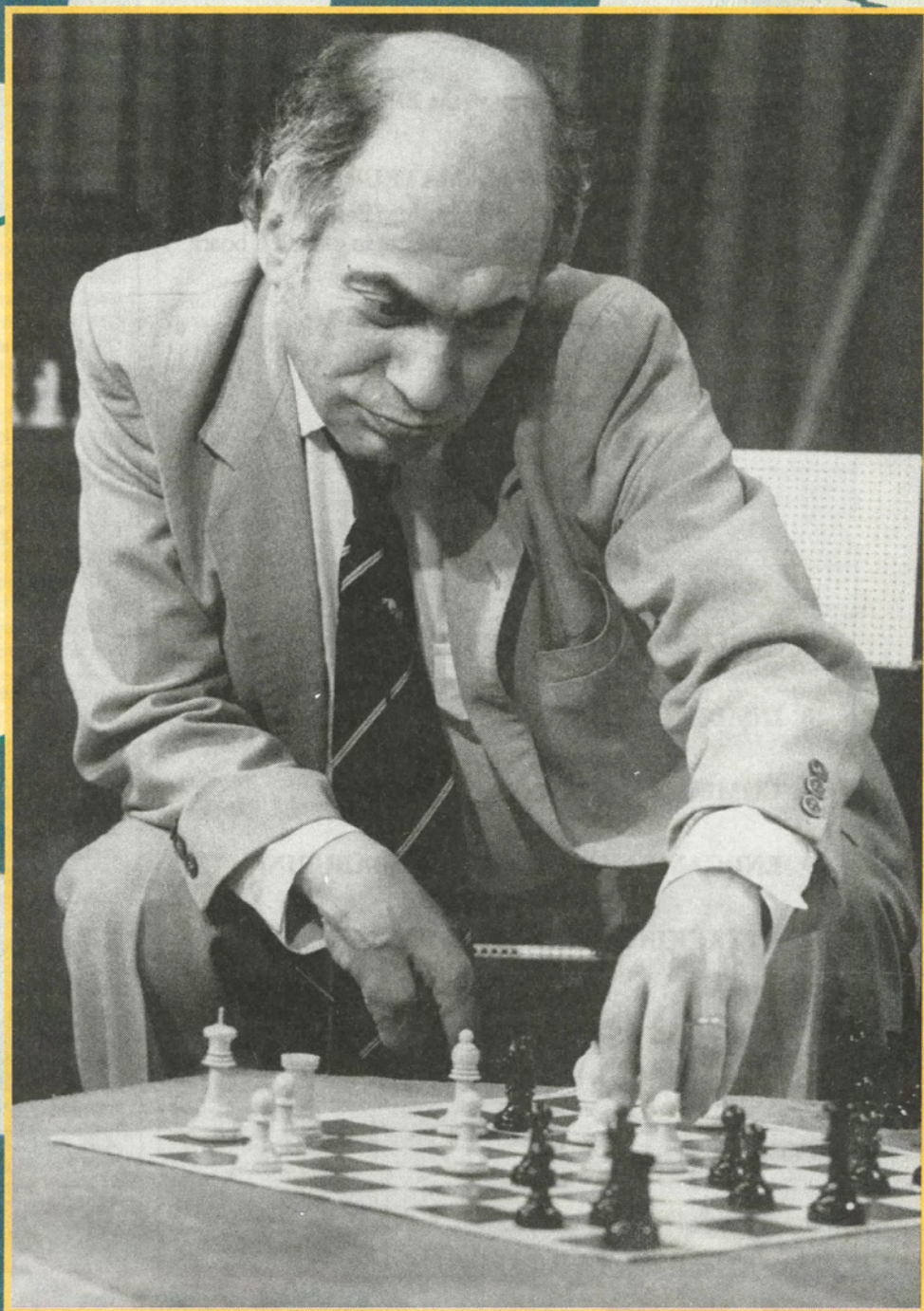




# INSIDE CHESS

**Mikhail  
Tal on  
Combinational  
Chess**





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## Publisher's Message

Now that we have moved to a monthly rather than a biweekly format for the magazine, I am hard-pressed to keep up with the mercurial changes in the world of chess. In the space of a month, anything can happen, and seems to do so with regularity.

Since FIDE successfully organized its 1997 World Championship, PCA Champion Garry Kasparov has come under increasing pressure to defend his version of the title again. Garry's refusal to accept a spot in the recent FIDE Groningen Semifinals, combined with a complete absence of any semblance of a PCA qualifying system, has eclipsed Kasparov from the championship limelight. Garry's own recent admissions of PCA failings presaged a "stunning" announcement and it finally came at the 1998 Linares tournament.

At a press conference before the tournament, Garry proudly announced the formation of something called the World Chess Council. This would have been a bit more newsworthy if the WCC was not, at least, the fourth such organization that Garry has founded. Long-suffering chess fans may recall the Grandmasters Association (GMA), the European Chess Union (ECU) and the Professional Chess Association (PCA). Each of these august organizations was supposed solve all the chess world's prob-

lems and the first two are dead, while the PCA's life-support system is about to be unplugged.

So now that Garry wears the World Chess Council crown, what can we expect? Well, the word "council" is defined as: "a) An assembly of persons called together for consultation, deliberation, or discussion. b) A body of people elected or appointed to serve in an administrative, legislative, or advisory capacity. c) An assembly of church officials and theologians convened for regulating matters of doctrine and discipline." The first two definitions don't completely fit and the third definitely doesn't, but let's not quibble. Who are the WCC members and to which particularly onerous problems in the chess world are they addressing themselves?

The WCC is a "council" of two, Garry Kasparov and Linares chess organizer Luis Rentero, and they have called themselves together to legislate and advise on the World Chess Championship. Kasparov and the PCA found the whole Candidates process quite tedious and expensive; so the WCC cut the Gordian knot and named Anand and Kramnik as the finalists, the winner to meet Garry for the title.

So why my mirth and expectation of an early WCC collapse? Why, the principals themselves! Luis Rentero is famous for fining players and, in general, making a big nuisance of himself. His blacklisting of players in the past has

earned him the enmity of many. Both Kasparov and Karpov have publicly feuded with Rentero to the point of mutual embarrassment. Now these two fiery, temperamental personalities are to work together? I think not! The first run-in between these two volatile principals should be the last.

The second bump is that Anand has rejected Kasparov's offer. Anand had signed a FIDE World Championship contract stating that if he reached the quarterfinal or beyond, he would not play in any other (competing) World Championship event. While Garry and Luis believe (probably correctly) that the contract is unenforceable, Anand chooses to keep his word.

Perhaps Garry should skip the qualifying step and simply challenge the unfettered Kramnik? Well, there is rather big problem here also. I'm sure the highly-principled Vladimir Kramnik would be extremely unhappy about being invited to a WCC Final. It would be a cruel irony if Vladimir were to abandon his principles now and become a "councilman" after refusing to play in Groningen because of Karpov's favorable seeding. But if I'm right about the combustible nature of the WCC, Vladimir will be spared the dilemma.

As I said, I'm concerned about *Inside Chess* only coming out once a month now. I'm worried that these guys can change the rules of engagement faster than I can put out magazines!

Yasser Seirawan

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# Reflections Before the Sacrificial Altar

**M**ikhail Tal (1936-1992) was a great player and a magnificent journalist. He was also a rare World Champion who gladly shared the secrets of his successes and failures in many articles and annotations. The following article is one of his little-known masterpieces, in which he discusses different aspects of tactics and combinational thinking. In my opinion, this is a classic work, which every chess player should know. — IM Nikolay Minev.

*Translated from Shakhmaty (Riga), #3-8/1966, and adapted for Inside Chess by IM Nikolay Minev. Unannotated moves have been added in some cases in order to complete the game scores. The next three editions of Dr. Minev's column will be devoted to the article by Mikhail Tal. — Editor*

by GM Mikhail Tal

**L**ong, long ago, some unknown wise man (perhaps Brahmin, plowman or warrior) invented the marvelous game of chess which has had many mighty patrons over the years. In the course of time, the patrons have changed quickly, while the rules of the game have changed slowly, but one patroness still remains and, it seems, is alive in the heart of every chess connoisseur. We are speaking of the chess Goddess with the original and very pleasant name, Caissa. Her kin — Pegasus, the Muses, Psyche, Hephaestus — also have many devotees, devotees ready to make sacrifices, because they all patronize the arts, and the arts demand sacrifices.

Caissa also demands sacrifices, and her servants are generous. Faced with the demanding altar of the Goddess, some give up hope of sporting successes and opt for an unclouded and pleasant life. However, many other of Caissa's unknown servants offer her sacrifices literally all their lives, from childhood to a ripe old age, experiencing with the same passion, every strong move and

every foolish mistake. It is true, their names are not mentioned in chess magazines, but the chess would not exist without these unknown soldiers.

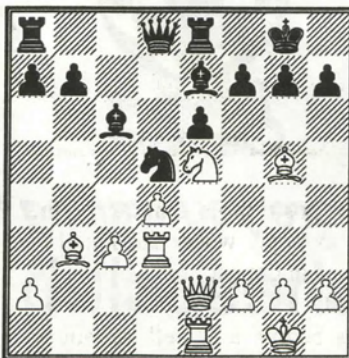
The most widespread offering at Caissa's altar is the sacrifice of the chess board's inhabitants. How many Rooks, Knights, Bishops, and pawns are laid at Caissa's sacrificial altar each year! Queens also share the common fate — from time to time, players voluntarily part with their strongest piece.

Of course, the ultimate fate of these sacrifices differs. Caissa gratefully accepts some of the sacrifices and the player secures the recognition of his or her contemporaries and the admiration of their descendants. But not always, sometimes the Goddess rejects the sacrifice (I think, today this is described as "an incorrect sacrifice"). What is to be done then, but to wait for the next holiday, and it is not far away, because every game can, and must, be a holiday.

It so happens that I have often been before Caissa's sacrificial altar and I have given many sacrifices to her. Some were successful, some not very successful at all. I want to share some thoughts on the subject with my more or less experienced, more or less successful, colleagues. The reader will not find formulae here to confidently predict the fate of a given sacrifice. These are simply reflections, reflections and nothing more.

GM Mikhail Tal—Amateur

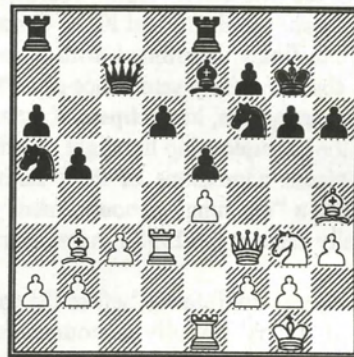
*Riga (simul) 1958*



17. ♖xf7! ♔xf7 18. ♚xc6+ ♔f8 19. ♙c1 ♙f6 20. ♙a3+ ♚e7 21. ♚e4 ♔e8 22. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 23. d5 ♙b5 24. d6 ♙xd3 25. d7+ ♚xd7 26. ♚g8 mate

GM Mikhail Tal—Amateur

*Tbilisi (simul) 1965*



20. ♖f5+! ♙xf5 21. ♚xf5 ♚d8 22. ♚g3+ ♔f8 23. ♙e6 ♖b7 24. ♚e3 ♖c5 25. ♚g8+! ♔xg8 26. ♚g6+ ♔h8 27. ♚xh6+ ♖h7 28. ♙f5 1-0

## Deceptive Tranquillity

**T**he aggressiveness of chess players shows itself in different ways. Some, from the first moves, bring home to the opponent what calamities he should expect and every blow is preceded by very active play. Others are quiet for a time, modestly developing the pieces and it seems they don't intend anything menacing at all. The position is drowsy, the opponent is at rest and, as a rule, in such situations a subtly prepared explosion proves to be exceptionally effective. Here is one of such examples of deceptive tranquillity.

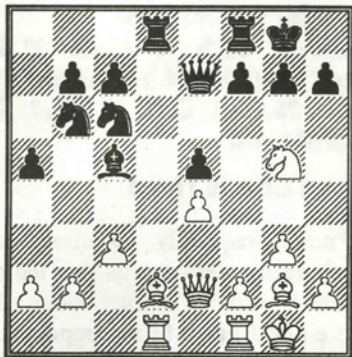
*French C00*

GM Evgeny Vasiukov

GM Mikhail Tal

*Baku, USSR Championship 1961*

1. e4 e6 2. d3 d5 3. ♖d2 ♖f6 4. ♖gf3 ♖c6 5. g3 dxe4 6. dxe4 ♙c5 7. ♙g2 e5 8. O-O O-O 9. ♚e2 ♙e6 10. c3 a5 11. ♖c4 ♖d7 12. ♖g5 ♙xc4 13. ♚xc4 ♚e7 14. ♙d2 ♚ad8 15. ♚ad1 ♖b6 16. ♚e2

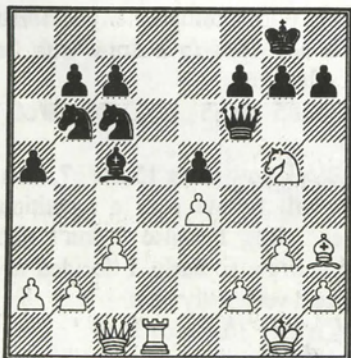


Considering the position, it would seem that the game will continue in a calm, positional way, with no possibility for combinations. This is not true. When I began to think over my sixteenth move, I automatically gave attention to the continuation 16...♖xd2, but very quickly I realized that this move attains nothing for Black, because after 17.♗xd2 ♖d8 18.♗c1 ♖xd1 19.♖xd1 he remains simply without an Exchange.

Now for something in the field of imagination. It turns out that if White's Bishop is not on g2, but on h3, the combination is feasible! I thought for forty minutes. At first, my intention was to continue 16...♖d7, provoking my opponent to play 17.♗h3 (with tempo!), but I decided that this would be too cheap. White can continue simply 17.♗c1, retaining a small positional advantage. So I played ...  
16...♖d6

And now, to my astonishment, Vasiukov quickly answered with ...  
17.♗h3

... which was immediately followed by:  
17...♖xd2! 18.♗xd2 ♖d8 19.♗c1 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♗f6!



The point of Black's combination. Now the threat is not only against the f2-pawn, but, first and foremost, 21...h6. That's where the negative qualities of the move 17.♗h3 are shown.

21.♗f5

The Exchange can be saved by 21.♗g2, but then after 21...♗xf2+ 22.♖h1 ♗e3 23.♖h3 ♗xc1 24.♖xf2 ♗xb2, Black has an advantageous endgame.

21...g6 22.b4 axb4 23.cxb4 ♗e7 24.♗d7 ♖d4

Black, continuing to pay attention to the King's wing, doesn't want to simplify the position and declines 24...♗xg5 25.♗xc6 ♗xc1 26.♖xc1 bxc6 27.♖xc6 ♗d6. In the game, Black achieved an easily winning position, but blundered in time trouble, and the game ended in a draw.

25.♗xc7 ♗d8 26.♗xb7 ♗xg5 27.♗e8 ♗f6 28.a4 ♖f8 29.♗b5 ♗d6 30.♖c1? ♖xa4 31.♖g2 ♖b6 32.♖c5 ♗f6? 33.♗b8! ♗f3+ 34.♖g1 ♗d1+ 35.♖g2 ♗f3+ 36.♖g1 ♖e6 37.♖c6 ♗d1+ 38.♖g2 ♗d4 39.♖d6 ♗xe4+ 40.♖g1 ♗b1+ 41.♖g2 Draw

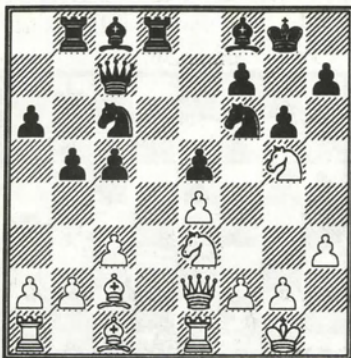
Ruy Lopez Chigorin C98

GM Mikhail Tal

GM Yuri Averbakh

Riga, USSR Team Championship 1961

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♖f6 5.O-O ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 O-O 9.h3 ♖a5 10.♗c2 c5 11.d4 ♗c7 12.♖bd2 ♖c6 13.dxc5 dxc5 14.♖f1 ♖d8 15.♗e2 g6 16.♖e3 ♖b8 17.♖g5 ♗f8



This position is similar to the previous example where the Knight on g5 was also in danger.

18.♗f3

This begins a forced variation. The Knight on g5 is deprived of all retreats. Naturally, White had taken this into

consideration and had decided to sacrifice the piece.

18...♗g7 19.♖d5 ♗d6 20.♗e3 h6

Black is heading toward White's intention. It is clear that in accepting the sacrifice of the Knight, he must take into consideration the possibility of a strong attack, because White's strike forces hold menacing positions and an explosion can occur at any moment.

21.♖xf6+ ♗xf6

Less misfortune was caused by 21...♗xf6, even if White also wins a pawn in this case.

22.♖ad1

The last undeveloped piece gets into play.

22...♗e7 23.♗xc5! ♖xd1 24.♖xd1 ♗xc5 25.♗xf6 hxg5 26.♗b3

Now Black cannot simultaneously repel all the threats.

26...♖b7 27.♗xg6+ ♖f8 28.♗h6+ 1-0

### The Board Has 64 Squares!

Very often chess players suffer from a peculiar short-sightedness. It can frequently be observed that each of the partners, engrossed in thought, stares only at "his" sector of the board, forgetting that any of the 64 squares can be decisive. I will try to illustrate this reflection with two examples.

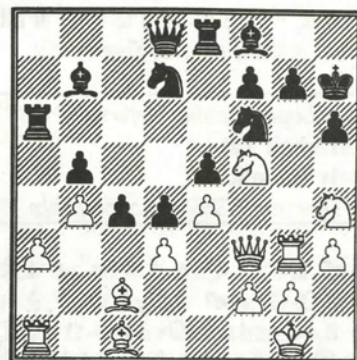
Ruy Lopez Zaitsev C92

GM Mikhail Tal

GM Boris Spassky

Tbilisi (m-11) 1965

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♖f6 5.O-O ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 O-O 8.h3 ♗b7 9.d3 d6 10.c3 ♖b8 11.♖bd2 ♖bd7 12.♖f1 ♖c5 13.♗c2 ♖e8 14.♖g3 ♗f8 15.b4 ♖cd7 16.♗b3 a5 17.a3 axb4 18.cxb4 h6 19.♖f5 d5 20.♖3h4 c5 21.♖e3 c4 22.♖g3 ♖h7 23.♗c2 d4 24.♗f3 ♖a6



Even a cursory assessment of the position shows that the mass of White pieces on the King's wing looks impressive: Queen, Rook, both Knights, dark-squared Bishop. Nevertheless, that's not enough for a successful attack. During the last few moves, as if bewitched, I looked steadily at the h6- and g7-squares, scrutinizing all the possible and impossible sacrifices: ♖xh6, ♘xh6, ♖xg7+, ♘xg7, ♕g5. But, as it turned out, it is impossible for Black's position to be crushed without the light-squared Bishop. A review of the kingside sector forced me to the conclusion that there are no better places for my pieces than those on which they now stand. That's why I sacrificed a piece:

25. ♘h6 gxh6 26. ♘f5

But Spassky's strongest answer ...

26... ♖a8!

... caused an immediate crisis, which proved to be fatal for White.

27. ♘h6 ♕xh6 28. ♖f5+ ♔h8 29. ♕xh6 ♖g8 30. ♕g5 ♖e8 31. f4 ♘h7 32. ♕h4 ♖xg3 33. ♕xg3 ♖f6 34. ♖g4 ♖g6 35. ♖h4 exf4 36. ♖xf4 f6 37. ♕f2 cxd3 38. ♕xd3 ♘e5 39. ♕f1 ♘g5 40. ♖h1 ♘xe4 41. ♖c1 0-1

Now let's return to the position in the diagram. The basis of Black's strategy was to restrict the activity of the opponent's light-squared Bishop. Here was White's last chance to slice through the Gordian knot by continuing 25.a4! followed by 26. ♖b1. By so doing, after the elimination of the phalanx of Black pawns, White's attacking forces will receive a very essential reinforcement — the light-squared Bishop. Of course, White cannot contend that he will absolutely win in this case, but it is clear that 25.a4! was the strongest continuation. To find it, White needed to look at all 64 squares, instead of only five or six.

*Ruy Lopez Steinitz Deferred C87*  
**GM Mikhail Tal**  
**Anatoly Bannik**  
*Yerevan, USSR Championship 1962*

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕b5 a6 4. ♕a4 ♘f6 5. O-O ♕e7 6. ♖e1 d6 7. ♕xc6+ bxc6 8. d4 exd4 9. ♖xd4 O-O 10. ♘c3 c5 11. ♖d3 ♕b7 12. ♕f4 ♘h5 13. ♕e3 ♕f6 14. ♘d5



Black answered White's last move after one-and-a-half hour's thought! The Ukrainian Master entered into a forced variation.

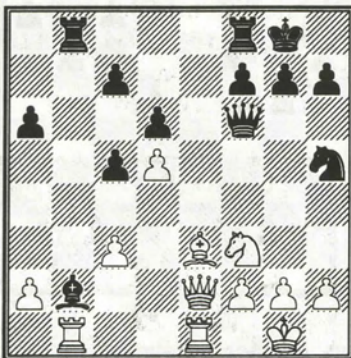
14... ♕xb2 15. ♖ab1 ♕xd5 16. exd5 ♖b8

The further course of the game shows that 16... ♕f6 17. g4 ♖d7 18. h3 g6 19. gxh5 ♖xh3 was better, though White's chances are also preferable in this case.

Now Black's attention is directed mainly to his Bishop and, of course, to the Knight, which are in awkward positions. Calculating quite far, Bannik reaches the conclusion that the piece can be saved. But, however strange it may seem, the principal defect in Black's position is an insufficient defense of the King. Because of this circumstance, White's decisive combination becomes feasible.

17. c3 ♖f6

Black has counted only on the natural 18. ♕d2, which can be answered by 18... ♖g6. But the game continuation was: 18. ♖e2!



Now Black is compelled to capture the poisoned pawn.

18... ♕xc3 19. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 20. ♕g5

Because of the mating threat ♖e8+, Black must give up the Queen. An echo

variation is 18... ♕xc3 19. ♕c1! with ideas similar to the game.

20... ♕xe1 21. ♕xf6 ♘xf6 22. ♖xe1 ♘xd5 23. g3 h6 24. ♖e4 ♘f6 25. ♖c6 ♖b1+ 26. ♘g2 ♖b2 27. ♖xc7 ♖xa2 28. ♖b8+ 1-0

## When Life Is Hard

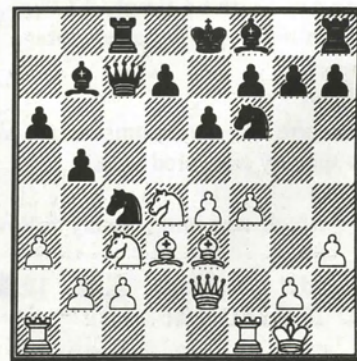
Quite frequently positions arise which easily convince us that the natural and objectively correct continuations give a good game to the opponent. In such situations, quite a lot depends on the character of the player. Some refuse to ignore their chess consciences and choose the objectively best continuation. Others consider that they should keep the opponent in a state of constant turmoil and often employ sharp continuations, even if they are not certain of correctness. That's how combinations arise which we will call "combinations out of a hard life."

*Sicilian Paulsen B48*

**Jon Kristinsson**  
**GM Mikhail Tal**

*Reykjavik 1964*

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 a6 5. ♘c3 ♖c7 6. ♕d3 ♘f6 7. O-O ♘c6 8. ♕e3 b5 9. a3 ♕b7 10. ♖e2 ♘e5 11. h3 ♖c8 12. f4 ♘c4



Here White initiated a combination, which will lead to a draw with "normal" play.

13. ♘dx5 axb5 14. ♘xb5 ♖c6 15. ♘a7

If Black now plays 15... ♖c7, then 16. ♘b5 will follow with a repetition of moves. But, because I don't like to make a draw so early, I decided to undertake a very risky plan.

15... ♘xe3!? 16. ♘xc6 ♕c5

16... ♖xc6 would be weaker because of 17. ♖f3. For the time being, Black has

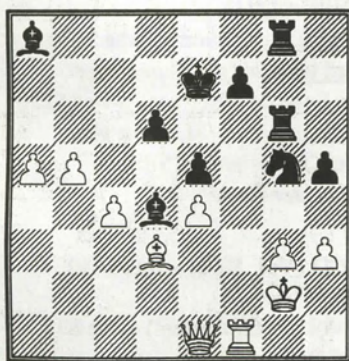
only two minor pieces for the Queen, but almost all his forces are mobilized. If Black succeeds in winning the e4-pawn, then his offensive will become dangerous. For example, if 17.♖a5, then 17...♗xe4 is possible, as well as 17...♗a8 (I especially liked this move), with the intention of capturing on e4 with the Knight. In this latter case, Black's light-squared Bishop will have a very important role in subsequent play.

It seems that the only move which brings the correctness of Black's conception into question is 17.b4 ♗b6 18.c4!, and if 18...♗xf1+, then 19.c5. But even then, Black will have enough compensation for the Queen. Kristinsson did not find this continuation and gave back my material, with interest.

17.♖h2 ♗xf1+ 18.♖xf1 ♗xc6

White's pawns on the queenside are not dangerous, because Black's attack develops faster. The remaining fight is also interesting.

19.c4 d6 20.♖c2 ♗d4 21.b4 e5 22.f5 ♖e7 23.a4 g6 24.b5 ♗a8 25.♖e2 ♗cg8 26.a5 h5 27.g3 ♖h7 28.♖g2 ♖hg7 29. fxg6 ♖xg6 30.♖f3 ♗h7 31.♖e1 ♗g5 32.♖f1



32...♗xe4! 33.♗xe4 ♖xg3+ 34.♖h2 ♖g2+ 35.♖h1 ♖g1+ 36.♖xg1 ♖xg1+ 37.♖xg1 ♗xe4+ 0-1

King's Indian Classical E96

GM Svetozar Gligoric

GM Mikhail Tal

Leipzig Olympiad 1960

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗f3 O-O 6.♗e2 e5 7.O-O ♗bd7 8.♖e1 ♖e8 9.♗f1 c6 10.♖b1 exd4 11.♗xd4 ♗c5 12.f3 a5 13.♗e3 ♖c7 14.♖d2 ♗d7 15.b3 ♖ad8 16.a3 ♖c8 17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 ♗e6 19.♖bc1 ♖e7 20.♖cd1 ♗d7 21.♗xe6 ♖xe6 22.♗a4 ♗e5 23.♗g5



The result of the opening is clearly in White's favor. He possesses greater space and it is difficult to find possibilities for Black counterplay. White's attack threatens to become irresistible in a few moves. Knowing how inflexibly and with what clear purpose the Yugoslavian Grandmaster realizes positional advantages, I was sure that passive defense equalled defeat. That's why I began to fish in troubled waters. I succeeded in sharpening the situation and taking the fight to my opponent. I must confess that a considerable role was played by mutual time trouble.

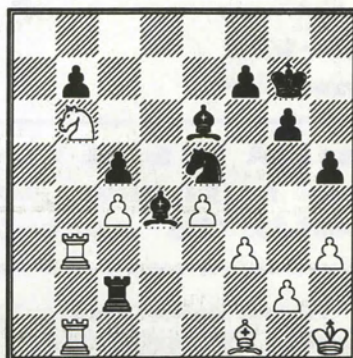
23...c5! 24.bxc5 dxc5 25.♗xd8 ♗d4+ 26.♖h1 ♗xd8

Black has no obvious compensation for the sacrificed Exchange, but White was unable to find the most effective continuations and Black managed to achieve counterplay.

27.♗c3 ♗e5 28.♗d5 ♖g7 29.♖b1 ♖d6 30.♖b3 ♖d7 31.♖eb1 ♖a6 32.♗b6 ♖c6 33.h3 h5 34.♗d5 ♖a4 35.♖b6 ♖e8 36.♖c2 ♖a3 37.♖b3 ♖a4 38.♗b6 ♖a2 39.♗xa4

Gligoric does not fall into the trap. If 39.♖b2?, then 39...♖xb3 and Black is already out of any troubles.

39...♖xc2 40.♗b6 ♗e6



The game was adjourned here. Analysis showed that only after 41.f4! does White maintain good winning chances. Instead, Gligoric sealed another, more natural-looking move.

41.♗d5 g5!

Now, in my opinion, Black's initiative promises him a draw.

42.♖xb7 ♗xh3 43.gxh3 ♗xf3 44.♗g2 ♗h4 45.♖f1 ♖xg2 46.♖xf7+ ♖h6 47.♖b1 g4 48.♗f4 ♖a2 49.♖b6+ ♖g5 50.♗e6+ ♖g6 51.♗d8+ ♖g5 52.♗e6+ ♖g6 Draw

53.♖f1 g3 54.♗xd4+ ♖h7 55.♖b7+ ♖g6 and White must force a draw.

## Diving off the Springboard

“How many moves can a Grandmaster calculate?” “Please, show your longest combination.” “Did the author of the combination take into consideration all the possibilities?” I am often asked such questions.

First of all, let me stress that combinations are different, not only in type, but also in spirit. There are more or less complicated, forced combinations which can be calculated till mate or till the achievement of a very substantial advantage. In other words, combinations which are designed for a victory. That such a combination can be very complicated is shown, for example, by the famous game Botvinnik-Capablanca, in which the main variation runs to fifteen moves. But we cannot always make so long a trip. Every chess player is familiar with the situation in which you become aware of an attractive combination, but are unable to calculate the consequences in full. Often such attempts are without success and consume a great deal of energy. That is why experienced players trust their feelings and terminate the calculation at some definite position. If they like this position, then they look at it as a kind of “springboard” for the further conduct of the fight.

This happened in my game with Keres in the 1959 Bled Candidates tournament, but, unfortunately, it turned out that my faith in the jump from the springboard was misplaced.



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Black's position is preferable. White's King's wing has weaknesses and, on occasion, Black's Bishop threatens to enter play with effect. In other words, terrible tactical clouds are hanging over White's position. Here the moves 28... ♖c6 or 28... ♗e7 look attractive, but they don't force events enough. However, Black has an order of moves with which he achieves a very dangerous attack by force.

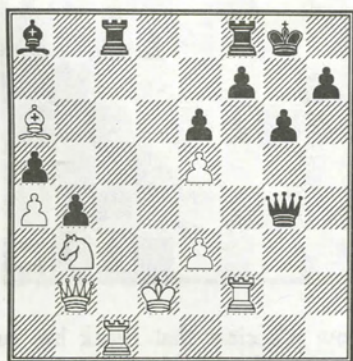
28... ♖xe3! 29. ♖c1

The only move. 29. ♗xc8 and 29. dxe3 are weak because of 29... ♗c6!

29... ♗e7! 30. dxe3

It is clear that in case of 30. ♗xc8 or 30. ♖xc8, 30... ♗xh4 will follow.

30... ♗xh4 31. ♖f1 ♗h3+ 32. ♖e2 ♗xg4+ 33. ♖d2



I had reached this position in my preliminary calculations. I have three pawns for the piece and White's King is in a bad position. (Translator's note: This is the springboard position — see Tal's note to the diagram above.)

33... ♖fd8+ 34. ♖d4 ♗g3 35. ♖f4 ♖xc1?

Here I blundered and allowed White good possibilities for counterplay. Instead, the immediate 35... ♗g2+ 36. ♗e2 ♗d5 gains a fourth pawn and retains excellent prospects for a strong attack. In playing 35... ♖xc1?, I overlooked White's 38th move.

36. ♖xc1 ♗g2+ 37. ♗e2 ♗d5 38. ♖c7! ♖d7 39. ♖c4

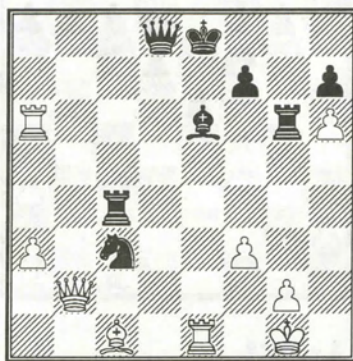
After the exchange of Queens, Keres demonstrated in masterly fashion that, in this situation, the piece is stronger than three pawns.

39... ♖g7 40. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 41. ♗b5 ♖c7 42. e4 ♗a8 43. ♖e3 ♖c3+ 44. ♗d3 b3 45. ♖f1 ♖c5 46. ♖xb3 ♖xe5 47. ♖c1 ♖h5 48. ♖c7 ♖f6 49. ♖c5 ♖e5 50. ♖d7+ ♖d6 51. ♖a7 e5 52. ♖xa8 ♖xd7 53. ♖xa5 ♖h3+ 54. ♖d2 ♖h2+ 55. ♖c3 h5 56. ♖a7+ ♖c6 57. ♖xf7 g5 58. a5 g4 59. a6 ♖a2 60. ♗c4 ♖a1 61. ♖f1 ♖xf1 62. ♗xf1 h4 63. ♗e2 g3 64. ♗f1 1-0

### Psychological Boomerang

Often we come across this type of statement in chess books and magazines: "Taking advantage of the time trouble of his strong opponent, Player A sharpened the game to the limit, sacrificing a pawn (or a piece). In his confusion, B didn't find the right defensive plan and the attack succeeded." I must make the candid admission that more than once I have succeeded in such situations.

GM Mikhail Tal—GM David Bronstein  
Kiev, USSR Championship 1964-65



In the first round of 32nd USSR Championship, my game with Bronstein reached the position shown in the diagram above and my opponent had only a few minutes for his last eight moves. I considered, practically speaking, Black's situation to be very difficult and not only from a practical point of view. The

Black King is under a crossfire of all the White heavy pieces and my dark-squared Bishop is also ready to enter the fray. Further, this Bishop has no Black counterpart and the Black pieces are in unenviable positions. Yet, Bronstein still found a great defensive possibility.

32... ♖e7!! 33. ♖a7+ ♖f6

As it turned out, the King is safer going ahead than staying at home on the eighth rank. The King is not lonely on f6 for he is in a crowd of friends. If my opponent had more time at his disposal, I would have probably chosen 34. ♗d2 or 34. ♗e3, maintaining sufficient initiative for the piece. I don't know how events would have developed further, but this is not the topic of our conversation. White's striving to add oil to the fire further heated an already very tense situation. Bronstein began to carry out a sharp, and as it appeared to him, a forced, variation.

34. ♖e4!? ♗d1+ 35. ♖h2 ♖xe4 36. ♖xc3+

I was confident here that 36... ♗d4 was the only move, and after 37. ♖xd4+ ♖xd4 38. ♗b2 ♖xh6+ 39. ♖g1 ♖h4 40. ♖a4 ♖e5 41. g3 the game must end in a draw. A draw seemed to me the most normal result of a game in which the attack (so I was convinced) and the defense (this I still wanted to verify) were at high levels. Suddenly, Bronstein answered with another move:

36... ♖e5

In my preliminary calculations, I had considered Black's last move to be losing and had prepared the following variation: 37. ♖a5 ♗d6 38. ♗f4 ♗d5 39. ♖a6! ♖xh6+ 40. ♖g1 ♗xa6 41. ♖xe5+ and 42. ♖g5 mate. But I enjoyed only a few seconds basking in the glory of the successful hunter when my intentions burst like a soap bubble. In calculating the beautiful variation, I forgot a small detail — I also have a King. Black can easily take advantage of this circumstance by playing 37... ♗e2! with an instant win.

37. ♗f4

This is what is left at my disposal, but it was refuted with the same prosaic continuation.

37... ♗e2

White resigned after few moves. 38. ♗xe5+ ♗xe5+ 39. ♗xe5+ ♖xe5 40. ♖a5+ ♖d4 41. ♖h5 ♗d5 42. ♖h3 ♖5 0-1

Thus White's psychological weapon boomeranged against him. ■

Part II next issue