THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

Editor: Seán Coffey

Lothar Schmid 1928-2013

Lother Schmid, Chess Referee, ran the headline of his obituary in the New York Times, and indeed he enjoys a place of honour in chess history for his rôle as arbiter of three of the most interesting and highly charged world championship matches ever: Fischer-Spassky, Karpov-Korchnoi 1978, and Karpov-Kasparov 1986. He also had the distinction of assembling one of the world's great collections of chess books and periodicals, extending to over 50,000 items. And all this is before considering his strength as a player: one of the élite few to achieve the title of grandmaster in both over-the-board and correspondence play.

He played the French Winawer with both colours, and his games were innovative and well ahead of their time. This issue considers his three Winawer games of greatest historical interest.

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Schmid-L. Pedersen
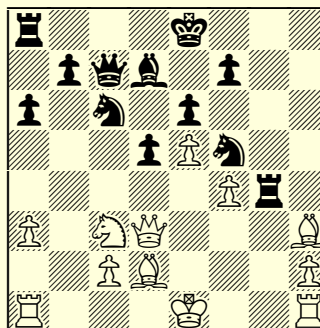**Max Blümich Memorial corr 1948-50**
dFV pp. 23-24 (Schwarz, citing Schmid)

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♕g4 cxd4 8 ♕xg7 ♖g8 9 ♕xh7 ♕c7 10 ♘e2 ♘bc6 11 f4 ♗d7 12 ♕d3 dxc3

    13 ♘xc3

The only try from early theory that continues to enjoy a good reputation. **Lilienthal-Levenfish, Moscow 1936** continued 13 … a6 14 ♖b1 ♖c8 15 ♗d2 ♘a5 and White won, though no other examples are known before the present game.

13	…	a6
14	♗d2	♘f5
15	g4!?	♖xg4

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    16 ♗h3(1)　　　　**♘xe5!**

This always-spectacular sacrifice has progressed to 'thematic' status based on its appearance in an abundance of exam-

ples. But in 1948 it was startlingly new: this seems to be the first example of … ♘xe5 in this form (the ♘c3 not being *en prise*) in a poisoned pawn Winawer.

17 fxe5   ♛xe5+
18 ♚f2!

Schwarz *dFV pp. 21-22 (game 10)* now quotes extensively from Schmid (original source unknown). 18 ♚f1?♗b5 and 18 ♛e2? ♖e4 lose quickly. After 18 ♚d1? ♖d4 19 ♛f3 ♘e3+ 20 ♚c1, Schmid's 20 … ♘c4 leads to no more than equality, but computers unearth the devastating 20 … ♖xd2!!∓∓: 21 ♚xd2 ♘c4+ 22 ♚d1 ♖c8 with a winning attack. **Frackowiak-Herrmann, Oberliga Nord N '01-'02 2002** continued 19 ♛e2 ♖e4 (*19 … ♘e3+ 20 ♚c1 ♖xd2!!∓∓*) 20 ♛f2 ♖c8? (*20 … ♘e3+ is still winning*) 21 ♗xf5± and 1-0, 26.

18 …   ♖d4
19 ♛e2   ♛f6
20 ♗xf5   ♛xf5+
21 ♚e1   ♖c8!

'With advantage to Black', Keres *FZ p. 133*. More accurate than 21 … ♛xc2? 22 ♖g1 (*22 ♛e3!?∞*) 22 … ♛h7 23 ♛f2 ♛h8± **Bánóczi-Bathory, E/359 National ½-final corr 1998** (1-0, 31).

22 ♖f1?

'!' Schmid, but this has a tactical flaw. White must instead try 22 ♛e3!, e.g. 22 … ♖cc4 23 ♖f1 ♛g6 24 ♛f3∞/∓.

22 …   ♛h7?

Schmid thought 22 … ♛xc2 gave Black a bad ending, analysing 23 ♛f2 ♖xd2 24 ♛xf7+ ♚d8 25 ♛f6+ ♚c7 26 ♛f4+ ♚b6 27 ♖b1+ ♚a7 28 ♛xd2 ♛xc3 29 ♖f7 '!' or 28 … ♖xc3 29 ♛xc2 ♖xc2 30 ♖h1 'when the h-pawn's march can hardly be prevented'. But this underestimates Black's centre:

30 … d4∓, e.g. 31 h4?! d3 32 ♖d1? ♗a4∓∓ or 31 ♖d1 e5∓; better 30 ♖f2=. On 28 … ♛xc3!, Schmid's 29 ♖f7 '!' favours Black after 29 … ♛e5+! ∞/∓; better 29 ♛xc3 ♖xc3∓. White should avoid this with 23 ♖c1, about =.

But Black has a clear path to advantage via the overlooked 22 … ♖xd2!, e.g. 23 ♚xd2 ♛g5+ 24 ♛e3 (*24 ♚d3?? d4∓∓*) 24 … ♛xe3+ 25 ♚xe3 ♖xc3+ 26 ♚d2 ♖h3∓.

23 ♛e5   ♖cc4

'?' Schmid: 'he pushes the attack too far and will soon regret he was not satisfied with 23 … ♛h4+! 24 ♛g3! ♛xg3+ with roughly equal chances.' This exaggerates: see below.

24 ♗e3   ♛h4+
25 ♖f2   ♖e4?

The losing error. Schmid gives the right way: 25 … f6! 26 ♛xf6 ♛xf6 27 ♖xf6 ♖h4, though as 'the last resort', with 'much poorer chances' than after 23 … ♛h4+. Instead it's a modest ±, as is the 23 … ♛h4+ option.

After the text White wins by force. The finish was 26 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 27 ♛b8+ ♚e7 28 ♚d2 ♖xe3 29 ♖xf7+! 1-0.

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Paoli-Schmid
Venice 1953 (3)
V53 pp. 29-30 (game 16) (Paoli)

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♛g4 cxd4 8 ♛xg7 ♖g8 9 ♛xh7 ♛c7
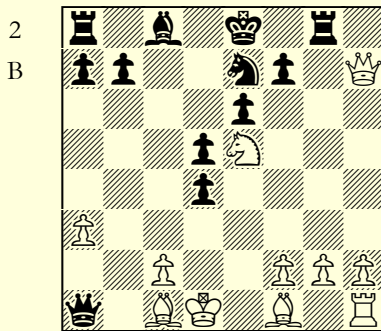
10 ♚d1

Euwe's suggestion, then new: this is only the third game known. Euwe's articles *Archives, 1 July* and *15 July 1952* don't specify the source of the idea but it must surely have been inspired by **Alexander-**

Botvinnik, Great Britain-USSR radio match 1946, where White achieved a tremendous position with f4 and ♘f3-g5 (and indeed ♔d1).

10 …   ♘d7!?

Schmid's startling innovation, which initially led Euwe to deem 10 ♔d1 'practically refuted' *Archives 7/8, 1954* (via Niessen *Chess Notes 6850*). The point is that 11 f4? may now be met by 11 … ♘c5!∓. White is forced into a speculative exchange sacrifice.

11 ♘f3   ♘xe5!?
12 ♗f4   ♕xc3
13 ♘xe5   ♕xa1+
14 ♗c1(2)

14 …   ♖f8!

Much better than the later try 14 … d3?.

15 ♗b5+?!

Keres *FZ p. 132* later gave 15 ♗d3!. But the text is much better than its reputation.

15 …   ♘c6!
16 ♖e1

'?' Moles *MLW p. 40*, but best. After 16 ♘xc6 the response 16 … ♗d7!, later repeatedly rediscovered, was already given by Paoli *V53 pp. 29-30*. Then Euwe *Archives XVII/3/17, 12f/30, 25 Feb. 1968* gave 17 ♘xa7 ♖xa7 18 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 19 ♕g7 but Black stands much better, e.g. **Andexel-Bernal Caamaño, ICCF World Cup corr 1992** (0-1, 30) (cf. also Moles). Instead 17 ♘e5!? ♗xb5 18 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 19 ♕g8+ ♔e7 20 ♕xa8 is complicated (cf. Pederson *tMLF p. 155*) but probably in Black's favour after 20 … ♗c6!, ∓/∓.

16 …   ♖b8

Schmid gave 16 … a6 17 ♗a4 d3!∓∓ (so cited by Paoli in the tournament book, probably from the *post-mortem*) and ever since this has been taken as refuting White's play. Fuchs' 17 … ♗d7 *Deutsche Schachzeitung 117/2, Feb. 1968, pp. 65-66* is also strong.

But White has much better in 17 ♗xc6+! bxc6 18 ♕h4!. After 18 … ♗d7 19 ♕f6 ♕c3? 20 ♗g5 ♕xa3 21 ♔e2∓∓ Black is move-bound. After 19 … c5 White has a draw with 20 ♘c6/ ♘g6/♘xf7, but no more.

17 ♕g7   a6
18 ♘xc6   bxc6
19 ♗xc6+   ♔e7

And the game quickly petered out into a draw: 20 ♕e5?! (*20 ♕g5+!? f6!∞ / =*) 20 … ♗d7 21 ♕c7 ♖bd8 22 ♗xd7 ½-½.

"« Eine hübsche Partie » ha detto il giovane maestro Tedesco dopo le solite analisi a fine partita. Anche di valore teorico."—''A lovely game' said the young German master during the usual analysis after the game. Also of theoretical value.'

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Schmid-Díez del Corral
10th Clare Benedict Cup, Lucerne 1963
Archives 15/8 (1407), 31 August 1963 (Euwe), citing Schmid notes from Schach-Echo

(Schmid-L. Pedersen to move 13)

14 ♖b1   ♖c8

The former main line, which fell under a shadow as a result of this game. Now 14 … ♘a5 is more common, but the text is still playable (and played).

15 h4!   ♘f5
16 ♖h3

Not quite new to Schmid: it was first played *against* him, in **Durão-Schmid, Málaga 1963** (½-½, 20).

16 …   f6?

The losing move. Better 16 … ♘ce7 or 16 … ♘cd4 (as played by Schmid): cf. **Sarkar-Shulman, Chicago Open 2007**.

17 exf6   ♔f7
18 h5

18 ♕d1 ♘g3 Euwe (from Schmid?), ∓ per Schwarz and Moles, is simply met by 19 ♔f2±±, but the text is just as good.

18 …   ♖g4
19 h6   ♘cd4
20 h7   ♖h8
21 ♕d1

'21 ♖b4 was dangerous because of 21 … e5!', Euwe (Schmid?). But White is winning there also.

21 …   ♖h4
22 ♖xb7!   ♕xb7
23 ♖xh4   ♘xd4(3)
24 ♕xd4?

This throws away White's advantage. Correct is 24 ♕h5+! ♘g6 25 ♗d3 ♘f5 27 ♗xf5! (but not *27 g4?* **Taetilae-Kuusela, Finnish corr 1975** and **E. Pedersen-H. Larsen, Danish corr Ch 1986**, allowing *27 … ♕b6!=*) 27 … exf5 28 ♕h6 ♔xf6 29 ♗e3±±.

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24 …   ♘f5?

After the essential 24 … ♖xh7! Schmid thought 25 ♕c5 '!' was winning, analysing 25 … ♔xf6, 25 … ♘g6, and 25 … ♗c6. In fact the latter two possibilities seem quite satisfactory for Black, but there is no reason the check on e7 must be prevented: after 25 … ♕c8! 26 ♕e7+ ♔g8 Black stands no worse (*27 ♘xd5? ♖f7!∓∓*).

25 ♕d3   d4?

The unremarked 25 … ♗b5! puts up much stiffer resistance. After 26 ♘xb5 ♕xb5 27 ♕h3 ♕c5 White needs to find accurate moves but is probably winning after 28 c4! ♕d4! 29 g4 ♘d6 30 cxd5!, e.g. 30 … ♕e4+ 31 ♕e3 exd5 32 ♗g2 or 31 … ♖xh7 32 dxe6+!.

After the text White wrapped up easily via 26 ♘e4 ♗c6 27 ♘g5+ ♔xf6 28 g4 ♗b5 29 ♕e4 ♕xe4 30 ♘xe4 ♔e7 31 gxf5 ♗xf1 32 ♔xf1 ♖xh7 33 f6+ ♔f8 34 ♔e2 ♖h1 35 ♗b2 1-0.

Thus three games of modern as well as historical interest.   ▶
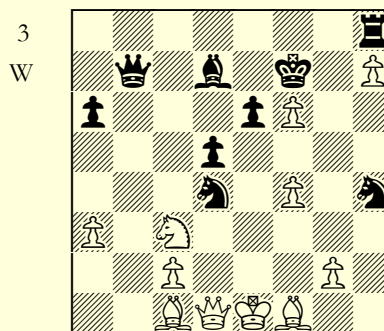
FZ   KERES, Paul, *Frantsuzkaya Zaschita* (Moscow 1958)—*see issue 4.*
MLW   MOLES, John L., *The French Defence Main Line Winawer* (Batsford 1975)—*see issue 3.*
V53   PAOLI, Enrico, *Vº Torneo Scacchistico Internazionale di Venezia, 8-23 ottobre 1953.* Reggio Emilia: Tipografia Sociale 1953.
tMLF   PEDERSEN, Steffen, *The Main Line French: 3 Nc3* (Gambit 2001)—*see issue 2.*
dFV   SCHWARZ, Rolf, *Die Französische Verteidigung* (Das Schach-Archiv Fr. L. Rattmann 1967) —*see issue 5.*