, 78, 79, 82, 83, 90, 100, 309, 334, 337f., 344, 357, 364
- Fidlow, Daniel (writer), 324
- Filarski, Herman Willem (bridge player), 254
- financial pressure and poverty, 80, 93, 99–101, 239, 257
- Fine, Reuben, 103, 377
- Finn, Julius, 339, 341, 363
- Flatauer, Max (cousin), 7
- Flohr, Salo, 103, 150
- Fontein, George Salto, 72
- Foreest, Arnold E. van, 71, 75f.
- Foreest, Dirk van, 75
- Forgács, Leó, 32
- Fraenkel, Heinrich, 225
- France: Amis du Bridge de la Muette (club), 260; Café de la Régence (Paris), 31; Grand Cercle de Paris, 36; Lasker on chess in, 53f.; Lasker's post-war difficulties, 81
- France, places: Marseilles, 53, 124; Paris, 31, 34, 36, 54, 60, 113, 154, 155, 214, 258, 260
- Frank, Alex (radio), 102
- Freyenwald, Artur Jonak von (Go player), 174
- Freymann, Sergey von, 32
- Fröschl, Carl (Go player), 189, 195
- funds: for Lasker, 101, for struggling chess masters, 66, 85
- G**
- Galema, Hidde Bernardus, 137
- Gall, Martin (pseud.). See Rivière, Arnous de
- game theory, 271–305; annotation of chess moves, 275; bluffing, 278, 286f., 290; chess, 273–276, 279, 305; combinatorial game theory, 293–300; equilibrium, 278f., 280, 300, 302; first-move advantage, 275; imperfect information, 276f.; Lasker on, 274, 281f., 283, 285f., 287–291, 292, 300–302; Lasker's contribution to, 280f., 290f., 292, 297–300, 300–302, 302–304; Lasker's limited knowledge of literature, 282f., 296, 303; minimax value, 277, 280, 285; mixed strategy, 277–279, 280, 290; Monte Carlo method, 292f.; multi-player games, 300–302; Nim winning formula, 295–297; Nine Men's Morris, 275f.; origins, 272, 275, 277; perfect information, 276, 278f., 293, 302; Sprague–Grundy theorem, 298f.; three-player games, 278f.; zero-sum property, 273. See also recreational and mind games
- Gans, Louis, 76
- Gebhardt, Rudolf, 28, 64f., 385
- Georgiadis, Nico: annotations, 435
- Germany: avoiding, 103; Berliner Lasca-Club, 125; Berliner Salta-Gesellschaft, 152; Berliner Schachgesellschaft, 5, 36f., 42, 54, 57, 62, 143, 181; Berliner Schachverband, 343; Berliner Schachverein, 176; Berlin free students body, 176; Café Bristol (Mannheim), 124; Café Kerkau (Berlin), 5, 63, 190; Café König (Berlin), 190, 192, 206; café Moka Efti (Berlin), 190; Café Victoria (Berlin), 190, 191; Café Zielka (Berlin), 190; Deutscher Schachbund (German Chess Federation), 18f., 27f., 64–66; Gesellschaft Deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte (Society of German Natural Scientists and Doctors), 9; Kerkau-Palast (Berlin), 42
- Germany, places: Augsburg, 27; Berlin, 1900: 153; 1901/02: 4f.; 1903: 9f.; 1904: 11, 13f.; 1908: 27, 28, 29f., 79, 179–182, 184; 1909/10: 2, 33, 35, 36f., 40, 41, 42, 368, 370, 381; 1911: 44–46, 118, 119, 121, 122; 1912–14: 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 62–64; 1915: 125; 1918: 224; 1921: 110, 112; 1922/23: 85, 95; 1924/25: 96f.; 1926: 344, 351; 1927: 225–227, 349; 1928/29: 98, 100, 190–192, 305; 1930/31: 195, 206, 232f., 238f.; 1932: 252f.; Bremen, 29; Cassel, 9; Coburg, 27f.; Cologne, 95; Dessau, 28; Dresden, 188; Duisburg, 28; Düsseldorf, 29; Frankfurt on Main, 27, 29, 31, 57, 59; Göttingen, 52f., 143, 187, 281; Hamburg, 12, 29, 59, 232, 337; Heidelberg, 14; Heringsdorf, 53; Hiddensee island, 53, 55; Ilmenau, 188f.; Leipzig, 5; Munich, 29, 36, 332; Nuremberg, 9, 31; Rathen, 194f.; Stralsund, 53; Stuttgart, 28; Thyrow (summer house), 85, 99; Wannsee (lake), 110; Weimar, 29; Wesel, 95; Wiesbaden, 38, 85, 152
- Geus, Klaas, 107
- Gijssen, Geurt, 311, 317
- Glezer, Lev (checkers player), 150
- Go, 165–213; comparison to chess, 166f., 173, 178, 183, 188; correspondence game, 181; game with Dueball, 206–213; Germany's leading players, 186; handicap, 180f., 186, 194, 198; invention, 165; with Edmund Landau, 143; Lasker's Go set, 205; at Lasker's home, 180, 191; Lasker on, 165, 168f., 188, 195–203, 204f.; learning the game, 166, 179f.; literary contribution, 196–203; and literature, 168; strength, 181, 186, 187–190, 195; origin, 165, 167f.; ranks, 178, 186; rediscovery in Berlin, 174–177; rules, 194f., 213; tournaments, 188f., 194f., 204f.; Western world, introduction to, 169–179
- Goerz, Optische Anstalt (company), 95
- Goldberg, Bruno (journalist), 236f.
- Goldschmidt, Alfons (journalist), 62
- Goldsstein, Max (physician), 29
- Goren, Charles (bridge player), 223, 229, 231, 268
- Gorter, Charles de (bridge player), 247
- Goto Sei (Go player), 193
- Gotthilf, Solomon, 437
- Goudsmit, Ernst Casimir (bridge player), 244, 245, 247, 249, 252, 256, 257, 258
- Goudsmit, Frits Willem (bridge player), 244, 245, 247, 248, 249, 252, 256, 257, 258
- Go-Zeitung*, 181, 183–186
- Great Britain: Almack's Club (bridge), 233, 246, 258; British Chess Federation, 64f., 82, 343; City of London Chess Club, 36, 57; Crockford's Club (bridge), 245–247, 249, 256; Cyprus Café (London), 148; Manchester Chess Club, 5; North Manchester Chess Club, 4; Lasker's post-war difficulties, 81
- Great Britain, places: Brighton, 9, 11; Glasgow, 7, 148; Liverpool, 41, 42; London, 1890s: 4, 47, 148; 1903: 10; 1904: 11, 14, 86; 1908: 29; 1909: 36; 1910: 42; 1913: 57, 59; 1930: 232f., 237f., 263; 1932: 72, 100, 150, 235, 244–250; 1933: 259, 266; 1934: 101, 266; 1935: 166; Luton, 87; Manchester, 4f., 7, 9, 42, 224; Oxford, 42; Southampton, 42; Wales, 27
- Grethlein, Rudolf (Go player), 189
- Grundy, Patrick Michael (mathematician), 296f., 298f.
- Grünfeld, Ernst, 306, 371, 420, 437
- Guest, Antony, 51
- Guillaume, Albert (caricaturist), 284
- Gundlach, Ernest Theodore, 354
- Gunsberg, Isidor, 17, 75, 154, 383, 385
- H**
- Haalebos, François Cornelis, 91
- Haas, Wander Johannes de (physicist), 100
- Hallgarten, Albert, 340, 341
- Halpern, Jakob, 14
- Hannak, Jacques, 145, 146, 203, 223, 224, 225, 235
- Hans Joseph GmbH, 58, 119–122, 124
- Haremaker, Reijerus Nicolaas (bridge player), 242
- Harley, Brian, 343
- Harsanyi, John C. (mathematician), 279
- Hart, Norman de Villiers (bridge player), 264

- Hartman, Lee Foster (journalist), 26
Hartogensis, Jacques Gabriel, 71
Hartz, Louis (painter), 68, 71, 99
Hauser, Karl, 152, 155
Hefter, Charles (checkers player), 147, 148f., 150
Heilmann, Ernst, 175
Helms, Hermann: *American Chess Bulletin*, 14; Cambridge Springs (1904), 11; on Capablanca's challenge (1911), 49; on Lasker's bridge, 238; on Maróczy negotiations, 21; New York (1924), 309, 310, 312, 336; New York (1927), 341; New York controversy, 345, 346, 348, 353, 356, 365; pictures, 339, 340, 346; on Schlechter match, 37; on White House visit, 24
Henig, A. (Salta player), 154
Henneberger, Moriz, 57
Herrmann, Paul (bridge player), 253
Hilbert, David (mathematician), 9, 12, 281, 286
Hirschberg, Lotte (step-daughter), 11, 12, 24, 103, 345
Hirschfeld, Richard (film entrepreneur), 336
Hoek, Aad van den, 90
Hoffer, Leopold, 15
Holland, 69–117, 135–141; Amsterdam, Café Panopticum, 76; Amsterdam, Continental Club (bridge), 256; Amsterdam, La Bourdonnais club, 89; Amsterdam, Philidor club, 89; Amsterdam, Schaakclub (A.S.C.), 88; Amsterdam, Vereenigd Schaakgenootschap (V.A.S.), 30, 31, 70, 75, 79, 85, 89; attracting masters after World War I, 90; chess championship, 70, 75, 78, 80, 105, 106, 107, 108; commemorating Lasker, 72; criticism of Lasker, 78; Delft chess club, 89; departure from, 103; Dutch bridge association, 244, 246; Dutch chess federation, 64, 68, 81f., 91, 97, 101; February strike (against the persecution of Jews), 72; festivities for Lasker, 71, 97, 99; friends in, 74, 101, 104–117; fund for Lasker, 101; Lasca, 82, 88; Lasker on, 73, 77, 88; living in, 93–97, 99–101; Nationaal Schaakgebouw, 71, 140; The Netherlands, used as synonym for, 69; popularity in, 70, 72f., 90, 97, 99; Rotterdam, Schaakvereniging, 79; Scheveningen, Schaak Sociëteit (S.S.S.), 74, 109; special relationship with, 69; The Hague, Café Hollandais, 87, 136; The Hague, Café Mercuur, 137; The Hague, Discendo Discimus club (D.D.), 78, 86–88, 93, 97, 101, 105, 106, 140, 144; The Hague, Respite Finem club, 105
Holland, places: Amsterdam, 1889: 75f.; 1908: 30, 31, 70, 79f.; 1920: 88, 135; 1922: 89; 1924: 71, 97; 1927: 98, 345; 1929: 71; 1930–32: 101; 1933: 258; 1935: 102, 103, 266f.; Arnhem, 105; Breda, 135; Delft, 89, 100; Groningen, 80, 140; Haarlem, 80, 83; Leiden, 76, 78, 90, 100, 104, 109, 135; Rotterdam, 27, 73, 78f., 83, 91, 95, 101, 102, 103, 106, 110, 115, 240, 244; Scheveningen, 78, 88, 91, 94, 106, 114, 242; The Hague, 1898: 76; 1908: 77; 1920: 82, 87, 135–137, 157; 1921: 137; 1922–24: 71, 86, 89, 90, 91, 93–97, 114, 140, 337; 1927: 345; 1929: 71, 99; 1930–33: 96, 99–101, 142, 240, 242, 244, 258; 1937: 117; Utrecht, 27, 76, 78, 80, 135; Zeist, 89; Zwolle, 135
Holz, Elfriede Elsbeth, 177
Holz, Erich (Go player), 177, 178, 184, 186
Holz, Käthe, 177
Honinbo Sansa (Go player), 168
Honinbo Shusai (Go player), 194
Hoogland, Herman (checkers player), 149
Houten, Samuel van (minister): Lasker on, 77
Howell, David, 314
Hoylé, Edmond, 283
Hromádka, Karel, 420
Hübner, Robert, 275; annotations, 370–381
humor and anecdotes, 10, 31, 48, 76, 86, 114, 166, 360
Hungary. *See* Austria-Hungary
Hurwitz, Adolf (mathematician), 2, 7f., 12, 46, 281
hypermodern school, 91f., 97
Ilyin-Zhenevsky, Alexander, 423, 437; game against Lasker (annotated), 421–427; game fragment, 423
international chess federation, 63, 64–66, 74, 85, 101, 106, 356
Ito Tomoe (Kawada Kiyoko; Go player), 186
Ivanov, Sergey N. (Bashni player), 128, 131f.
Janowski, Dawid: games with, 54; Lasker on, 43; match (1909), 35f.; match with (1910), 42–44; New York (1924), 336, 348, 350, 361; pictures, 43, 306, 385; Salta, 154; series with (1909), 34; tournaments with, 12, 331, 383
John, Fritz (Go player), 200
John, Walter, 175, 176, 179, 192, 200
Johner, Paul, 54
Johnson-Davies, David (Lasca player), 131, 159
Jones, Gawan, 408
Jordan, Alfred (checkers player), 150
Joseph, Hans (business partner), 46, 58, 118, 121, 124, 125
Joseph, Leo (journalist), 121
Journalism: reporting on tournaments and matches, 92, 97f., 266f.; writing habits, 93. *See also* articles by Lasker; chess columns by Lasker; magazines by Lasker; works by Lasker
Judaism: in chess, Lasker on, 47; Jews in German academia, 1f.; Lasker as a Jew, 1f., 72. *See also* anti-semitism
Judd, Max, 7
Kagan, Bernhard, 60, 336f., 337, 345, 350, 356
Kan, Ilya, 319
Kanyanikin, S., 422
Kant-Gesellschaft, 58
Karigane Junichi (Go player), 184
Karpin, Fred L. (bridge player), 250f.
Karpov, Anatoly, 382, 407
Kasparov, Garry: annotations, 375–378, 386–391, 424–427; home in New York, 313
Kastillan, Fritz (Go player), 179
Kaufmann, Hermann (bridge player), 245, 248
Kawabata Yasunari (writer), 168
Keidanz, Hermann, 26, 27
Kemény, Emil, 7
Kerkau, Georg (entrepreneur), 42
Keus, Dirk: biography, 93f., 96; bridge lessons, 96; business partnership, 94–96; picture, 71; visits to, 96, 101
Keus Cup, 93
Kewitsch, Georg (teacher), 3
Kitabatake Yasugoro (Go player), 180, 184
Klaus, Georg (cyberneticist), 271, 272, 279f., 303
Klein, Ernst Ludwig, 267
Klein, Felix (mathematician), 53
Kleute, Piet, Jr. (checkers player), 137, 140f.
Klingler-Mandig, Harald (Lasca player), 128
Klosak, Paul, 141
Knoch, Hans, 99; on Lasker, 72, 100, 263
Koblenz, Alexander: on Lasker, 166
Köhnlein, Friedrich, 107
Kok, Theodor Cornelis Louis, 72
Kolsté, Jan Willem te: Dutch tournaments, 106, 108; exhibition opponent, 77; on Lasker, 70, 71, 81, 93, 96f.; pictures, 70, 71;
Korolov, D. D., 385
Korschelt, Oskar, 166, 171–175, 172, 177
Kortchnoi, Viktor, 382
Koulen, Michael (Go player), 169
Kuhn, Harold W. (mathematician), 278, 279
Kuhns, Maurice S., 349, 354, 354f.
Kummer, Ernst Eduard (mathematician), 300
Kuntze, Friedrich (philosopher), 62
Kupchik, Abraham, 312, 313, 340
Landau, Edmund (mathematician), 2, 52f., 143, 144, 187
Landau, Leopold (gynecologist), 143
Landau, Salo: bridge partner, 100, 239, 242, 244f., 247f., 249, 256, 258f., 264; early death, 90; pictures, 239, 247, 248, 252, 267; radio interview, 102; translator of bridge book, 242, 243
Lange, Max I, 175
Lange, Max II, 175–181, 183, 184, 185f.; pictures, 175, 176, 178
Lasca, 118–146; association, 136f.; boards and pieces, 120f., 133f., 141f.; compositions, 133, 144, 146; computer programs, 130; games, 125–129, 157–161; in Holland, 82, 88, 135–141; impossible columns, 143f.; invention, 119–123; Lasker on, 119, 122f., 145f.; leaflets, 124, 126; mathematical aspects, 142–144; on-line, 129; openings, 136f., 139, 140; precursors, 121f.; production, 46; promotion, 58, 122, 124f., 133–142; reduced drawing tendency, 128; rules, 125–127; strategic and tactical considerations, 130–133; theoretical outcome, 131; tournaments, 110, 135f., 137, 140; in the United States, 133–135
Lasca-Vereeniging Emanuel Lasker, 136f., 138, 140f.
Lasca-Zeitung (Berliner), 139, 140, 144, 159f.

- Lasker, Amalie (sister), 4, 5, 7, 16
- Lasker, Berthold (brother): attending psychological society, 63; Berlin chess, 176; card games, 224; chap-erone, 29; death, 355; Go, 180f., 185, 186; letters to, 16, 31; marriage witness, 45; in New York (1902), 5, 7; Petersburg fee, 345; picture, 181; Salta, 153
- Lasker, Edward (Eduard): as Go player, 173, 175–183, 184, 187, 188, 204f.; New York (1924), 330; New York controversy, 356; pictures, 181, 203, 204, 306, 326; tournaments with, 331
- Lasker, Emanuel: academic career, 4, 7–9, 40; adjudicator and match referee, 15, 29; agent for waist belts, 95; allegations of disturbing opponents, 345f., 360–362; apprenticeship as a druggist, 96; behavior at the board, 361f.; birthday: fortieth (1908), 79; birthday: sixtieth (1928), 68, 71, 98f., 131; boat accident, 110; boat, named after Lasker, 89; business ventures, 39f., 46, 58, 81, 93–96; capital investments, 95; chess editor, 4, 25, 26f.; chess writing, 13–15, 34f., 44, 52, 54, 60; crops, 95; death date, 72; diary, 268; disappointed with chess, 367; engineering, 9f.; eye operation, 36; factory director, 94–96; farming, 81, 99; financial support from others, 101; financial support to others, 112–114; fine (3,000 Marks), 42; fodder and crop business, 95; grandfather figure, 115, 116; health, 7, 38, 83, 113, 307; honeymoon, 48; honorary club memberships, 42, 62, 89, 137f.; insurance agent, 9; interviews, 1, 102, 153, 166, 222, 366; language skills: *Dutch*, 73, 79f., 102; *English*, 73; *French*, 31, 34, 40f.; *German*, 73; *Spanish*, 41; late for a game, 31; magnets, astatic, 9f.; marriage, 45f.; marriage proposal to an English woman, 34; as novelist, 10f., 59; oil painting, 68, 71; patents, 9f., 46f., 134, 246; philosophy, 2, 22f., 34, 46, 53, 58f., 62, 122, 146, 264, 271, 279f.; physique and appearance, 4, 67, 71f., 77f., 88; pictures (*see under* “pictures and portraits of Lasker”); psychology, 62f., 221f., 237, 250–252, 283, 397f., 405, 421f., 437; pupils, 53; radio appearances, 73, 102, 226; religion, 1f.; respect and honor, 51, 356f.; in school, 96; school of mind games, 188, 203, 225; servants, 348f.; ship travel, 7, 9, 12, 40, 41, 47, 49, 110, 113, 337, 340, 355; smoking, 96, 237, 355, 360, 360f.; struggle, 226, 264, 279–281; sugar business, 93–96; swimming (inability), 110; taxes, 42; teaching, 4, 53, 233; writing style, 73. *See also* addresses; bridge; checkers; controversies; fees; prices, stakes, and salaries; financial pressure and poverty; game theory; Go; humor and anecdotes; journalism; Lasca; lectures; matches; nationality; pictures and portraits; recreational and mind games; Salta; tournaments; articles by Lasker; columns by Lasker; magazines by Lasker; works by Lasker
- Lasker, Emil (poker book author), 286
- Lasker, Käthe (bridge player), 245
- Lasker, Martha (wife): accompanying Lasker, 61f., 65, 99, 103, 110, 113, 115, 266, 331; in disguise, 40f.; engagement ring for, 39; family and ancestors, 12; first husband (*see* “Cohn, Emil”); honeymoon with, 48; introduction to, 5f.; joint novel with, 10f.; on Lasker, 28f., 99, 122f., 166; letters by, 113; letters to, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 23, 24f., 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38f., 40, 42, 48, 53, 59, 60, 63, 83, 85, 86, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 111, 112, 114, 116, 117, 124, 133, 134, 135, 136, 141, 187, 223, 225, 235, 244, 257, 258, 259, 260, 263, 266, 296, 344f., 348, 366f.; marriage, 45f.; memoirs, 2f., 6, 10, 189, 203, 204f., 259; pictures, 10, 11, 46, 71, 110, 112, 397; pseudonym Lia Marco, 5, 166; publications, 5f., 10; relationship with, 10f., 28f., 38f.; spa visits, 47, 53, 66; tournaments with, 29, 47; trip to Paris (1909), 31; wealth, 46
- Lasker, Michaelis Aron (father), 1, 30
- Lasker, Rosalie (mother): in Berlin, 4, 5; character, 1; dedication to, 1; letters to, 7, 13
- Lasker, Theophila (sister), 69, 100
- Lasker’s Bridge Studio, 244
- Lasker’s Chess Magazine*. *See under* magazines by Lasker
- Lasker Memorial (Go), 204
- Lasker–Noether theorem, 281
- Lasker Press, 26
- Lasker’s Publishing Company, 22, 26, 35, 39
- “Late Dispute” (1927 article by Lasker), 335, 336, 337, 339, 348, 349, 352
- Latvia: Riga, 257
- Latz, Harry (hotel manager), 308, 309, 336
- leapfrog chess (tandem simultaneous play), 44
- Leather, Robinson Kay, 75
- lectures: bridge, 232f., 257, 268; chess, 19, 25, 30, 31, 34, 40f., 44, 48, 49, 58, 73, 81, 90, 102, 226, 257; Lasca, 58, 124, 125, 135f., 137, 140; mathematics, 4, 6, 63, 224; philosophy, 58, 62; physics, 100
- Lederer, Norbert Lewis: clock incident, 317, 338f., 359f.; dispute with, 334–366; gate receipts, 337f., 358; inviting Lasker (1927), 362f.; Kagan, correspondence with, 336, 350, 356f.; Lasker on, 349–351; on Lasker, 345f., 349, 358, 360–362, 364; National Chess Federation protest, 354f.; New York 1924 invitations, 309, 312, 336f., 339f.; New York (1927), 334f., 341f.; Nimzowitsch, correspondence with, 352–354; Nimzowitsch on, 352; pictures, 334, 339, 340, 342, 362; on Seitz, 339
- Leeser–Coppel, Betty, 12
- Leeser, Isaac Cohn, 12
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (philosopher), 58, 167, 170, 171
- Lenep, Norman van, 90
- Lenz, Sidney (bridge player), 234, 252
- Lenze, Johanna, 101
- Lenze family, 101
- Leonard, Robert (economist), 280f., 303, 304
- Lessing Academy, Berlin, 225, 233
- Levenbach, Max, 71
- Levenfish, Grigory, 31, 225, 263, 437
- LeVino, Alexander, 13
- Levy, Anton (patent attorney), 9, 10, 125
- Lie, Sophus (mathematician), 295, 296
- Lilienfeld, Alfred (physician), 29
- Lilienthal, Andor, 190
- Limburg, Herbert Richard, 339, 339f., 343f.
- Lincoln, Orlando H. (checkers player), 150
- Linder, Isaak, 31
- Lithuania: Kaunas, 257; Memel (now Klaipėda), 257f.
- Little, Paul Hugo, 223
- Liu Zhongfu (Go player), 165
- Lokhvitsky, N.N., 385
- Loman, Rudolf: Dutch tournaments, 75, 91, 108, 109; exhibition opponent, 86f.; on Lasker, 75f.; pictures, 71, 74, 76; tournaments with, 75
- Loman’s Move, 86f.
- Lomas, Steven (Lasca programmer), 130
- “London rules,” 308f.
- Longmore, Thomas Philip (agent), 48
- Loyd, Samuel, 14, 17, 27
- M**achology (Macheide), 22f., 264, 280
- Mackenzie, Jacob, Sr., 79
- MacMahon, Percy (mathematician), 7f.
- magazines by Lasker: *The Chess Player’s Scrap Book*, 24, 26; game magazine (projected), 296; *Lasker’s Chess Magazine*, 13–15, 16f., 19, 24, 26f., 34f., 39; *London Chess Fortnightly*, 156; *Schachwart*, 54, 58, 64
- Maliutin, Boris, 60, 385
- Malowan, Walter (bridge player), 266
- Manning–Foster, Alfred Edye (bridge player), 232, 245
- Marco, Georg, 12, 44, 154; annotations, 374–380
- Marco, Lia (pseud.). *See* Lasker, Martha
- Marcuse, Kurt (stepson-in-law), 24
- Maróczy, Géza: career as civil servant, 22; controversy with, 345f., 360f.; Lasker on, 17, 18, 348; leapfrog chess with, 44; match challenge (1906), 19–22; New York (1924), 330f., 336; New York (1927), 344, 345f., 360f., 363; pictures, 20, 92, 267, 306, 334, 340, 345; Salta tournament, 154; successes, 17; tournaments with, 91, 331
- Márquez Sterling, Manuel, 19
- Marshall, Frank James: Lasker on, 17f.; match challenges, 15, 22; match with Tarrasch (1905), 17f.; match with Lasker (1907), 23–25; match with Mieses (1908), 29; New York (1927), 334, 347; pictures, 25, 63, 154, 176, 306, 313, 334, 340, 347, 385; Salta, 154; tournaments with, 12, 61f., 331, 383, 437
- Mason, James, 75, 154
- match conditions: Capablanca (1911), 45, 49f.; Capablanca (1921), 82, 109; Janowski (1910), 42; Maróczy (1906), 20; Marshall (1904), 15; Rubinstein (1912), 55; Rubinstein

- (1913), 56; Schlechter (1908/10), 30, 37
 matches, with: Capablanca (1914, speed chess), 63f.; Capablanca (1921), 88f., 307, 369, 392–396, 395; Janowski (1909), 35f.; Janowski (1910), 42–44; Marshall (1907), 23–25; Mieses (1889/90), 5; Schlechter (1910), 36–38, 368, 369–381; Speijer (1908), 30, 31, 79f.
 Mathematicians, International Congress of: Heidelberg 1904, 14
 mathematics: application at Carnegie in Pittsburgh (1905), 16; application in Missouri (1903), 7f.; doctoral dissertation, 1, 7; founding an institute (1910), 40; Lasker's contacts, 281; lectures, 63; main achievements, 7; manuscripts, 97; paper on modules, 9, 12; position in Manchester (Owens College, 1902), 4, 7, 97; teaching opportunity in Berlin (1910), 1f.
 mathematics of games. *See* game theory
 Matzdorf, Alice (photographer), 121
 Maximov, Nikolai, 385
 Mayer, Edward (bridge player), 245, 258, 266
 McCampbell, Bryant (bridge player), 228f., 268
 Meitner, Lise, 184
 Mendoza, José Perez, 40, 41
 Metger, Johannes, 153
 Metzger, Ludwig (journalist), 6, 25
 Mexico, 15, 134
 Meyer, Arthur, 339, 341
 Meyer, Gerhard (games collector), 124
 Meyer, Leonard, 339, 341
 Meyerbeer, Giacomo (composer), 12
 Michaelsen, Peter (games expert), 127f., 129
 Mieses, Jacques: on Lasker, 100; match with Marshall (1908), 29; Salta, 153, 154; *Schachwelt* editor, 49; tournaments with, 32, 91
 Miles, Tony, 407
 More, Paul Elmer (writer), 295f., 298
 Morehead, Albert (bridge player), 268
 Morgenstern, Oskar (economist), 272, 286, 287
 Morphy, Paul, 147, 153; Lasker on, 41
 Murase Shuho (Go player), 172, 173, 174
My Chess Career (Capablanca): Lasker on, 84
Nagata Hidejiro (politician), 192, 194
 Nardus, Leo, 34, 36, 42, 54
 Nash, John (economist), 144, 279, 300, 302
 Nat, Willem van der (painter), 96
 nationality, Lasker's: American, 18; Dutch, 72, 244f., 255f.; German, 80f., 343
 Negishi Tsutomu (Go player), 181f.
 Nelson, Chris (checkers player), 150
 Nemerov, Joseph, 350f.
 Netherlands, The. *See* Holland
 Neumann, Bernhard H. (mathematician), 129
 Neumann, John von (mathematician), 272, 277, 281, 285, 286, 292, 303
 New York Life Insurance Company, 9
 New Zealand, 34
 Nieuwerkerke, Karel Johannes, 71, 136, 140
 Nieuwjaar, Johannes, 82
 Nimzowitsch, Aron: correspondence with Lederer, 349, 352–354; on Lasker, 353f.; New York (1924), 306; New York (1927), 348; pictures, 334, 347, 352, 362, 385; tournaments with, 383
 Noether, Emmy (mathematician), 181
 Noether, Max (mathematician), 22, 281
 Nonnenmacher, Eduard (linguist), 185
 Norman-Hansen, Holger, 91
 Northrop, George Pannell, 35
 Norway, 81; Trondheim, 348
 Noteboom, Daniël, 90, 239, 240
 Nugent, Charles, 16f., 26f.
 Nunn, John: annotations, 327, 387–389, 433–435
Odds-giving, 31
 Olland, Adolf: Dutch tournaments, 80, 107; exhibition opponent, 76; Lasker on, 86; on Lasker, 78; picture, 78
 “onze Lasker,” 72, 103
 “Optik” (company), 95
 Oskam, Gerard Cornelis Adrianus: consultation game, 91; Dutch tournaments, 106; exhibition opponent, 77, 86; obituary of Lasker, 72, 74; offering refuge to Theophila, 69; pictures, 69, 74, 100
 Ottlik, Géza (bridge player), 254f.
Pakhomov, Viktor, 128, 129
 Paredes, León, 19
 Pedroso, Tomás, 19
 Perlis, Julius, 32
 Pettes, George William (whist player), 220
 Pfaundler, Leopold (Go player), 183–185, 184
 Pfeifer & Langen GmbH, 96
 Phillips, Harold Meyer, 14, 339, 342, 353
 Phillips, Hubert (bridge player), 236
 pictures and portraits of Lasker: with checkers players (Great Britain, 1899?), 148; at Salta (Berlin, 1900), 152, 155; England (ca. 1902), 4; Philadelphia (1902), 8; Philadelphia park (1903), 16; with Schlechter (Cambridge Springs, 1904), 43; Havana chess club (1906), 19; Chicago (1907), 21; with Marshall (United States, 1907), 25; Germany? (1908), 182; with Jacob Mackenzie (Rotterdam, 1908), 79; with Speijer (Amsterdam, 1908), 30, 80; with Rubinstein (St. Petersburg 1909), 33; Buenos Aires chess club (1910), 41; with Janowski (Berlin, 1910), 43; with Schlechter (Berlin/Vienna, 1910), 38, 368; United States (1911), 123; with Leo Joseph [?] (Berlin, 1911), 118; with Martha (Berlin, 1911), 46; Germany (1913), 56; St. Petersburg (1914), 63, 385; simultaneous exhibitions (Holland, 1920), 87, 89; with Lucie Arrias (Scheveningen, ca. 1920), 94; boarding steamship for Cuba (Rotterdam, 1921), 110; with Baudet family (Berlin, 1921), 112; drawings by Eduard Arrias and Willem van der Nat (ca. 1923), 96; Mährisch-Ostrau (1923), 397; painting (ca. 1923), 270; New York (1924), 306; Berlin (ca. 1925), 338; Moscow (1925), 422; simultaneous exhibition (Munich, 1925), 332; with Capablanca (Moscow, 1925), 318; Chicago (1926), 291; caricature (1927), 360; Germany (ca. 1927), 188; with Alekhine and Euwe (Amsterdam, 1927), 98; with Puck Baudet (Scheveningen, 1927), 114; Berlin (ca. 1928), 111; on S. S. *Westphalia* (1928), 355; on air (Berlin, 1928), 226; at Go with Goto Sei (Berlin, 1929), 193; birthday dinner (The Hague, 1929), 71; oil painting (The Hague, 1929), 68; with Ahues at Go (ca. 1929), 191; as bridge teacher (Berlin, 1930), 225; at Go (Berlin, 1930), 164; hands at Go (ca. 1930), 212; at bridge (London, 1932), 237, 248; with Dutch bridge team (London, 1932), 247; at bridge (Paris, 1933), 214, 260; at bridge (Amsterdam, 1935), 267; with Vidmar (Nottingham, 1936), 264
 Pillsbury, Harry Nelson: checkers, 150; death, 17; Lasker on, 17; Pillsbury Attack, 370; Salta, 154; tournaments with, 13
 H. Pinoff & Co. GmbH, 133
 Plato, 58
 Platz, Joseph, 103
 Pokorný, Amos, 420
 Poland: Berlinchen (now Barlinek), 4, 46; Breslau (now Wrocław), 30, 55, 75, 79, 187; Łódź, 57, 62; Stettin (now Szczecin), 187; Warsaw, 57, 62, 260
 Pole, William (whist player), 218
 Portugal, 142
 Post, Ehrhardt, 37, 54
 Pratesi, Franco (Go player), 174
 Preiswerk, Walter, 38
 Prins, E. (Lasca player), 136, 137
 Prins, Lodewijk, 114, 115
 Prins, Mrs. (Lasca player), 136
 printers' strike, 19
 Pritchard, David, 132f.
 Psychologische Gesellschaft, 62f.
Quinn, John William (mayor), 29
Rabinovich, Ilya, 437
 Ranneforth, Heinrich, 5, 57
 recreational and mind games: Allah, 156; Baccarat, 281–286; backgammon, 276f., 285, 291f.; Bashni, 119, 121, 128f., 131–133; billiards, 79; Blackjack, 286; bridge (*see under* “bridge”); Canfield Solitaire, 292; checkerette (Bashni), 119; checkers (*see under* “checkers”); Chinese checkers, 278; Diplomatenpiel (diplomats' game), 122; Gomony, 122; Halma, 119; knights' tour, 53; *kriegsspiel*, 5; Lasca (*see under* “Lasca”); Mah-Jong, 140; *n* queens problem, 53; Nine Dame (new checkers), 121f.; Nim, 53, 272, 294–302; Nim, Lasker's, 296–299; Nine Men's Morris, 275f.; Nine Men's Morris, Lasker's, 276; piquet, 237; poker, 225, 276, 278, 286–291; pokerette, 286–291, 300f.; rhythmo-machia, 125; rock-paper-scissors, 273–275; Salta (*see under* “Salta”); Senator, 122; Shogi, 125, 193; Skat, 224, 226f., 237; Skipit, 156; Spada, 46f.; Stack-Up Checkers, 122; Stax,

- 122; Stern-Halma, 278; Vint, 31; whist, 31, 215–220, 224, 227, 228, 231, 293; whistette, 228, 293f.
- L. Reimann (Berlin company), 95
relativity theory, 100
“Relevations” (1926 article by Lasker), 335, 339, 340, 343f., 359
- Renshaw, Nona (bridge player), 248
- resistan (insulation material), 95
- Réti, Richard: Baudet, losing to, 109; consultation game against, 91f.; in Holland, 90, 91; Lasker on, 92f., 97; at Lasker’s exhibition, 86; literary rivalry, 91–93; match challenge, 92; modern ideas, 91f.; New York (1924), 312, 324, 331, 336; New York (1927), 334; pictures, 84, 91, 306; problem-solving contest, 89; tournaments with, 91, 331, 420, 437
- Rhodes, Lady Doris Mary (bridge player), 245, 248
- Ricci, Matteo (missionary), 169f., 170
- Rice, Isaac Leopold, 5, 9, 20, 39
- Rice, William B. (checkers player), 150
- Rice Gambit, 9, 28, 39
- Richard Hirschfeld & Co., 336
- Richter, Kurt, 190
- Rinck, Henri, 54
- Rivière, Arnous de, 153, 153–155
- Robinow, Walter, 66
- Rochotz, Wolfgang (nephew), 141f.
- Rollins, Curtis Burnam (administrator), 7f.
- Romanovsky, Peter, 437
- H. Römmler AG, 95
- Roos, Nancy, 203
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 11, 24
- Rosebault, Frederick Dana, 49, 51
- Rosenberg, Paul, 35
- Rosenthal, Samuel, 54
- Rosenwald, Kurt (Go player), 164, 189, 195, 204f.
- Rotchin, Mikhail (Lasca player), 161
- Rothschild, Albert von, 30
- Rubens, Peter Paul, 171
- Rubinstein, Akiba: first meeting, 27; game against Lasker (annotated), 382–392; in Holland, 90; Lasker on, 26, 55; match challenge (1912/13), 51, 54–58, 59; nervous exhaustion, 56; New York (1924), missing from, 306; pictures, 33, 385, 392, 397; tournaments with, 32, 47, 58, 61, 383, 420, 437
- Rubinstein bind, 313f.
- Rudolf Karstadt AG, 238
- Rueb, Alexander: exhibition opponent, 77, 86, 106; falling out with, 101; friendship with, 74, 82, 102; fund for Lasker, 101; New York controversy, 356; picture, 101
- Rüger, Alfred (Go player), 179, 186
- Rüger, Bruno (Go player), 183, 185, 185–190, 192–197, 196, 206–212
- Russell, Bertrand (philosopher), 275
- Russell, Hanon, 336
- Russia: All-Russian chess federation, 64–66; Café Dominik (St. Petersburg), 31, 150; Go in Russia, 203f.; Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), 257; leaving, 103; Moscow, 57, 59f., 102, 115, 147, 150, 190, 203, 225, 263, 266, 318, 421–437; moving to, 102, 266; St. Petersburg, 30, 31–33, 34, 36, 47, 57, 59–63, 150, 382–392; St. Petersburg chess club, 36, 60, 385
- Ruthe, Paul (school director), 62f., 112
- Saburov, Peter Petrovich, 32, 60, 64f., 385
- Sakharov, Z.I. (checkers player), 150
- Salinger, Richard (lawyer), 42
- Salta, 150–156, 162f.; association, 152; exhibition game with Bartmann, 152f., 162f.; journal, 152; Lasker on, 153, 155; Steeples Salta, 155f.; tournaments, 153–155; variants, 156
- Salwe, Georg, 32
- Sämsisch, Fritz, 307, 437
- Saulson, Philip J., 13
- Savelyev, Alexey Grigoryevich (checkers player), 150
- Schachwart. *See under* magazines by Lasker
- Schellhout, Willem Andreas Theodor: Baudet, on, 107; chess editor of *De Telegraaf*, 83–86, 98; Lasca, 137; on Lasker, 70f., 72, 73; letters to, 83, 85, 86, 98, 103, 233; picture, 84; reception for Lasker in 1929, 97; relationship with, 85, 101; translator of the *Lehrbuch*, 98
- Scheveningen System, 91
- Schiller, Simon (bridge player), 258, 267
- Schilp, Albert (Go player), 203
- Schlechter, Carl: game against Lasker (annotated), 370–381; Lasker on, 18, 30; match challenge (1908/1910), 30, 35f.; match (1910), 36–38, 369–381; pictures, 13, 38, 153, 368, 369; Rice Gambit match (1908), 28; Salta, 154; tournaments with, 12, 31, 32, 47
- Schlesinger, Ludwig (mathematician), 2
- Schmidt (Go player, Breslau), 187
- Schrank (Go player, Stettin), 187
- Schubert, J. (Go player, Leipzig), 188
- Schuh, Frederik (mathematician), 109, 136, 137, 294, 296
- Schule der Verstandesspiele (school of mind games), 188, 203, 225
- Schur, Issai (mathematician), 2
- Schurig, Richard, 166, 174
- Schwartzmann, Leon, 260
- Schwarz, Hermann Amandus (mathematician), 300
- Schweitzer, Dora (cousin), 35
- Schweitzer, Nathan (entrepreneur), 35
- Seirawan, Yasser: annotations, 326f.
- Seitz, Adolf, 338f.
- Selenus, Gustavus (pseud., August II, Duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg), 125, 170
- Selezniev, Alexey, 60, 420
- Selman, John jr., 72
- Selten, Reinhard (economist), 279
- Shipley, Walter Penn: arbitrating between Lasker and Capablanca, 51; *Lasker’s Chess Magazine*, 34; letters to, 8, 16; New York controversy, 342, 349, 350, 365; organizing chess tour for Lasker, 7; pictures, 8, 365; treasurer in the Marshall match, 22
- Shishko, Sergei, 31
- Short, Nigel, 408
- Shoshin, Vassily Ivanovich (checkers player), 150
- Showalter, Jackson Whipps, 154
- Silman, Jeremy: annotations, 326f.
- Sims, P. Hal (bridge player), 254, 262
- Skillicorn, William (checkers player), 150
- Smith, Arthur (Go player), 173
- Smith, Magnus, 26f.
- “Sofia rules,” 311
- Soltis, Andrew: annotations, 327, 409–415, 422, 428–431
- Sosnitsky, Yuly Osipovich, 36, 66, 385
- South Africa: Johannesburg, 29, 33; projected tour, 33f.
- South America, 34, 38, 40f., 80
- Soyka, Otto (writer), 59
- Spain, 113
- speed chess, 23, 31, 63f., 67, 75f., 89, 91
- Speijer, Abraham: blitz chess, 89; Dutch tournaments, 107; match with (1908), 70, 79f.; pictures, 30, 80; St. Petersburg 1909 invitation, 80; tournaments with, 32
- Spielmann, Rudolf: bridge, 225; game against Lasker (annotated), 432–436; in Holland, 90; on Lasker, 433; New York (1927), 334f., 342, 348, 349; New York controversy, 349, 353; pictures, 334, 347, 362, 433; tournaments with, 32, 420, 437
- Spillane, Richard (journalist), 35
- Splinter, Abraham Christiaan, 106
- Sprague, Roland (mathematician): Go, 186; Lasca, 137, 140, 143, 144; Nim, 296, 297, 298–300; picture, 299; Sprague–Grundy theorem, 299
- Sprague, Thomas Bond (mathematician), 300
- Stapleton-Harris, Arnold Frank (bridge player), 247, 249
- Steffelaar, T.O., 136
- Steinitz, William, 5, 41, 119, 274, 307, 331
- Stern (Berlin), 125
- Steuer, Detlef (economist), 130
- Straub, Henri, 71
- Strick van Linschoten, Hendrik: Dutch tournaments, 91; exhibition opponent, 77, 106; friendship with, 74, 82, 100; helping Han Baudet, 109; on Lasker, 72, 90, 97; letters to, 100; pictures, 71, 74, 82
- Strohmeier (Go player, Munich), 189
- Sweden, 81, 94, 135; Gothenburg, 346; Malmö, 57
- Switzerland, 81, 113, 133, 135; Berne, 10; Scuol, 66; Zurich, 57, 357
- Takács, Sándor, 239
- Talvik, Eduard Ivanovich, 385
- Tarrasch, Siegbert: annotations, 375–379, 383–388; game against Lasker (annotated), 407–415; Lasker on, 18, 25f.; Marshall match (1905), 17f.; match negotiations (1903/04), 9, 11; match challenges (1904 and 1905), 18; match negotiations (1908), 27f.; match (1908), 29; New York 1924, substitute for, 350; pictures, 63, 385, 408; tournaments with, 61, 383, 420
- Tartakower, Savielly: annotations, 327f., 416–420; A.V.R.O. exhibition tour, 103; bridge, 239, 267; game against Lasker (annotated), 324–329; in Holland, 90; on Landau, 239; on Lasker, 329; New York (1927), 334; pictures, 239, 267, 306, 326, 397; tournaments with, 32, 331, 420, 437
- Tatarinov (Lasca player, Moscow), 161
- Teichmann, Richard: annotations, 412–414; Lasker on, 47; picture, 47; tournaments with, 12, 32; translating Lasker’s book, 33

- Teixeira de Mattos, Jacob (Lasca player), 136, 137, 139, 140, 159f.
- Therkatz, Wilhelm, 59
- Thomas, Sir George, 336
- Thorp, Edward (Blackjack player), 286
- Toeplitz, Otto (mathematician), 281
- Torre Repetto, Carlos, 437
- Tossizza [Tositsas], Michael, 53
- tournament and match tables (chronological): Amsterdam (1889), 75; match with Marshall (1907), 24; St. Petersburg (1909), 32; match with Schlechter (1910), 381; St. Petersburg (1914), 383; match with Capablanca (1921), 392; Mährisch-Ostrau (1923), 420; New York (1924), 331; Moscow (1925), 437
- tournaments (alphabetical): Amsterdam (1889), 75; A.V.R.O. (1938), 103; Baden-Baden (1925), 97; Barmen (1905), 17; Berlin 1932 (bridge), 252f.; Berlin 1933 (bridge), 258; Breslau (1889), 75; Breslau (1912), 55; Cambridge Springs (1904), 11f., 13; Carlsbad (1911), 47; Carlsbad (1923), 92; Düsseldorf (1908), 107; Havana (1927), 351; Ilmenau 1927 (Go), 189, 204f.; London (1919), 81; London (1922), 85f., 307, 343; London 1932 (bridge), 237, 244–252; Mährisch-Ostrau (1923), 308, 369, 397, 397–420; Mannheim (1914), 63, 65f., 85; Monte Carlo (1901), 154; Moscow (1925), 421–437, 422; New York (1924), 97, 306–331, 336–340, 356–362, 364; New York (1927), 333–367; New York/Havana (1912), 51; New York rapid (1906), 23; Nuremberg (1906), 19, 22; Ostend (1905), 17; Ostend (1907), 26; Oxford (1910), 42; Paris (1900), 153f.; Pistyán (1912), 55; Prague (1908), 30; Rathen 1930 (Go), 194f.; San Sebastian (1911), 44f.; San Sebastian (1912), 55; Scheveningen (1923), 91; Scheveningen 1932 (bridge), 242; Scheveningen rapid (1923), 91; St. Louis (1903/04), 11; St. Petersburg (1909), 31f.; St. Petersburg (1911), 47; St. Petersburg (1914), 58, 60–62, 382–392, 385; The Hague 1920 (Lasca), 136f.; The Hague 1922 (Lasca), 137; The Hague 1923 (Lasca), 140; The Hague 1933 (bridge), 258; Trenton Falls (1906), 20; Vienna (1908), 30; Vilnius (1912), 55f.; Zurich (1934), 102, 357
- Trautwein (musical store and piano factory), 12
- Trigault, Niklaas (missionary), 170f., 171
- U**
- Ulam, Stanislaw (physicist), 292f.
- United States: Brooklyn Chess Club (New York), 8, 15, 26; Chicago Chess and Checker Club, 15, 148f.; Franklin Chess Club (Philadelphia), 15, 21; German Jewish Club (New World Club, New York), 267; Lasker's post-war difficulties, 81; Manhattan Chess Club (New York), 13, 15, 16, 18, 23, 25, 40, 67, 68, 309, 310, 334, 336, 339, 340, 341, 342, 344, 346, 354; moving to (in 1937), 103; National Chess Federation, 340, 341, 349, 353; 354–356; New Orleans Chess, Checkers and Whist Club, 25; New York State Chess Association, 20; Pillsbury National Correspondence Chess Association, 15; Rice Chess Club, 20; Rice Gambit Association, 15; United States Chess Association, 15; The White House, 24
- United States, places: Baltimore, 23f.; Boston, 8; Buffalo, 48; Chicago, 16, 21, 23f., 123, 147–149, 150, 291; Columbia, Mo., 7; Kentucky, 48; Los Angeles, 8; Memphis, 8, 15, 20, 23f.; Missouri, 8, 19; New Jersey, 5, 25; New Orleans, 8, 15, 25; New York, 1902: 7; 1903: 9; 1904: 12, 13, 14; 1905–08: 16, 19–27; 1909: 34f., 36; 1910: 39f.; 1911: 47–49; 1924: 96f., 306–367; 1926: 340f.; 1928: 354f.; 1937–41: 103, 115, 267; Niagara Falls, 48; Philadelphia, 8, 16, 23f.; San Francisco, 7; St. Louis, 7, 11; Tennessee, 48; Texas, 19; Trenton Falls, 20; Washington, D.C., 23–25, 134; Westwood, N.J., 39, 40, 48; Yale, 48
- Uruguay: Montevideo, 40f.
- V**
- Vainshtein, Samuil Osipovich, 385
- Vance, William McClellan, 339
- Vanderbilt, Cornelius (businessman), 231
- Vanderbilt, Harold Stirling (bridge player), 230, 231
- Vanderbilt bridge, 230, 232, 233
- V.A.R.A. (radio broadcasting corporation), 73
- Veer, Johannes Raapzaet Gillard de, 144
- Verlinsky, Boris, 431, 437; game against Lasker (annotated), 428–431
- Victoria Louise (German Princess), 156
- Vidmar, Milan: bridge, 263, 264; giving rook odds to, 31; New York (1927), 334, 348; New York controversy, 349, 353; pictures, 264, 334, 347, 362; tournaments with, 32
- Vijzelaar, Johannes, 80
- Vila, Virgillo, 19
- Villeneuve-Esclapon, Comte Jean de, 54
- Vliet, Fred van der, 336
- Vliet, Louis van, 9, 75
- Voigt, Rolf (photographer), 212
- W**
- Wada (Go player, Berlin), 184
- Waerden, Bartel van der (mathematician), 277, 281
- Walbrodt, Carl August, 152, 155
- Walshe, George Gordon Joseph (bridge player), 245, 248
- Walter, Max, 420
- Watson, James Herbert, 26f.
- Weenink, Henri, 89, 90
- Weiss, Ina (bridge player), 267
- Weiss, Isidore (checkers player), 154
- Weiss, Werner (bridge player), 267
- Welen, Charles E. (checkers player), 150
- West Point Military Academy, 205
- Wiechmann, Robert (Salta player), 152
- Wijk, J. van, 71
- Wilbraham, Charles (bridge player), 229
- Wild, Lewis (wholesale agent), 156
- Wildenboer, Johannes, 71
- Wilford, Bruce (Lasca programmer), 130
- Wilhelm (German Crown Prince), 156
- Wilhelm II (German Emperor), 3, 153
- Winawer, Szymon, 154
- Winkelman, Barnie, 223
- Wohlmut (Berlin), 125
- Wolf, Heinrich, 5, 397, 420
- Wood-Hill, Nelson (bridge player), 245
- Work, Milton Cooper (bridge player), 229, 231, 254, 268
- works by Lasker: 35 *Endspielstudien von Schachmeister A. Selesnieff*, 60; *Das Begreifen der Welt*, 46, 53, 58f., 80, 122; *Brettspiele der Völker*, 119, 123, 130f., 133, 140, 144, 145, 149, 157f., 165, 168f., 189, 195–203, 204, 238, 276, 293–297, 302f.; *Bridge: bieden en spelen*, 221f., 260–265; *Bridge handleiding*, 230, 242, 243; *Das Bridgespiel*, 230, 238, 243; *Chess Primer*, 98, 266; *Common Sense in Chess*, 33, 274; *Curso de Ajedrez*, 15; *Encyclopedia of Games, Volume I: Card Games*, 98, 223, 228, 231, 232, 262, 268, 281–283, 286–289, 293; *Kampf*, 22f., 25, 28f., 59; *Leerboek voor het schaakspel*, 98; *Lehrbuch des Schachspiels*, 93; *Mein Wettkampf mit Capablanca*, 85, 307, 393–396; *Philosophie des Unvollendbar*, 62f., 146, 271, 279f., 305; *Rice Gambit Fifth Edition*, 39; *St. Petersburg 1909 tournament book*, 31, 33, 35, 39; *Struggle*, 22f., 25, 28f., 59, 146, 165, 264; *Das verständige Kartenspiel*, 228, 229, 231, 281, 283, 285–290, 300f., 303, 304
- works by Lasker, unpublished: Anglo-American bridge match 1933, 266; Contract Bridge: Bidding and Playing, 266; Elements of Chess, 33; *Encyclopedia of Games* (vol. 2), 144, 157, 276, 293, 296, 300; novel fragments, 10f.; Psychology of the Player, 259; textbook on algebra, 46; three-part course of mathematics, 97
- world championship resignation, 88
- World War I: articles in *Vossische Zeitung*, 80f.
- Y**
- Yao (Japanese Emperor), 167
- Yates, Frederick, 306, 312, 331, 336, 350, 437
- Z**
- Zacharias, Johannes (engineer), 9f.
- Zbarj, Anatoly (Bashni player), 128, 132
- Zeit im Bild* literary competition, 59
- Zeiz, August Hermann (journalist), 226
- Zermelo, Ernst (mathematician), 272, 273–275, 275, 281, 297, 305
- Zitterstejn, Gerardus Wilhelmus Johannes, 71, 72
- Znosko-Borovsky, Eugène, 32, 33, 91, 258, 385
- Znosko-Borovsky, Nikolai, 385
- Zubarev, Nikolai, 437