

be anything other than a dead draw? But let's think about those three lines of defense and see if they apply here, when you're fighting against a knight pawn.

**1. The Philidor third-rank defense.** Well, here, the black rook is there. And the white rook is so misplaced that it can't access the next best rank: 50.♖h2 loses to the trade of rooks, as does 50.♖h1.

**2. The Karstedt method** doesn't apply to the g-pawn because the king can't slide away to the short side (there is no short side), and going to the long side leaves the rook no place to check from.

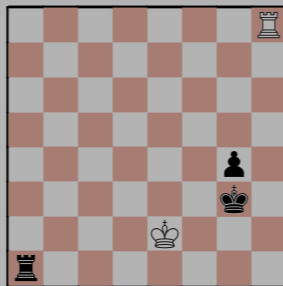
**3. Side checks** also don't work against the g-pawn: there is no short side.

Indeed, the knight pawn is in some ways the most dangerous: the only defense, other than the third-rank defense, is the passive defense on the first rank. Here, the white rook is offside, and neither defense is feasible. If you move the pawns one file to the left, it's an easy draw because the king escapes through the h-file. But here, White loses.

**50.♖h8 ♖a2+ 51.♔g1 ♔g3** The rook needs two moves to get to either the third or first rank.

**52.♔f1** This is where you can't go to h1 and then to "i2," and there is also no 52.♖f8 ♖a1+ 53.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 54.♔xf1 ♔h2-+.

**52...♖a1+ 53.♔e2 g4** and the Lucena position is unavoidable.



Let's show the bridge again: **54.♖g8 ♖g1 55.♖g7 ♔h2 56.♖h7+ ♔g2 57.♖g7 g3 58.♖h7 ♖a1 59.♖h6 ♖a5 60.♖h8 ♖e5+ 61.♔d2 ♔g1 62.♖g8 g2 63.♖h8 ♔f2 64.♖f8+ ♔g3 65.♖g8+ ♔f3 66.♖f8+ 66.♖g7 ♖e4! 66...♔g4 67.♖g8+ ♖g5-+**

How much undiscovered beauty is there in seemingly simple endgames?

I recommend refreshing this "basic" endgame theory regularly. If people starting with Philidor and all the way to Magnus Carlsen made mistakes here, it's not so basic after all.

Although we mostly focused on the Philidor position here (the third-rank defense and the Karstedt method), our journey also took us on some turns. We encountered some surprises (I suspect, even for many GMs):

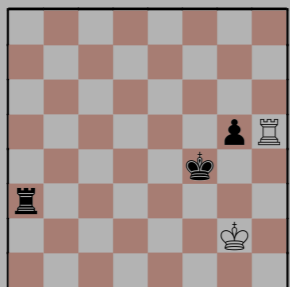
1. White can set some dangerous traps against the side check defense (for example, with ♔d6!). With no time on the clock, the defender has to know it cold.
2. If the black rook is behind the central pawn on the fifth rank, the defending king can even go to the long side.
3. The defender can lose with a king in front of the knight pawn, even if it hasn't reached the fifth rank.

I hope I have convinced you that these endings are not just practically useful but also, and more importantly, fascinating.

After this kaleidoscope of howlers, I want to finish with the most surprising (♖+♔) vs. ♖ position that I can recall seeing. GM Emil Sutovsky published a detailed analysis of this ending, from the game Vaisser-Martinovic (Vrnjacka Banja 1984), in the article "Illusion of Simplicity" (ChessPro.ru, June 2018).

I will give only the main line.

**45...f6!!** The game instead continued 45...gxh4? 46.♖xh4+ ♔xf3 47.♖h5 ♔g4 48.♖b5 f5 49.♔e1 ♖a3 50.♔f2 f4 51.♖b2 ♖h3 52.♖b8 ♖h2+ 53.♔g1 ♖a2 54.♖b3 and we have a Philidor position. The draw was soon agreed. **46.hxg5 fxg5 47.♔e1 ♖a3! 48.♔f2 ♖xf3+ 49.♔g2 ♖a3**



Wait a minute! The white king is in front of the pawn, and that pawn is not even on its fifth rank yet. How can this

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# The Lost Supertournament of 1929

By Thomas Shupe

In 1928, an eager chess enthusiast by the name of Victor Spark, made his family's hotels available to the chess world and successfully organized a couple of significant chess events. However, his ambitions increased further and resulted in an international tournament in 1929, featuring the reigning world champion Alexander Alekhine along with the best U.S. masters of the time.



▲ Alexander Alekhine, Fourth World Chess Champion

By the 1920s, Bradley Beach, NJ, had become a very popular resort town and attracted thousands of visitors from New York City and surrounding areas. This included Victor D. Spark, a chess enthusiast and member of the Manhattan Chess Club ("MCC"). A native of Brooklyn, Spark was a veteran of World War I. He served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, which fought valiantly in France as part of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, American Expeditionary Force. After the war, Spark went to work for his father, Ned, who owned two hotels in Bradley Beach – Hotel La Reine and the Bradley Hotel. Construction of Hotel La Reine and the adjoining Bradley Hotel was completed in 1900 and 1928, respectively.

Spark and MCC played an instrumental role in Bradley Beach's foray into chess. In September 1928, Hotel La Reine hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the National Chess Federation (predecessor to US Chess). Spark organized Bradley Beach 1928 and most of the tournament participants were also MCC members, including: Dr. Norbert Lederer (tournament director), Edward Lasker, I.A. Horowitz, Oscar Tenner, and eventual tournament winner, Abraham Kupchik.

## A DREAM DATE SWIPES LEFT

Shortly after Bradley Beach 1928, former World Champion Emanuel Lasker accepted an invitation from Spark to visit Bradley Beach and stay at his family's hotel. Lasker's stay at Hotel La Reine was part pleasure, but mostly business. At the time, Spark was seeking to solidify Bradley Beach's rapid rise to prominence in the chess world. He was in the midst of negotiations to host at Hotel La Reine a rematch between World Champion Alexander Alekhine and Jose Raul Capablanca, who surprisingly lost the 1927 World Chess Championship in Buenos Aires. As evidenced by his visit, it appears that Lasker was serving as mediator between the three parties to organize the match. Alas, Alekhine eventually declined and instead agreed to a match with Efim Bogoljubov. Lasker went on to serve as an arbiter during this match, which confirms

the active role he played in organizing the 1929 World Chess Championship. However, Spark's efforts were likely in vain, as Alekhine blatantly avoided playing Capablanca for the rest of his chess career.

## ALEKHINE'S ODYSSEY

After upsetting Capablanca for the title in 1927, Alekhine embarked on a two-year worldwide simultaneous exhibition tour, which brought him to New York City in March 1929. After being the guest of honor at a dinner held by the University Club, Alekhine kicked off his American tour with a series of exhibitions produced by MCC. First, he played a forty-board simultaneous exhibition at MCC's headquarters in Hotel Sherman Square. Next, he played ten hand-picked opponents blindfolded. Finally, he played a three-board consultation match, where teams of MCC members put their



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heads together in an attempt to defeat the world champion.

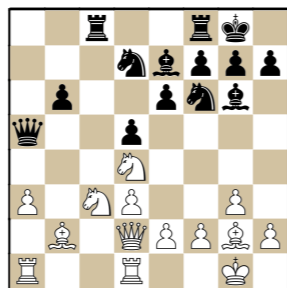
While he did not play Alekhine, Spark was almost certainly in attendance at these events along with the other MCC members. Seeking a consolation for Bradley Beach's failed world championship bid, this appears to be the occasion when Spark and MCC invited Alekhine to play in a tournament in Bradley Beach. Shortly after these events, *The New York Times* reported that Alekhine accepted an offer to play in Bradley Beach before he returned to his home in Paris. In the meantime, Alekhine gave simultaneous exhibitions in Boston, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cincinnati, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Zacatecas, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.

since Monday of last week. This he accomplished without the loss of a game, thanks to his victory over Lajos Steiner of Budapest, the runner-up, in the ninth and final round."

In reality, Alekhine was incredibly fortunate to win Bradley Beach 1929 given Lajos Steiner's strong performance. Alekhine found his footing in the latter half of the tournament, but his first four games were an unmitigated disaster by world champion standards - he blundered in each game and made many mistakes. Here are these games in order by rounds of play.

Alexander Alekhine  
Isidor Turover

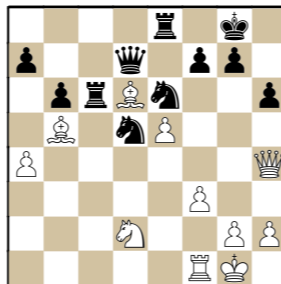
Bradley Beach 1929



17.e4?! dxe4 18.♖b3? ♖h5 19.♜xe4 ♜e5 20.♖f4 ♜xe4 21.♖xe5 ♖xe5? 21...♙f6!+-  
22.♙xe5 ♜c3 23.♙d2 ♙f6?! 24.♙xf6 gxf6 25.♙c1 ♜b5 26.♙c6 ♜d6 27.♙f1 ♙c7 28.♙e2 ♙fc8 29.♙dc2 e5 30.♙d2 ♙f5 31.♙d5 ♙xc2+ 32.♙xc2 ♙xc2+?! 32...♙d8=  
33.♙xc2 and White won in 80 moves.

Alexander Alekhine  
Maurice Fox

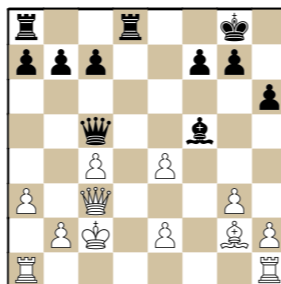
Bradley Beach 1929



30.♖e4? 30.♖c4 ♙xc4 31.♙xd7 ♙cc8 32.♙xe8 ♙xe8 33.♙c1.  
30...a6 31.♙xc6 ♖xc6 32.f4 ♜c5 33.♙xc5 ♖xc5+ 34.♙h1 ♜c3? 34...♜e3!+-  
35.♖d3 b5 36.axb5 axb5 37.h3 b4 38.♙h2 ♖d5 39.♖xd5 ♜xd5 40.♙g3 ♜c3 41.♙f3 ♙d8 42.♙e3 ♜d5+ 43.♙e4? 43.♙e2=  
43...♜c3+?! 43...♜xf4!±  
44.♙e3 and White won in 90 moves.

Horace Ransom Bigelow  
Alexander Alekhine

Bradley Beach 1929



**This tournament proved to be Alekhine's only master-level tournament between his world championship matches with Capablanca and Bogoljubov in 1927 and 1929, respectively.**

Alekhine kept his promise and finally arrived in Bradley Beach on June 2, 1929 for the final leg of his tour. This tournament proved to be Alekhine's only master-level tournament between his world championship matches with Capablanca and Bogoljubov in 1927 and 1929, respectively. This significance makes it all the more surprising that Bradley Beach 1929 has largely been ignored by chess historians!

FOUR STARS OUT OF FIVE

Alekhine's score (8½/9) would lead one to believe that he was on top form and won the tournament with ease. Indeed, chess journalists of the time came to this conclusion. *The New York Times* reported: "Fulfilling general expectations, Dr. Alexander Alekhine of Paris, chess champion of the world, today won the international masters' tournament which has been in progress in the solarium of the Hotel La Reine

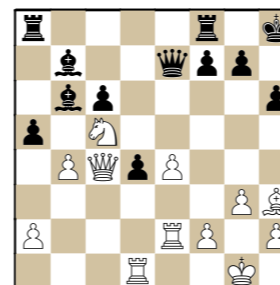


▲ The tournament venue, Hotel La Reine, ca. 1929. Photo courtesy of the Bradley Beach Historical Society.

18...♙d4? and Black won in 46 moves. The fascinating 18...♙e8! would bring Black an easy win after, for example, 19.exf5 ♙xe2+ 20.♙b1 ♖xf5+ 21.♙a2 ♙xg2+-.

Alexander Kevitz  
Alexander Alekhine

Bradley Beach 1929



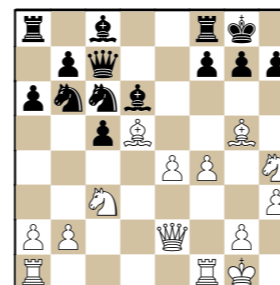
25.♙xd4? 25.♜xb7! ♖xb7 26.♙b2+ 25...♙a6 26.♜xa6 ♙xd4 27.♖xc6 axb4+-  
28.♜c7 ♙ab8? 28...♙a3 29.♜b5 ♙d3+-  
29.♜d5 ♖e5 30.♖c4 ♙c3 31.♜xc3? 31.a3!=  
31...bxc3 32.♙c2 ♖h5 33.♙g2 ♖d1 34.♖xc3 ♙b1 35.♙f5 ♙g8? 35...♖f1+ 36.♙f3 ♙g8+-  
36.e5? 36.♖c4!∞  
36...♖f1+ and Black won in 48 moves.

Alekhine also committed some inaccuracies in Round 8 against Herman Steiner, the game for which he was awarded the brilliancy prize.

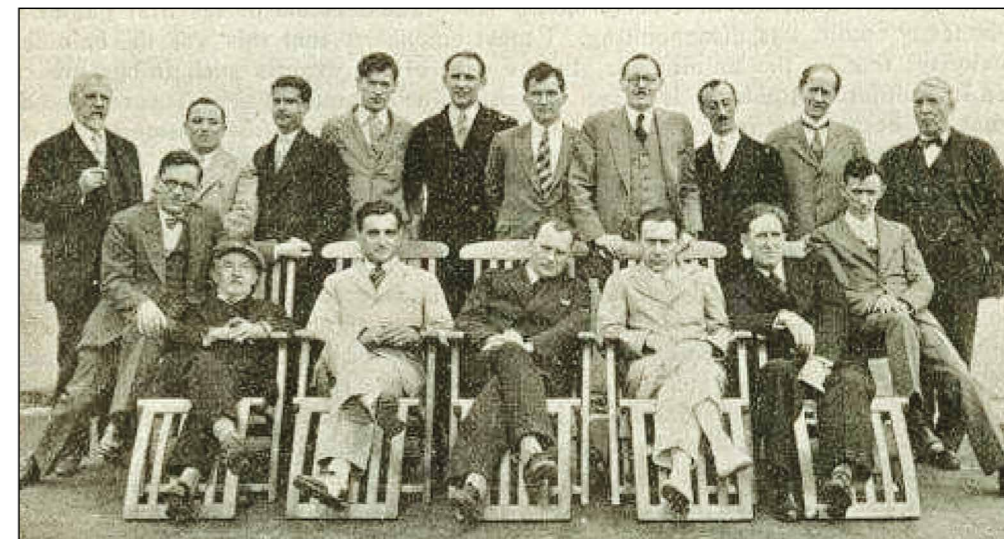
D28  
Alexander Alekhine  
Herman Steiner

Bradley Beach 1929

1.d4 ♜f6 2.♜f3 d5 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 e6 5.♙xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.♖e2 ♜bd7 8.♜c3 ♖c7 9.d5?! 9.a4  
9...exd5?! 9...♜b6!=  
10.♙xd5 ♙d6 11.e4 0-0 12.♙g5 ♜g4 13.h3 ♜ge5 14.♜h4 ♜b6 15.f4 ♜c6



16.f5?! 16.e5 ♙e7 17.♙xc6



▲ On the roof of the Hotel La Reine. Seated (left to right): Aleksander Kevitz, Hartwig Cassel (since deceased), Victor Spark, Dr. Alexander Alekhine, Dr. Norbert L. Lederer, Frank J. Marshall and Abraham Kupchik. Standing (left to right): George P. Northrop, I. S. Turover, Rafael Cintron, Herman Steiner, Lajos Steiner, H. Ranson Bigelow, Maurice Fox, Herman Helms and J. Edmund Lister.

A) 17...♙xg5 18.♙e4! ♙d8 (18...♙xh4 19.♖h5 h6 20.♖xh4+-) 19.a4+-  
B) 17...bxc6 18.♖h5±  
16...♜e5? 16...♜b4!? 17.f6 ♙e8 18.♖d2± 17.♖h5 ♙e8 18.♙f4 ♙e7 19.f6 ♙f8 20.fxg7 ♙xg7 21.♙af1 ♙e6 22.♜f5 ♙xd5 23.♜xg7 ♜g6 24.♜xe8 ♙xe8 25.♜xd5 Black resigned

SPECIAL EVENT AND CLOSING CEREMONY

Afterwards, there was a farewell rapid transit play tournament. Rapid transit play was a precursor to modern day blitz chess. Instead of three or five minutes per game, rapid transit play allotted players a certain amount of time per move. In the 1920s, it appears the most popular time control was ten seconds per move. Therefore, a player had to make each move within ten seconds, or else they lost on time. There were nine participants in the tournament, including Alekhine and Frank J. Marshall. Once again Alekhine emerged victorious; he won seven games and drew the other



▲ On the lawn at Bradley Beach. Seated (left to right): I. S. Turover, S. D. Factor, Dr. N. L. Lederer, Edward Lasker and A. Kupchik. Standing (left to right): Oscar Tenner, I. Horowitz, Victor D. Spark, H. Helms and S. Mlotkowski.



with Marshall. That evening, Bradley Beach 1929 was concluded with a dinner at Hotel La Reine. *The New York Times* reported: "Covers were laid for fifty and Mayor Frank C. Borden Jr. of Bradley Beach made an address in which he thanked the visiting experts for coming here to play, congratulated the winners and extolled the virtues of the royal game." The other speakers that evening included: Dr. Lederer, tournament director, who presented the awards; S.S. Van Dine, murder mystery novelist, who funded the brilliancy prize; Alekhine, Marshall, Victor D. Spark, and Edward Lasker.

Alekhine bid farewell to Bradley Beach and returned to New York City. At Hotel

▶ Murder Will Out. Dr. Alekhine, holding a black Bishop, is here shown on the veranda of the Hotel La Reine, face to face with S. S. Van Dine, author of mystery stories and otherwise known as Willard Huntington Wright.



1920s. These economic conditions were catastrophic for the Spark family, Hotel La Reine, and the Bradley Hotel. The ill-timed Bradley Hotel addition cost the Spark family \$500,000 in 1928, which is approximately \$8 million today! Bradley Beach's meteoric rise in the chess world came to a grinding halt; Hotel La Reine never hosted another chess tournament.

Four years after World War II, a fire caused considerable damage to Hotel La Reine. It took fire companies from twelve nearby communities to extinguish the flames. Luckily, only a few rooms were occupied and no one was hurt. New owners repaired and renovated the hotels, which experienced a brief renaissance in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet by the early 1970s, the hotels were abandoned and slated for demolition. In 1974, before they could be demolished, both hotels were destroyed by a suspicious fire. The fire started at Hotel La Reine and quickly spread next door to

the Bradley Hotel. Bradley Beach's Fire Chief said the fire "appeared suspicious because the utilities in the building had been turned off." It took firefighters from seven companies more than three hours to get the fire under control. Arson was suspected, but never proved.

Today, La Reine Avenue – a mere half mile long – is all that is left to remind visitors of the majestic hotel that hosted two world chess champions. The story's tragic ending reminds me of many of my own chess games, where a very promising position went down in flames. And I'm left staring at my scoresheet asking myself, "what could have been?"

"A second chess tournament stands to the credit of Bradley Beach, NJ, which bids fair to become a Mecca for followers of our game and in time may rival in this respect the famous resorts abroad."

–*Cassell and Helms; American Chess Bulletin; Volume 26; 1929*

American Chess Magazine felt that Mr. Shupe's extensive history of Bradley Beach 1929, which appeared originally online on chess.com, was worthy of attention for our readers. He condensed his research into this article.

BRADLEY BEACH 1929												
INTERNATIONAL CHESS TOURNAMENT												
HOTEL LA REINE - NEW JERSEY - USA												
DIRECTOR - NORBERT L. LEDERER												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	W L D	Score
1. Alexander ALEKHIN	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8 0 1	8½ - ½
2. Lajos STEINER	0	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	6 1 2	7 - 2
3. Abraham KUPCHIK	-	0	-	1	-	1	0	1	1	1	4 2 3	5½ - 3½
4. Isidor TUROVER	0	-	-	-	1	0	1	1	1	1	4 2 3	5½ - 3½
5. Maurice FOX	0	0	0	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	4 3 2	5 - 4
6. Frank MARSHALL	0	-	0	-	0	1	1	1	1	1	3 3 3	4½ - 4½
7. Alexander KEVITZ	0	0	0	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	3 4 2	4 - 5
8. Herman STEINER	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	0	1	1	2 6 1	2½ - 6½
9. Rafael CINTRON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2 7 0	2 - 7
10. H. R. BIGELOW	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0 8 1	½ - 8½

Edited by James R. Schroeder

▶ Photo of the final tournament standings and crosstable courtesy of Thomas Shupe.

“Since he arrived in New York, Alekhine played 616 games, of which he won 515, lost 47 and drew 54.

Astor, he won exhibition matches against Charles Jaffe and Frank Marshall. And finally, he held a blindfold chess exhibition against eight opponents. All told, since he arrived in New York, Alekhine played 616 games, of which he won 515, lost 47 and drew 54. Later in the week, Alekhine set sail for his home in Paris. Shortly before boarding his ship, Alekhine provided a quote to a reporter from *The New York Times*: "I shall never forget the many courtesies shown me everywhere, and shall carry with me the pleasantest memories of my journeyings over here."

Alekhine rounded out 1929 by serving as special correspondent for *The New York Times* at Carlsbad 1929 (he did not play), and easily defeating Efim Bogoljubov in the 1929 World Chess Championship.

IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES

Bradley Beach 1929 was the town's swan song of the "Roaring Twenties." The New York Stock Exchange collapsed just a few months after the tournament. "Black Tuesday" was the start of the Great Depression, which lasted until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Real estate prices plummeted, exacerbated by debt incurred during the optimistic

MAKE YOUR MOVE: BRADLEY BEACH 1929

Imagine you are in the solarium of Hotel La Reine. Now find the game's continuation or improve on the master's play!

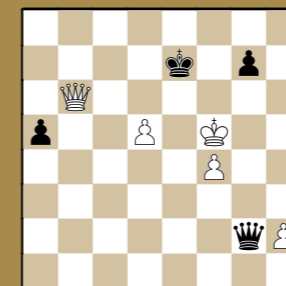
PROBLEM 1  
Lajos Steiner  
Abraham Kupchik



PROBLEM 4  
Alexander Kevitz  
Isidor Turover



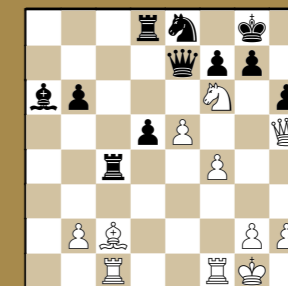
PROBLEM 2  
Frank Marshall  
Alexander Alekhine



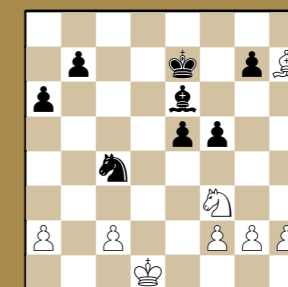
PROBLEM 5  
Alexander Kevitz  
Maurice Fox



PROBLEM 3  
Herman Steiner  
Lajos Steiner



PROBLEM 6  
Lajos Steiner  
Alexander Alekhine



PROBLEM 1

**Solution:** If you have a key idea and your opponent is preventing it, the first question you should always ask yourself is "what happens if I just do it anyway?"

36...e5!-+ With this strong move, Black rids himself of a backward pawn and sets his kingside pawn majority in motion. Despite the hanging pawn on f5, the tactics work in Black's favor due to the x-ray on the e-file.

Instead, Kupchik played 36...e3?? and Black went on to lose.

PROBLEM 2

**Solution:** 52...cxd5+ 53.c6g6 c6d6+! 53...c6e6+?? would allow White to win a tempo eventually with f4-f5+.

54.cxd6+ cxd6 55.f5 a4 56.c6xg7 This move is why the position is losing for White. The king is forced onto the a1-h8 diagonal! This is the type of move that is

easy to miss when evaluating a king and pawn ending.

56...a3 57.f6 a2 58.f7 a1c6+ With check! 59.c6g8 c6g1+ White resigned.

PROBLEM 3

**Solution:** 30...c2xf6 30...gxf6 31.c3xh6 c3xc2-+

31.exf6 c6e3+! I suspect Herman missed that Lajos could save his queen with a check. Most importantly, this move removes a defender from the rook and sets up the winning tactic.

32.c6h1 c6xc2 33.c6xc2 c6xf1-+ Black won.

PROBLEM 4

**Solution:** 17.b3! A silent but deadly move. Black's position is a train wreck on the dark squares.

17...d5 18.c6a3+- Turover finally castled his king to safety, but for the hefty

price of a piece. White won.

PROBLEM 5

**Solution:** 18.c6f5!! Unfortunately, Kevitz played 18.c6h3?? and eventually lost the game. He had the correct idea, but the wrong move order.

18...exf5 19.c6h3 c6g7 20.c6xf5 c6h8 21.c6d7! c6xd7 22.c6xe7 c6af8 23.c6xd7 c6e5 24.c6g4+ c6h6 25.c6d4+- Black is helpless against c6h4+ followed by c6g4 mate.

PROBLEM 6

This position arose in the dramatic final round encounter between the tournament leaders.

**Solution:** 24...c6f6!-+ A crucial move to prevent c6g5. Alekhine eventually forced resignation by trapping Steiner's light-squared bishop, thereby securing his tournament victory. Black won.