

SERGEY IONOV

PORTRAIT OF A CHESSPLAYER: ALEXANDER KHALIFMAN



Magnificent play in positions with the initiative is one of the strongest sides of Alexander Khalifman's style. He has focused his attention on studying openings since the very beginning of his chess career. He was especially attracted by those openings, in which he could thrust his opponent into the role of the defender by a pawn sacrifice. The Catalan Opening, which meets these criteria to the full extent, has served him hand and foot for a long time. The first game that introduced itself to notice was the following encounter.

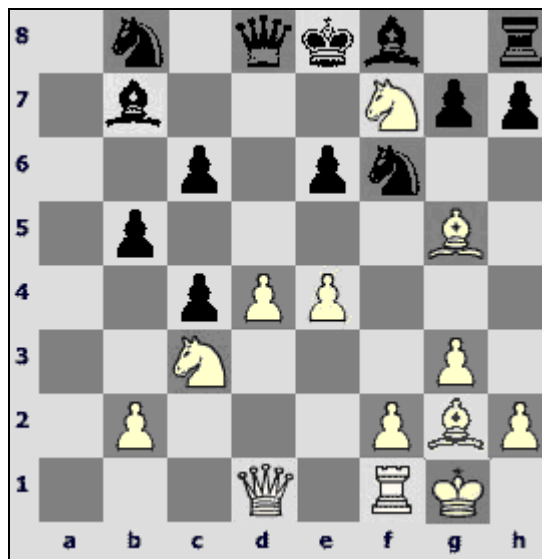
Khalifman – Novikov

Lvov 1985, USSR young masters championship

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.g3 dxc4 5.♙g2 a6 6.0–0 b5 7.♘e5
♘d5 8.a4 ♙b7 9.axb5 axb5 10.♖xa8 ♙xa8 11.e4 ♘f6 12.♘c3 c6
13.♙g5. Another possibility is an immediate breakthrough 13.d5.

13...♙b7. More reliable is 13...♙e7 14.♚a1 ♙b7 15.♚a7 ♚c8
16.d5 0–0 17.de6 fe6 18.♙h3 ♘ with mutual chances.

14.♘xf7!?



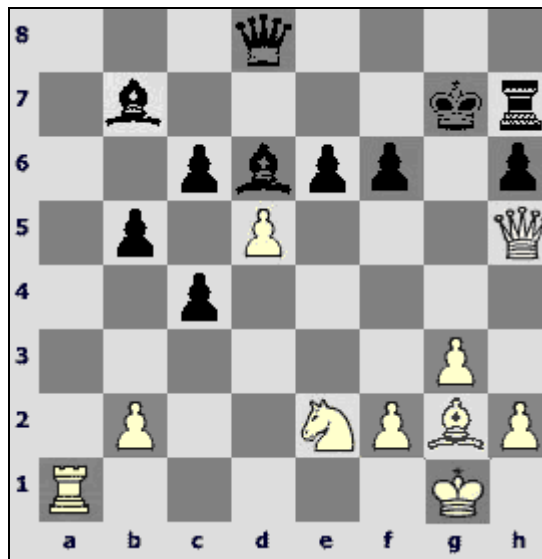
14...♙xf7 15.e5 h6 16.♙h4. White retains compensation for a sacrificed piece also after 16.♙f6 gf6 17.♚h5 ♙g7 18.♖a1 f5 19.♘e2 ♖g8 20.♘f4, as it was in a correspondence game Nesis – Blok, 1985.

16...♘bd7?! Having run across an unexpected novelty, Black did not decide on the principled 16...g5! 17. ef6 ♚f6 18.♘e4 ♚g6 19.♚a1 ♘a6! cutting off the access to his camp, and it would be hard for White to prove his case.

17.exf6 ♘xf6 18.♙xf6 gxf6 (18...♚f6 19.♘e4 with unpleasant initiative) 19.♚h5+ ♙g7 20.♖a1 ♖h7. Novikov instinctively wants to protect the seventh rank from white rook's invasion, but disaster comes from a different side. 20...♖g8!? can be proposed and in case of 21. ♘e2 ♙d6 22.d5 cd5 23.♘d4 Black has 23...♚e8 with chances for a successful defense.

21.♘e2 ♙d6. It seems that Black covered his vulnerable squares, but the breach happened in the most fortified spot.

22.d5! The knight joins the attack of the main weakness of Black – the e6-pawn.

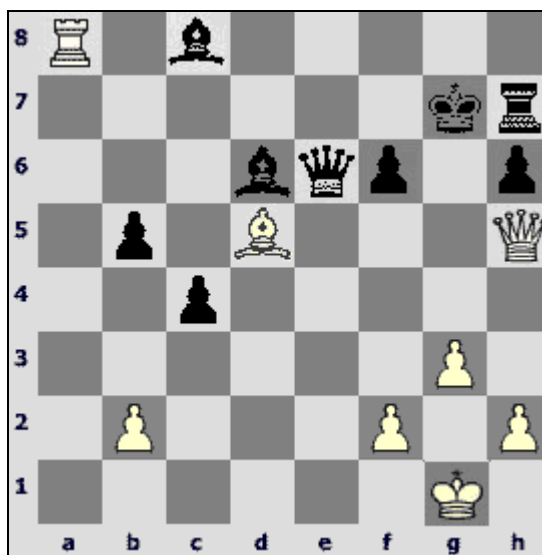


22...cxd5. Very bad is 22...ed5 23.♘d4 ♔h8 24.♕h3! ♕e5 25.♕f5 ♕d4 26.♕h7 ♖e7 (26...♕b2 27.♖e1) 27.♕f5 ♕b2 28.♖a7 ♕d4 29.♖b7 ♖e1 (29...♖b7 30.♗h6 ♔g8 31.♕e6 with a mate) 30.♔g2 ♗f2 31.♔h3 ♗f1 32.♔h4, and white king escapes from checks.

23.♘d4 ♕c8? A decisive mistake. The struggle remained tense after 23...♗g8 24.♕h3 ♗f7 25.♗e2 f5 26.♘e6 ♔h8 27.♘d4 ♗e7 (worse is 27...f4 28.♖e1 with initiative) 28.♗h5 ♕c5. However, White has another way of developing his attack: 24.♖a7 ♔h8 25.♖b7! ♖b7 26.♗h6 ♖h7 27.♗f6 ♗g7 28.♗e6 and now 28...♗e5 (28...♗d4? 29.♕d5) 29.♗c8 ♔g7 30.♘f5 ♔g6 (30...♔f6 31.♘e3) 31.♗g8, but it seems that Black is rescued by 28...♗h6 29.♗h6 ♖h6 30.♘b5 ♕c5 (30...d4!?) 31.♕d5 ♖f6 32.♕c4 ♖f2.

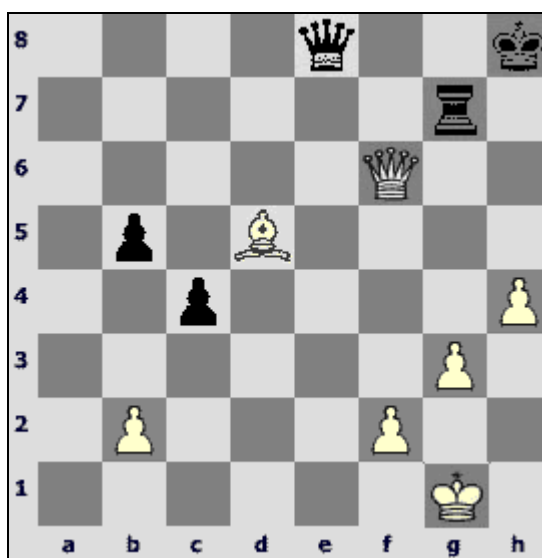
24.♖a8 ♗d7 25.♘xe6+! A beautiful blow, however no less efficient was 25. ♗g4 ♔f7 26.♖c8! ♗c8 27.♕d5 ♔e7 28.♗e4.

25...♗xe6 26.♕xd5



26... ♖d7 (26... ♖e1 27. ♔g2 ♘e6 28. ♗g4! ♘g4 29. ♖g8 a mate!)
 27. ♖xc8! ♗xc8 28. ♗f7+ ♔h8 29. ♗xf6+ ♖g7 30. ♗xh6+ ♖h7
 31. ♗xd6. In spite of the fact that Black is not in a very bad situation as regards material, unsafe position of the king kills him.

31... ♖g7 32. ♗h6+ ♖h7 33. ♗f6+ ♖g7 34. h4 ♗e8



35. ♘e6! ♗e7 36. ♗e5 ♗b7 37. ♗h5+ ♖h7 38. ♗e8+ ♔g7
 39. ♗g8+ ♔f6 40. ♘d5 Black resigned.

A few people could hit on an idea of such a bold piece sacrifice!

Alexander cogently refuted a risky opening strategy of his opponent in the next miniature.

Khalifman – Basin

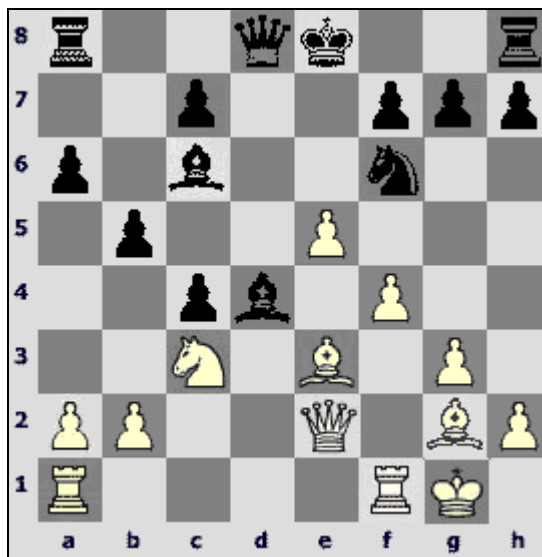
Minsk 1985, USSR championship (first league)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.g3 dxc4 5.♙g2 a6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.e3
 ♙d7 8.♘c3 ♙d6 9.♚e2 b5 10.e4 e5. More careful is 10...♙e7
 11.d5 ♘b4 12.♘e5 ed5, though in this position White also posed
 problems for Black in the game Gelfand - Bruzon, Bled 2002:
 13.a3! (13.ed5 0-0 14.a3 ♘d3 15.♘d3 ♙g4! was played before
 with equality) 13...♘d3 14.♘d3 cd3 15.♚d3 de4 16.♘e4.

11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♙xe5 13.f4 ♙d4+. Lately Black tries
 keeping this position with the help of 13...♙c3 14.bc3 c6!?

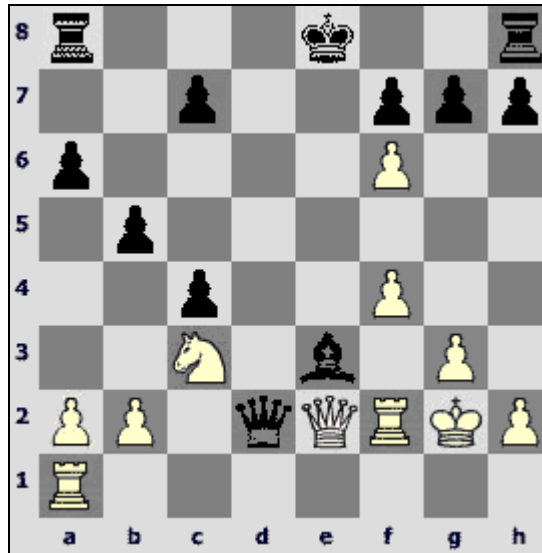
14.♙e3 ♙c6? This natural response hits runs across a refined
 refutation. Black made an attempt of rehabilitating the variation in
 the game Vallejo – Korneev, Spain 2004: 14...♙e3 15.♚e3 b4!?
 16.♘e2 ♚e7 17.e5, and instead of 17...♖d8 18.♚a7 with a small
 advantage to White deserved attention 17...♘g4 18.♚e4 ♖d8 (or
 18...0-0) with unclear position. However, also possible is simple
 16.♘d5 ♘d5 17.ed5 ♚e7 18.♚e7 ♙e7 19.d6 cd6 20.♖fe1 ♙f6
 21.♙a8 ♖a8 22.♖ad1 with advantage.

15.e5!



15...♙xg2 16.♙xg2 ♙xe3. Leads to material losses, but 16...♘g8
 17.♖d1 c5 18.♚g4 ♙f8 19.f5 is also joyless for Black.

17.exf6 ♚d2 18.♖f2!



18...0-0-0 19. ♖g4+ ♜d7 20. ♜f3! ♜d4 21. ♖e2 ♜xf6 22. ♖xe3 ♜b8 23. ♖ae1 Black resigned.

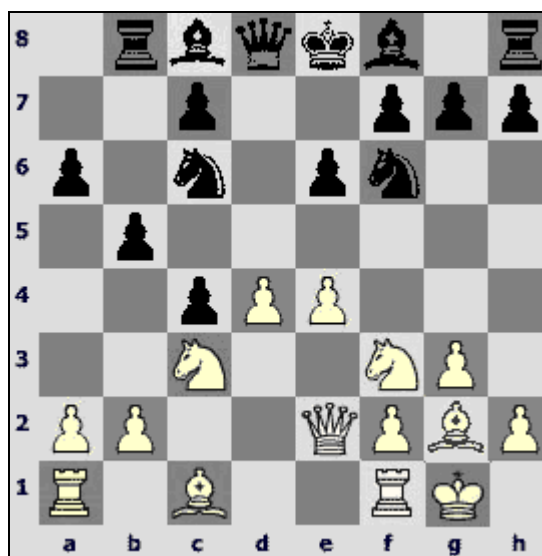
The next game is Alexander's bright win over his old rival and one of the strongest chessplayers of the world.

Khalifman – Ivanchuk

Minsk 1986, USSR Spartakiad

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4.g3 dxc4 5. ♙g2 ♘c6 6.0-0 ♖b8 7. ♘c3 a6. It's quite possible to save on the move 7...a6 and advance the b-pawn immediately – 7...b5.

8.e4 b5 9. ♜e2!? An unexpected sacrifice of the second pawn. More popular is 9. d5 ♘b4 10.b3! with a weighty compensation for a pawn.



9...♗xd4 10.♗xd4 ♖xd4 11.♙g5 ♗b6. 11...♙b7 12.♖ad1 ♗b6 deserved attention and it's not an easy task for White to prove the propriety of his plan.

12.e5 ♗d5?! Stronger was 12...♗d7 13.♖ad1 ♙c5 14.♗e4 0-0 15.♖d7 ♙d7 16.♗f6 gf6 17.♙f6, and after the only response 17...♖fd8! comes a draw – 18.♗g4 ♖f8 19.♖d1 ♖e8 20.♗g8 ♙f8 21.♙g7 ♖e7 (21...♗c5 22.♖d6) 22.♙f6. Black can play for a win 13...♙b7 14.♗d2 ♙d5 15.♗c5 ♗c5 16.♙d5 ♗d5 17.♗d5 ed5 18.♖d5 ♗b6 or 13...♙d4 14.♗g4!? ♙e5 (14...♗e5 15.♖d4! c5 16.♗d6 ♖f8 17.♗e2) 15.♙e3 c5 16.f4 ♙b2 17.♗d6 ♖e7 18.f5 with immense complications.

13.♙xd5! exd5 14.♗xd5 ♗b7. Another retreat of the queen was possible – 14...♗c6 15.♖ad1 ♙e6 (15...♙b7? 16.e6! (16.♗f6! gf6 17.ef6 ♗e6 18.♗d2 ♙d6 19.♖fe1 ♙e4 20.♗d4 0-0 21.♖e4 ♗f5 22.♗e3 ♙c5 23.♗e3 with big advantage) 16...♙d6 (16...fe6 17.♗h5 g6 18.♗f3 ♗d5 (18...♙g7 19. ♖fe1) 19.♖d5 ♙d5 20.♗f6 ♖g8 21.♖d1! ♖g7 22.♖d5 ed5 23.♗e6 ±) 17.♙e7! ♙e7 18.ef7 ♖f7 19.♗e7 ♖g8 20.♖fe1 with a strong attack) 16.♗f3 ♙d5 17.♖d5 ♗e6 18.♖fd1 ♙e7 19.♙e7 ♗e7 20.♖d7 ♗e6.

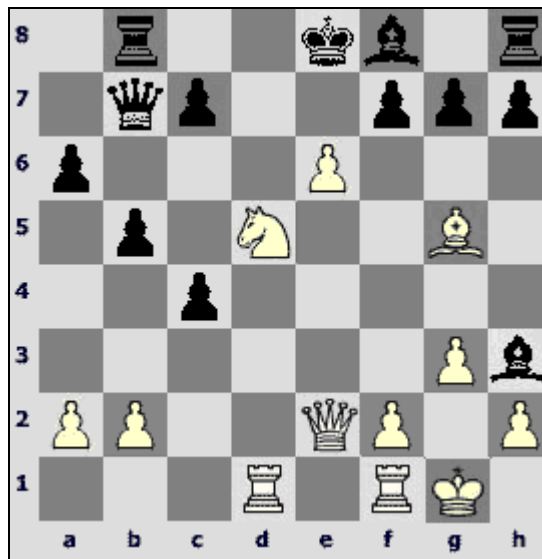
15.♖ad1 ♙h3? More careful was 15...♙e6, however, White's initiative there is also unpleasant: 16.♗f4; 16.♗f3 c6 (16...♙d5 17.♖d5 c6 18.♖d4 ♙c5 19.♖g4 ♗d7 20.e6! fe6 21.♖d1) 17.♗f4 (17.♗f6? gf6 18.♗f6 ♗e7).

15...h6 leads to head-spinning complications: 16.♗d2 (16.♗c7 ♗c7 17.♖d8 ♗d8 18.♙d8 ♖d8 19.♗f3 ♖e8 20.♖d1 ♙d7 21.e6! fe6 22.♗h5 – White's initiative compensates a material deficit). Now wrong is 16...hg5? 17.♗f6 ♖e7 18.♗d7! (much stronger than suggesting itself 18.♗d8 ♖e6 19.♗e8 ♙e7 20.♗h8 ♗h1! (20...gf6? 21.♗h3 g4 22.♗g4 f5 23.♗g7 with decisive threats) 21.♖h1 ♙b7 with a perfect position for Black) 18...f6 19.♖fe1, and Black will suffer. For example, 19...♖f7 20.e6 ♖g6 21.♗c2 ♖h6 22.♗b8 ♙d6 23.♗f5 g6 24.♗h3 ♖g7 25.♗h8! ♖h8 26.e7 ♙e7 27.♖e7 ♙e6 28.♖e6 ♗b8 29.♖de1! ♖g7 30.♖e8 ♗~ 31.♖1e7 ♖h6 32.♖h8#.

White's tasks are more difficult after the bishop's move: 16...♙e6

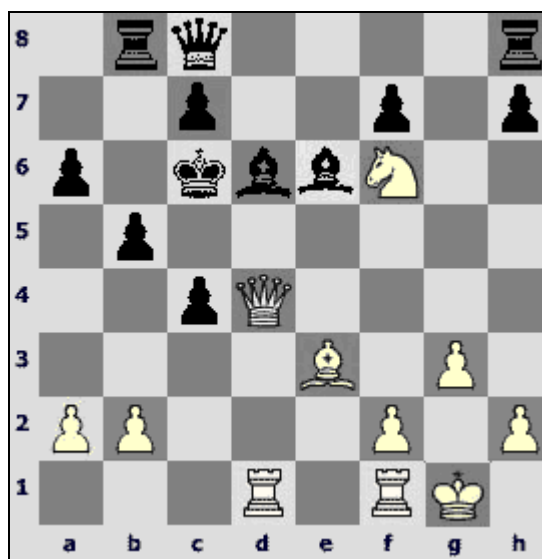
17. ♖f4 (17. ♖f6 g6 18. ♗f6 ♗e7 19. ♗h8 ♗h3 with approximately level position) 17... ♕c8 18. ♗e6 f6 19. ♗e3 with sufficient compensation for a pawn; 16... ♗h3 17. ♖f4 (17. ♖fe1 hg5 18. ♖f6 ♗e7 19. ♖d5=; 17. ♗h4!?) 17...hg5 18. ♖h3 ♗e7 with mutual chances; 16... ♗g4 17. ♗d8!? ♗c5 (17... ♖c8 18. ♖fe1 (18. ♗c7!?) 18... ♕c6 19. ♕d4 ♗d1 20. ♖f6 g6 21. ef6 ♗e7 22. ♗e7 ♕d7=) 18. ♖c7 ♗f8 19. ♕d5=.

16.e6!



16... ♗xe6 17. ♕e5 ♗d6 □ 18. ♕xg7 ♗d7 19. ♖f6+ ♗c6 20. ♖e4. It's very difficult to defend this position, especially in practical play.

20... ♕c8 21. ♕d4 ♕d7 22. ♖f6! ♕c8 (more stubborn is 22... ♕e7) 23. ♗e3!



23...b4. Here there are many ways of winning. The one chosen by White is the most efficient.

24.a4 bxa3 25.bxa3 ♖b3 26.♙e4+ ♔b5 27.♖d5+! ♕xd5
 28.♙xd5+ c5 29.a4+ ♔b6 30.♙xd6+ ♔b7 31.♙d5+ ♙c6 32.♙xc4
 Black resigned.

The next encounter became the most memorable win of the Russian championship of 1996.

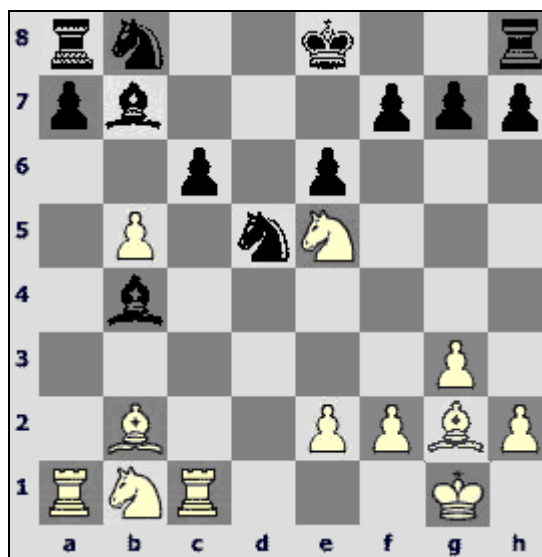
Khalifman – Sveshnikov

Elista 1996, Russian championship

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c6 4.g3 ♘f6 5.♙g2 dxc4 6.0–0. The alternative to the text move is 6.♘e5 (preventing 6...b5) ♙b4 7.♘c3 or 7.♙d2!?

6...b5 7.a4 ♙b7 8.♘e5 ♙b6. The main continuation is 8...a6.

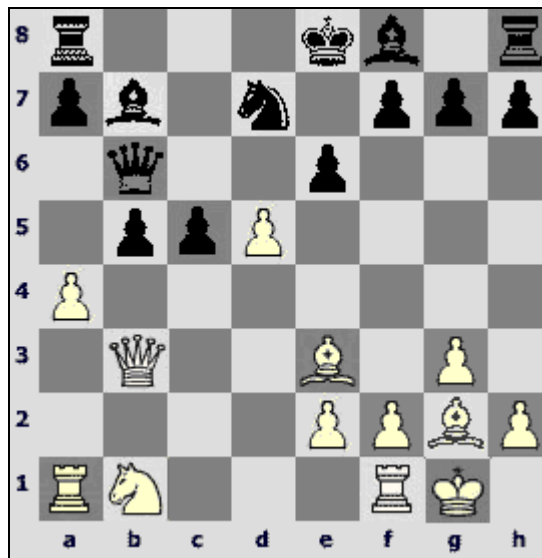
9.b3!? cxb3 10.♙xb3 ♘bd7. Black did not dare to treat himself to the second pawn, he is too underdeveloped. 10...♙xd4 11.♙b2 ♙b4? (11...♙b6 12.axb5 cxb5 13.♙d4! ♙xd4 14.♙xb7 ♙xa1 15.♙xb5+ ♘bd7 16.♘xd7 ♘xd7 17.♙xa8 ♙e5 18.♙a4 ♙c7 19.♖d1 ♙d6 20.♘c3 (20.♙c6 ♔e7) 20...0–0! 21.♘b5 ♙b8 – Black was defending himself in this variation) 12.♙xb4 ♙xb4 13.axb5 ♘d5 14.♖c1!



14...cxb5 (14...c5 15.♘c4! ♔e7 (15...0–0 16.♘d6+-) 16.e4 ♘b6 (16...♘f6 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♘d6+-) 17.♙xg7 ♖g8 18.♙f6+-) 15.♙xd5 exd5 16.♖c7 ♙a6 17.♘xf7 ♖g8 18.♘g5±.

11. ♖e3 c5. 11... ♞d5 12. ♞xd7 ♔xd7 13. ♞d2 – White has a long-term initiative because black king loses the right to castle (13. ♞c3?! bxa4 14. ♚c4 ♚b3).

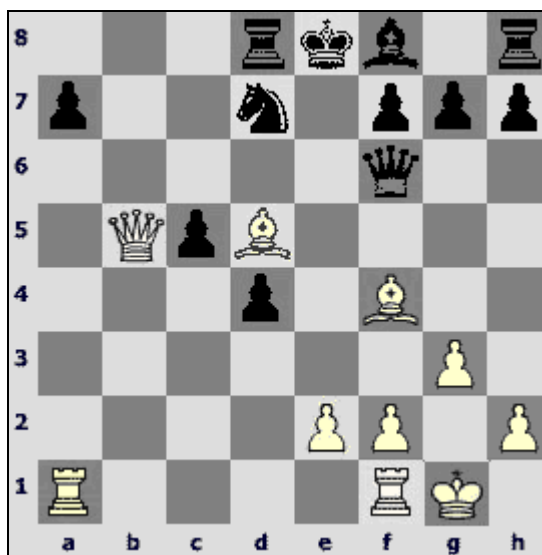
12. ♞xd7 ♞xd7 13. d5!? Regaining the pawn 13. ♖xb7 ♚xb7 14. ♚xb5 with a small advantage that could be insufficient for a win did not suit Alexander.



13... bxa4. 13... exd5 14. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 15. ♚xd5 ♜b8 16. axb5 ♚b7 17. ♞c3 led to the evident advantage of White.

14. ♚xa4 exd5?! Too optimistic. Better was 14... ♖xd5, exchanging a dangerous light-squared bishop – 15. ♞c3 ♖xg2 16. ♔xg2, and Black has chances to withstand, for example: 16... ♜d8 17. ♜fd1 ♚b7+ 18. f3 ♖e7 19. ♜ab1 ♚c8 20. ♚xa7 ♖f6 ♠ (20... 0-0 21. ♜b7 ♖f6 22. ♜dxd7 ♜xd7 23. ♜xd7 ♖xc3 24. ♖xc5±) 21. ♜b7 (♠ 21. ♞e4 0-0 22. ♜b7 ♞e5 23. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 24. ♖xc5±) 21... ♖xc3 22. ♜c7 ♚a8 23. ♜dxd7 0-0 24. ♚xa8 ♜xa8 25. ♖xc5 ♜fc8= 26. ♜xf7? ♖e5 27. ♖d6 ♜xc7 28. ♖xc7 ♔xf7 29. ♖xe5±.

15. ♞c3 d4 (15... ♚e6 16. ♜fb1 ♖c6 17. ♞xd5! ♖xa4 18. ♞c7+ ♔e7 19. ♞xe6+-; 15... ♖c6 16. ♞xd5 ♖xa4 17. ♞xb6 axb6 18. ♖xa8+-) 16. ♞d5 (16. ♜fb1? ♖xg2!) 16... ♖xd5 17. ♖xd5 ♜d8 18. ♖f4 ♚f6 (18... ♖d6 19. ♜fb1 ♚c7 20. ♖g5!? (20. ♜b7 ♖xf4 21. ♜xc7 ♖xc7 22. ♚b3 0-0 23. ♜xa7 ♖b8 (23... ♖e5 24. ♖e6!) 24. ♜b7±) 20... ♖e7 21. ♖xe7 ♔xe7 22. ♜b7 ♚d6 23. ♖c6, and no one will envy Black) 19. ♚b5!



Black's hopes for quiet evacuation are never to be fulfilled!

19...♙d6 20.♖a6 ♜b8 21.♙b7! ♙xf4 22.♖xf6 gxf6 23.gxf4 f5
24.♚c6 ♜d8 25.♚d5 ♜c7 26.♙c6 Black resigned.

It's much more difficult to seize the initiative playing Black. The King's Indian defense stops yielding fruits when entering the dense atmosphere. Adding the Volga gambit into the opening repertoire became a godsend from Alexander. The next game diminished the popularity of one of the main anti-Volga lines mid-nineties.

Lalic – Khalifman

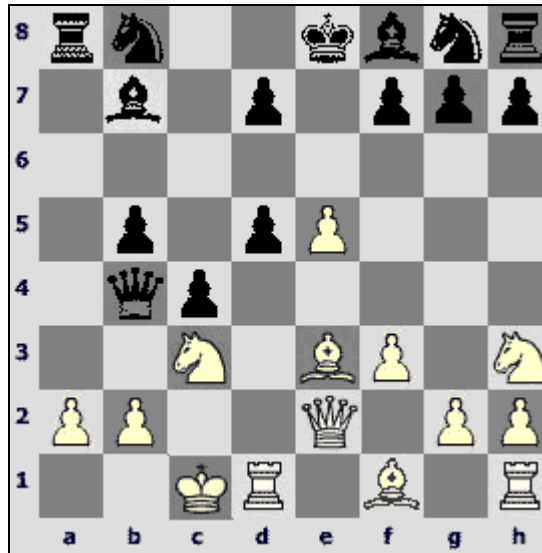
Linares 1997

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.f3 e6. The most principled response. The alternative is 5...ab5.

6.e4 exd5 7.e5. Calmer is 7.ed5. There is a completely imbalanced position on board.

7...♚e7 8.♚e2 ♘g8 9.♘c3 ♙b7 10.♘h3 c4 11.♙e3 (preventing ♚c5) 11...axb5 12.0-0-0. The game Ivanov – Khalifman (St. Petersburg 1997) saw 12.♘xb5 ♚b4+ 13.♘c3 ♘e7 14.a3 ♚a5 15.♚f2 ♖a6! 16.♚d2? (16.b4!? cxb3 17.♙d2⇔) 16...♘f5 17.♙f2 ♙c5 18.♖d1 ♙xf2+ 19.♘xf2 0-0♚, and Black ended the game triumphantly.

12...♚b4

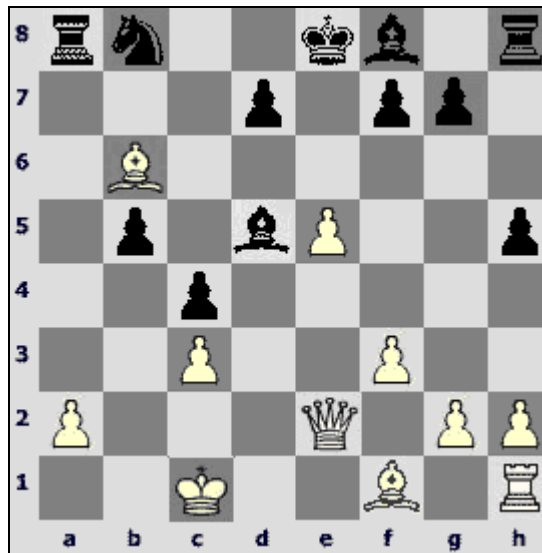


13. ♖f4. 13. ♖d5 is met by a queen sacrifice with excellent compensation: 13... ♙c3! 14. bxc3 ♘d5.

13... ♞e7 14. ♙b6. 14. ♙f2 which was tested later is more careful.

14... ♜h5! Bringing the rook into action and almost forcing White to capture on d5.

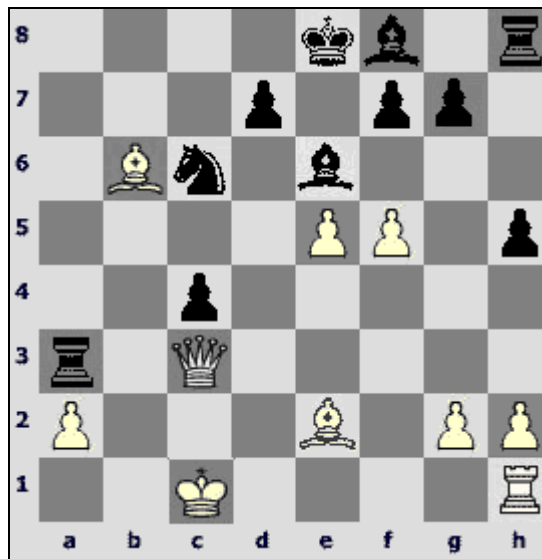
15. ♜xd5 ♙xc3+! 16. bxc3 ♞xd5 17. ♞xd5 ♙xd5.



Black has only a rook and a knight for the queen, but an open position of White's king and his difficulties with developing the kingside give Alexander good chances for an attack.

18. ♙d2 ♙e6 19. ♙e2?! It was necessary to lessen Black's attacking potential by exchanges: 19. ♙c7 ♞c6 20. ♙d6 ♙xd6 21. exd6 0-0∞.

19...♞c6 20.f4 b4 21.f5. White counted on this move. 21...bxc3
22.♞xc3 ♖a3!

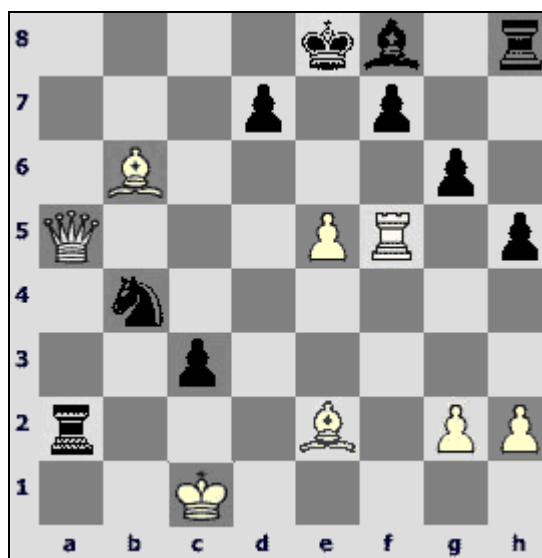


Without granting a respite.

23.♞b2. More stubborn is 23.♞a1 ♙xf5 (23...♙d5 24.♞d1 ♞b4
25.♞xd5! ♞xa2+ 26.♙d1 ♞c3+ 27.♞xc3 ♞xc3 28.♙d4 ♞a3
29.♙xc4) – strong bishops balance the position. Black's initiative
is very unpleasant, especially in a practical game.

23...c3 24.♞b5 ♙xf5 25.♞f1. Missing the next move. It was
necessary to play 25.♙c4±.

25...♞xa2! 26.♞xf5 ♞b4 27.♞a5 (27.♙d3 ♞a1+ 28.♙b1 c2
(28...g6? 29.♞f4+-) 29.♞xb4 ♙xb4 30.♙xc2 ♞h6+-) 27...g6!



With inevitable ♙h6. White resigned.



An interview to Russian TV during the Olympiad in Bled

Alexander achieved a good victory over a strong opponent in the main variation of the Volga gambit.

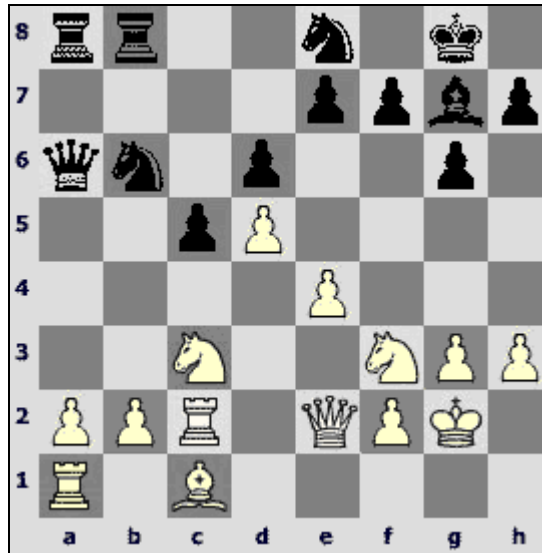
Beliavsky – Khalifman

Linares 1995

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 g6 6.♘c3 ♗xa6 7.e4
 ♗xf1 8.♗xf1 d6 9.♘f3 ♘bd7 10.g3 ♗g7 11.♗g2 0–0 12.♞e1
 ♔a5. Another popular plan is 12...♞a6 with subsequent ♔a8 and
 e6.

13.h3 ♞fb8 14.♞e2. Opening the play in the center by 14. e5 is an
 alternative.

14...♘e8 15.♞c2 ♘b6 16.♔e2 ♔a6!



The Volga gambit differs from other gambits by the fact that Black aims not at the king but on White's queenside. Black often exchanges queens himself in order to escape a possible White's attack on the kingside. At the same time this exchange weakens White's control over the light squares (c4, d3) in his own camp.

17. ♖g1?! Illogical decision. The knight on e2 usually stands passively in the Indian structures. But also after 17. ♔xa6 ♖xa6 18. ♘d2 f5 19. f3 ♘a4 Black has a compensation for a pawn (given by Khalifman).

17... ♘a4. Perhaps one should have waited a little with this thrust and bring the second knight – 17... ♘c7.

18. ♔xa6 ♖xa6 19. ♘ge2 ♘c7 20. a3. A controversial decision that weakens the square b3, but White wanted to release the rook from defending the a-pawn. One should have preferred 20. f3.

20... f5 21. f3 fxe4 22. fxe4 ♘xc3

22... ♘b5!?

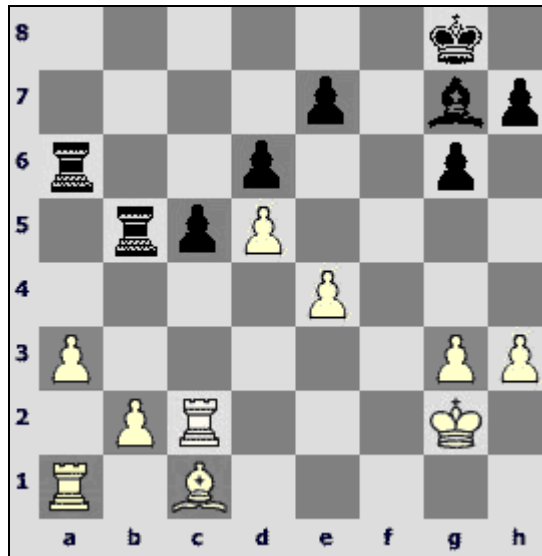
a) 23. ♘xb5 ♖xb5 24. ♖a2 ♖b3↑ 25. ♘g1!? ♖a8 (25... ♖ab6 26. ♘f3 ♖b8♞ (a)26... ♙xb2 27. ♘d2; a)26... ♘xb2 27. ♘d2 ♖c3 28. ♖axb2 ♖xb2 29. ♖xc3 ♙xc3 30. ♙xb2 ♙xd2 31. ♔f3±)) 26. ♘f3 ♖f8↑;

b) 23. ♘d1 ♘d4 24. ♘xd4 ♙xd4♞ (24... cxd4 25. ♖c7 ♘c5 26. ♘f2∞);

c) 23. ♖a2 ♘bxc3 (23... ♘axc3 24. ♘xc3 ♘xc3 25. bxc3 ♖b3

26. ♖b2 ♜a4 27. ♔f3 ♔f7) 24. ♗xc3 ♘xc3 25. bxc3 ♜b3
 26. ♘d2 (26. c4 ♗c3 27. ♜ab2 ♜axa3 28. ♜xb3 ♜xb3 29. ♘f4=) .

23. ♗xc3 ♗b5 24. ♗xb5 ♜xb5

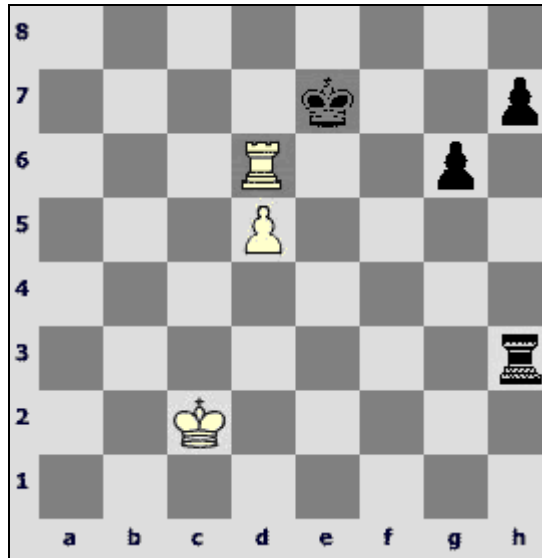


25. ♜c4? (25. ♜a2 ♜b3 26. ♜e2 ♜a4 27. ♘f4= – given by Khalifman) 25... ♘xb2 26. ♜b1 ♜ab6 27. a4 (27. ♘h6!? ♘d4 (27... ♘xa3?? 28. ♜xb5 ♜xb5 29. ♜a4 ♜b2+ 30. ♔f1 ♜b1+ 31. ♔e2 ♜b2+ 32. ♔d3 ♜b3+ 33. ♔c2 ♜b2+ 34. ♔c3+-) 28. ♜xb5 ♜xb5 29. ♜a4 ♜b2+ 30. ♔f3 ♔f7 31. ♜a8 ♜b3+ 32. ♔g4 ♘g7 33. ♘xg7 ♔xg7 34. ♔f4=) 27... ♜b3 28. a5?! White has no time to create a counterplay with the edge passer and loses it. However, Black's position is preferable in any case.

28... ♘xc1 29. ♜bxc1 ♜b2+ 30. ♜1c2?! More stubborn is 30. ♔h1! ♜a6! 31. ♜a4 ♔g7 32. ♜f1 (32. e5 ♜d2) 32... ♜b5 33. ♜fa1 ♔f6 34. ♔g2 (34. ♜f1+ ♔e5 35. ♜f7 ♜a7 36. ♜xh7 ♜b4 – given by Khalifman) 34... ♔e5 35. ♔f3 (35. ♜1a3 ♜b4 36. ♔f3 ♔d4) 35... ♜b3+ 36. ♔f2 g5 (36... ♜b4 37. ♔e3; 36... ♜d3 37. h4 ♜d4 38. ♔f3 c4 39. ♜e1 c3) 37. ♜f1 ♜d3.

30... ♜6b5 31. a6 ♜b6 32. e5 ♜xc2+ 33. ♜xc2 ♜xa6 34. exd6 exd6 35. ♜e2 ♔f7 36. ♜e6 c4 37. ♜e4 (37. ♔f3 c3 38. ♔e2 (38. ♔e3 ♜c6! 39. dxc6 ♔xe6 40. ♔d3 d5+-) 38... ♜a1 39. ♔d3 ♜d1+ 40. ♔xc3 ♜xd5 – Khalifman) 37... c3 38. ♜c4 ♜a3 39. ♔f3 c2+ 40. ♔f2 ♜a2 41. ♔e3 ♔f6 42. ♔d2 (42. ♜c7 h5 43. g4 hxg4 44. hxg4 ♔e5 45. ♔d2 ♜a4 46. g5 ♜g4 – Khalifman; 42. ♔f4? ♜a4+-) 42... ♜a3 43. ♔xc2 ♜xg3 44. ♜e4 (44. ♜h4 h5 45. ♜e4 ♜xh3 46. ♜e6+ ♔f5 47. ♜xd6 h4 48. ♜d8 g5 49. ♜e8 ♜a3 50. d6

♖a7 51.♖e7 ♖a6 52.d7 ♖d6--+) 44...♖xh3 45.♖e6+ ♔f7
46.♖xd6 ♔e7!--+



47.♖e6+ (47.♖a6 ♖h5 48.d6+ ♔e6) 47...♔d7 48.♖a6 ♖h5
49.♔c3 ♖xd5 50.♖a7+ ♔e6 51.♖xh7 g5 52.♖h1 ♔f5. It was not
too late to miss a deserved win: 52...g4? 53.♖h6+ ♔f7 (53...♔f5
54.♖h5+ ♔e4 55.♖xd5 ♔xd5 56.♔d3=) 54.♖h4 ♖g5 55.♔d3
g3 56.♖h1= given by Khalifman.

53.♖f1+ ♔e4 54.♖g1 ♔f3 55.♔c4 ♖a5 White resigned.

Black's reaction to White's attempt of a new setup in the
following game was more than convincing.

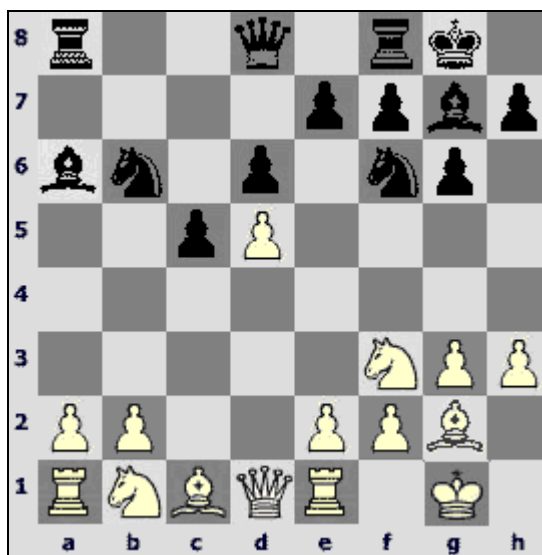
Aseev – Khalifman

St. Petersburg 1995

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 b5 5.cxb5 a6 6.bxa6 ♙g7 7.♙g2 d6
8.♘f3 ♙xa6 9.0-0. The following move order is considered to be
more precise nowadays: 9.♘c3 ♘bd7 10.♖b1, to have a
possibility of meeting 10...♘b6 with 11.b3.

9...♘bd7 10.♖e1. Now 10.♘c3 ♘b6 11.♖b1 hits 11...♙c4 with
two pawns attacked. White had an idea of waiting a little with the
b1-knight development, to have a chance of placing him on d2.

10...0-0 11.h3 ♘b6

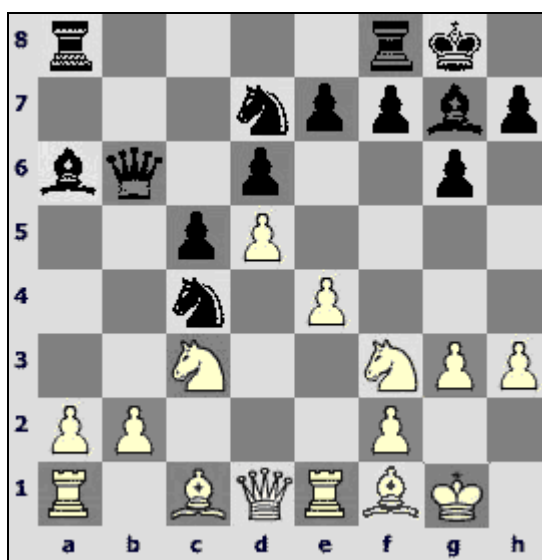


12.e4!? A usual 12.♘c3 ♘fd7 led to the position with a good compensation for Black's pawn.

12...♗fd7 13.♗c3. Inconsistent; the weakening of d3 starts telling now.

13.♗bd2 c4! 14.♙f1 ♗c5↑; 13.♙c2 deserved attention with the idea ♙d2-c3 13...♗c4 14.♗bd2 ♗de5 (14...♗ce5 15.♙f1 ♙a5) 15.♗xc4 (15.♙f1?! ♗a3! 16.♙b3 ♗xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♙xf1 18.♙xf1 ♙d7) 15...♗xc4 16.a3.

13...♗c4 14.♙f1 ♙b6



15.♙c2 (15.♙b3 ♙b4 (15...♙fb8!? 16.♙xc4 ♙a5) 16.♙xb4 cxb4 17.♗d1 ♗a3 18.♙xa6 ♙xa6 19.♗e3 ♙c8) (given by Khalifman) 15...♗ce5.

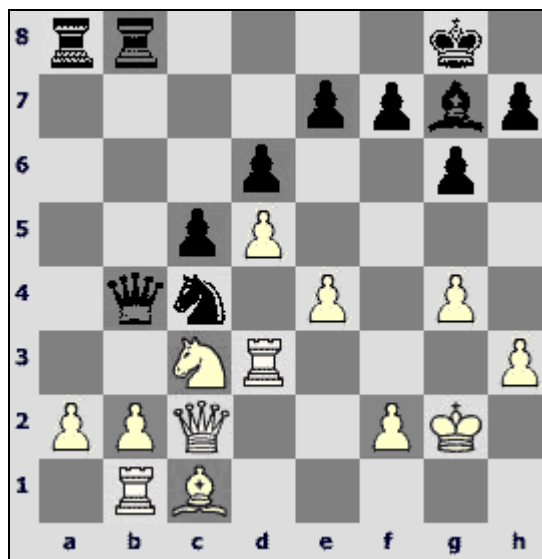
15... ♖fb8 16. ♖b1 ♚b4 17. ♙xc4 ♚xc4

a) 17... ♙xc4 18. ♙d2∞;

b) 17... ♙xc3!? 18. a3 b1) 18. ♙d2? ♙xd2 19. ♘xd2 ♘e5! 20. ♙xa6 ♚xd2 21. ♚xd2 ♘f3+ 22. ♙g2 ♘xd2-+; b2) 18. ♙xa6 ♙xe1 19. ♙d3 ♖xa2 20. ♙f4 ♙xf2+ (20...c4 21. ♚xc4 ♚xc4 22. ♙xc4 ♖a4 23. ♖c1∞) 21. ♚xf2 ♖xb2 22. ♖xb2 ♚xb2∞; 18... ♚xc4 19. bxc3 ♖xb1 20. ♚xb1 ♚xc3∞;

c) 18. ♙e3 ♚d3∞

16. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17. ♙g2 ♖fb8 18. ♙xa6?! (♞ 18. ♖b1) 18... ♚xa6 19. ♖d1 ♘c4 (19...c4 20. ♙d2 ♘d3 21. b3 ♚b6 22. ♙e3 ♚b4 23. ♙d2=) 20. g4?! (♞ 20. ♖b1 ♚a5 21. ♖d3) 20... ♚a5 21. ♖d3 ♘e5 22. ♖d1 ♘c4 23. ♖d3 ♘e5 24. ♖d1 ♚b4 25. ♖b1 ♘c4 26. ♖d3. Black gets a substantial advantage by force, however a piece of good advice was to the point.



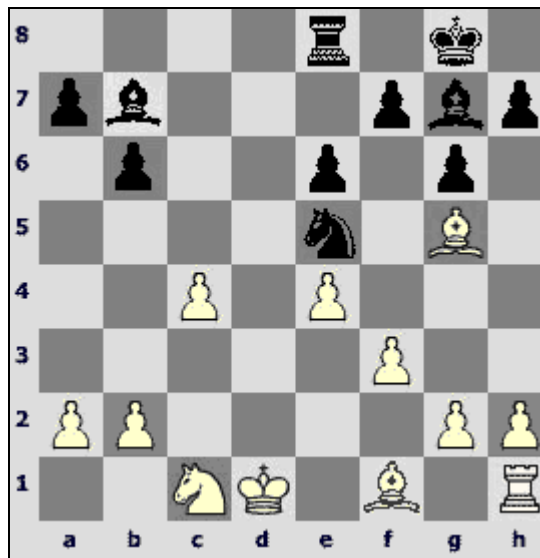
26... ♙xc3! 27. ♚xc3 ♞ ♘a3 (♞ 27... ♖xa2 28. ♚xb4 ♖xb4 29. b3 ♘e5 30. ♖e3 c4∞ (given by Khalifman)) 28. bxa3?⊕ (28. ♚xb4 ♞ ♖xb4 29. ♙d2! ♖bb8 (29... ♘xb1? 30. ♙xb4 cxb4 31. ♖d1=) 30. ♖a1 ♘c2 31. ♖b1 ♖xa2 32. ♙c3 ♘a3 33. ♖e1 ♘c4 34. ♖dd1∞) 28... ♚xe4+--+ 29. ♖f3 (29. f3 ♚e2+ 30. ♙g3 ♖xb1 31. ♖e3 ♚f1 32. ♙b2 (32. ♖e1 ♖xa3!-+) 32... ♚g1+--+ (given by Khalifman)) 29... ♖xb1 30. ♙b2 ♚d4 31. ♚xd4 cxd4 32. ♙xd4 ♖b5 33. ♖c3 ♖xd5 34. ♙e3 ♖da5 White resigned.

Khalifman's games often transit from the opening into the ending almost leaving aside a middle game. At the same time the final

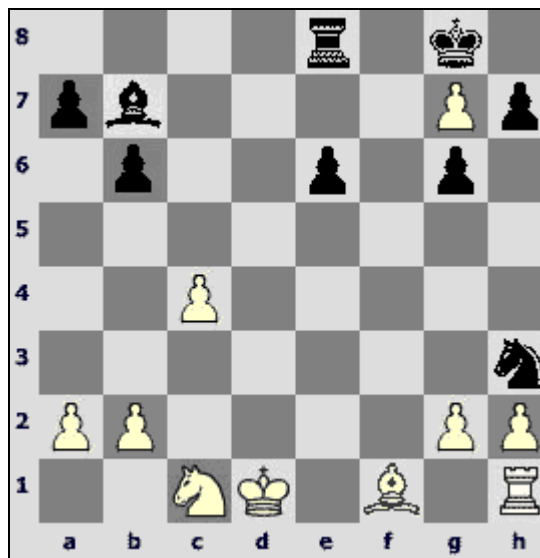
stage of the game is connected with the opening. In this case he also practices his main principle, which says that activity is paramount (in addition the attacking forces are re-joined by a new participant – the king). Here come a few examples on this subject.

Arlandi – Khalifman

Groningen 1985, European junior championship



18...f5 19.exf5 ♖xf3! 20.f6 ♖xg5 21.fxg7 ♖h3!

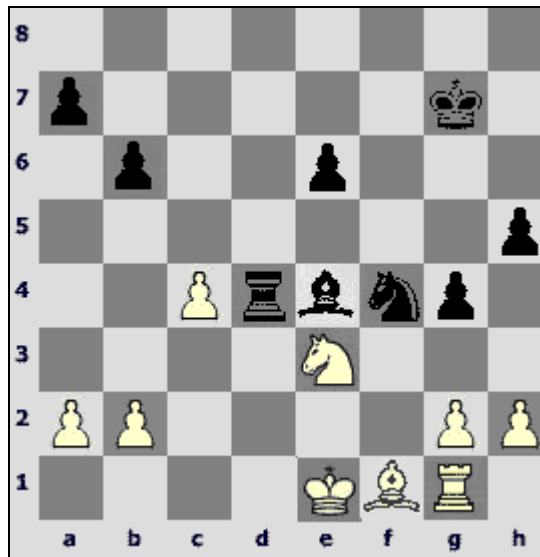


We've seen the similar idea (but on the queenside) in a later game Aseev – Khalifman.

22.♖d3 ♕xg7 23.♕e1 ♖d8. It's very difficult for White to free his locked kingside.

24.♖e5 g5! 25.♖g4 (25.♖f3 g4) 25...h5 26.♖e3 g4 27.♗e2 ♖f4

28. ♖g1 ♜d4 29. ♕f1 ♕e4



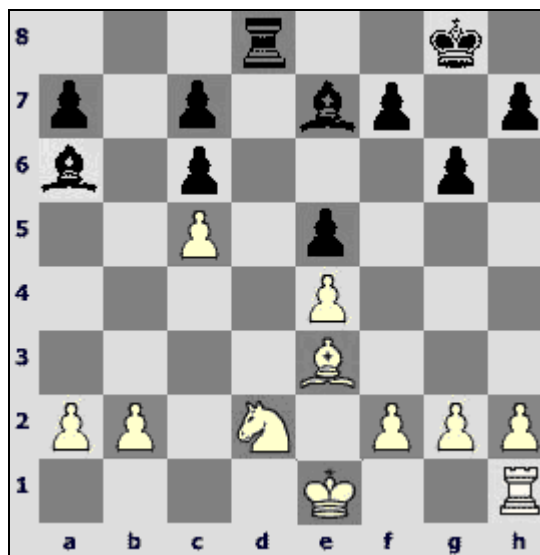
Complete domination!

30. a3 e5 31. g3. Weakening light squares decisively. However even after a more stubborn 31. ♘d1 bringing the king, Black should convert the advantage.

31... ♞d3+ 32. ♕xd3 ♜xd3 33. ♘d1 ♕f3 34. ♞c3 e4 35. ♞d5 e3
White resigned.

Naumkin – Khalifman

Jurmala 1982, USSR junior championship



17. h4 ♜b8. Immediate 17... f5 is met by 18. ♕g5, exchanging one of the bishops.

18.b3 f5 19.♘f3. It was possible to try keeping the position semi-closed – 19.g3 ♕d3 20.f3, however, in this case Black would also have the initiative. Advantage of Black, who has a pair of bishops along with an active rook (the most dangerous combination), increases after the game opening.

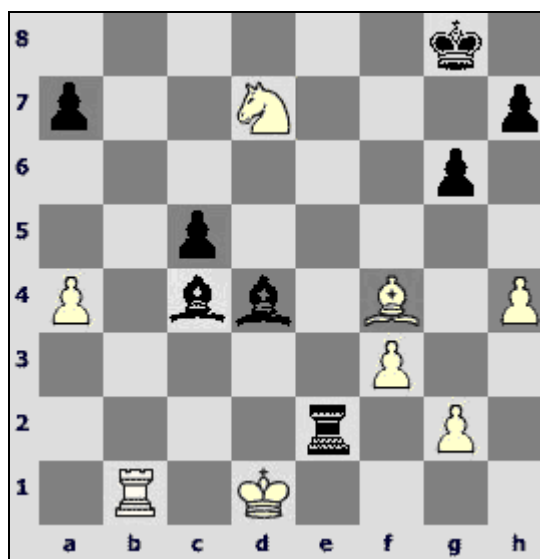
19...f4 20.♕d2 ♕xc5 21.♘xe5?! Now the rook bursts into White's camp.

21.♕c3 ♕b4±;

21.h5 deserved attention, bringing the rook into play – 21...♖e8 22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♕c3 ♕d4 24.♕a5 with an idea ♘d4 and f3 provided more chances for a draw.

24.♕xd4 exd4 25.e5 c5 26.♔d2 (26.♖h4 ♕b7 27.♖xf4 ♕xf3 28.♖xf3 ♖xe5+ 29.♔d2 ♖f5 30.♖xf5 gxf5 31.♔d3 ♔f7 (31...a5 32.g3 ♔f7 33.f3 ♔e6 34.♔d2 ♔e5 35.♔e2 ♔d5 36.♔d3 c6 37.a3=) 32.b4 (32.g3 ♔e6 33.f3 ♔d5 34.a3 a6–+) 32...cxb4 33.♔xd4 ♔e6 34.♔c5 (34.g3 ♔d6 35.f3 c5+ 36.♔c4 a5–+) 34...a5 (34...♔e5 35.♔xb4 ♔d4 36.♔b3 ♔d3 37.♔b4 ♔e2 38.f4 ♔e3 39.g4±) 35.g3 (35.♔b5 ♔d5–+) 35...c6 36.f3 ♔e5 37.♔c4 ♔d6–+) 26...♕b7 27.♖e1 ♔g7±.

21...♖e8 22.♘d7 (22.♕xf4? ♕d6–+; 22.♕c3 ♕d6±) 22...♖xe4+ (22...♕d4! with the idea of catching the knight 23.e5 ♖e7 24.♘f6+ ♔g7 25.♘e4±) 23.♔d1 ♕e2+ 24.♔c2 ♕d4 25.f3 (♔ 25.♕c3 f3 26.g3±) 25...♖e6 26.♕xf4 c5 27.a4 c4 28.bxc4 ♕xc4 29.♖d1?! (♔ 29.♖c1) 29...c5 30.♖b1 ♖e2+ 31.♔d1.



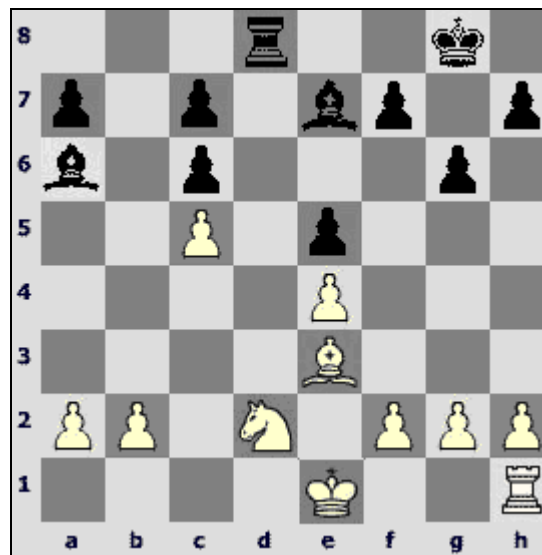
31...♔d3. Playing for a mate attracts Khalifman even in the ending! 31...♖xg2 32.♖b8+ ♕f7 33.♞e5+ ♔xe5 34.♔xe5 let White exchange one of the strong bishops, though Black is to win in any case.

32.♖b8+ ♕f7 33.♔d6 (♠ 33.♖b7 ♕e6 34.♖xa7 ♖xg2--+) 33...♔c3 34.♔g3 c4 35.♖b7 (more stubborn is 35.♖c8) 35...♖xg2--+ 36.♞e5+ ♕f6. 36...♕e6 would win quicker.

37.♞d7+ ♕e6 38.♞f8+ ♕d5 39.♖d7+ ♕c6 40.♖c7+ ♕b6 41.♞d7+ ♕a5 42.♖xa7+ ♕b4 43.♔d6+ ♕b3 44.♞c5+ ♕a2 45.♞xd3 cxd3 46.♔c5 ♖b2 White resigned.

Barbero – Khalifman

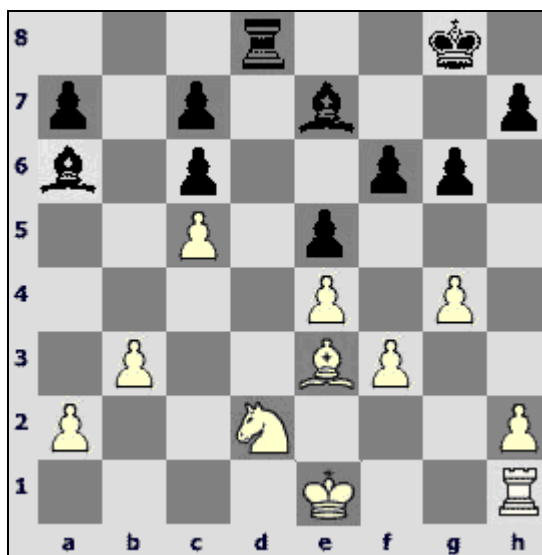
Plovdiv 1986



17.g4. It's for sure a stronger move than 17.h4 used by Naumkin.

17...♖b8 18.b3 f6 19.f3 (19.♕d1!? ♖b5 20.h4 ♠ 20...♔xc5 21.a4 ♖a5 22.♔xc5 ♖xc5 23.♖h3 ♖a5 ♠ (23...♔c8? 24.♖d3!))

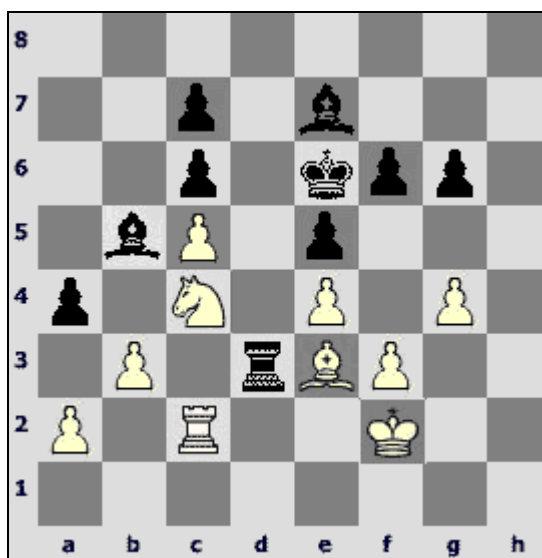
19...♖d8!



Black immediately attacks white bishop that has lost support.

20.h4 (more careful is 20.h3) 20...♖d3 21.♘f1 ♜b5. Alexander points out that in this case it would be much stronger to fix a weakness on h4 by 21...h5!

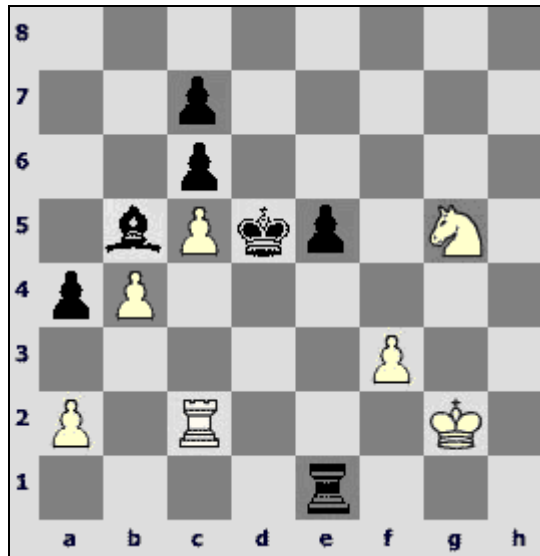
22.h5! a5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24.♖h2 ♜f8 (24...a4!?) 25.♖c2 (25.♖d2 ♖c3 26.♖d8 ♜xf1 27.♜h6 ♔h7 ♞ (given by Khalifman)) 25...♔f7 26.♔f2 ♔e6 27.♘d2 ♜e7 (27...a4 28.bxa4 ♜xa4 29.♘b3= (given by Khalifman)) 28.♘c4 a4



29.b4? Black does not stand the pressure 29.♘b2! axb3 30.♘xd3 bxc2 31.♘c1= (given by Khalifman).

29...f5 30.gxf5+ gxf5 31.exf5+ ♔xf5. 31...♔d5? complicated the struggle: 32.♘b2! ♜h4+ 33.♔g2 ♖xe3 34.♖d2+ ♜d3 with unclear consequences.

32.♔c1 ♕h4+ 33.♖g2 ♖e6 34.♘d2 ♜e3+ 35.♘e4 ♞e1 36.♕g5
 ♕xg5 (36...♕f1+ 37.♖h2 ♜xe4 38.fxe4 ♕xg5++) 37.♘xg5+
 ♖d5.



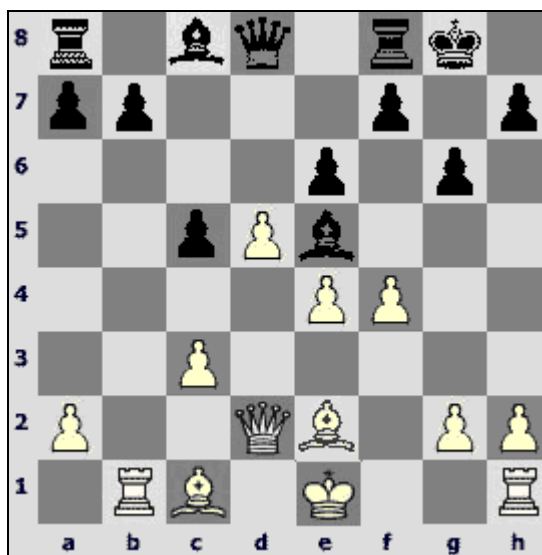
38.♘e4?! Hastens the inevitable defeat. 38.♖f2 ♜b1 39.♖e3
 ♜xb4 (39...a3 40.♘e4 ♜b2 41.♜xb2 axb2 42.♘d2 ♕f1 43.a4
 ♕a6 44.a5 ♕b5++) 40.♘e4 ♜c4 41.♜h2 ♜d4++.

38...♕d3 39.♞d2 ♖c4 40.♘f2 (40.♖f2 ♜c1 41.♖e3 ♕xe4
 42.♖xe4 ♞e1+ 43.♖f5 ♖xb4++) 40...♕f1+ 41.♖g3 ♖xb4
 42.♘g4 ♖c3 43.♞d7 ♕b5 44.♞xc7 ♖b2 White resigned.

Khalifman – Ivanchuk

Tilburg 1994

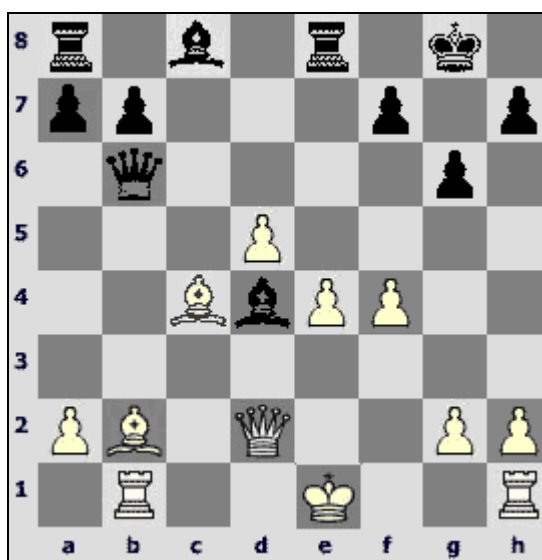
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.d4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 g6
 7.e4 ♕g7 8.♞b1 0-0 9.♕e2 ♘c6 10.d5 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 ♕xe5
 12.♞d2 e6 13.f4



13...♙g7. More popular continuation now is the original 13...♙c7, not letting White build up a strong center – 14.0–0 (14.c4?? ♙a5) ed5 15.ed5 ♙a5 16.d6. Khalifman had two triumphal games with this variation – against Tseitlin and against Mikhalevski, that were played in the match St. Petersburg – Beer Sheva, 1999.

14.c4 exd5. The game Khalifman – Greenfeld that was played in the same match continued as follows: 14...b6 15.♙b2 ♙xb2 16.♖xb2 ♙a6 17.♖b3! (after 17.0–0 exd5 18.cxd5 ♙xe2 19.♙xe2 f5 Black smashes White's center) 17...♖e8 (17...exd5 18.cxd5 ♙xe2 19.♙xe2) 18.♖e3 exd5 19.cxd5 ♙xe2 20.♖xe2 ♙h4+ 21.g3 ♙h3 22.♖f1 b5 23.f5↑.

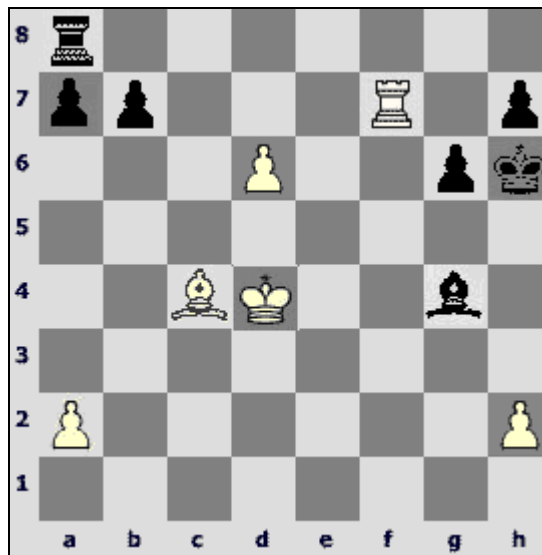
15.cxd5 ♙d4 16.♙b2 ♙b6 17.♙d3 c4 18.♙xc4 ♖e8.



The point of Black's idea. However, Alexander had a deeper

assessment of the arising ending, in which White, in spite of his minus pawn, has the initiative due to a greater pieces activity and, first of all, his king.

19. ♖xd4! (19. ♗d3 ♗f5 20. ♗a1 ♖f6 21. e5 ♗xd3 22. ♖xd3 ♗xa1 23. 0-0 ♖a6 24. ♖e3 ♖ad8=; 19. e5 ♗f5 20. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 21. ♗xd4 ♗xb1 22. ♖f2 ♖ec8∞) 19... ♖xd4 20. ♗xd4 ♖xe4+ 21. ♖d2 ♖xd4+ 22. ♖c3 ♖xf4 23. d6 ♖g7? (♗23...b6 24. ♗d5 ♖b8 25. ♖hf1 ♖f5 26. ♖d4 h5± protecting from g4) 24. ♖hf1! exchanging the only active piece of Black 24... ♖xf1 25. ♖xf1 ♗f5? (25... ♗e6! 26. ♗xe6 fxe6 27. ♖d4 ♖f8 ♖± 28. ♖b1 ♖f5; 25...f6? 26. ♖e1 ♗f5 27. ♖e7+ ♖h6 28. ♖d4+-) 26. g4! ♗xg4 27. ♖xf7+ ♖h6 28. ♖d4!+-



Complete domination of white pieces.

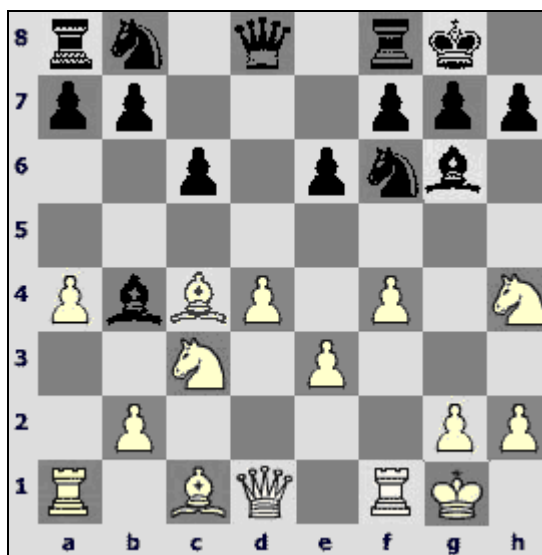
28... ♖c8 29. ♗d5 (29. ♖xb7? ♖c6 30. ♖d5? ♗f3+) 29... ♖g5 30. ♖e5 h5 31. d7 ♖d8 32. ♗e6 ♖h4 33. ♗xg4 ♖xg4 34. ♖d6 ♖h3 35. ♖c7 Black resigned.

Lputian – Khalifman

Lvov 1990, zonal tournament

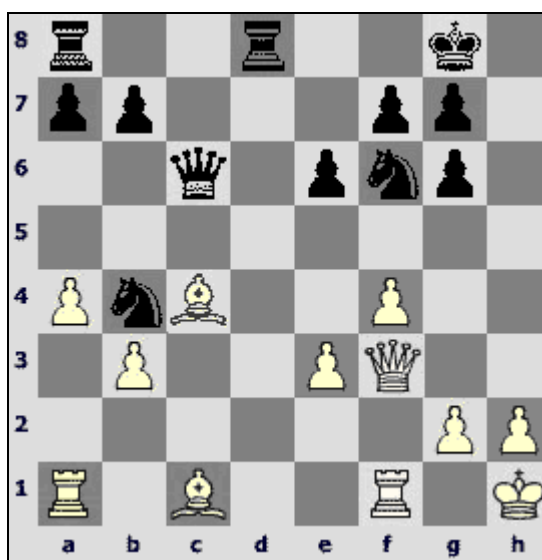
1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♖f3 ♖f6 4. ♖c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♗f5 6. e3 e6 7. ♗xc4 ♗b4 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♖h4 ♗g6. Black delays the queen's knight development so that the knight could be on a more active position on c6 after the possible c6-c5. Black's plan proves to be 100% correct after a too active moves of White.

10. f4?! More natural is 10. ♖g6 hg6 11. ♖c2 ♖bd7 12. ♖d1.



10...c5! 11. d4xg6 hxg6. Now we can ask, what for does a pawn stand on f4? White would return it on f2 with a pleasure – but pawns can't be moved back!

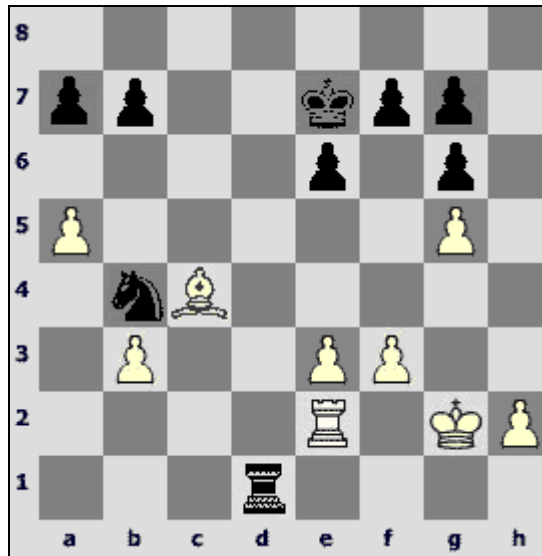
12. d4a2 d6c6 13. d4xb4 d6xb4 14. dxc5 (d14. e2d2 d6c6 15. dxc5 d6e4 16. e1e1 c6xd1 17. c6xd1 d6xc5= (given by Khalifman))
 14...c6a5 15. b3 c6xc5 16. c6f3 c6fd8 17. e1h1?! (17. c6xb7? d6c2
 18. c6a2 d6xe3 19. e1xe3 c6xe3+ 20. e1h1 a5+; 17. e1a3 c6b6=)
 17...c6c6!



Preventing e3-e4 with activating the dark-squared bishop.

18. a5 (18. c6xc6 bxc6+) 18...c6ac8 19. c6a4 d6d3 20. e1a3 d6c5.
 White had to exchange one of his bishops. Unsuccessful was
 20...c6xf3 21. gxf3 d6d5 22. e1xd3 d6xe3 23. c6c4!= (given by Khalifman).

21. ♖xc5 ♔xf3! (21... ♔xc5 22.e4 ♖d2=) 22.gxf3 ♖xc5 ♗
 23. ♖a2 ♕f8! 24. ♖g1 ♕e7 25. ♖g5 ♖xg5 26.fxg5 ♘d5 27. ♖e2
 ♘b4 28. ♕g2 ♖d1 ♚



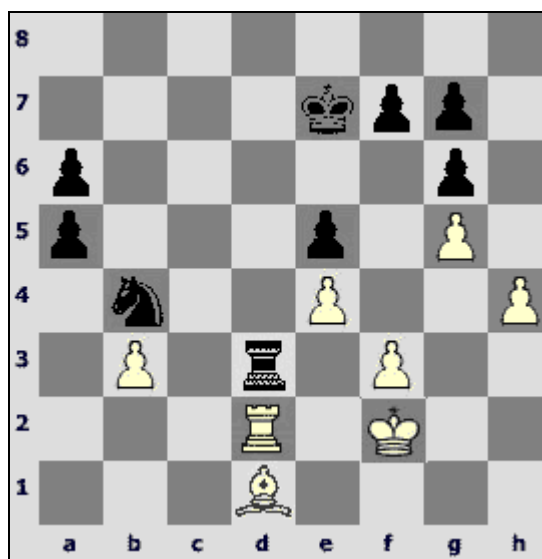
White has to suffer material losses.

29.a6 bxa6 30. ♕f2 ♖h1 31. ♕g3. Black's advantage increases – the difference of pieces activity is too big.

31...a5 32. ♖d2 (32. ♖b5 a6 33. ♖a4 ♖d1 not allowing the opponent to activate his rook) 32...a6 33.h4 ♖g1+ 34. ♕f2 ♖h1 35. ♕g3 ♖g1+ 36. ♕f2 ♖c1 37. ♖e2 ♖c3 38. ♖d1. 38. ♖b2 allowed black king's stirring up.

38... ♘d5! Provoking the decisive weakening of dark squares.

39.e4 ♘b4 40. ♖d4 e5 41. ♖d2 ♖d3!



Black exchanges the white rook, which hampers his king to pass to the queenside, and the difference of the knight's and the bishop's strength becomes evident.

42.♔e2 (42.♖xd3 ♖xd3+ 43.♔e3 ♗f4-+) 42...♖xd2+ 43.♔xd2 ♕d6 44.♙e2 ♕c5 45.♙c4.

45.♔c3 ♗c6! 46.♙c4 (46.♙xa6 ♗d4 47.♙c4 ♗xf3 48.♙xf7 ♗xh4) 46...♗d4 47.♙xf7 ♗xf3 48.♙e6 (48.♙xg6 ♗xh4 49.♙h5 ♗g2 50.♙f3 ♗f4 51.♙g4 ♗g6 52.♙f5 ♗e7-+ with subsequent ♗c6-d4-b5) 48...♗xh4 49.♙g4 ♗g2 50.♙f3 ♗f4 51.♙g4 a4! 52.bxa4 a5 53.♙d7 ♗e2+ 54.♔d3 ♗d4-+ (given by Khalifman).

45...a4 46.♙xf7 a3 47.♔c1.

47.♔c3 a5 48.♙c4 (48.♙xg6 ♗d3!) 48...♗c6 49.♙f7 (49.♙e2 ♗d4 50.♙d1 ♕b5) 49...♗d4 50.h5 gxh5 51.♙xh5 ♗e6 52.g6 ♗f4-+ (given by Khalifman).

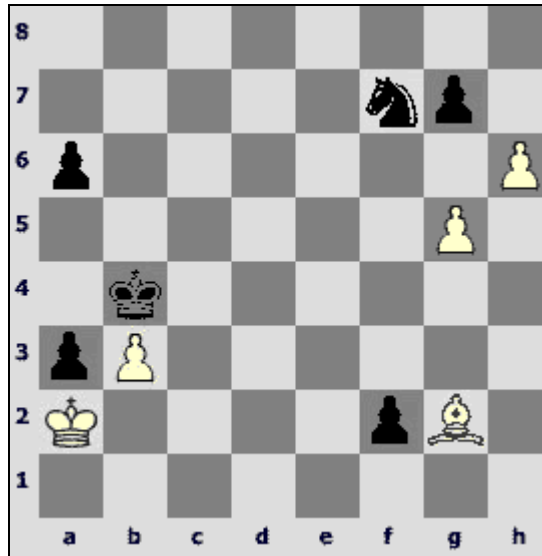
47...♗d3+ 48.♕b1 ♗e1 49.♕a2 ♕b4 50.f4 (50.h5 gxh5 51.♙xh5 ♗d3 52.♙g4 ♗c1+ 53.♕b1 ♗e2 54.♕a2 ♗c3+) 50...exf4 51.♙xg6.

51.e5 f3 52.♙c4 ♕c5 53.♕xa3 ♗c2+ 54.♕a4 f2 55.♙xa6 ♗e3 56.b4+ ♕d5 57.♙e2 f1♚ 58.♙xf1 ♗xf1 59.b5 ♗e3 60.b6 ♕c6-+.

51...♗f3 52.e5.

52.♙h5 ♗xh4 53.e5 ♕c5 54.♕xa3 f3 55.♕a4 f2 56.♙e2 ♗f5 57.b4+ ♕d5 58.♕a5 ♗g3; 52.♙f7 ♗xh4 53.e5 f3 54.♙c4 a5 55.e6 ♗f5 56.♙d3 f2 57.♙f1 a4 58.bxa4 ♕xa4 59.♙d3 ♕b4 60.♙a6 ♕c5 61.♕xa3 ♕d6-+ (given by Khalifman).

52...♗xe5 53.♙e4 f3 54.h5 f2 55.♙g2 ♗f7 56.h6 (56.g6 ♗h6 57.♙f1 a5 58.♙g2 ♗g8 59.♙f1 ♗f6).



56...♞xh6! White resigned.

Alexander's play certainly has some drawbacks as well. It often turned dull, if he did not manage to seize the initiative from the very beginning. Stubbornness of defense was not the strongest feature of his play as well. Sometimes he lost control over position and suffered unplanned losses following a sudden change of the situation on board. However, he would never become a world chess champion, if he did not manage to overcome them!



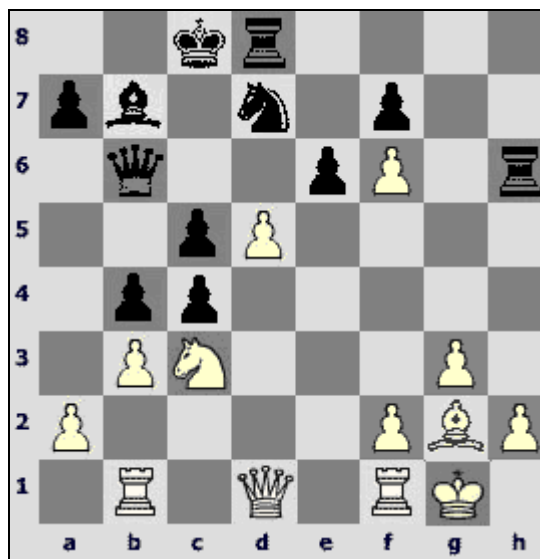
Two world chess champions

Two lessons that Khalifman gave to his opponents who did not take the used variations seriously, come in conclusion.

Khalifman – Galkin

Elista 1998

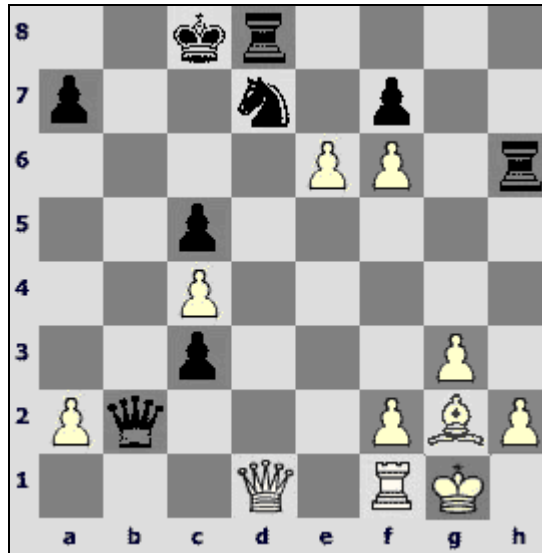
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♙g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♙xg5 ♘bd7 11.g3 ♙b7 12.♙g2 ♚b6 13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.d5 b4 16.♖b1 ♙h6. The bishop thrust was put away for good after this game. The main continuation is 16...♚a6. 17.♙xh6 ♖xh6 18.b3!



A wonderful idea, invented by Dutch grandmasters Piket and van Wely.

18...bxc3. In the previous encounters, in which this variation was played, the capture of the knight that seems dangerous and lets the b-file be opened proved to be correct. 18...cxb3 19.♘a4 ♚b5 20.axb3 exd5 21.♖c1 and White got advantage in the game Piket – Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1995.

19.bxc4 ♚a6 20.♖xb7 ♚xb7 21.dxe6 ♚b2. Black's counterplay was based on this move. 21...♚b6 22.♚c1 ♖xf6 23.exd7+ ♔xd7 (23...♖xd7 24.♙h3) 24.♚xc3 led to a situation in which in case of approximate material equality the opened position of the black king left a little chance for rescue.



22.e7! The refutation of Black's idea. White got nothing after 22.exd7+ ♖xd7 23.♙f3 c2 24.♙c6+ ♔d8 (Novikov – Ivanov, St.Petersburg 1996); 22.♙d6 fxe6 23.♙c6+ ♔b8 (Tella – Ivanov, Benaske 1997). White had to be satisfied with a perpetual in both cases.

22...♖e8. Natural 22...♖dh8 is refuted by 23.♙d5 ♙b6 (23...♖xf6 24.♔h3! ♙b7 25.♙e5+-) 24.♖d1 ♙c7 (24...♘xf6 25.♙a8+ ♔c7 26.♙d8+ ♖xd8 27.exd8♙#) 25.♙xf7 ♘xf6 26.♙f8+ ♘e8 27.♙f5+ with a mate.

23.♔c6 ♙d2 (23...♘xf6 24.♔xe8 c2 25.♙d8+ ♔b7 26.♔d7 c1♙ 27.♙c8+ ♔b6 28.♙c6+ ♔a5 29.♙xc5+ ♔a6 30.♔c8+ ♙b7 31.♙b5#) **24.♙b3 ♙b2 25.♔xd7+** Black resigned. 25...♔d7 26.♙a4 ♔~ 27.♙e8 finishes the struggle (variations are given by grandmaster Ivanov).

Khalifman – Nikolic

Moscow 1990

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♔b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♔xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e7 7.♙g4 0–0 8.♔d3 ♘bc6 9.♙h5 ♘f5. Unsatisfactory is 9...h6 10.♔xh6 gxh6 11.♙xh6 ♘f5 12.♔xf5 exf5 13.0–0–0 with irrefutable attack. The text-move also did not stand the test neither in this nor in subsequent encounters. 9...♘g6 is considered to be the only possible response now.

10.♘f3 f6 11.g4 c4 12.gxf5! 12.♔e2 ♘fe7 was used before, with an acceptable position of Black.

12...cxd3 13.♖g1.



13...exf5. Black can't repulse the attack, which is proven by the following examples:

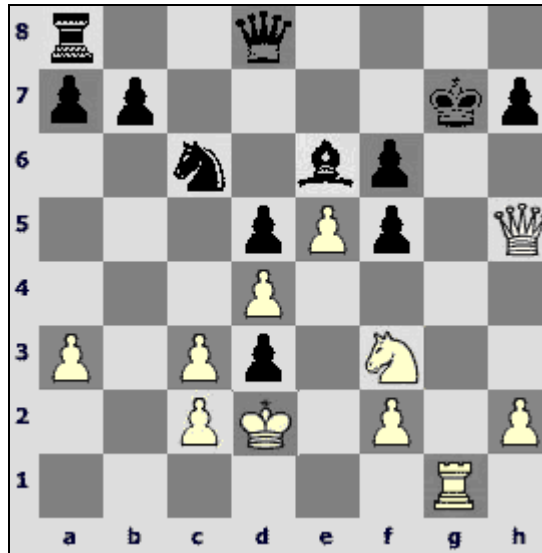
13...♔a5 14.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 15.♙h6+ ♔h8 16.♙xf8 ♔xc3+ 17.♙f1 ♔xa1+ 18.♙g2+- (Schipper – Cubas, Switzerland 1991);

13...dxc2 14.♙h6 ♖f7 15.♙d2 ♙d7 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♔h6 ♔f8 18.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 19.♖g1 ♔xg1 20.♘xg1 fxe5 21.f6 (Palac – Kovacevic, Vinkovci 1995);

13...♘e7 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 16.♔g5+ ♘g6 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.♙f4 ♙d7 19.♙e5 dxc2 20.h4! ♙e8 21.♘h2 ♙f7 22.♔h6+- (Kruppa – Komarov, Kherson 1991).

14.♙h6 ♖f7 15.♙d2! ♙e6. Does not save 15...♔e7 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 (17...♔xg7 18.♔e8+-) 18.♖g1+ ♙f8 (18...♙h8 19.♘h4+-) 19.♔h6+ ♙e8 20.♖g8+ ♙d7 21.♖g7+- (given by Khalifman); 15...♙d7 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 18.♖g1+ ♙h8 19.♘h4 ♘xe5 20.dxe5 ♔b6 21.♘g6+ ♙g8 22.♔h4 d4 23.cxd4 dxc2 24.♘e7+ ♙f7 (24...♙h8 25.e6+-; 24...♙f8 25.♖g8+ ♙xe7 26.♔xf6+-) 25.♔xh7+ ♙e6 26.♔xf5+ ♙xe7 27.♖g7+ ♙f8 28.♔xd7 c1♔+ 29.♙xc1 ♔c6+ (29...♖c8+ 30.♔xc8+ ♙xg7 31.♔d7+-) 30.♙d2 ♔xd7 31.♖xd7+-.

16.♙xg7! ♖xg7 17.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 18.♖g1+.



Now both 18...♔h8 19.♘h4 ♘e7 20.ef6 ♕e8 21.♖h6 ♖f8
 22.♗g7 ♙g8 23.♘f3 and 18...♔f8 19.♖h7 ♘e7 (19...♙f7
 20.♗g7 ♕e8 21.♘h4 ♔e7 22.♘f5 ♔e6 23.♘d6) 20.ef6 ♘g8
 21.♗g8 ♙g8 22.♖g7 ♔e8 23.♘e5 are hopeless (given by
 Khalifman), that's why Black laid down arms. 1-0