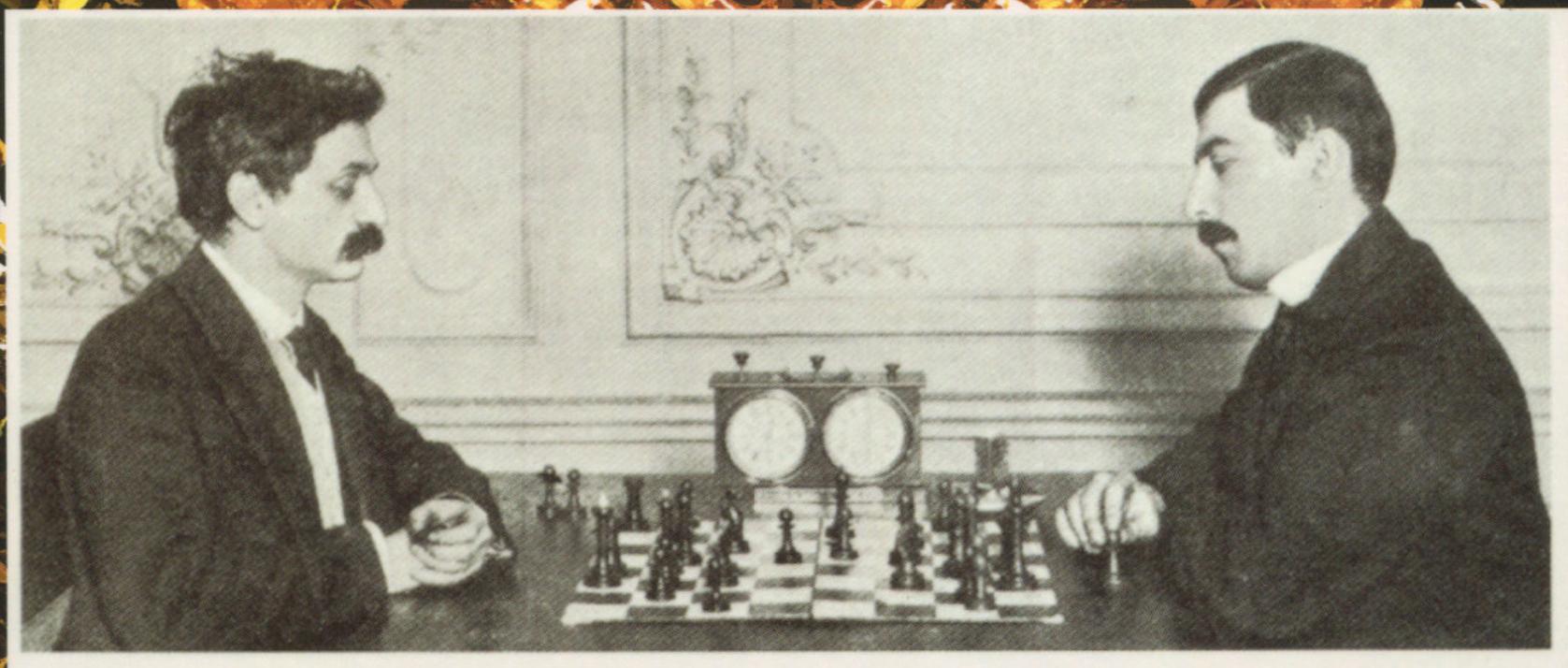


The Life & Games of
Akiva Rubinstein
Volume 1: Uncrowned King



by John Donaldson and Nikolay Minev

2nd Edition, Revised and Enlarged

Akiva Rubinstein

Volume 1

Uncrowned King

IM John Donaldson

IM Nikolay Minev



2018
Russell Enterprises, Inc.
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Akiva Rubinstein
Volume 1: Uncrowned King

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This edition is fondly dedicated to the memory of

Nikolay Minev (1931-2017)

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Introduction to the Second Edition

This year marks the one hundred and first anniversary of Akiva Rubinstein's receiving the master title at Barmen. As we noted in the first edition, it might seem a bit strange to devote so much attention to a player from so long ago. The answer, we believe, is that in many ways Rubinstein was a truly modern player and his games are still very relevant today. This is an opinion not only held by us. Two recent books concerned with some of the greatest players of all time, *My Great Predecessors: Part 1* by Garry Kasparov and *Learn from the Legends* by Mihail Marin both devote chapters to Rubinstein. Among today's top players Boris Gelfand has mentioned on more than one occasion that the great Akiva is one of his heroes and it is no accident that he and many other top players readily contributed to Viktor Glatman's Akiba Rubinstein's Chess Academy.

The eleven years that have past since the publication of our first volume on Rubinstein have yielded some new information. Nick Pope deserves credit for the biggest find, unearthing five new games of Rubinstein's from the mammoth Ostende 1906 tournament. There are several events from Rubinstein's early career, where quite a few games are missing, but Ostende 1906 is the only one played in Western Europe. Thanks to Nick's find we now have 19 games and fragments of the 30 Rubinstein played in the Belgian port. It's likely that this is how things will stand as Tony Gillam has spent many years researching Ostende 1906 and recently published a book on the event.

Alan Smith has found the remaining moves of Rubinstein-Nimzovitch, San Sebastian 1912, and Per Skjoldager has discovered the actual position of the adjourned game Rubinstein-Nimzovitch, Vilna 1912, along with comments about the game from Nimzo's column in the Rigaer Rundschau. These comments from the original German have been translated by Hans Baruch and give a good idea of what happened in the game (we have no actual moves).

It's likely that scraps of information like these are precisely the new discoveries researchers will make in the future. Most primary source material has been thoroughly picked over, the exception being some years of the *Neue Lodzer Zeitung*. The chess column of this paper, which appeared in the Saturday supplement, is potentially a gold mine of material regarding Rubinstein's early career. In theory libraries in Poland plus those in major cities of the Russian empire like Helsinki, Riga, Moscow and St. Petersburg would all be likely repositories but one hundred years and many upheavals have made it a hard to find item.

One bright spot for Rubinstein fans looking for new material comes from the generosity of Simon Constam. Several decades ago Simon did a tremendous amount of research on Rubinstein. He spent time in Holland and Belgian at various libraries and befriended Rubinstein's sons Jonas and Sammy. In this book you will find some of his discoveries from Akiva's tour of Holland in 1920 in-

cluding a fragment from the Rotterdam Quadrangular and some very interesting non-tournament efforts.

A curiosity from the early 20th century was the practice of strong local players taking every chance they had to play a visiting hero. This might mean the local would not only face the master in a tournament but also in consultation games and even simulms! One of the players to do this in Holland, Rubinstein's countrymen Samuel Factor, would soon move to the United States where he won several Western Chess Association championships. Volume 2 will have many more of Simon's finds including over a dozen pictures from the Rubinstein family archives and numerous training games between Akiva and his younger son Sammy.

Note that we have changed the spelling of Rubinstein's name for this volume from Akiba to Akiva, as it appears in Jewish sources.

We are currently working on the second edition of volume two, which will cover the remainder of Rubinstein's life (1921-1961) and would love to hear from readers who might have any of the following games:

Gothenburg 1920/21: Appelberg.

Triberg 1921: Selezniev-R (rd 1), Selezniev-R (rd 4) and Spielmann-R (rd 6)

Hastings 1922/23: Yates and E.G. Sergeant. .

Southport 1924: Wright.

London 1925: both games with Thomas.

Lodz 1927: Kohn, Blass and Friedman.

Warsaw 1927: Makarczyk

Chicago 1928: any from the simul R most likely gave in mid-March.

Rogaska Slatina 1929: Maróczy, and Honlinger.

Prague Olympiad 1931: Erdelyi, E. Steiner, and Grunfeld.

Antwerp 1931: Baert, De Mey, and Perquin.

Warsaw (?) 1931: match with H. Friedman ???

Please contact us at imwjd@aol.com or John Donaldson - Mechanics' Chess Director, 57 Post Street, Room 408, San Francisco, CA 94104.

We would like to thank all of our helpers from the previous edition and add Ricardo Alvarez Cela, Simon Constam, Nathan Divinsky, Mark Donlan, Anthony Gillam, Burt Hochberg, Peter Holmgren, Holly Lee, Jason Luchan, Michael Negele, Nick Pope, Per Skjoldager, Alan Smith and Edward Winter for this volume.

This book is fondly dedicated to Holly Lee and Elena Minev.

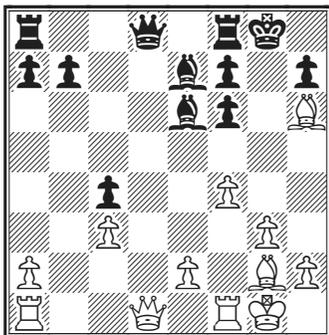
John Donaldson
Nikolay Minev
August 2006

(229) *Rubinstein - Perlis*

St. Petersburg (5) 1909
Queen's Gambit Tarrasch [D34]

Notes by Lasker.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 c5 3.c4 e6 4.c×d5
e×d5 5.♗c3 ♘c6 6.g3 c4 7.♙g2
♙e7 8.0-0 ♗f6 9.♗e5 0-0 10.♙g5
♙e6 11.f4 ♗×e5!? 12.d×e5 d4
13.e×f6 g×f6 14.♙h6 d×c3
15.b×c3



Much better than 15.♙×f8?!, because of
15...c×b2 16.♙×e7 ♗×e7 17.♙b1 c3
18.♗c2 ♗c5+ 19.♗h1 ♙d8 20.♙bd1
♙×d1 21.♙×d1 ♙×a2, threatening
...♙b3 or ...b5-b4-b3.

15...♗b6+ 16.♗h1

[Authors' note: Recent theory consid-
ers 16.e3 as better and leading to a
slight edge for White.]

16...♙fd8 17.♗c2 ♙d5

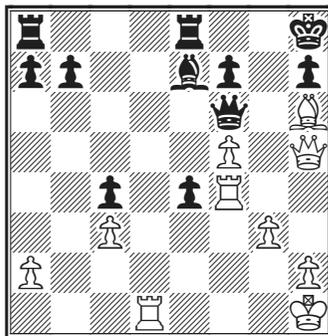
Premature. First Black should play
17...f5, and if 18.♙ab1 ♗e3, threaten-
ing 19...♙d2.

18.e4 ♙c6 19.♗e2 f5 20.♙ad1
♙e8

After 20...♙×e4 21.♙×e4 ♗×h6

22.♙×b7 ♙×d1 23.♙×d1 ♙d8 24.♙d5,
White stands better.

21.♗h5 ♙×e4 22.♙×e4 f×e4 23.f5
♗f6 24.♙f4 ♗h8



25.♙g4?

White's only wrong move. Here
25.♙h4 could decide the game quickly.
If 25...♙ad8 then 26.♙df1, and if
25...e3 26.♙g5 ♗×f5 27.♙f6+!

25...♙g8 26.♙e3 ♙×g4 27.♙d4
♙g7 28.♙×f6 ♙×f6 29.♗e2 ♙e8
30.♗×c4 e3 31.♙e1 ♙gg8 32.♗g2
♙e7 33.♗f3 ♙ge8 34.♙e2 b6
35.h4 h6 36.♗c6 ♗g7 37.♗g4
h5+ 38.♗f4, Draw

[Time: White 2:32, Black 2:30]

(230) *Burn - Rubinstein*

St. Petersburg (6) 1909
Ruy Lopez [C77]

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♗c6 3.♙b5 a6
4.♙a4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 ♙e7 6.d3 b5
7.♙b3 d6 8.a4 ♙b8 9.a×b5 a×b5
10.0-0 0-0 11.♗e2 ♙e6 12.c3 d5
13.♗g3 d×e4 14.d×e4 ♗×d1
15.♙×d1 ♙c4 16.♙e1 ♙c5
17.♙c2 ♗d7 18.♗f5 ♙a8 19.♙e3
g6 20.♗h6+ ♗g7 21.♗g4 ♙×e3
22.♗×e3 ♗b6 23.b3 ♙e6 24.♗g5

**b4 25. ♖×e6+ f×e6 26. c×b4 ♗×b4
27. ♖ec1, Draw**

[Time: White 1:28, Black 1:38]

(231) *Rubinstein - Mieses*

St. Petersburg (7) 1909

Queen's Gambit Declined [D06]

Notes by Lasker (L), Kmoch (K) and Razuvaev (R).

**1. d4 d5 2. ♗f3 c5 3. c4 ♗f6 4. c×d5
c×d4 5. ♗×d4 ♗×d5 6. e4 ♗f6**

(L) Here interesting is 6... ♗c7?! The continuation 7. ♗f4 ♗d7 8. ♗c4 e5 9. ♖b3 ♖f6 10. ♗g3 leads to a complicated game. [Authors' note: Lasker's 7... ♗d7 is missing in recent theory.]

7. ♗c3 e5?!

(L) If 7... a6 8. e5 ♗d5 9. e6 and Black stands worse. The right move here is 7... e6.

8. ♗b5+!

(K) If 8. ♗db4, not 8... ♖×d1+, but 8... a6!, which is strong.

8... ♗d7 9. ♗f5 ♗c6?!

(R) Relatively best was 9... ♗×b5. Now Black's position grows weaker as White achieves control over the black squares.

**10. ♗d6+ ♗×d6 11. ♖×d6 ♖e7
12. ♖×e7+ ♗×e7**

(R) After 12... ♖×e7 13. ♗g5 ♗e6 14. f4 White has a strong attack.

**13. ♗e3 a6 14. ♗×d7+ ♗×d7
15. ♖e2 ♖c8 16. ♖hd1 ♗c5
17. ♗×c5**

(L) Better was to keep the bishop; e.g., 17. ♖ac1 ♗e6 18. ♗d5, etc.

(R) A surprising decision. White exchanges his strong bishop. Rubinstein's idea will be clear after the 19th move.

17... ♖×c5 18. ♖ac1 ♗c6

(L) A mistake. Black should play 18... ♖c7 followed by ...0-0.

(K) 18...0-0 would be insufficient because of 19. ♗d5, but the text move is also inferior. Relatively best appears to be 18... ♖c7. White, however, replies with 19. ♗a4! and retains the advantage; e.g., 19... ♗c6 20. ♖e3 0-0 21. ♗c5 ♗d4 22. ♗d3, etc. The exchange 17. ♗×c5 was therefore well considered! [Authors' note: In the book *Akiva Rubinstein*, Razuvaev mistakenly claims that Kmoch's analysis belongs to Lasker.]

19. ♖d5! ♖×d5

(L) If 19... ♖c4 20. b3 ♖d4 21. ♖e3 f6 22. ♗a4 ♖e7 23. ♗c5 ♖×d5 (23... ♖b8 24. ♗×b7) 24. exd5 ♗b4 25. d6+ with advantage for White.

**20. exd5 ♗d4+ 21. ♖d3 ♖e7 22. f4!
f6 23. f×e5 f×e5 24. ♖e4 ♖d6
25. ♖f1 ♖c8 26. ♖f7 ♖c4 27. ♖d3
♖b4 28. ♖×g7**

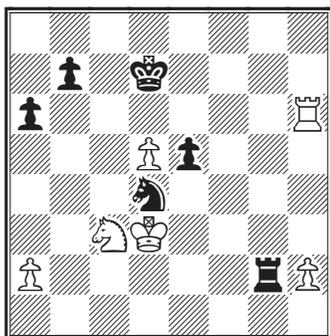
(L) Also strong was 28. b3 and White will win at least a pawn; for example, 28... ♗b5 29. ♗×b5! ♖×b5 30. ♖×g7 h5 31. ♖h7 ♖×d5+ 32. ♖e3.

**28... ♖×b2 29. ♖×h7 ♖×g2
30. ♖h6+ ♖d7**

(K) The king must retreat: 30... ♖c5 31. ♗e4+ and if 31... ♖×d5 32. ♖d6+

mate. And upon any other moves the advance of the d-pawn wins.

31.♖h7+ ♔d6 32.♖h6+ ♔d7



33.♗e4!

(R) An excellent move! Black's king will be repulsed on the last rank.

33...♖×a2 34.♖h7+ ♔d8 35.d6 ♗b5

(L) The threat was ♗f6 and ♖h8+ mate.

36.♗c4 ♖a5

(R) Stopping 37.♗d5 with 37...♗c7+!, but not 37...♗d4+? 38.♗c5 b6 39.♖h8+ mate.

37.♖×b7 ♗a3+ 38.♗b4! ♖b5+ 39.♖×b5 ♗×b5 40.♗c5 ♔d7 41.♗d5 a5 42.♗c5+ ♗e8 43.♗×e5 ♗f7 44.♗b7, 1-0

[Time: White 3:00, Black 3:00]

(L) Rubinstein conducted the endgame of this game with monumental mastery.

(K) An elegant example of the power of centralization, by virtue of which White obtains an irresistible attack even in the ending.

(232) *Duras - Rubinstein*

St. Petersburg (8) 1909

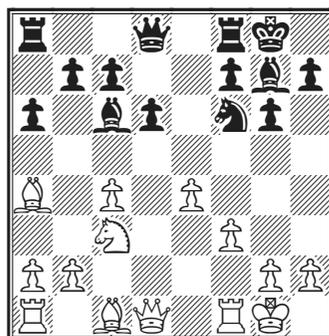
Ruy Lopez [C77]

Notes by Lasker (L), Kmoch (K) and Razuvaev (R).

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.d3 d6 6.c4

(K) A favorite variation of the Czechoslovak master. With it he has won many successes.

6...g6 7.d4 e×d4 8.♗×d4 ♗d7 9.♗×c6 ♗×c6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.♗c3 0-0 12.f3



(L) A waste of time, which is possible to be avoided with 12.♗×c6. In this case, after 12...b×c6 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗e3 White wins an important tempo for ♗d2 or ♗d4.

(R) Lasker's criticism of 12.f3 is not justified. After 14...♖e8 Black achieves an excellent game; for example, 15.f3 d5!, or 15.♖c2 (15.♖d3) 15...♗g4! with initiative. In my opinion, 12.f3 is not a bad move.

12...♗d7 13.♗e3 ♗e5

(R) Possible was 13...♖e8.

14. ♖b3

(L) 14.c5 will be refuted by 14...♗c4 15.♖e2 ♗xe3 16.♖xe3 ♗xa4 17.♗xa4 dxc5 and ...♗d4. Also unsatisfactory is 14.♖e2 because of 14...♗xa4 15.♗xa4 ♗xc4 16.♖xc4 b5.

(R) Not much better is 14.♗d4: 14...♗xa4 15.♗xa4 b5! 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♗c3 b4 18.♗d5 c6 19.♗e3 c5 20.♗xe5 ♗xe5, or 19.♗xb4 c5 20.♗xe5 ♗xe5 21.♗d3 ♗d4+ 22.♖h1 c4 23.♗b4 ♗xb2, and in both cases Black has the advantage.

14...b6 15.f4?!

(R) Now the pawn e4 will be weak. Better was 15.♗d4 ♖e8 16.♗d5 with approximately equal chances.

15...♗d7 16.♗d4 ♗c5 17.♗xg7

(R) After this move Black takes control of the diagonal a1-h8. Worthy of consideration was 17.♗c2 a5 18.♖d2 ♖h4, and Black is only slightly better.

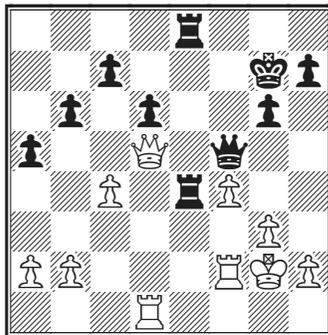
17...♖xg7 18.♗c2 a5 19.♖g4

(L) Much better was 19.♖d4+, and if 19...♖f6 20.♖xf6+ ♖xf6 21.♖ae1, and White can hope for a draw. If Black tries to avoid the exchange of the queens, then White's queen will have a dominant position.

19...♗xe4! 20.♗xe4 f5 21.♖f3 fxe4 22.♗xe4 ♗xe4 23.♖xe4 ♖f6! 24.♖f2?!

(R) Black wants to take the e-file. This should be prevented by playing 24.♖c6 (shown by Yusupov). Possible is the following variation: 24...♖d4+ 25.♖h1

♖c5 26.♖xc5 bxc5 27.♖ae1 ♖ae8 28.g3 g5!? 29.fxg5 ♖xf1+ 30.♖xf1 ♖e2.

24...♖ae8 25.♖d5 ♖f5 26.♖d1 ♖e4 27.g3 ♖fe8 28.♖g2**28...h5**

(L) Excellent! This threatens to eventually play ...h4 and ...♖e3.

29.b3 ♖e3 30.♖d4 ♖f6! 31.h3?

(L) This makes Black's task easier, but White already was lost. For example, 31.♖dd2 h4 32.♖xf5+ gxf5 33.♖f3 hxg3 34.hxg3 ♖e2+ 35.♖f2 ♖xd2 36.♖xd2 ♖e3, to be followed by ...a4-a3 and final posting of the rook at b2.

31...h4! 32.♖xf5+

(R) If 32.g4 ♖g3+ 33.♖h2 ♖xd5 34.cxd5 ♖ee3 and Black wins.

32...gxf5 33.gxh4 ♖g8+ 34.♖f1 ♖xh3 35.♖e2 ♖e8+ 36.♖d2 ♖xh4 37.♖g2 ♖eh8 38.♖c3 ♖h3+ 39.♖d3 ♖xd3+ 40.♖xd3 ♖h3+ 41.♖d4 ♖f3 42.♖d5 ♖xf4 43.♖c6 ♖g4 44.♖f2 ♖g7 45.♖d5 ♖e7 46.♖f1 ♖g5 47.♖g1+ ♖f4 48.a3 ♖f3 49.♖f1+ ♖g4 50.♖g1+ ♖h3 51.♖f1 ♖e5+ 52.♖c6 ♖g2