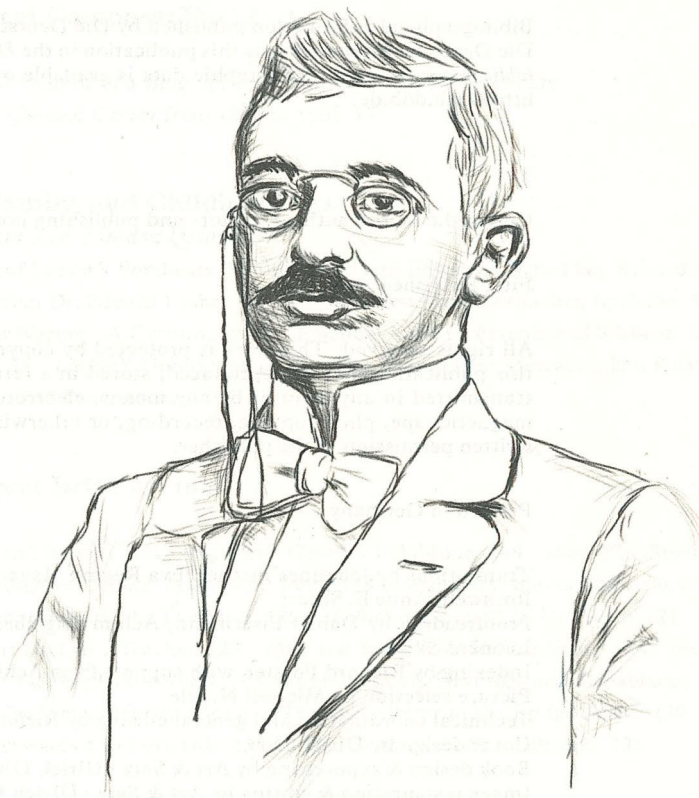


# EMANUEL LASKER

VOLUME I STRUGGLE AND VICTORIES  
WORLD CHESS CHAMPION FOR 27 YEARS

EDITED BY  
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Exzelsior Verlag  
Berlin 2018

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Bibliographical Information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek. Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the *Deutsche Nationalbibliografie*; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>.

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First Published 2018

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Printed in Germany

Translations by Johannes Fischer, Eva Regina Magacs, Stephen Rothwell, Anna E. Stuart  
Proofreading by Daniel Eisermann, Achim Engelhart, John Hilbert, Leonard Skinner  
Indexing by Richard Forster, with support from Achim Engelhart  
Picture selection by Michael Negele  
Technical coordination and general editing by Richard Forster  
Cover design by Ulrich Dirr  
Book design & typesetting by Art & Satz · Ulrich Dirr, Munich  
Image restoration & editing by Art & Satz · Ulrich Dirr, Munich  
Printed and bound by Druckerei Steinmeier, Deiningen  
Published by Exzelsior Verlag GmbH, Berlin

ISBN 978-3-935800-09-9

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# WELCOME TO THE READER

**S***implex sigillum veri*—THE SIMPLE IS the hallmark of truth. So went one of Emanuel Lasker’s tenets, which among other things he enlarged upon in his work *Das Begreifen der Welt* (The Comprehension of the World). Personally I only later devoted myself to the philosophical writings of Lasker, since in my youth the study of the second chess world champion’s games at first had priority. The biography of Lasker by Jacques Hannak was the hub and fulcrum of my then-fascination with Lasker. I still remember today how proud I was, as a sixteen-year-old “world comprehender” in training, to have acquired an edition of this appreciation of Lasker at, for me, an astronomical sum. Despite a foreword by Albert Einstein and many references to Lasker’s life, I always had the feeling that there must be more material about Lasker. I never suspected that approximately forty years later the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft (Emanuel Lasker Society) would offer me the opportunity to participate as a supporter of the work now in hand.

Chess and the preparation for the next human opponent are today dominated by computers to the point where even the current world champion Magnus Carlsen is compelled to constantly search for playable strategies beyond the established theory. The opponent is persistently confronted with unknown problems so as to force upon him a battle of minds, in which the better player might (hopefully) win. Lasker modeled this style of play in his long chess career and in the process, trusting in his prowess and common sense, he never shunned the battle. At that he was still brilliant in old age. The young group of today’s super grandmasters carries forward with their playing style—whether consciously or unconsciously—

the legacy that Lasker once co-founded. His success rested on the understanding of those approaches and faculties of the human being, which Lasker also taught and practiced outside of chess. Therefore, even in the computer age, the “Begreifen der Welt” of and with Lasker is worthwhile.

Lasker’s personality in all its varied facets left behind numerous “heritages,” which could not all be addressed by the monograph *Emanuel Lasker—Denker, Weltenbürger, Schachweltmeister*, commissioned in 2009 by our society. It is all the more delightful that a new Lasker trilogy continues this legacy independently, introducing new insights from old and new sources into the study and exploration of Lasker’s work. It is surely a great challenge for each publisher and author to take on the multifaceted creativity of Lasker, which demands skill, courage, and self-confidence. Simple truths will hardly be found here. One fact is certain for me personally: delving into Lasker is worthwhile on all levels.

In the foreword to the monograph of 2009, my friend Stefan Hansen described in very personal terms how this epic work came about back then. For me, one of the central themes is that the common struggles through trials and tribulations, disappointments, and successes have led in the end not only to an excellent publication, but also to enduring friendships. This unifying element characterizes the entire time of my board activity in the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft. Since 2001, I am indebted to this post for many enriching friendships with numerous “Kulturfreunde” (friends with a common interest in cultural matters), which would not have existed without Lasker and the common interest in his life. This privilege I share with

many members. We all owe this enrichment to the untiring commitment of my friend and fellow board member Paul Werner Wagner, without whom there would be no Lasker Gesellschaft. In the course of about fifty years his personal destiny has been connected much, much closer to his engagement with Emanuel Lasker. Therefore it fills me with pride that now, with the support of our society, the first volume of this new trilogy is available. In the universal language of English, this trilogy will address itself on all levels to the cosmopolitan man Emanuel Lasker.

My hope is that this publication will present the opportunity for a myriad of chess and culture enthusiasts worldwide to learn still more, with enjoyment and intellectual gain, about Lasker and his activities. No year could be deemed better suited for publication of the first volume than 2018, the 150th year since Lasker's birth, which is celebrated worldwide as the "Lasker Year." It is thus a high honor and distinction that the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft, founded in 2001 and at 17 years not

even "of age," should be permitted to support this impressive project and accompany it with this foreword.

For me personally the publication of this work is an important occasion, and at this juncture I congratulate my friend Dr. Michael Negele and his two co-editors, Dr. Richard Forster and Raj Tischbierek. Without Michael as the prime mover, and without his indefatigable enthusiasm, this work would have been inconceivable. But only Richard's language skills and editorial precision made this English edition possible in the first place. Without the willingness of Raj to assume the publishing risk for the complete edition of all three volumes through his Exzelsior Publishing House this work would not exist. So let us be happy that we now hold in our hands, and can enjoy, the dream become book of publishers and authors. For that, a special thanks is due to all contributors, which in the name of the entire board and of all members of the Lasker Gesellschaft I wish to convey wholeheartedly on this occasion, full of anticipation to read this collection.

Thomas Weischede  
*Board member of the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft*  
Berlin, August 2018

# FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

**S**ERENDIPITY ... IS A WORD RARELY used in German. It describes the random occurrence of fortunate and unexpected discoveries during the search for usually something totally different. Michael Negele used the term in *KARL*, no. 1/2008, and made it the headline of the report on his findings in the Lasker Scrapbooks of the Cleveland Public Library in Ohio.

Although it may not be especially imaginative at this place to resort to this word, it nonetheless forces itself on one because the story that finally led to the Lasker monograph was nothing but a succession of fortuitous and unexpected incidents.

At the beginning of my personal convergence to Emanuel Lasker was a conversation with my wife Sandra. She wanted to know what was so fascinating about this Lasker that caused me to become so strongly involved with the board of directors of the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft (Emanuel Lasker Society). Somewhat confounded for an impromptu explanation, I glimpsed a paperback that a publisher had given me a few years before. Unheeded, it had disappeared in the bookcase, and I had actually completely forgotten it: *Emanuel Lasker—Schach, Philosophie, Wissenschaft* (Chess, Philosophy, Science). Impulsively I opened it and discovered, right at the front, a quote of Lasker's from his *Philosophie des Unvollendbar* (Philosophy of the Unattainable), which in a way also describes my own life's journey.

There exists in all aspirations a quiet progress, which is compelling through its unpretentiousness. The public does not notice it because it does not clamor for attention, nor is it conspicuous in any other way. It is not "ingenious," as this term is commonly un-

derstood, and its successes, as great as they may be, seem taken for granted. Its technique is very simple: work, which immerses itself into each detail.

My resolution to dedicate myself more intensively to this Dr. Lasker sprang from this accidental discovery.

Via the Lasker Gesellschaft I had become acquainted with grandmaster Raj Tischbierek in autumn of 2004. He shortly thereafter invited me to attend the German Individual Chess Championship of February 2005 in Altenkirchen. There I met Michael Negele, who more or less incidentally had arranged a meeting with Tischbierek for the weekend.

We conversed about chess history, and Negele recommended to me Richard Forster's 972 page work *Amos Burn*. When I acquired this book, the thought instantaneously occurred to me that such a monumental work should also exist about Lasker. Michael Negele seized upon this *idée fixe*: "When the funding is ensured, the contents will be taken care of!"

No later than October 2005 we quickly ascertained that my part, which beforehand was considered the difficult one, was rather infinitesimal measured against the immense effort that Michael, as "Lasker project manager," had taken upon himself.

In February 2006, (not totally) by chance Richard Forster was in Berlin as a guest of the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft. Whatever induced Richard back then to be the third in our band, he has not revealed it to me to this day. Certainly he must have at times cursed this decision during his countless late shifts and weekend work, however he never gave up.

The fact that the German Lasker monograph could be produced was at that time solely

due to the untiring work of my friends Michael Negele and Richard Forster. It was they who chose the authors, kept in touch with them, and combined the experts' contributions into a unique synopsis of Emanuel Lasker. They were surely often on the brink of despair, but never without hope and the will to win. Totally in the sense of the Lasker quote: "*Work, which immerses itself into each detail.*"

"Nailed it, finished it, it turned out great!," those roughly were the thoughts that buoyed me immediately after the book launch at the splendid Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel on 20 November 2009. It had become an epic work, just as I had wished. Overflowing with new content on 1079 pages, proportionate to the heavyweight importance of Lasker.

My firm conviction this could not be surpassed got the first damper when, not two weeks later, e-mails showed up in my mailbox with suggestions on what might still be amended, improved, and expanded upon. At first it was a trickle, then a brook, finally a constant river. Doubtful that the two would embrace this challenge once again, I let this river stream past me and expected—erroneously—for it to seep away.

This first volume of an expanded trilogy, carefully translated into English, thrills me anew. The duplication of such a feat can only be achieved if a team—free of all vanity—believes in its mission and is consumed by it. For this I want to express my admiration, my respect, and my thanks to my friends Michael and Richard.

Stefan Hansen  
*Sponsor of original monograph in German (2009)*  
Berlin, August 2018



# EDITORS' PREFACE

**I**N THE SUMMER OF 2013, WHEN THE remaining stocks of the German Lasker monograph dwindled rapidly, the idea for a revised German edition started to grow in Michael Negele's mind. The initial enthusiasm was dampened when it transpired that the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft, at that point in time, had little interest in such a project. Tentative inquiries of individual authors and the co-editor in Berlin also yielded a rather indifferent attitude. But from Zurich there was a positive response: Richard Forster signaled a fundamental willingness to participate, and Joachim Rosenthal brought plausible arguments for a revised new edition into play—but this time in English!

Thereupon in April 2014, after a brainstorming session with Raj Tischbierok, fantasy became fact: it was to become a three-volume new edition in English. Immediately there began the assembly anew of an international author and translator team.

Very soon the Polish chess historian Tomasz Lissowski wrote in with important new discoveries about the Lasker genealogy. In collaboration with Richard Forster, he was able, it seems, to classify, finally and conclusively, Emanuel Lasker in the "Yehuda branch" of the widely-ramified Lasker family tree. The contribution by Joachim Rosenthal was substantially augmented through findings in Göttingen (Lasker's correspondence with Adolf Hurwitz). Furthermore, in Jörg Bewersdorff our team found a competent specialist for "Lasker's Contribution to Game Theory," a topic that had somewhat fallen by the wayside in the German first edition but can now be treated more fully in volume II of this trilogy.

In order to do justice to a cosmopolitan such as Lasker, it was once again an important ob-

jective to let experts from those countries where Lasker spent important periods of his varied life have their say. In cooperation with John S. Hilbert (United States) and Tony Gillam (England), their original contributions from 2009 could be palpably deepened and updated as well.

Two further special pieces by Ralf Binnewirtz (Lasker's Chess Problems) and Jürgen Fleck (Lasker's Endgame Studies) have, slightly amended, found admission to the volume at hand.

A shortcoming in the German edition was the missing biographical consolidation. An accompanying biographical text ("Lasker Compass") is now included in this new English edition. In volume I, it brings together the separate threads of Lasker's life story in the period from 1868 to 1901. Contemporary opinions are quoted which served Lasker both as points of reference and bones of contention. For Lasker's youth the compass follows in the steps of Martha Lasker's "Biographical Mosaic." This is the text which seems to have formed the basis for most of the anecdotal section of Jacques Hannak's *Biographie eines Schachweltmeisters (Life of a Chess Master)*, originally published in 1952 by Siegfried Engelhardt, Berlin-Frohnau.

Although the hopes for a direct collaboration were shattered, many a fascinating document from Lasker's estate has been won for the public sphere via the publications of the American collector David DeLucia. Further, parts of the estate were checked in the summer of 2014 at the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis, Missouri. We once more delved deeply into the Lasker memorabilia of the Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, and also did some even more extensive research than before at the Royal Li-

brary in The Hague, The Netherlands, which holds the literary legacies of Meindert Niemeijer and Alexander Rueb. Especially gratifying was the prospect, won in the fall of 2015, of obtaining access to the available Lasker material in the Lothar Schmid collection in Bamberg. This was thanks to the magnanimous support of Bernhard Schmid, son of the famous collector. We thus have more than enough new material and insights to revamp the monumental monograph of 2009 and at the same time put it into a more attractive format comprising of three volumes.

For some topics new authors had to be found, and new focal points defined. Most notably, the theme “Lasker, the Chess Player” had to be assigned anew. The team found a pleasant enrichment by the Romanian grand master Mihail Marin, who approached the topic less academically, but instead in a very vivid

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The current Lasker volume is a composite work, with all the benefits and drawbacks of such an endeavor. Our heartfelt thanks go to the ten subject matter experts and authors, who generously have placed their profound knowledge at our disposal for this unique and multifaceted view of the second world chess champion. In constant dialog with the editors, these professionals were willing to re-write each sentence three times, and to question even the smallest detail. Likewise, great is our thankfulness towards the team of translators and editorial staff, already mentioned above, who put the finishing touches on the raw materials.

A crucial contribution was made by the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft, which has supported this first volume with a considerable financial donation.

The fact that we can deliver this volume not only on time, but in a decidedly elegant garb, is principally due to the Herculean work of our typesetter and typographer Ulrich Dirr. Once again, he has undauntedly tackled even the most difficult creative tasks and complex

and spirited manner. The second chess contribution in this volume comes from co-editor Raj Tischbierek who, in comparison with the German version, has strongly deepened and enhanced his considerations and analyses of Lasker’s 1908 World Championship battle with Siegbert Tarrasch. So, the decades-long rivalry and the long yearned-for clash on the board between the two German chess titans, which at that time threw the chess world into a singular dither, here receive their proper treatment.

The success of the project is guaranteed by appropriate (and affordable) translators—no easy undertaking. We have found outstanding and highly dedicated co-workers in Anna E. Stuart and E. Regina Magacs, Johannes Fischer and Stephen Rothwell. The overall editing rested on Richard Forster, who was congenially supported in this by Achim Engelhart and Leonard Skinner.

challenges and has solved them masterfully. At the same time, he has taken on the professional image editing and designed a gorgeous title page.

With sharp eyes Daniel Eisermann, Achim Engelhart, John Hilbert, and Leonard Skinner have discovered any number of smaller, and occasionally larger, inconsistencies and other blemishes, thereby contributing much to the success of the project. Still remaining irregularities and mistakes should all be credited to the account of the editors.

In addition, we were able to reckon on the active assistance of countless friends, colleagues, and correspondents from all over the world. Again and again, they have supported us with rare documents or unique cultural material. With outstanding generosity, Jurgen Stigter (Amsterdam) has shared the content from his extensive Lasker collection.

Furthermore, we thank, without claim to being exhaustive, all the following people and institutions for their fantastic help (omitting those already mentioned above): *Austria*—