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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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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.

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.

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.

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 column[17] 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 *triomphe*, *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]

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

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.

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 ♦-cards, they should—depending on the distribution—be able to take at least 4 tricks in ♦ (namely when the suit will have no more disproportionate distribution than 4:3 for EW). The ♣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 ♦-distribution blocks EW, because East has the ♦A only as a singleton. He is thus forced to take the first trick but cannot play ♦ again. How can East let his partner make a trick in time to ensure that he makes his winning ♦-tricks? East realizes that with ♣A he will automatically get to lead if the declarer, who must collect ♣-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 ♣-tricks, 4 ♠-tricks, and ♥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 ♣, he can be just in time to lead with it. On the other hand, if West only commands a high card in ♠, 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 ♥; in this suit, ♥A and ♥J are visible in North. In order to blow the contract, it is not enough that West holds ♥Q, because it can be taken anytime by North with ♥A. Hence, it would be useless to lead a low ♥. East must take special measures: the ♥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 ♥A. However, East has now to sacrifice his ♥K in the hope that West has ♥Q. The trick goes to North, who has a choice: If the declarer decides to take the ♥K with ♥A, East will soon afterwards take the ♣A and then lead a low ♥. This is aimed towards the now promoted ♥Q of West, which takes the trick, after which this player cashes all his ♦-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 ♥, six in ♦ and one in ♣).

If, however, the declarer decides not to take the ♥K—a true Trojan horse—and instead plays ♥J (thereby "ducking" or "holding up" the ace), then East continues the attack in ♥ in the next trick. ♥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!

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.

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.

Emanuel Lasker
Carl Schlechter[1]
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 ♗×f3 9 ♕×f3, since White players have eventually found ways of keeping at least some pressure thanks to the bishop pair.

7 … ♘a6[3] **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*.

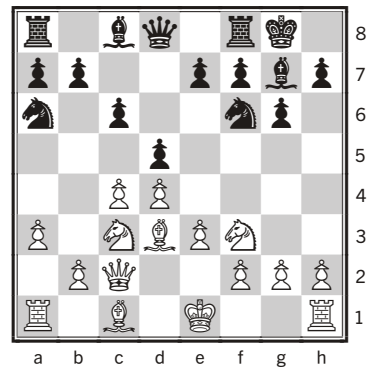
3 This was the move order given in most of the contemporary sources, also by Lasker in *Pester Lloyd*, 11 February 1910, and *New York Evening Post*, 23 March 1910. Nevertheless, Lasker's annotations in *Ost und West*, April 1910, cols. 235–238, as well as in *Tidskrift för Schack*, May 1910, pp. 117f., had a different move order: 7 … d×c4 8 ♗×c4 b5 9 ♗d3 ♘a6 10 a3 etc.—*eds*.

8 … d×c4

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.

#1 after 8 a2–a3



9 ♗×c4 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 ♗×a6 Black has 10 … c×d4 11 ♗×b7 ♗×b7, 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 0–0 offers Black good play on the dark squares: 11 … ♗×f3 12 g×f3 ♘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? ♘×e4 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 … ♕×d6 14 h3 ♗h5 15 g4 ♘×g4 16 h×g4 ♗×g4, with three pawns for a knight and better development.) 12 0–0 ♖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, but it is quite interesting. Engines are somewhat skeptical, but in practical play things become very double-edged.

M. Euwe – A. Alekhine
4th match game, The Hague 1935
after 15 ♘g1–e2

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

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.

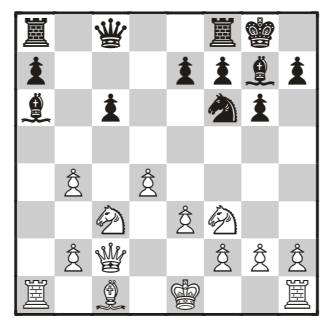
Referring to this game Max Euwe's biographer wrote that "Alekhine combined like a devil."[4] This is, unfortunately, what Schlechter failed to do in the most important game of his life.

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

11 ♘a4

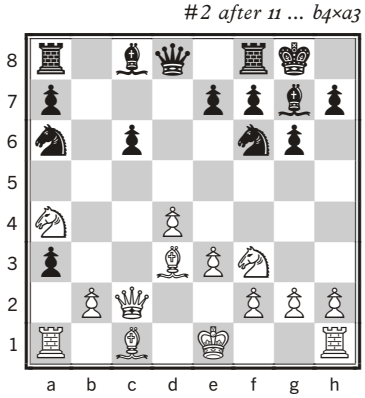
Lasker avoids the complications arising from 11 ♗×a6 ♗×a6 (11 … b×c3 would allow Black to gradually equalize, but this is not what Schlechter was aiming for; for instance, 12 ♗×c8 c×b2 13 ♗×b2 ♖×c8 14 0–0 ♘d7 15 ♖ac1 c5 16 d5 ♗×b2 17 ♕×b2 ♕b6 18 ♕e2 c4 19 ♖×c4 ♕b5 20 ♖c2 ♕×d5, with a probable draw.) 12 a×b4 ♕c8. [#]

after 12 … ♕d8–c8 (analysis)



According to Vladimir Vuković, 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! 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 Münninghoff, *Euwe*, p. 118.

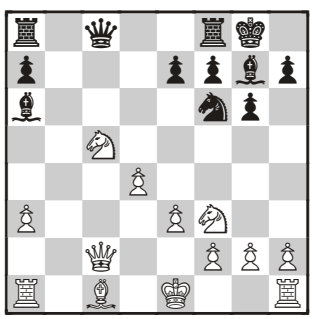
12 … ♗b7?!

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.

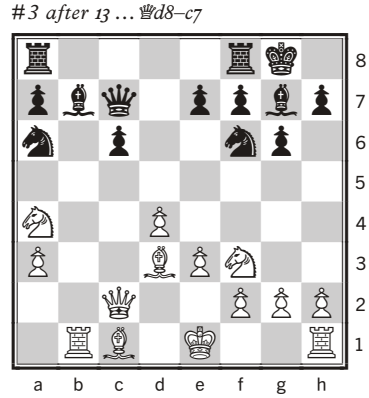
With his last move Schlechter planned to play … c6–c5 under better circumstances, but the further course of the game shows that the bishop does not manage to create threats along the long diagonal, and it soon returns to c8 to defend the kingside.

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.