The Seven-Decade Odyssey

A Chess Biography of Jacques Mieses

Taylor Kingston

The Seven-Decade Odyssey: A Chess Biography of Jacques Mieses

Author: Taylor Kingston

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Contents

Author's preface 9
Analytical Methodology and Technical Details 15
Frequently Used Abbreviations and Acronyms 17
Foreign Chess Terms 18
Annotation Symbols 19
Chapter I. Family Background and Early Years 20
A Chess-playing Family 20
A young Problemist 20
Hard Going in first Deutscher Schachbund Tournaments 22
Chapter II. 1888: Earning the German Master Title 25
Nuremberg 1888 25
Leipzig 1888 27
Chapter III. 1889-1894: Ups and Downs in German Chess 30
Riding High at Breslau 30
Brought Low by Lasker 35
A Sobering Effect 36
1892-1894: Three Unimpressive Tournaments, and a Tie Match 37
Seventh DSB Congress, Dresden 1892 37
Kiel 1893 Congress 41
Lehrbuch des Schachspiels 42
Blindfold Exhibitions 45
The Walbrodt Match 46
Leipzig 1894 49
Chapter IV. 1895-1906: Earning an International Name 53
Match with David Janowski 53
Match with Richard Teichmann 60
Hastings 1895 61
His first Brilliancy Prize 68
London 1899 74
Paris 1900 International Tournament 75
1901-1903: The Monte Carlo Years 83
Monte Carlo 1901 85
Monte Carlo 1902 91
Hannover 1902 95
Monte Carlo 1903 98
Vienna 1903 King's Gambit Thematic 104
Off to America 109
Cambridge Springs 1904 111
14th DSB Congress, Coburg 1904 115
1905: Five Matches and a Dreadful Tournament 117
The Napier Match 118
The Leonhardt Match 124
Barmen 1905 131
A Visit to Lodz: Matches with Salwe and Rubinstein 135
1906: Revival at Stockholm, Withdrawal at Ostende 136

Stockholm 1906 136
The Ostende 1906 Tournament 139
Chapter V. 1907-1910: Two Miraculous Tournaments, then Back to the Pack 145
1907: Mieses' Miraculous Year 145
The Trebitsch Memorial Tournament, Vienna 1907 145
Ostende 1907 Masters Tournament 160
Karlsbad 1907 International Tournament 168
The Danish Gambit Refuted? 173
1908: Vienna, Prague, Düsseldorf, and a Match with Marshall 174
Vienna 1908 174
Prague 1908 175
Düsseldorf 1908 176
The Mieses-Marshall Match 177
1909: St. Petersburg, and better luck with Rubinstein 179
St. Petersburg 1909 179
Second Mieses-Rubinstein Match 184
1910: Matches with Spielmann and Teichmann 187
Chapter VI. 1911-1913: A New Magazine, New Book, and the San Sebastián Tournaments 189
Die Schachwelt 189
Editing the Kleines Lehrbuch 193
San Sebastián 1911 196
San Sebastián 1912 200
18th German Federation Congress, Breslau 1912 203
Chapter VII. 1914-1919: World War I and Aftermath 206
Mannheim 1914 206
Mieses and Lasker on the War 208
Exhibition Games with Tarrasch 211
Berlin Vier Meisterturnier 214
In the Aftermath of the War 216
Chapter VIII. 1920-1932: The Weimar Republic 219
The Gothenburg International Congress 219
Berlin 1920 224
Ink War with Erhardt Post 226
A New World Champion 227
The Hague 1921 227
Germany-Sweden Team Match 232
Teplitz-Schönau 1922 234
1923: An Eventful Year 236
Triumph at Liverpool 236
Dutch vs. Foreigners at Scheveningen 241
The Beer Hall Putsch 245
1924-1929: Golden Years for Germany, Decline for Mieses 245
Berlin 1924 246
Baden-Baden 1925 249
Hannover 1926 250
Bad Schandau 1927 251

The First FIDE Olympiad: London 1927 251
Bad Kissingen 1928 253
Berliner Tageblatt Tournament 256
Bautzen 1929 256
Duisburg 1929 258
The Café Moka Efti Tournament 260
1930-1932: Last Years of the Weimar Republic 262
Zwickau 1930 262
Springtime in Paris 264
Frankfurt 1930 267
Eye-Whacking in Swinemünde 269
Chapter IX. 1933-1937: Under the Nazis 275
1933 Berlin Championship 276
The Gleichschaltung of German Chess 277
Lasker Goes, Mieses Stays 281
Match with Grob, 1934 282
Mieses in 1935 284
Hastings 1935-36 285
Organizing Jewish Chess 290
1936: Big Chess for Germany 291
Mieses visits Palestine 292
1937: 2nd Jewish Championship, Success at Margate, Calamity at Kemeri 294
The Second Jewish Championship 294
Mastery at Margate 296
Premature Obituaries! 296
Chapter X. 1938-1939: Escape to England 298
Brighton 1938 299
Kristallnacht 302
1939: Tournament Success, an Appeal to Lasker, and War 302
Hastings 1938-39 302
Margate 1939 305
The 1939 Mieses-Lasker Exchange 305
The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact 307
War Breaks Out 308
Chapter XI. 1940-1954: World War II, the first Grandmasters, and Mieses' Final Years 310
Depressing Events in 1941 311
Racial Cleansing of the Kleines Lehrbuch des Schachspiels 312
The Notorious Alekhine Articles 315
1942: A Match with Menchik 317
1945: The Grand Old Man of British Chess 318
Germany Surrenders 319
Match with Gerald Abrahams 319
Hastings 1945-46 323
Return to Europe 1947-1948 325
His Last Brilliancy Prize 326
1950: Among the first International Grandmasters 327

Mieses' Last Surviving Game — The "Triumph of Youth" 327
Mieses' Last Days 329
Memorial Tributes 330
Chapter XII. Jacques Mieses: Legacy and Final Evaluation 332
Literary Contributions 332
As a Touring Showman 333
As a Chess Organizer 335
Mieses and Opening Theory 335
Mieses' Strengths and Weaknesses as a Player 337
His Worst Weakness: Inexplicably Bad Opening Play 338
His Greatest Skill: the Endgame 341
Exactly How Many Brilliancy Prizes? 345
Appendix A: Mieses' Tournament and Match Record 347
Appendix B: Mieses' Tournament and Match Crosstables 351
Appendix C: Mieses' Composed Problems 401
Indexes:
Index of Players 405
Index of Openings 406
General Index 407
Bibliography 415
Endnotes 420

Author's Preface

The name Jacques Mieses (pronounced MEE-zezz) may not be familiar to you, nor even to most chess players today. When the chess books of my youth gave him any attention at all, it was usually not very flattering. For example Irving Chernev's *Logical Chess: Move by Move* (1957) had three of his games, all Mieses losses, and Chernev seemed to go out of his way to make him look bad. Reuben Fine's *The World's Great Chess Games* (1951), a broad survey profiling prominent players over the centuries, did not even mention Mieses, despite the fact that he, along with Fine, had been among the first 27 to receive the International Grandmaster title from FIDE just the year before.

This is perhaps understandable; Mieses' record as a player was hardly the most impressive. He won only a few tournaments, and his overall score in serious games, tournaments and matches combined, was slightly on the minus side. Chernev, Reinfeld, Fine *et al* tended to concentrate on the greats, the apex of the chess pyramid — Morphy, Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, etc. — and not on the pyramid's lower levels. But as the reader will learn, with Mieses his overall record is rather beside the point. Amid the dross, there is gold.

Historians gave Mieses a bit more attention in later years; for example Richard Fauber's *Impact of Genius* (1992) devoted a few pages to him, and then in 1993 came Helmut Wieteck's *Meister Mieses*, a German book consisting mostly of lightly annotated games, but also some biography. Still, it was not deeply researched, had factual errors, and was overall rather superficial.

In research for my book *Chess in the Third Reich* (McFarland, 2025) I had to delve into a great many German sources, learning a lot about Mieses in the process. That's when the idea of a proper biography came to me. However, unlike my two previous biographical works — on Edgard Colle and Carlos Torre, two players with short careers — a book about Mieses, if it was to give a really adequate account, would have to cover much more. When Mieses started serious play, Steinitz was not yet official world champion and Germans were dominant in chess; when he retired, Botvinnik held the title and the USSR was supreme. A professional playing career that ran for 68 years, from 1882 to 1950! Among grandmasters the longest on record, equaled later only by Victor Korchnoi, who played from 1947 to 2015.

Furthermore (and this became increasingly apparent as my research went on), Mieses' involvement in chess went far beyond his tournaments and matches, great though their number was. He was, additionally, a reporter, a newspaper columnist, a problem composer, a magazine editor (twice), an articulate, thoughtful, principled and incisive editorialist and vigorous polemicist, a tournament organizer and director, the author of many books, and a tireless and wide-traveling showman, giving countless simultaneous exhibitions, both

sighted and blindfold, in Europe and North America, which were enlivened by entertaining, instructive lectures and witty repartee.

His contributions to the game were vast and varied, and I considered it important to give the reader a representative sample of all these aspects of his life's work. With copies of long out-of-print books, and digital archives of old magazines and newspapers — German, Austrian, British, American, Dutch, Swedish, French, Italian — I was able to do this, though it took over two years, all told. The result is what you have here.

Around 1948, Reuben Fine quoted Mieses as saying "I may be accused of playing bad chess, but I can never be accused of playing dull chess." Mieses himself said "I always strive to play beautifully. If I also win, that's a bonus." He was a romantic artist who strove after excitement and beauty, sometimes acting on impulse more than cold reason. Yes, he might fail badly, but he also often succeeded. Thus he won many brilliancy prizes, more than any other player of his time except Alekhine. Those brilliancy prize games are all here, plus many others just as good or better, if not in terms of brilliancy, then in other aspects of chess skill. In particular, I would recommend these to the reader:

Game 3, Mieses-Tarrasch, Nuremberg 1888: Mieses recovers from a dangerous situation around moves 22-29, and with an intricate dance of his knights reaches a winning but difficult endgame, where careful play gives him the victory.

Game 4, Mieses-Tarrasch, Leipzig 1888: Mieses advances with energetic central pawn thrusts, establishes a knight at e6, and breaks through with a decisive combination.

Game 14, Mieses-Walbrodt, 8th match game, Berlin, 1894: An archetypal Mieses game, where a vigorous kingside pawn storm culminates in a queen sacrifice.

Game 16, Mieses-Lipke, Leipzig 1894: After some indifferent opening play by both sides, Mieses unleashes one of his longest combinations.

Game 19, Mieses-Janowski, 6th match game, Paris, 1895: From move 14 on, a decisive attack unfolds like action in a well-written drama.

Game 23, Mieses-Teichmann, 4th match game, London, 1895: Mieses ekes out a win with fine technique in an ending of ♘+4♙-vs-♗+3♙.

Game 24, Mieses-Blackburne, Hastings 1895: The "Black Death" dies in a withering attack.

Game 25, Mieses-Lasker, Hastings 1895: A draw, but nearly a win, the closest Mieses ever came to beating Lasker. Excellent annotations by Tarrasch.

Game 30, Mieses-Chigorin, Paris 1900: An early TN perplexes the great Russian, while Mieses plays strongly and beautifully throughout.

Game 31, Schlechter-Mieses, Paris 1900: A strange game in which, at move 19, White had moved none of his queenside pieces, and Black none on his

kingside. With Schlechter's queenside pawns advancing menacingly, Mieses pulled a devastating kingside attack out of his hat.

Game 32, Mieses-Janowski, Paris 1900: A wonderful game, which Mieses considered one of his very best. Noteworthy for its passive queen sac 24.♕g7!, after which the queen stayed *en prise* for five more moves.

Game 34, Mieses-Mason, Monte Carlo 1901: Of all the rough-and-tumble games between these two, this was the roughest and tumblest. A great one for lovers of complications.

Game 35, Chigorin-Mieses, Monte Carlo 1901: Mieses plays nearly perfectly in a difficult ending, to grind out a win in 84 moves.

Game 42, Mieses-Pillsbury, Vienna 1903: A tremendous struggle, a draw worthy of these two greats, for which both received a prize.

Game 55, Süchting-Mieses, Barmen 1905: Mieses' exemplary technique is worthy of close study in this rare ending with four bishops.

Game 56, Mieses-Møller, Stockholm 1906: A delightful, brilliant game, showcasing Mieses' skills in both middle game and ending.

Game 57, Mieses-Chigorin, Ostende 1906: Mieses' most celebrated miniature.

Game 58, Janowski-Mieses, Ostende 1906: One of Mieses' best in terms of positional play.

Game 60, Vidmar-Mieses, Vienna 1907: Perhaps Mieses' best game from his best tournament.

Game 62, Albin-Mieses, Vienna 1907: Mieses' most intricate, difficult game of the tournament.

Game 75, Janowski-Mieses, Prague 1908: A brilliant queen sacrifice draws last blood in his long series with Janowski.

Game 78, Mieses-Marshall, match, Berlin, 1908, game 8: Mieses' best game of this match.

Game 89, Barasz-Mieses, Breslau 1912: A lovely Morphy-style sac-fest.

Game 91, Tarrasch-Mieses, 11th match game, Berlin, 1916: In a lost position, Mieses summons up his defensive abilities to gain a hard-earned draw.

Game 95, Nimzowitsch-Mieses, Gothenburg 1920: One of Mieses' most brilliant games.

Game 96, Mieses-Bogoljubov, Gothenburg 1920: One of Mieses' patented miniatures, beating a world title contender in just 15 moves.

Game 99, Yates-Mieses, The Hague 1921: An extremely complex and difficult game.

Game 101, Mieses-Réti, Teplitz-Schönau 1922: A nice upset against a player 25 years younger.

Game 102, Mieses-Yates, Liverpool 1923: One of Mieses' best attacks, hitting like a flurry of Muhammad Ali punches.

Game 104, Euwe-Mieses, Scheveningen 1923: One of Mieses' better games despite its flaws, a victory over a future world champion.

Game 105, Rubinstein-Mieses, Berlin 1924: An amazing save in a difficult endgame against the world's foremost endgame expert.

Game 109, Grob-Mieses, London Olympiad 1927: Grob's seemingly innocent 13th move allows an explosive chain reaction.

Game 111, Mieses-Marshall, Bad Kissingen 1928: From what had been a lost position, Mieses walks a very narrow path to draw.

Game 112, Mieses-Engert, Bautzen 1929: One of Mieses' nicer finishes of the decade.

Game 119, Bogoljubov-Mieses, Swinemünde 1931: Bogo swore he would blacken Mieses' eye, but Mieses fended off every attempt.

Game 120, Mieses-Rellstab, Swinemünde 1932: One of Mieses' best endgames.

Game 123: Mieses-Lenton, Hastings 1935-36: A Mieses rarity, a game of understated positional play, with subtle maneuvers that ultimately prove lethal.

Game 124, Mieses-Cross, Hastings 1935-36: In a drawish knight ending against a blind but talented opponent, Mieses put forth one of his finest efforts, capitalizing on a nearly imperceptible error to win what seemed a certain draw.

Game 128, Mieses-Solomon, Brighton 1938: In a tense position, menaced by his opponent's queen and rook, Mieses finds the one winning move, problem-like and not at all obvious.

Game 135, Mieses-Abrahams, 3rd match game, 1945: A very exciting game, admittedly difficult and imperfect, but rich in complexity and striking possibilities; a credit to Mieses' fighting spirit.

Game 136, Christoffel-Mieses, Hastings 1945-46: Mieses' penultimate brilliancy prize.

Game 154, von Bardeleben-Mieses, Hannover 1902: One of Mieses' best endings.

Game 155, Mieses-Spielmann, Breslau 1912: Missing chances to win by direct attack, Mieses demonstrates fine technique in winning an ending of ♖+♗+♘+4♙-vs-♖+♗+♘+3♙.

Game 156, Mieses-List, Swinemünde 1932: When his opponent misses a win in the endgame, Mieses plays flawlessly to secure the draw, in a difficult situation where he must repeatedly find the only move that does.

The reader can see the full standings and results of almost all his tournaments and matches in Appendix B, where crosstables are given, in chronological order.

I was fortunate to obtain a copy of *My Best Games*, the 73 Mieses considered his best, annotated in a manuscript he prepared in his later years. I included almost all of them, mostly whole but some as fragments. Six I rejected due to serious flaws Mieses apparently did not see. As almost always with work from

the pre-computer days, his notes, and those of other analysts, often required correction; see "Analytical Methodology and Technical Details" below for a discussion of that.

Beyond his purely chess-related accomplishments, I came to have an appreciation of Mieses as a person. He was a man with a good heart, and a man of culture, intelligence, humor and wit, who won friends and entertained audiences wherever he went. He was also an accomplished rhetorician, skilled in framing logical arguments and skewering fallacious thinking. Among the chess personalities of the past, he ranks, along with Lasker and Tartakower, as one I would most like to invite to dinner. I have tried to convey some of that here, and also something of the times in which he lived, which saw everything from the opulence of Imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary, to the horrors of two world wars and the Nazi regime.

Concerning translation, I am reasonably fluent in German and, assisted by Google Translate, I had no trouble with that language. The Gothic font (also called *Fraktur* or *Altschrift*) was another matter, and my friend Marilyn Piper helped decipher the more arcane letters. For French, Dutch, Swedish, Italian and other languages, not to mention Mieses' occasional Latin, I had to rely almost completely on Google Translate. I generally left spellings of proper names as I found them, *e.g.* the *BCM*'s "Leipsic" for Leipzig, or the varied transliterations of Russian names.

I have many people to thank for their help with this project, in particular Herbert Bastian for material from the Hermann Römmig estate and some relevant German articles, Nick Pope for his marvelous *Chess Archaeology* web-site, Michael Negele for his article about Mieses in the March 2012 issue of *KARL*, Andy Ansel for relevant issues of *CHESS* and *Kagans neueste Schachnachrichten*, FM Carsten Hansen for his editions of Mieses' books, Sara Beth Cohen for many photographs, John Upham for the Mieses article on his web-site *British Chess News*, John Saunders for some otherwise lost Mieses games from his web-site *BritBase.info*, Edward Winter for relevant items from his *Chess Notes* web-site, Steven Dowd for Mieses' composed problems, and Chuck Medairy, who never tired of showing me Mieses material he found. Others include Hans Renette, Mark Hannon, Eduardo Bauzá Merceré, Paul Heaton, Geurt Gijssen, Holger Langer, Adam Sauer, Jeffrey Williams, Tony Mantia, Clive Edwards, David McAlister and a host of other friends on the Facebook group Chess Book Collectors. And late in the project I was lucky to make the acquaintance of Johannes Geppert of Leipzig, the great-great-grandson of Marie Coelestine Mieses, youngest sister of Jacques. He supplied some personal details and some early club tournament results, and his website *https://www.mieses.info/en/index.html* has much relevant information.

Mieses' own best games collection was not published in his lifetime. *The Batsford Chess Encyclopedia* says that he was working on a work of much

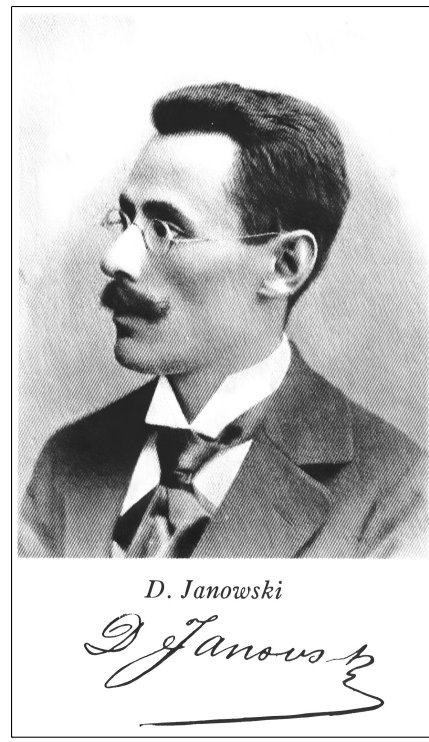
greater scope, a memoir to be titled *More than 70 Years in International Chess*, with his recollections of all the great personalities he knew and events he experienced in his long, active life, but he died before getting very far with it. A pity; it would have been of great interest to chess historians and fans of the game, since he knew everybody who was anybody in chess in his long career. I hope that the present work, which includes biographical notes about many of his opponents and colleagues, and to which I have given a similar title, may be a small approximation of what that book might have been.

Taylor Kingston, Paso Robles, California, November 2026

Chapter IV

1895-1906: Earning an International Name

Match with David Janowski



Janowski in 1895

1895 started with a bang. Mieses had hardly gotten back from Russia before he began a match in Paris with David Janowski. This interesting pairing of two good tacticians attracted considerable attention from European chess journals. Janowski (1868-1927, historical Elo 2570), a Polish Jew born in what is now Belarus, had settled in Paris about 1890, where he would become the house pro at the famous Café de la Régence. He was just beginning a professional chess career that would see him rise into the world's top ten or higher circa 1898-1908. Untutored but naturally gifted,[16] he played quickly and sharply, especially with the bishop pair, and racked up overwhelming plus scores against such greats as Steinitz, Chigorin, and Blackburne. Against more solid players such as Tarrasch and Lasker he did poorly, however. He would play a world title match with Lasker in 1910, losing by the lopsided score of +0 -8 =3.

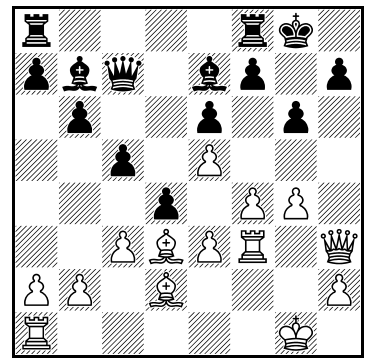
If that was like a 3-hit shutout, the Mieses-Janowski match was like a 14-inning 11-11 baseball game called on account of darkness. Both sides got many hits and scored many runs (and made a few errors), as one would expect between two such offense-minded players. It was held at the Café de la Régence beginning in early January. The terms were seven games up, draws not counting, but the match to be reckoned as drawn if the score reached 6-6. Stakes were 800 francs, time-limit 15 moves/hour,[17] with play daily from 1:30 PM to 6:30 PM, except Sunday. They had met once before, at Leipzig 1894, Janowski winning, and placing =6th-7th, two points above Mieses in 10th.

The contest went through several distinct phases. At first it seemed that Janowski would run away with the match. In the first game Mieses blundered away a pawn, obligingly gave Janowski the bishop pair, and soon succumbed to a vigorous attack. In the second game Mieses opened strangely with 1.e4 e5

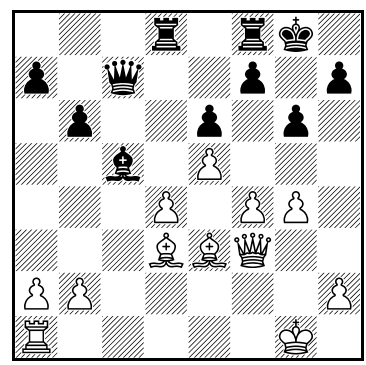
2.♘e2, then lost a piece at move 10 and was mated at move 21. Finally he got in the win column in game 3:

***Game 17: Janowski-Mieses, match, Paris, 1895, game 3, 10 January, Stonewall Attack [D05]*:**

1.d4 d5 2.e3 e6 3.♗d3 c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.♘d2 ♗e7 6.f4 The Stonewall Attack was seen as early as an 1855 game in Calcutta, between Cochrane and Somaracana. The American Preston Ware tried it at Vienna 1882, as did J.M. Hanham in American tournaments 1889-91. In 1894 it appeared in the second game of the W. Cohn-Walbrodt match, and in Lipke-Schiffers at the Leipzig congress. More usual here or at an earlier point was 6.♘gf3, as in Lasker-Rumboll, London 1892. **6...0–0 7.♘gf3 b6 8.♘e5 ♗b7 9.♕f3 ♘bd7 10.0–0 ♕c7 11.g4 g6** Apparently to enable ♘f6-h5 in the event of g4-g5. An alternative approach was 11...♘e8, intending ♘d7-f6 and ♘e8-d6, to post a knight on the weak e4 square. White's next move renders that moot. **12.♕h3?!** With the brutally simple idea of ♕h3-h6 and ♖f1-f3-h3, but there is a flaw: the watch on e4 is weakened. **12...♘e4! 13.♖f3?** Too brutal, too simple; the mature Janowski was more subtle. **13...♘xe5! 14.dxe5** If 14.fxe5?? ♘g5−+. **14...♘xd2 15.♗xd2 d4**



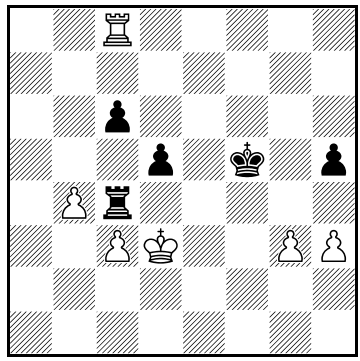
16.exd4 Probably best. If 16.♖g3 Black has several good options, *e.g.* 16...dxe3 17.♗xe3 c4 18.♗f1 ♖ad8∓, or 16...c4 17.♕h6 (if 17.♗f1 d3∓) 17...cxd3 18.♖h3 ♗h4 19.♕xh4 f6∓. **16...♗xf3 17.♕xf3 ♖ad8 18.♗e3 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♗c5**



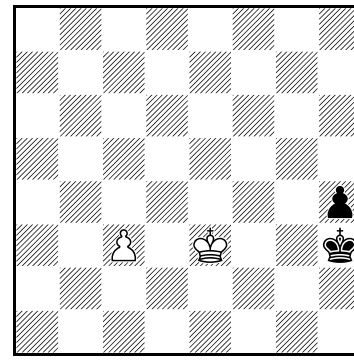
20.♕e4? Necessary was 20.dxc5 ♖xd3 21.c6 ♖c8 22.♖c1, when White can resist for some time. But Janowski always preferred attack to resistance. **20...♗xd4! 21.♗xd4 ♕d7 22.♗xb6 axb6 23.♗c2 ♕d4+ 24.♔g2??** Janowski prefers to go down in flames rather than endure the slower death of 24.♕xd4 ♖xd4. **24...♕xb2 25.♖f1 ♖d2+ 26.♖f2 ♖xf2+ 27.♔xf2 ♖c8 0–1**

In game 5, for the first time in the match, an endgame was reached.

***Game 18: Janowski-Mieses, match, Paris, 1895, game 5, 12 January, after* 42…♔f6-f5:**



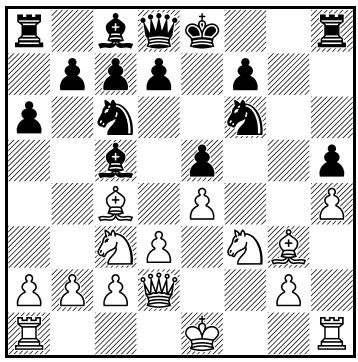
Years later, Janowski told Capablanca "I detest the endgame,"[18] and it became known as the weakest part of his game. Here we have an early example. Janowski, a pawn up, is winning, and could secure the point by, for example, 43.♖h8 ♔g6 44.g4 ♖e4 (if 44...hxg4?? 45.♖g8+ ♔f5 46.♖xg4+−) 45.♖xh5 etc. Instead he played **43.b5?**. Presumably Janowski thought forcing the exchange of rooks would give him an elementary pawn ending won for White. But Mieses, seeing deeper, must have breathed a sigh of relief. **43...cxb5 44.♖xc4 bxc4+** Not 44...dxc4+?? 45.♔d4+−. Now Mieses walks a tightrope to force a draw. **45.♔d4 ♔e6□ 46.g4 h4!□ 47.g5 ♔f5□ 48.♔xd5 ♔xg5□ 49.♔xc4 ♔f4□ 50.♔d4 ♔g3□ 51.♔e3 ♔xh3□**



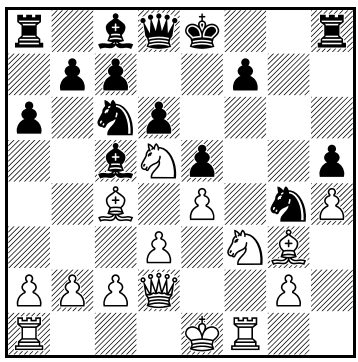
52.♔f3 If 52.c4 ♔g2 53.c5 h3 54.c6 h2 55.c7=, both pawns queening. **52...♔h2 53.♔f2 h3 54.c4 ♔h1 55.c5 h2 56.c6 ½–½** Stalemate! One wonders if this failure temporarily shattered Janowski's morale. Whatever the reason, he had revealed his Achilles heel, and he lost the next four games. But it was by attack that Mieses won the next game, arguably his best of the match.

***Game 19: Mieses-Janowski, match, Paris, 1895, game 6, 14 January, Vienna Game [C28]*:**

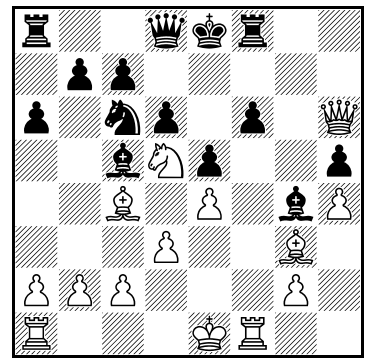
1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 An old line, going back to Kieseritzky-Horwitz, 1846. It would be played four times in this match. **5.♗g5** A relatively recent innovation, introduced in von Bardeleben-Ranken, London Vizayanagaram tournament, 1883. **5...h6 6.♗h4 g5** Into what was then *terra incognita*. **7.♗g3 h5?!** Too much, too soon. Better 7...d6 and further development before commencing any offensive gestures. **8.h4!** Much better than 8.h3. **8...g4□ 9.♕d2 a6 10.f4!** With much the better development, White is justified in making this early break. **10...gxf3 11.♘xf3**



11...♘g4 Necessary. If instead, say, 11...d6?, then 12.♘g5 ♖f8 13.♖f1 ♕e7 14.♗xf7+!! ♖xf7 15.♘xf7 ♕xf7 16.♘d5+−. **12.♘d5 d6 13.♖f1!**



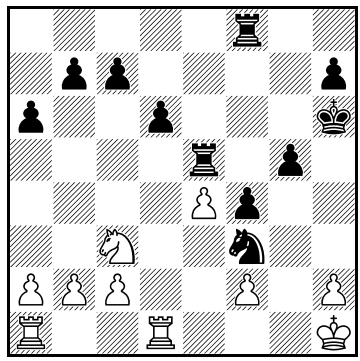
13...f6? Already, the losing move. Better, say, 13...♖g8 14.0–0–0 ♗e6 15.♔b1 ♖g6 16.♘g5±. **14.♘h2!** Janowski probably did not reckon with this odd-looking but decisive riposte. If now 14...♘xh2 15.♘xf6+ ♔e7 16.♕g5+−. **14...♖f8 15.♘xg4 ♗xg4 16.♕h6** Natural, but less than best. Stronger was either 16.c3 or 16.b4.



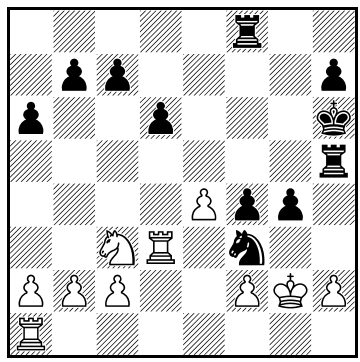
16...♘d4? 16...♘b4 would have capitalized on White's previous move. Then after 17.♕g6+ ♔d7 18.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 19.♖xf6 ♘xc2+ 20.♔d2 ♘xa1 Black's position would not be quite so hopeless. **17.♔d2!** The surest way to keep control. Playable and strong was 17.♕g7 ♘xc2+ 18.♔d2 ♘xa1 19.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 20.♖xf6 ♕xf6 21.♕xf6, but why take chances with complications? The remainder of the game shows Mieses' attack unfolding like the climax of a well-plotted drama. **17...f5 18.♕h7 ♖f7 19.♕g8+ ♖f8 20.♕g6+ ♔d7** If 20...♖f7?? 21.♘b6! +−. **21.c3 ♘e2 22.♗f2 ♗xf2 23.♖xf2 ♘g3 24.♕g7+ ♔c6 25.a4 ♖c8 26.a5** To cut off any retreat via ♔c6-b6-a7. **26...♕xh4** Desperation. **27.♘e7+ ♔d7 28.♘g6+ 1–0** A lovely attack by Mieses.

The 7th, 8th and 9th games all featured endings won by Mieses. We give the finish of two.

***Game 20: Janowski-Mieses, match, Paris, 1895, game 7, 17 January, after* 25...♖e8-e5**



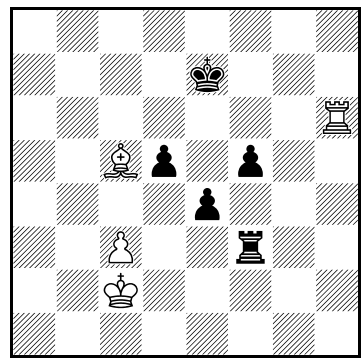
Though Mieses is up only a pawn, it could be said he has Janowski right where he wants him, in an inferior endgame. **26.♖d3?!** Already Janowski shows poor judgement; better was 26.h3, preventing Black's next maneuver. **26...g4! 27.♔g2 ♖h5**



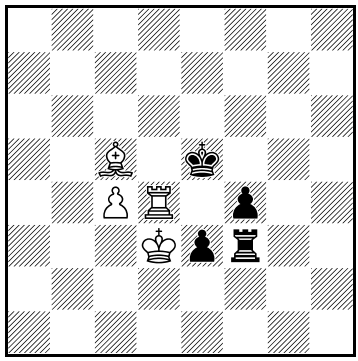
28.♖xf3 Effectively forced; if 28.♖h1, a likely line is 28...♘e5 29.♖dd1 ♖h3 30.♘d5 ♖f7 31.a4 ♔g5 32.a5 c6 33.♘c3 ♖f6 34.♖d4 ♖fh6 35.♖b4 ♘f3 36.♖xb7 ♖xh2+ 37.♖xh2 ♖xh2+ 38.♔f1 h5 etc., winning. **28...gxf3+ 29.♔xf3 ♖xh2** and **0–1, 54**.

The eighth game was a ponderous 91-move affair that required several playing sessions. A threefold repetition occurred at move 50, but apparently neither player cared to claim a draw. Eventually an ending where Mieses had ♖+♗+♙ against Janowski's ♖+3♙ came about. It was a theoretical draw, but again Janowski misplayed it, allowing Mieses to win.

***Game 21: Mieses-Janowski, match, Paris, 1895, game 8, begun 18 January, after* 63.♗d4-c5+:**



Mieses must be careful here to retain his lone pawn, or the game is a certain draw. **63...♔f7?** Janowski's first misstep, costing a pawn. Correct was 63...♔d7 or 63...♔d8, so that if 64.♖d6+ ♔c7 and White cannot play 65.♗d4. **64.♖d6! f4** If 64...♖d3 65.♗d4 and 66.♖xd5. **65.♖xd5?!** Better first 65.♗d4 and then 66.♖xd5, so that if 66...♔e6 67.♖e5+ drives the king back, preventing him from supporting the advance of his remaining pawns. The position is theoretically even again. **65...♔e6 66.♖d2 e3 67.♖d6+ ♔e5 68.♖d1 ♔f5 69.c4 ♔e4 70.♖d4+ ♔e5 71.♔d3**



71...♔f5? The losing move. 71...♖f1 would have held the draw. **72.♖d5+ ♔g4?** This makes it easier. 72...♔e6 was a bit tougher, though still losing. **73.♖e5! ♖f1 74.♗xe3!** The only way to win. **74...fxe3 75.♖xe3** Had Janowski read an endgame manual such as Berger's *Theorie und Praxis der Endspiele* (1890), he would have known he was busted here. You can bet Mieses had read it, for from here on his technique is flawless. His task is made easier by Black's king being cut off from the pawn, the e-file forming a *cordon sanitaire* over which he cannot pass. **75...♔f4 76.♖e8 ♖c1 77.♔d4 ♖d1+ 78.♔c5 ♖h1 79.♔b5 ♔f5 80.c5 ♔f6 81.c6 ♖b1+ 82.♔a6 ♖c1 83.♔b7 ♖b1+ 84.♔c7 ♔f7 85.♖e4 ♖c1 86.♔d7 ♖d1+ 87.♔c8 ♖c1 88.c7 ♖d1 89.♖e5 ♔f6 90.♖c5 ♔e7 91.♔b7 1–0**

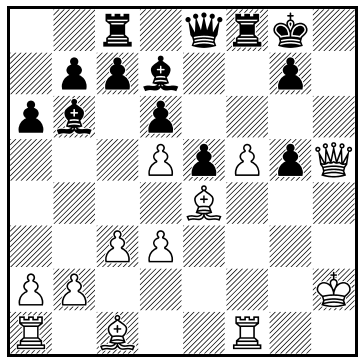
After game 9 the *BCM* reported "The match between Messrs. Janowski and Mieses began at the Café de la Régence, Paris … and at first was all in favour of the former player, who began by winning 3 games to 1, and drawing 1. In the sixth game, however, Herr Mieses began to improve, and won it in good style. The games are, so far, disappointing on the whole, there being a good many mistakes." Imagine, a chess game with mistakes! The *BCM* would have done well to remember Jesus' admonition "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Back then, there were more analytical mistakes in any issue of the *BCM* than in the entirety of this match. This is sweaty, rowdy, rough-and-tumble 19th-century chess: fun, interesting, and instructive to boot.

After a draw in game 10, Janowski revived, winning the next three games. Mieses' once commanding lead had vanished. Another Janowski victory would win the match, so everything was riding on game 14. Mieses included it in his best games manuscript.

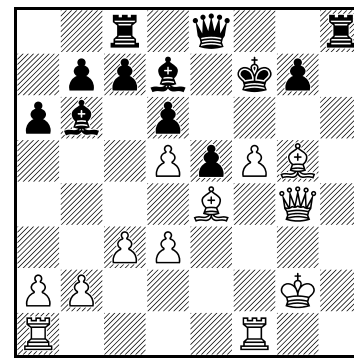
Game 22: Mieses-Janowski, match, Paris, 14th game, 4 February 1895, Vienna Game [C26]:

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 TK: Mieses returns to his old reliable. After losing with it in game 4, he had played 3.♗c4 until now. **3…♘f6 4.♗g2 ♗c5 5.d3 a6 6.♘ge2** TK: First played in Pitschel-Englisch, Leipzig 1879, and used by von Bardeleben to defeat Lasker in an 1890 match, but after 1905 it disappeared from master practice until the 1970s. **6...d6 7.h3** TK: The next most common line, after 7.0–0, played first by Berthold Lasker in 1887, then by Horatio Caro in 1897 and 1905, GMs Sax and Gufeld in 1975, and GM Short in 1989. **7...h6 8.0–0 ♗d7 9.♘d5!** TK: A novelty, played neither before nor since, according to CB. **9...♘xd5** JM: 9...0–0 may be preferable. **10.exd5 ♘d4** JM: The right line of play would have

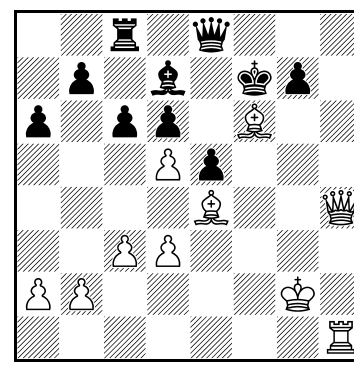
been 10...♘e7 followed by 11...c6. **11.♘xd4 ♗xd4 12.c3 ♗b6 13.♔h2 ♕e7 14.♕e2 0–0 15.f4 ♖ae8 16.f5 f6 17.h4 ♖c8** TK: Janowski's reason for this is unclear. Perhaps he intended ♔g8-f7-e8-d8 to remove his king from the impending pawn storm, but he is a move late with that. **18.g4 ♔f7 19.g5! hxg5?!** TK: This was the time for 19...♔e8, with a cramped but tenable game for Black. Mieses now forces the king back to g8. **20.♕h5+! ♔g8 21.hxg5 fxg5 22.♗e4! ♕e8?** TK: 22...c6 was best, play then probably proceeding 23.♗xg5 ♕f7 24.♕f3±.



23.♕g4! TK: Strongest was 23.♕xg5 ♖f6 24.♕h4, intending 25.♗g5 in most lines with a winning attack. The text retains White's advantage, but yields no clear win against best defense. Janowski, however, was not much of a defender. **23...♔f7?** TK: The decisive error, apparently based on the mistaken belief that Black can attack on the h-file, or at least get some relief by exchanging rooks there. Necessary was 23...c6 24.♗xg5 ♕f7 (or 23...♕f7 24.♗xg5 c6) 25.c4 ♗d8, when White has no immediate breakthrough and must regroup and maneuver, for example by 26.♗e3 ♗f6 27.♖h1 ♖fe8 28.♔g3 ♔f8 29.♖h7 ♔e7 30.♖ah1± etc. **24.♗xg5 ♖h8+ 25.♔g2**



25...♔g8 TK: It is hopeless to try to double on the h-file. The only square where the rook would not be *en prise* is h7, but if 25...♖h7?? 26.♖h1 ♕h8 27.♖xh7 ♕xh7 28.♖h1 ♕g8 29.♕h5+ ♔f8 30.f6!+−. **26.♖h1 ♖xh1 27.♖xh1 c6 28.♕h4 ♗d8 29.f6!** JM: Obvious and decisive. **29...♗xf6 30.♗xf6 ♔f7 1–0**



JM: White announced mate in three: 31.♗g6+ ♔xg6 32.♕g5+ ♔f7 33.♕xg7#.

And so with the score 6-6, draws not counting, the match was officially a tie. After his poor tournament results in the previous five years, the match improved Mieses' standing in the chess world. Both combatants could leave the field with

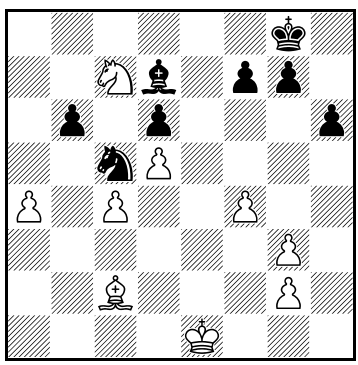
honor. They had played vigorous fighting chess, imperfect but admirable for its spirit. All in all, Mieses and Janowski would meet across the board a total of 26 times, the last in 1913, with the final tally +12 -9 =5 in the Frenchman's favor, the low number of draws attesting to the intensity with which they played.

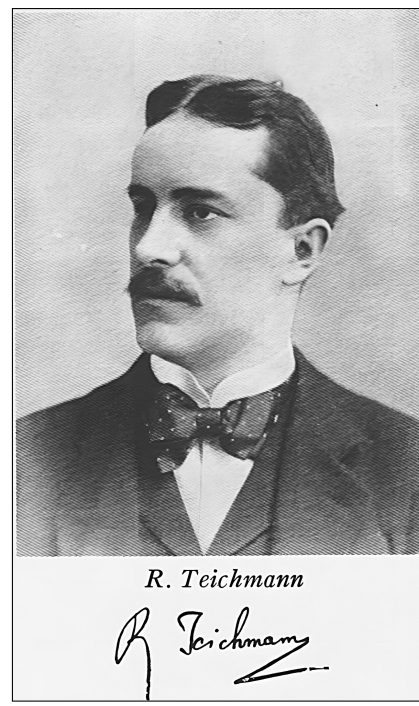
The match had one more effect: it was probably his time in Paris that persuaded Mieses to go by the stylish French form of his name. From this time forward he was known not as Jakob, but Jacques.[19]

Match with Richard Teichmann

Almost immediately after concluding the Janowski match, Mieses went to London for a short match with the German-born Richard Teichmann, who had been a language teacher there since 1892. Teichmann (1868-1925, historical Elo 2570) was an opponent rather different from Janowski. Possessed of greater patience and *Sitzfleisch*, he could play on in dull, even games for hours until his opponent cracked. He almost always built up a solid position, and attacking it could be like steering a ship into an iceberg. He generally avoided speculative openings in favor of a sound Ruy López, French Defense, or Queen's Gambit. He had only recently begun serious chess, winning the Berlin Championship in early 1891, then coming an impressive third at Leipzig 1894 with a 12-5 score, including a win over Mieses. Probably few had an inkling of his real strength in 1895, but in retrospect it is not surprising that the score was lopsided in Teichmann's favor, +4 -1 =1. We give the conclusion of Mieses' lone win:

***Game 23: Mieses-Teichmann, match, London, 1895, game 4, 20 February, after* 36.♗b3-c2**





Teichmann in 1895

Chapter VI

1911-1913: A New Magazine, New Book, and the San Sebastián Tournaments

Die Schachwelt

In January 1911 there appeared the first issue of a new magazine, *Die Schachwelt*. Mieses was editor-in-chief; the other regular contributors were Berthold Lasker (brother of the world champion) and Tarrasch, covering game annotations and instructive articles, with Mieses' old colleague von Gottschall handling the problem department. An excerpt from Mieses' opening remarks:



DIE SCHACHWELT

HALBMONATSSCHRIFT FÜR DAS GESAMTE SCHACHLEBEN DES IN- UND AUSLANDES

Herausgegeben von **J. Mieses** unter Mitwirkung von **Dr. von Gottschall, Dr. B. Lasker** und **Dr. Tarrasch**

Abonnement für Deutschland und Österreich-Ungarn 12 M., für das Ausland 13 M. jährl. **Inserate:** ganze Seite 75 M., halbe Seite 40 M., viertel Seite 25 M. Bei Wiederholungen hoher Rabatt. | **Verlag und Redaktion:** Verlag Dr. Wedekind & Co. G. m. b. H., Berlin S. 14, Dresdenerstr. 43 Alle Sendungen, auch für die Redaktion, bestimmte, sind an vorstehende Adresse zu richten.

No. 1 **I. Jahrgang** **1911**

INHALT: Zur Einführung — Erstes internationales Problemturnier der „Schachwelt" — Die Eröffnungen im letzten Wettkampf Janowski-Lasker. — Partien — Partiestellungen — Mitteilungen aus dem Schachleben — Probleme.

Zur Einführung.

Motto: „Das Bessere ist der Feind des Guten."

Seit Jahrzehnten befindet sich das Schachleben allenthalben in einer stark aufwärts steigenden Bewegung, die gerade in neuester Zeit bedeutend an Intensität zugenommen hat. Alle Anzeichen sprechen dafür, dass sie noch keineswegs auf ihrem Höhepunkt angelangt ist. Vor fünfzig Jahren war ein internationales Turnier, ein Wettkampf hervorragender Meister ein Ereignis, von dem die Schachwelt jahrelang zehrte. Und gegenwärtig! Jedes der letzten Jahre hat mehrere erstklassige Turniere, Weltmeisterschaftsmatche und eine Reihe anderer hochinteressanter Veranstaltungen gebracht. Ein goldenes Zeitalter ist für den Schachenthusiasten hereingebrochen, und jubelnd mag er ausrufen: „O, Jahrhundert, es ist eine Lust in dir zu leben!"

Parallel laufend mit der so enorm gesteigerten Spielpraxis hat begreiflicherweise auch ein treibhausartiges Wachstum der Schachliteratur stattgefunden, und unter anderem ist die Zahl der periodisch erscheinenden Fachzeitungen, in Deutschland sowohl wie im Auslande, keine geringe. Und dennoch wagen wir es, mit der Gründung eines neuen Schachorgans vor die Oeffentlichkeit zu treten? Wir wagen es, weil wir dabei nichts zu wagen glauben! Nämlich — und hiermit kommen wir zu jenem Punkte, der unser obiges Motto rechtfertigen mag — alle heutigen Schachzeitungen, obwohl zum Teil von Kräften ersten Ranges geleitet, genügen den Ansprüchen, die das Schachpublikum an sie stellt, an sie zu stellen berechtigt ist, nur in ziemlich geringem Masse. Diese Ueberzeugung haben wir im

Front page of the first issue, from the author's collection

By Way of Introduction

Motto: *"The better is the enemy of good."*

> For decades, chess life everywhere has been on a rapidly upward trend, which has recently increased significantly in intensity. All signs point to the fact that it has not yet reached its peak. Fifty years ago, an international tournament, a competition between outstanding masters, was an event that the chess world benefited from for years. And today! Each of the last few years has brought several top-class tournaments, world championship matches and a number of other highly exciting events. A golden age has dawned for the chess enthusiast, and he may jubilantly exclaim: "O century, what a joy it is to live in you!"
>
> Parallel to the enormous increase in chess play, there has understandably been a hothouse-like growth of chess literature, and, among other things, the number of specialist periodicals, both in Germany and abroad, is not small. And yet we dare to go public with the founding of a new chess organ? We dare because we don't think we are daring anything! Namely — and hereby we come to the point that justifies our motto above — all of

> today's chess magazines, though some are run by talents of the first order, meet only to a fairly small extent the demands that the chess public places on them, and is entitled to place on them. We have gained this conviction more and more over years of personal contact with chess circles in all countries. The chess magazine that really corresponds to the ideal of the true, avid chess lover, the knowledgeable connoisseur, does not yet exist, but is really needed. If we had had the slightest doubt about this, it would have disappeared in view of the lively interest, we might almost say the enthusiasm, with which the mere confidential mention of our intended founding of this new magazine was greeted in so many quarters. Our undertaking, this child that has only just seen the light of day, is already in the fortunate position of having, to our knowledge, a larger number of subscribers for the first year than any chess magazine has ever been able to boast.

Mieses said that *Die Schachwelt* would strive to become an "ideal chess magazine," such as did not then exist. The fault, he said, was not any lack of goodwill or ability on the part of current chess editors, but that "the current flood of chess events is bringing to light such a wealth of material, valuable but often difficult to process," a flood that could not be handled by a single editor, or even two, as was the case with most magazines. Thus *Die Schachwelt* would have four, all of them experienced masters.

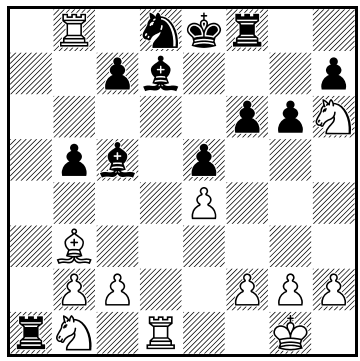
Furthermore, he wrote, "an essential further step must be taken: we need allies in the fight, we must strive to acquire capable contributors. Not just a few; no, all masters, all strong amateurs, as long as they have a literary bent, should occasionally write for our paper. But we can only address this request to them if we first offer them the natural equivalent for their activity, namely a proper fee. Every work is worth its reward. This is the healthy trend of our time, and *Die Schachwelt* will adhere strictly to this principle. Woe to the paper that depends on free contributions!". Which, apparently, most did at that time.

Die Schachwelt came out twice monthly, usually around the 15th and 30th, with the occasional extra, for example during the San Sebastián 1911 tournament. An annual subscription cost 12 marks for Germany or Austria-Hungary, 13 marks for other countries. The full 1911 edition ran to 400 pages, the 1912 to 384, an average of about 16 pages per issue. The pages, on high-quality glossy paper, were 5¾ x 8¾ inches (14.6 x 22.23 cm). Our bound copy of the two-year run is still, after more than a hundred years, in very good condition, with no yellowing or decomposition.

The first year's content consisted of annotated games (roughly 50%), chess news from around the world (20%), problems and studies (15%), opening theory (6%), and book reviews (3%). The remaining six percent was a mix of letters from readers, editorials, corrections to annotations and problem solutions (seldom seen in other magazines!), the occasional poem, and advertising.

The game annotations tended to feature more depth and accuracy than those of the *DSZ* or *WSZ*, especially those by Tarrasch (and he did the lion's share). An example:

Game 85: Duras-Rubinstein, San Sebastián 1912, position after 20...♖a7-a1:



21.♗g8? The losing move, but one would not know it from the *DSZ*, which made no comment. In *Die Schachwelt*, Tarrasch correctly pointed out it was an error and that White would have been safe after 21.♔f1 △22.♔e2=. Play continued **21...♗a7 22.♖xd8+** If 22.♖a8 ♗xf2+. **22...♔xd8 23.♗xh7 ♔c8** and **0–1, 56**. In another case, Tarrasch's discussion of a correspondence game between the Riga and Moscow clubs, played December 1909 to February 1911, ran to nearly seven pages, covering both the opening (1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c4 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.g3, a hot topic at the time) and the middle game in great depth.

As Mieses promised, many other "guest annotators" appeared, among them Burn, Leonhardt, E. Cohn, Nimzowitsch, Teichmann, Spielmann, Hoffer, Przepiórka, Carls, Behting, Alapin, Malkin, and even Emanuel Lasker occasionally.

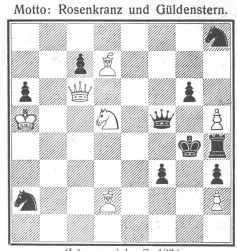
Die Schachwelt covered the most important tournaments and matches of 1911: San Sebastián (of course, but including the concurrent amateur tournament), Karlsbad (Teichmann's great triumph), Köln (Cologne), Hamburg, St. Petersburg (Russian Amateur Championship), and the matches Marshall-Leonhardt, Spielmann-Alapin, and Schlechter-Tarrasch. Also events of mainly local or regional interest, *e.g.* the Bavarian and Saxony Federation Congresses, and the Berlin-Vienna telegraphic team match. Even a full page on chess in Morocco!

There were several articles on openings. In the first issue Tarrasch began a series on "The Openings in the Latest Janowski-Lasker Match," and Mieses annotated a game from the 1910 Spielmann-Tartakower match, a Caro-Kann, in a manner designed to explain the opening to inexperienced players. In a June issue Tarrasch looked at "die russische Partie," *i.e.* the Petroff, in detail.

There was ample material for lovers of problems and studies, and an issue without any was rare. The magazine ran problem tournaments, where readers submitted their own compositions, which were judged by Mieses and von Gottschall. Two 1911 first-prize winners are featured on the next page.

It was customary in those days for a problem to have a motto, a phrase or saying that somehow related to the position or solution. "Rosenkranz and Güldenstern" are of course characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; "Vis major" is Latin for "greater force." Solutions in the endnotes.[51]

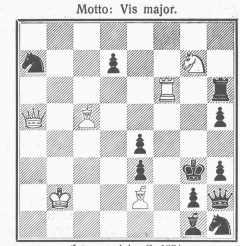
A. Zweizüger.
I. Preis.
Motto: Rosenkranz und Güldenstern.



(Lösung siehe S. 189.)

Ein feiner Einleitungszug, der allerdings nicht sehr fern liegt, da durch ihn die Fesselung des nach f6 strebenden Springers aufgehoben wird. Die äusserst geschickte Konstruktion und Variantenbildung macht das Problem trotz der erwähnten Schwäche zu einem sehr wertvollen Zweizüger.

B. Dreizüger.
I. Preis.
Motto: Vis major.



(Lösung siehe S. 188.)

Ein sehr interessanter Dreizüger, der eine Anzahl hübscher Gedanken in sich vereinigt; dabei ist die Lösung fein und nicht ohne Originalität. Die etwas gedrückte Aufstellung der schwarzen Steine wirkt eher pikant als störend, da sie sich dem ganzen Milieu anpasst.

Die Schachwelt's reporting of news from around the chess world was largely superior to that of the *DSZ* or *WSZ*. In particular, it began covering the title match negotiations between Capablanca and Lasker earlier, and in much greater detail. As early as its 12 September 1911 issue, even before Capablanca had sent Lasker a formal challenge,[52] it reported that the Club Argentino de Ajedrez in Buenos Aires had offered to host such a match in 1912. Then in the next issue it reported how Lasker reacted to this in his column in the *Pester Loyd*, a German-language Budapest newspaper:

> Meanwhile, Capablanca has returned from Buenos Aires and brings the news from there that the club would like to arrange a World Championship match between the young Cuban and me next year. Presumably nothing will come of it, because the difficulties that stand in the way of such an undertaking are too many. If the match took place in a Spanish-speaking part of the world, national sympathies would be most strongly in favor of Capablanca. In this case, the person who wants the world championship would have the advantage of choosing the environment for the fight, not the one who holds the title. That would undoubtedly be a strong advantage for a young man who is only 23 years old and who, although the world knows his good sides, does not yet know him well enough.
>
> This may all be true, but: "The other only hears 'no' to everything."[53]

One can see that Lasker's tone was somewhat unfriendly from the start. The 9 December 1911 issue devoted almost four pages to the terms and conditions he proposed for the match. Part of Capablanca's reply, written 20 December, was published in the 30 December issue. He said "I take exception to some of the conditions you have seen fit to impose … Frankly, these conditions came as a great surprise to me." Capablanca's response went on even longer than Lasker's list, but Mieses summarized the main points of disagreement succinctly:

> Capablanca explains that he had to reject a time limit of 12 moves per hour, as well as adjourning a game after 2½ hours. He further demands that in

every case the winner should be the one with the better score after the thirty games have been completed.

That last was in reply to Lasker's stipulation that if the match went to a full 30 games (*i.e.* was not decided sooner by one player winning six games), and the score in decisive games was either 1-0, 2-1, or 3-2, the match was to be declared drawn, the incumbent then retaining the title, even if he was on the short end of that score.

The issue of 9 January 1912 printed a nearly two-page letter from Lasker in which he took great umbrage at Capablanca's reply. It concluded "I am obligated to accept anyone's challenge, no matter who it comes from. But I have certain rights that protect me. Capablanca did not respect them, and now has to give to dignified aspirants for the world championship the place he usurped." Mieses added "There is therefore no hope, until further notice, that the match will take place." It would not until 1921.

Die Schachwelt had a short run, alas, only two years, but during that brief span it was quite possibly the best chess magazine in the world.


Kleines

Lehrbuch des Schachspiels.

Von

Jean Dufresne.

Siebente verbesserte Auflage.

Herausgegeben

von

Jacques Mieses.

Leipzig.

Druck und Verlag von Philipp Reclam jun.

Title page of the 1901 Lehrbuch

Editing the *Kleines Lehrbuch*

In 1911, the eighth edition of the *Kleines Lehrbuch des Schachspiels* (Little Textbook of Chess Play) was released. This was the second under Mieses' editorship. Not to be confused with the *Lehrbuch des Schachspiels* of 1894 (see Chapter III), this was a revised, expanded version of an important, widely respected book that had already seen six editions under the editorship of Jean Dufresne (1829-1893). After Dufresne's death, Mieses edited every edition from 1901 through 1937. It was an all-around instructive manual, something like a combination of *Chess for Dummies*, *Modern Chess Openings*, *Fundamental Chess Endings*, and *Chess Informant*. We take a brief look at the 7th and 8th editions.

As the photo next page shows, the term "little" was apt. The book was quite small, about 4 by 5½ inches (11 by 14 cm), fitting easily into the palm of one hand. This never changed through all the editions we have seen (the latest being the 27th, 1979).

Index of Players

(numbers refer to games)

Abrahams, Gerald 134, 135
Alapin, Semyon 6
Albin, Adolf 10, 40, 62
Barasz, Zsigmond 89
Bauer, Johann Hermann 2
Berger, Johann 47, 59, 151
Bernstein, Ossip 66, 86
Blackburne, Joseph Henry 24, 64, 147
Bogoljubov, Efim 96, 110, 119
Breyer, Gyula 97
Capablanca, José Raoul 86
Caro, Horatio 28
Charousek, Rudolf 27
Chigorin, Mikhail 30, 35, 43, 57, 71
Christoffel, Martin 136
Cohn, Erich 148
Cross, Alfred 124
Didier, M. 144
Duchamp, Marcel 116
Duras, Oldrich 65, 85, 150
Ellinger, Maurice 131
Engert, Immo 112
Euwe, Max 98, 104
Fajarowicz, Sammi 115
Finn, Julius 44
Forgács, Leo 80
Golombek, Harry 132
Gossip, George 7
Grob, Henry 109, 122
Hakansson, Arthur 100
Harmonist, Max 5
Harnik, 126
Helling, Karl 121
Janowski, David 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 32, 58, 75, 146
Kann, Marcus 1
Klein, Ernst 127
Lasker, Emanuel 25, 145
Lehmann, H. 125
Lenton, Alfred 123
Leonhardt, Paul Saladin 51, 52, 53
Lilienthal, Andor 117
Lipke, Paul 16
List, Paul 157
Lohmann 141
Luckis, Marcos 130
Makovetz, Gyula 11
Marco, Georg 33
Marshall, Frank 36, 37, 38, 70, 77, 78, 111
Martinolich, Giovanni 61
Mason, James 34, 154
Menchik, Vera 133
Møller, Jørgen 56
N.N. 13, 93, 94, 139, 142, 143
Napier, William 48, 49, 50
Nimzowitsch, Aron 67, 87, 95
Olland, Adolf Georg 72
Paulsen, Louis 8
Paulsen, Wilfried 9
Perlis, Julius 69
Pillsbury, Harry 41, 42, 45
Przepiórka, David 118
Reggio, Arturo 39
Rellstab, Ludwig 120
Réti, Richard 101
Rubinstein, Akiva 74, 83, 85, 87, 88, 92, 105
Schallop, Emil 12
Schlechter, Carl 31, 63, 79
Schories, Georg 114
Seitz, Jakob Adolf 113
Sergeant, Edward Guthlac 137
Smith, Stephen Francis 29
Solomon, J. 128
Spielmann, Rudolf 84, 156
Süchting, Hugo 55
Tarrasch, Siegbert 3, 4, 15, 90, 91
Tartakower, Savielly 73
Teichmann, Richard 23, 46, 106
Thomas, George Alan 103
Van Foreest, Dirk 138
Vidmar, Milan 60, 82
von Bardeleben, Curt 54, 76, 155
von Gottschall, Hermann 107
von Scheve, Theodor 149, 153
Walbrodt, Karl 14
Wiarda, Jakob 108
Wood, Baruch 129
Yates, Fred Dewhirst 99, 102
Znosko-Borovsky, Eugene 68, 81