

THE LIFE AND GAMES OF CARLOS TORRE



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THE LIFE AND GAMES OF CARLOS TORRE

BY

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Key to symbols

!	a good move	±	White has a serious advantage
?	a weak move	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!!	an excellent move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
??	a blunder	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
!?	an interesting move	→	with an attack
?!	a dubious move	↑	with initiative
□	only move	↔	with counterplay
=	equality	Δ	with the idea of
∞	unclear position	⊃	better is
≡	with compensation for the sacrificed material	N	novelty
±	White stands slightly better	+	check
∓	Black stands slightly better	#	mate

Frequently Used Abbreviations

ACB: *American Chess Bulletin*
 CA: chess association
 CB: ChessBase (Mega Database 2017)
 CC: chess club
 CF: chess federation
 Ch: Championship
 CL: Chess Life magazine
 CM: Candidate Master (a/k/a Expert)
 FIDE: Fédération Internationale des Échecs, i.e. the International Chess Federation
 GM: Grandmaster
 IM: International Master
 TN: theoretical novelty, i.e. a new move in the opening
 WCh: World Championship
 WSZ: Wiener Schachzeitung (Vienna Chess Magazine)

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Preface to the First Edition (2000)

In 1993, *Vida y Partidas de Carlos Torre* appeared, published by Incaro. The current work began as a straightforward translation of that work, but the author, working closely with the translator Taylor Kingston, expanded the original manuscript and the result is this English edition. This book is offered to chessplayers and enthusiasts of all Spanish-speaking countries as an homage to one of the greatest Latin American chess players of all time: grandmaster Carlos Torre Repetto, originally from Yucatán, Mexico. In recognition of Torre's formidable accomplishments and triumphs during the years 1924-1926, the Fédération Internationale Des Echecs (FIDE, the International Chess Federation) in 1977 bestowed on Torre the title of International Grandmaster.

The author visited Torre in the town of his birth, Mérida, where he passed away a year later. Though Torre knew the intent of this book, it is sad that he did not live to see it realized. Those who knew Carlos Torre recall him as an unaffected person of noble sentiments. His health was always fragile and he suffered constantly from insomnia. In his book *The Psychology of the Chess Player*, Reuben Fine described some of Torre's eccentricities, as well as the nervous breakdown he suffered in October 1926, which forced him to retire permanently from chess at the age of 21. Fine related that Torre could never sleep more than two hours a day and described some of his strange habits, such as eating 12 pineapple ice cream sundaes in a day and other such extravagances.

In this book we will make no attempt to psychoanalyze Torre, nor will we indulge in theorizing about his untimely and unexpected retirement from chess, in which respect he was similar to some other grandmasters. Our major concern will be to present Torre's great games, his beautiful combinations and his strategic and tactical concepts. The author was able to compile about 170 games of the Yucatan grandmaster, which were narrowed to a selection of 100 of the best, though, in fact, the final total turned out to be 105. We have included four losses and a number of draws, but the great majority of games offered were, logically, won by Torre. Naturally, many trips, letters, and inquiries were necessary to assemble the games.

The author would like to express his gratitude to all those who assisted in the collection of the games, the biographical data, and the tournament tables, including Dale Brandreth, the late Alice N. Loranth, Julieta viuda de Gilberto Repetto Milán, Alejandro Báez and Taylor Kingston. To all these people, my sincere thanks.

Gabriel Velasco León, Guanajuato, Mexico, March 2000

Preface to this Second Edition

Serving as the translator for Gabriel Velasco's *Vida y Partidas de Carlos Torre* was my first big job in chess book writing and editing, and one of my most enjoyable. Besides the interesting work of turning Spanish into English, it introduced me to Carlos Torre as a chess player and as a person.

It has been twenty-three years since the first edition of this book went to press. It was well received critically, and I felt proud of what Dr. Velasco and I had worked hard to produce. Still, over the years, as my skill and experience with chess databases and analytical software increased, I realized it could have been much better. Better for one in its technical aspects, especially game annotations and notation. Also as I continued research into chess history (a lifelong interest), new things related to Torre would turn up, things that would have made worthwhile additions to the book. These kept accumulating in my files.

But they just stayed there until I saw the film *Torre x Torre*, a documentary by Mexican film-makers, released in 2019. It inspired me to think seriously about a new edition. Dr. Velasco was unable to contribute further, and even went so far as to suggest that the new edition should be credited to me as sole author, but there is still enough of his original work here that I could not accept that.

Here is what has been added to this edition:

- ♖ More accurate and more extensive annotations, computer-assisted. Every game has been examined under Stockfish 14, probably the best analytical engine available for home computers at this time. For the first edition we had only Fritz 4 and 5, which compare to Stockfish like a Model T Ford to a Ferrari, and many games were given no computer examination at all. Thus owners of the first edition will find most annotations here substantially different (and substantially better). However, many general assessments and heuristic notes proved valid and have been retained.
- ♖ Torre's own annotations to several games have been unearthed and added. These come from several sources: the *American Chess Bulletin*, his book of the 1926 Mexican Championship tournament, and his instructional booklet *Development of Chess Ability*.

- ⌘ Several games have been added. Some, frankly, are Torre losses, which are given in the interest of presenting a more complete, balanced picture of his play. The first edition, to some extent, looked at Torre through rose-colored glasses; here the aim is only for untinted clarity. Also added are the six games between players other than Torre that he annotated for the Mexican Championship tournament book (see Chapter VIII).
- ⌘ There are many more diagrams and photographs than in the first edition. Also more thumbnail bios of Torre's opponents.
- ⌘ More ancillary material about Torre's life and career: pictures, anecdotes, interesting facts, opinions, bits of trivia etc., drawn from the *American Chess Bulletin*, the *Wiener Schachzeitung*, the film *Torre x Torre*, and other sources.
- ⌘ A 1927 interview with Torre, published in the Yucatán magazine *Anahuac*, in Chapter III.
- ⌘ Chapter IV, excerpts from the book *64 Variaciones Sobre un Tema de Torre* by his friend Germán de la Cruz.
- ⌘ Chapter V, "Remembrances of Carlos Torre," which consists of columns and articles from newspapers in his home town of Mérida.
- ⌘ Chapter VI, "A Clash of Opposites," an article originally published in the British magazine *Kingpin*, comparing and contrasting Torre with the notorious Norman Tweed Whitaker, whom he played at Detroit 1924.
- ⌘ Chapter VII, the full text of Torre's 1926 instructional booklet *Development of Chess Ability*, which has become a very rare collector's item.
- ⌘ Chapter IX, a review of *Torre x Torre*, a film by turns fascinating, informative and misleading.
- ⌘ A more extensive, more fully informed overall assessment of Torre as a chess player in Chapter X.

I have preserved Dr. Velasco's biographical portrait of Torre much as it was, though with several additions and some minor corrections. Also some of our original game annotations (at least those not overturned by Stockfish!). And the vast majority of the games are the same ones he chose for the first edition. Some are readily available on ChessBase, but others, especially the non-tournament games from Torre's 1926 sojourn in Mexico, are known today only because of his diligent research.

Besides Dr. Velasco, I would like to thank Juan Obregón, co-director of *Torre x Torre*, for sending me various Mexican newspaper articles about Torre, and along with his fellow director Roberto Garza, for providing information about their

film; Edward Winter for two letters about Torre written by E.Z. Adams; Jeremy Spinrad for news reports of Torre's 1926 breakdown; and also Guy van Habberney of Belgium, for providing scans of Torre's book on the 1926 Mexican Championship. Also my junior high school Spanish teacher, the late Felipe Chacón, for all he taught me about that beautiful language so that I could translate those texts. And finally my beloved wife Emily, who is about the most supportive helpmate a chess writer could want, even though she doesn't know the game.

Taylor Kingston, Pas Robles, California, November 2022



Chapter I

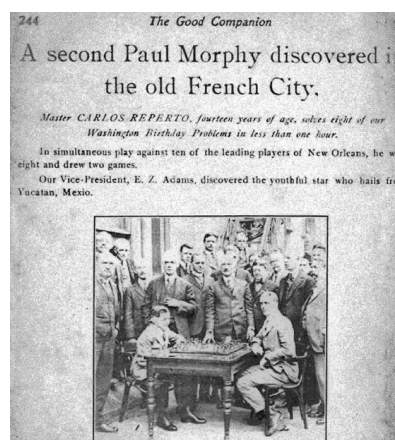
Biographical Portrait of Carlos Torre

Little is known of Carlos Torre's childhood and early adolescence, the years which gave rise to his love for chess. He was born the 29th of November, 1904, in Mérida, Yucatán province, Mexico. Carlos was the sixth of seven siblings (four boys and three girls). It is known that his father, Egidio Torre, taught him to play chess at an early age. According to Carlos, he learned the moves of the pieces at age six, by observing the games between his father and his older brother, Raúl. In 1916, when Carlos was not yet 12, the Torre family moved to the United States, settling in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, birthplace of the legendary Paul Morphy. The reason for choosing this particular city was perhaps merely geographical, as the distance between Mérida and New Orleans is relatively short, even less than that separating Mérida from Mexico City. Of course, in those days it was relatively easy for a Mexican to enter the United States and settle there for short, long or indefinite periods. The problem of undocumented or illegal aliens did not then exist.

Within a few months of his arrival in New Orleans, Carlos quickly learned to read and write English, and he began to frequent that city's chess circles. His first chess books were those of James Mason (*The Art of Chess* and *The Principles of Chess*). In one of those appears a great number of combinational exercises and brilliant games with colorful tactical themes, which undoubtedly influenced the style Torre would eventually acquire. At age 13 his chess talent became apparent to Edwin Z. Adams (1885-1944), a chess organizer well-known in the United States. At that time, Adams served as vice-president of the New Orleans Chess, Checkers and Whist Club and he gladly took on the role of guide and mentor to the talented youth.

It was natural that under such conditions young Torre made very swift progress. At age 14 he was already considered the second best chessplayer in New Orleans, after the veteran Leon Labatt. That year, the magazine *The Good Companion* dedicated an entire page to the Mexican prodigy, along with a photograph

showing the boy Carlos and Edwin Adams at the board, surrounded by the leading players and personalities of the New Orleans chess world. The title ran “A second Paul Morphy discovered in the old French City” (as New Orleans is sometimes called). The article further said “Master Carlos Repetto [sic]¹, 14 years of age, solved eight of the most difficult chess problems from the *Washington Birthday Problems* in less than an hour,” and added “In a simultaneous exhibition against 10 of the best chessplayers in New Orleans, he won eight games and drew two. Our vice-president, E.Z. Adams, discovered the young star, who comes from Yucatán, Mexico.”



In a 1920 letter to Hermann Helms, publisher of the magazine *American Chess Bulletin*, Adams wrote about Torre as follows:

I have just received a visit from C. Torre, R., and I have obtained the following information from him. He was born in Merida, Yuc. Mex. 29 November 1904 and came with his parents to this country in 1916. He has been playing chess with his father and brothers for about six years and about two years with all comers. He learned the game from his father and brothers and became so efficient at it that he soon left them far behind. He has played the following with the strongest players to a finish in N.O. but I am sorry to say there is [sic] no records kept of the games.

James McDonnell	2 games, he won 1 and lost 1
Prof. Dixon	8 games, he won 5 and lost 3
Chas. Rosen	4 games, he won 2 and lost 1, draw 1
Percy Moise	5 games, he won 4 and lost 1

His simultaneous exhibition at the chess club, he won eight and drew two games. In a lightning game with Mr E. Laker [sic; apparently Edward Lasker] of Chicago played in April 1920 the game was given up as a draw.

¹ Besides misspelling “Repetto,” the article makes a mistake often seen in English-language publications, of taking the matronymic for the surname. With Spanish names, the mother’s surname, in this case Repetto, is often appended after the father’s surname. This will be seen with many names in this book, e.g. Agustín Garza Galindo and Raúl Ocampo Vargas. English speakers often mistakenly assume the paternal surname is just a middle name, as in, say, Edgar Allan Poe or Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and take the matronymic for the surname.

The little fellow is very modest and unassuming and his success in chess has not given him the swell head. He has a very extensive knowledge of the openings also the end games. He is also a very good problem solver. If he had some professionals to play with, I think in a short time he would be very strong.

Edwin Ziegler Adams was described as “The Sponsor of Carlos Torre” in an article on pages 110-111 of the May-June 1927 *American Chess Bulletin*:

On the second page of Carlos Torre’s *Development of Chess Ability*, reserved for the dedication, appears the name of Edwin Z. Adams of New Orleans quite properly heading the list. We say quite properly because it was due to this Southern gentleman more than to anyone else that the little Mexican, now among the grand-masters of the game, started out upon the great adventure that took him first to New York and then overseas to his European successes.

Further on in the article, Adams looked back on his association with young Carlos:

“My chess career,” Mr Adams modestly wrote us many moons ago, “consists principally of my interest in Carlos. I commenced to study the game about ten years ago. I had a hard time of it, as I had to batter my way along and get whatever pointers I could pick up by watching the others play, and finally I learned the code and played over the games in the books. It was over two months before I was able to win a game from the poorest player I could find at the club (and the only one who would play with me), and it was only by ‘bucking the line’ and being ‘thrown for many losses’ and taking my medicine like a man that I finally learned to play a little.

“About eight years ago I met Carlos. I think he was then about 14 years old. He was a small, dark-skinned, thin little fellow, very polite, quiet and serious for a boy of his age. He had learned to play chess from his father and brothers and soon was able to make short work of them over the chessboard. Dr Ainsley (now deceased) was their family physician, a member of the chess club and also a very good player, well above the average. When visiting the family one day they mentioned to him that they had a small member who could play a good game and asked him to play with the little chap and see if he really could play well. I think Carlos won two out of the three games to the surprise of all. Dr Ainsley then suggested that he play Mr Percy Moise, a very strong player. Carlos showed his strength with him also. Next, I think, he played with Mr C. Rosen, also one of the best here, with the same results.

“Things, however, drifted along until I received a letter from his older brother telling of Carlos’ chess ability, when I arranged to have him come to

the club and show what he could do. None of the old dignitaries with chess reputations wanted to play with the child, so a Dr Sternberg, a visitor, volunteered to play him. The latter had been toppling us all over, and that, I figured, would be a real test. I will never forget that day. As one of the gentlemen remarked, 'You felt more like petting the little fellow than trying to beat him a game of chess'. Carlos electrified the crowd, and Dr Sternberg enjoyed his rout also.

"Next, Carlos gave a peripatetic exhibition, playing six games at once, winning four and drawing two. The chess club was so impressed with his play that they gave him *carte blanche*, and from that time on he visited the rooms very often, until he could not get anyone to play with him, for they were all tired of being beaten. So he had nothing to do but come to my home occasionally, when we would play a few games and go over the openings together. His next feat was to win the city championship in 1923, which he did with ease.

"During all these years he worked and attended night school, so he was driven very hard. After a very severe case of pneumonia he was out of a position, and I suggested that he go to New York, with an introduction to the *American Chess Bulletin*. He also took an interest in problems and endgames and, of course, was excellent in these branches. He won several prizes in *Good Companion* tourneys. This is about all I can give you concerning Carlos. To you, better than to anyone else, is known the rest¹."

After winning the city championship of New Orleans, Torre in 1923 won by a wide margin the Louisiana state championship, a double round-robin 8-man tournament. For unknown reasons, this tournament's games were not published by any New Orleans newspaper. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* had had an excellent chess column, but this ceased in 1919. Only one game from the event is known to have survived (Game 1 of this collection, Labatt-Torre), thanks to Torre himself, who included it in his booklet *Development of Chess Ability*. The oldest known game of Torre's dates from 1920, when he was 15 years old, that being the famous loss to Adams in a game featuring an amazing combination with repeated Queen sacrifice offers and threats of back-rank mate. However, there is considerable doubt that such a game was actually played. The score is given as Game 107 of this collection, together with a discussion of its historical validity.

¹ The text of this and the previous letter were obtained from Edward Winter's article "Adams v Torre – A Sham?" at <https://www.chesshistory.com/winter/extra/adamstorre.html>. They appear here with his permission.

Here it is pertinent to note a peculiar trait of Torre's character, and of his attitude toward chess, one which partly explains the enigma of his unexpected and premature retirement from competition. This trait was identified by the master Alejandro Báez, who lived with Torre for years and was able to observe many details of his personality. Ironical though it might seem, Torre never cared for the idea of struggle and competition inherent in chess. For Torre there never was "the thrill of victory, the agony of defeat," because for him chess was foremost, perhaps solely, an art form. Torre's pleasure in a game came from its artistic, aesthetic value, independent of whether he had won or lost. In his later years, well after retiring from international competition, he was in the habit of playing offhand games with friends, obtaining a won position, and then surprising his opponent with a draw offer. When Torre won a beautiful game he would still sometimes feel regret, even actual suffering, at having inflicted a defeat on his opponent. Many of the great chess champions, such as Alekhine, Fischer, Tal, Karpov, Kasparov *et al*, have been characterized at the board by a confrontational indomitability, the aggressive attitude of a gladiator. Carlos Torre had a comparable degree of chess talent, but was lacking this competitive malice, often bordering on cruelty, seen in some of the greatest chessplayers. It was not an exaggeration when Boris Spassky said of Anatoly Karpov that he radiated an aura of enmity comparable to a crocodile. No such thing was ever said of Carlos Torre. In contrast to Alekhine, who was known occasionally to falsify game scores and notes to make himself appear stronger, in the 1920 Adams game incident Torre may have changed a game score for the sake of beauty, even if it meant portraying himself as the loser.

In June of 1924, Torre traveled to New York in search of stronger opposition. He soon joined the Marshall Chess Club and took part in its Friday afternoon blitz tournaments. In his first six such tournaments Torre took first place in five (once tied with Smirka, then New York state champion) and second place in the other, behind Tholfsen, then champion of the Marshall Club. The ACB, in its July-August 1924 issue, made mention of Torre's strong play and the ease with which he defeated the Marshall's most experienced veterans. Page 156 read:

Carlos Torre, the young Mexican expert who for several years has made his home in New Orleans, where he outranked all others interested in chess, recently came to New York and affiliated himself with the Marshall Chess Club. Like Capablanca, he has shown himself to be almost invincible in rapid transit play¹, although primarily he prefers slow, studious play.

¹ A form of speed chess then popular, played at ten seconds per move.

At that time, the best players then living in New York City were the Cuban José Raúl Capablanca, champion of the world, and the eponymous Frank J. Marshall, for 20 years one of the ten best in the world, but neither took part in club championships. After them, the best players were considered to be Abraham Kupchik and Morris Schapiro, both members of the Manhattan Chess Club. Naturally, after Torre's easy victories over the Marshall's best, curiosity grew about how he would measure up against the Manhattan's strongest players. In July 1924 the club directors organized a closed championship to which Torre was invited. This proved a profitable experience for the young Mexican master; despite losing to Kupchik and Schapiro, he took a noteworthy third place.

1924 Manhattan Chess Club Championship:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	total
1	Kupchik	*	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
2	Shapiro	1	*	1	½	1	1	1	0	1	0	6½
3-4	Torre	0	0	*	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	6
3-4	Frink	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	1	1	6
5-7	Beihoff	0	0	0	½	*	1	1	0	0	1	4
5-7	Katz	0	0	½	½	1	*	1	0	0	1	4
5-7	Tenner	0	0	0	1	0	0	*	1	1	1	4
8	Samuels	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	*	½	1	3½
9	Ross	0	0	0	0	½	1	0	½	*	1	3
10	Norwood	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	2

For this book we have selected five of Torre's games from this tournament: wins against Beihoff, Tenner, Frink, and Samuels, and his loss to Schapiro in an interesting pawn ending. Not long after the Manhattan event Torre was to demonstrate his superiority over Kupchik and Schapiro, defeating them brilliantly in exhibition games. From those successes came a growing desire to face Marshall and Capablanca.

In August of 1924, Alrick H. Mann, president of the Marshall Chess Club, announced an attractive prize fund for seven of New York's best chess players, including Torre, Marshall, and the young Anthony Santasiere, to compete in two special invitational double round-robin tournaments. These were thematic events: in the first the Vienna Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.f4) was obligatory, and in the second the romantic Ponziani Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.d4, also known as the Urusov). The purse for the second tournament was donated by Mr. Edwin Dimock, who also chose the thematic opening. Five of the seven

competitors were the same in both events; in the second Norwood and Gustafsson took the place of Santasiere and Fosberg. These two thematic tourneys demonstrated convincingly that Marshall and Torre were in a class by themselves among New York masters (with the exception of Capablanca). In the first they drew their two games against each other, and in the second they won one apiece, oddly each with the black pieces. In both tournaments they left the rest of the field well behind. For this book, we have selected four games from these events.

In August the New York State Championship took place at the Rochester Chess Club. The nine contestants played a round robin. Neither Marshall nor Kupchik took part, but there was still strong competition. The *American Chess Bulletin* reported as follows:

NEW YORK STATE MEETING AT ROCHESTER

With nine competitors in the Championship Tournament and six in Class A of the General Tournament, the New York State Chess Association held a very successful meeting at the rooms of the Rochester Chess Club from August 18 to 22. The championship competition was noteworthy for the participation of Carlos Torre of New Orleans, who made his debut in the North on that occasion. The circumstances that he and Harold E. Jennings of Rochester, State champion in 1916, tied for first place without losing a game, in the face of the fact that an expert of high repute like Roy T. Black of Syracuse was competing, speaks volumes for the ability of these two young men who bid fair to blossom out into the master class. Both made scores of 7-1, leaving the question of the championship undecided. Later, they agreed to meet at the Marshall Chess Club in New York, on September 13 and 14, to play off the tie.

New York State Championship, Rochester 1924:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
1-2	Torre	*	½	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
1-2	Jennings	½	*	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
3	Black	½	½	*	0	1	1	1	1	1	6
4	Adams	0	0	1	*	0	1	1	1	1	5
5	Lear	0	0	0	1	*	½	1	1	1	4½
6	Searle	0	0	0	0	½	*	1	1	0	2½
7-8	Gluckemus	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	½	1	1½
7-8	Weiss	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	*	1	1½
9	Palmer	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	*	1

The playoff match was indeed held as reported. Torre won by a score of 3-1, making him Champion of the State of New York.

Playoff Match, September 13-19, 1924

	1	2	3	4	total
Torre	o	1	1	1	3
Jennings	1	o	o	o	1

From these we have chosen two games from the tournament (against Lear and E.B. Adams, not the same man as E.Z. Adams of New Orleans), and the last three games of the Jennings match.

In those days, though Marshall would not put his US Champion title at stake except in match play, a tournament sponsored by the Western Chess Association functioned as a *de facto* United States tournament championship, the Western Championship. An invitational event limited to the strongest masters and state champions, in 1924 it took place in Detroit, Michigan, with contestants coming from as far south as Memphis, Tennessee, and as far west as Los Angeles, California. The program called for a tough two-games-per-day schedule, with a time limit of 20 moves per hour.

Carlos Torre attended as the representative of New York, and instead of Jennings another even younger master on the rise was invited: Samuel Reshevsky, then but 12 years old. Though in 1924 Reshevsky had not reached anywhere near the strength and maturity that made him one of the world's best from the mid-1930s to the late 1960s, he still managed to take an honorable 5th place.

The Western Championship resulted in a convincing triumph for Torre, who took clear first 2½ points ahead of the field. With an undefeated 12 wins and four draws in 16 games, Torre showed that, apart from Marshall and Capablanca, no other master then living in the USA could compare with him. The ACB wrote:

As was the case in the ever-memorable tournament at New York in 1857, which has gone down in history as the First American Chess Congress, a youth came out of the South, from New Orleans to surprise an unexpectant chess world. Carlos Torre, who had been in New York only three months and was sent to the State meeting at Rochester by the Marshall Chess Club, which he joined, set the pace from the start.

Displaying throughout the sort of invincibility which marked the career of Paul Morphy, he went straight through without losing a game and finished well in the lead as winner of the first prize and the Western championship. He accomplished it with the total score of 14-2, representing 12 wins and 4

drawn games. This astonishing performance unquestionably places the young Mexican in the first ranks of American experts, and, doubtless, he will be heard from again in the not far distant future.

Western Chess Association Championship, Detroit 1924:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
1	Torre	*	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	14
2-4	Factor	0	*	1	½	1	½	0	1	0	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	11½
2-4	Hahlbohm	½	0	*	0	0	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11½
2-4	Whitaker	0	½	1	*	1	½	1	1	1	0	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	11½
5	Reshevsky	0	0	1	0	*	1	½	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
6	Banks	0	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	10½
7	Ruth	½	1	0	0	½	½	*	0	1	½	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
8	Mlotkowski	0	0	½	0	1	½	1	*	½	½	½	1	0	½	1	1	1	9
9-10	Stolzenberg	0	1	0	0	0	½	0	½	*	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	8
9-10	Scrivener	0	0	0	1	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	8
11	Spero	0	½	0	½	½	0	1	½	0	0	*	½	0	½	1	1	1	7
12	Palmer	½	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	½	*	0	1	1	1	1	6½
13	Winter	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	*	0	0	0	1	5
14	Margolis	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	0	1	*	1	0	1	4½
15-16	Erdeky	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	*	1	1	4
15-16	Jenkines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	*	1	4
17	Goerlich*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	0

* Goerlich withdrew after losing his first five games. His remaining games were scored as wins for his opponents.

The September-October 1924 issue of the *American Chess Bulletin* was devoted almost completely to articles on Torre, his playing style and triumphs. Hermann Helms and C.S. Howell even compared him to Capablanca, and filled page after page with praise for the young Mexican master. Here is what Howell had to say:

A NEW CHAMPION

When the publisher of the *American Chess Bulletin* asked me to annotate “briefly” several games by Carlos Torre in Rochester and Detroit, it is possible he selected me because Torre is a Mexican and Mr. Helms knows that I have spent years in Latin-American countries and have a very keen realization that much that is good in the Western Hemisphere lies south of the Rio Grande and that the term American is rightly used as far away as Puntas Arenas.

Americans have every reason to be proud of Carlos Torre as they already had reason to be proud of Capablanca. Both of these chessists are American and products of Western Hemisphere progress. They and the Latin Americans who will surely come after them in chess affairs are very welcome, too, especially now when there are no signs whatever of young North Americans coming very far forward in the royal game.

I have played over Torre's games very carefully and with great interest. They show very clearly that he is developing a real chess talent. It is very evident that he has imagination and skill and that he possesses self-confidence and courage of conviction. He lacks technique and for the sake of his chess future, I hope that he will not hasten too much in cultivating it. Acquired naturally and as a result of the experience of play, technique is a valuable asset but the attempt to acquire it before one's ability to combine has been fully developed has stopped permanently the improvement of a good man young players.

At the end of the games annotated by Howell, he wrote "Altogether a study of the Mexican's games leaves one with the impression that he may go far. There is a directness and energy about his play that I have not seen in the games of other young American players for some years and that is very refreshing as a change from the many attempts I have seen the part of other young players to imitate (usually without understanding) the so-called hyper-modern style of play. Evidently Torre has no fetishes and no dogmatic notions. It is to be hoped that he will let the 'Books' alone for a while and go on developing his natural style. The technique will come when he needs it."

Due to the high caliber of Torre's play in the Western Championship, we have chosen ten of his games from that event, games which show the vigorous and artistic style of the young Yucatecan, his impressive imagination and characteristic abundance of ideas. At only 19 years of age, quite young for a chess master of that time, he had reached an extraordinary level of ability and maturity.

In mid-December, an exhibition game between Carlos Torre and Morris Schapiro came about under unusual circumstances. On December 15th it was announced at the Manhattan Chess Club that Torre would give a simultaneous exhibition against all comers. It was expected that there would be 30 or 40 opponents, but when only 10 turned up, the club directors decided to change from a simul to an exhibition game between Torre and Schapiro, who had finished second, ½-point ahead of Torre, in the club championship some months earlier. In retrospect it was a providential decision, as it resulted in an excellent and exciting game in which Torre delighted the spectators with a series of brilliant

combinations culminated by a Queen sacrifice. A true jewel of the art of attack. Even the greatest attacking masters are seldom able to realize a proper Queen sacrifice more than every ten years or so in serious tournament or match games. Nevertheless, Torre would do this with much greater frequency. In the Western Championship, for example, he sacrificed his Queen in two games, against Reshevsky and against N.W. Banks. Even at the highest levels of serious competition he was able to do this, as shown by his brilliancies against Lasker and Verlinsky at Moscow 1925.

Torre's attitude toward exhibition games was to seek, above all, to delight the spectators with an interesting, exciting, yet high-quality game. For Torre, this kind of chess was entertainment. In contrast, his opponents often were more tense and cautious, taking few risks, treating it as they would a decisive tournament game. Oddly, Torre's more light-hearted approach brought out a more agile, fluent style than in his tournament games and he in fact won every exhibition game he ever played, except for two with Reuben Fine in 1934.

Late in December 1924, an exhibition game was arranged between Torre and the Franco-Polish master Dawid Janowski, who had been living in New York since 1915. Janowski had once been one of the top players in the world, even playing a world championship match with Emanuel Lasker in 1910. Though Lasker had defeated him soundly, and his skills had clearly declined since then, Janowski was still an opponent worthy of respect. The exhibition game was held at the Manhattan Chess Club on December 28. Torre had the black pieces and played his favorite variation of the French Defense. The game was adjourned, and resumed the next day. Torre finally prevailed in a hard fight of 62 moves.

The great publicity given to Torre's victories in the *American Chess Bulletin* soon opened a new chapter in his career, as his games and style rapidly became known in Europe. First veteran German grandmaster Siegbert Tarrasch and later, former world champion Emanuel Lasker, commented positively on Torre's style of play. From Berlin, Dr. Lasker sent a lengthy letter to Herman Helms, editor of the *ACB*. The letter, dated October 25, was published in the November 1924 issue. Lasker touched on various matters, responding to some attacks by Capablanca, discussing philosophy, and finally mentioning Torre. He wrote: "C. S. Howell's article on Carlos Torre hits the nail on the head: Carlos Torre's games are interesting, his style is promising, his combinations are chessy."

At the start of 1925 an important international competition was announced, to be held in the German city of Baden-Baden. Dr. Tarrasch, age 62, would serve as tournament organizer and director. It was hoped to bring together for this event all the best chess players of the world. Alekhine, Rubinstein, Nimzovich,

and Spielmann confirmed their participation, but Dr. Lasker announced he would not take part. Invitations were extended to the most eminent New World players: Capablanca, then world champion, and Frank J. Marshall. When Capablanca declined, it was decided to invite in his place either Torre or Kupchik. To make the final choice, a match between the two was organized. In addition to the tournament bid and expenses for travel to Germany, the winner would collect \$500. The match was set at ten games, to begin the 3rd of March, games to be played on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday in two sessions from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM. In the event of adjournment, play was to be resumed the same day, going from 8:00 PM until midnight, if necessary. Naturally, both masters were eager to win the right to attend such a strong tournament. Ironically, this very desire to win, and the unambivalent “either-or” nature of the situation, caused Torre for the first time to think in terms of achieving a definite result and playing with premeditated caution, rather than give free rein to his natural artistic qualities.

This attempt to control his imaginative talents and change his concept of “chess as art” to one of “chess as competitive sport” caused Torre to play in a strange, artificial way against an opponent he would in other circumstances probably defeat with relative ease. Kupchik won the first game and Torre the second. Then came four consecutive draws characterized by positional struggle and great caution on both sides. Then, unexpectedly, on March 13th, as preparations were under way for the seventh game, came a telegram from Dr. Tarrasch saying that two places in the tournament had been reserved, for Marshall and Torre. Naturally these tidings did not please Abraham Kupchik, but he had no choice but to accept the final decision of the Baden-Baden organizers.

Following the suspension of their match, Torre and Kupchik both took part in New York Metropolitan League play, a club team competition. As luck would have it, eight days after the end of the match, they faced each other as first board for their respective clubs. The game excited considerable interest, as it was seen as a sort of unofficial decision to their inconclusive match. This time Torre, free of external pressures, defeated Kupchik in a beautiful game.

At the end of March 1925, Torre and Marshall left for Germany aboard the Cunard liner *Antonia*. During the trip the two became fast friends and played a great many informal games in which each tried out various openings and experimented with unusual systems of attack and defense. In one of these Torre tried out the double-edged line 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 ♗c6!?, which he would later use at Baden-Baden against the German master Sämisch. In one blitz game Marshall tried to refute this strange move outright and lost in nine moves:

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 ♗c6 3.d5 ♗e5 4.b3(?) e6! 5.♙b2 ♙b4+ 6.♗d2?? ♗e4(-+)
7.♙c1 ♜f6 8.♗f3 ♗g4 9.♞b1 ♗exf2, 0-1.**

White's Queen is lost in three more moves: 10.♞c2 ♗e3 11.♞b2 ♙c3 12.♞a3 ♗c2+.

The opening ceremonies of the Baden-Baden tournament were held April 15th, 1925. Play was conducted in the lavish salons of the city's casino. The prize fund, in German gold marks, was: 1st place, DM 1,500; 2nd, 1,000; 3rd, 700; 4th 500; and 5th, 300. Also, players would receive 20 marks for every game won and 10 for every draw in addition, of course, to meals and lodging in first-class hotels. The tournament concluded May 15th in an impressive victory for the future world champion, Alexander Alekhine. Carlos Torre played somewhat nervously in his international debut. While attaining a respectable 10th place (out of 21), he clearly was more concerned with not losing rather than trying to win.

Baden-Baden, 17 April to 14 May, 1925:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	total
1	Alekhine	*	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	16
2	Rubinstein	½	*	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	14½
3	Sämisch	0	½	*	1	½	0	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	13½
4	Bogoljubow	½	½	0	*	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	½	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	13
5-6	Tartakower	½	1	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	½	1	12½
5-6	Marshall	0	½	1	1	½	*	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	1	12½
7	Rabinovich	0	½	½	1	½	0	*	½	0	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	½	½	1	12
8	Grünfeld	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	*	½	0	0	1	½	1	0	1	½	0	1	1	1	11½
9	Nimzovich	0	½	0	0	0	½	1	½	*	½	1	0	½	1	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	11
10	Torre	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	0	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	10½
11-13	Réti	0	½	0	0	½	1	½	1	0	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	0	1	0	1	10
11-13	Treybal	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	1	1	½	*	½	1	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	10
11-13	Spielmann	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	0	½	*	1	1	0	1	1	½	1	1	10
14	Carls	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	*	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	9
15	Yates	0	0	0	1	0	½	½	1	½	0	½	1	0	1	*	0	0	0	1	0	1	8
16-17	Tarrasch	0	½	1	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	1	0	1	*	0	½	0	0	½	7½
16-17	Rosselli	½	0	½	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	0	0	1	1	*	1	0	½	½	7½
18	Colle	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	½	1	0	0	½	1	½	0	*	0	1	1	7
19	Mieses	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	1	1	*	1	1	6½
20	Thomas	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	½	0	0	1	1	½	0	0	*	½	6
21	te Kolsté	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	*	1½

The Baden-Baden area's newspapers regularly published games and accounts of the tournament, along with interesting facts and opinions about the players. For example, on April 28th, after the ninth round, a local journal discussed Torre in the following terms:

The American prodigy Carlos Torre is without doubt an excellent player of whom we will surely hear much in the future, but he has, nevertheless, an obvious character defect, in that he plays too fearfully and nervously, offering draws just when the game is reaching its decisive point, even in positions of advantage for him. He has now gained 5½ points in the first 9 games. We would hope that with the years he is able to master his nervousness and play with more self-confidence and with greater facility.

Immediately after the Baden-Baden event, many of its players moved on to the Czechoslovakian city of Marienbad (also known as Mariánské Lázně) for another tournament which began only eight days later. Though its luster was somewhat dimmed by the absence of Alekhine, the field was of similar quality, with 11 of Baden-Baden's players also among the 16 at Marienbad.



The tournament ended with Nimzovich and Rubinstein equal 1st. Torre improved greatly to share 3rd and 4th places with Marshall, who had won five games, drawn 10 and lost none, the only undefeated player. Carlos Torre won six, drew eight, and lost one, to Spielmann in the 13th round.

It was gratifying to see Torre return to his natural style of play: more vigorous, bold, and enterprising. Ironically, at Baden-Baden he attempted to play safely and cautiously, and lost four of his 20 games, while at Marienbad he returned to his natural energetic risk-taking style, thereby losing only one of 15 games. As the Mexican saying goes, "When Juan imitates Pedro he is neither Juan nor Pedro."

The Marienbad tournament ended June 8, 1925. Over the next four or five months Carlos Torre was relatively inactive, taking a rest from serious chess. He mostly played exhibition games and simultaneous displays in various parts of the United States, and annotated games for the ACB. Then he and Marshall sailed across the Atlantic again.

Marienbad, 20 May to 8 June, 1925:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	total
1	Nimzovich	*	1	0	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	11
2	Rubinstein	0	*	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
3-4	Marshall	1	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	10
3-4	Torre	½	½	½	*	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	½	½	½	½	1	10
5-6	Tartakower	½	0	½	½	*	1	0	1	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	9½
5-6	Réti	0	½	½	0	0	*	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9½
7	Spielmann	½	0	½	1	1	0	*	0	½	½	0	½	1	1	1	1	8½
8	Grünfeld	0	½	½	0	0	1	1	*	1	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	8
9	Yates	½	0	0	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	1	½	½	½	1	1	7
10	Opocensky	0	1	0	0	½	0	½	½	0	*	0	½	1	½	1	1	6½
11-12	Przepiórka	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	½	0	1	*	1	0	1	0	0	6
11-12	Thomas	0	0	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	1	1	0	6
13-14	Sämisch	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	1	½	*	0	1	1	5½
13-14	Janowski	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	½	0	0	1	*	1	1	5½
15	Michell	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	0	0	*	1	3½
16	Haida	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	*	2½

On November 10 began the great Moscow 1925 tournament, in which Lasker, Capablanca, Bogoljubow, Rubinstein, Réti, and practically all the world's best players with the exception of Alekhine, took part. Marshall and Torre were invited. The tournament would be a much stronger event than Baden-Baden or Marienbad, due not only to the participation of Lasker and Capablanca, but also of the best Russian chess players, who were just beginning to reach their later extraordinarily high level of mastery. Noteworthy Soviet masters included Romanovsky, Levenfish, the veteran Dus-Chotimirsky and USSR champion Boris Verlinsky.

The Moscow tournament was won in emphatic and surprising style by the Ukrainian master Efim Bogoljubow, who had the advantage of prior familiarity with the Russian players, whom he dominated (+7 =2 -0) and against whom he gained the majority of his points. Lasker gained 2nd place with 10 wins, 8 draws and 2 losses (to Levenfish and Torre). Capablanca had a very weak start, playing some games like a sleepwalker. Belatedly, he awoke and finished like a cyclone, winning seven and drawing two of his last nine games, but even so he could not overtake Lasker and much less Bogoljubow, though he did have the satisfaction of defeating the latter in a brilliant game.

Moscow, 10 November to 9 December, 1925:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	total
1	Bogoljubow	*	½	0	½	1	1	0	½	1	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15½
2	Lasker	½	*	½	1	½	0	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	0	½	1	½	½	1	1	14
3	Capablanca	1	½	*	1	1	½	½	½	½	0	1	0	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	1	13½
4	Marshall	½	0	0	*	½	0	1	1	½	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	½	0	½	1	1	12½
5-6	Tartakower	0	½	0	½	*	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	12
5-6	Torre	0	1	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	½	0	1	½	½	1	½	0	1	1	1	1	12
7-8	Réti	1	½	½	0	0	½	*	1	0	1	1	½	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	½	11½
7-8	Romanovsky	½	0	½	0	½	1	0	*	1	0	½	1	0	0	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	11½
9-10	Grünfeld	0	½	½	½	½	½	1	0	*	1	½	½	½	0	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	10½
9-10	I.-Zhenevsky	0	0	1	1	½	½	0	1	0	*	½	0	1	½	0	½	1	½	½	1	1	10½
11	Bohatirchuk	½	0	0	0	½	1	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	10
12-14	Verlinsky	0	0	1	0	0	0	½	0	½	1	½	*	1	1	1	½	0	1	½	1	0	9½
12-14	Spielmann	0	0	½	0	0	½	1	1	½	0	½	0	*	1	1	½	½	1	½	0	1	9½
12-14	Rubinstein	½	0	½	0	0	½	½	1	1	½	0	0	0	*	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	9½
15	Levenfish	0	1	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	1	½	0	0	0	*	1	1	½	½	1	½	9
16	Rabinovich	0	½	½	0	0	½	0	0	0	½	0	½	½	1	0	*	1	½	1	1	1	8½
17	Yates	0	0	0	½	0	1	0	0	0	0	½	1	½	1	0	0	*	1	½	0	1	7
18-19	Sämisch	0	½	0	1	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	*	0	1	0	6½
18-19	Gothilf	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	0	½	1	*	0	½	6½
20	D.-Chotimirsky	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	*	1	6
21	Zubarev	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	0	1	0	0	½	0	0	1	½	0	*	4½

In contrast, Torre had a phenomenal start, standing clear first after nine rounds. Later he lost to Bogoljubow in a very instructive game and fell back a bit. Even so, entering the 13th round the standings at the top were: 1. Bogoljubow 9½-2½, 2. Torre 8½-2½, 3. Lasker 8-3, 4. Marshall 7½-3½, 5. Tartakower 7-4, 6. Ilyin-Zhenevsky 7-5, 7. Rubinstein 6½-4½, 8. Capablanca 6½-5½. In the last rounds, Torre gave way under the nervous pressure and could not keep up with the pace set by Bogoljubow and Lasker. The Mexican lost inexplicably to players in the lower half of the table and fell to 5th place, being overtaken by Capablanca and by Marshall, who also had a good closing rush. Still, Torre's overall performance fully merited the high praise it received in the Soviet press, and he produced in the process some worthy additions to any "greatest games" anthology.

Torre remained in Moscow for the New Year festivities, and later was invited to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) to play in a small quadrangular tournament with three of the best chess players of that beautiful city. A professor of the University of Leningrad, Konstantin Derzavin, proposed to Torre that he write a short essay

on chess development, or on the educational value of chess. Torre spent two weeks writing. The manuscript was quickly published in Russian under the title *Carlos Torre and Latin American Chess Creativity*. Later this was the basis for a booklet which Torre published in Spanish as *El Desarrollo de la Habilidad en el Ajedrez*, and in English under the name *Development of Chess Ability*. At Leningrad, Torre won both games against Abram Model, who later would be mentor to future world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. His games against Yakov Rokhlin were drawn, while Solomon Gotthilf had the opportunity to avenge his loss to Torre at Moscow by taking both games. It is clear that Moscow had tired Torre more than it had Gotthilf. At Leningrad, Torre also was more concerned with trying out certain experiments with closed opening systems, and with other ideas that he would later detail in his booklet.

After more than ten years' absence, Torre returned to the land of his birth, Mexico. He arrived at Veracruz the 19th of April, 1926, where he was received with great warmth and enthusiasm by the local people. Two days later he moved on to Mexico City, where he stayed more than two months. At the end of July he went north from there to Zacatecas, in central Mexico, and later he traveled southeast to Progreso and Mérida (his birthplace) on the Yucatán peninsula.

During his stay in the capital, Torre played in another double-round quadrangular tournament with three of the best chess players of the Federal District¹. This time his opposition was considerably less dangerous than in Leningrad, and Torre won all six of his games, most with relative ease.

Mexican Championship, Mexico City 1926:

		1	2	3	4	total
1	Torre	**	11	11	11	6
2	Araiza	○○	**	½ 1	1 ½	3
3	Soto Larrea	○○	½ ○	**	1 ○	1½
4	Freyria	○○	○ ½	1	**	1½

Torre spent almost four months in Mexico. Finally, on August 11 1926 he took ship at the port city of Progreso and sailed back to the United States aboard the Norwegian steamer *Gunni*. After a few days in New Orleans he traveled by train to Chicago, to take part in a strong tournament. This included many of the best North American players as well as Hungarian grandmaster Geza Maróczy, then living in the U.S. The front page of the September-October ACB reported:

¹ Mexico's equivalent of the USA's District of Columbia.

Chicago, accustomed to doing things in a big way, surpassed herself in the matter of the 27th annual convention of the Western Chess Association, held in that city from August 21 to September 2 in the Red Room on the 19th floor of the Hotel La Salle, and the result was a memorable meeting which will take high rank in American chess history. Aside from the several tournaments of the first rank held in this country, no more important competition has ever been held here than the national masters' tournament in which the best talent available, 13 players in all, competed ...

After what may properly be termed a hair-raising finish, Frank J. Marshall emerged as the winner of the first prize of \$650 in the masters tournament ...

During the first few rounds of the masters' tournament the pace was set by Charles Jaffe of New York, and A.J. Fink of San Francisco also gave a good account of himself. Both Marshall and Maróczy were in fine fettle and early gave promise of finishing well up in the list. Torre started poorly by losing to Jaffe in the opening round, but then settled down to serious work and did not lose again until the thirteenth and final round. At that time the Mexican, with a lead of half a point, seemed to be the likely winner, but the cup of victory was snatched from his lips at the very last moment.

Going into the last round, Torre held the lead, but then he unexpectedly stumbled against German-American master Edward Lasker and finished equal second (with Maróczy), ½-point behind Marshall.

Western Masters Tournament, Chicago 1926:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	total
1	Marshall	*	o	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	o	1	1	1	8½
2-3	Torre	1	*	1	½	o	½	1	o	½	1	½	1	1	8
2-3	Maróczy	o	o	*	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	8
4-5	Kupchik	o	½	½	*	1	½	1	1	o	1	1	o	1	7½
4-5	Jaffe	½	1	½	o	*	½	o	1	1	1	1	1	o	7½
6	Kashdan	o	½	o	½	½	*	1	1	½	o	1	1	1	7
7	Factor	½	o	o	o	1	o	*	1	1	½	½	1	1	6½
8	Ed. Lasker	½	1	½	o	o	o	o	*	1	1	1	o	1	6
9	Fink	o	½	o	1	o	½	o	o	*	1	½	½	1	5
10	Banks	1	o	o	o	o	1	½	o	o	*	½	½	1	4½
11	Chajes	o	½	o	o	o	o	½	o	½	½	*	1	1	4
12	Showalter	o	o	o	1	o	o	o	1	½	½	o	*	o	3
13	Isaacs	o	o	½	o	1	o	o	o	o	o	o	1	*	2½

After this tournament, Torre returned to New York, where he suffered a nervous breakdown which put an end to his short but brilliant career. This episode is discussed in more detail in the narrative following Game 106, and in the 1927 *Anahuac* interview with Torre in Chapter III. The November 1926 issue of the *ACB* reported on page 140:

On October 23, Carlos Torre, Mexican chess champion, sailed from New York on board the steamship *Monterey* of the Ward line bound for his home in Mérida, Yucatán, by way of Havana and Progreso. The young international expert returned to this country in August in order to play in the national tournament at Chicago, where he finished second on a level with Maróczy and just below Marshall. Since his return to New York, Torre has been in poor health and has gone home to rejoin his parents. In the milder climate of his native land he hopes for early recovery.

Antonio Canto, another native of Mérida, and Emilio Deymeier, both members of the Philidor Chess Club of New York, were passengers on the same ship. Before leaving Mexico City, where he won the national championship in a tournament, Torre obtained strong backing for a match with Marshall for the Pan-American championship, but negotiations that were set afoot were discontinued.

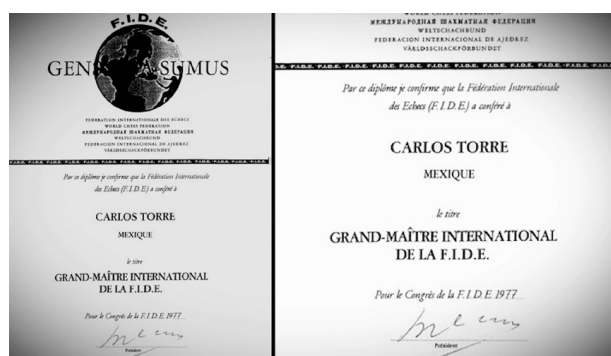
After returning to Mexico, Torre lived for a while on a friend's ranch in the state of Tamaulipas, then lived several years in the city of Monterrey, capital of the state of Nuevo León. He was employed there by his brother, a pharmacist, working in his drugstore. For more about Torre's post-1926 life in Mexico, see Chapters III and IV; for now we give just a brief summary.

Later, around 1950, Torre moved to Mexico City. Except for a few people, such as chess master Alejandro Báez, who treated him with sincerity and friendship, most were indifferent or interested only in taking advantage of him. Torre took the occasional odd job, but lived mostly in poverty. He had little or no concern for money, women, or mundane pleasures, and developed an interest in Buddhism. There were recurrences of his nervous breakdowns, sometimes requiring hospitalization. Around 1960 he left Mexico City and returned to the town of his birth.

Finally, in 1973, his friend Báez arranged for him to enter a home for the aged in Mérida. There he lived in clean and peaceful surroundings. An amusing anecdote stems from those years. Torre would receive the occasional visitor, some like Báez true friends, others merely local players who were just interested in getting their games analyzed for free. Torre became increasingly annoyed with these. One such, a minor master but a very conceited man, insisted on showing Torre

his latest “brilliancy.” Torre reluctantly agreed, on condition that upon spotting his first mistake, the session was over. The vain master, confident he had made no error, agreed. The game, with him playing Black, began 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗g8. “What kind of a move is that, ...♗g8?” Torre broke in severely. “Why,

it’s a move of great subtlety, even Nimzovich played it!” came the indignant reply. “Ah,” said Torre calmly, “but Nimzovich was a genius; he could afford to make such bizarre moves and still win. You and I are just ordinary people. Therefore we must respect the principles of development.” End of analysis.



Torre's GM certificate (screen print from the film *Torre x Torre*)

In contrast to the way he was lionized in 1926, Torre in his final years was little remembered by his country, except in Mérida and the Yucatán, where he had the status of a beloved elder statesman, and in Mexico City, where he still had friends. The international chess community still remembered him intermittently. He had been granted the honorary title of International Master by FIDE in 1963, and in late 1977 his title was upgraded to the more fitting one of International Grandmaster. However, this news was reported little if at all in Mexico, and to the authors' knowledge, Torre never learned of it in the few months remaining to him. Given his outlook on life and the game he might not have cared, deserved though the honor was. Torre died in Mérida on March 19, 1978. For more on that, see “Don Carlos Torre Repetto: A Chess Player Until Death” in Chapter V.

Chapter II

The Games Section

Analytical Methodology and Technical Details

Before getting to the games themselves, a description of our analytical method is in order. As a scientist must explain his experimental technique in a detailed way that will allow others to replicate it and check the validity of his results, so we do here with our methodology.

All games here, and any notes by human annotators, were examined using Stockfish 14, among the strongest of all analytical engines, rated about 3500 Elo, running on a Dell Inspiron 17 7000 Series with an Intel Core i7-7500U CPU at 2.90 GHz with 16 GB RAM and a 64-bit operating system. The games were accessed via ChessBase 14 with the engine running in “kibitzer” mode.

Informator symbols (*e.g.* $+-$, $-+$, \pm , \mp , etc.) are used sometimes, but these can be somewhat vague, and so we have generally used the engine’s numerical assessments — *e.g.* 28. Bf5 (+2.58), or 35. Qxf3 Bg7 (-2.25) — to indicate the status of a position, as we consider this more precise and informative. The numbers represent Stockfish’s evaluation of the position to the nearest hundredth of a pawn, *e.g.* a difference of exactly one pawn, with no other relevant non-material differences, has the value +1.00 when in White’s favor, or -1.00 when in Black’s. A position where White is considered better by $3\frac{1}{2}$ pawns (or the equivalent, such as a minor piece) would get the value +3.50, the advantage of a Rook +5.00, etc. With the symbols, a position where White is up Knight for pawn, and another where he’s up a Queen, would both get a “+-”, but there is obviously a big difference. Most evaluations are also followed by a whole number, *e.g.* “+1.57/30”. This means that Stockfish reached a search depth of 30 ply, *i.e.* it looked 30 half-moves beyond the end of the variation. Generally we tried to reach at least 25 ply deep before accepting the evaluation. With very one-sided evaluations the ply depth is usually irrelevant and is not given.

These numbers should not always be taken entirely at face value, especially to the right of the decimal point, and they will vary some from one machine to another, or with the time allowed for analysis, but they are generally valid and

reliable, and serve as useful shorthand for assessments and comparisons that would otherwise require extensive detailed explanation.

Diagrams of actual game positions are in 14-point type, while diagrams of analysis variations are in smaller, 12-point type.

Modern engines such as Stockfish can show supposed masterpieces to be seriously flawed, and make players and analysts of the past look quite bad, somewhat like what the Chief of the Nazgûl described in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*: "Thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shriveled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye."

It is not our intention to devour or shrivel anyone, least of all our hero Torre, for whom we have great admiration and sympathy. We simply aim for analysis that is objectively correct. True, sometimes Stockfish shows that a Torre game did not deserve all the praise it received, but on the other hand it can reveal important, sometimes wonderful possibilities never noticed by the annotators of his day. The point is to find chess truth. Torre himself repeatedly stressed how this was his highest goal. It could not be done in his time, when all analytical engines were inside human skulls. Therefore we like to think he would approve of our using today's technology to come closer to his long-sought, elusive goal.

Game 1

Labatt-Torre

Louisiana Championship, New Orleans 1923

Queen's Gambit Declined [D67]

Leon L. Labatt (1854-1928), a graduate of prestigious Georgetown University, was a prominent New Orleans jurist, and a strong chess amateur who won the Louisiana Championship in 1917. Among his laurels were a 3-1 victory over Adolf Albin in a thematic Evans Gambit match in 1895, a remarkable win over Marshall in 1913,



Leon L. Labatt

That game is worth presenting here.

Labatt-Marshall, New Orleans, 1913:

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.♟xe5 d6 4.♟f3
 ♟xe4 5.c4 d5 6.♟c3 ♟xc3 7.dxc3 ♟e6
 8.♟b3 ♟c6 9.♟xb7 ♟a5 10.♟a6 c6
 11.cxd5 ♟xd5 12.♟e3 ♟e7 13.♟e2 0-0
 14.♟d3 ♟ab8 15.b3 ♟a3 16.♟d1 ♟xd3
 17.♟xd3 ♟b2 18.c4 ♟c3+ 19.♟e2 ♟fe8
 20.h3 ♟bd8 21.g4 c5 22.♟f1 f5 23.♟xc5
 ♟xc4 24.gxf5 ♟b2? 25.fxe6 ♟xd3 26.e7
 ♟d7 27.♟a3 a5

Now begins one of the most extraordinary King walks on record.

28.♟e2! ♟f4+ 29.♟e3! ♟d5+ 30.♟e4!
 ♟f6+ 31.♟f5! ♟d5+ 32.♟e6! ♟b5
 33.♟d8 ♟b4 34.♟xb4 ♟xb4 35.♟hd1 h6
 36.♟e5 ♟h7 37.♟f7 ♟e4 38.♟xe8 ♟b7
 39.♟f8 ♟g5 40.e8♟ ♟h8 41.♟1d7 1-0.

and wins against Lasker and Capablanca in simul and casual games *ca.* 1907-1915. Here we see a changing of the guard as the 18-year-old Torre beats

Labatt, age 69, on his way to becoming state champion himself.

1.d4 d5 2.♟f3

The use of this move, instead of the thematic 2.c4, is usually prompted by two motives:

(a) White wishes to avoid the dubious but contentious Albin Countergambit (2.c4 e5?!) or,

(b) White wishes to walk more tranquil paths, such as the Colle System (2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.e3 c5 4.♟bd2), the Zukertort System (*e.g.* 2.♟f3 e6 3.e3 ♟f6 4.♟d3 c5 5.b3), or the Torre System (2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.♟g5, of which we will see many examples in this book).

2...♟f6 3.c4 e6 4.♟g5?!

In the first decades of the 20th century this move, seemingly so natural,

was recommended and played by Capablanca, who held that White did well to wait until Black moved his c-pawn to either c5 or c6, and that in the latter case the Queen's Knight stood much better on d2 than on c3, the c3 placement being advisable only if Black plays ...c7-c5. According to the great Cuban grandmaster, White should therefore defer the development of his Knight at b1 in favor of 4.♘g5. In contrast, Alekhine strongly criticized 4.♘g5, stating that 4.♘c3 first was correct, as after 4.♘g5 Black plays neither ...c6 nor ...c5, but rather 4...h6!, obliging White to exchange his Bishop, since if 5.♗h4 there follows 5...♗b4+!, and if 5.♗f4, then 5...c5! is a good response.

4...♗e7

An invitation to enter the well-worn paths of the Orthodox Defense. Apart from 4...h6, the text is in fact the only viable alternative in this position; 4...c6? will not do, because then Capablanca's idea 5.♘bd2! works well, and Black cannot enter the famous Cambridge Springs Defense. The Cambridge-style trap attempt 5...♖a5? 6.e3 ♘e4 avails nothing after 7.♗f4. (This book's first edition gave the line 7.♗e2 dxc4 8.♗f4 g5 9.♗c7!, but instead Black can play 8...c3! 9.bxc3 ♘xc3 ♣.)

5.e3 ♘bd7

Or 5...c6? 6.♘bd2! ♘bd7 7.♗d3 dxc4 8.♘xc4! when White has control

over the square e5, as in numerous games of Capablanca's, for example Capablanca-Janowski, New York 1918.

6.♘c3 0-0 7.♖c1

A position seen thousands of times during the first three decades of the 20th century. The principal alternative is 7.♖c2, used various times by Rubinstein with the idea of castling long and later launching a pawn-storm on the King's flank. There were several famous games between Rubinstein and Teichmann with this classic theme. In the late 1930s the Yugoslavian master Pirc discovered that after 7.♖c2 the reply 7...h6! 8.♗h4 c5! is very strong. Also 7.♗d3 is answered by ...c5!, either immediately or after 7...h6 8.♗h4. In contrast, the text move is aimed directly at meeting ...c5 with advantage.

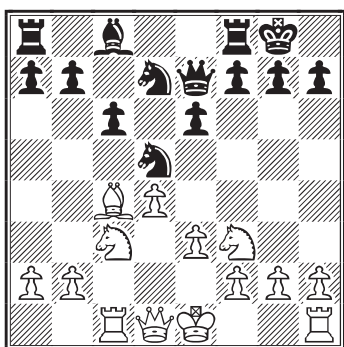
7...c6

The classical reply, probably played first in Zukertort-Schiffers at Frankfurt 1887, then by Steinitz against Lasker in their 1894 title match, four times by Showalter in his 1897 match with Pillsbury, and innumerable times since. Mason essayed it against Marshall at Hannover 1902 (it should be remembered that Mason was the author of the first books Torre studied). Today, it is preferred to insert first the moves 7...h6 8.♗h4 before 8...c6. On the other hand, the so-called "Argentine Variation" 7...a6 was played several times by Alekhine in his 1927 world championship match with Capablanca.

8.♙d3

Rubinstein's move 8.♙c2 was much discussed in the first half of the century. Before 1923 (the year of the present game), Alekhine recommended against 8.♙c2 the reply 8...a6, to which he even appended an exclamation mark in his book *My Best Games of Chess 1908-1923*, game 80. At that time he was unaware of Ståhlberg's strong reply to 8...a6, i.e. 9.c5!. In his second volume of best games, Alekhine had a different opinion (a wise man knows when to change his mind) and gave the correct response as 8...♙e4! (1924-1937, game 89). This strong reply was introduced to high-level international play in Grünfeld-Wolf, Mährisch-Ostrau 1923, though it had been seen nearly two years earlier in Illa-Reca, Montevideo 1922.

8...dxc4 9.♙xc4 ♘d5 10.♙xe7
♙xe7

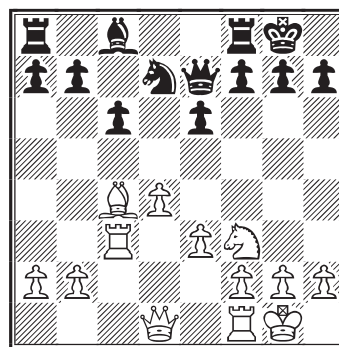


11.0-0

An interesting alternative is 11.♞e4!?, a favorite of Alekhine for a time (e.g. 1924-37, Game 7 vs. Treybal). Even so, Alekhine himself later

recognized that 11.0-0 was more correct and less risky. In the 6th game of the 1927 Buenos Aires match, Alekhine played 11.♞e4, to which Capablanca responded 11...♙b4+ 12.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13.♞xd2 ♞d8. However, in the 16th game Capablanca found the most accurate defense: 11...♞5f6! 12.♞g3 ♙b4+ 13.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 14.♞xd2 b6! 15.e4 ♞d8 16.e5 ♞e8, which produced a draw in 24 moves.

11...♞x3 12.♞x3

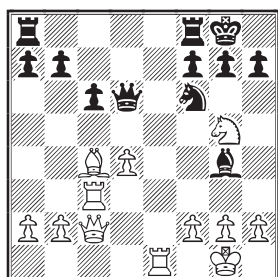


This is the critical position of the old Orthodox Defense, rarely encountered these days, but which at the time of this game was practically a chess player's daily bread. The position is ripe for change because Black can free his game with 12...e5, which he usually does at this point.

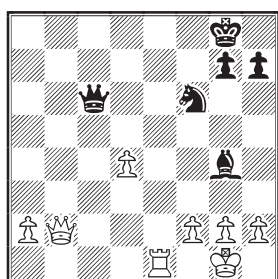
12...b6

A somewhat passive move, though on the whole not bad. Dusting off the theory of those bygone days, one finds the normal line to be 12...e5 13.♙c2 e4 14.♞d2 ♞f6 15.♞c1, or alternatively 13...exd4 (somewhat better than

13...e4) 14.e×d4! ♟f6 15.♞e1 ♜d6
16.♞g5 ♞g4 (??; better 16...g6),



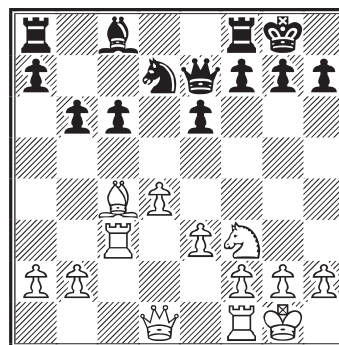
followed usually by 17.♞b3 or 17.♞g3. It is surprising that this was accepted theory for decades; it is not until Müssig-Müller, Wallertheim 1993, that ChessBase shows White playing the refutation 17.♞×f7+! (17.♞×f7 works equally well) 17...♞×f7 18.♞×f7 ♜×f7 19.♞b3+ ♜f8 20.♞×b7 ♞b8 21.♞×a7 ♞×b2 22.♞×c6! ♜×c6 23.♞a3+ ♜g8 24.♞×b2,



and with ♞+5♞ vs. ♞+♞+2♞, White should have a winning endgame.

The text move 12...b6 appears to have been a favorite of the young Torre (we will see it again in Game 12, Lear-Torre). However, though the Mexican master won both games, it is clear he was by no means content with the passive positions thus obtained. After the Lear game, Torre never again returned to the

Orthodox Defense, and it is evident that it was ill-suited to his enterprising and vigorous style. Returning to the game:



13.♞e2

The normal line, played also by Lear in Game 12. In the same position, however, Capablanca preferred 13.♞c2 (e.g. vs. H. Steiner, Budapest 1928). That game continued 13...c5 (13...♞b7 is also playable) 14.d×c5 ♞×c5 15.b4 ♞a6?! 16.a3, and the Cuban won in 37 moves. Correct was 15...♞d7! 16.a3 ♞f6, followed by ...♞b7, with equality. The idea behind 13.♞e2, logically, is to reply to ...♞b7 with 14.♞a6!, a well-known maneuver intending an exchange of light-squared Bishops, so as later to exploit the weaknesses of those squares. Many games have been won using this simple strategy introduced by Oldrich Duras in the early 1900s.

13...♞d8

A move never played before, according to the databases. Deserving attention was 13...a5!?, so as to prevent White's planned maneuver 14.♞a6. Also possible, albeit more passive, was 13...♞b7, a move that had been played