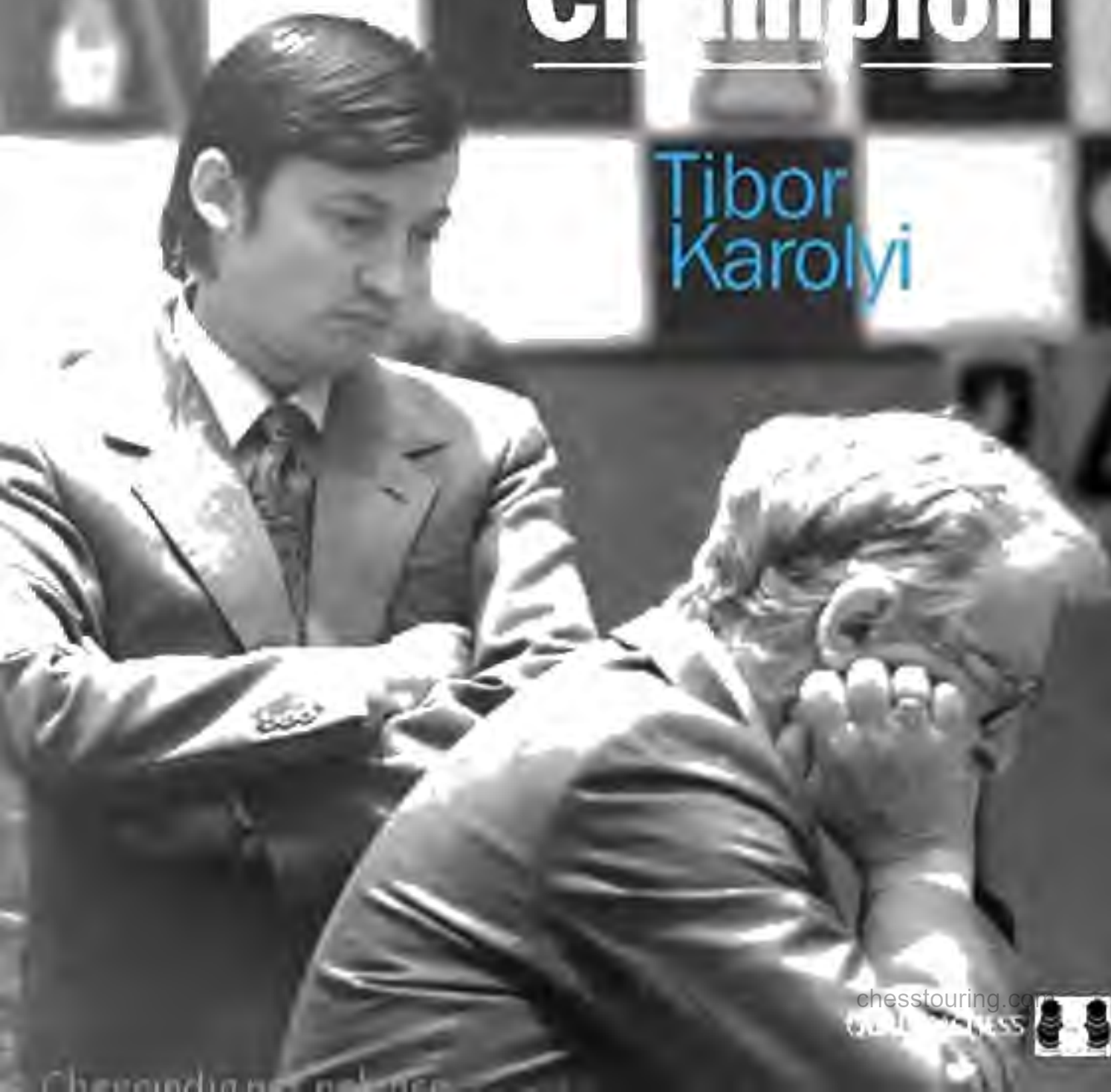


KARPOV'S STRATEGIC WINS 1

1961-1985

The Making of a Champion

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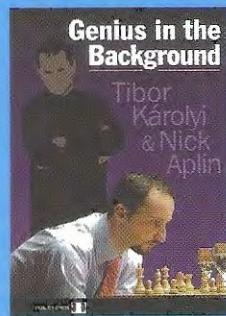
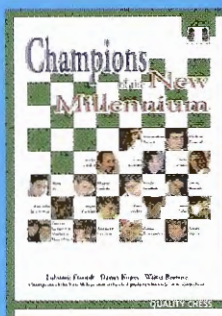
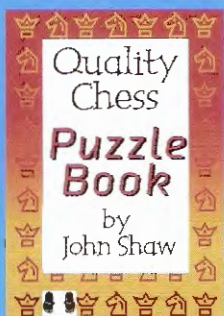
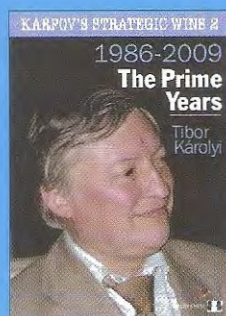
Karpov's Strategic Wins 1: The Making of a Champion 1961-1985

Anatoly Karpov was World Champion from 1975 to 1985 and is universally regarded as one of the greatest players of all time. Award-winning author Tibor Károlyi explains Karpov's genius with a particular focus on Karpov's unrivalled grasp of strategy. Károlyi has selected Karpov's most entertaining and instructive strategic wins from 1961-1985 as the Russian star proved he was a worthy successor to Bobby Fischer.

The book starts with Karpov as a precocious youngster and tells the story of the making of a champion. It concludes with Karpov losing his title to his nemesis, Garry Kasparov.

International Master **Tibor Károlyi** was Hungarian Champion in 1984 and is renowned as an author and trainer. He won The Guardian Book of the Year prize in 2007 and coached Peter Leko when in the space of four years Leko went from a promising youngster to a world class grandmaster.

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Karpov's Strategic Wins 1

The Making of a Champion

By

Tibor Karolyi



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Karpov's Strategic Wins 1 - The Making of a Champion

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Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better
∓	Black is slightly better
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+—	White has a decisive advantage
—+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
±	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
?	unclear
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
!?	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
#	mate

Preface

Anatoly Karpov, the twelfth World Chess Champion, is one of the greatest players of all time and the holder of a number of records. No other player in history has won so many high-level individual tournaments. Karpov also achieved the best ever tournament performance in winning the 1994 Linares tournament with an incredible 11/13, two and a half points ahead of the second and third placed Kasparov and Shirov.

These records are the most impressive but they are not the only ones. Of all the World Champions, Karpov is the one who participated in the largest number of World Championship finals. He is also the only player to have won the title of World Champion in three different ways. The most significant is of course when he reigned between 1975 and 1985. He also won the 1997-98 FIDE World Championship. What is less well known is that he was the winner of the only World Rapid Chess Championship in Mazatlan 1988. Karpov may well be the player who earned the most money through chess, although it is impossible to establish this with any certainty.

Together with Nick Aplin I wrote a book entitled *Endgame Virtuoso: Anatoly Karpov*, published by *New in Chess* in 2007. During the selection of games for that book came the realization that Karpov's games are so rich as to be worthy of deep investigation from just one particular angle. The primary aim of the present two-volume work is to show the reader, in chronological order, how Karpov outplayed his opponents by strategic means. Karpov's strategic genius has been well documented by many chess writers, but according to my best knowledge not a single book has been written on the subject in such depth as can be found in these pages.

The twelfth World Champion is best known as a "python" who could slowly squeeze the life out of his opponent, but over the course of the two volumes we will see plenty of examples of his tactical sharpness as well. Games involving a quick attack on the opponent's king have been omitted, as they do not fit in with the overall theme of the book, but let me quash any misconceptions about Karpov being a one-dimensional player. When the situation on the board demanded it, he could attack with as much ferocity as almost anyone else.

A number of Karpov's games which culminated in interesting endgames have been omitted from this project, as they have already been discussed in the *Endgame Virtuoso* book. My conclusion from the work on both the present project and the aforementioned endgame book is that Karpov's little-known games often contain at least as much instructive and artistic value as his more famous wins. In this book I have tried to give priority to the beauty and educational value of his strategic masterpieces. Over the coming pages I will identify the tools he uses and highlight the features that characterize his play.

Many have called Karpov the greatest strategic player of all time. I invite the readers to become acquainted with his masterpieces and decide for themselves whether this view is justified.

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1961

Anatoly Evgenevich Karpov, the twelfth world chess champion, was born on 23 May 1951 in the city of Zlatoust, located in the Urals region of Russia. He learned to play chess at the age of four with his father Evgeny Stepanovich, a chief engineer. It may or may not be a coincidence that many of the world champions came from single parent families. Karpov was an exception; he grew up in a normal family environment with his parents and one sister.

Karpov's exceptional chess talent shone almost from the start. He became a second and then a first category player at the age of just nine. His first recorded games for the public are from 1961.

We will take the year 1961 as the starting point for our study of Karpov's career, as his first games in the database are from that year. The biggest event in the broader chess world was the Tal – Borvinnik rematch, in which the fifty year old Borvinnik regained the highest title for the last time. Most of Karpov's games from 1961 were played in his home city, although he also competed in several other Russian cities including Borovichi, Magnitogorsk and Chelyabinsk. This exposure shows that he and his supporters were already taking chess seriously at that time.

It is not possible to work out from the database whether the Zlatoust games were played in one tournament or whether these are selected games from that particular year. He did not handle openings in a well educated way, although with Black he played one main Ruy Lopez Chigorin variation with ...♖d8 and a ...d5 pawn sacrifice. His generally slow handling of the opening caused his games to last longer on average than they did in the later part of his career. He already followed reasonable plans, although of course opponents' blunders played a more significant role than in later years.

Here is our first game. A database search reveals no further games on the part of his opponent.

Game 1

Anatoly Karpov – Gaimaletdinov

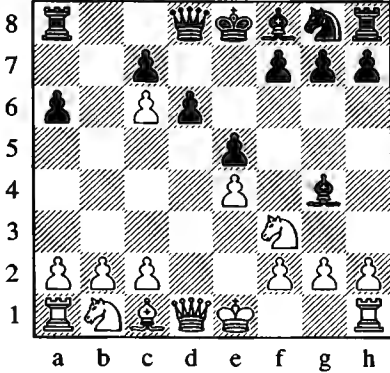
Zlatoust 1961

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 d6 4.d4 ♗g4 5.d5 a6 6.♗xc6?!

White could have given up the bishop under better circumstances: 6.♗a4 b5 7.dxc6 bxa4 8.c4 f5 9.h3 ♗h5 (or 9...♗xf3 10.♖xf3 fxe4 11.♖xe4 ♘f6 12.♖c2 and White is better) 10.exf5 e4 11.g4 ♗f7 12.♖e2 d5 13.♘e5 White got a clear advantage in Dvoretzky – Biriukov, USSR 1973.

It is also promising to keep the bishop: 6.♔e2!? ♕xf3 (6...♖c6 7.h3 ♔d7 8.c4 is also better for White) 7.gxf3! ♖d4 (7...♖ce7 8.f4) 8.♕f1 And White will carry out f3-f4 with better prospects.

6...bxc6 7.dxc6



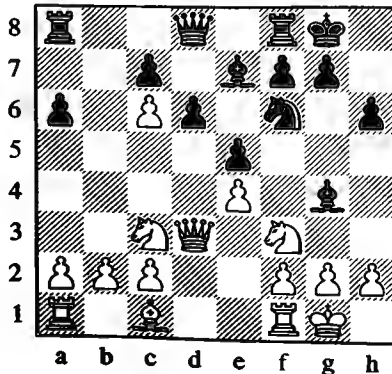
7...h6?

This move is obviously too slow, just like the whole plan with which Black intends to capture the c6-pawn. Instead he should play 7...♖c7, regaining the pawn with a good game.

8.0-0

On 8.♖d3 ♖c7 comes.

8...♖f6 9.♖d3 ♔e7 10.♖c3 0-0



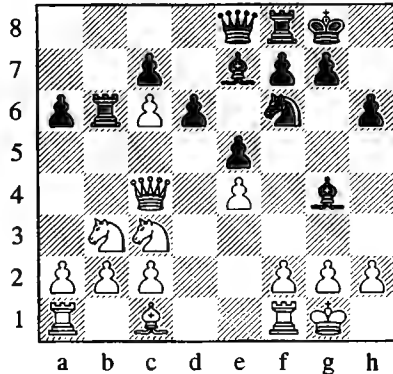
11.♖d2!

A subtle move; the young Anatoly wants to defend the c6-pawn without allowing his opponent to double his pawns on the kingside.

11...♖e8

So Black wants to take the c6-pawn with the queen.

12.♖c4! ♖b8 13.♖b3 ♖b6



14.♖a5!

The position is closed, so White can afford to spend a fourth tempo with the knight to defend it. Besides, the black rook is misplaced on b6.

14...♖h7?!

This is too slow. Black should have preferred 14...♔e6 15.♖d3 ♖h5 16.f3 ♖d8 17.b3 ♔g5 when White only has a small edge.

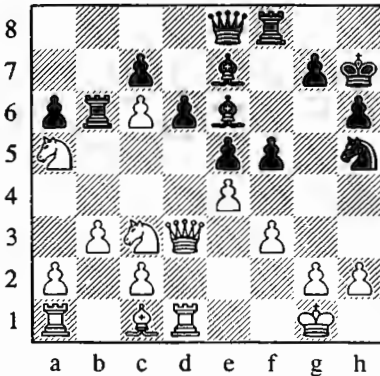
15.b3 ♔e6 16.♖d3 ♖h5 17.♖d1!?

It is difficult to understand why Karpov moved his rook to this square. He may have wanted to vacate the f1-square for the queen in the event of 17...♖f4.

17...f5 18.f3!?

It is remarkable that he refrains from winning a tempo with the natural 18.♔e3. He probably

had a different plan in mind to hurt the rook on b6.



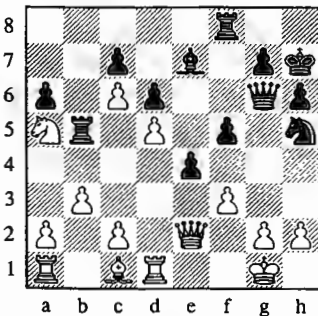
18...f4?

Black closes the kingside, hoping for a pawn storm that will never happen. Both of the following alternatives would have kept the game more interesting:

18...g6 19.d5!

19. e3 f4 20. d2 (20. e4 exf4 21. d5 fxe4 22. e7 exd3 23. d6 exg6 24. cxd3 f5 Black is very active) 20...fxe4 21.fxe4 f6 22. f1 It is not easy to for White to make his extra pawn count.

19...e3 20.exd5 21. c4



22.a4!!

It is a lovely way to showcase the theme of the misplaced rook.

22. d7 e6 23. b1 e3 is not so convincing.

22...f6

22... f6? is possible, although after 23. b4 e6 24. a3 e2 25. e2 f4 26. f1 fxd5 27. fxd5 e3! 28. e3 dxd5 29. e1 dxb4 30. c4 a5 31. e7 White keeps a nice edge.

23.d4

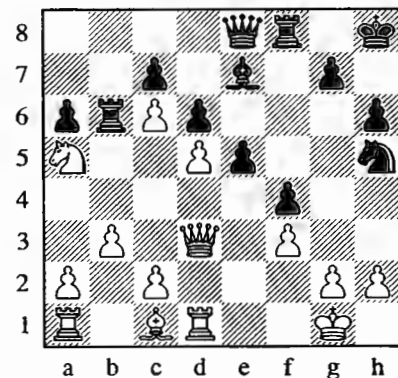
23. f4!? also looks promising.

23...e6 24. b1 exf3 25. f3

Black does not have enough for the pawn.

18...fxe4 Opening the position at once was probably Black's best chance. 19. g6 f4 19... g8 (After 19... g6 20. g6 f4 21. e3 f6 22. d5 Black has little to show for the pawn.) 20. d5 (20. e3 is also good) 20... f6 21. d6 f4 22. c4 White extra pawn should be worth more than Black's activity.

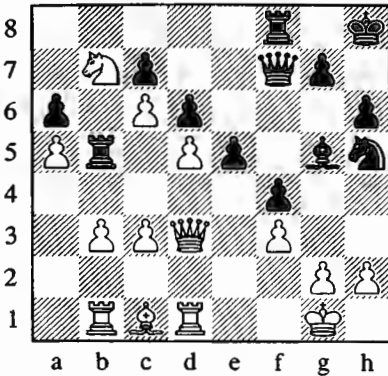
19.d5 e3 20.exd5 21. c4



21.d7!

The knight may not attack anything here, but it serves an important function in trapping the black rook.

21... e6 22. b1 f7 23. a4! e5 24. a5! f6 25. c3 f6



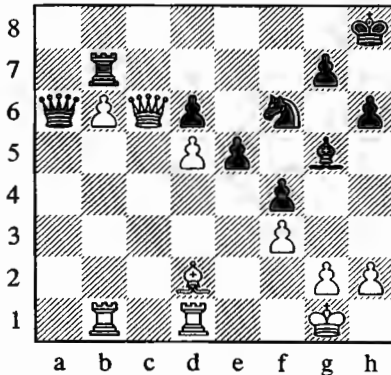
26.c4!

Karpov completes his plan and the rook perishes. The rest should be simple.

26...Rxb7 27.cxb7 Bb8 28.b4 Rxb7 29.b5 axb5 30.cxb5 Qe8 31.Qc4 Qa8 32.Qc6 Qa7† 33.b6 cxb6 34.axb6 Qa6 35.d2?

Missing an opportunity to end the game with 35.Qe8†, winning the knight on h5.

35...Qf6



36.Qxd6

36.d1?! e4 (36...Qg8 37.d2) 37.h4 wins without giving any counterchances. Karpov has such an overwhelming advantage that he can win in any way he chooses. In the game he

certainly did not finish off his opponent in the most efficient way, but he always maintained a winning advantage.

36...e4 37.dxf4?!

37.fxe4 was simpler, as 37...Qxe4? loses to 38.Qf8† Qh7 39.Qf5†.

37...Qxf4 38.Qxf4 exf3 39.Qxf3

39.d6!? was also possible.

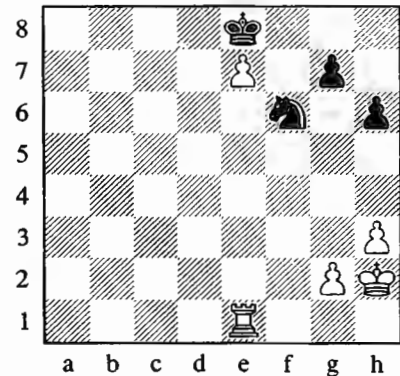
39...Rxb6 40.Rxb6 Qxb6† 41.Qh1 Qd6 42.h3

42.Qg3 was also fine.

42...Qh7 43.Qe2 Qg8 44.Qe6 Qxc6 45.dxe6 Qf6 46.e7?

46.Rd8! Qg6 47.Rf8 wins very simply.

46...Qg8 47.Rc1 Qf7 48.Qh2 Qe8



49.Rc5

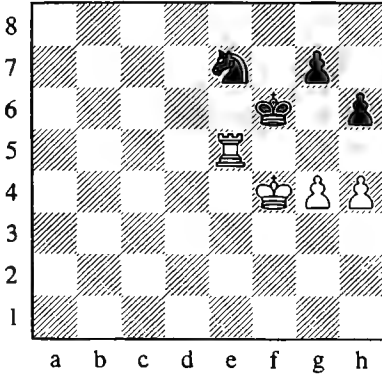
It is worth mentioning the line 49.Rc6 Qf7 (49...Qg8 50.Rg6 wins easily) 50.Rxf6†? gxf6 51.Qg3 Qxc7 52.Qg4 Qf7 53.h4! White wins here but there was no practical value in playing like this.

49...Qg8 50.Qg3 Qxc7

Winning the c7-pawn enables Black to resist for a while, but he is lost anyway. If Black had

a light-squared bishop instead of the knight, the win would require skilful technique.

51.♔g4 ♕f7 52.h4 ♖g8 53.♕f4 ♕f6 54.g4 ♖e7



55.h5 g5†

55...♖g8 56.♖a5 ♖e7 57.♖a7 ♕f7 58.♔e5 ♕f8 59.♔e6 wins.

56.♔e4 ♕f7 57.♖a5 ♖g8 58.♔e5 ♕g7 59.♖a7† ♕h8 60.♔e6

1-0

This was a remarkable performance for a ten year old. He made the win a bit harder than it should have been, but overall he played the whole game impressively.

1961 Summary

The database contains eighteen games from this year, of which Karpov won twelve, drew five and lost only one. It is likely that his overall results were lower and Karpov publicized only his best games from the early period of his life. Even so, his play was undoubtedly at a high level for a ten year old.

1962

Interestingly there are only twelve games documented from this year, most of which took place in Zlatoust. His games were of a shorter duration and his opening play had visibly improved. Blunders played a smaller role in his games than in the previous year. Some of the games are already endgame pearls. The database shows that he achieved a draw with Black against Korchnoi, which must have been at a simul.

Karpov's opponent in the next game was not a well-known player. The game is selected because of its crystal clear technique.

Game 2

Anatoly Karpov – Dmitri Piskunov

Zlatoust 1962

1.c4 ♟f6 2.e5 ♞d5 3.c4 ♞b6 4.d4 d6 5.exd6

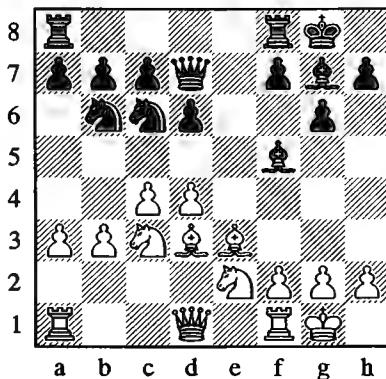
It is interesting that Karpov chose this exchanging line long before it became fashionable.

5...exd6 6.♞c3 ♞c6 7.a3 ♞f5 8.♞e3 g6

It was worth considering 8...d5!? 9.c5 ♞c4.

9.♞d3 ♞d7 10.♞ge2 ♞g7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b3

By eliminating the possibility of ...d5 and ...♞c4, Karpov reduces his opponent's options.

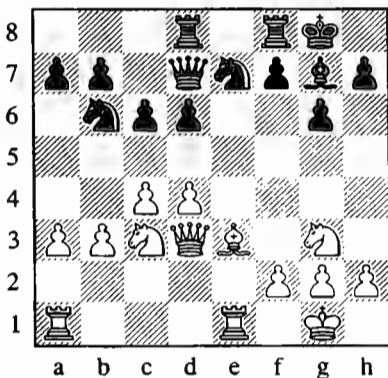


12...♖ad8 13.♜c2 ♗xd3 14.♜xd3 ♘e7
15.♘g3!

Karpov refuses to allow the exchange of the e7-knight, which would have eased the congestion in Black's position.

15...c6 16.♞fe1

Black is worse as White has more space and most of the pieces are still on the board. In addition Black's knights have hardly any purposeful squares available.



16...d5?!

16...♘e8 looks slightly awkward but may nevertheless have provided better hopes of survival as Black can at least double his rooks on the e-file.

16...h6! was recommended by Ashot Nadanian, who suggests Black now has a pleasant game. His plan involves ...f5, gaining space without giving up important squares. Nevertheless after 17.♞e2 f5 18.♜d2 ♖h7 19.♞ae1 White's position is preferable and he could also exert pressure with 19.a4. Still, Black would have had better chances than in the game.

17.c5

Karpov increases his space advantage.

17...♘bc8

Sometimes one must visualize the second move of a knight rather than just the first. It would have cost a tempo to put the knight on c7 with 17...♘a8! but it was worth the investment as the position is closed and the knight would have enjoyed much better prospects there.

18.♞e2 f5?

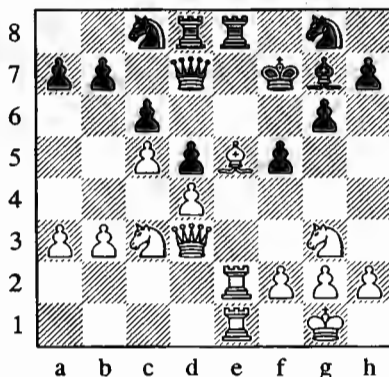
This weakens the e5-square, although skill is needed to exploit the opportunity. A sounder alternative was 18...♖h8, enabling the knight to transfer to f6 via g8.

Another idea was 18...f6!?, giving the option of bringing the king to f7, as in the game, but without relinquishing control of the e5-square.

19.♗f4 ♖f7 20.♞ae1 ♞fe8

Black wants to ease the pressure on his position by exchanging the rooks on the e-file.

21.♗e5 ♘g8



22.♘f1!

White has time to transfer the knight to e5.

22...♗f6

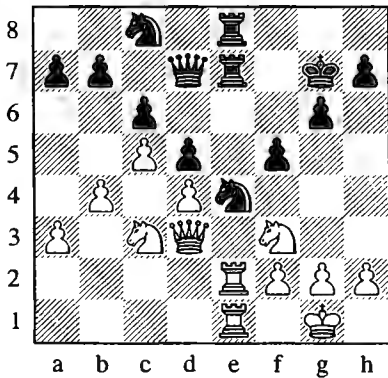
22...♗xe5 can be met strongly by 23.dxe5!. Keeping the rooks on the board is White's most effective strategy. Note that the black

knight is both a long way from e6. 23...♗g7
24.♘d2 The white knight has an easy route
to d4, and if 24...d4 then 25.♘a4 leaves the
d-pawn weak.

23.♘d2 ♘e4 24.♗xg7!

Karpov believes that manoeuvring the knight
to e5 is more important than keeping a pair of
pieces on the board.

24...♗xg7 25.♘f3 ♖e7 26.b4 ♜de8



27.♘e5

Finally the knight can occupy the soft point
in Black's position.

27...♞d8 28.f3 ♘xc3

If 28...♘g5 29.b5 ♘f7 30.f4 White has a
great advantage as well.

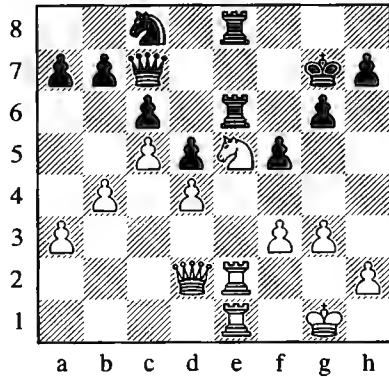
29.♞xc3 ♜e6

Black has a joyless position. He would like to
improve the c8-knight but there is no easy way
of doing it. Instead he must wait passively and
react to White's threats.

30.g3 ♞c7

30...f4 offers more resistance, although 31.g4
leaves White clearly on top.

31.♞d2



31...♘e7?

Black has no luck with knight moves in this
game.

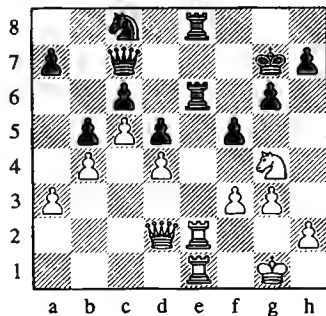
31...b5!?

This was a much better attempt to resist,
although White keeps a big plus and should
have enough resources to grind his opponent
down.

32.♘g4!?

Singaporean IM Chan Peng Kong recom-
mended this witty move. It threatens an in-
vasion.

Alternatives include preparing a pawn break,
such as a4 on the queenside or h4 followed
by g4 on the kingside.



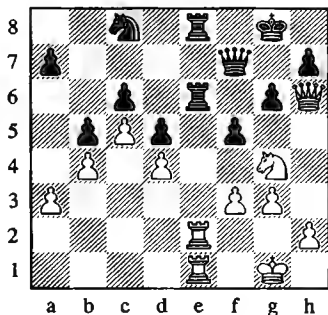
32...♞f7!

Black can resist the onslaught with this cold-
blooded move.

After 32...♞e2? 33.♞xe2 White invades:

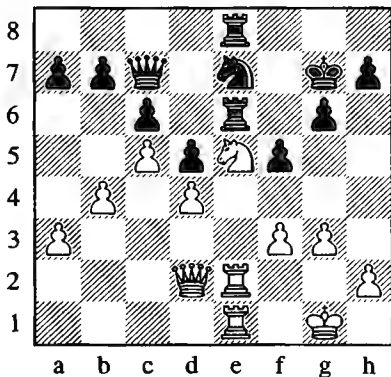
33...♔d8 (33...♙xe2 34.♖h6† ♕g8
35.♕f6†+-) 34.♗h6† ♕g8 35.♕f6† ♕h8
36.♙e6 ♗f7 37.♗e3 With a winning
advantage.

33.♗h6† ♕g8



34.♕e5

White has to return to the positional
approach in order to convert his advantage.



32.♕d3!

This shows the remarkable alertness of the
eleven year old Anatoly. He notices that he can
transfix his opponent with a lethal pin on the
e-file.

32...♙xe2 33.♗xe2 h5?

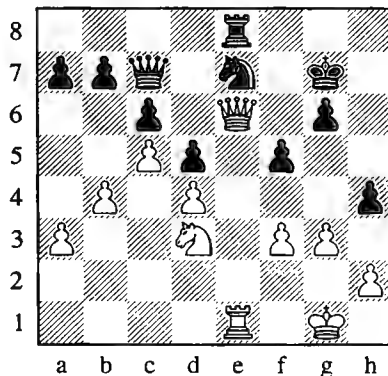
Black goes down without any resistance.
33...♗d7 was better, although even then
White can win with 34.♗e5† (34.♗e3 is

also good enough) 34...♕f7 35.♕f2 ♕c8
(35...♕g8 36.♗h8+-) 36.♗b8 ♙xe1 37.♕xe1
♕e8 38.♕e5+-.

34.♗e6

34.♕f4 also wins.

34...h4



35.♗d6!

1-0

Black resigned as he cannot avoid the loss of
a piece. This game is a remarkable example of
chess understanding, even at the age of eleven.
Karpov identified the soft point, manoeuvred
to gain control and retreated at the right time
to open the floodgates.

When I wrote the book *Endgame Virtuoso: Anatoly Karpov* with Nick Aplin, I was curious as to the identity of Karpov's junior trainer, but I was unable to find out. In a conversation Vladimir Smirnov told me that Kasparov mentions the name in the Russian edition of the relevant volume of *My Great Predecessors*. I checked the English version but the name was not given, but with Vladimir's help I managed to find out that Karpov's trainer in this extremely formative period was Leonid Gratvol. I know in Hungary what a strong and often underestimated effect junior trainers had

on the development of the Polgars and Leko, for instance, and once these players retire or drop their level how heavily Hungarian chess will pay for it and reduce the status of my country in world chess. It took some investigation to reach Mr. Gratvol and send him a few questions. I was told his health was not good, and I was especially happy when his answers arrived. Here is the interview.

When and where were you born?

"I was born on the 16th of April 1932 in the city of Chelyabinsk."

Could you please say a few words about your family?

"My father, Aaron Gratvol (1900-1943), was Jewish; he died at the front during World War II. My mother, Antonina Gratvol (1912-2004), was Russian. My father worked as an accountant in a factory. My mother was a kindergarten teacher.

When did you learn to play chess?

"I learned to set up the board at the age of five, and I started to participate in tournaments in 1947 at the Chelyabinsk chess club."

Who was or were your trainer(s) in your youth?

"I did not have one; after visiting the chess club I still played chess and I mainly worked on my chess from books and magazines."

Have you graduated from a university?

"I obtained a diploma. I left the history faculty of the Chelyabinsk Pedagogical Institute in 1959."

Have you ever been a professional player?

"Apart from training juniors in the Pioneers' Palace, I gave lectures on history in an evening school."

What do you consider your best achievement?

"I won three times, in 1960, 1962 and 1968, the regional championship. In 1968 I finished second and in 1975 I won the championship of Chelyabinsk.

When did you start working with Karpov and for how long did you work with him?

"I started to work with him in 1961 when he was nine years old and trained him for three and a half years. Our involvement stopped when the family moved from the Chelyabinsk area to Tula."

When did you discover his enormous talent?

"I immediately noticed that he was a very talented boy."

How did you train him?

"Because he lived in Zlatoust, which is three and a half hours away on the train from Chelyabinsk, we did not train very often. We mainly worked on middlegame positions and choosing plans. Apart from that he participated in many tournaments when he stayed at my place."

How did his style evolve, compared with his game in his junior years?

"Karpov's style never changed sharply, but strengthened tremendously."

What kind of relationship did you have with his parents?

"Karpov's father worked in a metallurgic factory as a first engineer. I had virtually no contact with his mother."

Are there any of Karpov's games of this period which is memorable for you?

"Nowadays it is very hard for me to select a game from Karpov's early period."

Do you think there is any Karpov game or games from the time he dominated the world in which the work you did with him can be directly seen?

“I do not think there is such a game.”

Do you still have contact with him? If not, for how long were you in contact with him?

“Now there is no contact between us. Last time I met him was in 1975 in Leningrad.”

Who is your favourite player?

“I respect all the great players a lot, but I do not have a single favourite.”

How did you judge his chances against Fischer?

“I thought he had good chances, but I never believed the match would take place.”

Were you happy when he won the title of World Champion without play?

“I was not happy about Karpov obtaining the title of World Champion without playing. I considered that it was a big loss for the whole chess community that the match did not take place.”

When did you move to Israel? Could you speak a bit about your present family?

“I came to Israel with my wife and my mother in 1994. My daughter has raised my grandson on her own since 1996. My mother died in 2004.”

How much time do you have for chess?

“When I arrived in Israel I participated in many tournaments. Nowadays I seldom play because of the deterioration of my health.”

On behalf of the readers I wish you the best of health and many happy years. Thank you very much for the interview.

Mr Gratvol also sent me a scanned page of an old Soviet chess magazine, in which Karpov talks about his junior years. The section on Gratvol is translated below:

“Then I lived in Zlatoust, far away from the chess centres of our country and my initial chess development occurred independently. From time to time I travelled to Chelyabinsk where regional tournaments took place. There I met Leonid Aronovich Gratvol who was the head of chess at the Pioneers’ Palace. The now honoured trainer of the Russian Republic – strictly speaking he was my first chess tutor. Leonid Aronovich – a very delicate person and teacher. He did not impose creative views, but he tried to save the originality of each junior chess player in order not to spoil their talents.”

I managed to find out that Gratvol had a total of eight future grandmaster pupils, a few of whom wrote about him in public. Unfortunately I was unable to find out where and when the following comments were published.

GM Evgeny Sveshnikov

Renowned Grandmaster and theoretician, and inventor of the Sveshnikov variation of the Sicilian.

“In my development as a chess player the trainer who took care of me for the longest period had the biggest role. He was not only my trainer but also a close person to me: Leonid Aronovich Gratvol. He was a candidate master, but several times he won the championship of the region. Through his hands, apart from me, went a row of grandmasters: Gennady Timoscenko, Alexander Panchenko, Semen Dvoiry, Tatiana Shumiakina and even Anatoly Karpov. All the players from Chelyabinsk who achieved something at chess worked with him. When the Chelyabinsk team won the all Soviet school team championship, Timoscenko played on the first board, Karpov second and myself on the third.

Gratvol was awarded the “Honoured Trainer” title of the Russian Republic. Without this success he would not have been ranked on the appropriate level – he was such a modest person.”

GM Alexander Panchenko

You have become a well-known coach quickly enough despite the lack of pedagogical and life teaching experience. Please tell us in detail how you managed to do it!

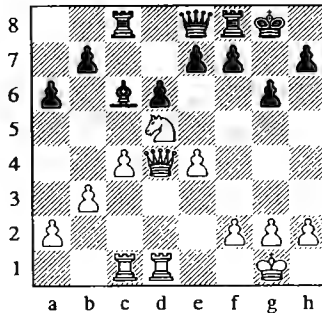
“I’ve been lucky. My coach in Chelyabinsk was the honoured coach of Russia, Leonid Aronovich Gratvol, a natural born teacher. I could have talked about him endlessly. It would be enough to say that he had brought up Gennady Timoschenko, Evgeny Sveshnikov, Semen Dvoiryis, Tatiana Shumiakina, many other well-known masters, and worked with the young Tolya Karpov. I just had to recall how he had been working with us, and tried to follow his advice.”

I checked the database for Gratvol, and was only able to find a few games. I noticed he had a very positional style. It is difficult to measure exactly how much a trainer’s influence can be seen in a pupil’s career, although in the previous Karpov – Piskunov game, which I rate very highly, one can sense Gratvol’s direct effect. His games on the database are not from the times when he was at his peak in Chelyabinsk, but only from the period after he passed his sixtieth birthday. Before returning to our main subject of Karpov’s career, as a farewell I present one of Gratvol’s wins. Decide for yourself how much Karpov’s style resembles that of his junior trainer.

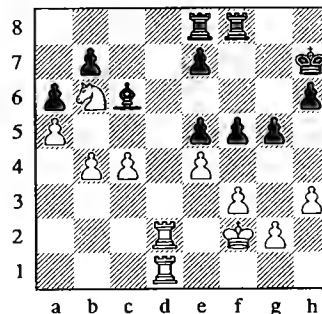
Leonid Gratvol – Stefan Hatzi

Frohnleiten 1999

1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♘g7 3.c4 c5 4.e4 cxd4 5.♖xd4
♖c6 6.♙e3 ♖f6 7.♖c3 d6 8.♙e2 0–0 9.0–0
a6 10.♞d2 ♖g4 11.♙xg4 ♙xg4 12.♞ac1
♞c8 13.b3 ♙d7 14.♞fd1 ♞e8 15.♖d5 ♖xd4
16.♙xd4 ♙xd4 17.♞xd4 ♙c6



18.♖c3!? f6 19.♖d5! ♞f7 20.♖b6 ♞cd8 21.f3
♗g7 22.♞d2 ♞e6 23.♞cd1 h6 24.a4 ♗h7
25.♞c3 ♞de8 26.♙e1 ♖d8 27.a5 ♞f7 28.♞de2
♞fe8 29.♞d2 ♞f8 30.♞ed1 ♞de8 31.b4 ♞e6
32.♙e1 ♖d8 33.♞ee2 ♞f7 34.h3 g5 35.♙e1
♞e6 36.♞ed1 ♞de8 37.♞b2 ♞e5 38.♞xe5
dxe5 39.♞b2 ♖d8 40.♞bd2 ♞de8 41.♗f2 f5



42.♞b2 ♞b8 43.b5 ♙c8 44.♗e3 ♞f6 45.♖d7
f4† 46.♗f2 ♞c8 47.♖xf6† exf6 48.bxa6 bxa6
49.♞b6 ♞xc4 50.♞xa6 ♞c2† 51.♗g1 1–0

1962 Summary

Out of the twelve games Karpov has in the database from 1962, he won nine of them and drew three without a loss.

1963

This was the year in which Botvinnik lost his crown for the last time, with Petrosian becoming the new champion. As the number of games by Karpov in the database decreased to three, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about his level of improvement. It seems that he dared to enter more complicated positions than before. He won all three games, each of which lasted more than forty moves.

The following is Karpov's last game in the section devoted to Zlatoust. Interestingly I found only one more game featuring Karpov's present opponent, which took place in 1998!

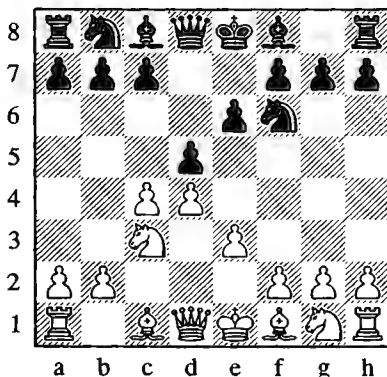
Game 3

A. Korotaev – Anatoly Karpov

Zlatoust 1963

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.e3

To close the bishop's diagonal is a harmless plan. White's position is safe, but it is not easy to breathe life into it.



4...b6

Intending to undertake the 'hanging pawns' centre.

5.♘f3 ♗b7 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0

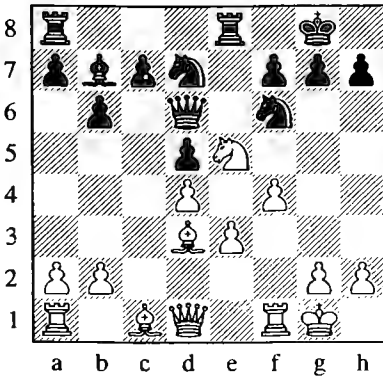
The alternative was 8...a6.

9.♘b5 ♜e8!?

Karpov gives up the two bishops for fluent play. 9...♗e7 was possible as well.

10. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 11. ♗e5 ♜bd7 12. f4?!

White intends to attack Black's king, but the plan is a faulty one. Instead he should just catch up with his development.



12...♗e4 13. ♖f3

13...♗d2 is more natural.

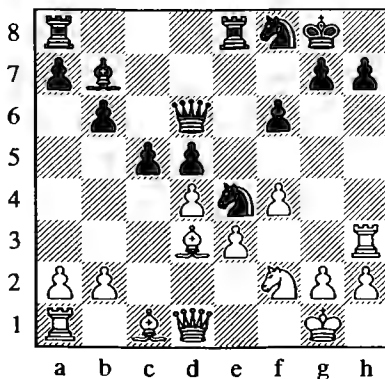
13...f6 14. ♗g4 c5!

Karpov keeps playing fluently.

15. ♖h3?!

The rook does little here and will find itself sidelined as the game progresses.

15...♗f8 16. ♗f2



16...f5

This move is well timed, as White's knight is a long way from the e5-square. Nevertheless Black could have played more strongly with 16...cxd4! 17.exd4 ♗e6+ when he wins a pawn for no compensation.

17.b3?!

White should have opened the long diagonal for his dark-squared bishop with 17.dxc5!, and after 17...♜xc5 the position is close to equal.

17...cxd4! 18.exd4 ♖ac8

Black is somewhat better because of the strong knight on e4.

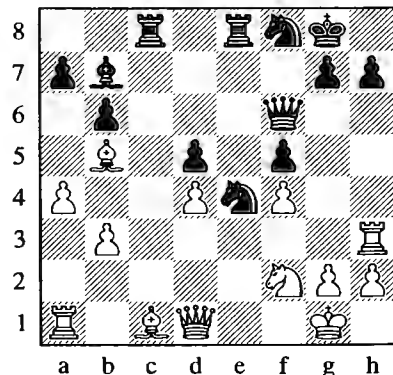
19.a4?!

This wastes a tempo. 19.♗e3 would at least have improved White's development.

19...♜f6

19...♗e6 was also strong.

20.♗b5



20...♖e7!

Karpov improves his position. He could have won a pawn with 20...♗xf2?! 21.♗xf2 ♖e4, but White's pieces would come to life: 22.♗b2! (22...♗e3 ♗e6) 22...♖xf4† 23.♗g1 ♗e6 24.♜d2 Black is better, but converting his extra pawn will not be easy.

21. ♖b2 ♜c7

Taking over the c-file.

22. ♙d3?!

Exchanging one of the rooks gave more chances to hold: 22. ♜c1!? ♜e6 (22... ♜xc1 23. ♙xc1 ♜e6 24. ♙e3) 23. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 24. ♜f3 ♙c6 (24... a5 can be met by 25. ♜d3; perhaps Black should just keep his opponent guessing with 24... ♜f8!?) 25. ♙xc6 (25. ♙e2 ♙e8) 25... ♜xc6 26. ♜d3 White is facing a passive defence, but he is not beaten yet.

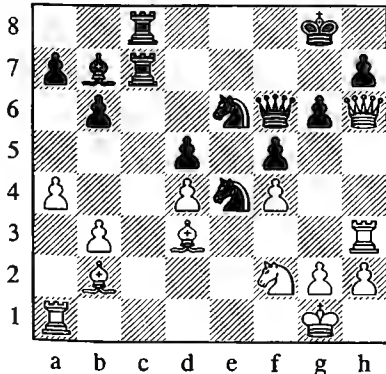
22... ♜e6 23. ♜h5?

This puts the queen out of play as well.

23... g6

Karpov simply parries White's threat, although he could safely have gone ahead with 23... ♜xf2!, when 24. ♜xh7† ♜f7 25. ♜h5† ♜g6 26. ♜xg6† ♜xg6 27. ♜xf2 ♜c2† simplifies to a won endgame.

24. ♜h6



24... ♜xd4!

Black has such domination in the centre that he can afford to open the long diagonal.

25. ♜d1

White keeps his dark-squared bishop, but

Black has so much force in the centre that White cannot even create a threat on the long diagonal. If 25. ♙d1 ♜e2† or 25. ♜b1 ♜d2 wins.

25... ♜c5 26. ♙c2

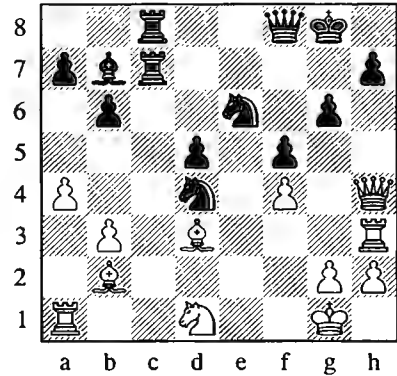
26. ♙f1 would have offered more resistance.

26... ♜ce6?!

Karpov wants to simplify into an endgame. It should be good enough, but Black could have won instantly with 26... ♙e8!. At this early age he had not yet acquired the ability to seize upon almost any chance to go after the opponent's king.

27. ♙d3 ♜f8 28. ♜h4

Avoiding the somewhat slower death that would have occurred after exchanging queens.



28... ♜xb3

Aside from Black's material advantage, he has several good pieces while White has only one.

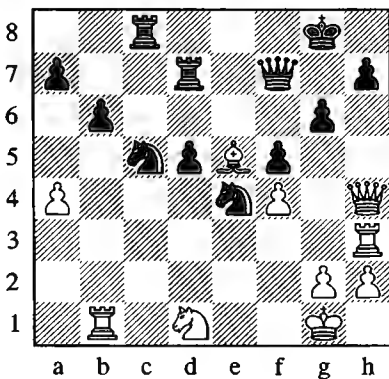
29. ♜b1 ♜d2 30. ♜c1 ♜f7 31. ♙a1 ♜e4 32. ♜b1 ♜6c5 33. ♙f1 ♙a6

With two extra pawns, Karpov naturally exchanges pieces.

34. ♙e5 ♙d7 35. ♙xa6 ♜xa6 36. ♜f2 ♜ac5

37. ♖d1

White has failed to develop any counterplay, and now he loses a third pawn.



37... ♖xa4 38. ♗a3 ♖ac5 39. ♜e1 d4 40. ♗ba1
 ♖b3 41. ♗1a2 ♗c1

Karpov liked to pin his opponents' pieces.

42. ♗b2 ♖c3

0-1

White played poorly in this game, but from Karpov's perspective it was an impressive performance. He purposefully improved his position. He positioned his knight on the e4-outpost, isolated the enemy d-pawn and took control over the c-file before winning material. Despite a few missed opportunities to win more quickly, he never let his opponent back into the game.

1963 Summary

With only three games from this year on the database, it is hard to make generalizations about Karpov's play. It is clear that the above game was a mature and skilful performance for a twelve year old. Karpov was on his way up, and according to the database he never played another significant game in Zlatoust. The future World Champion has outgrown his home city, but he still has a long way to go.

1964

Once again there are minimal games in the database – four this time. Karpov won them all, which suggests that these were specially selected games. They all took place in the city of Vladimir. His opening play did not improve in any discernable way, and all his wins were slow and long games. He preferred the Closed Sicilian to the Open. In 1964 he played in Moscow, drawing in a clock simul against Botvinnik. Karpov dropped a pawn, but then Mikhail Moiseevich blundered his queen. Luckily for the latter he still had enough activity and managed to survive.

Botvinnik later trained Karpov. The Patriarch did not realize what talent Karpov possessed and famously remarked that “he doesn’t have a clue about chess”. (Of course he did not tell it to Karpov!) Karpov wrote that the lessons and homework that he received at Botvinnik’s home were especially useful for him, as they required him to work hard, by reading books and studying independently.

Game 4

Anatoly Karpov – Viktor Fedin

Vladimir 1964

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3

Karpov played mainly the Closed Sicilian in the sixties, but stopped playing it regularly in 1971. In later years he tried it only three more times. Altogether he played twenty six Closed Sicilian games, winning seventeen, drawing eight and losing only once.

2...♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.♘ge2 d6 6.0–0 e5

The modern reaction to this setup involves putting the knight on h3, but it is too late for White to do that here.

7.d3 ♘ge7 8.f4 0–0 9.h3 f5

9...♗e6 deserves consideration, continuing Black’s development.

10.♗e3 ♘d4 11.♞d2 ♞c7 12.♘d1

Karpov follows a well-known regrouping plan.

12...♗d7 13.c3 ♘e6 14.♘f2 ♞ab8 15.♞ac1 ♗c6 16.b4

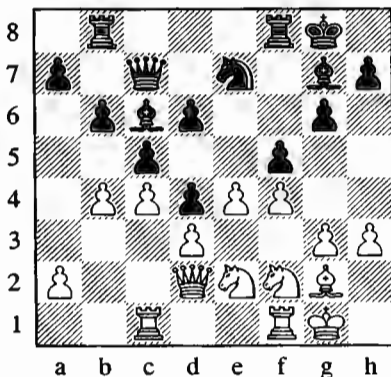
Having found good places for his minor pieces, Karpov starts gaining space.

16...b6 17.c4 ♘d4

Black has equalized from the opening.

18. ♖xd4 exd4

18...cxd4 may have been better.

**19. b5 ♖b7 20. g4 ♜f7**

20...fxe4 21.dxe4 ♗h6 was stronger, as Black's pieces work better than in the game.

21. a4

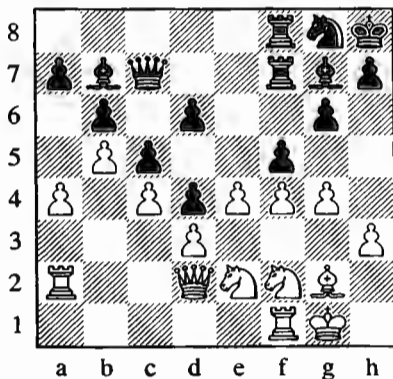
Karpov keeps gaining space.

21... ♜bf8 22. ♜c2 ♖h8

After 22...fxe4 23.dxe4 White has a mobile kingside majority.

23. ♜a2 ♖g8

23...a5!? deserved consideration.

**24. g5!**

Karpov blocks the f6-square from the knight and gains more space.

24... ♜e8

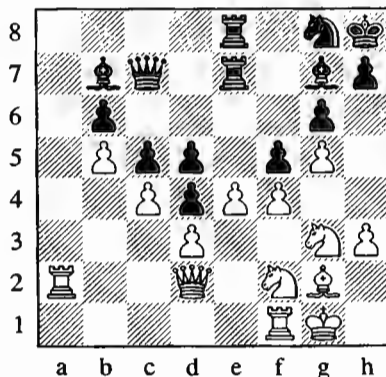
After 24...fxe4 25.dxe4 a5 26.h4 ♖e7 27.h5 the position is double-edged.

25. a5! ♜fe7

Black's rooks are strong but the g8-knight is out of play.

26. ♖g3 d5!?

Black can stir up complications in a different way too: 26...fxe4 27.♗xe4 d5 28.♗xd5 ♗xd5 29.cxd5 ♜e3 30.♖ge4 c4 With a highly complex position.

27. axb6 axb6**28. exf5**

Karpov elects to open the kingside, where both sides have their trumps. Black has the two rooks on the e-file, while White has three pieces and the strong g5-pawn.

A good alternative was 28.cxd5 fxe4 29.dxe4 ♜d7 30.♖g4 c4, when White's extra pawn should count for something, although the position remains wildly complicated.

28...♖e3 29.♘f1 dxc4 30.dxc4

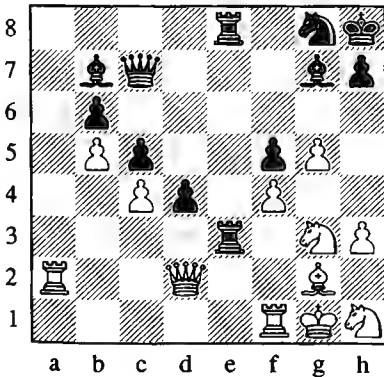
30.f6!? ♘xf6 (after 30...♗xf6 31.♖a7 ♖b8 32.gxf6 ♗xd3 33.♞e2 ♖e3 34.♞xc4 ♘xf6 35.♗c6 White should have better chances with his extra piece) 31.gxf6 ♗xf6 32.♖a7 (32.dxc4 ♗c8) 32...♗xd3 33.♞c2 ♖b8 34.♞xc4 ♖e3 35.♗c6 d3 Black has counterplay at the end of this sharp line.

30...gxf5?

Black falters at a critical moment. He should have preferred one of the following alternatives:

30...♗xg2 31.♘xg2 (31.♞xg2 d3) 31...d3! 32.f6 ♘xf6 33.gxf6 ♗xf6 White is a piece up but Black is not worse at all as White's knights have few active prospects.

30...♗c8!? also leads to an unclear position.



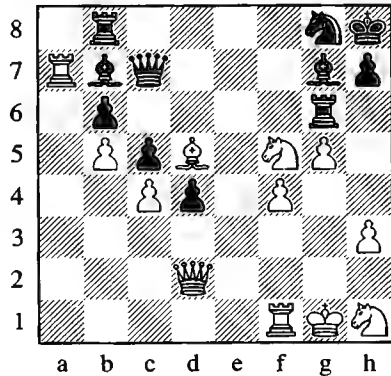
31.♖a7!

I have already remarked that Karpov liked to pin his opponents' pieces. The idea works perfectly here.

31...♖b8 32.♘f5

Black is a piece up compared with the variations analysed two moves ago, but on the other hand the white knight works superbly and he still has the g5-pawn.

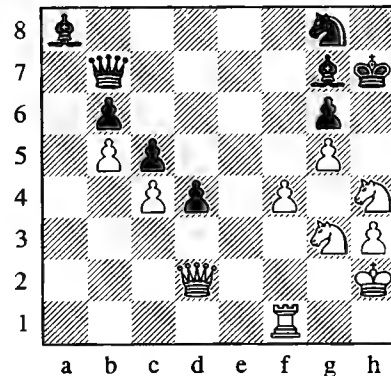
32...♖e6 33.♗d5! ♖g6



34.♘hg3!

Karpov has radically improved his three minor pieces on the kingside, and is now winning.

34...♞c8 35.♗f7 ♖a8 36.♖xa8 ♗xa8 37.♘h2 ♞b7 38.♗xg6 hxg6 39.♘h4 ♘h7



40.f5!

White already has a material advantage, and now he rips open Black's kingside with decisive effect. On move 28 Karpov started the confrontation with 28.exf5. He outplayed his opponent, and now he reaps the harvest and wins the game easily on the kingside.

40...gxf5 41.♖e2 ♘e7 42.♖h5† ♘g8 43.♖e8† ♘h7 44.g6† ♘h6 45.♖xe7 f4 46.♘gf5†
1-0

1964 Summary

Once again the small number of games prevents us from drawing any detailed conclusions, apart from remarking that his play in the above game was at a high level for one so young.

1965

Karpov was the youngest player at the All Union Schoolboys event at Kharkov, where he scored a respectable $4\frac{1}{2}/8$. The games do not appear in the database, although the Russian chess magazine *Shakmatniy Bulletin* published his first game. He also participated in the Spartakiad USSR junior event in Kharkov, where he played nine games, only four of which found their way to the database.

The only other game available from 1965 was a draw against Spassky in a simultaneous event. At the time Spassky was arguably the strongest player in the world, and would go on to challenge Petrosian for the World Championship the following year. It all goes to show that in those days promising juniors such as Karpov had excellent opportunities to sharpen their skills against the very best in the world. Karpov's game against Spassky was rather boring, as he went for safety first. They soon found themselves in a double rook ending. Spassky played on for a while but later agreed a draw.

His opponent in the following encounter has no other games on the database (and also lacks a first name!).

Game 5

Hampyuk – Anatoly Karpov

Tula 1965

1.e4 e5

Over the course of his career Karpov answered 1.e4 with 1...e5 a total of 233 times. He won sixty two games, drew 145 and lost twenty six.

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♙e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0–0 9.h3 ♘a5 10.a4?

This is a clear mistake, as in the long run Black will open the position for his two bishops. Let's see how Karpov carries out this strategy.

10...♘xb3 11.♞xb3 ♙e6 12.♞d1 c5 13.axb5

White could have considered 13.d4!?, as the opening of the queenside does not help him in the present position.

13...axb5 14.♞xa8 ♞xa8 15.d3 c4

Karpov wants to exchange pawns to clear some space for his bishops. Black can also exert pressure with 15...♟b7, intending ...b4 and using his heavy pieces on the queenside.

16.♙g5

16.♘a3!? would have given Black less freedom to build his position.

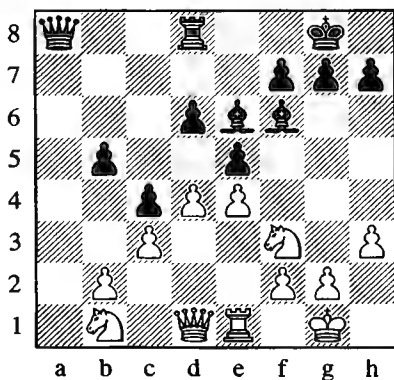
16...♞d8

Preparing to open the position further.

17.♙xf6!?

Giving up the second bishop was a mistake – it was not worth doing it to achieve d3-d4. Better was 17.♘a3!? ♟b7 18.♘c2 when it is not so easy for Black to open the position.

17...♙xf6 18.d4



18...d5!?

Karpov shows a very important and striking quality, which he will retain throughout his career: once he picks up a plan he sees it through, rather than changing his mind and reverting to another idea.

Nevertheless it was just as promising to play on the queenside with 18...♟a2 19.♟d2 (or 19.♟c2 ♞b8) 19...♞a8 when it is not easy to meet Black's ongoing initiative on the flank.

19.♟c2?

White could have stirred up some fascinating complications with the more resolute reply: 19.♘bd2!

Thanks to various tactical nuances this keeps White in the game. One can only speculate as to how Karpov planned to respond.

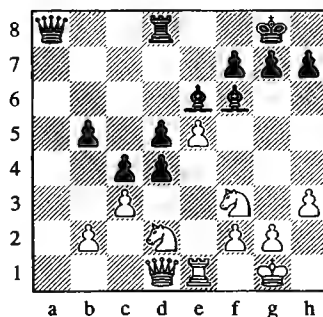
19...exd4

19...b4!? is interesting, but White should be able to keep a playable game: 20.dxe5 (20.♘xe5 ♙xe5 21.dxe5 bxc3 22.bxc3 dxe4 23.♟e2 is equal) 20...dxe4 21.exf6 exf3 22.♟xf3 ♟xf3 23.♘xf3 bxc3 24.bxc3 And White is not worse.

19...g6!? 20.dxe5 ♙g7 21.♟c2 ♟b7 Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn, but no advantage.

Knowing the mature Karpov who likes to have a pawn chain for a piece, maybe he would have opted for the main continuation examined here. However, Black must also take into consideration his opponent's attacking chances.

20.e5

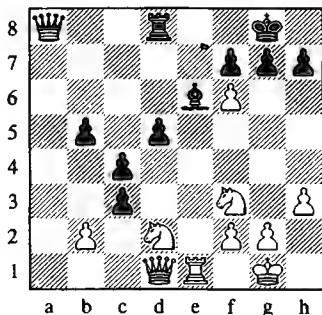


20...dxc3!?

This move leads to fascinating complications, in which a single inaccuracy could prove fatal for either side. White has chances to catch Black's king, while of course Black's pawns could decide the game as well.

20...♙e7 is met by 21.♘xd4 ♟a6 22.b4 when White is safe.

21.exf6



In this position Black has two interesting moves.

a) 21...d4

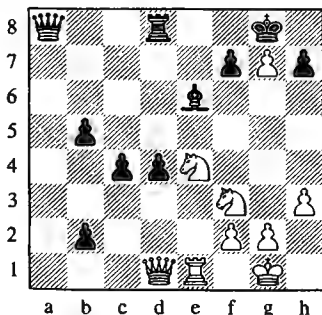
After 21...cxd2 22.♖xd2 gxf6 23.♖f4 White has enough at least for a perpetual.

22.♗e4 cxb2

22...♗d5 23.bxc3 ♗xe4 (23...dxc3 24.♖b1 ♗xe4 25.♖xe4 g6 is rather risky for Black.)

24.♗xd4 b4 25.♖g4 ♗g6 26.♗f5 The position is equal.

23.fxg7



23...♖a5!

Others lose, for instance:

23...♖a1? 24.♖d2!+-

23...♗xg7 24.♗xd4 ♗c8 (24...♖d5 25.♗xe6+) 25.♖f3+-

23...c3 24.♖d3! ♖c8 25.♗xd4 c2 26.♖g3 and once again White wins.

24.♖b1 c3

After 24...♖b4 25.♗f6† ♗xg7 26.♗h5† ♗g8 27.♖e4 ♗f8 28.♖xh7 Black is in trouble.

25.♗f6† ♗xg7 26.♗h5† ♗g8 27.♖d3!?

After 27.♖e4 b4 28.♗e5 ♖a1 29.♗f6† ♗g7 White probably has to be content with a draw.

27...b1=♖

27...b4? 28.♗e5 b1=♖ 29.♖xb1 d3 30.♗f6† ♗g7 31.♗c6 (31.♗h5† ♗h6!) 31...♖b6 32.♗xd8 ♖xd8 33.♗e8† ♖xe8 34.♖xb4 c2 35.♖d4† f6 36.♖xd3 ♖c8 White can press with the extra exchange.

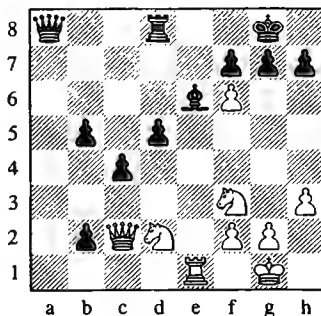
28.♖xb1 b4 29.♗f6† ♗g7 30.♗e4 ♗f5 31.♗xd4 ♗g6 32.♖e3

Black faces an uphill struggle to survive.

b) 21...cxb2

It looks better not to allow the knight to occupy the e4-square just yet.

22.♖c2



22...♖a2!

This is more accurate than: 22...♖a1 23.fxg7 d4 24.♗e4 ♖a8 (after 24...d3 25.♖d2 Black's king is in trouble) 25.♗h2 ♗xg7 26.♖b1 ♖a4 27.♖d2 And once again White's attack is dangerous.

23.fxg7

23.♗g5? allows 23...b1=♖! 24.♖xb1 ♖xb1 25.♗xb1 ♖a8 when Black's pawns should be the deciding factor in the endgame.

23.♖c3! is interesting though.

23...d4 24.♖e4

Once again 24.♘g5?! runs into b1=♖.

24...♞d5 25.♘xd4 c3 26.♘2b3 ♜a6

The position remains highly unclear. The whole line seems to be no less dangerous for Black than for White.

The game continuation is nowhere near as challenging, and Karpov takes full advantage of his initiative.

19...dxe4 20.♞xe4?!

The lesser evil was 20.♘xe5, although after 20...♙xe5 21.dxe5 ♞d3 Black is still better.

20...♙d5 21.♞e3

No better is 21.♞f5 exd4.

21...♙xf3 22.dxe5 ♞d3! 23.♞f4 ♙c7?!

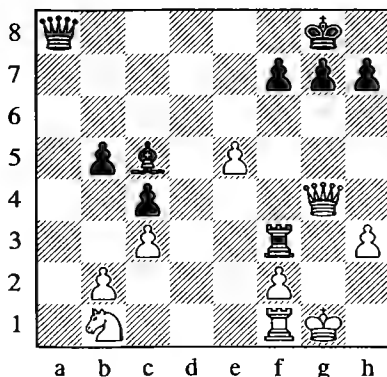
Black could have won more easily with 23...♙xg2 24.exf6 ♞xh3 25.f3 ♙xf3.

24.gxf3 ♞xf3 25.♞g4 ♙c5

25...♞d5!? would have prevented the rook from getting to the e2-square.

26.♞f1?

More resilient would have been 26.♞e2 ♞d3 (After 26...h5 27.♞g2 h4 28.♙f1 White survives as this escape square is now available.) 27.♘d2 ♞d5 Black is better here, but White has chances to survive. (Alternatively after 27...h5 28.♞e4 ♞c8 29.e6 fxe6 30.♘f3 White has compensation for the pawn.)



26...h5!

The addition of a final attacking unit crushes White's resistance.

27.♞g2 h4 28.♙h1

28.♙h2 ♞e4 wins.

28...♞xh3†

0-1

With this game we can begin to see the features of the future great champion. His opponent was naive in gifting him the two bishop advantage, and as soon as this happened Karpov based his strategy around opening the position to exploit their potential. His play was not flawless, but the consistency with which he executed his plan is to be admired.

1965 Summary

This was the year in which Karpov began to take part in more prestigious Soviet junior events. He held his own and the overall quality of his play was higher than the previous year.

1966

Karpov achieved some remarkable results in the year that Petrosian successfully defended his title against Spassky. Playing through his games, it is clear that he had reached a newer, higher level. With a total of forty three games in the database, this is the first year in which his results were truly well documented.

The following game is Karpov's first against a future grandmaster. The location of the event is significant, as the game was played in the Soviet capital. Karpov started the Soviet Under 18 Championship with a loss in twenty moves with White against Dydyshko, but he made his way back with some wins. He drew the penultimate round against Shakarov, who would go on to become a trainer of Kasparov and Naderian (see Chapter 4 of my previous book for Quality Chess, *Genius in the Background*). The following game was played in the last round.

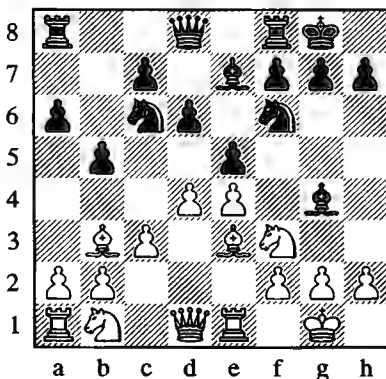
Game 6

Gennady Timoschenko – Anatoly Karpov

USSR Under 18 Championship, Moscow 1966

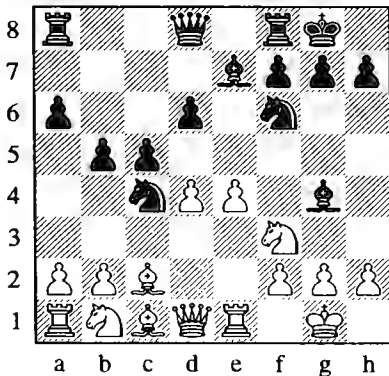
I was surprised to learn that, according to the database at least, these two players only met over the board on one subsequent occasion. That game was decided in the opening when Timoschenko executed a small combination to win a pawn, which he eventually converted in the endgame.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙c7 6.♞c1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 ♙g4 10.♙c3



This is the only time anyone played this move against Karpov. The other main move is 10.d5, against which he scored one win and one draw.

10...♖a5 11.♙c2 ♘c4 12.♙c1 exd4 13.cxd4 c5



14.♘bd2?!

The usual continuation is 14.b3 ♘b6. It would be interesting to know whether the future grandmaster did not know the theory, or simply made a slip. In any event, the game continuation had not been seen before and has never been repeated.

14...♘xd2 15.♙xd2

White can sacrifice a pawn with 15.♙xd2, but it presents no problems for Black: 15...cxd4 16.h3 (16.♙f4 ♙c8 17.♙c1 ♘h5 is nice for Black) 16...♙xf3 17.♙xf3 ♙b6. Though it is not simple to convert the extra pawn, Black certainly has a nice position.

15...♙xf3

Even as a young player, Karpov always liked to create weaknesses in the enemy camp.

16.gxf3 ♙b6 17.dxc5?!

Opening the d-file is useful for Black. Better was 17.b3 ♘d7 18.♙b2, when White is okay.

17...dxc5 18.♙h1?!

This is too slow, and White will never get enough play on the g-file.

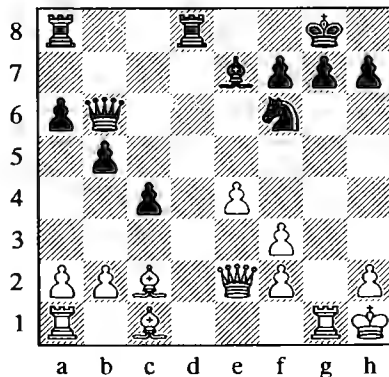
He could still have maintained equality with: 18.e5! ♙ad8 19.exf6 ♙xd2 20.fxc7 ♙xc2 21.e8=♙ ♙g6† 22.♙f1 ♙d3† 23.♙g2=

18...♙fd8

White is worse as his pawn structure has been damaged. With his last move Black mobilizes another piece, seizing the open file with gain of tempo.

19.♙c2 c4 20.♙g1?!

White is playing too optimistically. 20.e5 ♘d5 21.♙e4 was more appropriate, while 20.a4!? also deserved attention.



20...♘d7!

Improving the knight.

21.♙g2 ♘e5 22.♙c3 ♙c5 23.♙ag1 g6 24.f4 ♘d3 25.e5 ♙ac8 26.h4

By now White has burned his bridges, and has no real choice but to keep playing on the g-file.

26...♙b7!

Even though this game was played early in Karpov's career, his tools are the same as the ones

he uses later. Here he seizes the opportunity to set up a pin along the diagonal.

27. ♖xc5

27.h5 ♖e4

27... ♖xc5 28. ♖e3 ♖d5

28... ♖cd5! was even stronger.

29.b4?!

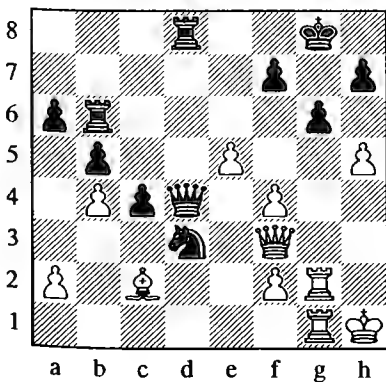
In a difficult position, Timoschenko gambles with a pawn sacrifice. Objectively 29.h5 looks preferable, but after 29... ♖d4 Black remains in full control.

29... ♖c6

Perhaps Karpov was taken in by his opponent's bluff. In fact it was quite safe to accept the pawn with 29... ♖xb4 30. ♖e4 ♖d4 31. ♖f3 ♖d3 32.h5 ♖f8! when White's attack is going nowhere.

30.h5 ♖d4 31. ♖f3 ♖b6

Missing a chance to end the game in style with 31... ♖xf4! 32. ♖xc6 ♖h4† 33. ♖h2 ♖xf2† 34. ♖g2 ♖g5† 35. ♖f3 (35. ♖xf2 ♖f4†! wins [but not 35... ♖d2?† when 36. ♖f3 wins for White!]; 35. ♖f1 ♖c1† 36. ♖g2 ♖xc2+) 35... ♖xg1 36. ♖xf2 (36. ♖g2 ♖d3!+) 36... ♖h1† 37. ♖g2 ♖xh5†+ Black will soon have four pawns for the piece plus an ongoing attack.



32.f5?

White is attacking relentlessly along the g-file, but he is unable to break through. He would have done better to abandon that plan altogether in favour of 32. ♖d1, when his position is not drastically worse.

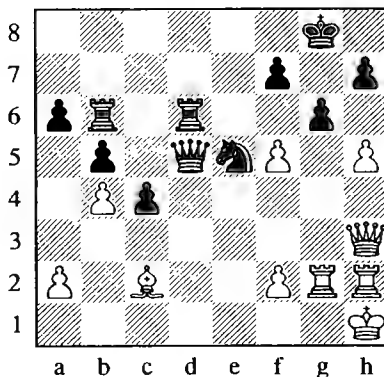
32... ♖xe5 33. ♖h3 ♖dd6

Black safely defends the g6-pawn.

34. ♖h2 ♖d5†

Forcing White back into the pin.

35. ♖gg2



35... ♖f3!

Threatening mate in three. White must shed an exchange, and his position quickly falls apart.

36. ♖g4 ♖xh2† 37. ♖xh2 ♖d2

The final invasion occurs on the d-file, which was occupied nineteen moves previously.

38. hxc6 hxc6 39. fxc6 fxc6 40. ♖e4 ♖xf2†
41. ♖h1 ♖f7 42. ♖h4 ♖f6 43. ♖g4 ♖h8
44. ♖h4 ♖a1† 45. ♖g2 ♖d2†
0-1

This game did not contain any single spectacular move, but Karpov's play was skilful, consistent and instructive.

Later in the year Karpov participated in a Masters versus Candidate Masters tournament in Leningrad, where he exceeded the master norm by two points. He became the youngest Master in the Soviet Union – quite an achievement. His short but lively draw with Igor Zaitsev was the first of his games to be published in *Chess Informant*.

This was followed by further success in a USSR junior team event in Vladimir. Karpov shared the board prize with Kudishevich, scoring 6½/8. Only two games from this event are listed in the database. One is the game he won against Kudishevich, while the other is presented here. His opponent went on to become a decent grandmaster and an exceptional rapid and blitz player.

Game 7

Anatoly Karpov – Valentin Arbakov.

Vladimir 1966

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3

Karpov never played any other move in this position. Out of 134 games in the database he won more than half, with seventy wins, fifty eight draws and just six losses.

2...♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4

Karpov rarely took on c6 and he was not particularly successful with it.

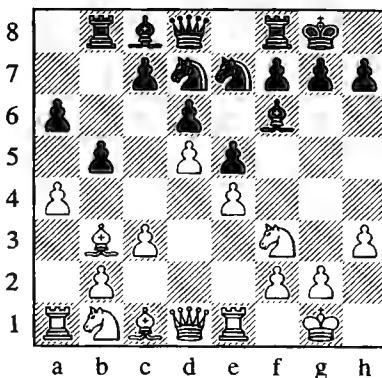
4...♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.a4

Avoiding the Marshall, although he often played 8.c3 inviting the gambit. Interestingly, only Short took up that particular challenge against him, at Tilburg 1991. That game ended in a draw.

8...♞b8 9.c3 d6 10.b3 ♗d7?! 11.d4 ♗f6

Black has bolstered the e5-pawn, so Karpov homes in on another target.

12.d5 ♗e7



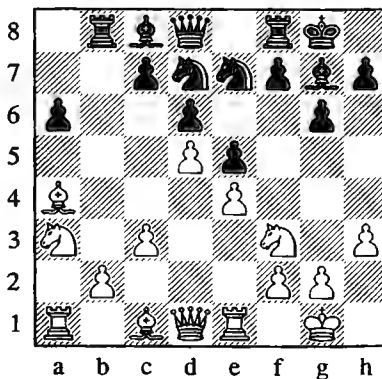
13.♗a3! g6?!

Better was 13...♗c5, although after 14.axb5 axb5 15.♗c2 b4 16.cxb4 ♞xb4 17.♞d2 Black will be left with a weak pawn on either c7 or d6.

14.♗c2 bxa4

Black hopes to create enough play to offset the weakness of the a6-pawn by preparing ...f5.

15.♗xa4 ♗g7



16.♗c2!

This is not an easy move to appreciate fully. Karpov believes that the position is so closed

that he can afford to devote a lot of time to laying siege to the weak a6-pawn. It is a risky strategy, as Black will have time to develop kingside counterplay.

16...h6

16...f5 is inadvisable due to 17.♘g5.

17.♖d2 f5 18.♗ac4 ♘f6 19.♗e3 ♖e8

19...f4 20.♗ec4 is good for White.

20.♗d3 ♘h5

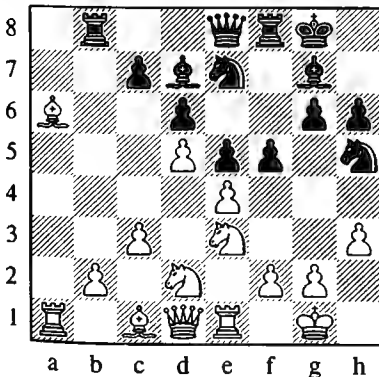
20...♗f7 21.f3 fxe4 22.fxe4 ♘g4 is a nice idea, but it does not stop White from claiming a slight advantage after 23.♗e2.

21.♗xa6

Reaping the fruit of the plan that began five moves ago.

21...♗d7

Black avoids exchanges, hoping to utilize his bishop for attacking purposes. Black may be a pawn down, but he is not without chances on the kingside.



22.♗f1

Karpov brings back the bishop to defend the king.

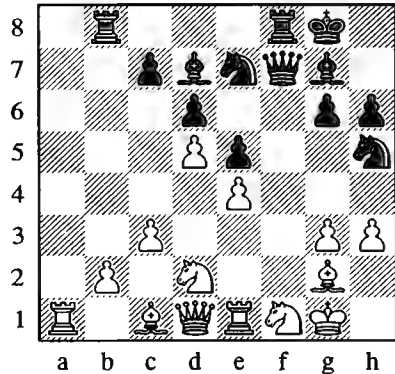
22...♘f4 23.g3

23.♖a7?! was also strong.

23...♘h5 24.♗g2 f4 25.♗e1 fxg3

Black opens the f-file, although there is not much he can do with it. Alternatives were also unappealing, for instance 25...♗f7 26.g4 ♘f6 27.♖a7 when White's kingside looks firm enough to withstand the pressure.

26.fxg3 ♗f7



27.♖e3!

Reinforcing g3 while preparing to switch the rook to the f-file. Karpov correctly evaluates the check on f2 as harmless.

27...g5

27...♗f2† 28.♗h2 ♗b5 is safely met by 29.♗e1.

28.♖f3 ♗g6 29.♖a7 g4 30.♖xf8† ♖xf8 31.h4

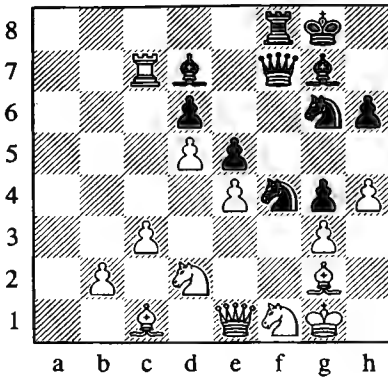
Keeping the kingside closed.

31...♗f7 32.♗e1

The queen defends not only g3, but h4 as well.

32...♘g6 33.♖xc7 ♘hf4!

Black is doing his best to create problems. Now White must make a decision.

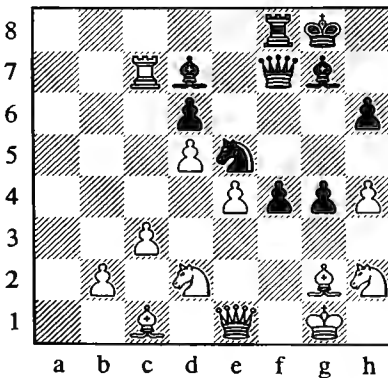


34.gxf4

Up to this point Karpov played strongly, but by taking the piece he unnecessarily gives Black counterchances.

Amongst other possibilities, the computer's main line is: 34.♖c4! ♜d3 35.♙e3 ♜xc1 36.♜b6! ♜f4 37.gxf4 exf4 38.♙xc1 f3 39.♜xd7 fxg2 40.♜xf8 gxf1=♙† 41.♙xf1 ♙xc7 42.♜e6 And White should win the ending without too many problems.

34...exf4 35.♜h2 ♜e5



36.♜df3?

There was no reason to return the piece so soon. After the superior 36.♙f1! White is clearly better.

36...gxf3 37.♜xf3 ♙g6 38.♙f1?

White should have preferred 38.♙h1! when the position is messy.

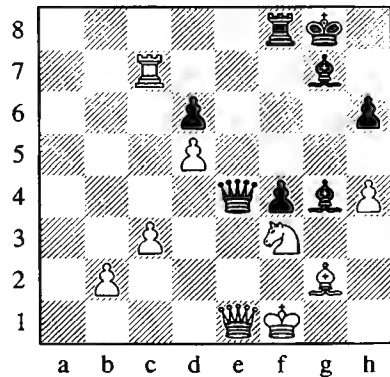
38...♙g4

After 38...♙b5† 39.c4 ♙xc4† 40.♙xc4 ♜xc4 the extra exchange should be enough for Black.

39.♙f2 ♜d3 40.♙d2 ♜xc1?

40...♙xe4! would have won for Black. Given the frequency of mistakes on both sides, it seems reasonable to assume that both players were short of time.

41.♙xc1 ♙xc4 42.♙e1



42...♙xf3?

The final error. Correct was 42...♙xd5 43.♙e2 when Black is still somewhat better.

43.♙xe4 ♙xc4

1-0

Presumably the game was adjourned here, after which Black resigned. White's extra pawn should be sufficient to win, and Karpov was already good enough to receive significant help at adjournments. During this game he played very well for a long time, but later lost control in the complications and in the end he was lucky to win.

Karpov's next event was the Scandinavia – USSR match in Stockholm, where he defeated the Norwegian player Hatlebakk by a score of 1½–½. His opponent rarely played tournament chess after his junior years, although he must have been a promising young player as he was selected for this match and later represented his country in the World Under 26 Championships. This game was the first in their mini-match.

Game 8

Hatlebakk – Anatoly Karpov

Stockholm (1) 1966

1.c4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6

In 1966 Karpov won a game easily with 3...f5, but he never dared to repeat it.

4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♗e7 6.♙e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6
8.c3 0–0 9.h3 ♘a5

In the sixties Karpov only played the Chigorin Variation of the Closed Spanish. In the early seventies he continued using it but also incorporated the Breyer System into his repertoire. He scored well with both of them. Remarkably, he never lost a game in the Breyer. From 1978 onwards he mainly played the Zaitsev variation.

10.♗c2 ♗b7

In most games he preferred the main line of 10...c5.

11.d4 ♘c4

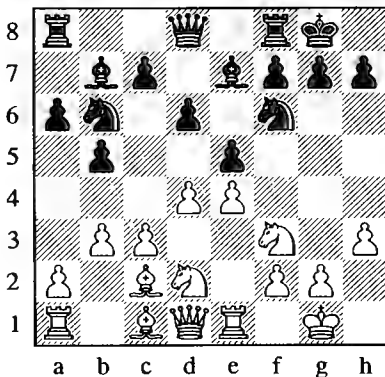
According to the database Gligoric was the first to play this line against Keres in Zurich 1959.

12.b3

This natural move is the main line.

12...♗b6 13.♗bd2

White is unable to win a pawn with 13.dxe5?! dxe5 14.♙xd8 ♙axd8 15.♘xe5 in view of 15...♘xe4 when Black is a bit better.



13...♗fd7!?

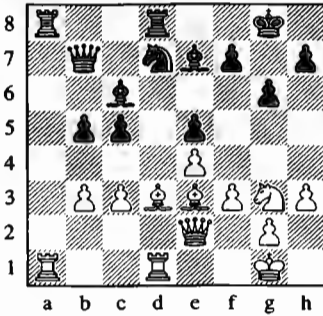
According to the database this is Karpov's move, so it could reasonably be called the Karpov Variation.

14.♘f1 c5 15.♘e3!

This is the main line. Karpov won another two games in this variation without a draw or loss, but on both occasions White released the central tension prematurely:

15.d5 f5 16.exf5 ♗xd5 17.a4 ♗c6 18.♘e3 e4 19.♘d2 d5 20.a5 ♘c8 (in the later part of Karpov's career he might have sacrificed a piece with 20...♗f6!?) 21.c4 d4 22.♘d5 (22.♗xe4! dxe3 23.♗xc6 exd2 24.♙xd2) 22...♗xd5 23.cxd5 d3 24.♗b1 ♘e5 25.♘xe4 ♙xd5 Black went on to win this complicated position in Kudishevich – Karpov, Vladimir 1966.

In a subsequent game White chose to simplify the centre: 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♘g3 g6 18.♗e3 ♙c7 19.♙e2 ♙fd8 20.♙ed1 ♘d7 21.a4 ♗c6 22.axb5 axb5 23.♗d3 ♙b7 24.f3



24...♖f8 Karpov nicely improves his pieces.
 25.♗b2 ♜xa1 26.♗xa1 ♜e6 27.♜e2 ♗c7
 28.♗c1 ♜a8 29.♗b2 ♔g5! 30.♔xg5 ♜xg5
 Black eventually managed to convert his small advantage into a win in Alt – Karpov, Riga 1970.

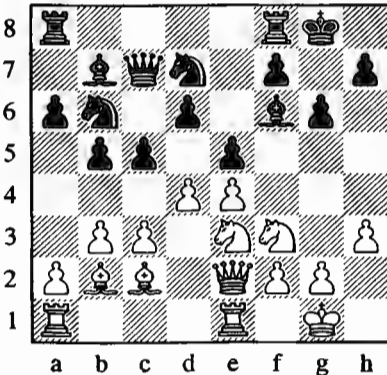
15...g6 16.♔b2

Both 16.a4!? and 16.♜g4!? look more testing.

16...♔f6

Karpov improves his bishop and puts pressure on White's centre.

17.♗e2 ♗c7



18.dxe5?!

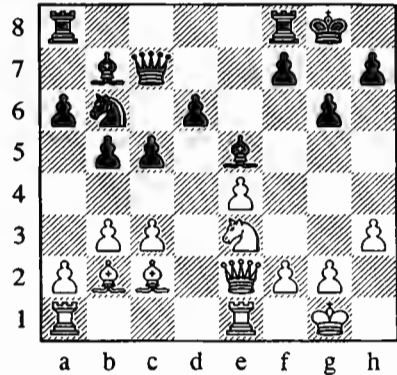
Instead 18.d5 is the principled move, which limits the b7-bishop. If Black plays 18...c4 then 19.♜d2 gives White a small edge.

18...♜xe5

In this opening Black usually recaptures on e5 with the knight first.

19.♜xe5 ♔xe5!

Karpov is looking for a fight. He avoids a symmetrical pawn structure in order to develop pressure against the e4-pawn, as well as keeping the long diagonal open for his bishop.



20.♔d3?!

Perhaps surprised by Karpov's last move, White immediately falters. He should have preferred either 20.♗d2 or 20.a4 bxa4 21.bxa4 a5, with approximate equality in both cases.

20...c4!

Karpov sacrifices a pawn in return for long term compensation on the queenside. The passivity of the b2-bishop is a particular problem for White.

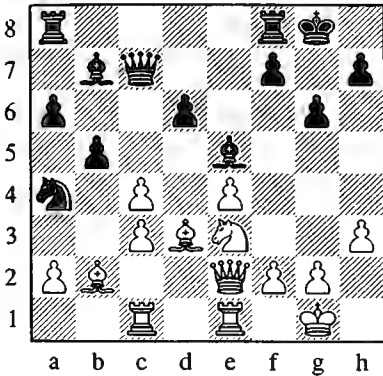
21.bxc4

If 21.♔c2 b4! 22.bxc4 bxc3 23.♔a3 a5 and Black takes the upper hand.

21...♜a4! 22.♗ac1?!

Eliminating all the queenside pawns with 22.cxb5 would have eased White's suffering: 22...axb5 (22...♜xb2 23.♗xb2 ♗xc3 [23...axb5 24.♔xb5]) 24.♗e2 axb5 transposes

to 22...axb5.) 23.♙xb5 ♘xb2 24.♗xb2 ♖xc3
 25.♞e2 ♗b4 26.♞ab1 ♗xe4 27.♙d3 ♗c6
 (27...♗f4 28.♘g4) 28.♞ec1 ♖d7 29.♘c4
 White manages to eliminate the dark-squared
 bishop and thus equalizes.



22...b4!

A wonderful idea! Karpov paralyzes his
 opponent on the queenside.

23.♘d1 a5 24.♙a1 ♞fd8!?

Here is an early example of Karpov's famed
 prophylactic thinking. He rejects the more
 natural 24...♞fc8, presumably in anticipation
 of White shifting his queen to d2, followed by
 exchanging on b4 and later exerting pressure
 against the d6-pawn.

25.♗c2?!

White's position is not easy to handle. There
 is no direct threat, and being a pawn up he
 may not have appreciated the dangers.

If 25.cxb4 axb4 26.♞b1 Black can maintain
 the pressure with 26...♗b6; but not 26...♗c5?!
 27.♙xe5 dxe5 28.a3 when White gets rid of
 the b-pawn.

Best was 25.♗d2! ♗c5 (Or 25...♘c5 26.♙c2
 ♗e7 [26...♗b6 27.♞b1] 27.cxb4 axb4 28.♗xb4
 and White is safe.) 26.♙c2 ♘b6 27.♘e3 when

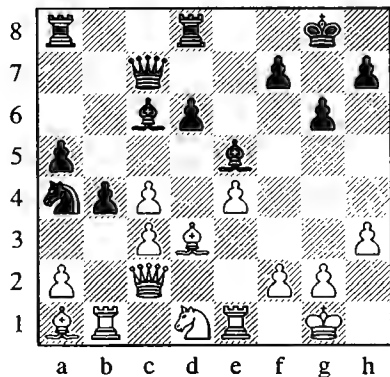
Black has nice compensation for the pawn, but
 White should be all right.

25...♙c6

Obviously Black should maintain the
 position of his strong knight.

26.♞b1

White cannot release the pressure completely
 with 26.cxb4 axb4 27.♙xe5 dxe5 28.c5, as
 after 28...♞d4 29.♙f1 ♞a5 he remains rather
 passive.



26...♘c5!

Karpov gives up the pressure on the c3-pawn
 in order to change his objective.

27.♘e3

After 27.cxb4? axb4 White cannot take the
 b4-pawn and is largely paralysed.

27...♙a4! 28.♗d2 b3!

Karpov creates a passed pawn on the
 queenside, an idea that was not easy to see in
 advance. The a1-bishop has become even more
 passive than before.

29.♘d5 ♗a7 30.♙f1

White can do little except wait.

30...♞db8

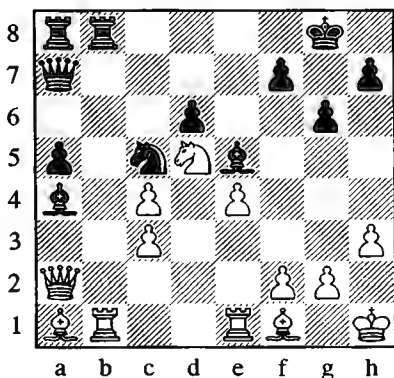
Improving the rook before commencing the next phase of the plan.

31. ♖h1 bxa2

Karpov can find no more general improving moves, so he launches his queenside play.

32. ♖xa2

Exchanging a pair of rooks with 32. ♖xb8† ♖xb8 33. ♖xa2 would also have led to a difficult and passive position after 33... ♗b3 34. ♖d2 a4.



32... ♗b3

Black is a pawn down but his compensation is tremendous. The a1-bishop is virtually dead, and its partner on f1 is only slightly better. White's rooks have no open files, and only the d5-knight stands well. Black has a dangerous passed pawn and a wonderful knight on c5.

33. ♖e2

33. ♖a3 was possible, but blocking the a-pawn would be a menial task for the queen.

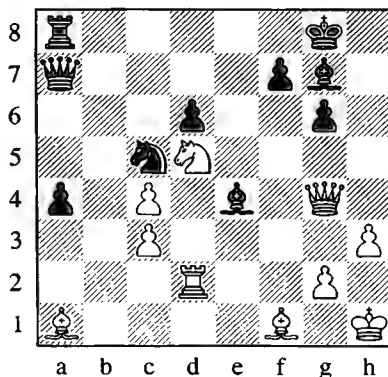
33... a4 34. f4?

White's desire for counterplay is understandable, but objectively this move accelerates his demise as it weakens the e4-pawn.

34... ♗g7 35. f5 ♖e8!

Karpov immediately targets the new weakness and White's position soon collapses.

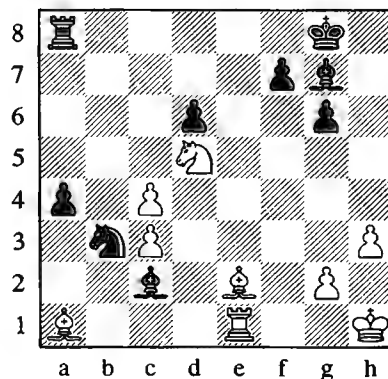
36. ♖g4 ♗c2 37. ♖b2 ♖xe4 38. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 39. fxg6 hxg6 40. ♗d2



41... ♗b3!

Karpov demonstrates a forced win by luring his opponent into a fatal pin.

41. ♗d1 ♗c2 42. ♖e1 ♖f2! 43. ♖e2 ♖xe2 44. ♗xe2



44... ♖e8!

This pin is simple to find and it wins in short order.

45.♖b2 ♗d3! 46.♘f4 ♗xc4 47.♙g1 g5
48.♙f2 ♘d2 49.♗d3 ♖b8
0-1

Apart from the fine overall performance, this game was also significant in being Karpov's first ever in western Europe.

His last tournament of the year (which actually ran into January 1967) was also his international tournament debut. Due to an oversight the Soviets sent two juniors to an adult tournament in Trinec, close to the eastern border of what is now the Czech Republic. Karpov won the event by scoring a most impressive 11/13. Kupka and Kupreichik shared second place with 9½, and another strong future grandmaster Smejkal finished fourth with 8½ points.

1966 Summary

Over the course of the year Karpov won more than half of his forty seven games and lost just one. It is interesting to note that fourteen of his games ended in less than twenty five moves, and only a small number of those were decisive. It was notable throughout his career that he made some quick draws and did not try to win all his games. When a draw was useful for his tournament result, he was happy enough. His attitude in this regard was in sharp contrast to players such as Fischer and Kasparov, both of whom tried to win almost all of their games.

Compared with the period up to 1965, we can also observe that Karpov played in more prestigious tournaments and faced stronger opposition. Competing in Europe would have been a rare experience for a fifteen year old boy from the Soviet Union. It is possible that 1966 was the year in which it was decided that Karpov should become a chess player by profession.

This was the first year in which Karpov played a sufficient number of games to justify a numerical breakdown of his results:

USSR U18 Championship, Moscow: 6/9 (+4 =4 -1)

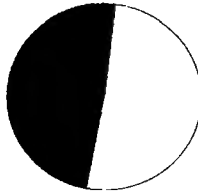
Spartakiad USSR Juniors (Board one in lower age group): 6½/8 (+5 =3 -0)

Master versus Candidates, Leningrad: 10/15 (+5 =10 -0)

USSR – Scandinavia, Stockholm (Board six): 1½/2 (+1 =1 -0)

Trinec 1966-67 (1st place): 11/13 (+9 =4 -0)

Total 74.4% (+24 =22 -1)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1967

Karpov played in four significant events in 1967, beginning at the Spartakiad of the Russian Republic, which was a team event. He played on board two, winning four games, drawing one and losing two. Here is his game from round four. No other game from his opponent is available on the database.

Game 9

Vladimir Avetisian – Anatoly Karpov

Leningrad 1967

1. $\text{d}3$ $\text{d}f6$ 2. $\text{d}4$ $\text{e}6$

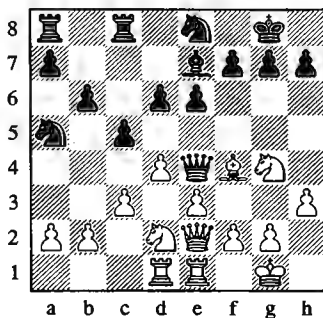
It is remarkable how Karpov almost always played this move here and never once tried 2...g6.

3. $\text{g}f4$

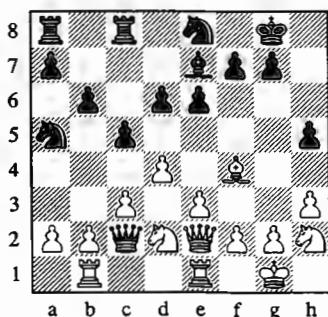
Interestingly Karpov did not do well against 3. $\text{g}g5$, losing three games out of fourteen, which was a lot by his standards.

3... $\text{d}5$

Almost twenty years later, when he was the reigning World Champion he employed another plan: 3... $\text{g}e7$ 4. $\text{h}3$ $\text{b}6$ 5. $\text{d}bd2$ $\text{c}5$ 6. $\text{c}3$ $\text{g}a6$ 7. $\text{e}3$ $\text{g}xf1$ 8. $\text{d}xf1$ $\text{c}c8$ 9. $\text{d}1d2$ 0-0 10. $\text{c}e2$ $\text{c}b7$ 11. 0-0 $\text{c}c8$ 12. $\text{c}fe1$ $\text{d}c6$ 13. $\text{d}c4$ $\text{d}e8$ 14. $\text{d}ce5$ $\text{d}a5$ 15. $\text{c}ad1$ $\text{d}6$ 16. $\text{d}g4$ $\text{c}e4$ 17. $\text{d}d2$!



17... $\text{c}c2$! This sets up a wicked threat. 18. $\text{c}b1$? $\text{h}5$! 19. $\text{d}h2$

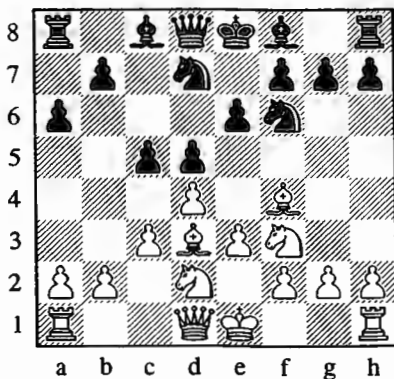


19...g5! Trapping the bishop. 20.♔xg5 ♕xg5
 21.♖xh5 ♕e7 22.♘df1 ♘g7 23.♗f3 ♗g6
 24.♞bd1 ♞ab8 25.d5 b5 26.e4 ♘c4 27.b3
 ♘e5 28.♗e3 c4 29.dxe6 fxe6 30.f4 ♘d3 0-1
 Glienke – Karpov, Hannover 1983.

4.e3 a6!?

Preparing to steer the game towards a Queen's Gambit Accepted in the event that White plays c4. It is a good decision, as in that opening the white bishop rarely goes to f4.

5.♘bd2 ♘bd7 6.c3 c5 7.♔d3



7...b5!?

Gaining space on the queenside.

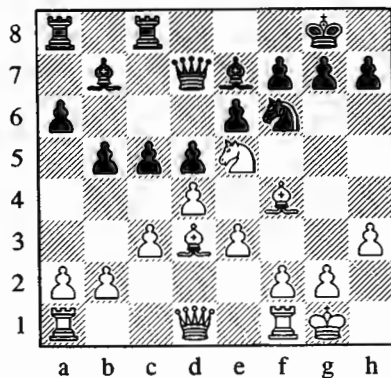
8.0-0 ♔b7 9.h3

White should have played for an attack on the kingside with 9.♘e5 ♔e7 10.♗f3.

9...♔e7 10.♘e5 0-0 11.♘xd7?! ♗xd7 12.♘f3

White is not doing much to counter his opponent's space advantage on the queenside. Black already has a pleasant position, but he still needs to find a suitable way to exploit it.

12...♞fc8 13.♘e5



13...♗e8!

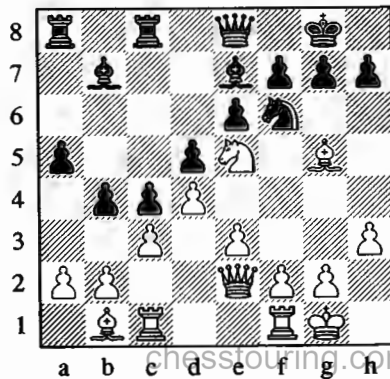
By keeping the b5-pawn defended, Black facilitates a further queenside expansion.

14.♞c1 a5 15.♔g5 b4 16.♗e2 c4!

Karpov continues gaining space.

17.♔b1

17.♔c2! would have discouraged Black's next move.



17...♖d7!

Karpov looks to exchange some kingside pieces in anticipation of a possible attack from his opponent.

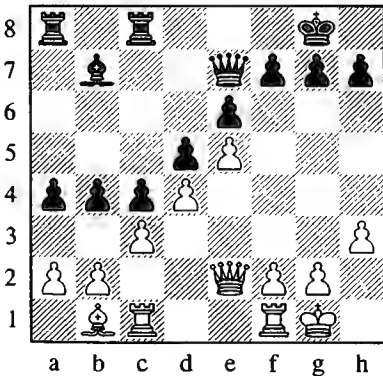
18.♗xd7

18.♗f4 looks better, as White keeps another potential attacker for the kingside.

18...♞xd7 19.♗xe7 ♞xe7 20.e4?!

20.♞d2 would have halted Black's queenside advance, at least for a few more moves.

20...a4 21.e5



21...a3!

This is a thematic undermining of the enemy queenside. So far Karpov has made eight pawn moves on that flank; rather a lot, but the position is closed enough to justify it.

22.f4 g6!

Black mainly focuses on the queenside, but he still pays attention to the other wing.

23.♞f3 b3!

An instructive moment. Karpov abandons the undermining of the enemy pawn chain and instead pushes his queenside pawns as far as possible.

24.♞f2 ♗c6

Now Black opens the b-file.

25.g4 ♞cb8!

Karpov has brought tremendous power into his queenside play, and White has no good answer.

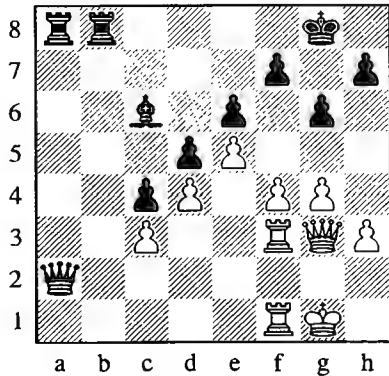
26.bxa3

26.axb3 a2 wins.

26...♞xa3 27.♞f1 bxa2

Winning the bishop.

28.♗xa2 ♞xa2 29.♞g3



29...♞b1!

Black eliminates one of the attacking rooks, thus ensuring that White will not have enough firepower to hurt him.

30.f5 ♞xf1† 31.♞xf1 ♗d7 32.fxg6 hxg6

33.♞f3 ♗e8 34.♞f2 ♞b1†

Finally Karpov goes after the king; by now his task has become very easy.

35.♗h2 ♗a1 36.♞g2 ♞d3 37.♞f6 ♞f1

0-1

The manner in which Karpov carried out his queenside expansion was exemplary.

Next Karpov participated in the qualification tournament for the World Junior Championship. He finished in fifth place after winning three, drawing one, losing three and thus scoring $3\frac{1}{2}/7$. His next event was the USSR Schools' Spartakiad, where he won five games and drew four.

At the end of 1967 and start of 1968 Karpov participated in the European Junior championship, where he demonstrated his ability to perform under pressure and duly won the event. In the preliminary rounds he won the first two games and drew the remaining five to qualify. In the final he drew the first game, before winning the following encounter.

Game 10

Anatoly Karpov – John Moles

European U18 Championship, Groningen 1967-68

Moles hailed from Ireland. He represented his country in several world junior events in the sixties as well as two Olympiads in the early seventies. It looks like he gave up chess after 1972.

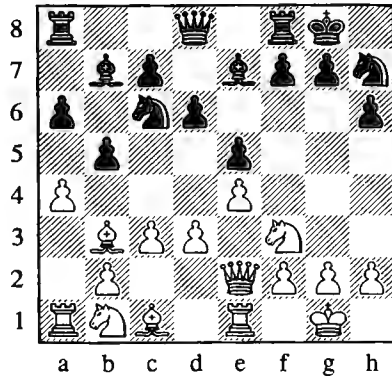
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6
5.♞e2

Karpov played this sideline three times in the sixties, winning on each occasion. He may have used it to avoid the Open Variation against certain opponents.

5...♗e7 6.c3 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.a4 ♗b7 9.0-0
0-0 10.d3

Karpov is not doing anything special in the opening, and settles for a quiet position with the hope of outplaying his opponent later.

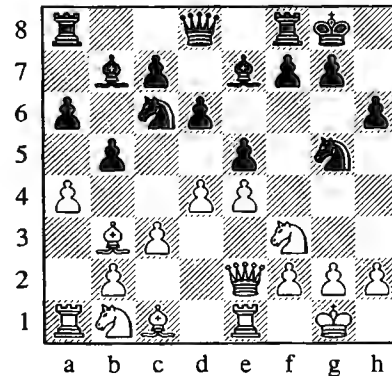
10...h6 11.♞c1 ♘h7



12.d4!?

Karpov shows his flexibility, occupying the centre later than usual in reaction to his opponent's last decentralizing move. In other openings such as the Philidor, the move ...♘h7 is often met by h3 in order to vacate the h2-square for the knight. In this position the idea is harmless, as after 12.h3 ♘g5 13.♘h2 ♗e6 Black's knights are strong in the centre.

12...♘g5



13.♗xg5!?

A remarkable decision – White gives up an important bishop in order to gain time to weaken the b5-pawn. Obviously the loss of the bishop pair entails some risk for White, and we can only guess how much Karpov

saw in advance. All world champions, even the positional players, played riskily and ambitiously when they were juniors – it is probably a requirement if one is to excel.

13...hgx5 14.d5

Isolating the b5-pawn.

14...♖a7?!

A strange choice. I remember seeing one game in which 1...e5 expert Hebden played ...♖a7 against Arakhamia in a Ruy Lopez, but it was under very different conditions. Instead the knight should have moved in the conventional way with:

14...♖a5

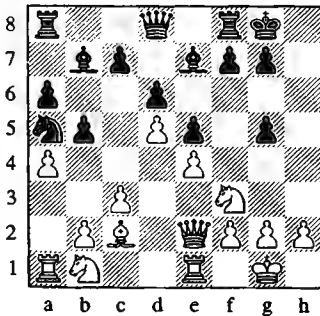
From here the play might have developed in several ways, with both sides potentially sacrificing material.

15.♙c2

Two other moves are possible:

15.♖fd2 (15.♖bd2?? g4++) 15...♖xb3
16.♖xb3 c6 17.♖d1d2 (17.c4?! bxc4 18.dxc6
♙xc6 19.♙xc4 ♖b6 Black is somewhat
better) 17...cxd5 18.axb5 ♖b6 Black is quite
active.

15.♙a2 bxa4 (15...c5 16.axb5 axb5 17.♖a3)
16.h3 ♙c8 17.♖bd2 ♙d7 18.♙b1 ♖b7
(18...♖b8 19.b4 ♖b3 is unclear) 19.♙c2
♖c5 20.b4 axb3 21.♖xb3 ♖xb3 22.♙xb3
a5 23.♙a4 Once again, as in many of these
lines, it is hard to judge the extent of Black's
compensation in this murky and irregular
position.



15...c6

This looks natural, although once again there are two worthy alternatives.

15...♖c4 16.b3 ♖b6 17.axb5 axb5 18.♙xa8
(18.♖a3!?) 18...♙xa8 19.♙xb5 Black has
some play for the pawn, although it is hard
to evaluate whether it is truly enough.

15...c5?! Maybe this is the simplest way to
sacrifice the pawn. 16.axb5 c4 17.bxa6 ♙xa6
Black has a good grip on the position; I think
it is worth a pawn.

16.♖fd2 cxd5 17.exd5

It is hard to tell how Black should sacrifice
the pawn from here.

17...♖c4

Also after 17...♖b6 18.axb5 axb5 19.♖a3
b4 20.♖e4 f5 21.♙xb4 ♖d8 Black has
reasonable counterplay.

18.♖xc4 bxc4 19.♙xc4

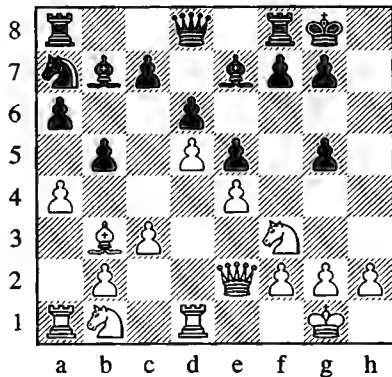
19.♙d1 f5

19...f5 20.♖d2 g4

Black has fair compensation.

15.♙d1

Anticipating ...c6.



15...g4?!

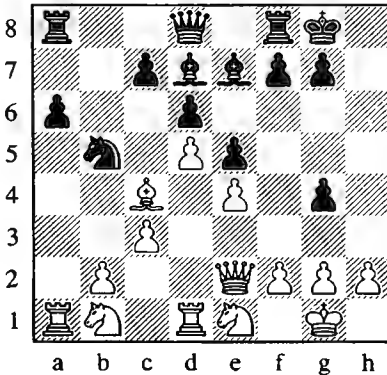
It is tempting to drive back the knight, but it
gives White a tempo to organize his queenside
attack. Black is also worse after 15...c5 16.dxc6
♖xc6 17.♙d5.

Perhaps the best chance would have been 15...♞d7? 16.axb5 axb5 (16...g4 17.♘e1 axb5 18.♘c2 White is in control.) 17.♞e3 Black loses a pawn, but is not completely without counterplay.

16.♘e1 ♙c8 17.axb5 ♘b5

17...axb5 was also not ideal, as after a few further preparatory moves White will obtain strong play on the a-file: 18.♘c2 ♙d7 (After 18...g6 19.♘e3 f5 20.♘d2 White double his rooks on the a-file with an advantage, for instance 20...♙g5 21.♞a2, or 20...♞d7 21.exf5 gxf5 22.♞a5.) 19.♘e3 ♞c8 20.♘a3 (or 20.♘d2 ♙g5 21.♞a5) 20...g6 21.♘ac2 f5 22.exf5 gxf5 23.♘b4 ♔g7 24.♙c2 ♙g5 25.♞a6 Black has problems.

18.♙c4 ♙d7



19.♘c2

Highlighting the drawback of Black's 15th move.

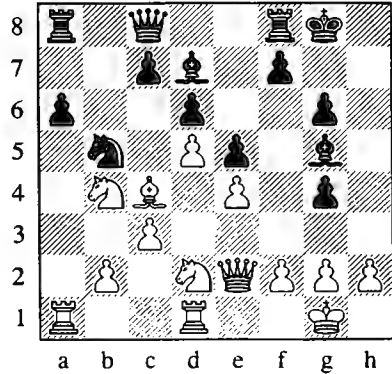
19...♞c8

After 19...g6 20.♘e3 White will exert strong pressure on the queenside: 20...♞c8 21.♘a3 ♞b8 22.♘ac2 f5 23.exf5 gxf5 24.♘b4 ♞b6 25.♙d3 ♙f6 26.♘c4 Black is strong on the kingside, but White's attack on the other wing comes first.

20.♘d2 g6 21.♘b4

White can afford to mass his pieces on the queenside, as Black's kingside play is rather slow, especially with the queen so far away.

21...♙g5



22.♞a5!

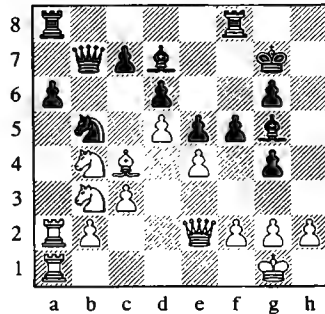
Less accurate would have been:

22.♘b3 ♞b7 23.♞a2

In the ensuing critical position, the placement of the rook on a2 instead of a5 makes a real difference.

23...f5 24.♞d1 ♔g7

Black is not helped by 24...f4?! 25.♞d3 or 24...fxe4 25.♞xa6.



25.♘xa6

25.♘a5 ♞b6 26.♘ac6 fxe4 is not so bad for Black.

Also after 25.exf5 ♖xf5 26.♖xa6 ♖xa6 27.♖xa6 ♘d4! 28.♘xd4 exd4 29.♙xg4 ♙f6 Black's strong bishops give some compensation for the material deficit.

25...♙b6

There is also 25...fxe4 26.♘ac5 dxc5 27.♘xc5 ♖xa2 28.♖xa2 ♘xc3 29.bxc3 ♙b1† 30.♙f1 ♙xf1† 31.♙xf1 ♙f5 32.♖a7 ♙h6 33.♖xc7 e3 and Black is still kicking.

26.♘b4 ♖xa2 27.♖xa2 ♘d4 28.♘xd4 exd4 29.♖a6 ♙b7 30.e5 dxe5 31.♙xe5† ♙f6

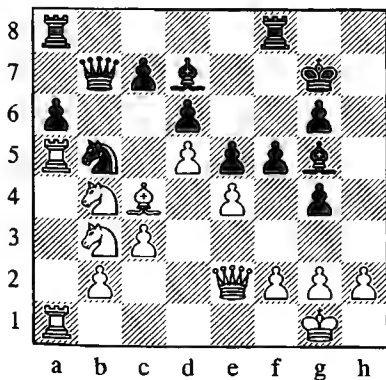
Black is very much in the game.

22...♙b7 23.♘b3 ♙g7

23...f5 24.♖da1 f4 25.♘xa6 f3 26.♙e1 (26.♙d3 fxg2 27.♘ac5 is also strong.) 26...♙b6 27.♘ac5! ♖xa5 28.♘xd7 wins.

24.♖da1 f5

After 24...♘d4?! 25.cxd4 ♙xb4 26.dxe5 dxe5 27.♘c5 ♙c8 28.♙xa6 Black has severe problems.



25.♘xa6

Karpov's fine play on the queenside has resulted in the win of a pawn, but Black is not without chances on the opposite flank.

25...♙b6!

Aiming at f2.

26.♙xb5

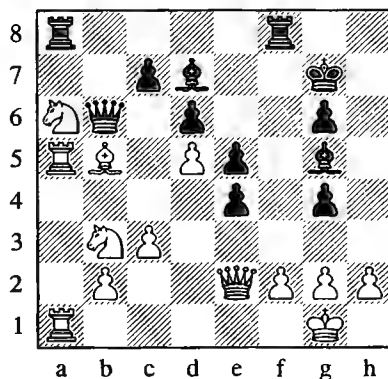
Black's initiative is not easy to tame, as illustrated by the following variations.

26.♙h1?! fxe4 27.♙xb5? This backfires badly. (The lesser evil is 27.♙xe4 ♙xf2 28.♙e2 c6 when Black is somewhat better.) 27...♖xf2 28.♙c4 g3!! 29.♙xc7 ♙xc7 30.♘xc7 ♖h8 And Black wins.

26.exf5 ♖xf5 27.♘bc5 This time White covers the diagonal before taking on b5. (27.♘ac5 ♖xa5 28.♖xa5 dxc5 29.♙xb5 c4!! 30.♙xd7 ♖xf2 31.♙xe5† ♙f6 and Black stays in the game.) 27...♘xc3 28.bxc3 dxc5 With a highly unclear position.

26...fxe4!

Black ignores the bishop and instead threatens to take on f2.



27.c4?

At the most critical moment of the game Karpov commits a tactical error. At the time of the present game he already possessed a subtle positional understanding and great skill in endgames, but he had not yet developed the calculating ability of a champion. There were two superior alternatives, both of which lead to fascinating complications.

27.♙xd7

With this move White wins an awful lot of material for the queen, but his vulnerable king enables Black to obtain dangerous counterplay.

27... Rxf2! 28. Qxf2

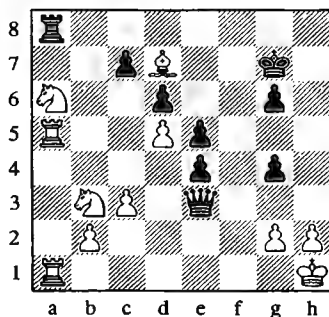
White cannot gain a tempo by offering a queen exchange: 28. Qb5?? $\text{Rf1}\dagger$!! This beautiful move leads to a forced mate: 29. Qxf1 $\text{Rf8}\dagger$ 30. Qe2 $\text{Qe3}\dagger$ 31. Qd1 Rf2 32. Qxg4 $\text{Rd2}\dagger$ 33. Qc1 $\text{Qe1}\dagger$ 34. Qd1 $\text{Qxd1}\#$!

28... Qe3 29. Qxe3

29. Qac5 $\text{Qxf2}\dagger$ 30. Qxf2 Rxa5 31. Rxa5 dxc5 32. Rb5 $\text{Qf6}\dagger$ 33. Qe2 e3 34. Qxe3 $\text{Qf4}\dagger$ Black has a perpetual.

29... $\text{Qxe3}\dagger$ 30. Qh1

White has far too much material for the queen, but once again his vulnerable king is a problem.



30... Rb8!

This enables Black to hold the balance, as the white pieces are out of play on the queenside.

31. Qxg4

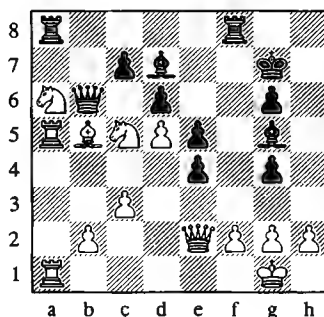
Or 31. Qxc7 $\text{Rxb2}\dagger$! (31... Qg3 32. h3 leads to the same result) and Black draws.

31... Qf4 32. h3 Qxg4

Black is not worse.

The strongest and most spectacular move was: 27. Qbc5!

Returning the extra piece in order to block the a7-g1 diagonal.



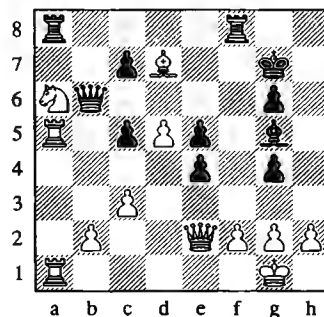
27... dxc5!

After this move Black incredibly has three sets of doubled pawns, but they give him a lot of open files! Alternatives are inadequate:

27... Qf5? 28. Qa4 Qxa5 29. b4 wins.

27... Rxa6? 28. Rxa6 Qxc5 (28... Qxb5 29. $\text{Qe6}\dagger$ Qh6 30. Rxb6 Qxe2 31. Rb4 wins) 29. Qxd7 Rxf2 and now 30. b4! diverts the queen and wins.

28... Qxd7



28... c4! !!

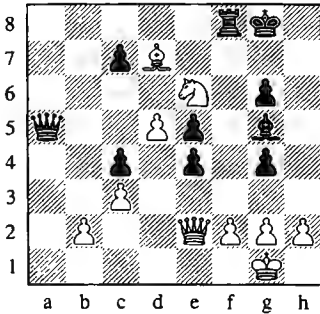
Black renews his attack by reopening the a7-g1 diagonal.

29. Qc5

This looks best although it is worth checking the alternatives.

29. Qh1 Rxf2 30. Qe1 (30. Qxg4 Qxa5! In the closed Ruy Lopez the back rank is seldom a problem for White. Chess is a marvellous game!) 30... g3 31. Qg1 e3 White is in considerable danger.

29. ♖xg4 ♜xf2 30. ♗xf2 (30. ♖b5 ♜xb5 31. ♗xf2 ♜xa6 is equal) 30... ♗e3 31. ♗xe3 ♗xe3† 32. ♖h1 ♗d2 and Black has a nice position because of the e-pawn.
29... ♜xa5 30. ♜xa5 ♗xa5 31. ♖e6† ♖g8!



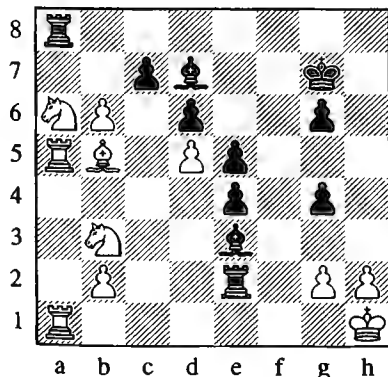
32. ♖xf8

If 32. ♖xg5 e3! 33. ♗e6† (33. ♖xg4? ♜a1† 34. ♗d1 ♗xb2 wins.) 33... ♖g7 34. ♖xg4 ♗a1† 35. ♗xd1 ♗xd1† 36. ♖xd1 ♜a8! Black is not worse.

32... ♗a1† 33. ♗f1 ♗xf1† 34. ♖xf1 ♖xf8

Black has good chances to hold this opposite-coloured bishop endgame.

27... ♜xf2! 28. c5 ♜xe2 29. cxb6 ♗e3† 30. ♖h1



30... ♖xb5

This move was not difficult to anticipate,

although Karpov may have missed or underestimated Black's tactical resources as seen in the following variations.

31. b7

After 31. ♖xc7 ♜xa5 32. ♖xa5 ♖xb6 33. ♖xb5 ♖xa5 34. ♖xd6 ♖b6 Black can press.

31... ♜h8! 32. b8=♗

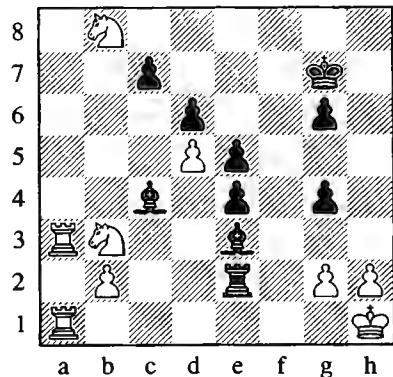
32. ♜b5?? leads to a disaster after 32... g3 33. h3 ♜xh3† 34. gxh3 ♜h2#!

32... ♜xb8 33. ♖xb8 ♖c4

White is a rook up, but Black has two extra pawns and his two bishops are vastly superior to White's two knights.

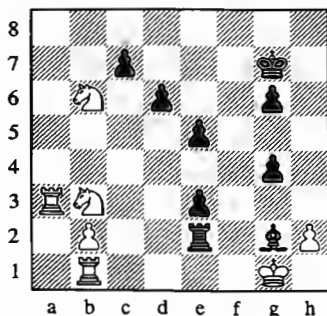
34. ♜5a3?

After the superior 34. ♖a6!? ♖b6 35. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 36. ♜a7 ♖xb3 37. ♜xc7† ♖h6 White probably gets a draw.



34... ♜xb2?

Now it is Black's turn to err. After 34... ♖xd5! he has excellent winning chances despite the missing rook, for instance: 35. ♖b1 (35. ♖a5? ♖b6; 35. ♖d1 ♜xb2 36. ♖c1 ♖xc1 [36... ♖d4 also wins] 37. ♜xc1 ♜xb8 38. ♜xc7† ♖f6 39. ♖c1 ♖c4 and Black wins) 35... ♖b6! 36. ♖d7 e3 37. ♖xb6 ♖xg2† 38. ♖g1



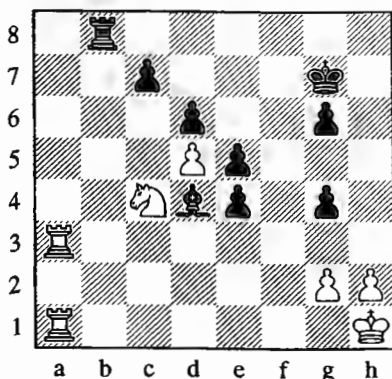
38...♙f3! White is a rook and a piece up, yet he is completely lost due to the mating threats.

35. ♖a5! ♜xb8?

After 35...♙xd5? 36. ♜xe3 ♜xb8 37. ♜c3 c5 38. ♘c4 ♙xc4 39. ♜xc4 White should win with the extra rook.

Correct was 35...♙d3! 36. ♘a6 (36. ♘bc6 ♜b5) 36...♙b6 37. ♘c6 ♜f2 when Black still has enough counterplay to maintain the balance.

36. ♘xc4 ♙d4



37. ♜d1!

Karpov makes sure he keeps the d5-pawn and thus wins comfortably.

37...♜b4 38. ♘e3 ♜b5 39. g3 ♜c5 40. ♔g2 ♜b5 41. ♜c1

1-0

This fascinating game shows that Karpov was not averse to taking risks. He played on the queenside with great force. He did not control the fight all the way, but emerged triumphant in the end.

After winning again in round three Karpov next faced Jan Timman, with whom he had already drawn in the preliminary qualifier. Timman went on to become Karpov's most frequent opponent in tournaments; actually they may well be the all-time record holders in that regard (not including encounters in match play). According to my database they met across the board in sixty five games, not including matches. If I wanted to be ironic I could mention that they played each other virtually everywhere except the Soviet and Dutch championships. They played two matches, including one for the FIDE World Championship in 1993. Karpov's all time score against Timman, including matches, was twenty nine wins, with fifty eight draws and eight losses. Timman faced a string of World Champions, from Smyslov all the way through to the present Champion Anand, with the exception of Fischer. The Dutchman scored twenty two victories against the world champions, with 156 draws and seventy eight losses.

Game 11

Anatoly Karpov – Jan Timman

European U18 Championship, Groningen 1967-68

1. c4

According to the database this was the very first time Karpov played this particular move. It was never his primary opening but he went on to employ it regularly throughout his career, using it in approximately ten percent of his games.

1...e6 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♘f3

Timman took part in the European Junior Championship a year earlier, so Karpov was probably familiar with his games. According to the database Timman mainly played the French around that time, so perhaps Karpov's first move was designed to avoid that opening. Note that he avoided the critical 3.e4 here, although he later tested it in two games, both of which ended in draws.

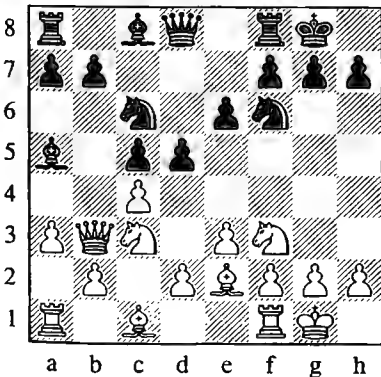
3...♗b4 4.♞b3 c5 5.a3 ♘a5 6.e3

It looks like Karpov wanted to avoid an open position against Timman. It is more common to fianchetto the light-squared bishop in this line.

6...0-0!

The more closed the position is, the less one should hurry to castle. One gets the feeling that Black was playing too automatically, whereas he would have been better off focusing on the centre with 6...♖c6!?, intending to meet 7.♗e2 with 7...d5.

7.♗e2 d5 8.0-0 ♖c6



9.♖a4!

Karpov takes advantage of the unconventional placement of the a5-bishop to play against the c5-pawn. Perhaps his experiences in the Closed Sicilian helped him, as the c5-pawn can sometimes be attacked there too.

9...♞e7

9...b6!? was worth considering. The bishop would be uncomfortable, but it is not easy for White to exploit this concretely.

10.♞c2! ♖d7

This is not a nice move to have to make, but Black already faced some tricky problems. There are a lot of unusual tactics here. The best chance may have been:

10...d4!?

After 10...b6? 11.cxd5 ♖xd5 12.b4 Black is in big trouble.

10...dxc4 is the only other move to have been tested in practice, White won both games, but the line is not completely unplayable with Black. Best play looks to be 11.♞xc4 ♖d7 12.d4 cxd4 13.b4, with some initiative for White.

11.exd4

After 11.♖xc5 dxe3 12.fxe3 ♞xc5 13.b4 ♖xb4 14.axb4 ♗xb4 15.d4 White has some play for the pawn, but Black should be okay. Karpov usually refrained from sacrificing pawns speculatively.

11...♖xd4 12.♖xd4 cxd4 13.b4 ♗c7

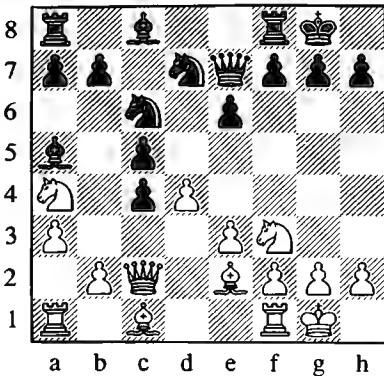
After a natural sequence we reach a double-edged position with chances for both sides.

11.d4!

Black is rather awkwardly placed in the centre, and he has problems developing his queenside. He would like to play ...b6, but the x-ray attack along the c-file makes this move difficult to carry out.

11...dxc4

With 11...cxd4 Black could have steered the game towards an IQP position: 12.cxd5 (there is also 12.exd4 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♖b6 14.♖xb6 ♗xb6 15.♗d1 when White is better developed) 12...cxd5 13.b4 ♗b6 14.b5 ♖ce5 15.♖xd4 White is a bit better.

**12.dxc5!**

This capture virtually wins a pawn.

12...e5

12...♖xc5? 13.♖xc5 ♜xc5 14.b4 wins.

The best chance may have been: 12...b5!? Thanks to some unusual tactics Black stays in the game, but fails to equalize. 13.cxb6 ♗xb6 14.b4 ♖xb4 15.axb4 b5 16.♗d2 ♜xa4 17.♜xa4 bxa4 18.b5 White keeps some initiative on the queenside.

13.e4!

The young Karpov demonstrates his maturity, refraining from grabbing the pawn at once, in order to prevent his opponent from gaining ground in the centre. After the hasty 13.♜xc4 e4 14.♗d4 ♖f6 Black has some chances to create play against White's king.

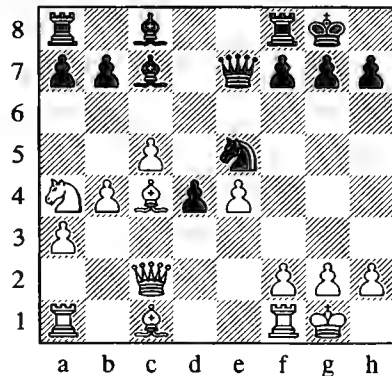
13...♗d4 14.♗xd4 exd4 15.♖xc4 ♖e5 16.b4

This is a useful move, although the drawback is that it drives the black bishop into a prime attacking position. The attempt to do without this move would have led to its own problems: 16.♗d5 d3! 17.♜d1! ♖c6 (17...♗g4!?) 18.♞b1 (18.♗f4 ♜ad8 19.♜b3 ♖c7 20.♜xb7 ♞d7; 18.f4 ♗g4 19.♜b3 ♖e2 20.♜b5 ♖xf1 21.♜xa5 ♖c6 22.♖xc6 ♖xg2 23.♗xg2 bxc6 White's king

is rather open, which should provide enough play for Black.) 18...b5! (18...♜ad8 19.b4! ♖c7 20.f4 and the d3-pawn falls) 19.♖xa8 ♜xa8 20.b4 bxa4 21.bxa5 ♖b3 The d3-pawn is very strong.

16...♖c7

After 16...♖c7 17.♜xc4 ♖c7 18.♖b2 White remains in control.

**17.♗d5!**

Karpov's strategy is risky, ambitious, and most importantly, correct! With his last move he practically surrounds the d4-pawn, and prepares to advance his f-pawn, and possibly his e-pawn as well. Nevertheless, we should not forget that Black has a lot of pieces within striking distance of White's king.

The alternative was 17.♖e2. This move keeps an eye on the kingside, but allows Black to generate counterplay with his d-pawn by means of: 17...♞d8 18.♖b2 d3! 19.♖xd3 (After 19.♖xd3? ♖xd3 20.♖xd3 ♜e5 21.g3 ♜xa1 22.♖b2 ♜xb2 23.♜xb2 ♞xd3 Black has too many pieces for the queen.) 19...♖xd3 20.♖xd3 ♜xe4 At this point White has to find only moves to stay in the game. He can do so with 21.♞e1! ♜g6 22.♜c3, although Black remains quite active.

17...d3?

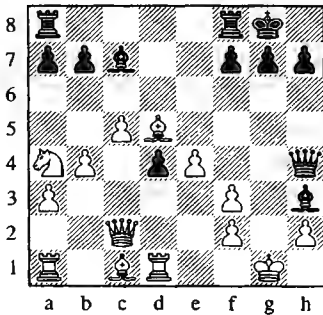
Black's best chance was to go for the king directly with:

17...♖f3! 18.gxf3 ♖h4 19.♔d1!

After 19.e5 ♔xe5 20.f4 d3 21.♖a2 ♔xa1 22.♖xa1 ♔h3 White has trouble getting coordinated.

19...♔h3

19...♖h3 gets nowhere after 20.f4.



20.e5!

20.♖d3 ♔ae8 is very dangerous for White.

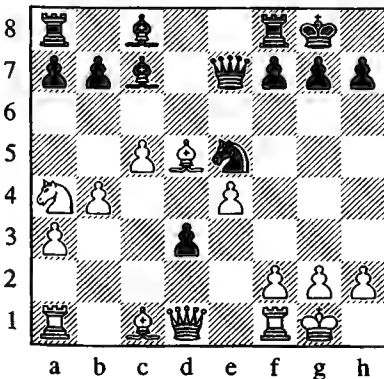
20...♔xe5 21.♖e4

After 21.♔d3 ♔xh2† 22.♔xh2 ♔f1† 23.♔g1 ♖h3 24.f4 ♔xd3 25.♖d1 ♔ae8 Black has a dangerous attack.

21...♖h5 22.♔f4 ♔xf4 23.♖xf4 ♖xd5 24.♖c3 ♖c6 25.♔xd4

White keeps some advantage with his extra pawn, although his fractured kingside gives Black some counterplay.

18.♖d1



18...♔g4

The way Timman plays quickly leads to a lost position, but Black must act quickly before White finishes his development and wins with his extra material. 18...♔g4 achieves nothing after 19.f4, while 18...♔e6 can be met by 19.♖c3.

The best chance may have been:

18...♖f6

This sets a cunning trap.

19.f4!?

White can also opt for the more restrained 19.♔a2 ♔g4 (19...♔e6 20.f4 ♔g6 21.♖xd3 wins.) 20.h3 ♔h2 21.♔e1 Black has little to show for the material.

19...♔g6 20.e5?

This overambitious move backfires badly.

Instead White can maintain a big advantage with 20.♔b2!, intending to meet 20...♖a6 with 21.♖d2! ♖xa4 22.♖c3 winning.

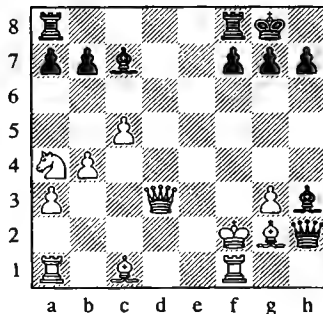
20...♔xe5! 21.fxe5 ♖xe5

White's king is forced into the open.

22.♖xd3 ♖xh2† 23.♔f2 ♖h4† 24.g3

24.♔e2! is a better chance, although after 24...♔e6 Black keeps a strong initiative.

24...♖h2† 25.♔g2 ♔h3



By now the attack is unstoppable.

26.♖f3 ♔fe8 27.♔h1

Or 27.♔g1 ♔ad8.

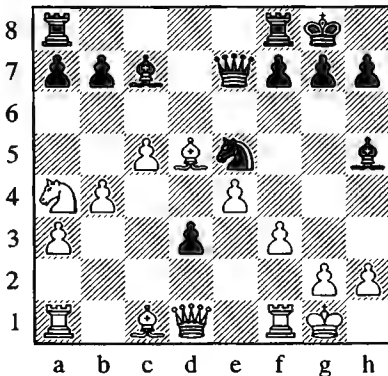
27...♔xg3†! 28.♖xg3 ♔e2†

And Black wins.

19.f3 ♖h5

This is objectively wrong, as it virtually sacrifices the bishop. On the other hand, from a practical perspective at least it led to some complications.

The alternative was 19...♗e6, hoping to eliminate the bishop on d5 and basing his play on the d3-pawn. However, White should be able to maintain control after: 20.♘c3! (20.♖b1 f5; 20.f4 ♖g4 21.♙d2 ♗e2) 20...f5 (20...h5 21.f4! With the knight on c3 this move contains a lot of power.) 21.♘b5 (21.♙b3!?) 21...♗b8 22.♗g5 ♙d7 23.♗xe6† ♙xe6 24.♘d4 And White wins.

**20.♖a2!**

Such a move is typical for Karpov. He improves another piece while removing the rook from its tactically vulnerable location.

20...♗h8

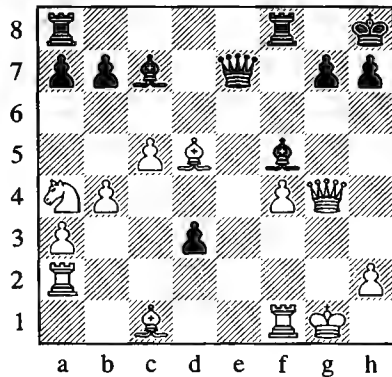
Black hopes to follow up with ...f5. If 20...♙h4 21.g3 defends easily.

21.g4! ♗g6 22.f4!

Having sown the seeds, Karpov chooses the right moment to reap the harvest.

22...♘g4

The best chance.

23.♙xg4 f5 24.exf5 ♗xf5**25.♙f3**

White is a piece up and completely winning. Had the game taken place ten years later, Timman may even have resigned here.

25...♖ad8 26.♘c3 ♙f6 27.♖g2

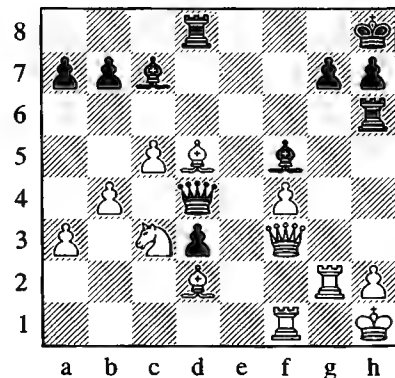
27.♘b5 was a slight improvement, but the text move should be fine.

27...♙d4† 28.♗h1 ♖f6 29.♗d2

Here Karpov was already in time trouble.

29...♖h6

This is a bluff, which works in the game.



30. ♖f2??

This is a dreadful mistake. This game, along with the previous one, suggests that Karpov was a long way from developing his almost computer-like calculating skills. Almost any sensible move wins, including 30. ♖fg1! ♖h3 31. ♖xg7, or 30. ♖e1! ♖h3 and now either 31. ♖g3 or 31. ♖b5 win.

30... ♖xd5

After this simple capture Black is back.

31. ♖e1

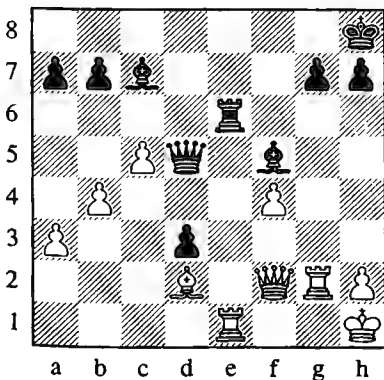
Another possibility was 31. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 32. ♖c3 ♖g6 33. ♖g1 ♖g8 34. ♖xg6 (after 34. ♖g3! White is still better) 34... ♖xg6 35. ♖d4 ♖xd4† 36. ♖xd4 ♖xf4 and Black is alive.

31... ♖e6

Objectively better was: 31... ♖g8! 32. ♖xd5 (32. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 33. ♖e7 ♖xf4) 32... ♖xd5 33. ♖g1 White should be still somewhat better here, but his king is airy and Karpov was short of time.

32. ♖xd5

Karpov misses another opportunity to secure victory: 32. ♖xe6! ♖xe6 33. ♖e1 ♖f7 34. ♖b5 ♖f6 35. ♖xc7 ♖d7 36. ♖c3 And White wins.

32... ♖xd5**33. ♖xe6!**

A good move, exchanging a strong attacking piece.

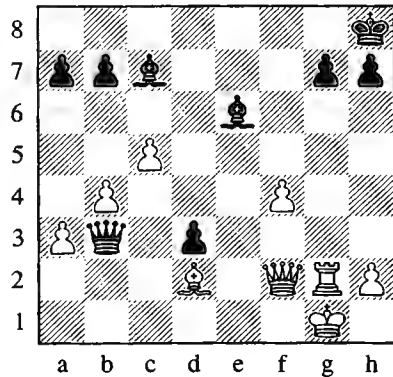
33... ♖xe6 34. ♖g1!

It is sensible to step aside out of the pin.

34... ♖b3??

Black is searching for counterplay, but the text move leaves his king fatally exposed. 34... ♖d7 was better, although White has a good answer in 35. ♖g5!

Black's best continuation was to play 34... ♖g8!, improving the king's position, and after 35. ♖c3 g6 36. ♖e3 ♖f7 it would still require a great deal of skill and effort for White to win.

**35. ♖e1!**

This move combines attack and defence perfectly, stopping any checks along the back rank while preparing to attack the g7-pawn. Black has no good defence.

35... ♖g8

35... ♖g6 was no better as 36. f5 wins.

36. f5! ♖f7 37. ♖h6 g6 38. ♖a1 ♖e5 39. ♖xe5 ♖d1† 40. ♖f2 ♖c2† 41. ♖g3

1-0

This game was far from flawless; both of these future stars were a long way from reaching their full potential, but they still produced a very interesting game. It was a pity the mistakes crept in, but the strength of Karpov's positional understanding was very much evident throughout. Later in the event Karpov scored two more wins and became the European Junior Champion.

1967 Summary

In 1967 (including the 1968 part of the aforementioned competition) Karpov played a total of thirty seven games. Of the games in the database, eight were quick draws, finishing in twenty moves and under. Compared with Fischer and Kasparov, the relatively high number of quick draws may have been due to a busier tournament schedule, although it is hard to talk about this with certainty as not every tournament would have been documented on the database.

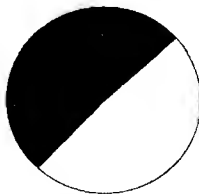
Russian Federation Spartakiad (Board two): 4½/7 (+4 =1 -2)

World Junior Qualifier (5th place): 3½/7 (+3 =1 -3)

USSR Schools' Spartakiad (Board two): 7/9 (+5 =4 -0)

European U18, Groningen (1st place): 10/14 (+6 =8 -0)

Total 67.6% (+18 =14 -5)



Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1968

In this year Karpov had twenty seven games in the database, slightly fewer than before. His first two events were matches. The Soviet Union used to play a national team match against Yugoslavia every year, including junior boards as well. Karpov played in the latter, winning his own four-game match against Vujakovic by the impressive score of 3½–½. His next event was a USSR – Scandinavia junior match in Tallinn, in which he lost to Bo Jacobsen by the score of 1½–½ on board two.

Later in 1968 Karpov won a tournament, the Moscow University Championship, by winning seven games and drawing six (although three of the draws cannot be found in the database). We will look at one of his wins.

His opponent only has one other game in the database. His name means “the one who is chosen”, although the game itself has been selected for completely unrelated reasons! It provides a nice example of the young Karpov’s skill in handling opposite-coloured bishop middlegames.

Game 12

Sergey Vybornov – Anatoly Karpov

Moscow 1968

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6

Maybe Karpov was hoping for 3.d4, which is well known to be ineffective against Black’s chosen move order.

3.♘c3

The main options are 3.c3 and 3.c4.

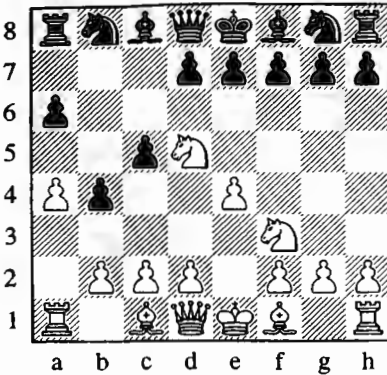
3...b5!?

A logical reaction. The same idea is sometimes seen in the Closed Sicilian lines with 2.♘c3 and 3.g3. Maybe Karpov did not like to face ...a6 and ...b5 when he played that way with White.

4.a4?!

Black is already toying with the idea of playing ...b4, so why spend a tempo to force it? 4.d4 was more consistent, when it looks interesting for Black to try: 4...e6!? With the knight on c3 Black can consider eschewing the pawn exchange on d4. 5.d5 (5.♗f4 ♖b7) 5...♗b7 With a double-edged and almost uncharted position.

4...b4 5.♘d5

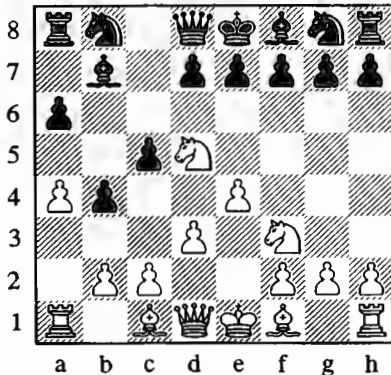


5...♗b7!

This move is trickier than it looks.

6.d3

White defends the e4-pawn, as ...e6 was a threat.



6...♗xd5!?

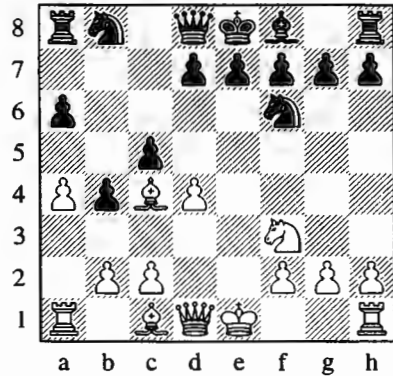
Once again Karpov embarks on a risky and ambitious strategy. He is willing to give up a valuable bishop, which was also his only developed piece, in order to compromise the enemy structure.

7.exd5 ♘f6

Hunting down the d5-pawn.

8.d4 ♘xd5 9.♗c4 ♘f6!

Black is behind in development and must therefore exercise great caution. For example, 9...♘b6? allows a winning raid: 10.♗xf7! ♘xf7 11.♘e5† ♔g8 (11...♘e8 12.♖h5† wins.) 12.♖f3 ♖e8 13.dxc5 And Black is lost.



10.dxc5?

With this move White regains his pawn, but his light-squared bishop will have no function in the long run.

10.d5! This strong move gains space and restricts the enemy pieces, while preparing to develop pressure along the e-file. It is an instructive exception to the rule that the side with better development should strive to open the position. 10...g6 11.0-0 ♗g7 12.♗e1 0-0 13.♗g5 White has lovely compensation for the pawn, and risks nothing.

10...e6 11.♗e3 ♖c7 12.♖d4 ♘c6 13.♖d3 ♘g4!

Black has to get rid of the c5-pawn as it is currently fixing the weakness on d7 as well as restricting his pieces.

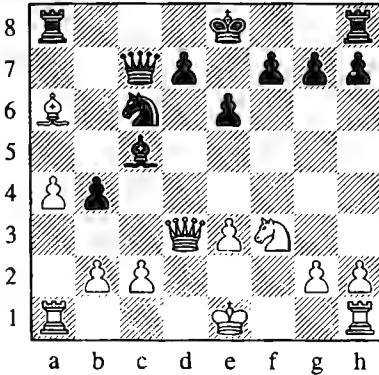
14.♗xa6

White wins back the pawn, and one may even think that he is doing well as he has a

passed a-pawn. However, a closer inspection reveals that it cannot be pushed.

In the event of 14.♞d1 ♖xe3 15.♜xe3 ♜a7 White is unable to safeguard the c-pawn.

14...♖xe3 15.fxe3 ♜xc5



Opposite-coloured bishop middlegames can be hard to judge – or perhaps it would be more accurate to say *easy to misjudge*. At his peak Karpov created masterpieces from positions of this type.

16.♜b5

If 16.0–0–0 ♜xe3† picks up a pawn.

16...0–0 17.0–0

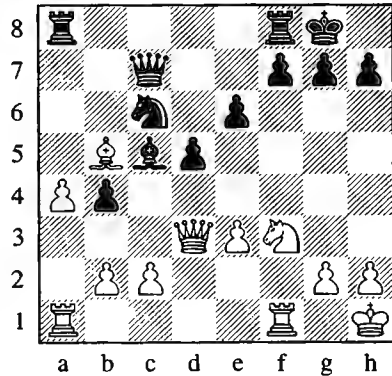
17.♜xc6!? was worth considering.

17...d5

The immediate 17...♖e5! would have avoided the idea in the following note.

18.♜h1

18.♜xc6!? Exchanging the bishop was the lesser evil, despite the fact that the a-pawn will require careful defence. 18...♜xc6 19.a5 ♜a6 20.♖d4 ♜b7 21.♖b3 ♜d6 Black remains comfortable, but it is not easy to formulate a plan that will really hurt White.



18...♖e5!

This renders White's bishop useless.

19.♜e2 f5!

Fixing the e3-pawn as a permanent target for the black bishop.

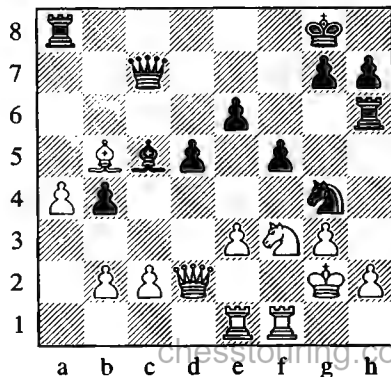
20.♜ae1 ♖g4!

Karpov starts building his attack against the king, as well as the e3-pawn. White can do nothing to counteract his opponent's domination on the dark squares.

21.♜d2 ♜f6!?

Karpov goes after the king rather than playing 21...♜b6, even though this wins material by force after 22.c4 ♖xe3 or 22.♖d4 f4.

22.g3 ♜h6 23.♜g2



23...♖b6!

Only now does Karpov decide to win the e3-pawn, after White has put himself in position for a knight fork on e3. The game is practically over.

24.♘h4 ♘xc3† 25.♙xe3 ♙xc3 26.♗xb4 f4
27.♗e7 ♜f6 28.♘f3 ♙c5 29.♗d7 ♙d6 30.c3
♙d8 31.♗c6 ♗e3
0-1

Karpov's next event was the junior section of the Soviet Team Championship, where he played on the top board. He scored two wins and one draw. According to the database, his opponent in the following game played one major tournament in the sixties and defeated Romanishin in one game. He went on to become an international master.

Game 13

Boris Nisman – Anatoly Karpov

Soviet Team Championship (juniors), Riga 1968

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 c6 3.d4

The aggressive Mikenas variation with 3.e4 was only played against Karpov three times. After drawing with Miles and Timman in 1977, Karpov suffered a defeat in this line against Korchnoi at the Baguio World Championship final in 1978, after which he almost never allowed it again.

3...♙b4

The Nimzo-Indian was a mainstay of Karpov's repertoire throughout his career.

4.a3

Statistically speaking 4.♘f3 was the most problematic move for Karpov, but this is explained by the fact that Kasparov employed it against him regularly. He only faced the

text move four times, and triumphed on each occasion.

4...♙xc3† 5.bxc3 c5 6.e3

Zakharov played 6.f3 here at the 1976 USSR Championship, and Karpov went on to win a remarkable endgame.

6...♘c6 7.♘e2!?

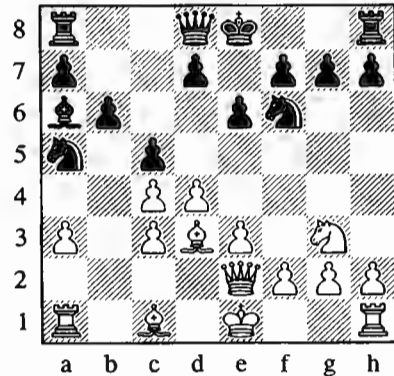
7.♙d3 is more common.

7...b6 8.♘g3 ♙a6

According to the database this move was only ever played in the present game. The usual course is 8...0-0 9.e4 ♘e8.

9.♙d3

9.e4! is the critical test, now that the thematic ...♘e8 is unavailable.

9...♘a5 10.♗e2**10...d6**

Karpov gives up the plan of bringing the f6-knight to d6, instead embarking on a somewhat surprising strategy.

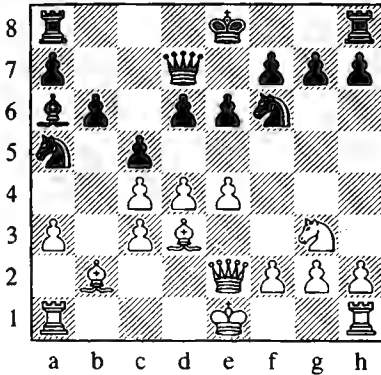
11.♙b2!?

The bishop has a bleak future here.

11...♗d7

This looks a bit mysterious but is all part of the plan. Karpov leaves the c4-pawn alone, at least for a while.

12.e4



12...0-0-0!

Karpov solves the problem of his king in an original way.

13.a4 h5!?

Now he starts pushing White back on the other wing.

14.0-0?!

White should have prevented the further advance of the h-pawn.

14...h4 15.♖h1 e5!

Gaining space, while facilitating the transfer of the knight to f4.

16.f4

Waiting passively with 16.d5 was probably the better choice. Black would still have had a nice position, although at least 16...♖h5 can safely be met by 17.g3.

16...♖h5! 17.fxe5

17.f5! Sacrificing the exchange in a more closed position is more in keeping with chess

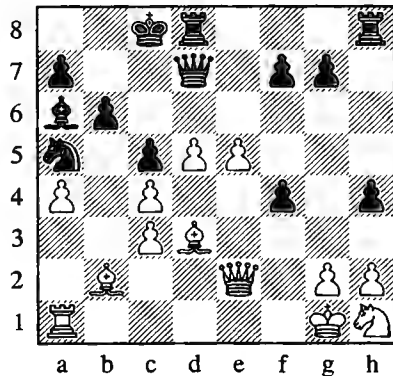
principles as White has better chances to build a fortress. Play might continue 17...♖f4 (17...♔c7!?) 18.♞xf4 exf4 19.♕f2 with reasonable compensation.

17...dxe5 18.d5 ♖f4!

Karpov takes some risk by winning the exchange as his pieces are not well centralized. Nevertheless the decision is justified.

19.♞xf4 exf4 20.e5

Objectively 20.♕f2 was better, although Black's advantage is clear after 20...f6. The text move looks very natural, and indeed if White can find time to get coordinated then his central pawns could become a mighty force. Fortunately Karpov has assessed the position correctly and prepared a strong counter.



20...h3!

Opening up White's kingside.

21.g4

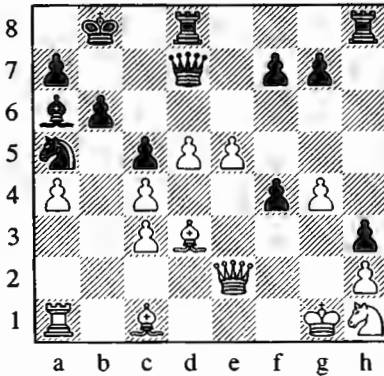
In the event of 21.g3 Black has the nice idea of 21...♙xc4! (21...g5 should be enough for an advantage, but it is hard to argue with the text move) 22.♙xc4 ♖xc4 23.♞xc4 ♞xd5 24.♞xd5 ♞xd5 25.gxf4 ♞d2 and White is in huge trouble.

21...♔b8

21...♙xc4! looks strong here too.

22. ♖c1?

There is no time for this. The best chance was 22. ♖f2, although after 22... ♔f3! (22... ♗de8 23. ♖c1 g5 24. ♖c4) 23. ♗e4 g5 Black soon attacks the e5-pawn.

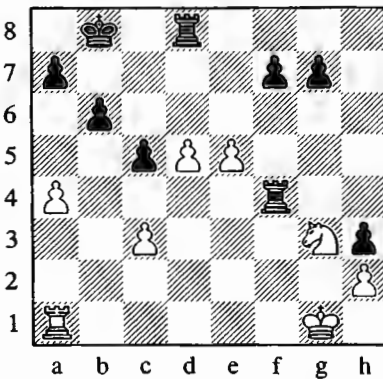


22... ♖xc4!

After this clever tactic White's position falls apart.

23. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 24. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 25. ♖g3 ♗h4
26. ♗xf4 ♗xf4 27. ♖xf4 ♗xf4

Black is winning easily, and Karpov has no trouble converting his advantage.



28. ♖d1 g6 29. ♖d2 ♗xa4 30. ♖f2 ♗c4 31. ♖d3
a5 32. ♖c3 ♗e8 33. e6 ♗c6 34. d6 ♖d8 35. ♖e4
♖c8 36. ♖f6 ♖d7 37. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 38. ♖d2

♗h4 39. ♖c2 b5 40. ♖g3 ♖xd6 41. ♗xg6 ♗f4
42. ♖b3 a4† 43. ♖a3 ♗f3 44. ♖b2 b4

0-1

Karpov's strategy worked to perfection – he sheltered his king on the queenside and outplayed his somewhat naive opponent on the kingside in an impressive and instructive manner.

After this win Karpov continued his fine form, and amassed a superb nine points from his first ten games. His victims included Romanishin and Piesina, and one of his draws was against Vaganian. In the last round Karpov's team (the armed forces) had to play their main rivals Burevestnik, with the latter needing to win by a score of 6-4 to secure overall victory.

Karpov's opponent in this tense situation was a talented junior player named Ilya Mikliaev who, according to the database, had also achieved the remarkable score of nine points from ten games. Amongst others he won impressively against Vaganian with the black pieces, and drew with Romanishin. Prior to this event in a USSR – Scandinavia match Mikliaev also defeated Ulf Andersson 1½-½, after winning a fine attacking game.

According to the database, Mikliaev gave up chess after the following game. This is sad for chess, as he most probably would have become a world class player. I asked several Russian players what happened to Mikliaev. I was surprised to find that hardly anyone even knew his name! Finally Grandmaster Razuvaev provided the answer. Mikliaev went to university and became a very successful cardiologist. He excelled in this field, and at a remarkably early age became a director of a major hospital in Kharkov. Such a demanding job left him with no time for chess. I managed to get in contact with Mikliaev and I hope to devote a chapter to him in one of my future books.

Game 14

Anatoly Karpov – Ilya Mikliaev

Soviet Team Championship, Riga 1968

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 d6

Karpov may have anticipated this variation, as Mikliaev had already used it to draw with Romanishin.

5.c3 ♙d7 6.0–0 g6 7.d4 ♙g7 8.h3

Eighteen years later Karpov spared this move and won a nice game against Spassky:

8.♞e1 ♘ge7 9.♙e3 0–0 10.♘bd2

Around that time the tenth world champion had some success with developing the knight on e7, but Karpov prepared well for it.

10...♞e8 11.♙b3 b6

11...♘h8!? may have been more useful.

12.dxe5 dxe5

12...♘xe5!? was worth considering.

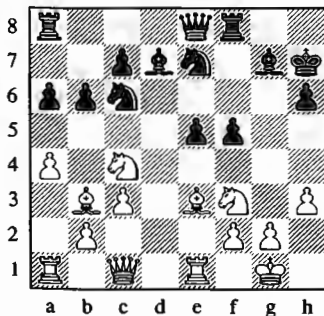
13.♘c4 ♘h8 14.♞c1

Also after 14.♙xb6!? cxb6 15.♘d6 ♞d8 16.♘xf7+ ♞xf7 17.♙xf7 White is somewhat better.

14...♙g4 15.♘g5 h6 16.h3 ♙d7

16...♙h5!? 17.g4 hxg5 18.gxh5 f6 19.hxg6 looks better than the game.

17.♘f3 ♘h7 18.a4 f5? 19.exf5 gxf5



20.♘fxe5!

Now Black's king becomes vulnerable.

20...♘xe5 21.♘xe5 ♙xe5 22.♙xh6 ♙d6
23.♞g5 ♞g6 24.♞xe7+ ♙xe7 25.♞xe7 ♘xh6
26.♞xd7

The two pawns for the exchange and Black's open king gave White a clear advantage, Karpov – Spassky, Bugojno 1986.

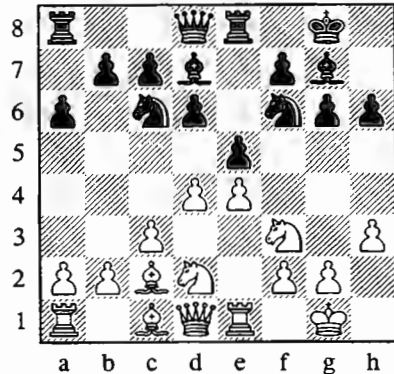
8...♘f6 9.♘bd2 0–0 10.♞e1 ♞e8

Black more often starts playing on the kingside with 10...♘h5 or 10...♞e8.

11.♙c2

Karpov defends the e4-pawn in order to prepare ♘f1.

11...h6



12.a3!

This subtle move is directed against the following pawn sacrifice: 12.♘f1 exd4!? 13.cxd4 d5! 14.e5 ♘e4 15.♙xe4 dxe4 16.♞xe4 ♙f5 17.♞e1 (17.♞e2 ♘xe5) 17...♘b4 Black has reasonable compensation.

12...♘h7

Black plays a useful waiting move, defending the h6-pawn. Later he may think of freeing his position with ...d5.

13.♘f1

If 13.b4 then 13...d5! exploits the weakening

of the c3-pawn and the long diagonal in general.

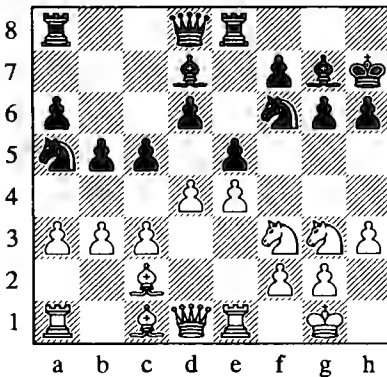
13...b5!?

Usually Black searches for counterplay on the kingside in this variation, but Mikliaev instead chooses to play on the queenside.

14.♖g3

Also possible was 14.d5!? ♘a5 15.♗e3 ♘b7 16.b4 and White has a small advantage.

14...♗a5 15.b3 c5



Black has obtained a playable position which resembles the Chigorin Variation of the main line.

16.d5 c4

Black could have regrouped the knight with 16...♘b7!?, keeping the queenside more fluid.

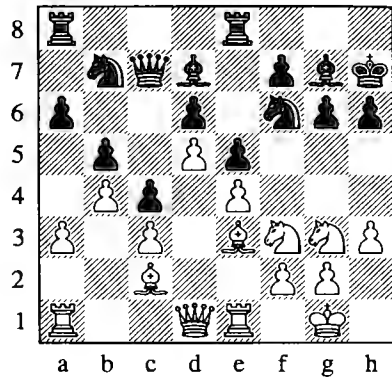
17.b4 ♘b7

One of Black's main challenges in the ensuing middlegame will be to find a useful role for this knight.

18.♗e3 ♞c7

The hasty 18...a5 gives White the option of opening the queenside: 19.a4!? ♞c7 20.axb5

♗xb5 21.♗a4 ♗xa4 22.♞xa4 axb4 23.♞xb4 White has the initiative on the b-file, and the c4-pawn is a target.



19.♘h2

Karpov prepares to gain space on the kingside with the thematic f2-f4. It was also possible to focus on the other flank for a while with 19.a4 ♞eb8 20.♞e2, with a typical slight plus.

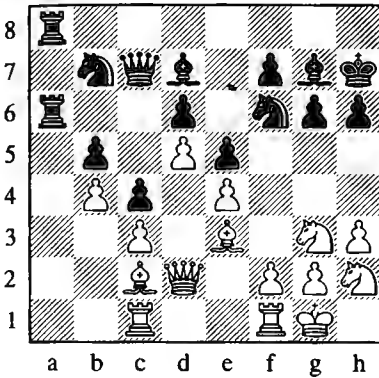
19...a5 20.♞d2 ♞a6

Mikliaev takes control over the a-file, although in the game he is unable to do much with it. Another idea was 20...♘d8 in order to improve the misplaced knight without delay. A logical continuation would be: 21.f4 exf4 22.♗xf4 ♘g8 Black has to choose which knight he improves. Now one of them defends the king. 23.♞f1 f6 24.♗e3 ♘f7 25.♘f3 ♘e5 26.♘d4 White keeps some advantage.

21.♞f1 ♞ea8 22.♞ac1!

Karpov does not mind giving up the a-file, as Black will not be able to hurt him there. The rook moves into a defensive position where it protects the light-squared bishop as well as the c3-pawn.

22...axb4 23.axb4



23...d8

Black decides to improve the b7-knight by means of ...f6 ...d8 and ...d7. The other main plan was to vacate the d7-square for his other knight, in order to occupy the e5-square after White's intended f2-f4. There were three different ways of going about this.

One idea was to begin with the flexible 23...a2!? and only later decide where to retreat the d7-bishop.

There was also 23...e8, for instance: 24.f4 exf4 25.xf4 (25.fxf4 d7) 25...d7 26.dg4 h5 27.e3 de5 Black is doing all right here.

Finally, Black could also have freed the d7-square with:

23...c8 24.f4 exf4

After 24...e7 25.f5 Black remains passive.

25.fxf4

25.fxf4 a2! (25...d7 26.fh6!) 26.f3 d7 (or 26...a6 27.d4 d7 28.c1 e8 and Black is in the game) 27.d4 de5 28.fxb5 d7 29.d4 d3 30.b1 e8 Black has compensation for the pawn.

25...e7 26.f3 d7

There is also 26...a2 27.d4 d7 28.c1 d8 when it is not easy to advance White's position.

27.d4 de5 28.fxb5 a2 29.c1 d7

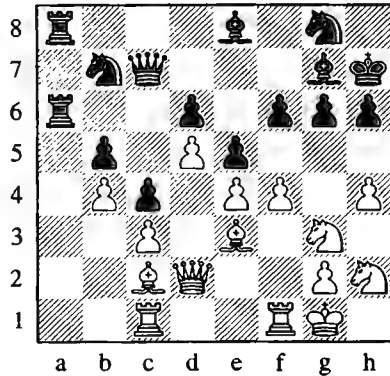
30.d4 a4

White has an extra pawn but his pieces are tied up.

24.f4 f6 25.h4

Karpov wants to weaken Black's kingside. In the event of the immediate 25.f5 g5, White would only be able to attack along a single file, which may not be enough. Play might continue: 26.dh5 (or 26.d1 e8 27.fh5 a2) 26...e8 27.dg7 (27.d1! a2 28.c2) 27...xg7 28.h4 d8 White is somewhat better, but a tough fight lies ahead.

25...e8



26.dg4

Karpov provokes ...h5, hoping that it will loosen Black's kingside.

The other main idea was 26.h5. This move gains space, fixes Black's kingside and virtually buries the g8-knight and the g7-bishop. Nevertheless it has one major drawback – it make the position so closed that White may be left without a convincing way to penetrate. A logical continuation would be: 26...g5 27.fg5 ffg5 28.dg4 a2! 29.f2 h8 30.b6 d7 (30...e7! 31.f5 d7) 31.f3 a6 32.e3 b2 Black gets some counterplay, but more importantly it is hard to see how White can invade along the f-file.

26...h5!?

Black decides to gain some time and aim for counterplay, but in doing so he weakens his kingside. It was also possible to focus on the opposite flank with:

26...♖a2!? 27.f5

27.h5 g5 28.fxg5 fxg5 transposes to the previous note.

27...h5

After 27...g5? 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.♕f2 White has a decisive attack on the h-file.

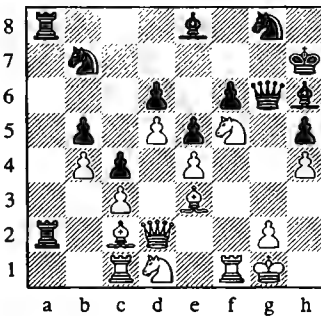
28.♕f2

28.♕h2 ♖8a3 is okay for Black.

28...♗h6

Another possibility is 28...♞f7 29.♞e2 ♕e7 (29... ♖8a3!?) 30.♞f3 gxf5 31.♕xf5 ♕xf5 32.♞xf5† ♞g6 when Black should be able to live with his small disadvantage.

29.♕d1 ♞g7 30.fxg6† ♞xg6 31.♕f5



31...♗f8!?

This is a weird looking move, but it may well be a good one as it prepares to eliminate the strong f5-knight by means of ...♕e7.

The alternative was: 31...♗xe3† 32.♕dxe3 ♕h8 (32...♗d7 33.♖f3) 33.♖f3 ♞h7 34.♖g3 ♗g6 Black is passive, but has reasonable chances to hold.

32.♖f3 ♗d7

The immediate 32...♕e7? runs into 33.♖g3 ♞f7 34.♕h6!.

33.♖g3 ♞f7 34.♕f2

34.♞e2 can also be met by 34...♕e7.

34...♕e7

There are no direct threats, so Black could also consider 34...♖b2!? first.

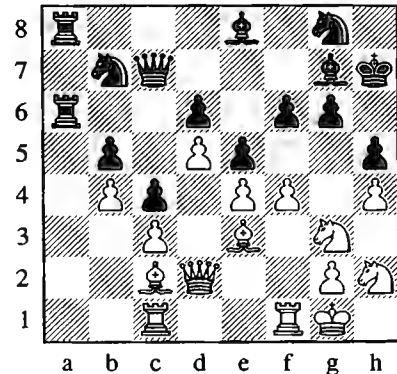
35.♕h6 ♗xh6

35...♞e8!? is also possible.

36.♗xh6 ♕g6 37.♕h2 ♖g8

Black is not worse, and he may be able to target the h4-pawn.

27.♕h2



27...exf4

This is another important and double-edged decision. Black gives up his control over the d4-square in order to create his own knight outpost on e5.

If Black intends to exchange on f4, he should do so immediately. If he tries to prepare it with 27...♕d8? then White plays 28.f5.

Another idea is 27...♖a2, allowing 28.f5 ♕h6 29.♞e2. In the resulting position White has a slight edge thanks to his kingside pressure after 29...gxf5 30.exf5 ♞f7 or 29...♞f7 30.fxg6† ♞xg6.

Finally, Black can improve his bishop with: 27...♗h6 28.♕e2 (After 28.♕f3 ♖a2 29.♕e2 ♕d8 30.♕h1 ♕f7 Black has managed to improve his knight, and remains in the game.)

Now the natural 28...♖d8 allows White to launch a dangerous attack with 29.g4!, but after the safer 28...♗d7 it is not easy for White to increase the pressure against Black's kingside.

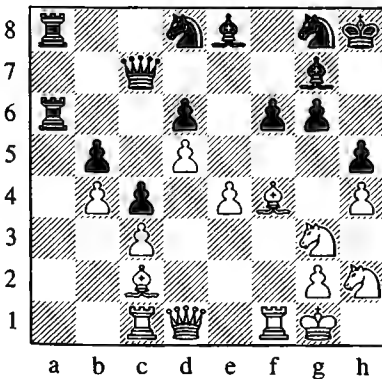
28.♗xf4 ♖d8 29.♞d1!?

Objectively this may not hurt Black, but who would enjoy being threatened by a possible e5 and ♜h5†?

Another possibility was 29.♗e3 ♖f7 30.e5 ♖xe5 31.♖xh5 ♗a2 32.♖xg7 ♞xg7 with a balanced position.

29...♗h8

Mikliaev wants to keep the h-pawn. It was also possible to improve the knight at once with 29...♖f7!?, not fearing 30.e5 ♖xe5 31.♞xh5† (or 31.♖xh5 ♗h8) 31...♖h6 when Black remains quite solid on the kingside.



30.♖e2

Karpov prepares to open the kingside.

30...♖f7

If 30...♖h6 31.♖d4 ♖hf7 32.g4 hxg4 33.♖xg4 ♖e5 34.♗f2 White's position is slightly preferable.

31.g4 ♖e5!?

Finally the knight achieved his goal and reached the desired e5-square. A more straightforward alternative was 31...hxg4!?. White's heavy pieces are far away, therefore Black can withstand the attack on the kingside. 32.♖xg4 ♞c8 (32...♖e5 33.♖d4 ♗d7 34.♖e3) 33.♖d4 ♖e5 Black has enough pieces around his king to defend himself.

32.gxh5 gxh5 33.♖g3

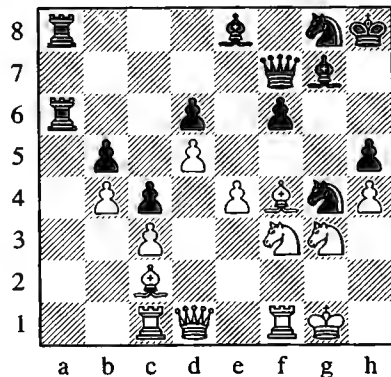
Karpov immediately homes in on the new target on h5.

33...♞f7

It looks interesting to sacrifice a pawn as White's king is a bit exposed: 33...♗h6!? 34.♖xh5 ♞h7 35.♖g3 ♗xf4 36.♗xf4 ♞h6 37.♞d2 ♗d7 Black has compensation.

34.♖f3 ♖g4!?

Black wishes to preserve his strong knight, but the idea is too slow. He should have preferred the immediate 34...♗h6! 35.♖xe5 (after 35.♞d2 ♞g6 36.♖h2 ♖d3 Black is becoming active) 35...♖xe5 36.♗d2 (or 36.♗xh6 ♖xh6 37.♖g2 ♖g4 and Black is all right) 36...♞g6 37.♖h2 ♗xd2 38.♞xd2 ♖h6 Black has enough of a grip on the position.



35.♖d4

From here the knight controls a lot of important squares.

35...♗h6?!

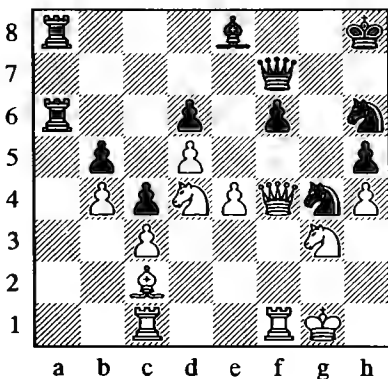
Black exchanges his bad bishop. This is positionally desirable, but the bishop was also an important defender of the black kingside.

A better idea was 35...♖e7, intending to attack the weak h4-pawn. 36.♖e6 ♖g6 37.♖f5 ♗f8 38.♗d2 ♗d7 Despite the menacing appearance of the white knights, Black is holding his position together.

Black can also begin by taking away the e6-square with 35...♗d7 and only then switch his attention to the h4-pawn: 36.♗d2 ♖e7 37.♗d1 ♖g6! 38.♗xg4 (after 38.♖xh5 ♖xf4 39.♖xf4 ♗h6 40.♗h1 ♗g8 41.♗g1 ♗h7 Black has lovely counterplay for the pawn) 38...♗xg4 39.♖xb5 ♗d7 40.♖d4 ♗h3 41.♗f2 ♗g4 Black is very much alive.

36.♗d2 ♗xf4 37.♗xf4 ♖8h6?!

37...♖e7! It was more effective to attack the h4-pawn to tie White up for a few moves. 38.♖g5 (38.♖d5 ♖g6 39.♗d2 ♖6e5) 38...♖g6 39.♗g3 ♖6e5 40.♖e6 ♗d7 Black's knights succeed in holding the position together.

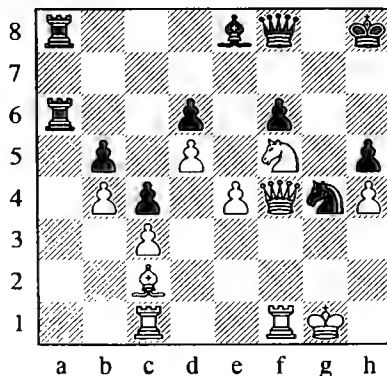


38.♖g5!

The h6-knight is a very important defensive piece, so Karpov wastes no time in exchanging it. Now he will be able to get closer to Black's weak h-pawn.

38...♖xf5 39.♖xf5 ♗f8

After 39...♖e5 40.♗h1 ♗f8 41.♗g1 Black's kingside is seriously weak.



40.♗d1!

Karpov expels the knight and vacates the c2-square for his rook.

40...♖e5 41.♗c2 ♗a2!

Black exchanges the rook before it can join in the attack.

42.♗xa2 ♗xa2 43.♖g3

This double attack wins a pawn.

43...♗a3?!

Mikliaev is looking for counterplay on the wrong side. It turns out that Black could have kept himself in the game with:

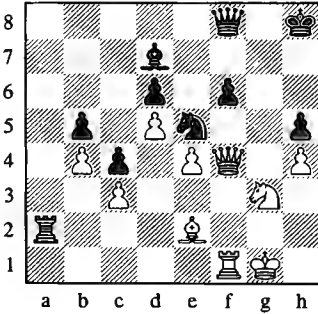
43...♗d7!

Aiming for counterplay against White's king.

44.♗e2!

The best response. After 44.♗xh5? ♗h3 45.♗f2 ♖d3 Black wins material.

44. ♖xh5 is met by 44... ♗h3 (or 44... ♜g8†
45. ♜g3 ♜xg3† 46. ♖xg3 ♗h3 47. ♜f2 ♖a1
48. ♖h2 ♗g4 49. ♗e2 ♜c1 with compensation
for the pawn) 45. ♜xf6† ♜xf6 46. ♜xf6 ♜g2†
47. ♖f1 ♜b2† 48. ♖g1 ♜g2† and White has
to repeat moves.



44... ♜c2

Now Black attacks the pawn under more favourable conditions.

45. ♜xf6† ♜xf6 46. ♜xf6 ♜xc3 47. ♖xh5 ♜b3

47... ♜c2! is also interesting. After the text move the c-pawn is really dangerous.

48. ♖f2

After 48. ♜h6†? ♖g8 49. ♜xd6 c3 50. ♗d3 ♜xb4 Black wins.

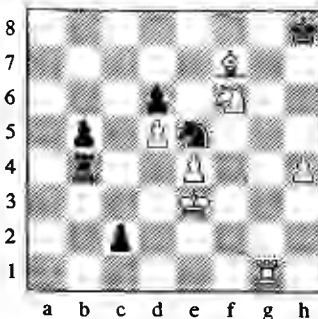
48...c3

48... ♜b1 is also met by 49. ♖e3.

49. ♖e3 ♜b1 50. ♜f1 ♜xb4 51. ♜g1 ♗e8 52. ♖f6 ♗f7

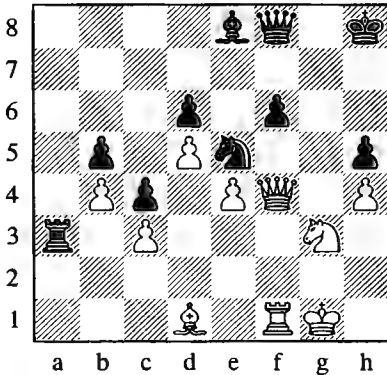
Black is barely able to defend himself against the mating threats, but on the opposite flank his c-pawn is a monster.

53. ♗h5 c2 54. ♗xf7



54... ♖g4†!! 55. ♖d2 ♖xf6

The resulting endgame should be a draw.



44. ♜xf6†

Karpov enters an endgame. In practice it turns to be a good decision as he outplays his opponent, although objectively Black should still be all right.

44. ♜d2 deserved consideration, for instance: 44... ♜g7 45. ♖h2 ♖a1 46. ♖f5 ♜f8 47. ♜b2 (after 47. ♜g1 ♗g6 48. ♜f4 ♖h7 Black manages to keep his position together) 47... ♖a6 48. ♖d4 ♗g6 49. ♜g2 ♜e8 50. ♜g1 And White is a bit better.

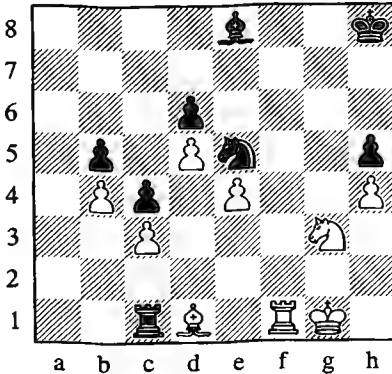
44... ♜xf6 45. ♜xf6 ♖a1?

Despite some imperfections, the overall quality of Black's play up to this point has been quite high. The text move is his first really serious mistake. This was the last game of the Armed Forces – Burevestnik match and Mikliaev's team was already leading 7–2, so they achieved their objective. Perhaps this even contributed to a loss of concentration from Mikliaev.

The correct continuation was 45... ♜xc3 46. ♖f2 ♖d3† 47. ♖e2 ♖g7 (47... ♖xb4!?) 48. ♜xd6 ♖f4† 49. ♖f2 ♖h3† 50. ♖g2 ♖f4† and White should settle for the perpetual, as the attempt

to play on with 51.♖h2?! only leads to trouble for White after 51...♗g6.

46.♟f1 ♖c1



47.♗e2?

Throughout his career Karpov rarely made mistakes in endgames, but here he misses a simple win: 47.♗xh5! ♟xc3 48.♗e2! ♟e3 49.♟f8† And White wins a piece.

In those days players were used to adjournments, and it may well be that the last round took place in one session. The present game has been full of challenges for both players, so it would be perfectly understandable if they were fatigued.

47...♟a1 48.♗d4 ♖g8 49.♗f5 ♟a6 50.♖f2!

Karpov starts improving his king, which will decide the outcome of the game.

50...♗g6 51.♖e3?

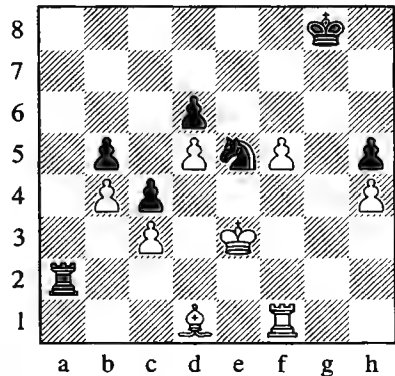
This time the centralization of the king is less important than keeping the knight on the board. The correct route to victory was: 51.♗d4! ♗xc4 (51...♟b6 52.♖e3) 52.♖e3 ♗xd5 53.♗xb5 ♟b6 (53...♗f7 54.♟f6) 54.♗d4 ♗f7 55.♟f5 White restores his one-pawn advantage and wins easily as his king is also much better than Black's.

51...♗f5 52.♖xf5

After 52.♟xf5 ♟a3 53.♖d2 ♟a2† 54.♗c2 ♟a3 55.♟f6 (55.♟xh5 ♗f3†) 55...♖g7 56.♟xd6 ♗f3† 57.♖d1 ♟xc3 58.♗d7† ♖f6 Black is rather active.

52...♟a2?

This is too slow. Black should waste no time in playing 52...♟a3! to attack the c3-pawn. Play may then continue 53.♖d4 (or 53.♗xh5 ♟xc3† 54.♖f4 ♖g7! and Black's king is safe) 53...♟a1 54.♗e2 transposing to the game while avoiding the improvement mentioned in the next note. (It should be mentioned that 54.f6 is not an improvement due to 54...♗f3†.)



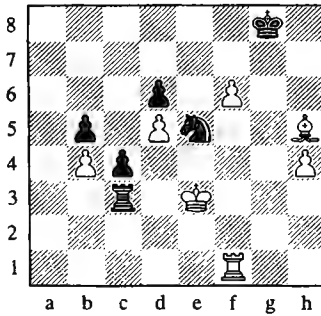
53.♖d4?

It is hard to guess the motivation for this poor move. I would guess that with the time control approaching (the classical time control in those days was two and a half hours for forty moves and an extra hour for each sixteen moves thereafter) the players were both in time trouble.

53.♟f2 This simple move ensures a two pawn advantage as the h5-pawn will drop. Nevertheless Black has some chances to resist thanks to his superior minor piece. 53...♟a3 54.♟c2 ♖g7 55.♗xh5 At this point the best chance looks to be 55...♟a8!?. (Instead after

55...♖a1 56.♙e8 ♖h1 57.♞e2 ♗f6 58.♙xb5 ♖xh4 or 58...♗xf5 59.♙c6 White has excellent winning chances.) In the resulting position White will have a hard time converting his two-pawn advantage.

The strongest move of all was: 53.♙xh5! White not only takes the second pawn, but more importantly he can begin weaving a mating net. 53...♞c2 (53...♞h2 54.♞g1† ♗f8 55.♗f4!! ♖xh4† 56.♗g5 ♖h2 57.♖a1 wins) 54.f6 ♗xc3†



55.♗f4! (55.♗e4 is weaker because of 55...♞h3.) Karpov probably missed the key concept of utilizing the king in a mating attack. In later years Karpov would demonstrate a remarkable, yet not widely recognized ability to organize incredibly effective checkmating attacks against the enemy king, especially in positions with few pieces remaining. It seems that at the tender age of seventeen he had not fully developed that particular skill. 55...♞h3 56.♞g1†! ♗f8 57.♖a1 And White catches the enemy king.

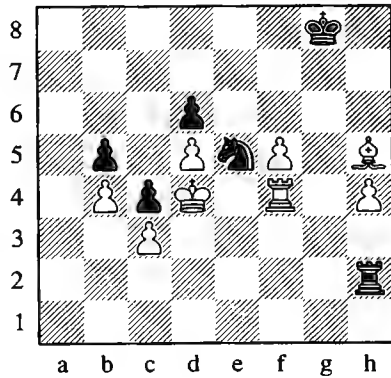
53...♖a1?

Black could have turned the tables with 53...♞h2! 54.♞g1† ♗f8! 55.♗e3 ♖xh4 56.♙e2 ♗f7 when he stands better.

54.♙e2 ♖a2 55.♙xh5

This wins a second pawn, but thanks to the strong knight on e5 Black still can resist.

55...♞h2 56.♞f4

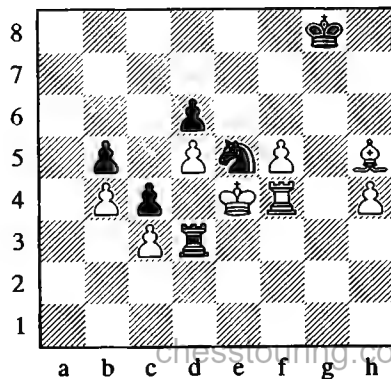


56...♞d2†?

Black wants to take the c3-pawn, but in doing so he improves White's king.

56...♗f8! would have given good drawing chances, for instance: 57.f6 ♖h3 58.♙e2 ♗d3 59.♖e4 ♗c1 (also after 59...♗e5!? 60.h5 ♗f7 61.♞f4 ♗d7 Black probably gets away with it) 60.♞e6 ♖xh4† 61.♗e3 ♗f7 62.♙f3 (after 62.♞d6 ♖h3† 63.♗d2 ♗xe2 64.♗xe2 ♖xc3 65.♖b6 ♖b3 Black holds) 62...♗a2 63.♞d6 ♗xc3 64.♖b6 ♗a2 65.♖xb5 c3 66.♙e4 c2 67.♙xc2 ♗xb4 68.♙e4 ♗xd5† Black succeeds in reaching a rook and bishop versus rook ending, which should be a draw.

57.♗e4 ♖d3



58.f6!

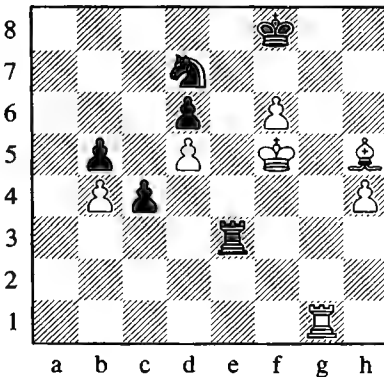
The pawn not only takes a step closer to promotion, but also controls some key squares around the enemy king while opening the door for the white king to invade.

58...♖xc3 59.♔f5 ♖e3

The rook stops the king, but White has other pieces as well.

60.♖f1! ♕d7

60...c3 61.♖g1† ♕f8 62.♖a1 wins.

61.♖g1† ♕f8**62.♖a1!**

Now Black's king is caught.

62...♖e5† 63.♕g6 ♖e8 64.♖a7 ♖d8 65.♖c7 ♕g8 66.♕g5!

Karpov prepares to advance his h-pawn, which will be the final straw for the defence. The king has ended up being the star performer – this was its seventh move since castling to g1.

66...♕h8 67.♗g6 ♕g8 68.h5 ♕h8 69.h6 c3 70.♖xc3 ♖f8 71.f7

1–0

This was a hard fought victory. Though it was far from flawless, Karpov's performance showcased a lot of important qualities required by a professional player: the desire to beat a strong rival; being able to withstand great tension; the ability to strive for a win without fear of losing; and most importantly, the ability to dig deep when tired and find a way to win.

1968 Summary

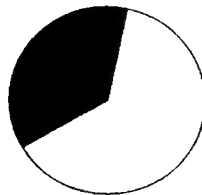
USSR – Yugoslavia (junior match): 3½/4 (+3 =1 –0)

USSR – Scandinavia (junior match): ½/2 (+0 =1 –1)

Moscow University Championship (1st place): 10/13 (+7 =6 –0)

USSR Team Championship (junior section): 10/11 (+9 =2 –0)

Total 80 % (+19 =10 –1)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1969

This was the year in which Spassky succeeded in wresting the World Championship crown from Petrosian at the second attempt. It was also a highly successful year for the young Karpov. He started the year with a three-player qualification tournament for the World Junior Championship. The three contestants played six-game matches against each other. Karpov's rivals were Rafael Vaganian, who went on to become a famous grandmaster, and the less well known Mikhail Steinberg, who features in the following game.

Steinberg's last game on the database was from 1972, but his last year as a fully active player was 1971. It was reported that he became seriously ill. He defeated many strong Soviet players, and had he been able to pursue a chess career he would probably have become a strong grandmaster.

Game 15

Anatoly Karpov – Mikhail Steinberg

Leningrad (6) 1969

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.♖e2

Interestingly this was Karpov's final flirtation with this variation, which brought him a perfect three wins from three games.

5...b5 6.♙b3 ♙e7 7.c3 0-0 8.d4

Karpov occupies the centre before castling.

8...d6

With 8...exd4!? Black could try to exploit the presence of White's queen and king on the e-file: 9.e5 (9.cxd4 d5 10.e5 ♘e4 is nice for Black) 9...♗e8!? 10.0-0 dxc3 (10...♙f8!?) 11.♘g5 d5 12.exd6 ♘d4 With tremendous complications.

9.0-0 exd4 10.cxd4 ♙g4

10...d5!? 11.e5 ♘e4 is interesting.

11.♙e3!?

It is more usual to defend the d-pawn with the rook in this variation.

11...♘a5

11...d5!? looks natural, but does not appear to have been tested here.

12. ♖c2 ♜c4 13. ♖c1 c5 14. b3 ♜b6 15. ♖b2 ♜fd7

15... ♖h5 and 15... ♖c8 are both possible.

16. a4!?

Despite being a bit behind in development, Karpov decides to spend a tempo softening Black's pawn structure.

16... bxa4

Black has a few alternatives of roughly equal merit:

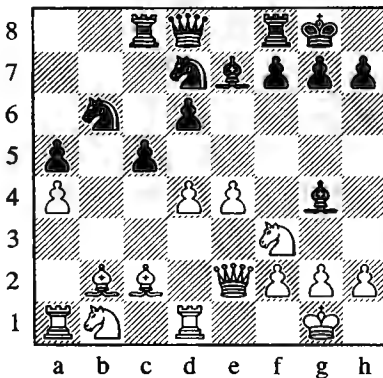
16... ♖xf3 17. ♖xf3 bxa4 18. bxa4 ♜c4 19. ♖c3 cxd4 20. ♖xd4 ♖f6 21. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 with reasonable play on the dark squares.

16... cxd4 17. axb5 axb5 18. ♖xd4 In this case too, Black's pawn weaknesses are balanced by his active piece play.

17. bxa4 a5 18. ♖d1

Karpov continues to delay the development of the b1-knight, keeping his opponent guessing for as long as possible.

18... ♖c8



19. ♜a3!

The knight took a long time to move, but it was worth the wait, as the b5-square is an inviting home for it.

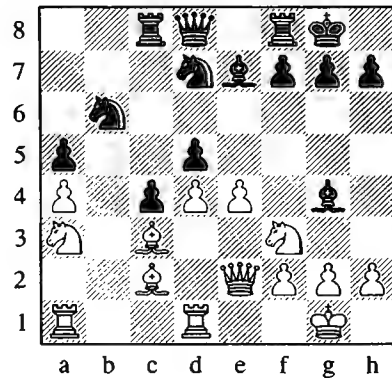
19... c4?

In the resulting position White's dominant central pawns will be of far greater significance than Black's passed c-pawn. After the superior 19... cxd4 20. ♖xd4 (20. ♜b5 ♜e5) 20... ♖f6 21. h3 White only has a small edge.

20. ♖c3

Blocking the c-pawn.

20... d5



21. e5!

We have already seen some games in which Karpov allowed his pieces to be drawn away from the centre for the sake of winning a pawn on the flank. On this occasion he was wise to resist the temptation, as after 21. ♖xa5?! ♖a8 Black gets decent counterplay on the queenside.

21... ♖b4 22. ♜b5!

Karpov superbly brings Black's attempted counterplay to a near standstill. Soon he can turn his attention to the kingside where he has the upper hand.

22... ♜b8 23. h3 ♖h5 24. ♖e3 ♜c6 25. ♖d2

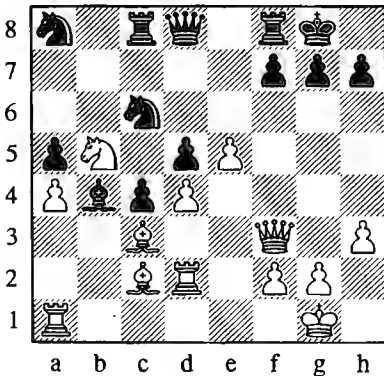
With last two moves Karpov made his ♖3-knight mobile.

25... ♖xf3

Stopping ♖g5 with 25...h6 would not have dampened White's initiative after 26.g3 ♖b8 27.♗h4.

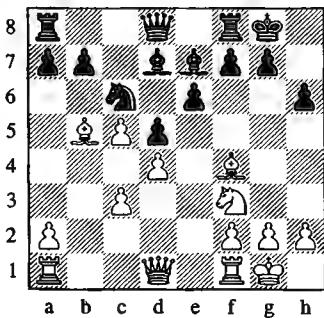
Maybe 25...♙e7 was the best chance, as 26.♗g5 h6 achieves nothing for White, although 26.♙f4!? retains a nice plus for him.

26.♙xf3 ♖a8



27.♖c1!!

This looks like utter nonsense – don't rooks belong on open files? Karpov's decision to place the rook on a file blocked by four pieces reminds me of one game of Kasparov against Anand. From the following position the game continued:

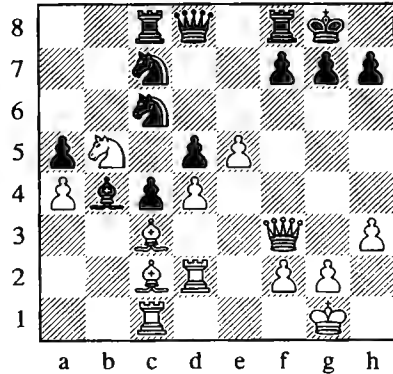


13.♖c1!! ♗e8 14.♖e1 ♗f6 15.♖b1 b6 16.♗a6 ♗c8 17.♗b5 ♗d7 18.♗a6 ♗c8 19.♗d3 bxc5

20.♗e5 ♗d7 21.♖b7 Kasparov – Anand, Amsterdam 1996. As a reward for his magical play Kasparov obtained good compensation for a pawn and went on to win.

27...♗c7

It is not often that one encounters a position with seven pieces on the same file.



28.♗f5!

It took some time, but Karpov is finally ready to commence his operations on the kingside. At the same time the idea behind the mysterious rook move becomes apparent, as ...♗xc3 will always be met by ♖xc3 when the rook joins in the attack, while the knight will remain on the ideal b5-square.

28...♗e6 29.♙g4 ♙e7 30.f4 ♖b8 31.♗h2

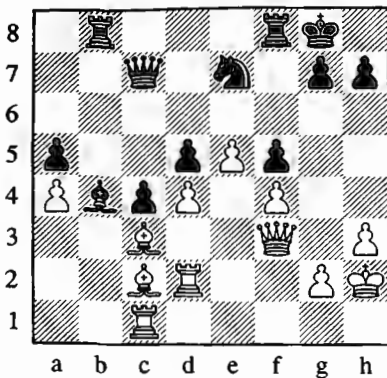
Such prophylactic moves are typical of Karpov.

31...♗c7 32.♗xc7 ♙xc7 33.♙f3 ♗e7

After 33...g6 34.♗c2 ♗xc3 35.♙xc3 ♗b4 36.♗b1 ♙d7 37.f5 White has a dangerous attack.

34.♗c2 f5!

Black has to play this before he is crushed by f5-f6.



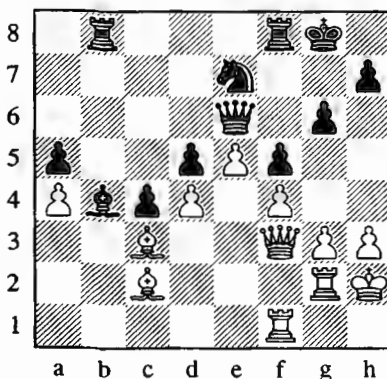
35. f1!

Once again we see a mysterious rook move. The more natural square would appear to be g1.

35... d7 36. g3! e6 37. g2!

Karpov finds a nice way to improve his rooks before playing g4.

37... g6



38. g4

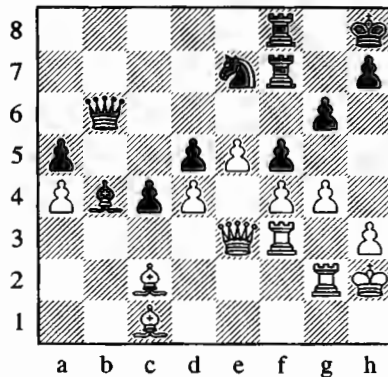
After some remarkable preparatory moves Karpov carries out the desired pawn break.

38... h8 39. g3 f7 40. e3 b8 41. b2

The f4-pawn was in danger, so Karpov prepares to lend it proper support.

41... b6 42. g2 c6 43. f3 e6 44. c1
Mission accomplished.

44... b6



45. h1!!

It is difficult to work out Karpov's precise motivation for playing this move. Of course it is possible that he just wanted to return the ball and see what Black would do next. This would have been especially understandable had one or both of the players been short of time. Whatever the reasoning, the king retreat actually yields a clear improvement in White's position, due to the clearance of the h2-square for a rook. The benefit may be seen after plans such as g4-g5 and h3-h4-h5 with an attack along the h-file.

45... fxg4?

Black cannot resist the urge to win the d4-pawn, but now White's kingside pawns start to roll.

46. hxg4 c6 47. e6 e7

47... c7 is no better, and after 48. f5 xd4 49. f6 and Whites e- and f-pawns are tremendous.

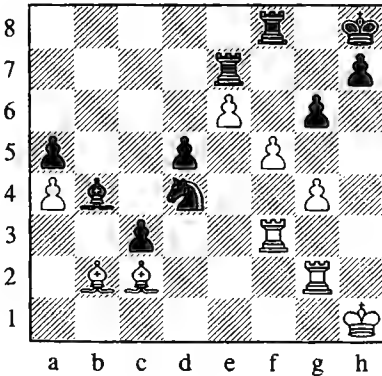
Also after 47... g7 48. f5 gxf5 49. gxf5 fxg2 50. hxg2 g8+ 51. h3 d6 52. h6 Black's position is perilous.

48.f5 ♖xd4

Black also goes down quickly after 48...♞fe8 49.♞h2! (49.♞h6! should also suffice for victory, but the text move is more instructive as it underlines the usefulness of the earlier 45.♞h1.) 49...♞a7 50.♞fh3 ♜g8 51.♞g5 with a crushing attack.

49.♞xd4† ♜xd4 50.♙b2 c3

50...♙c5 51.♞d2 (or 51.♞f4) 51...♞xe6 52.♙xd4† wins.



51.♞xc3!

This simple move deals Black his deserved punishment on the long diagonal for taking the d4-pawn.

51...♜g8 52.♞e3 ♙c5 53.♞e5 ♞b8

After opening the b-file 38 moves ago, Black finally uses it to create a threat. Alas, it is too little too late.

54.♙c3 ♜xc2 55.♞xc2 d4 56.♙xa5 ♙d6 57.♞d5

1-0

In the opening Karpov did not get more than a playable position, but once his opponent erred with 19...c4? he controlled the game superbly, halting Steinberg's play on the queenside and steadily building pressure on the kingside. His pawn majority in the centre was present since

the tenth move, and it eventually decided the game.

Karpov lost to Vaganian in the seventh game, but he recovered and went on to win the 'triple threat match' with a total score of 7½/12. Over the course of the six games against Vaganian he scored 3½ points with two wins, one loss and three draws. Against Steinberg he triumphed by 4-2 with three wins, one loss and two draws.

Karpov's next event was the annual Soviet Union – Yugoslavia match. He won the first two and drew the last two games against Evrosimovsky, thus winning their match by the score of 3-1. Karpov then played a single game in the Red Armies team event in Warsaw, where he defeated Konokowski.

Karpov's next event was the USSR Armed Forces Team Championship. He got off to a flying start, with four straight wins. The following game was the third of the quartet. His opponent has no other games in the database.

Game 16

Anatoly Karpov – Tserdakh

Armed Forces Team Ch., Leningrad 1969

Karpov never fought in the army, but national service was compulsory for all young Soviet men, and it appears that even rising chess stars were not exempt from it.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞d2

This was Karpov's usual weapon against the French throughout his career. In his childhood he played 3.exd5 a few times, and later he occasionally flirted with 3.♞c3 as well. Overall he scored extremely well with the Tarrasch Variation, although against Korchnoi in the

1974 candidates final he only managed seven draws with no decisive results. He did, however, use the Tarrasch to defeat Viktor "the Terrible" in a training match in 1971.

3...c5

Against other moves Karpov scored an amazing 100%, including 7-0 against 3...d6.

4.dg3

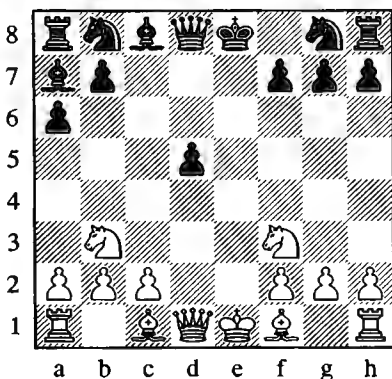
Sometimes he played 4.exd5 exd5 5.b6†, but only managed four draws out of four.

4...a6 5.exd5 exd5 6.dxc5

Karpov ensures that his opponent will have an isolated pawn.

6...xc5 7.d3 a7

In another game Vaganian preferred 7...b6, but Karpov beat him soundly with an attack against the Armenian grandmaster's king.



8.g5

Karpov follows the main theoretical path. After 8.g5 the reply 8...e7† relieves some of the pressure.

8...d6 9.e2†

Eight years later with the black bishop on b6 instead of a7, Karpov opted for 9.g5 against Vaganian.

After 9.d6 0-0 10.e2 d6 11.0-0 e4 12.e3 d6 13.dxc6 xc6 14.fxc3 bxc6 White obtained no advantage and Black eventually went on to win the game Keres – Botvinnik, World Championship Final (The Hague/Moscow) 1948.

9...e6

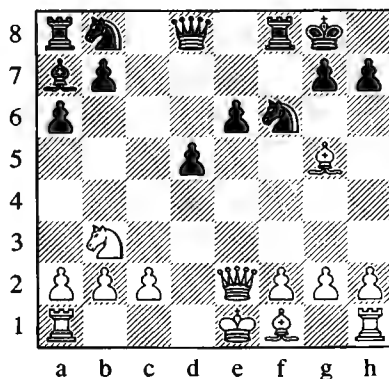
Against 9...e7 Karpov would probably have doubled Black's pawns with 10.xf6.

10.dfd4 0-0?

Black should have preferred 10...e7 with a reasonable position.

11.dxc6 fx6

Does White have time to grab the e-pawn?



12.e6†!

Yes! Apparently Black believed he would obtain sufficient compensation after this move, but Karpov's judgement proves correct. At the same time taking the pawn is not without risks, and White will have to continue carefully.

12...h8 13.0-0 d6

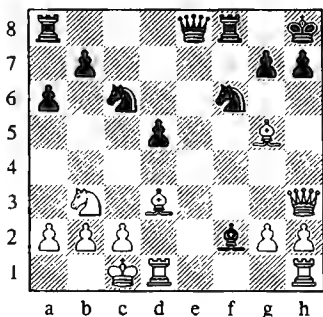
Taking back the pawn with 13...xf2 was unpromising due to 14.xf6 xf6 15.xd5! f8 16.h3.

14.h3!?

It was also possible to hold onto the pawn with: 14.f3 ♖e8 (14...a5 15.♗b5) 15.♞h3 ♙e3† (after 15...a5 16.♙d3 ♞c7 17.♞g3 ♞f7 White should be better, but not by much) 16.♙xe3 ♖xe3 17.♙d3 ♞e7 In the resulting position White has good chances to press for a win with his extra pawn, but Black's pieces are active and a tough fight lies ahead.

14...♞c8?!

Black wants to relieve the kingside pressure, but it leads straight to an endgame a pawn down. A better practical try was 14...♙xf2 15.♙d3 ♞e8, when White must be precise:



16.♙f5! This powerful move prevents Black from freeing his position with ...♗e4. (Instead after 16.♙xf6 ♞e3† 17.♞xe3 ♙xe3† 18.♗b1 ♖xf6 19.♙c2 White is only fractionally better.) 16...♞h5 17.♙xf6 ♞xh3 18.♙xh3 ♖xf6 19.♖xd5 White is a pawn up for nothing.

15.♞xc8 ♖axc8

It is obvious that this position should be winning for White, but the way Karpov achieves it is so instructive and typical of his style.

16.f3

First he safeguards the pawn while also covering the e4-square.

16...h6 17.♙d2

He retreats this way in order to prevent the enemy bishop from invading on e3.

17...d4!?

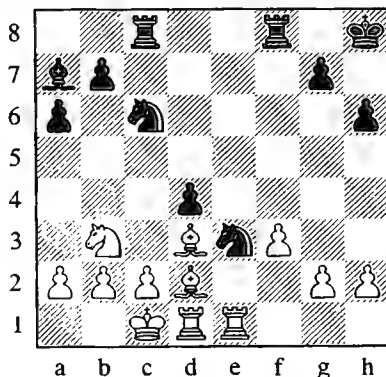
Tserdakh is determined to make White work for his money.

18.♙d3 ♗d5 19.♖he1

Bringing the last piece into the game.

19...♗e3!?

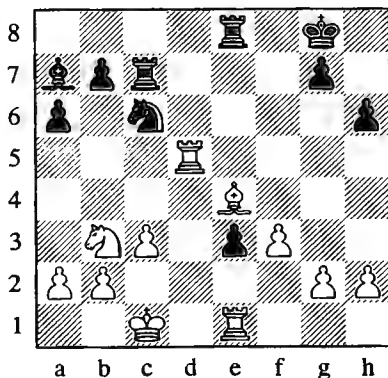
Black hopes that a change in the pawn structure will lead to a change in fortune.



20.♙xe3 dxex3 21.♙e4

White starts surrounding the e3-pawn. The way he converts his advantage from here is extremely instructive.

21...♖c7 22.c3 ♖e8 23.♖d5! ♗g8



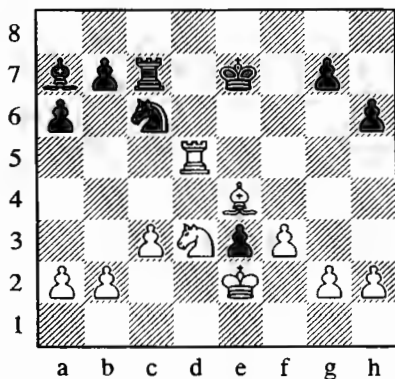
24.♔d1!

Karpov's first priority is to improve his king. With the e-pawn securely blockaded, his remaining pieces will be free to do as they wish.

24...♙f7 25.♖e2 ♞e5 26.♞ed1 ♕e6
27.♞xe5† ♕xe5 28.♞d5† ♕e6 29.♖c5†

Now he brings the knight into the game.

29...♙f6 30.♖d3 ♕e7

**31.h4!**

Karpov is not in a hurry to win the e3-pawn. Instead he finds another way to improve his position, gaining space and preparing to fix Black's kingside pawns.

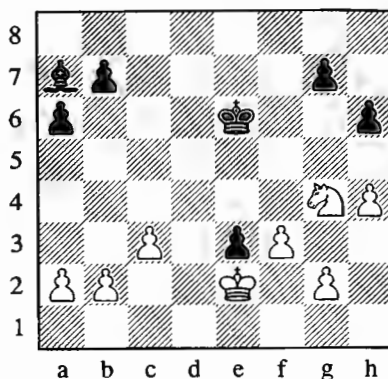
31...♞d7?!

This accelerates the end, but Black is lost in any case.

32.♞xd7†!

Exchanging some pieces opens the way to win the e3-pawn.

32...♕xd7 33.♞xc6† ♕xc6 34.♖e5† ♕d5
35.♖g4 ♕e6



36.♖xe3

It took sixteen moves to collect the pawn.

36...♕e5

1-0

This game may have seemed like an odd choice to present, as compared with some of the other games featured here, it seemed so easy. Therein lies the point – Karpov was able to make the technical phase of the game appear almost effortless. It was also a lovely example of one of Karpov's outstanding qualities when playing endgames – his purposefulness. He wasted no time in the process of improving his pieces followed by surrounding the e3-pawn.

Overall it was a successful event for Karpov, who won the prize for the best performance on board two with $5\frac{1}{2}/7$. But more importantly, as Karpov himself later wrote, he met Semyon Furman. Karpov started to train with Furman and they worked together during both this event and the next. The partnership would blossom into one of the most productive trainer-pupil relationships in chess history; more about this later.

World Junior Championship

This was Karpov's last competition of both the year and the decade, and it turned out to be a hugely successful, and quite possibly career-altering event for him. Although the Soviets were dominating the upper echelons of world chess, their juniors tended not to perform as well as one might have expected on the world stage. In fact, the previous occasion when a Soviet player became World Junior Champion was fourteen years earlier in 1955, when Spassky took the title.

Furman was Karpov's second at the 1969 competition. His performance in the preliminary event was far from convincing, and for a time it was not even clear if he would qualify for the finals. In one crucial game against Torre, in which the initiative kept shifting from one side to the other, Karpov wound up two pawns down in an ending. In a titanic fight, after two adjournment sessions, he eventually succeeded in holding on for a draw. In one interview in the late seventies, Karpov called this the most important game of his life. Had he lost he would not have qualified for the finals, and there is no telling how much of a difference this might have made to his career.

After struggling to qualify, Karpov produced a staggering turn of form in the finals, decimating the competition with an eight game winning streak en route to a final score of 10/11. The following game from round three is a true masterpiece, probably Karpov's best game from the sixties. His opponent, Sweden's Ulf Andersson, also went on to become a world class player. Perhaps the following game even contributed to Andersson becoming such a fine positional player. Though he consistently made solid and impressive performances at top class tournaments, the Swede never qualified at the Interzonals.

Andersson's record against world champions is interesting. Out of 121 games, he won five encounters, drew ninety four and lost twenty four. Karpov has an impressive head to head record against almost all his rivals across several generations, but his most dominant record of all is probably against Andersson; he beat the super-solid Swede twelve times, with 29 draws and just a single loss, although it is interesting that not a single one of Karpov's victories came with the black pieces.

Game 17

Anatoly Karpov – Ulf Andersson

World Junior Championship, Stockholm 1969

1.e4 e5

Andersson did not do especially well with this first move and he stopped playing it about a year later. He went on to become a great expert on the Sicilian.

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6

Karpov played a total of twelve games against Black's other third moves; he dropped only two draws and won the rest.

4.♗a4 ♘f6

Other moves resulted in just a single draw against Karpov out of eight games.

5.0–0 ♗e7 6.♙e1 b5 7.♗b3 0–0 8.c3 d6 9.h3

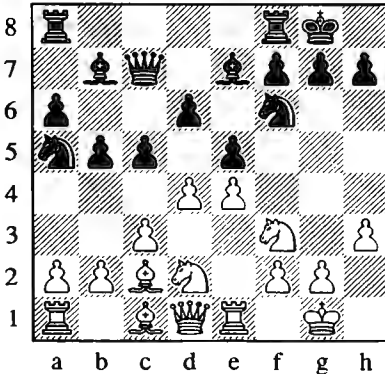
According to my database Karpov reached this starting position of the main line Ruy Lopez forty two times with the white pieces. He performed remarkably, winning twenty two games and drawing the rest.

9...♘a5

Karpov achieved six victories against this move, with the same number of draws.

10. ♖c2 c5 11.d4 ♜c7 12. ♘bd2 ♙b7

Interestingly Karpov only once faced the main line of 12...cxd4. The text move is ambitious, as Black wants to carry out the central break ...d5, which may or may not be prefaced by ...cxd4. This particular move order is rarely played nowadays, and is only employed regularly by the Hungarian IM Bela Lengyel, who continues to play it, and not without success.



13.d5!

Grandmaster Lukacs is a true expert in the Ruy Lopez, and he told me what I am about to pass on to you now: in the Chigorin Variation, White should almost always play d4-d5 in response to Black developing his bishop on b7.

Let me show you one interesting game to illustrate the theme of the strong b7-bishop in this line. This is a memorable game for me, as when I myself played this line, I wanted to emulate my mentor. 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♙e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 ♜c7 12.♘bd2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♙b7 14.♘f1 ♜ac8 15.♙e2 d5! 16.dxe5 ♘xe4 17.♘g3 ♘xg3 18.fxg3 d4 19.♘g5 g6 20.♗h2 ♜d8 21.h4 ♘c4 22.e6 f6 23.♘f7 ♜b6 24.♜d3 ♘e5 25.♘xe5 fxe5 26.♙h6 ♜f5 27.♙b3

♙h5 Black got a lovely position and should have won later, Lengyel – Honfi, Kecskemet 1981.

13...♙c8

The bishop has to come back to this diagonal, and the sooner the better. The same position can also occur via the move order 12...♘c6 13.d5 ♘a5, which is in fact the more common route.

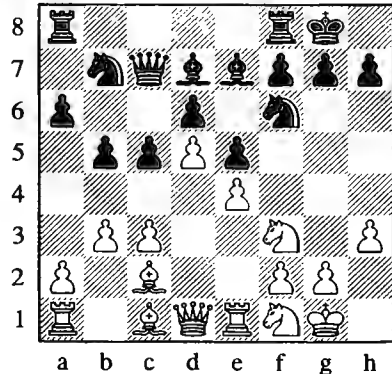
14.♘f1

14.b3 would have prevented the idea mentioned in the following note.

14...♙d7

Black scores better when he transfers the knight to b6 with 14...♘c4.

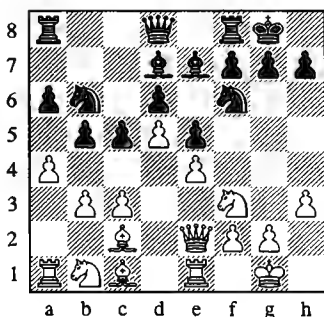
15.b3 ♘b7



16.c4!?

Karpov decides to prevent a possible queenside strike with ...c4, while also gaining space. It is an interesting plan which attracted other notable followers, as seen in the following example.

Alexander Grischuk used to play the Chigorin Variation and did well with it, at least until he met Kasparov. They reached the following position.



At this point White embarked on a strong plan: 16.c4! b4 17.♖bd2 g6 18.♘f1 ♘h5 19.g4 ♘f4 20.♙xf4 exf4 21.♚d2 ♙f6 22.e5 dxe5 23.♘xe5 White obtained a better position and went on to win in Kasparov – Grischuk, Cannes (Rapid) 2001.

It should be added that Karpov's move is not the only promising path. A year later, from the same position as was reached in the main game, Geller won a fine game against Mecking with 16.♘g3.

16...♙f8 17.♘e3 ♙f8?!

It would have been more prudent to prevent the following knight hop with 17...g6.

18.♘f5

This knight will cause a lot of trouble for Black. Taking it with the bishop would be a mistake, as White would gain additional space plus the use of the e4-square, not to mention the two bishops.

18...♘d8

Black transfers the knight to help the king.

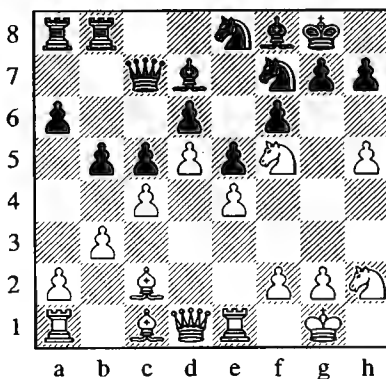
19.♘h2 ♘e8 20.h4!

This is a somewhat unusual idea in the Ruy Lopez, but it works very well here.

20...f6 21.h5

If Black exchanges this pawn, he opens a file close to his king, but if he leaves it, it could become like a sharp needle.

21...♘f7



22.♙e3!

With this imaginative rook move Karpov begins an operation which provokes the weakening move ...h7-h6.

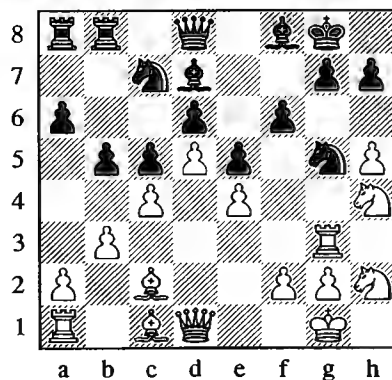
22...♘g5

The queenside knight finally arrives at the kingside.

23.♘h4

Preventing ...g6.

23...♚d8 24.♙g3 ♘c7



25.♘2f3!

As a general rule, the player with more space will strive to avoid exchanges. In this instance Karpov shows good judgement, realizing that it is more important to remove the knight from the g5-square.

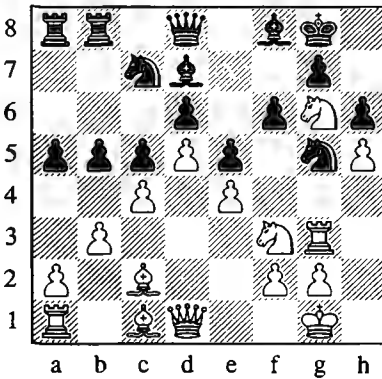
25...h6

Black bolsters the knight, at the cost of permanently weakening his light squares. In the event of 25...♖xf3† 26.♚xf3 his king would have become more vulnerable.

26.♕g6

White immediately occupies the newly created outpost, reaping the fruits of his previous play.

26...a5



27.a4!

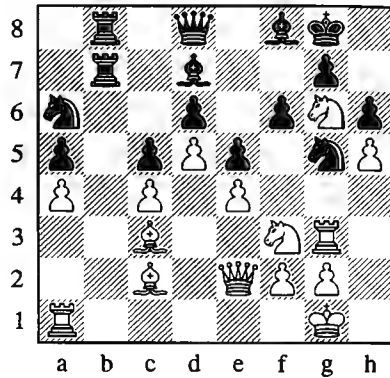
By preventing the opening of the a-file, Karpov limits his opponent's queenside counterplay.

27...bxc4 28.bxc4 ♖a6

Andersson's kingside knight prepares to occupy the outpost on the queenside.

29.♚e2 ♜a7 30.♙d2 ♜ab7 31.♙c3

It is really instructive to observe how Karpov prevents Black's counterplay on the b-file.



31...♖b4 32.♙d1 ♖a6 33.♕d2 ♖b4

The knight reaches a seemingly impressive outpost, but achieving this objective has consumed several tempos and a lot of effort. Depending on the specific situation, such a knight could either be a dominant force or a wasted resource which shoots the air. Let me offer you, dear reader, one small tool which can be used to determine whether the knight is strong or weak. It is often enough to ask whether or not the knight attacks a weakness in the opponent's camp. If the knight attacks nothing, then its value is questionable. For example, if Black's pawn was on a3 and White's on a2, the b4-knight would be better than in the game, as it attacks a weakness.

34.♞e3

The rook has done its job, and now it is time to reorganize the kingside pieces.

34...♙e8

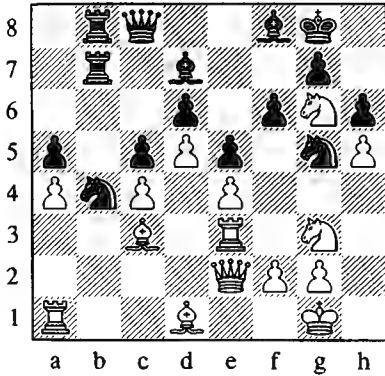
Andersson decides to wait passively, allowing Karpov the pleasure of strengthening his position at his leisure. Of course 34...f5 is risky, but at least Black gets some play: 35.exf5 ♙xf5 36.♕f1 ♙xg6 (36...♚f6 37.f4) 37.hxg6 ♚f6 38.♚h5 The situation does not look great for Black, but White has less freedom than in the game.

35. ♖f1 ♗c8 36. ♖g3

Karpov improves another piece and stops ...f5.

36... ♗d7

White is obviously in control, but how can he improve his position?



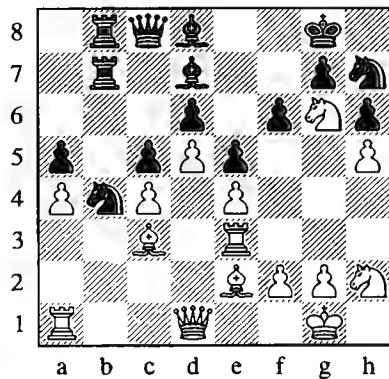
37. ♗d2!

What is so clever about this little queen move? Once again it is all part of a positional plan. White has gained as much space as was possible, and improved his pieces while preventing Black's intended queenside counterplay. Now it is time to decide what to do with the position. Karpov hits on the right plan, namely to exchange the light-squared bishops. By exchanging his worst piece for Black's best one, he paves the way for a future invasion on the light squares. The way he does it is highly instructive, and I would advise the reader to pay close attention, as any player might find himself in a similar situation.

37... ♖h7 38. ♗e2! ♗f7 39. ♗d1!

Karpov follows the plan with his characteristic purposefulness.

39... ♗e7 40. ♖f1! ♗d8 41. ♖h2 ♗g8



42. ♗g4

Karpov was able to complete his plan while Black merely played waiting moves.

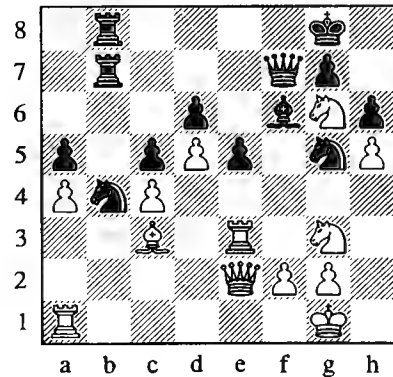
42... ♖g5 43. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 44. ♖f1

The knight immediately aims for the f5-square.

44... ♗f5

Black takes the opportunity to loosen his shackles while he still has the chance.

45. exf5 ♗xf5 46. ♖g3 ♗f7 47. ♗e2 ♗f6



48. ♗f1!

Karpov demonstrates a well known advantage of having more space: the ability to transfer

pieces from one part of the board to another with maximum speed and efficiency.

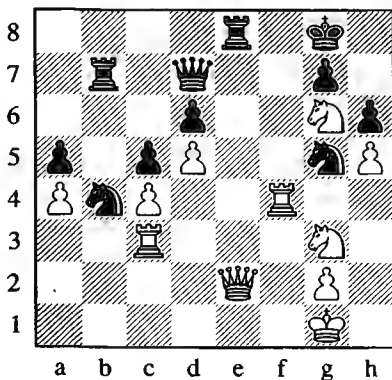
48...♞d7 49.f4!

White wastes no time in opening the kingside. He does not mind exchanging Black's bad bishop, as the opening of the kingside will yield greater benefits.

49...exf4 50.♞xf4 ♠xc3

Black has no choice but to exchange this valuable defensive piece.

51.♞xc3 ♞e8



52.♞e3!

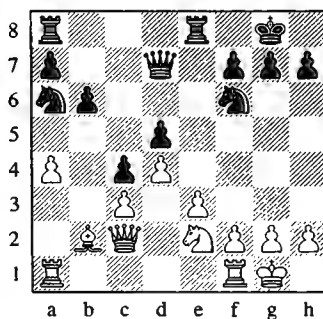
Exchanging pieces will favour White, as his material superiority on the kingside will increase in magnitude. The principle is exactly the same as in Game 45 (Fraguela Gil – Karpov).

52...♞bb8 53.♞f2!

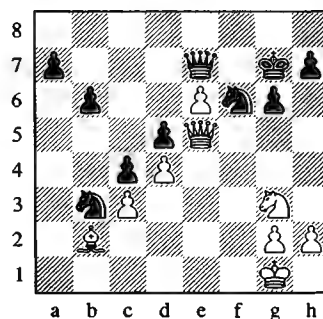
Creating a vicious threat in the form of ♞e7. By the way, one can try to argue that the knight on g6 is not attacking any pawn or weakness, but this is only partially true. Please keep it in mind that one's king also can be a weakness! In the present position the knight plays a key role in supporting the mating threats.

If you have the idea of manoeuvring a knight to such an outpost, remember that the stakes are high – you can do a lot of good to your position, and a lot of damage as well. Let me show you two marvellous examples by Botvinnik, which illustrate both sides of the coin.

Here is the first. It is perhaps the most famous game Botvinnik ever played.

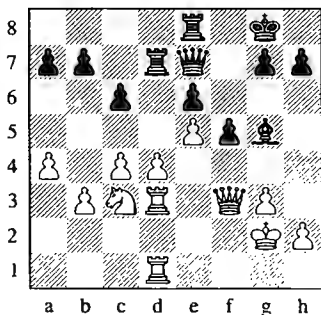


15...♠b8 Black embarks on a long knight manoeuvre. 16.♞a1 ♠c6 17.♠g3 ♠a5 18.f3 ♠b3 From this square the knight assists Black in winning the a4-pawn, but this does not justify the time spent. 19.e4 ♞xa4 20.e5 ♠d7 21.♞f2 g6 22.f4 f5 23.exf6 ♠xf6 24.f5 ♞xe1 25.♞xe1 ♞e8 26.♞e6 ♞xe6 27.fxe6 ♠g7 28.♞f4 ♞e8 29.♞e5 ♞e7 Now Botvinnik crowns his energetic play with a memorable finishing sequence:



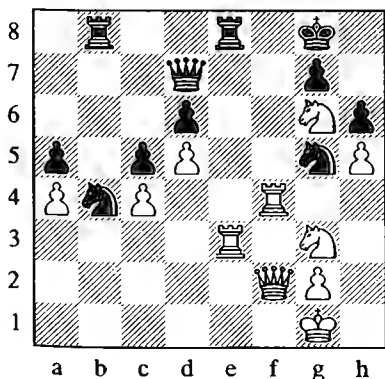
30.♙a3!! ♖xa3 31.♘h5†! g×h5 32.♗g5† ♕f8
 33.♗xf6† ♕g8 34.e7 ♖c1† 35.♕f2 ♖c2†
 36.♕g3 ♖d3† 37.♕h4 ♖e4† 38.♕xh5 ♖e2†
 39.♕h4 ♖e4† 40.g4 ♖e1† 41.♕h5 1–0
 Botvinnik – Capablanca, AVRO 1938. Once
 the knight arrived on b3 it became a spectator
 and never moved again.

And here is the second:



33.c5! The knight is headed for d6, where it will
 dominate the entire board. 33...a5 34.♖b1!
 ♗f8 35.♖a3 ♙d8 36.♖c4 ♙c7 37.♖d6 White
 achieved his objective and went on to win in
 Botvinnik – Flohr, Moscow 1936.

Let us now return to the game.



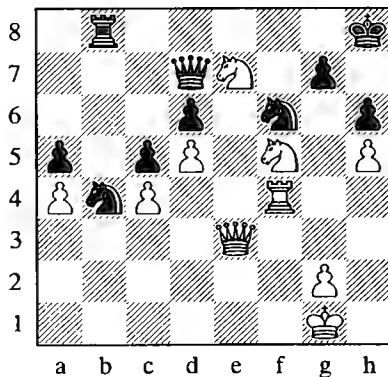
53...♖h7

This looks horribly passive, but Black had to
 cover the f8-square somehow.

54.♖f5

White's pieces simply outnumber and
 overpower Black's forces on the kingside. The
 knight on b4 contributes nothing.

54...♗xe3 55.♗xe3 ♖f6 56.♖ge7† ♕h8



57.♖xh6!

The demolition begins.

57...♗e8 58.♖f7† ♕h7 59.♗e4

This is good enough to win in short order,
 although 59.♖g5† would have led to a forced
 checkmate: 59...♕h8 60.♗xf6 g×f6 61.♖f7†
 ♕g7 62.♗h6† ♕xf7 63.♗h7† ♕f8 64.♖g6#

59...♗xe7 60.♗xe7

1–0

Although Andersson played the game passively,
 this was undoubtedly a strategic masterpiece,
 and probably Karpov's best game from the
 sixties.

Karpov met the Romanian representative in
 round eight, by which time it was more or less
 clear that he would win the title. His opponent
 was a decent international master. This was the
 only time they met over the board.

Game 18

Aurel Urzica – Anatoly Karpov

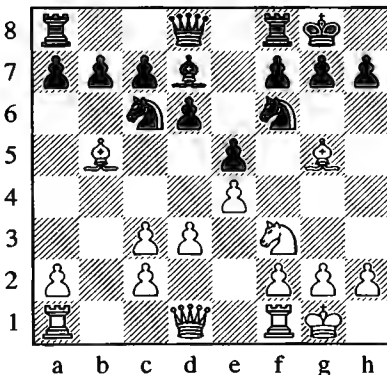
World Junior Championship, Stockholm 1969

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3

Karpov did not face this move many times, and he never lost against it. After 1.e4 e5, the only line apart from the Ruy Lopez which caused him problems was the Scotch with 4...♘f6, in which he scored 3/7, although two of the losses came at the hands of Kasparov. He did better with 4...♗c5, scoring two wins and two draws with no defeats, but for some reason he did not play it as frequently.

3...♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗b4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d6 7.♗g5 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♗d7

This move is no longer in fashion. Later Karpov would switch to the normal 8...h6 9.♗h4 ♞e7, with which he drew against Speelman at Linares 1992.



9.d4

Black was planning to break the pin with the witty ...♘e7.

In a subsequent game White tried 9.♞b1, achieving a slight advantage after 9...a6 10.♗a4 ♞b8 11.♗b3 h6 12.♗h4 ♞e7 13.♞e1

♘a5 14.d4 ♞bd8 15.h3 in Chandler – Karpov, Reykjavik 1991. The further course of the game was interesting. Karpov outplayed his opponent in the middlegame, but Chandler had the last laugh as he eventually managed to hold a highly unpleasant endgame in which Black had rook and knight versus rook and bishop, with four pawns versus three on the kingside.

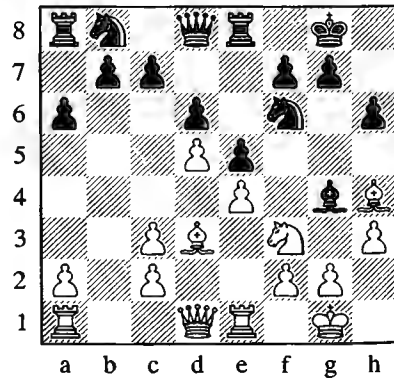
9...h6

Forcing White to commit his bishop to one of the available diagonals. Instead after 9...♘e7 10.♗xd7 ♘xd7 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♞b1! b6 13.♞b4 Black is underdeveloped.

10.♗h4 ♞e8 11.♞e1 a6 12.♗d3 ♗g4!

This move clarifies matters in the centre. If 12...g5 then 13.♘xg5!? is dangerous.

13.d5 ♘b8 14.h3



14...♗xf3!?

14...♗c8 deserved consideration, but Karpov feels comfortable giving up his second bishop. In closed positions a single knight is often superior to a bishop, but two bishops versus two knights can be a different story. Although one knight may find a stable outpost (c5 in the present case), the second one can often have trouble finding a useful role.

Obviously Karpov understood this, so it is interesting to observe the way in which he justifies his decision with his subsequent play.

15. ♖xf3 ♜bd7 16. ♗g3

The bishop was disturbing White's natural plans like g3 and f4 or transferring the d3-bishop to h3.

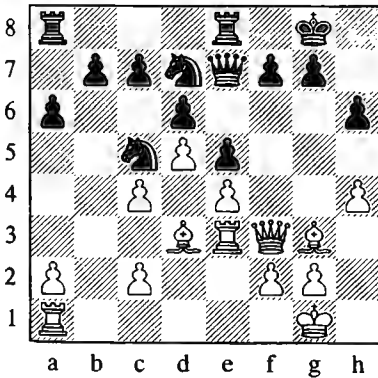
16... ♜c5 17. c4 ♖e7

This does not look like a special move, but it is a part of a plan.

18. ♗e3

White is thinking about a kingside attack, and prepares to swing the rook to g3.

18... ♜fd7?! 19. h4



19... ♗eb8!

Preparing to open the queenside. Many times in the Ruy Lopez and other closed positions, Black makes the mistake of focusing too heavily on the queenside and leaves his king short of defenders. The way Karpov has arranged his pieces, the queen is on hand to assist the defence while the other pieces are ideally placed to support his queenside play.

20. ♖e2

Stopping ...b5.

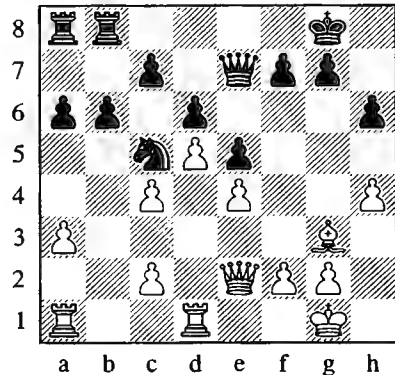
20...b6 21. a3

This is a clear sign that Urzica does not know what to do. 21. f3! was more useful, in order to bring the dark-squared bishop back into the game.

21... ♜xd3 22. ♗xd3?!

22. cxd3 was better, improving White's structure. In that case Black would have enjoyed only a modest edge on the queenside after: 22...b5 (22... ♜c5 23. ♖c2 b5 transposes) 23. ♖c2 ♜c5 24. ♗e1 (or 24. f3 a5) In the resulting position Black is just a bit better. He has a few different ways of developing his play, including 24...a5, 24...b4 and 24... ♗b7 25. ♗ab1 ♗ab8. It would have been interesting to see which method Karpov would have chosen.

22... ♜c5 23. ♗dd1



23...c6!?

This is a subtle way to maintain the initiative. Karpov is anticipating White's potential plan of f3 and ♗f2 followed by exchanging on c5, and prepares to open the c-file.

24. a4

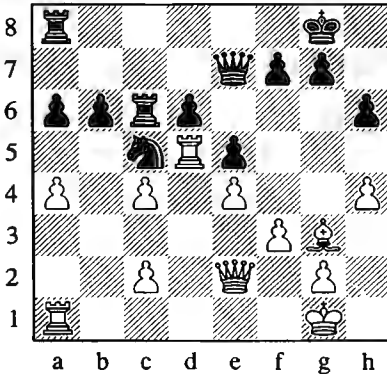
After 24. f3 ♖c7 (24...b5) 25. ♗f2 cxd5 26. cxd5 ♜a4 Black is somewhat better.

24...cxd5 25. ♗xd5

25.cxd5 ♖d7 26.a5 ♔a4 is unpleasant for White.

25...♞c8 26.f3 ♞c6

Karpov combines defence of the d6-pawn with an intended doubling of rooks to increase the pressure against c4.



27.a5?

This move hastens the end. The best chance was 27.♙f2 ♞ac8 27.♗d2, challenging Black to find a way to capitalize on his advantage.

27...bxa5 28.♞xa5 ♖c7 29.♙e1

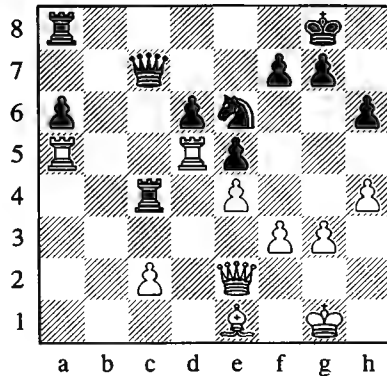
29.♗d2 ♔b7 wins a pawn.

29...♔e6 30.g3?

With this move White voluntarily weakens the king even more.

30.♗f1 would have forced Black to play more accurately, although he can still win as follows: 30...♔f4! Forces a weakening of the kingside. (After 30...♞xc4 31.♞xd6 ♞xc2 32.♞dxa6 White has some chances to survive.) 31.♞d1 ♞xc4 There is no need for further improvement of the position. 32.g3 ♔e6 From here a possible finish is: 33.♞xd6? (A better chance is 33.c3, but after 33...♞c6 White is unlikely to survive.) 33...♞xc2 34.♞dxa6 ♞xa6 35.♞xa6 ♖c5† 36.♙f2 ♖c3 And Black wins.

30...♞xc4



31.♗d3?

31.c3 would have lasted longer, although the result should not be in much doubt.

31...♞xc2 32.♞xa6

If 32.♞xd6 ♞c1 33.♙f2 ♞xh1 wins.

32...♞xa6 33.♖xa6 ♔d4 34.♗d3 ♖a7 35.♙f1

35.♙f2 ♖a2 wins.

35...♞c1

0-1

I have already mentioned that Karpov likes to use pins to reduce the mobility of the enemy pieces. On this occasion the effect is rather more serious, and White simply had to resign.

After winning the world junior title so decisively, Karpov ended the year in a somewhat anticlimactic manner in a Hungary – Russian Republic junior match in Budapest, where he lost by a score of 1½–½ against both Adorjan and Ribli. Despite this small setback, Karpov's tremendous victory at the World Junior Championship cemented his status as a future star, and was most probably the pivotal result that enabled him to become a full time chess professional.

1969 Summary

World Junior Qualification:

Versus Vaganian: $3\frac{1}{2}/6$ (+2 =3 -1)

Versus Steinberg: $4/6$ (+3 =2 -1)

USSR – Yugoslavia Junior Match (Board three): $3/4$ (+2 =2 -0)

Tournament of the Eastern Bloc Armies Reserve: $1/1$ (+1 =0 -0)

USSR Armed Forces Team Championship (Board two): $5\frac{1}{2}/7$ (+5 =1 -1)

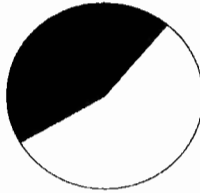
World Junior Championship, Stockholm:

Preliminary: $4\frac{1}{2}/6$ (+3 =3 -0)

Final (1st place): $10/11$ (+9 =2 -0)

Hungary – Russian junior match, Budapest: $1/4$ (+0 =2 -2)

Total 72.2 % (+25 =15 -5)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1970

This was the year in which Fischer started his magical three year run, during which time he became arguably the most dominant force in chess history. The chess world had never before, and may never again witness anyone achieve twenty straight wins over world class grandmasters. Karpov and Fischer never met over the board, although it is quite possible that the young Soviet rising star was influenced or even inspired by the American and his brilliant results.

In 1970 Karpov played in three major events, the first being the Championship of the Russian Republic in Kuybyshev. He won it with an impressive eight wins, nine draws and no losses. His next tournament took place in Caracas, Venezuela – his only foreign event of the year. It was also his first grandmaster tournament, and one can imagine his uncertainty as to how he would measure up against this higher class of opposition. He started with a draw, and in round two he faced Gedeon Barcza. The Hungarian grandmaster played a total of thirty four games against a string of world champions, from Alekhine to Karpov. He won three of those games, lost eighteen and drew thirteen.

Game 19

Gedeon Barcza – Anatoly Karpov

Caracas 1970

1. ♖f3 c5

Karpov seldom played anything other than 1... ♖f6 here, but on this occasion he opts for a different set-up. Even when the game began 1.c4 e5, he almost always developed the knight to f6 in the near future. It is interesting to note that on those rare occasions when he did develop the knight on a different square, he was very successful. For instance, he twice met the English Opening with the reverse Closed Sicilian setup with ... ♖g8-e7 and scored two victories, including a twenty five move drubbing of the Hungarian grandmaster Ribli, who was generally known as a very strong and safe player.

2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2

If 4.d4 cxd4 5.♖xd4 ♖c6 White is unable to keep his knight on d4.

4... ♖c6 5.♖c3 e5 6.d3

If White really wishes to strive for an opening advantage then 6.0-0 ♖ge7 7.a3! is a more accurate move order, as in certain positions White can save time by delaying d2-d3, as shown in Chapter 4 of Mihail Marin's third volume on the English Opening in the *Grandmaster Repertoire* series.

Barcza was a strong player but he was not known as a fearsome theoretician. And to be fair to him, the superior move order had not been tested in many games prior to 1970.

6...♖ge7 7.0-0

White could try to transfer the knight at once with 7.♖d2!? in order to cover the key d5-square.

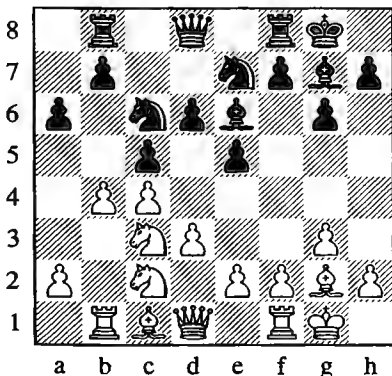
7...0-0

Karpov also castles without delay, although he could have started his queenside play without it.

8.♖e1 ♜b8 9.♖c2 a6

Preparing to develop some queenside activity in the event of White neglecting that flank. One gets the impression that after drawing in round one, Karpov wanted to play for a win in round two, without taking any wild risks of course.

10.♜b1 d6 11.b4 ♗e6

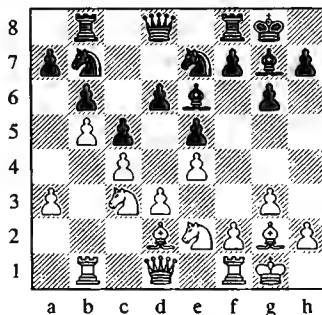


12.bxc5

Another idea is 12.♗g5, which should be countered by 12...f6!, preventing the intended minor piece exchange on e7. In order to illustrate this theme, let me show you a positional masterpiece involving Karpov. The

only surprising point is that on this occasion, he was on the receiving end of the masterpiece! His antagonist was his long-time nemesis Kasparov, and the game took place in their 1987 World Championship match in Seville.

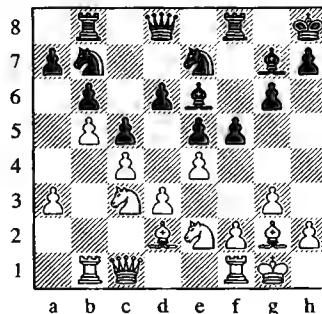
1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 d6 3.g3 c5 4.♗g2 ♖c6 5.a3 g6 6.b4 ♗g7 7.♜b1 ♖ge7 8.e3 0-0 9.d3 ♜b8 10.♖ge2 ♗e6 11.b5 ♖a5 12.♗d2 b6 13.0-0 ♖b7 14.e4



14..♙h8?!

14...h6 intending ...f5 looks better.

15.♜c1 f5



16.♗g5!

Portisch called this the best move of the entire match.

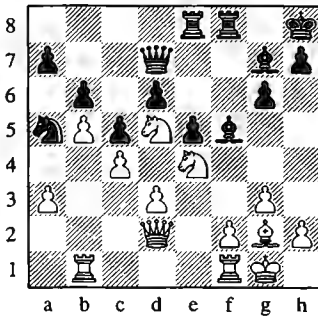
16...♜e8 17.♗xe7! ♜xe7 18.exf5 ♗xf5?!

18...gxf5 19.f4±

19.♖d5 ♜d7 20.♜d2 ♖a5?!

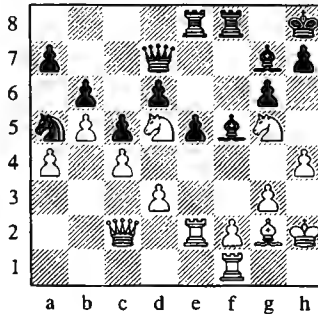
20...♖d8 was preferable.

21.♖ec3 ♜be8 22.♖e4



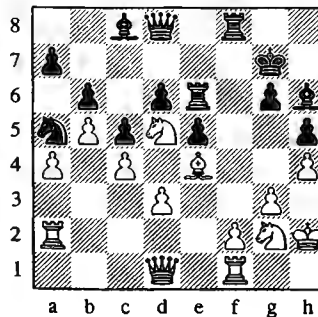
Black is beautifully paralysed. Kasparov continues to manoeuvre with great skill.

22...♖b7 23.a4 ♘a5 24.h4 ♖b7 25.♗h2 ♖b8 26.♞a1 ♘a5 27.♞a3 ♜f7 28.♞c3 ♞d8 29.♞a2 ♞h6 30.♘g5 ♜ff8 31.♞c2 ♞g7 32.♞c2 ♞de8



33.♘e3! ♞h6 34.♞d5 ♞g7 35.♞d1 h6 36.♘e4 ♞d8 37.♞a2 ♞c8 38.♘c3! h5 39.♞e4 ♞e6 40.♘cd5 ♞h6 41.♘g2 ♗g7?!

After spending a prolonged period with his pieces in a defensive huddle, Karpov stumbles into an unfortunate piece configuration. The punishment is swift and severe.

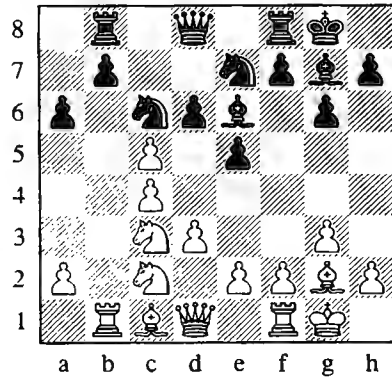


42.f4!

Finally Kasparov chooses the perfect moment to open the position and invade.
42...exf4 43.♘gxf4 ♞e5 44.♘xg6! ♞xf1 45.♞xf1 ♞xe4 46.dxe4 ♗xg6 47.♞f2 ♞e8 48.e5! dxe5 49.♞f6† ♗g7 50.♞d6 1-0

Kasparov – Karpov, Seville (8) 1987. I rate this game as one of Kasparov's best ever positional wins.

Back to the game.



12...dxc5 13.♘e3 b6

Another idea was 13...b5 14.♘e4 ♞b6.

14.♘ed5 ♞d7

When commenting on the game some time after the event, Karpov revealed that he was told beforehand that the Hungarian grandmaster played well with his knights, therefore he wished to swap them.

15.♞d2

15.♞g5 was more accurate, as after 15...f6 16.♞d2 the inclusion of ...f7-f6 is not helpful to Black.

15...♘xd5

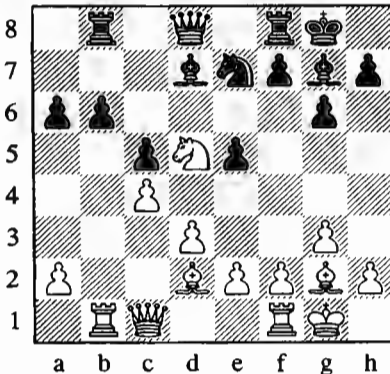
Still following the game plan.

16.♘xd5

After 16.cxd5! ♖d4 17.a4 ♗e7 18.e3 ♜f5 Black is also not worse.

16...♜e7 17.♗c1!?

Perhaps Barcza wanted to swap the g7-bishop, but apart from that the queen does almost nothing here. 17.a4! was more purposeful.



17...♜xd5

Mission accomplished – the white knights are no more!

18.♗xd5

18.cxd5! is more interesting.

18...♗h3 19.♞e1

Safer would have been: 19.♗g2 ♗xg2 I doubt that Karpov would have minded swapping these bishops. 20.♖xg2 ♗d6 21.a4 ♗c6† 22.f3 ♗xa4 23.♞a1 And the game is likely to end in a draw.

19...b5 20.a3

White could have attempted to justify the position of his queen with 20.♗h6, when best play looks to be: 20...b4! (Barcza might have been concerned about the exchange sacrifice 20...bxc4 21.♞xb8 ♗xd5 22.e4 ♗xd3 23.♞xf8† ♗xf8. It looks worrying for White, but he can in fact keep his position together with 24.♗e3!.) 21.♗xg7 ♖xg7 And Black's

pawn majority gives him a small edge on the queenside.

20...♗d6 21.♗f3

This signifies the beginning of a faulty plan. Instead the following alternatives all deserved consideration.

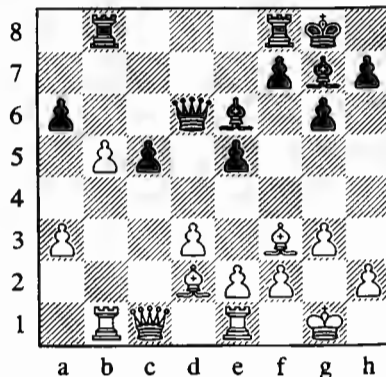
If White just wants to play solidly he can continue 21.♗c3 ♞fc8 22.♗b3 when it is not easy to improve Black's position.

White can also base his play around pushing the c-pawn with 21.♗e3, for instance 21...b4 22.axb4 cxb4 23.♗e4 a5 24.c5 ♗c7 25.c6 when the position looks balanced.

Finally, another interesting idea is 21.e4 b4 22.d4! (or 22.axb4 cxb4 23.c5 ♗f6 24.♗d1 with a double-edged game) 22...exd4 (22...♗f6 23.♞b3) 23.axb4 cxb4 24.c5 and White should not be worse.

21...♗e6 22.cxb5!

Barcza wants to exert pressure against Black's queenside, but the plan turns out to be too optimistic.



22...axb5

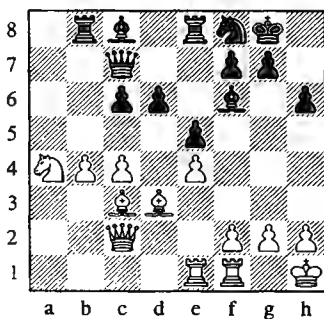
The b5-c5 pawn duo is not only strong enough to withstand White's pressure, it also possesses some aggressive energy of its own.

23. ♖e3?

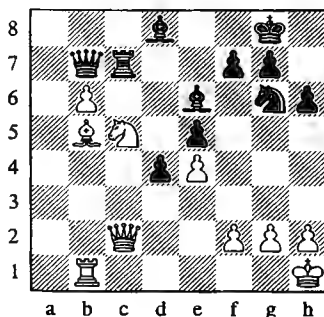
It was better to restrain the b-pawn with 23. ♖a5 ♜f8 24. ♞d2, when White is still in the game.

23... ♜f8 24. ♞d2 b4!

Now the b-pawn becomes a powerful force. I noticed that one year later Karpov executed a similar strategy against the three time Soviet Champion Leonid Stein:



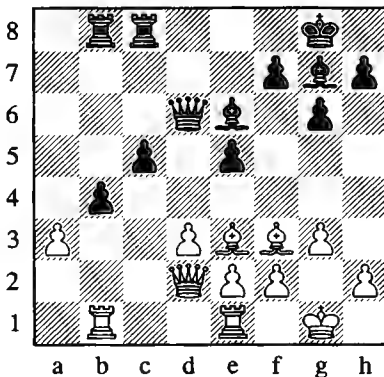
25. b5! cxb5 (25... ♗d7!?) 26. cxb5 ♗d7 27. ♞b1 ♜ec8 28. b6 ♞b7 29. ♖b5 ♜a8 30. ♞b3 ♖e6 (after 30... ♗xb5 31. ♞xb5 ♜xa4 32. ♞xa4 ♜xc3 33. ♞a7 the b-pawn decides the issue) 31. ♞b4 ♖e7 32. ♜fc1 d5 33. ♞b2 d4 34. ♖b4 ♖g5 35. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 36. ♞e2 ♜a8? 37. ♗d6 ♖g6 38. ♞c2 ♜c8 39. ♖c7 ♗d8 40. ♖c5 ♜xc7



41. ♖xb7! ♜xc2 42. ♖xd8 ♖c8 43. g3 ♜xf2 44. ♜c1 ♜f6 45. ♜xc8 ♜xb6 Black finally eliminated the b-pawn, but it cost him a piece.

46. ♖c4 ♖h7 47. ♖xf7 1-0 Karpov – Stein, Leningrad 1971.

Back to the game.

**25. axb4 cxb4 26. ♖a7?**

White is already in trouble, and this move only makes matters worse by losing valuable time.

Nevertheless after 26. ♜e1 ♜xc1† 27. ♞xc1 b3 Black's b-pawn is tremendously powerful and White is unlikely to be able to sacrifice an exchange for it. If 28. ♖e4 then 28... ♞b4 is very strong.

26... ♞b5 27. ♜e1 ♜xc1† 28. ♞xc1 b3

White has been outplayed, and a final inaccuracy hastens the end.

29. ♞c6?

The Hungarian grandmaster must have miscalculated something.

29... ♞xc6 30. ♖xc6 ♜a5! 31. ♖e3 ♜a2 32. ♖b5 b2

The culmination of Black's strategy. The mighty pawn will cost White too much material.

33. ♖g2 e4 34. d4 ♖b3 0-1

Game 20

Anatoly Karpov – Vladimir Bagirov

USSR Championship, Riga 1970

Karpov's wins over Barcza and Stein did not contain quite the level of mastery of Kasparov's win over Karpov, yet they were still highly instructive. Both games demonstrated a high degree of purposefulness and consistency in his strategy; once he created the passed b-pawn, he wasted no time in forcing the pawn up the board in a forceful yet always controlled manner.

Karpov finished the tournament with a highly respectable 11½/17, with eight wins, seven draws and two losses. This was good enough to share fourth place with Ivkov and Benko, and was only half a point behind the joint winners Kavalek, Stein and Panno. Against those top five rivals he only scored three draws and two losses without a win, but against the lower part of the cross table he made a massacre. Overall, the result was sufficient for Karpov to earn the coveted grandmaster norm and title, making him at nineteen years of age the youngest grandmaster in the world at the time.

1970 was a breakthrough year for Karpov in another respect: he was invited to take part in the Soviet Championship for the first time. The line-up included former world champions and many other top class players including Tal, Smyslov, Stein, Polugaevsky and Geller.

Karpov went for safety and started with eight consecutive draws, but in round nine he lost to Korchnoi. After two more draws he met Vladimir Bagirov, an experienced grandmaster who excelled at positional play. He played in the Soviet Championship many times and once finished as high as fourth, which shows his class. I found thirty games in which Bagirov met the world champions, of which he won one, drew twenty three and lost six.

1.e4 ♘f6

Bagirov is one of the very few grandmasters who employed Alekhine's Defence as his main weapon against 1.e4 for most of his career.

2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♗f3

The main line suits Karpov's style. White aims for a small but steady advantage.

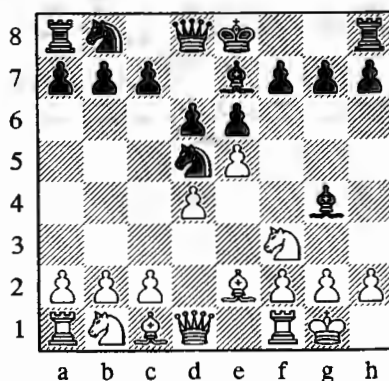
4...♙g4

The most popular alternative is 4...g6. In the sixties Karpov reacted with 5.♙e2 here, but in the early seventies he switched to 5.♙c4 and won all three games.

5.♙e2 e6

A few rounds later Mikenas played the provocative 5...♘c6 against Karpov, just as Alburt did at the 1980 Olympiad. Neither of them were successful.

6.0-0 ♙e7

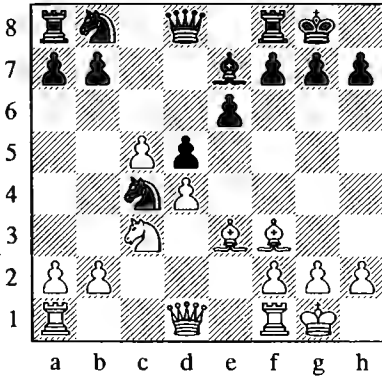


7.c4

White can insert the moves h2-h3 and ...♙h5 at more or less any moment, which could

potentially benefit either player depending on how the game develops. On this occasion Karpov decides to do without those moves.

7...♖b6 8.exd6 cxd6 9.♖c3 0-0 10.♗e3 d5
11.c5 ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 ♖c4



13.♗c1!

Bagirov had reached this position the previous year against Radovici, who opted for 13.b3. The text move was presumably a prepared improvement by Karpov, and Bagirov never repeated the line again.

13...♖c6

13...b6 is also possible, although after 14.b3 ♖a5 15.cxb6 axb6 16.♗e3 or 16.♖b5!? White maintains a slight plus.

14.b3 ♖4a5 15.♗e3 b6

At some point Black needs to counter the pressure of the choking pawn chain. Another way to do it was seen in the following game: 15...♗f6 16.♞c1 b6 17.♖a4 bxc5 (17...b5!?) 18.♖xc5 ♞e7 Black was okay and went on to draw in Lein – Vukic, Vrsac 1979.

16.♖a4 ♞b8

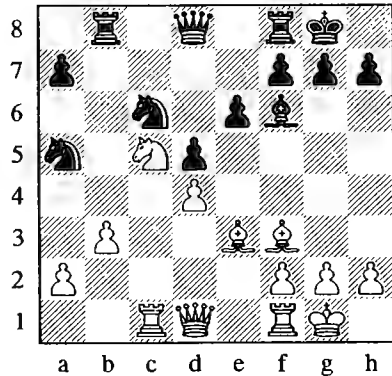
According to Karpov 16...♗g5 deserved consideration, but so far nobody has tested this approach. 16...b5!? is also interesting.

A few decades later Black tried a different plan: 16...♖b7 17.♞d2 ♞c8 18.b4 ♗f6 19.♞ad1 ♖e7 20.♗e2 ♞d7 21.b5 ♞d8 Hracek – Jansa, Czech Republic 1994. Usually Jansa is known for playing actively; on this occasion he handled the position rather differently, but nevertheless still managed to hold a draw.

17.♞c1 bxc5?!

With this move Black reveals his cards a bit too early. I would prefer a developing move like 17...♗f6 or perhaps instead seek a bishop exchange with 17...♗g5, although White should maintain an edge after the simple 18.♞d2.

18.♖xc5 ♗f6



19.a3!

The immediate 19.♗e2 (as well as other natural moves such as 19.♞d2) allows Black to develop interesting play with 19...♞b4! (19...♖e7 20.g4!? is mentioned by Karpov) 20.a3 ♞xd4 21.♗xd4 ♖xd4 with reasonable compensation. Objectively White should still be better, but compared with the game continuation he does not enjoy the same level of control over the position, and a subsequent advance of Black's central pawns might well prove troublesome.

The text move prevents the exchange sacrifice and prepares a queenside advance while maintaining full control.

19...♖e7 20.♗e2!

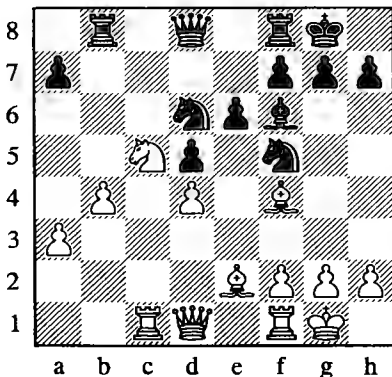
Controlling c4 in preparation for the following pawn advance.

20...♖f5 21.b4 ♖b7

21...♖c4!? is interesting but not fully satisfactory: 22.♗xc4 dxc4 23.♞xc4 ♣d5 24.♣d3 ♞fd8 (after 24...♞bc8 25.♞fc1! ♞fd8 26.♖e4 White keeps his extra pawn) 25.♖b3 ♞bc8 (25...e5? 26.♞c5) 26.♞fc1 ♞xc4 (26...♖xd4!? 27.♗xd4 e5) 27.♣xc4 ♣xc4 28.♞xc4 e5 (after 28...♖xd4 29.♗xd4 e5 30.♗f1 exd4 31.♗e2 White has excellent winning chances) 29.♞c7 exd4 30.♗d2 Black managed to win back the pawn, but still fell short of equality.

The other option was to eliminate the dark-squared bishop: 21...♖xe3 22.fxex3 ♖b7 (22...♗g5? 23.bxa5 ♗xe3+ 24.♗h1 ♗xc1 25.♣xc1 ♣xa5 26.♖d7 ♞bc8 27.♣f4 wins) 23.♗a6 (23.♣a4!?) 23...♖d6 (23...♖xc5 24.♞xc5) 24.♣e2 ♗g5 25.♗d3 According to Karpov White is somewhat better here. He has succeeded in preventing ...♖f5 and can look to invade along the c-file with his heavy pieces.

22.♗f4 ♖bd6



23.♗e5! ♗xe5

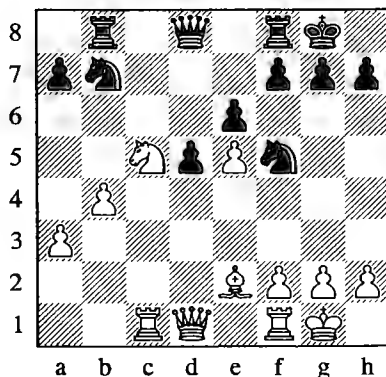
Another possibility was 23...♞c8 24.♗xf6 gxf6 (24...♣xf6 25.♖d7) 25.♗d3 ♗h8 26.♣h5 ♞g8 27.♗xf5 and whichever way Black recaptures, he is worse.

Black could also have adopted a wait-and-see approach with 23...♗g5!? 24.♞c2 ♞b6. In this case White is certainly better, but it will take a lot of effort and skill to obtain something tangible.

24.dxe5 ♖b7?

Black is destined to have a lot of trouble with this knight. 24...♖e4 was a much better try, when a likely continuation is 25.♗d3 (25.♣d3 should also suffice for a small edge) 25...♖xc5 26.♞xc5 transposing to 25.♗d3 in the next note.

It should be noted that, by contrast to the game, the attempt to avoid exchanges with 25.♖b3?! does not achieve the desired effect after 25...♣b6 26.♗d3 ♞fc8, when Black gets fluent play.



25.♖b3!

Karpov refuses to allow his opponent to get rid of the misplaced knight. Instead after 25.♗d3 ♖xc5 26.♞xc5 ♖e7 27.♣e2 ♞c8 28.♞fc1 ♣d7 White's advantage is smaller than in the game.

Karpov also mentioned the possibility of 25.♖a4 to avoid the exchange while also preventing ...♞b6. However, the knight is a long way from the centre and this might encourage Black to counter with: 25...f6! (Karpov notes that White is better after 25...♞d7 26.♗a6; the same is also true after 25...♞c8 26.♗a6 ♞xc1 27.♞xc1 ♞d7 28.♖c5 ♖xc5 29.♞xc5) 26.exf6 ♞xf6 27.♗d3 ♖bd6 (or 27...♖d4) And Black's pieces are not badly placed.

25...♞b6

With the white knight closer to the centre, 25...f6 can be met by 26.♖d4 ♖xd4 27.♞xd4 ♞b6 28.♞xb6 axb6 29.f4 when Black still has problems with his knight.

26.♗d3 ♖e7!?

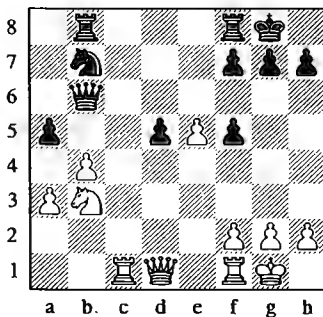
Karpov opines that after this move Black is unlikely to be able to save the game, and instead recommended:

26...a5!?

This is an ugly move, nevertheless it serves one important purpose: it gives Black good chances to eliminate the queenside pawns.

27.♗xf5 exf5

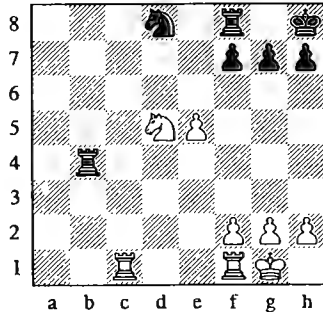
White's advantage is undeniable, but it is by no means clear whether it is enough to force victory.



28.♖d4

Another option is 28.♞d4 ♞xd4 29.♖xd4 axb4 30.axb4 (after 30.♖c6 ♞be8 31.axb4

♖d8 Black has reasonable chances to survive) 30...♖d8 31.♖xf5 ♞xb4 32.♖e7 ♗h8 33.♖x5

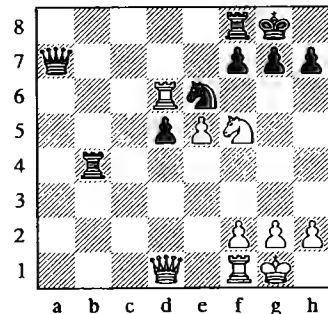


If White's pawn stood on e4 instead of e5, he would have excellent winning chances as the ending with four pawns against three on the same side should normally win with this many pieces remaining on the board. With the pawn on e5, however, Black will have good chances to exchange a pair of pawns with a well timed ...f6. The resulting ending with three pawns versus two should normally be a draw with accurate defence.

28...axb4 29.♞c6

29.axb4 ♖d8 30.♖xf5 ♞xb4 31.♞xd5 ♖e6 does not change much.

29...♞a7 30.axb4 ♖d8 31.♞d6 ♞xb4 32.♖xf5 ♖e6



We have reached another position with four pawns versus three (after White takes on d5),

except that this time the queens remain on the board. This might offer White some additional chances, but the win would still be a long way off.

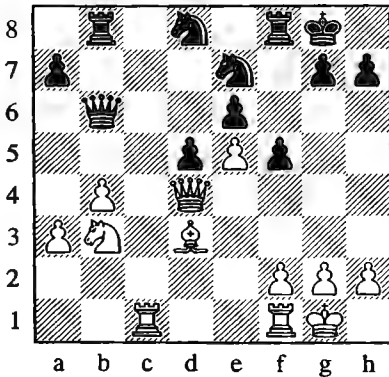
27. ♖g4 f5

27...f6 28. ♖h4 ♘g6 29. ♗xg6 hxg6 30. exf6 ♗xf6 31. ♖g3 is insufficient for Black according to Karpov.

Karpov does not mention how he intended to meet 27...♘g6!?, which looks like a sensible try to defend the king. The correct reaction looks to be: 28. ♖g3! (Going for checkmate with 28. ♗xg6 is too optimistic: 28...hxg6 29. ♘d4 ♗fc8 30. ♖h4 [30. ♖f4 ♘d8 31. ♖e3!?] 30...♘d8 31. ♘f3 ♖a6 32. ♘g5 [or 32. ♖e7 ♘c6 33. ♖d7 ♗b6 and Black can keep attacking the queen.] 32...♗xc1 33. ♗xc1 ♗c8 Black is still alive.) 28...♗fc8 29. h4 White keeps a strong initiative.

28. ♖d4 ♘d8

Black hastens to improve the misplaced knight, but it will still struggle to find a meaningful role in the game.



29. b5!

White's kingside feint was just a temporary distraction from his main plan of advancing on the queenside.

29...g5 30.a4 ♘g6 31. ♖a1!

Karpov utilizes the full dimensions of the chessboard.

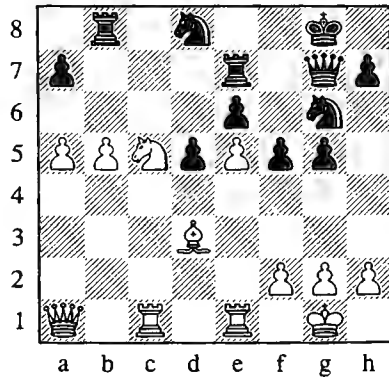
31... ♖b7

31...♘f7? runs into 32. ♗c6.

32. ♗f6!

Karpov takes a moment to defend the e5-pawn while vacating the f1-square for the bishop. He is now fully prepared to press ahead with the queenside invasion.

32... ♖g7 33. ♘c5 ♗f7 34. a5 ♗e7



35. ♘a6! ♗a8 36. ♗f1 ♘f7 37. ♘c7 ♗d8

37...♗f8 38. ♖d4 (38. ♗c6 ♘d8) 38...♘fxe5 39. ♖xa7 wins.

38. ♗c6 ♘f8 39. b6!?

There are several ways to win, but this is one of the cleanest.

39...axb6 40.a6

The a-pawn will cost Black a rook.

40... ♘h6 41. ♗ec1 ♘g4 42. a7 ♘xe5 43. ♗6c2 ♘c4 44. a8=♖ ♗xa8 45. ♘xa8 b5 46. ♗a2 ♗b7

1-0

From this point onwards, Karpov started to have more decisive games; perhaps his first victory boosted his confidence. Over the next six rounds he made three wins with two draws and one loss, before meeting Doroshkievich in the penultimate round. Doroshkievich was a decent International Master, but never became a GM. He qualified for the Soviet Championship final a few times, without ever scoring particularly well against the top class field. Over his lifetime he played eight games against world champions, scoring three draws and five losses.

Game 21

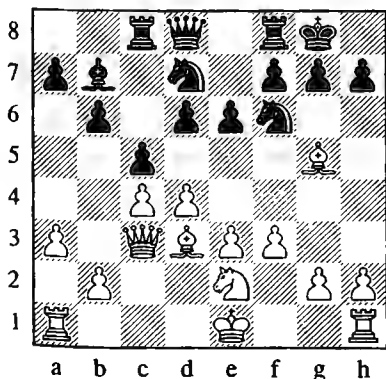
Vladimir Doroshkievich – Anatoly Karpov

USSR Championship, Riga 1970

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♖b4 4.♙c2 0–0
5.a3 ♗xc3† 6.♙xc3 d6 7.♗g5 ♘bd7 8.e3 b6
9.♗d3

Since the dawn of the new millennium 9.♗e2 became popular, intending ♙d3 and ♗c3.

9...♗b7 10.f3 c5 11.♗e2 ♙c8



This whole variation is characterized by the fight between White's two bishops and

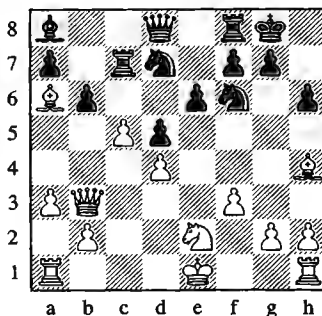
Black's lead in development. Paradoxically, it is Black who will generally be looking to open the position, despite fighting against the bishop pair, in order to exploit his superior coordination.

12.♙c1?!

This is now known to be inaccurate, although at the time of the game the theory was not so well mapped out. Here are a few of Karpov's other games in this variation:

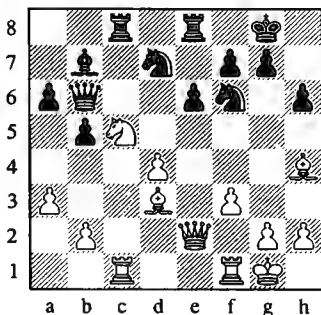
12.0–0 h6 13.♗h4 cxd4 (After 13...d5 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♙e1 ♘5f6 16.♙d1 a6 17.♗b1 ♙e7 18.e4 cxd4 19.♘xd4 ♗e5 White was a little better and the game Sigurjonsson – Karpov, Munich 1979, was eventually drawn.) 14.♙xd4 ♗e5 15.♙ac1 ♘xd3 16.♙xd3 d5 17.cxd5 ♙xd5 Black equalized effortlessly, Bareev – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2002.

12.♙b3 h6 (Also possible is: 12...d5 13.cxd5 ♗xd5 14.♙a4 cxd4 15.exd4 ♗c6 16.♙d1 b5 17.0–0 ♙b6 18.♙c1 ♗d5 Black has equalized although he later went wrong and lost in Adianto – Karpov, Jakarta 1997.) 13.♗h4 cxd4 14.exd4 d5 15.c5 ♗a8 16.♗a6 ♙c7



17.♗g3 bxc5 18.♗xc7 ♙xc7 19.♙c3 e5
20.♗d3 exd4 21.♘xd4 ♙e8† 22.♗f1 ♙b6
Black obtained nice compensation for the sacrificed exchange in the game Lautier – Karpov, Linares 1995.

Karpov was also not afraid to play the white side of the position: 12.♖d2 cxd4 13.exd4 d5 (13...♙a6!?) 14.cxd5 ♙xd5 15.♙a6 ♜c6 16.♙b5 ♜c7 17.♙f4 ♜c8 18.♙a6 ♜a8 19.♜c1 ♘b8 20.♙d3 ♙b7 21.♙g5 ♘bd7 22.0-0 h6 23.♙h4 ♜c8 24.♘c3 a6 25.♜e2 b5 26.♘e4 ♜b6 27.♘c5 ♜fe8

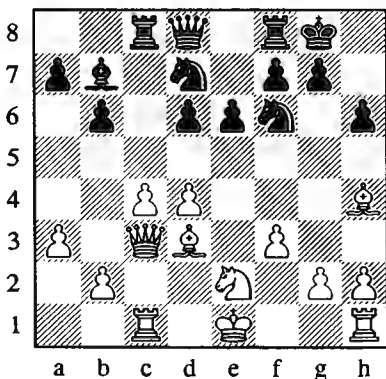


28.b4! White obtained some advantage thanks to his remarkable strategy involving the installation of the knight on c5, Karpov – Cu. Hansen, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

12...h6

Black usually inserts this move at some point.

13.♙h4 cxd4 14.exd4



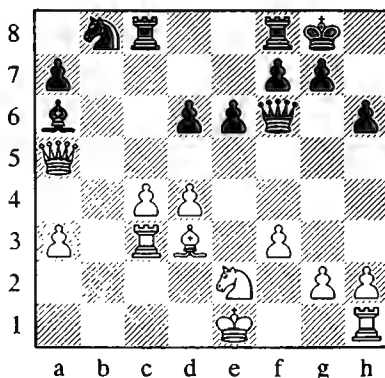
14...b5!

This move creates a target, and reveals why White would have been better off evacuating his queen from the c-file.

15.b3 bxc4

Taking at once reduces White's options, compared with 15...♙a6 16.♜b4 bxc4 when 17.♙xc4! is possible.

16.bxc4 ♙a6! 17.♙xf6 ♜xf6 18.♜a5 ♘b8 19.♜c3



19...d5

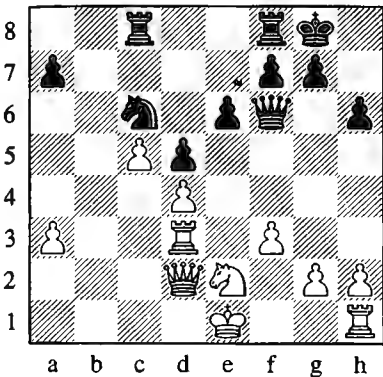
Having already begun exerting pressure on the c4-pawn, Karpov continues to apply the same strategy.

20.c5?

This tempting move is in fact an error; the passed pawn will have no impact on the game as Black's knight will blockade it perfectly. White should instead have exchanged to ease his suffering on the queenside: 20.cxd5 ♙xd3 (After 20...♜xc3 21.♜xc3 ♜c8 22.♜d2 ♙xd3 23.♜xd3 exd5 24.0-0 White easily holds.) 21.♙xd3 ♜g5 22.♘f2 ♘c6 23.♜a4 ♜xd5 24.♜c1 White is fairly active, so he can live with the isolated pawn.

20...♙xd3 21.♙xd3 ♘c6 22.♜d2

22.♜a4? controls the queenside but drops a pawn to 22...♜g6! with a double attack.



22...Bb8!

White is tied to the defence of the d4-pawn, so he is unable to challenge Black's control over the open file.

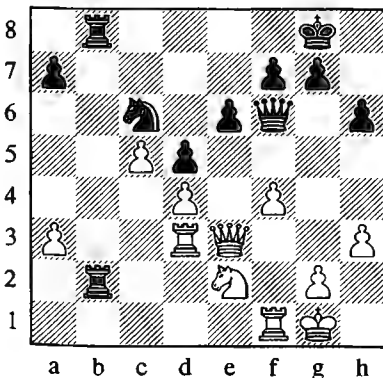
23.0-0 Bb7 24.f4

After 24.♖f4 ♗xf4 25.♕xf4 Bb8 White faces a difficult endgame.

24...Bb8 25.h3 Bb2!

Simple and strong.

26.♗e3



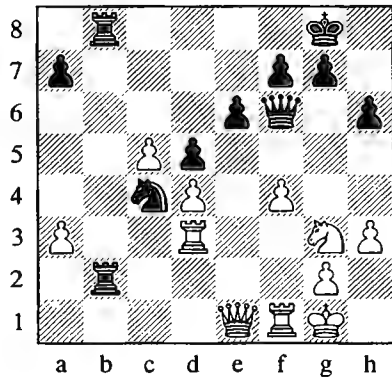
26...Qa5!

White's c-pawn is receiving no support from its colleagues, so Black can afford to improve his knight.

27.♕g3?

Moving the knight away from the centre does not help White. Instead it was necessary to play on the kingside to keep Black distracted from the queenside: 27.f5! ♕c4 (after 27...exf5 White can target the d5-pawn with 28.♕c3) 28.♗f4 e5 29.dxe5 ♕xe5 30.♗e3 ♕c4 31.♗g3 ♕d2 32.♗d1 ♕e4 33.♗e3 White has to be careful, but he is still in the game.

27...♕c4 28.♗e1



28...Bb3!

Removing White's only defending piece in the centre. The ease with which Karpov outplayed his opponent is remarkable.

29.♗xb3

After 29.♗f3 Bb1 30.♗d1 ♗xf3 31.♗xb1 ♗xd4† 32.♔h1 ♗e3 Black wins.

29...♗xd4†

White's position has fallen apart.

30.♔h2 ♗xb3 31.f5

This attempt for counterplay is too little too late, and Karpov crushes his opponent's resistance with ease.

31...♕e3 32.♗f3 ♗xc5 33.fxc6 fxc6 34.♕h5 ♗d6† 35.♔g1 d4 36.♗g3 Bb7 37.♗d2 Bb1†

38.♙f2 ♖f1† 39.♙e2 ♜a6† 40.♜d3 ♖e1†
0-1

Karpov drew his final two games and finished in equal fifth place in a formidable field. In total he scored five wins, fourteen draws and only two losses.

Later in the year he played in three minor Soviet team events, playing ten games altogether. His results were respectable, with a combined total of four wins and six draws.

1970 was the year in which Karpov successfully made the transition from junior to adult tournaments – with two years to spare. His impressive results suggest that he was working very hard on his chess, and was almost certainly assisted by Semyon Furman. It is worth noting that the great era of Soviet chess had been dominated by players who were born in the late 1920s and 1930s. The best players of that generation were by now approaching or already into their forties, and Fischer was storming the Soviet barricades. The country needed a new chess star and the superpower spared no resources to create one. No young player at the time showed greater promise than Anatoly Karpov.

1970 Summary

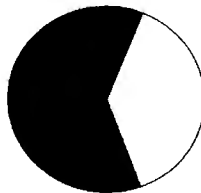
Russian Republic Championship, Kuibyshev (1st place): 12½/17 (+8 =9 -0)

Caracas (4th-6th place): 11½/17 (+8 =7 -2)

USSR Championship, Riga (5th-7th place): 12/21 (+5 =14 -2)

Soviet Team Events: 7/10 (+4 =6 -0)

Total 66.2% (+25 =36 -4)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1971

Rating 2540 (39-46 in the world)

The year in which Karpov turned twenty years old was one of his most active periods, with the second highest number of games of any year of his career. This was the year in which he produced his first world class tournament performance, as well as registering his first ever ELO rating.

His first event was a six-game training match against Korchnoi, which ended in a tie, with two wins from each player and two draws. Next was the semi-final of the USSR Championship, which Karpov won with a most impressive score of nine wins, eight draws and no defeats.

It was not possible to find any games from his next event, which was the 18th Student Olympiad in Puerto Rico, although it is known that Karpov scored a superb 7½/8 on board three. Even without knowing who the opponents were, it is safe to say that achieving such a score is an outstanding achievement.

Karpov followed this by playing in some minor Soviets events, including the USSR Armed Forces Championship. The database lists eleven of his games from this event, with six wins, four draws and one loss. Interestingly, in *Chess is My Life*, Karpov modestly states that he played just seven games, with two wins, four draws and one loss. Perhaps there were preliminary rounds that he did not categorize as part of the event.

In any case, here is one of his wins.

Game 22

Sinakov – Anatoly Karpov

USSR Armed Forces Team Championship, Leningrad 1971

1.e4 c5

Karpov employed the Sicilian in less than twenty percent of his games when he faced 1.e4. He took it up in 1969, and remained undefeated with it until 1979.

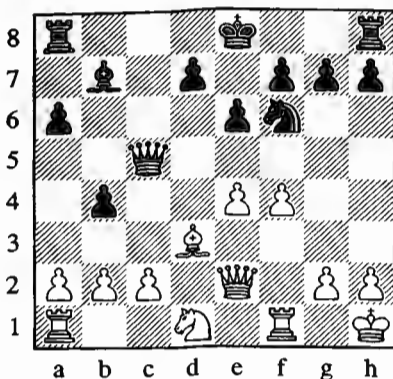
2.♟f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞c6

This was his usual choice, although he sometimes played 4...a6.

5.♞c3 ♖c7 6.♙e3 a6 7.♙d3 b5 8.0-0 ♙b7 9.♖e2

9.♞xc6 is the most common move here, but Black scores fairly well against it.

9...♞f6 10.f4 ♞xd4 11.♙xd4 ♙c5 12.♙xc5 ♖xc5† 13.♞h1 b4 14.♞d1



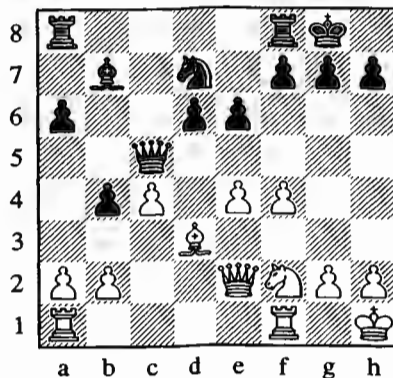
14...0-0

Later in the same year Karpov deviated with 14...d6 and soon made a draw: 15.♘f2 e5 16.♘g4 ♘xg4 17.♙xg4 0-0 18.a3 ♙c6 19.♙f5 bxa3 20.♙xa3 ♙b5 21.♙c3 ♙b4 22.♙b3 ♙c5 23.♙c3 ½-½ R. Byrne – Karpov, Moscow 1971.

15.c4?!

The c2-pawn is not weak, so there is no need to waste a tempo on this move. 15.♘f2 was more logical.

15...d6 16.♘f2 ♘d7

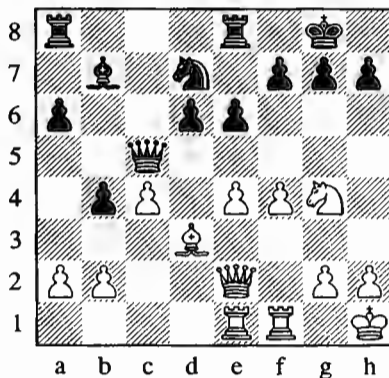


17.♘g4?!

White would like to threaten something on the kingside, otherwise Black can count on a

pleasant game thanks to his control over the c5-square. Unfortunately the knight move fails to accomplish anything at the moment. I would prefer 17.♙a1 to develop the last piece, for instance 17...♙f8 18.e5 and the position is balanced.

17...♙f8 18.♙a1



18...f5!

This strong move not only stops White's attacking ideas on the kingside, but also enables Black to fight for the initiative by clearing the long diagonal for his bishop.

19.exf5?!

White opens the e-file and the long diagonal, but it is Black's pieces that will benefit.

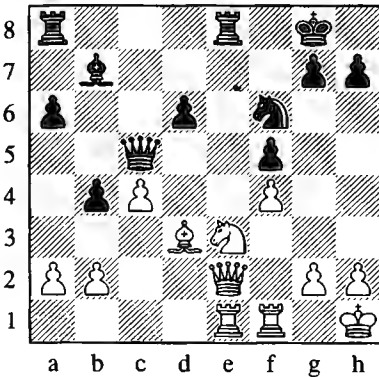
A better idea was 19.♘f2 ♘f6 20.♙e3 g6. White's position is rather passive, but overall Black's advantage remains within manageable proportions.

19...exf5 20.♘e3

The knight turns out to be surprisingly passive on this square.

20...♘f6?

Having strategically outplayed his opponent, Karpov acts quickly. The calmer 20...g6 was also promising.



21. ♞d2

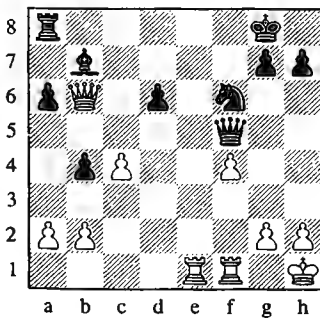
It was worth considering:

21. ♕xf5!?

Simplifying leads to a joyless position, but White still obtains reasonable drawing chances.

21...♞xe3 22. ♞xe3 ♞xf5 23. ♞b6

It would be interesting to know how Karpov would have tried to win from this superior position. He has several options, including:



23...♕e4

23...♞d7 can be met by 24. ♞xb4.

24. ♞xd6

White does best to reduce the number of pawns as much as he can.

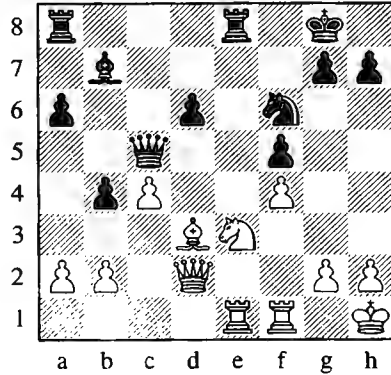
Instead 24. ♞xb4 ♕h5! sets up a wicked trick and keeps the d-pawn. 25. ♞f2 (25. ♞xd6 ♕g3†!) 25...♞e8 26. ♞d2 ♕f6 Black has reasonable winning chances.

24...♕d3 25. ♞f3 ♕xc4 26. ♞xb4 ♕xa2

Or 26...♕d5 27. ♞fe3.

27. b3 ♕b1 28. ♞c4† ♕h8 29. ♞fe3 h5

Presumably Karpov was optimistic about grinding down his opponent from a position like this. Still, White has realistic chances to survive if he defends stubbornly.



21...♕e4 22. ♕xe4

White cannot realistically expect to live with the knight on e4, for instance: 22. ♞c1 ♞e6 23. ♞e2 ♞ae8 24. ♞fe1 g5! (Black can maintain control with a move like 24...♕c6, but he has every reason to be more ambitious.) 25. ♞f1 g4 26. ♞fe1 (26. ♞d1? This mistake allows a lovely combination: 26...♕g3†! 27. hxg3 ♞xe3 28. ♞de1 ♕xg2†! 29. ♕xg2 ♞c6† 30. ♕h2 ♞8e6 And Black's attack breaks through.) 26...g3 27. ♕xe4 ♞xe4 28. ♞d2 gxh2 29. ♕xh2 ♞8e6 White is living dangerously.

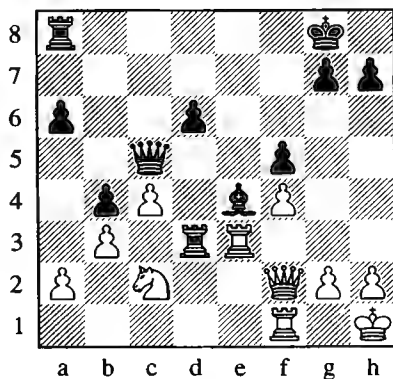
22...♞xe4 23. b3 ♞d4 24. ♞f2

A better chance was 24. ♞b2! ♕e4 (24...♞d3? 25. ♕xf5!! ♞xf5 26. ♞e7) 25. ♞f2 ♞d3 (after 25...a5 26. ♞d2 ♞xd2 27. ♞xd2 a4 it is not easy to improve Black's position further) 26. ♞fe2 ♞e8 27. ♕d1 d5 White must suffer but he has chances to survive.

24...♞d3 25. ♕c2?

White should have retreated the knight to d1 instead, with the idea of transferring it to b2, where it prevents ...a4 and disturbs the d3-rook.

25...♖e4 26.♞e3



26...a5!

Opening the a-file gives White one more thing to worry about. 26...♞c3!? was worth considering as well, when Black can follow up by transferring the queen's rook to g6, via e8 and e6.

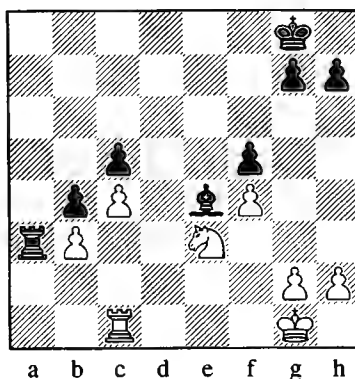
27.♞xd3 ♕xd3 28.♞xc5?

This soon leads to a hopeless situation. The last chance was 28.♞f3, when play might continue: 28...♕e4 29.♞f2 a4 30.♘d4 d5 (Black can also insert a pawn exchange on b3 at any moment) 31.cxd5 ♕xd5 32.♞e3 ♕e4 33.♞c1 ♞d5 34.♞d2 h6 White is passive and faces an unpleasant defence, nevertheless Black will have to work to convert his advantage into a win.

28...dxc5 29.♞c1 a4!

The subsequent invasion along the a-file will decide the game.

30.♘e3 ♕e4 31.♙g1 axb3 32.axb3 ♞a3



The b-pawn is defenceless, and the rest is easy.

33.♞d1 ♞xb3 34.♞d8† ♙f7 35.♞c8

According to the database, the game ended after the moves:

35...♞b1† 36.♙f2 b3

0-1

It is hard to imagine Karpov rejecting 35...♞xe3, even though the above continuation is also winning comfortably. Perhaps there was a data error, but in any case it was a fine positional game from the future champion.

Karpov's next event was the USSR Team Championship, where he played on the junior board and excelled with a score of 6½/7. This was followed by the final of the USSR Championship, where Karpov finished fourth – a good achievement in a strong field. His overall score was 13/21, with seven wins, twelve draws and two losses.

Although Karpov's results for 1971 have thus far been highly impressive, they pale in comparison to his accomplishments at his next event, the Alekhine Memorial tournament in Moscow. This must rank as his first indisputably world class tournament result. He began solidly with two draws, before meeting

the Hungarian grandmaster Levente Lengyel in round three. Lengyel played against all the Soviet world champions except Kasparov, winning one, drawing fifteen and losing six against them. Karpov played him once more, a year later, and drew.

Game 23

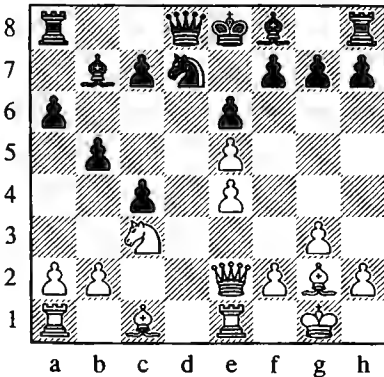
Levente Lengyel – Anatoly Karpov

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1971

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 dxc4 5.♜f3 b5

Karpov opts for a risky continuation, keeping his extra pawn at the expense of the initiative.

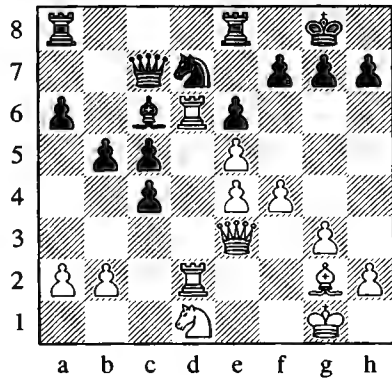
6.♞e5 ♞d5 7.0-0 ♙b7 8.e4 ♟f6 9.♞e1 ♞bd7 10.♞e2 a6 11.♞c3 ♞xe5 12.dxe5 ♞d7



I do not want to comment too heavily on the early phase of the game, as the most interesting and instructive moments occur later. Over the next few moves both players continue to play logically, with White retaining enough of an initiative to balance his one pawn deficit.

13.♞d1 ♞c8 14.f4 ♙c5† 15.♙e3 0-0 16.♞d2 ♙xc3† 17.♞xe3 c5 18.♞ad1 ♙c6 19.♞d6 ♞c8 20.♞1d2 ♞c7 21.♞d1

The position remains dynamically balanced: Black is a pawn up but his pieces do not work well, and White firmly controls the d-file.



21...b4!?

With this move Karpov effectively decides to return his extra pawn in order to relieve the pressure.

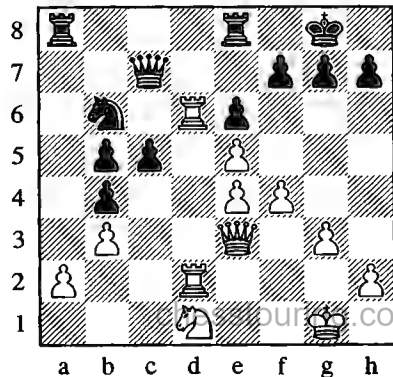
22.♙f1 ♙b5 23.♙xc4

23.b3 ♞b6 24.bxc4 ♙xc4 25.♞c2 ♙xf1 26.♞xc5 ♞b7 27.♟xf1 ♞a4 The position is equal.

23...♞b6 24.♙xb5

Another possibility is 24.♙e2 ♞c8 (24...♞ab8 25.♞c2 ♙xe2 26.♞xe2 c4 is also playable) 25.♙xb5 axb5 26.♞d7 ♞b6 27.f5 c4 when the position is balanced.

24...axb5 25.b3



25...♖c8!

The knight moves backwards, but it is all part of Black's intended regrouping.

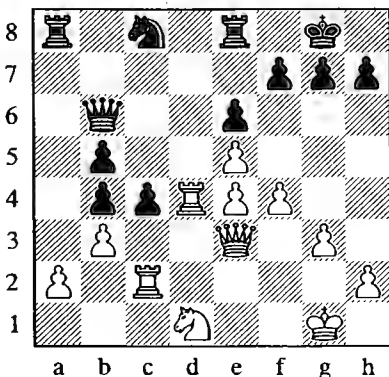
26.♞d7 ♣b6 27.♞c2

White could also have prepared for the endgame with 27.♔f2, for instance: 27...c4 (or 27...♖e7 28.♞c2 ♞ec8 29.♞xe7 [29.♞d6 ♣a7] 29...♣d8 30.♞b7 ♣xd1 when White's king is too open to hurt Black) 28.♣xb6 ♖xb6 29.♞b7 c3 30.♞c2 ♞eb8 31.♞c7 ♞c8 32.♞b7 With equality.

27...c4 28.♞d4!?

White decides to play ambitiously. The alternative was 28.♣xb6 ♖xb6 29.♞d6 ♖c8 30.♞d4 ♖b6 31.♞d6 when Black cannot do much except settle for a draw.

It should be noted that taking the pawn with 28.bxc4 bxc4 29.♞xc4? would have been a grave error, as 29...♣xe3† 30.♖xe3 ♖b6 wins an exchange.



28...♞a3!

This is an unpleasant move to face, although objectively it should not hurt White too much.

29.♖f2?

The Hungarian grandmaster thinks that the

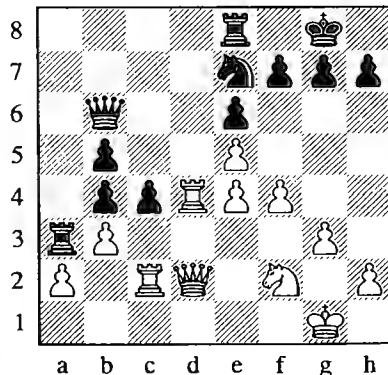
knight on d1 is misplaced. He has a point, but in reality d1 is still the best square for it, at least for the time being.

A better continuation would have been 29.♔f1 ♣a5 (29...♖e7 30.♞d7) 30.♣e2 ♖b6 31.♞d6 cxb3 (31...h6 32.f5) 32.axb3 ♞xb3 33.♞c5 when the position remains balanced.

29...♖e7

Suddenly Black takes over on the queenside. 29...c3? would be premature because of 30.♖d3!.

30.♣d2



30...c3!

Karpov chooses the right moment to force his pawn to c3 without losing the b4-pawn. Now his pawns will choke White.

31.♣d3 ♖c6 32.♞d6 ♞aa8!

This subtle move prepares to exchange the strong white rook and invade with ...♖d4.

33.♔g2 ♞ed8

Karpov's plan prevails, and his knight reaches d4.

34.a3

A desperate attempt in a lost position.

34...♞xd6 35.exd6 ♘d4 36.axb4 ♘xc2
37.♞xc2

Game 24

Anatoly Karpov – David Bronstein

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1971

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5

Throughout his career Karpov scored very well against this variation. Against the Scheveningen setup he did well until the mid 1980s, but then his percentage score dropped heavily. This had a lot to do with Kasparov, who frequently employed it against him.

7.♘b3 ♙e6

Nowadays 7...♙c7 is more common.

8.f4 ♞c7 9.0–0

The strong 9.g4! first appeared a year later in the game Kaplan – Saidy, San Antonio 1972.

9...♘bd7 10.f5 ♙c4 11.a4 ♙e7

37...♞d4!

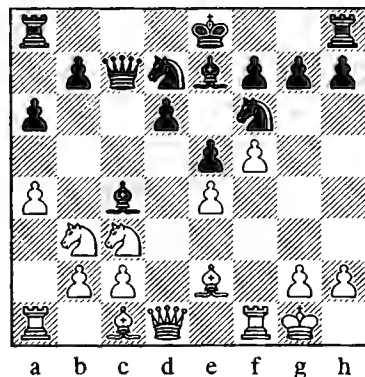
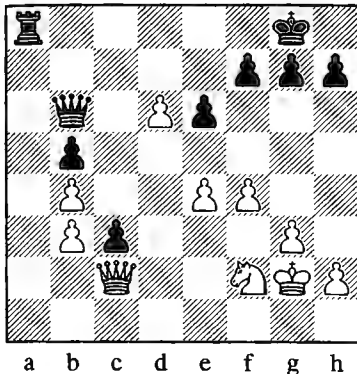
Now White does not even get the c-pawn in return for the exchange.

38.♙f3

38.e5 ♞xb4 is equally hopeless, as White is unable to support the d6-pawn.

38...e5 39.♘d3 exf4 40.gxf4 f6
0–1

After this win Karpov drew seven in a row, the last three of which were against Spassky, Tal and Petrosian. These results probably elevated his confidence, which encouraged him to go for a sharp attacking game against Hort, whom he beat. After one further draw he then faced a legendary player in David Bronstein, who came within a whisker of becoming World Champion in 1951 when he drew his match against Botvinnik. Even though the present game took place two decades after the match, it must still have been a momentous occasion for the young Karpov. According to my database Bronstein played 167 games against world champions, scoring seventeen victories, 119 draws and thirty one losses.

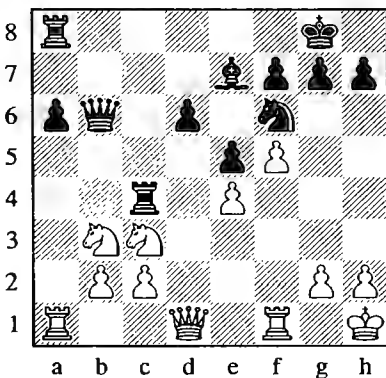


12.♙e3

With this move Karpov deviates from 12.a5, which he had played in round three of the same event: 12...0–0 13.♙g5 ♞f8 14.♙xc4 ♞xc4 15.♞f2 h6 16.♙xf6 ♘xf6 17.♞a4 ♞c7 18.♙d2 b5 ½–½ Karpov – Gheorghiu, Moscow 1971.

12...0-0 13.a5 b5

This is a thematic idea, but it is not the strongest in the present position. It was Portisch who eventually found the strongest answer to White's setup: 13... $\text{f}c8!$ 14. $\text{h}1$ $\text{g}xe2$ 15. $\text{g}xe2$ $d5$ 16. $exd5$ $\text{g}b4$ 17. $\text{g}d2$ $\text{g}xc3$ 18. $\text{g}xc3$ $\text{d}xd5$ Black obtained a nice position and went on to win the game Sigurjonsson – Portisch, Buenos Aires (ol) 1978.

14.axb6 $\text{d}xb6$ 15. $\text{h}1$ $\text{f}c8$ 16. $\text{g}xb6$ $\text{g}xb6$ 17. $\text{g}xc4$ $\text{g}xc4$ **18. $\text{g}e2$ $\text{g}b4$**

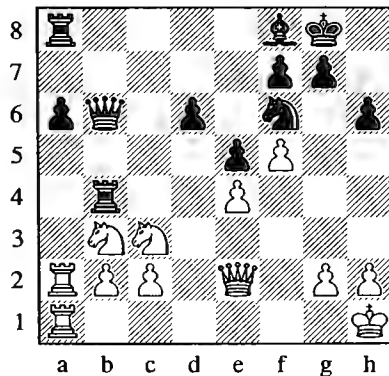
Karpov would go on to repeat the same position in two more games, both of which continued: 18... $\text{f}ac8$ 19. $\text{g}a2$ $\text{g}d8$ (19... $d5!$?) 20. $\text{f}a1$ $\text{g}b7$ 21. $\text{g}a4$ $\text{g}xa4$ At this point Karpov agreed a draw with Robert Byrne at the 1973 Leningrad Interzonal, despite having enjoyed success from the same position the previous year. The earlier game continued as follows: 22. $\text{g}xa4$ $\text{f}c6$ 23. $\text{g}d3$ $g6$ 24. $h3$ $\text{d}h5$ 25. $\text{g}a1$ $\text{d}f4$ Karpov – Stoica, Graz 1972. Despite his eventual defeat, Black is not doing badly at this stage, which explains Byrne's willingness to repeat the line as well as Karpov's decision to take a draw with him.

19. $\text{g}a2$

Karpov homes in on the weak a-pawn.

19...h6

An earlier game between two legends continued 19... $\text{g}b7$ 20. $\text{d}a5$ $\text{g}c7$ 21. $\text{d}d5$ $\text{d}xd5$ 22. $exd5$ with an edge for White although the game was eventually drawn, Geller – Fischer, Curacao 1962.

20. $\text{f}a1$ $\text{g}f8$ **21. $\text{g}a4!$**

By exchanging Black's active rook, Karpov eases the pressure on the e4-pawn. A much later game saw 21. $\text{g}xa6$ $\text{g}xa6$ 22. $\text{g}xa6$ $\text{g}b7$ 23. $\text{g}a5$ $\text{g}c6$ 24. $\text{g}a6$, Kononenko – Pasko, Alushta 2004, and now after 24... $\text{g}xe4!$ 25. $\text{d}xe4$ $\text{g}xe4$ 26. $h3$ $\text{g}xc2$ Black should not be worse.

21... $\text{f}c8!$?

The former world title contender plays for an exchange sacrifice. The idea is well known, but not quite sufficient in the present position.

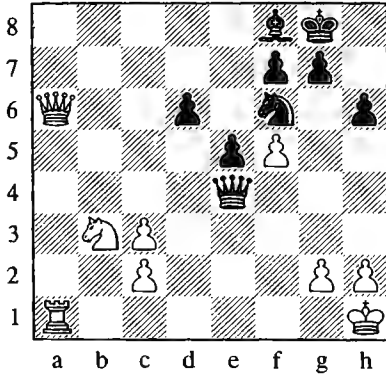
A better choice was 21... $\text{g}xa4$ 22. $\text{g}xa4$ $\text{g}b7$, which has been played in a few games. Black is a bit passive, but he has fared okay in practice.

22. $\text{g}xb4$ $\text{g}xb4$ 23. $\text{g}xa6$ $\text{f}xc3$

After 23... $\text{g}c4$ 24. $\text{g}xc4$ $\text{f}xc4$ 25. $\text{g}e1$ $d5$ 26. $exd5$ $\text{g}b4$ 27. $\text{g}xe5$ Black is too far behind in material.

24. bxc3 Wxe4

If Black could collect just one more pawn then he would be okay, but as it stands he does not quite have enough compensation for the exchange.

25. Wd3 !

The queen returns to the centre without delay.

25... Wf4

After 25... Wc6 26. c4 White would follow with Re1 and Qd2-e4 , with good winning chances.

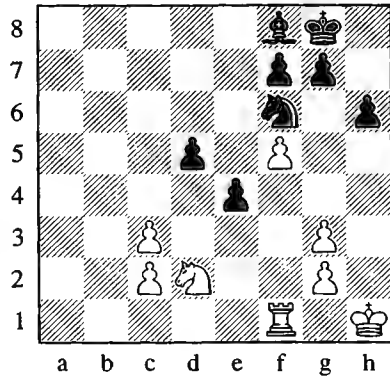
26. Rf1 Wh4 27. Qd2 !

Karpov exchanges queens under his own terms. After the less accurate 27. c4 ?! Qg4 28. Wg3 Wxg3 29. hxg3 Qe3 the position is equal according to Karpov.

27... e4

27... d5 ? 28. Qf3 wins.

Another line is 27... Qe7 28. Wf2 Qg4 (28... Qd8 29. Rb1) 29. Qf3 Wh5 30. h3 Qf6 31. Qd4 Wg5 32. Qc6 Qf8 33. Wf3 when White has stopped Black's play, and can aim to improve his own position by transferring his rook to the eighth rank.

28. Wg3 Wxg3 29. hxg3 d5 30. Rb1

30. Ra1 ! is more precise, as it is useful for White to have the option of a check on the eighth rank.

30... Qd6 31. Qg1 Qxg3

Black regains a pawn, but White still has four remaining.

31... Qg4 !? might have given White more chances to go wrong:

a) Karpov likes the response 32. Rb5 , despite the fact it gives up a piece. Perhaps he missed something in the following variation: 32... e3 33. Rxd5 e2 34. Qf3 Qxg3 35. Rd8 † (After 35. c4 Qh2 36. Qe1 Qxe1 37. Rd8 † Qh7 38. Rf8 Qg4 39. Rxe2 Qb4 Black is unlikely to lose.) 35... Qh7 36. Rf8 Qe5 !! 37. Rxe5 Qxe5 And Black is certainly not losing.

b) However, White can improve on the above line with 32. Qf1 ! Qe3 † 33. Qe2 Qxf5 34. g4 when Black is in trouble.

32. Qf1 Qh5

Black can choose between several worse endgames, and it is hard to determine which one gives the best practical chance of surviving.

One alternative is 32...e3 33.♖f3 ♖e4 34.♖b3 ♙f4 (34...♙f2 35.♗e2) and now White can maintain a substantial advantage with 35.g4!.

33.♗e2?

It is a pity that after playing the whole game so well, Karpov now makes a bad mistake. Even in his subsequent analysis he did not mention the much stronger 33.♖b5! ♖f4 34.♖b8† ♗h7 35.♖e8 when White wins, as he will break up Black's pawn chain with c4.

33...♙f4?

It looks as though both players were in time trouble. Black could have drawn with: 33...♖f4† 34.♗f1 (34.♗e3 ♖xg2† 35.♗e2 ♖f4† is a repetition.) 34...e3! (I can imagine Karpov planned for 34...♖h5, when he presumably planned to repeat moves once just to get closer to the time control. The text move is much better though.) 35.♖f3 e2† 36.♗g1 ♗f8 It is practically impossible for Black to lose the ending with the pawn on e2.

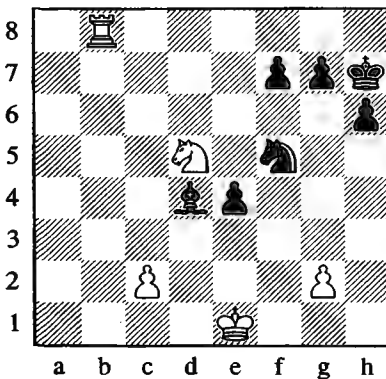
34.♖f1 ♙e5 35.♖e3 ♙xc3 36.♖b8†

36.♖xd5 would have won easily.

36...♗h7 37.♖xd5 ♖g3† 38.♗f2?

Another inaccuracy. After 38.♗e3 ♙e5 39.♖b6 Black cannot resist.

38...♙d4†! 39.♗e1 ♖xf5



40.♖b4!

Luckily for Karpov, even after the last mistake he is still winning.

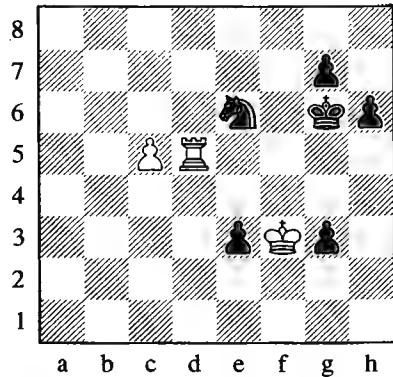
40...♖e3 41.♗e2 ♙c5 42.♖b5 ♖xd5 43.♖xc5

Despite the overall material equality, White is winning relatively easily as Black cannot handle the c-pawn.

43...♖f4† 44.♗f2

44.♗e3 was also good enough: 44...♖xg2† 45.♗xe4 ♖h4 (45...g5 46.c4 ♗g7 47.♖e5 ♖f4 48.c5 ♗f6 49.c6 ♖e6 50.♖d5 h5 51.♖d6 ♗e7 52.♖d7† wins), 46.c4 f5† (46...g5 47.♖d5) 47.♖xf5 ♖xf5 48.♗xf5 g6† (after 48...♗g8 49.♗e6 ♗f8 50.♗d7 White promotes with check) 49.♗e5 ♗g7 50.c5 ♗f7 51.♗d6 ♗e8 52.♗c7 and White wins.

44...♗g6 45.g3 ♖e6 46.♖d5 f5 47.c4 f4 48.c5 e3† 49.♗f3 ♖g3



50.♗g3

Karpov's king will restrain the enemy pawns, while his rook and pawn decide the outcome on the other side.

50...h5 51.c6 e2

After 51...h4† 52.♗xh4 e2 53.♖e5 ♖d4 White wins with 54.c7! (or 54.♖xe2!) 54...♖f3† 55.♗g3 ♖xe5 56.♗f2+.

52.♟f2 ♟f6 53.♞d7

1-0

After this fine victory Karpov finished superbly, beating Korchnoi, drawing with Stein and Smyslov, then winning against Savon in the last round. This enabled him to share first prize with Stein, who had previously been leading by half a point. This was Karpov's first world class result against elite opposition, and many more would follow in the coming years. From this point it became clear that he would sooner or later become a contender for the highest title in chess.

Karpov's next event was the historic Hastings tournament, where his excellent form did not desert him, as evidenced by his score of four points from the first five games. Next he faced the former child prodigy Henrique Mecking of Brazil. Mecking became a strong grandmaster and would go on to win two interzonal tournaments, although he lost both of his candidate matches, first against Korchnoi and later against Polugaevsky. He was subsequently forced to take a long break from chess due to a serious illness. He only played one subsequent game with Karpov, which ended in a quick draw.

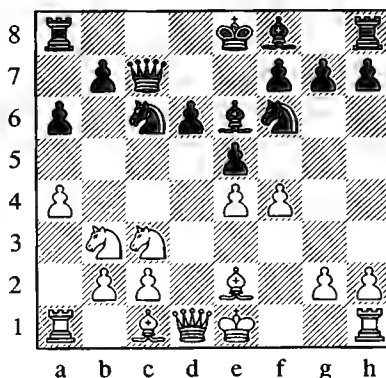
Game 25

Anatoly Karpov – Henrique Mecking

Hastings 1971-72

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♟f6
5.♟c3 a6 6.♞e2 e5 7.♟b3 ♞e6 8.f4 ♣c7
9.a4 ♟c6?

This was a new move, but unsurprisingly it failed to catch on. Some strong players have developed the knight here in certain 6.♞e2 lines, but they do not give up the bishop for the b3-knight.



10.f5!

Karpov weakens Black's control over the key d5-square.

10...♞xb3 11.cxb3 ♣b6

Played to prevent White from castling.

12.♞g5! ♞e7

After 12...♟d4 13.♞xf6 gxf6 14.♟d5 Black is in trouble.

13.♞xf6 ♞xf6 14.♟d5

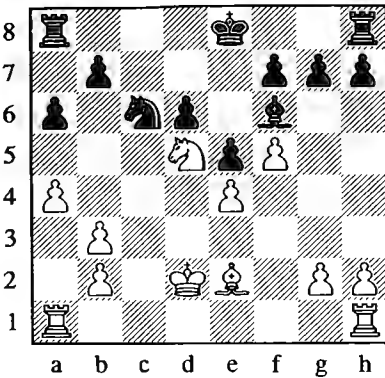
Karpov has already outplayed his opponent, but the win is still a long way off, and it is instructive to see how he converts his advantage.

14...♣a5†

Karpov mentions the line 14...♣d8 15.0-0 ♝c8 16.♞c4 when White has an overwhelming position.

15.♣d2 ♣xd2† 16.♟xd2

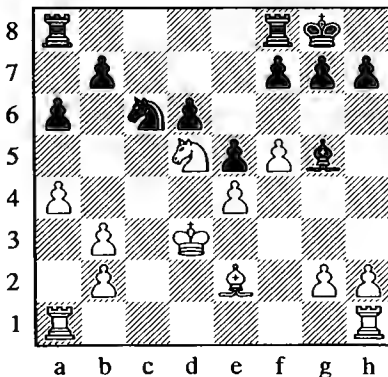
White has a large advantage as the d5-knight is very strong. He has good chances to gain control over the c-file, as well as prospects to gain space on either flank. At the same time Black has no serious weaknesses yet, and the opposite-coloured bishops might offer him drawing chances in certain types of endgame.



16...g5+ 17.f3 0-0

One would normally prefer to keep the king closer to the centre for the ending, but this approach also fails to solve Black's problems. For instance, after 17...0-0-0 18.h4 g6 19.g4 g5 20.f4 f6 Black loses a pawn.

Another possible continuation is 17...g6 18.f4 g5 19.g4 g6 20.f4 f6 21.g5 f7 22.f6 g8 23.f7 g9 24.f8 g10 25.f9 g11 26.f10 g12 27.f11 g13 28.f12 g14 29.f13 g15 30.f14 g16 31.f15 g17 32.f16 g18 33.f17 g19 34.f18 g20 35.f19 g21 36.f20 g22 37.f21 g23 38.f22 g24 39.f23 g25 40.f24 g26 41.f25 g27 42.f26 g28 43.f27 g29 44.f28 g30 45.f29 g31 46.f30 g32 47.f31 g33 48.f32 g34 49.f33 g35 50.f34 g36 51.f35 g37 52.f36 g38 53.f37 g39 54.f38 g40 55.f39 g41 56.f40 g42 57.f41 g43 58.f42 g44 59.f43 g45 60.f44 g46 61.f45 g47 62.f46 g48 63.f47 g49 64.f48 g50 65.f49 g51 66.f50 g52 67.f51 g53 68.f52 g54 69.f53 g55 70.f54 g56 71.f55 g57 72.f56 g58 73.f57 g59 74.f58 g60 75.f59 g61 76.f60 g62 77.f61 g63 78.f62 g64 79.f63 g65 80.f64 g66 81.f65 g67 82.f66 g68 83.f67 g69 84.f68 g70 85.f69 g71 86.f70 g72 87.f71 g73 88.f72 g74 89.f73 g75 90.f74 g76 91.f75 g77 92.f76 g78 93.f77 g79 94.f78 g80 95.f79 g81 96.f80 g82 97.f81 g83 98.f82 g84 99.f83 g85 100.f84 g86



18.h4!

Knocking back the bishop and obtaining the c1-square for the rooks.

18...g6 19.f4 g5 20.f4 g6 21.g4

White gains space, and threatens an attack as well.

21...f6 22.g4

Alternatively 21...f6 22.g4 23.g5 also offers excellent winning chances.

22...f6 23.g5 g6

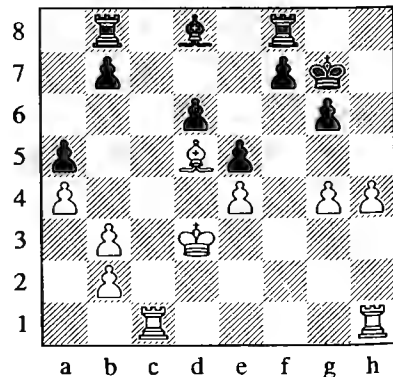
Alternatively 23...b5 24.axb5 f6 25.g5 and White is once again clearly better.

24.f6!

Karpov refuses to allow his opponent to close the kingside. It is harder for a defender to protect two wings at the same time.

24...h6 25.f6 g7

25...b5 may have been a better attempt, although White remains on top with 26.axb5 (the immediate 26.f6 is also good) 26...f6 27.f7 g8 28.f8 g9.



26.h5!

Karpov creates another potential plan of attack, namely to invade along the h-file.

26...g6

Moving the bishop to the queenside leaves the king vulnerable. On the other hand, placing it on the kingside with 26...♔g5 allows an invasion on the other flank with 27.♞c7, when Black is in big trouble.

27.♞h3 ♔c5

Black seals up the queenside.

28.♞f1 f6?

Black is anxious to remove the weakness on f7, but this move further weakens the light squares.

It should be noted that White was threatening to win immediately. For instance, after a move like 28...b6?, White breaks through with 29.h6† ♔g8 30.h7† ♔g7 31.h8=♞†, as pointed out by Mihail Marin in *Learn from the Legends*.

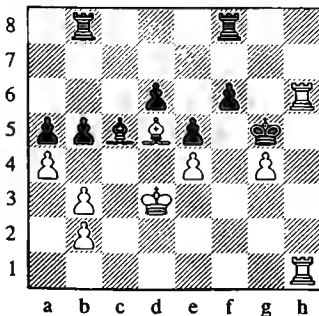
The best chance was 28...b5, hoping for some queenside activity, although Black's position remains highly unpleasant. After the natural 29.h6† ♔h7 30.axb5 ♞xb5, White's strongest continuation looks to be 31.g5!, when he enjoys a powerful grip over the position.

29.hxg6 ♔xg6 30.♞fh1

Suddenly Black's king is in mortal danger.

30...♞be8

After 30...b5 31.♞h6† ♔g5 White can win in fabulous style:



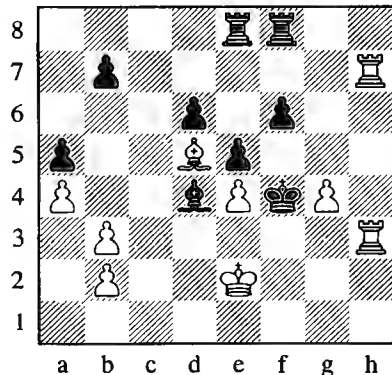
32.b4!! In opposite-coloured bishop endgames, such moves occur more often than one might expect. 32...axb4 (32...♙xb4 loses immediately to 33.♕e3 followed by mate) 33.a5 ♙d4 34.a6 (34.♞1h4 ♙xb2 35.♙e6 wins as well) 34...♔xg4 (34...♞be8 35.♕e2 ♔f4 36.♞g6 wins) 35.♞g6† ♔f3 36.♞f1† ♙f2 37.♙b3 Followed by mate in two.

31.♞h7

White starts weaving the mating net.

31...♔g5 32.♕e2! ♔f4 33.♞1h3 ♙d4

33...♔xg4 34.♞f3 wins.



34.♞g7!

1-0

Black resigned, as it is mate next move. This game not only demonstrated Karpov's skill at developing his positional advantage in the endgame, but also showcased his ability to develop lethal checkmating attacks with few pieces.

In the next seven rounds Karpov won three and drew four. He then stumbled against Korchnoi, who avenged his recent loss to Karpov at the Alekhine Memorial, taking a half point lead in the process. Korchnoi proceeded to draw his final game, leaving Karpov needing a win against Markland in order to tie for first prize. He achieved it by virtue of a masterful endgame performance.

1971 Summary

Training match versus Korchnoi: 3/6 (+2 =2 -2)

USSR Championship semi-final, Daugavpils (1st place): 13/17 (+9 =8 -0)

Student Olympiad, Puerto Rico (Board three): 7½/8 (+7 =1 -0)

USSR Armed Forces Team Championship (Board one): 7/11 (+6 =4 -1)

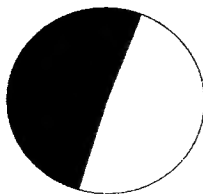
USSR Team Championship, Rostov on Don (junior board) 6½/7 (+6 =1 -0)

USSR Championship, Leningrad (4th place): 13/21 (+7 =12 -2)

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow (1st-2nd place): 11/15 (+5 =12 -0)

Hastings (1st-2nd place): 11/15 (+8 =6 -1)

Total 71.6% (+50 =46 -6)



Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1972

Rating 2630 (7-8 in the World)

Following a hectic twelve month period, Karpov was relatively inactive during the year that Fischer defeated Spassky to become the first non-Soviet world champion since 1946. This reversal in Soviet fortunes probably worked in Karpov's favour, as he would later receive even more support as the new contender. The Soviet Union desperately wanted the chess crown back, and their desire was only magnified by the Cold War. Chess had never before, and may never again play such a role in world politics! Karpov fully deserved all the help he received, due to his immense talent and the exceptional results he had achieved. He did not waste the investment that was made in him.

Karpov began the year by playing in the USSR Olympiad. After seven games he had a fifty percent score, at which point he met the sixth World Champion, Vassily Smyslov. Despite being fifteen years removed from his peak, the former champion was still a fierce competitor. Before this encounter they had only met once over the board, and on that occasion the old lion triumphed over his future successor.

Game 26

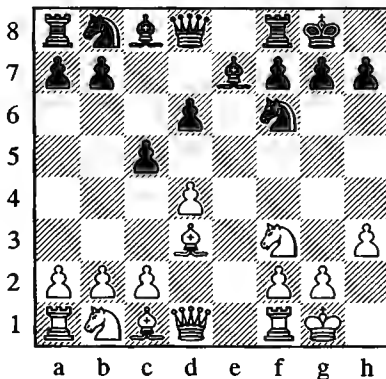
Anatoly Karpov – Vassily Smyslov

USSR Olympiad, Moscow 1972

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗xe5

Karpov only seldom tried 3.d4, and abandoned it altogether after suffering an unpleasant defeat against Bent Larsen, who played superbly.

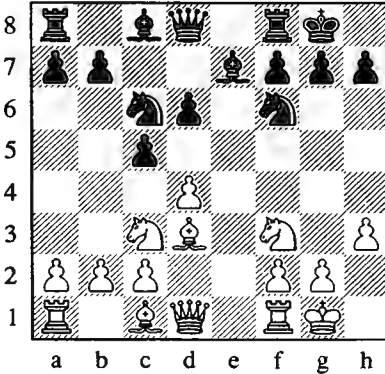
3...d6 4.♗f3 ♗xe4 5.d4 ♙e7 6.♙d3 ♗f6?! 7.h3 0-0 8.0-0 c5?!



This whole variation is unappealing for Black, as he gives up some space without gaining anything in return. 8...c6 looks better, followed by slow development.

9. ♖c3 ♖c6?!

With 9...b6!? Black can hope to exert pressure against the d5-pawn if White pushes it.



10. ♖e1!

Aside from being a generally useful move, this also takes the sting out of a future ...♖b4 by freeing the f1-square for the bishop.

10...a6 11.d5!

White wins a tempo and gains space at the same time.

11...♖a7

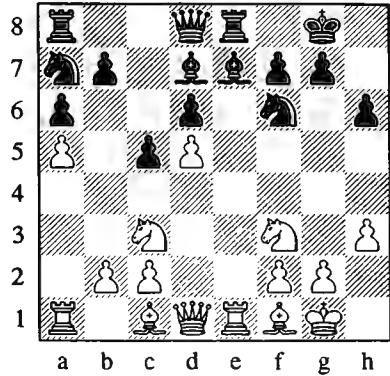
The point of White's rook move can be seen after 11...♖b4 12. ♖f1 ♖f5 13. ♖e2 when Black is practically forced to play 13...a5, and after 14.a3 White dominates the light squares on the queenside.

12.a4 ♖d7 13.a5 ♖e8 14. ♖f1

This move is a bit mysterious; perhaps Karpov wanted to overprotect the d5-pawn in anticipation of ...♖b5, as mentioned in the next note.

14...h6

14...♖b5 was possible; it would be in Black's interest to exchange pieces as his position is somewhat cramped. For this reason 15. ♖e2! looks like the most logical reply.



15. ♖f4 ♖f8 16. ♖xe8 ♖xc8 17. ♖h2 ♖d8 18. ♖d2 ♖c7

18...♖b5 19. ♖c4 ♖xc3 20.bxc3 ♖c7 looks better for Black than the game.

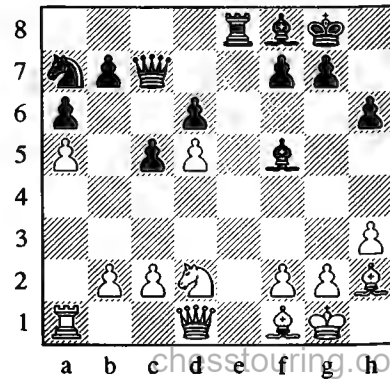
19. ♖de4

19. ♖c4!? would also retain a small edge.

19...♖xc4 20. ♖xc4 ♖f5 21. ♖d2

21. ♖f3!? is interesting as well.

21...♖e8



22.c3

Karpov is aiming to maintain a modest edge. One gets the impression that he had two things in his mind during this game. Obviously he was motivated by the desire to defeat his legendary opponent, but at the same time he wanted to make sure he would not lose.

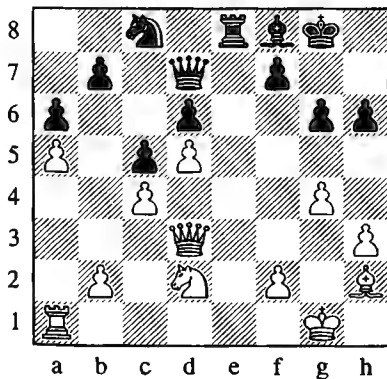
22...♞d8 23.♞b3 ♞d7 24.c4!?

Many players would have preferred to keep this square free for White's other pieces, especially the knight, but Karpov has other ideas. It looks like he wanted to restrict the enemy knight.

24...♘c8

After 24...g5 25.♙d3 ♙xd3 26.♞xd3 ♙g7 27.♞b1 White keeps a slight edge.

25.g4 ♙h7 26.♙d3 ♙xd3 27.♞xd3 g6



28.♞b1!

Karpov plans to open another file to keep Black busy on the queenside.

28...♙g7 29.b4 cxb4 30.♞xb4 ♞c7 31.♘b3 ♙e5 32.♙xe5 ♞xe5 33.♔g2

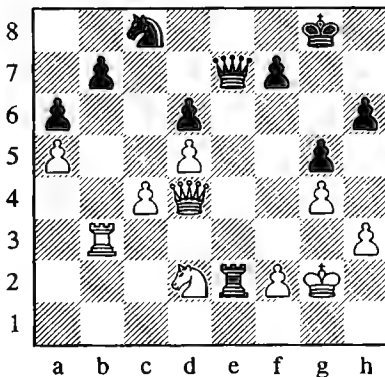
The king stands slightly better on g2. This type of small improving move was characteristic of Karpov's play.

33...g5?

This stabilizes the position of the rook on e5, but the cost in terms of the weakening of Black's kingside is too high. Better was 33...b6! in order to increase the influence of the knight. In the following line of analysis the knight moves more than it eventually will do for the remainder of the game: 34.axb6 ♘xb6 35.♘d4 (35.♘a5? ♘xd5) 35...♞c5 36.♘c6 ♞e8 37.♞d4 ♘d7 Black has good drawing chances.

34.♞d4 ♞e7 35.♘d2 ♞e1 36.♞b3 ♞e2

Black is trying to generate some activity, but he cannot achieve anything without his knight.



37.♔f3!

Karpov uses his king with style. Interestingly 37.♞b2!! was stronger, even though White steps into a pin. Fortunately there is no means to exploit this and Black drops the b7-pawn.

37...♞e5 38.♞e3 f6?

In fortifying the e5-square, Black weakens his kingside even further. 38...♞xe3† 39.fxe3 f6 would have been a slight improvement, although Black is still very passive.

The best chance was probably 38...♔f8, intending to wait and see how White intends

to continue. A likely continuation is 39.♠e4 ♣c7 40.♞c3 when White maintains a large plus, although there is still some work required to win the game.

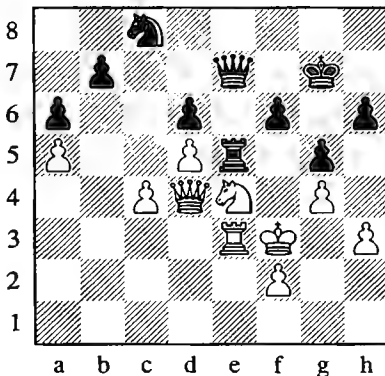
39.♠e4!

Karpov spots a new weakness.

39...♣g7?!

The alternative 39...f5 is not much better, and after 40.♠g3 f×g4† 41.h×g4 White should win here as well.

39...♞f8 is more resilient, although after 40.♠g2 f5 41.♠d2 ♠xe3 42.♞xe3 ♞f7 43.f4 f×g4 44.f×g5 Black is in trouble.



40.♠g2!

The king's work is finished, so he retreats in order to prepare ♠g3, after which the rook capture will no longer occur with check.

40...♞c7?

This loses at once. 40...♠f7 was the only chance, although after 41.♞d3 White maintains a massive advantage.

41.♠f3!

This move reveals a second purpose of the king retreat. Black's position collapses, as he has no way to defend f6.

41...b5 42.axb6

1-0

This was Karpov's first win over a former world champion. At this point in their respective careers the two great players were separated by just ten rating points; Karpov was rated 2630 and Smyslov 2620. Their personal score eventually ended with Karpov winning three, with eleven draws and one loss – which occurred in their very first encounter. Karpov finished the tournament by beating Taimanov and Stein. Overall he won four games, lost one and drew four.

Next came the Graz Student Olympiad. The previous year Karpov played on the third board, but this time he was number one. He started slowly, drawing against two unrated players, but in the finals he found his form, winning five games and drawing four.

Later in 1972, Karpov represented the Soviet Union at the Skopje Olympiad for the first time. He was on fine form in the preliminaries and won all four games, and won his first game in the finals as well. Then he suffered a reversal against Padevski of Bulgaria, who ground out a win in an isolated pawn endgame. It seems that the rising superstars from the Soviet Union had a tendency to struggle against Bulgarian opponents at Olympiads – eight years later, Kasparov was taken apart by Krum Georgiev in the 1980 Malta event.

After that setback, Karpov really showed his class. He won three games in a row, then made a draw followed by another win. His next opponent was Arthur Bisguier of the United States. This was their second meeting – they had previously drawn in Caracas and had not played each other since. The American played a total of forty three games against the world champions, starting with Euwe and finishing with Fischer. He won one of those games, drew sixteen and lost twenty six.

Game 27

Arthur Bisguier – Anatoly Karpov

Skopje Olympiad 1972

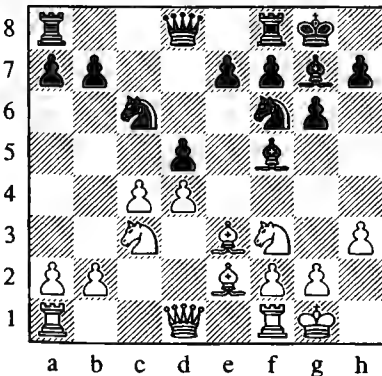
1.c4 c5

Karpov used this move in the early and mid-1970s, but gradually switched to other systems as time went on. One of his main weapons was 1...e5, and he also played 1...d6 in several games, followed by 2.d3 e5, although he sometimes played 2...e6 there as well.

2.d3 g6 3.d3 f3 g7 4.e3?

This variation has little power, as long as the black knight has not committed itself to c6. If White wishes to fight for an advantage he should prefer either 4.g3 or 4.d4 cxd4 5.dxd4.

4...d6 5.d4 0-0 6.g2 e2 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.0-0 d6 9.h3 g5 10.g2



The players have transposed to an innocuous line of the Grunfeld. It could also be viewed as a reversed Tarrasch Defence, with an extra tempo for White.

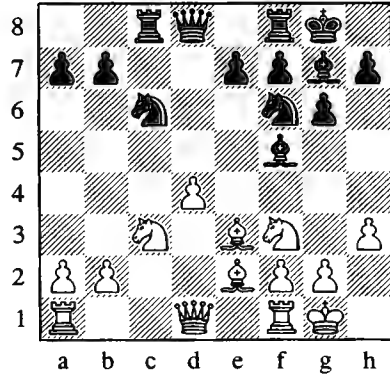
10...dxc4!

Karpov forces an isolated pawn position. He played well and scored highly in positions of

this type. Instead after 10...e8 11.c5! d4 12.e1 White has done well.

11.gxc4 e8 12.g2?

This move is too passive. 12.e1, 12.a3 and 12.a4 were all better alternatives.



12...g6!

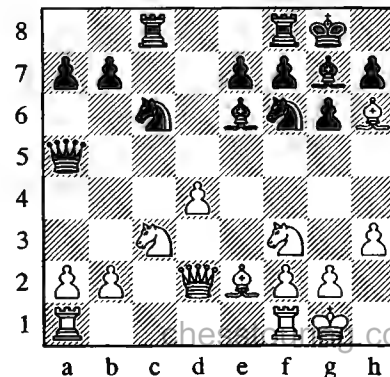
Halting the d-pawn. If it got to d5 it might exert a choking effect on the black position, assuming White could protect it properly.

13.a2 a5!

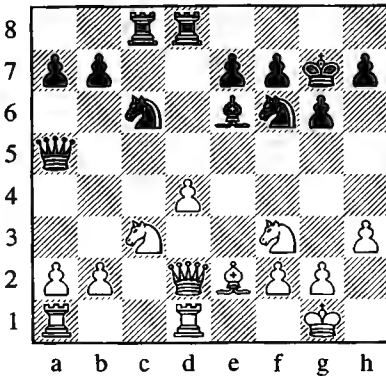
In the next few moves Karpov efficiently directs his forces against the isolated pawn.

14.g6?

On principle, minor piece exchanges should help the side playing against the isolated pawn.



14...♞fd8 15.♙xg7 ♜xg7 16.♞fd1



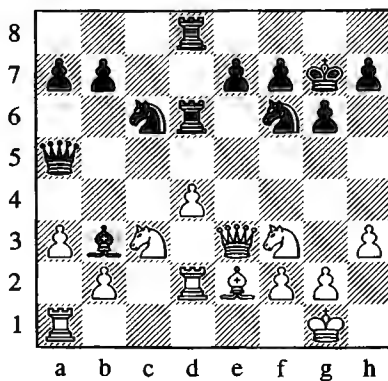
16...♞d6!

Karpov simply increases the pressure against the d4-pawn. As it turns out, this rook is destined to play a starring role in future events.

17.♞e3 ♞cd8 18.a3?! ♙b3!

Preventing White's intended b2-b4, after which his extra space on the queenside would have given him something to cheer about.

19.♞d2



19...♞e6!

After posting all his pieces on good squares, Karpov inserts an unpleasant rook move.

20.♞f4?

Paradoxically, the queen would have been in less danger on the d-file, and 20.♞d3 should have been preferred. Black should respond with 20...a6!, stopping ♞b5. At this point exchanging bishops with 21.♙d1 is in White's interest. Normally it would not be the case, but it is worth it here in order to get the d1-square for a rook. White's situation is still far from pleasant, but he would have reasonable chances to resist.

20...♙d5!

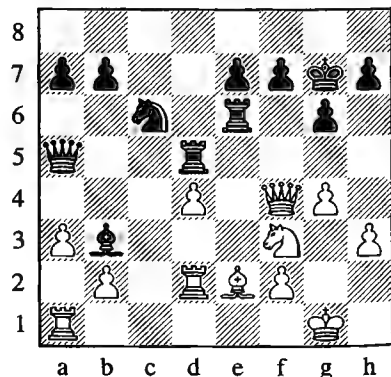
Winning the d5-square for his rook, which will function there superbly.

21.♙xd5 ♞xd5

Suddenly White's queen and rook are under pressure, and 22...♞f5 followed by ...♞xf3 is a serious threat.

22.g4

White has to resort to this move, as after 22.♙d3 ♞f6 23.♞e3 ♙xd4 24.♙xd4 ♞xd4 Black has won a pawn.



22...g5!

Great stuff from Karpov – after some fine positional play, he now exploits his tactical chances.

23. ♖g3

The queen is out of play here and never gets back into the game.

23... ♜f6!

Threatening to take on f3.

24. ♖d1 ♖c4

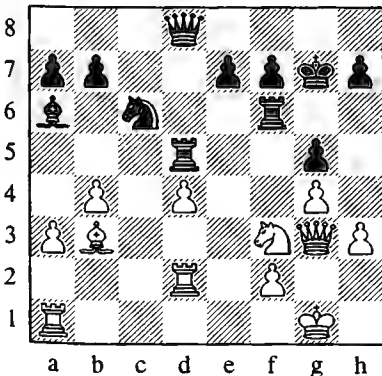
24... ♜b5 was also strong, as after 25. ♜d3 ♖d5 White is in trouble.

25. b3 ♖a6 26. b4 ♖d8

Black is also better after 26... ♖xb4 27. ♖b3 ♜b5, but the position is more complicated than in the game.

27. ♖b3

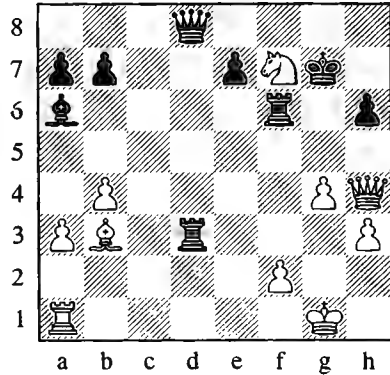
Another line goes 27. ♜aa2 ♖c4! (better than 27... ♖xd4 28. ♖xd4 ♜xd4 29. ♖e5) 28. ♜ac2 b5 when White is practically paralysed. Play might continue 29. ♖e2 ♖xe2 30. ♜xe2 ♜xf3! (but not 30... ♖xd4? 31. ♖xd4 ♜xd4 32. ♖e5) 31. ♖xf3 ♖xd4 and Black is a pawn up.

**27... ♖xd4! 28. ♜xd4**

If 28. ♖xd5 ♖xf3† 29. ♖xf3 ♖xd2 30. ♖e5 ♖f4 31. ♖xf4 ♜xf4 Black should win comfortably with his extra pawn.

28... ♜xd4 29. ♖xg5?

Bisguier wants to stir things up, but goes down quickly. White can prolong the end with 29. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 30. ♜e1 e6 31. ♖e3 ♜f4, but Black should still win with his extra pawn.

29... ♜d3! 30. ♖h4 h6 31. ♖xf7**31... ♖d4!**

Black is not only ahead in material but his pieces also work better, so White cannot even hope to resist.

32. ♜e1 ♜xh3!**0-1**

Karpov followed this victory with two wins and one draw from the final three games. Altogether he scored 13/15 on the fifth board – an outstanding result for his first Olympiad.

Karpov participated in only one individual tournament in 1972, in San Antonio, Texas. The field was packed with strong American players, in addition to a strong contingent of foreign grandmasters including Petrosian, Portisch, Keres, Larsen and Hort. In the first round Karpov faced the American IM Anthony Saily with the black pieces. It was the only time they met over the board. Saily faced all the world champions from Tal to Karpov; out of thirteen games he drew three and lost ten. He wrote a book entitled *The Battle of Chess*

Ideas, in which he discusses his meetings with those elite players.

Game 28

Anthony Saidy – Anatoly Karpov

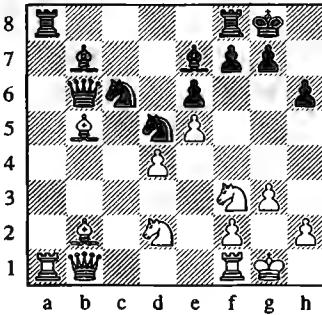
San Antonio 1972

1. $\text{d}3$ 2. $\text{f}6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ 4. $\text{b}5$

Karpov played this ambitious move three times and only dropped half a point.

3. $\text{e}2$

A year later Korchnoi tried 3.c3!?, playing against the b5-pawn and in the centre: 3... $\text{e}b7$ 4.a4 a6 5.e3 $\text{d}c6$ 6.d4 e6 7.b4 $\text{e}e7$ 8. $\text{d}bd2$ $\text{d}a7$ 9. $\text{e}d3$ 0-0 10.e4 d6 11.0-0 c5 12.bxc5 dxc5 13. $\text{e}b2$ $\text{d}c6$ 14.e5 $\text{d}d5$ 15.axb5 axb5 16. $\text{c}b1$ cxd4 17.cxd4 h6 18. $\text{e}xb5$ $\text{c}b6$



Black obtained decent positional compensation for the pawn, and later White blundered and lost, Korchnoi – Karpov, Moscow 1973.

3... $\text{e}b7$ 4.0-0 e6 5.d3 $\text{e}e7$

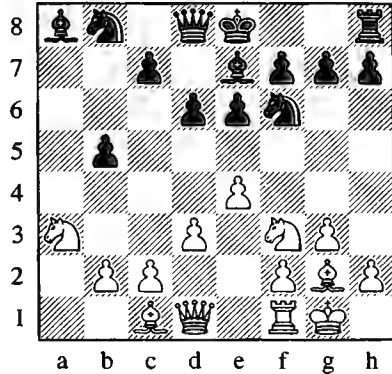
In 1978 Karpov played with 5...d6 against Vukic, and the game deviated in a draw after a long fight.

6.e4 d6 7.a4

White tends to score better with the standard

King's Indian Attack plan, involving moves like $\text{e}e1$ and $\text{d}bd2$ followed by c3 and d4.

7...a6 8.axb5 axb5 9. $\text{e}e8$ $\text{e}xa8$ 10. $\text{d}a3$



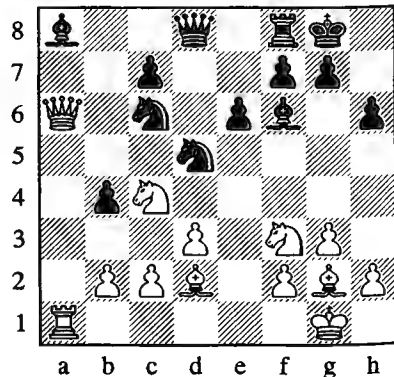
11...b4

The pawn can be attacked on this square, but it can be defended as well.

11. $\text{d}c4$ 0-0 12. $\text{e}d2$ $\text{d}c6$ 13. $\text{c}a1$ d5 14.exd5 $\text{d}xd5$!

Karpov chooses to go for a slow position. It was not an easy decision, as the white knight is well placed on c4. The alternative 14...exd5 15. $\text{d}ce5$ would have led to an equal position.

15. $\text{c}a6$ $\text{e}f6$ 16. $\text{e}a1$ h6



17. ♖e1

In some ways the position is easy to play for White, but in other respects it is hard. White has a stable position and a lot of choices, as Black threatens very little. On the other hand it is not easy to choose between the numerous options of roughly equal value.

17... ♖e7 18. ♖ce5 ♖d6 19. ♖c4

White could not resist the temptation of this indirect draw offer. Simpler was 19. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 20. d4 ♖a8 21. ♖c4 with an equal position.

19... ♖c5

Karpov wants to play on.

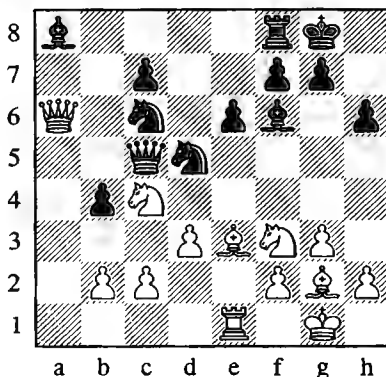
20. ♖e3!?

Black's eventual victory comes as a result of his subsequent domination of the dark squares, so one might say that the text move is the first step towards White's eventual demise. At the moment there are a lot of pieces on the board, so White does not have to worry too much about the dark squares, but the more pieces are exchanged, the more White's sensitivity on the dark squares will grow.

I would personally prefer 20. ♖a1, which would just hold the position, although Saily thinks there is nothing wrong with the move he played. The position was equal before and remains the same after this move as well, so the American – who is not only a decent chess player but a medical doctor as well – certainly has a point. In chess certain things are a matter of taste; it is one of the things that makes the game so fascinating.

By the way, Portisch later produced a positional masterpiece to defeat Saily in the same event, helped at one point by the move ♖xb6, exchanging his bishop for Saily's knight. On the other hand the American also enjoyed success against a legendary player by utilizing the same concept: in 1993 he defeated

Korchnoi after exchanging his bishop for an enemy knight in the early stages of the game.



20... ♖xe3 21. ♖xe3 ♖e7 22. ♖fd2 ♖d5!

Karpov does not want to take on g2, as White's remaining knights would be strong enough to counter his bishop. Instead he allows the exchange, but only on his own terms, when the recapture ...exd5 would cost White his treasured outpost on c4.

23. ♖e4!?

White wants to simplify, but he goes about it in an unfortunate way. More promising was: 23. ♖b3 ♖c6 (23... ♖xc4 24. ♖xc5 ♖xa6 25. ♖xa6 ♖xb2 26. ♖b1 ♖c3 27. ♖b3 White soon regains the pawn with equal chances.) 24. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 25. ♖a1 ♖xc4 26. ♖xc6 ♖xb3 27. ♖xb3 ♖xb2 28. ♖a8 White is a pawn down, but he should be able to draw the opposite-coloured bishop ending.

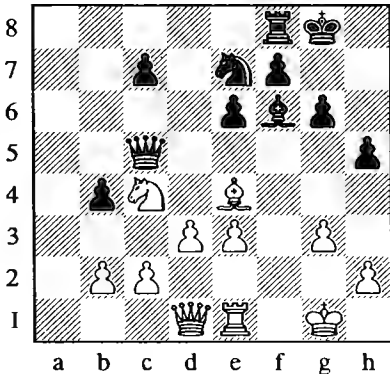
It was also reasonable to play 23. ♖a1 intending to exchange queens on a5.

23... ♖xc4 24. ♖xc4 h5 25. ♖a1!?

Saily brings back his queen to defend, but he could have played more actively with: 25. ♖a1! White can generate enough play with his rook. 25... ♖g5 26. ♖b7 h4 (or 26... ♖d5 27. ♖a8 ♖xe3 28. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 29. ♖xb4† and

White is not worse) 27. ♖a8 ♘d5 28. ♙xf8+ ♜xf8 29. ♗c8† ♝e7 30. ♙xd5 exd5 31. ♗xc7† And White holds.

25...g6 26. ♖d1



27...h4!

Karpov softens his opponent up on the dark squares.

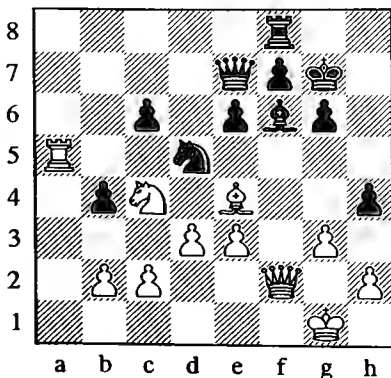
27. ♗e2 ♗g5 28. ♗f3 ♝g7!

This is typical of Karpov; the king move has no special purpose, other than providing a small but definite improving of his position.

29. ♗f4 ♗c5

Black needs his queen to develop an attack on the dark squares.

30. ♖a1 ♘d5 31. ♗f2 c6! 32. ♖a5 ♗e7



33.g4!

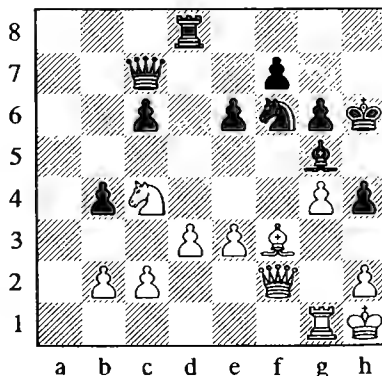
This leads to a further weakening of the dark squares. Though it was not much fun, White should have continued to defend this pawn on the g3-square and only advance it as a last resort.

33...♗c7 34. ♖a1 ♙g5 35. ♜h1

White can do nothing but wait passively.

35...♜h6 36. ♖g1 ♘f6 37. ♙f3 ♖d8?!

It is hard to evaluate this move, apart from calling it sly. As Saïdy points out, "it has NO value *unless* I overlook the positional threat - which I did".



38. ♖a1?

For reasons that will become obvious, White should have preferred 38. ♗e2.

38...b3!

Karpov seizes the opportunity to open the position and fracture his opponent's pawn chain. In the resulting position his bishop will work superbly, while Saïdy's bishop is restricted by the enemy pawns and has no target to attack.

39. ♖a6 bxc2 40. ♗xc2 ♘d5 41. ♗d2?

Maybe White was short of time and did not realize he had passed the 40 move mark. When

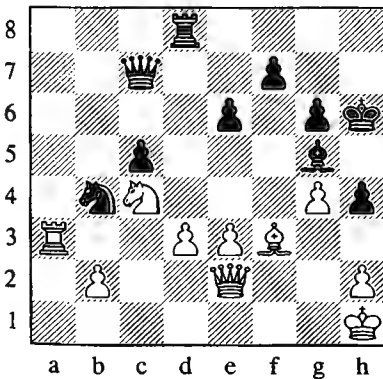
I asked Saidy about the game he said: “Yes, I was always in zeitnot in those days.” His last move is directed against ... $\text{b}4$, but the queen is stepping into a different type of hazard. Instead White should have preferred 41. $\text{c}2$ $\text{b}4$ 42. $\text{a}3$.

41...c5?!

Perhaps Karpov was also playing too fast, as he missed a direct refutation of White's last move: 41... $\text{d}3$! 42. $\text{d}3$ $\text{c}3$ $\text{f}4$ 43. $\text{c}6$ $\text{c}3$ 44. $\text{c}3$ $\text{c}3$ 45. $\text{e}4$ $\text{b}8$ And Black is winning.

42.c2 b4 43.a3

Another line runs as follows: 43. $\text{b}6$ $\text{d}7$ (43... $\text{a}7$!?) 44. $\text{g}1$ (44. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}5$; 44. $\text{b}7$ $\text{d}8$ 45. $\text{d}7$ $\text{c}7$ 46. $\text{e}5$ $\text{c}7$ 47. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}8$ Black wins the d3-pawn) 44... $\text{g}7$ (44... $\text{d}8$ 45. $\text{d}4$ 45. $\text{b}7$ (45. $\text{f}1$ $\text{d}3$) 45... $\text{d}8$ 46. $\text{d}7$ $\text{d}7$ and White drops the d3-pawn.



43...g7 44.g2 f6

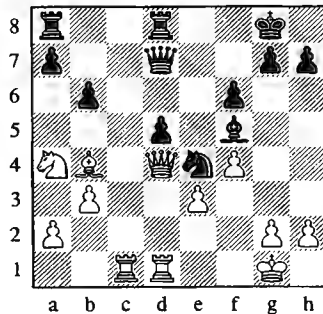
Karpov follows a cunning plan: he wants to exchange knights. Once this has been achieved, there will be nothing to stop his bishop from becoming overwhelmingly powerful.

45.f1 d6 46.c2?

White does nothing to prevent the knight exchange. It is a common mistake – the

defender allows exchanges, hoping that the simplification will bring him closer to a draw when in fact the opposite is true. The temptation is especially great in positions with opposite-coloured bishops.

The same theme has been illustrated in many games involving the great champions of the past. The following is a good example:

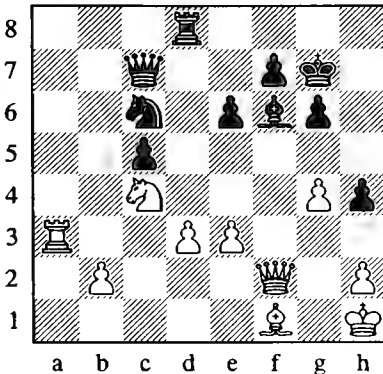


24. $\text{d}3$? White should have manoeuvred his knight to e1 in order to defend g2. 24... $\text{d}3$! And in Kotov – Borvinnik, Moscow 1955, the first Soviet Champion got a superior position and went on to win a famous endgame. Other shining examples of this theme include Matulovic – Borvinnik, USSR vs. Rest of the World 1970, as well as the more recent game Kasparov – Vallejo Pons, Linares 2002.

Returning to the main game, let us consider how White might have improved. Avoiding the exchange with 46. $\text{g}1$ $\text{d}5$ 47. $\text{d}2$ was unsatisfactory, as after 47... $\text{b}8$ 48. $\text{a}2$ $\text{e}7$ White is very passive, and Black should be able to break in sooner or later.

A better try was 46. $\text{h}3$!?. This does not fully save White from suffering, but at least it sets up an obstacle: 46... $\text{e}5$ 47. $\text{h}2$! Now Black cannot get out of the pin without exchanging queens. 47... $\text{g}5$ (after 47... $\text{b}7$ 48. $\text{g}2$ $\text{b}4$ 49. $\text{d}5$ $\text{e}1$ 50. $\text{g}1$ White is very much alive) 48. $\text{g}2$ $\text{d}7$ 49. $\text{b}3$ (or

49.♞c3 ♘xc4 50.♟xc7 ♞xc7 51.♞xc4 ♘xb2) 49...♘xc4 50.♟xc7 ♞xc7 51.dxc4 Black has excellent winning chances, but the game is not completely over.



46...♗e5! 47.♗xc5 ♟xc5

From the time of the first minor piece exchange, it took Karpov a further twenty seven moves to swap all the minor pieces except for the opposite-coloured bishops.

48.b3 ♞d7 49.e4

This gives Black even more dark squares on which to play, but White's position was already beyond saving. After 49.♞a5 ♟c3 50.♞b5 ♞a7 Black invades.

49...♟g5!

Black directs his forces against the vulnerable h2-pawn.

50.♟e2 ♞b7 51.♟f3 ♗c5! 52.♞a5?

A blunder in a hopeless position. White could have struggled on with 52.♔g2, but is unlikely to last much longer after 52...♟c1.

52...♟d2
0-1

This was a masterful demonstration of how to handle a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops. Saidy did not make many obvious

mistakes. I wonder if he was subsequently consoled by the fact that Karpov did something similar to Kasparov in their second world championship match thirteen years later – see Game 75 on page 423.

Karpov followed this first round win by powering ahead to a score of 6/7, courtesy of wins over, amongst others, Browne and Byrne, as well as a draw with Petrosian. In round eight he faced Svetozar Gligoric, who was firmly established as the top Yugoslav player and had formerly been ranked among the very best in the world. He played all the world champions from Euwe to Anand, missing only Kramnik and Topalov. Out of 183 encounters, he won twenty three games, drew 109 and lost fifty one. Karpov and Gligoric had only played once before, and drew. Their lifetime result is 7-3 in favour of Karpov, who achieved four victories and six draws with no defeats.

Game 29

Anatoly Karpov – Svetozar Gligoric

San Antonio 1972

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♗f6
5.0-0 ♗c7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3
♗b8

Karpov's lifetime result against the Breyer is seven wins and nine draws without a loss.

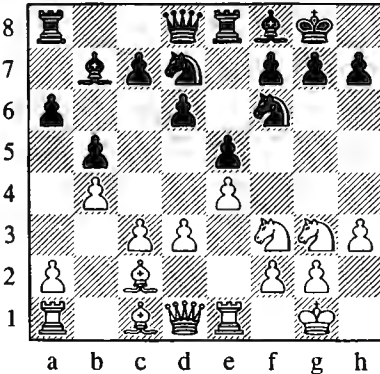
10.d3

In the early seventies Karpov played this unassuming move three times, dropping only half a point. Gligoric would go on to repeat the Breyer against Karpov on three subsequent occasions, but with little success. Each time Karpov opted for the main line with 10.d4, and the Yugoslav grandmaster only achieved a single draw.

10...♖bd7

Black can also play in the style of the Chigorin by means of 10...♗c5!? 11.♖bd2 ♖c6, although White may be able to benefit from the fact that his light-squared bishop has not been forced to retreat to c2.

11.♖bd2 ♖b7 12.♖f1 ♖c5 13.♗c2 ♗e8
14.♖g3 ♗f8 15.b4 ♖cd7

**16.d4 h6**

Up to this point both sides have played normal moves, but the text is rare. 16...a5 is the main line, and 16...g6 has also been seen regularly.

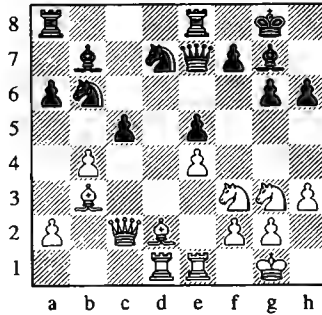
17.♗d2 ♖b6 18.♗d3

This small nudge of the bishop stops two of Black's ideas, namely ...♖c4 and ...a5. As is typical for Karpov, the move is not only preventing but also building, as it prepares an eventual c3-c4.

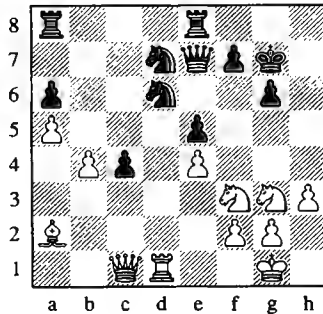
18...♗c8

The following year Spassky tried to improve with 18...g6. It is worth checking the course of the game, as it was remarkable: 19.♗c2 ♖fd7 20.♗ad1. ♗g7 (Kasparov recommends 20...c5) 21.dxc5 dxc5 22.c4! Revealing the building function of White's 18th move. 22...bxc4 23.♗xc4 ♗e7?! (23...♖xc4! 24.♗xc4

♗e6 25.♗e3 ♗d6 would have been equal according to the winner.) 24.♗b3 c5



25.a4!! Karpov demonstrates a superb handling of the initiative as well. 25...c4 26.♗a2 ♗c6 27.a5 ♗a4 28.♗c1 ♖c8 29.♗xh6 ♗xd1 30.♗xd1 ♖d6? 31.♗xg7 ♗xg7



32.♗g5! f6 33.♗g4 ♗h7 34.♖h4 1-0 Karpov – Spassky, Moscow 1973.

19.♗c2 ♗d7?!

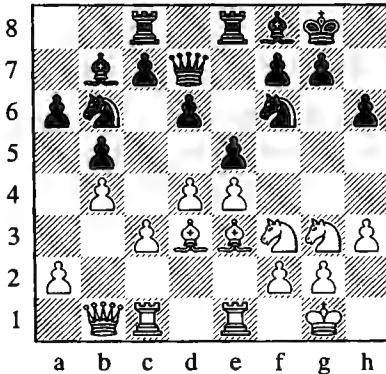
Black should have opted for a complicated middlegame with 19...exd4! 20.cxd4 c5 21.bxc5 dxc5 22.d5 c4 23.♗f1 ♖a4. The resulting position is double-edged.

20.♗ad1 ♗c6 21.♗e3 ♖a4 22.♗c1 ♖b6 23.♗b1

Karpov wants to keep the queens on the board. Another possibility was 23.♖d2!?, aiming to transfer the knight to a5 or play f4.

23...exd4 24.cxd4 (Also after 24.♗xd4 ♖e6 25.♘b3 ♜e8 the position looks balanced.) 24...♜xc2 25.♞xc2 d5 26.e5 ♘fd7 Black has equal chances as his knight will be strong on c4.

23...♜d7



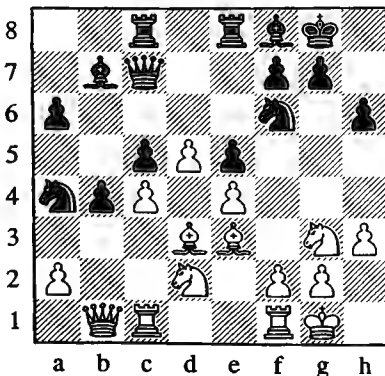
24.♘d2!

Intending to gain space with f4.

24...c5 25.bxc5 dxc5 26.d5 ♘a4 27.c4!

Otherwise Black would play ...c4 himself.

27...b4 28.♞f1! ♜c7



29.f4

Karpov handles the closed position with great skill, obtaining more and more space.

29...♘d7 30.♜c2 ♘c3 31.f5!

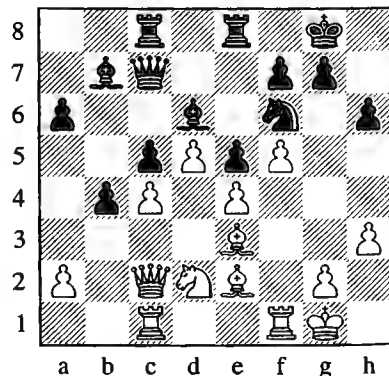
The position is closed and Karpov plays accordingly. He increases his space advantage while avoiding any chance of Black securing an outpost on e5.

31...♘f6 32.♘e2!

The side with a space advantage is not normally supposed to exchange pieces, but the knight on c3 was an unpleasant piece to live with. In fact the text move was another example of Karpov playing with more than one purpose, as he also cleared the path of the g-pawn to launch an attack.

It is worth noting that White could have won a pawn with 32.♘f3 ♗e7 33.♗d2, but after 33...♘h7 Black will obtain some compensation thanks to his control over the dark squares.

32...♘xe2† 33.♗xc2 ♗d6



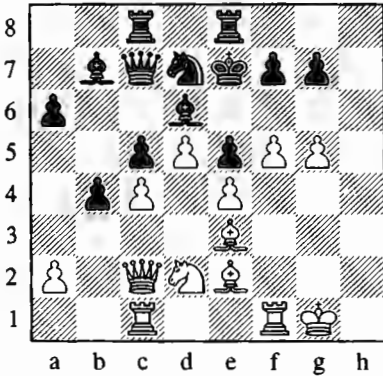
34.g4! ♜f8!

Gligroric is a King's Indian expert and fully understands the power of White's impending pawn storm. He knows it would be futile to try and prevent it, so instead he evacuates his king.

35.h4 ♖e7 36.g5

Karpov pushes his opponent back by increasing his own space.

36...hxg5 37.hxg5 ♘d7



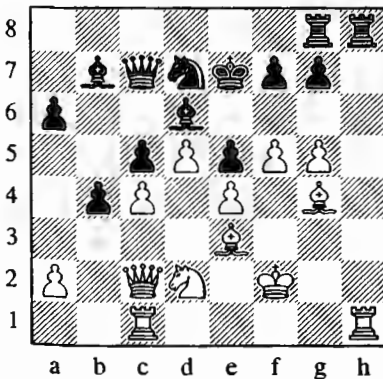
38.♙g4!

Even in closed positions one should not become lazy at improving the pieces to the fullest extent possible.

38...♞g8 39.♔f2!

Karpov improves his king and starts fighting for the only open file.

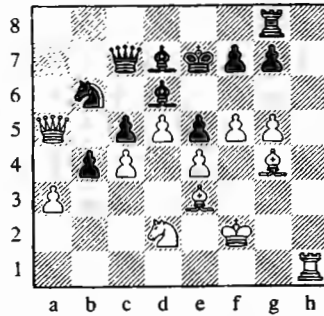
39...♞h8 40.♞h1 ♞cg8



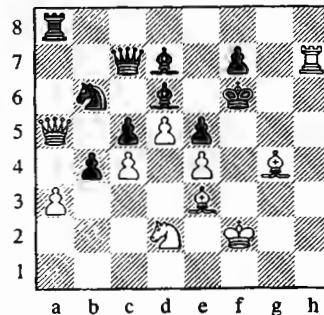
41.♞d1!

This is part of a deep and subtle plan, which can be carried out without taking any real risks. From a practical perspective this is an ideal strategy.

Nevertheless it was objectively even stronger to soften Black on the other flank with 41.a3!!, when the game might proceed as follows: 41...a5 42.♞a4 ♘b6 43.♞b5! This wins but requires precise calculation. It would be interesting to know if Karpov spent much time looking at this, and whether he missed a detail in what follows. 43...♙c8 44.♞xa5 ♞xh1 45.♞xh1 ♙d7 The threat of trapping the queen appears frightening, but White has a beautiful retort:

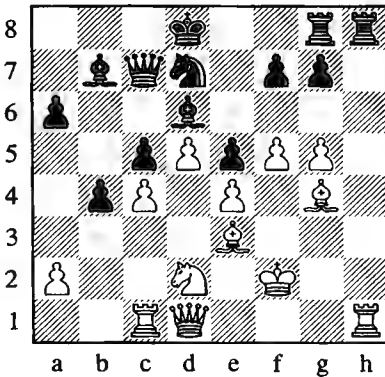


46.♞h7!! ♞a8 47.f6†! gxf6 48.gxf6† ♔xf6



49.♙h5!! White does not save the queen but instead plays for mate. 49...♙g4 50.♞xb6! and White wins.

41...♔d8



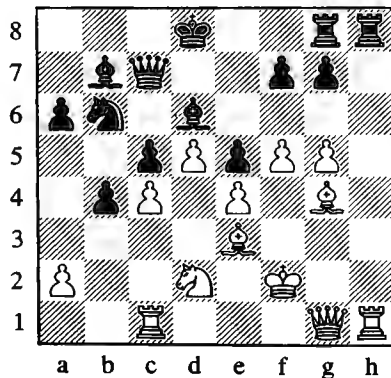
42.♖g1!!

With this brilliant move Karpov beautifully finds better places for his pieces. Black has no counterplay so there is no need to hurry.

42...♘b6?

Gligoric wants to fight for the h-file, but Black's c5-pawn is weak, so there was not much to be gained from moving the knight away from d7.

A better idea was Kasparov's suggestion of 42...a5, intending ...a4 to take away the b3-square from the white knight.



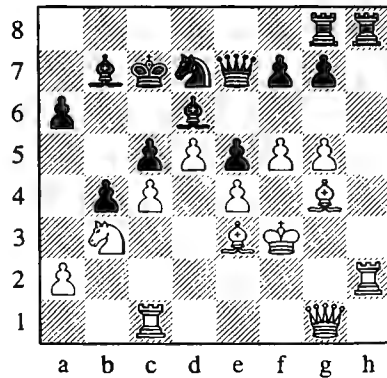
43.♞h2!

White begins fighting for the h-file; the first function of the magical queen move.

43...♗e7 44.♘b3 ♔c7 45.♕f3!

White makes full use of his space advantage. The king is ideally placed not on the second rank but the third, for reasons that will soon become apparent.

45...♘d7



46.a3!!

Karpov switches to the opposite flank and brings his opponent down in no time. My students have great difficulty in finding this move. The principle is clear though: when one has an advantage in space, one should look for opportunities to switch the focus of the attack between both sides of the board.

46...bxa3 47.♞a2!

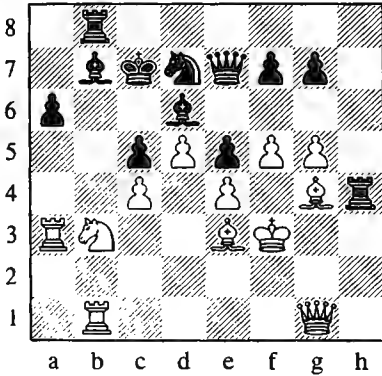
And now we see why Karpov opened the second rank. I cannot say for sure if he envisioned this idea when making his 42nd move, but it would not surprise me if he did.

47...♞h4 48.♞xa3 ♞gh8

48...♘f6! is a witty suggestion from Kasparov. It does not solve Black's problems, although it would have been worth trying as a

last ditch attempt. After 49.gxf6 gxf6 50.♖a5 ♜g4 51.♗xg4 ♜xg4 52.♔xg4 ♚d8 53.♙xc5 ♙xc5 54.♞xc5† ♔d7 55.♞b1 ♙a8 56.♙d2 White's king escapes the checks, as Kasparov himself pointed out.

49.♞b1 ♞b8



50.♗e1!

The introduction of the queen to the attack signifies the end for Black.

50...♞g4 51.♔xg4 ♙c8 52.♗a5†
1-0

In round nine Karpov suffered a setback and lost to Portisch. He bounced back with a win over Smith, and then drew the rest of his games, including one against the legendary Estonian Paul Keres. He finished with 10½/15, which was enough for equal first place alongside Petrosian and Portisch. Despite his relatively slow finish, his overall performance was impressive. By the end of 1972, Karpov had firmly established himself as a world class player.

1972 Summary

USSR Olympiad, Moscow (Board two): $5\frac{1}{2}/9$ (+4 =3 -2)

Student Olympiad, Graz (Board one):

Preliminary: $2\frac{1}{2}/4$ (+1 =3 -0)

Finals: $4\frac{1}{2}/5$ (+4 =1 -0)

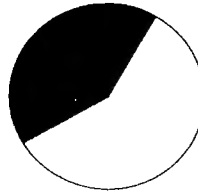
World Olympiad, Skopje (Board five):

Preliminary: $4/4$ (+4 =0 -0)

Finals: $9/11$ (+8 =2 -1)

San Antonio (1st-3rd): $10\frac{1}{2}/15$ (+7 =7 -1)

Total 75% (+28 =16 -4)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1973

Rating 2660 (2-3 in the World)

Before Karpov set out on the road to the world crown, he played in two tournaments. The first was in Budapest, at a time when the Hungarian capital was celebrating the centenary of establishing the combined city by uniting Pest and Buda. In the first round the German endgame specialist Hecht thwarted Karpov's attempts to grind out a full point, and held him to a draw. In the second round Karpov defeated Hort, who committed surprising mistakes in the endgame for a player of such high calibre. Throughout the tournament, Karpov ruthlessly punished his rivals who would later become candidates in the world championship cycle. The win over Hort was followed by a sequence of five draws. In round eight he met another future world championship candidate, Gyula Sax of Hungary. This was their first encounter, and they would go on to meet six more times. Overall Karpov won three of their encounters and drew the other four. The Hungarian grandmaster faced all the world champions from Smyslov to Anand, with the exceptions of Fischer and Kramnik. He won four of those encounters, drew thirteen and lost thirty.

Game 30

Anatoly Karpov – Gyula Sax

Budapest 1973

1.d4!

The exclamation mark is in recognition of Karpov's willingness to expand his repertoire. 1973 was the first year in which Karpov regularly utilized the queen's pawn openings. Before that he only sporadically played anything other than 1.e4.

1...♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d6

Sax's main opening at this period was the Grünfeld. On this occasion, perhaps fearing Karpov's preparation, he employs his secondary weapon.

4.g3

Karpov regularly used this safe line, as well as the Sämisch and the main line with ♗e2 and ♗e3. He won numerous games with each variation.

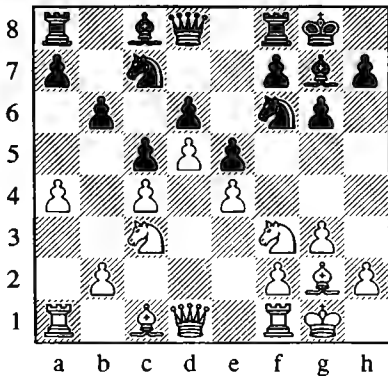
4...♗g7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.♗f3 c5 7.d5 e5

Gyula Sax is a superb tactician with a great feel for dynamics, so it is surprising that he opted for such a static structure.

8.0-0 ♖a6 9.e4 ♘c7 10.a4

Preventing any sacrifices in the style of the Benko Gambit.

10...b6



11.♘e1!

Improving the knight and preparing a possible f4.

11...♘h5 12.♘d3 ♜5 13.ex♜5!

With this move Karpov wins control over the e4-square.

13...♙xf5 14.♘e4 ♞d7 15.♜3 ♘f6 16.♘df2!

Having more space, Karpov only allows Black to exchange a single piece.

16...♙xe4?!

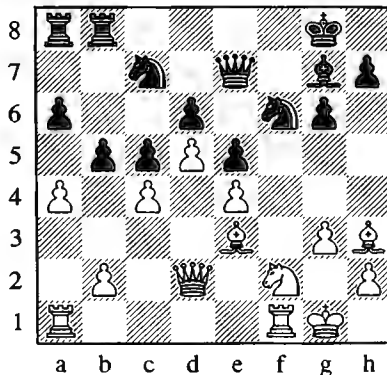
Black had to parry the threat of 17.♘xf6† followed by g4, but giving up his light-squared bishop was not the best way to do it. 16...♞e7!? would have enabled Black to keep the bishop pair.

17.♜xc4 a6 18.♙e3 ♝fb8

The immediate 18...b5 would have allowed White to open the queenside in his favour: 19.b4! cxb4 20.axb5 (20.c5!?) 20...axb5 21.c5 And White will soon dominate on the queenside.

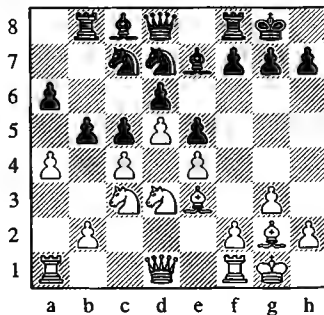
19.♙h3 ♞e7 20.♞d2 b5

Sax may have been aiming for counterplay, or perhaps even a complete closing of the queenside, after which it would be hard for White to prove anything on the other flank.



21.b4!

Karpov forcefully opens the queenside. It is a thematic breakthrough for such positions. Let me cite you another beautiful example:



14.cxb5! axb5 15.b4! White went on to win in I. Sokolov – Miles, Sarajevo 1987.

21...cxb4 22.axb5 axb5 23.c5! ♝a4 24.♝ac1

This move does not let Black off the hook, although 24.cxd6!? may well be faster, as after 24...♞xd6 25.♝ac1 ♘a6 26.♝c6 ♞d8 27.d6 Black is in big trouble.

24...♖c8!

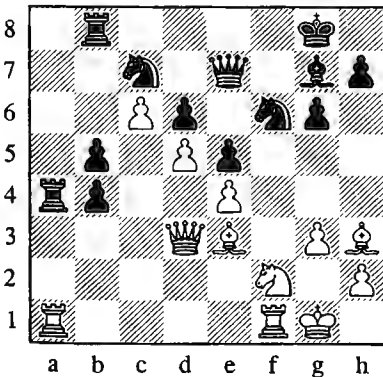
Sax finds the most resilient defence.

25.c6

Karpov relinquishes any ideas of a quick breakthrough, in favour of creating a monstrous passed pawn. In the long run it will be hard for Black to restrain this pawn while also holding his queenside together.

25...♖c7 26.♖a1!

This subtle move prepares to pose a dilemma to Black. He will either have to give up the a-file, or allow the exchange of a rook which would have been useful for restraining the c6-pawn.

26...♖a6 27.♖d3 ♖c7 28.♖ab1 ♖a6 29.♖a1 ♖c7**30.♖b3!**

Karpov has a clear advantage so of course he avoids a repetition.

30...♖ba8

Sax opts for the latter of the two evils noted above.

31.♖xa4 ♖xa4 32.♗d2 ♖a6 33.♖d3 ♖a5 34.♖e2!

Again it is hard to read what Karpov wants to do. This move makes ♗c8 a dangerous

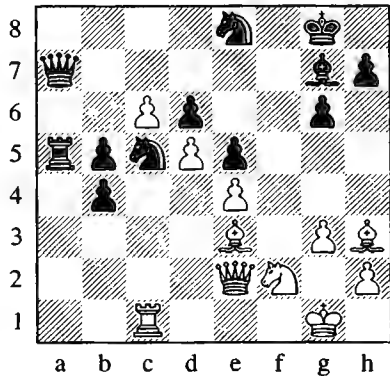
threat, as the response ...♖c5 will no longer win a tempo by attacking the queen.

34...♖a7 35.♗e3

If 35...♗c8 ♖a2 is the answer.

35...♖c5 36.♖c1!

With this move Karpov prepares to create a second passed pawn by capturing on c5, which will also secure his control over the e6-square. 36.♖d3! ♖xe4 37.♖g4 was also winning.

36...♖e8**37.♖g4!**

Black has put too many of his pieces on the queenside, and his king will pay the price after the white queen invades. White had another solution in 37.♗d7! ♖c7 38.♗xc5 dxc5 39.d6 when the mighty pawns decide the game.

37...b3

Black has no time to exchange the rook: 37...♖a1 38.♖xa1 ♖xa1† 39.♗g2 ♖a8 40.♗xc5 dxc5 41.♖e6† ♖h8 42.d6 wins.

38.♗g2

Karpov often liked to improve his king before moving in for the kill, but here it is an unnecessary precaution. The cleanest route to victory was: 38.♗xc5! b2 (38...dxc5

39. ♖e6† ♗f7 40. d6 b2 41. ♙d1 wins) 39. ♙b1 dxc5 (39... ♙a1 40. ♙xa7) 40. ♙xb2 White stops the queenside counterplay and wins.

38...b2

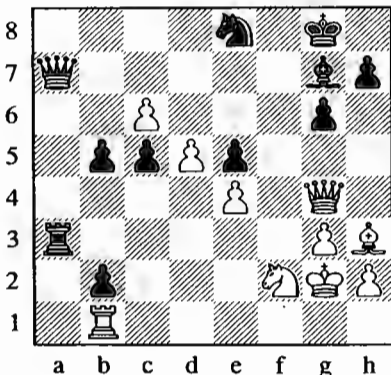
38... ♙f6 is too slow: 39. ♙xc5 dxc5 40. ♗c8 ♗a8 41. ♗e6† ♗g7 42. ♙xc5 b2 43. ♗d7† ♗f8 (43... ♗h6 44. ♗g4† ♗g5 45. ♗xh7 b1=♗ 46. ♗h4#) 44. c7 And White wins.

38... ♗e7 also fails: 39. ♗c8! (better than 39. ♙b1 ♙a3 40. ♗d1 b4 41. ♙xc5 dxc5 42. ♙xb3 ♙a5) 39... ♙f8 40. ♙b1 And Black is in serious trouble.

39. ♙b1 ♙a3

If 39... ♙a2 40. ♙xc5 dxc5 41. d6 ♗xd6 42. ♗e6† ♗f7 43. c7 wins.

40. ♙xc5 dxc5



41. ♙xb2

Without the b2-pawn Black has no counterplay and will quickly be crushed.

41... ♗b8 42. ♗e6†
1-0

Black resigned as White will easily invade. In the last five rounds Karpov drew three and beat two more future world championship candidates in Adorjan and Vaganian. Karpov

finished in second place with 9½/15, having won four games with eleven draws.

There was a rumour within Hungarian chess circles that Geller, who won the tournament a full point ahead of Karpov, went to the Soviet ambassador and told him proudly that he had won the event, only to be scolded. Apparently Karpov "should have won" the tournament. There is no guarantee that the story is true, but if it was so, it would show how badly the Soviet authorities wanted the chess crown back from Fischer. Their obvious choice to achieve this was Karpov, and they would go to almost any lengths to build up their new rising star.

After Budapest, Karpov took part in the 'Three Teams' event in Moscow, where he defeated both Spassky and Taimanov by the score of 1½-½. His next tournament was the Leningrad Interzonal. He began as favourite to qualify, as he already had the highest rating in the competition. Karpov began well, scoring three wins and three draws before facing Gennady Kuzmin, who obtained his grandmaster title at this event. They had drawn once before, but Karpov won all three of their subsequent encounters. Kuzmin played against all the world champions from Smyslov onwards, except for Fischer and Topalov. Out of thirteen games he won two, drew six and lost five against them.

Game 31

Anatoly Karpov – Gennady Kuzmin

Leningrad Interzonal 1973

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗d2

Karpov scored nineteen wins and eleven draws with the Tarrasch Variation, and never lost a single game with it. It is a fantastic score, although it is interesting that in his 1974 match with Korchnoi, he was unable to score a victory in seven attempts.

3...c5

Against other moves Karpov has scored nine out of nine, which is quite incredible.

4.exd5 exd5 5.♖gf3

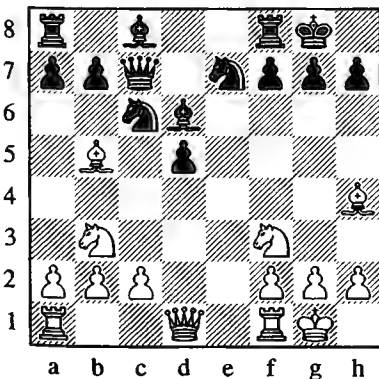
In his 1978 world championship match against Korchnoi, Karpov tried 5.♖b5† ♘c6 6.♙e2† and drew twice.

5...♘c6 6.♖b5 ♖d6 7.dxc5 ♖xc5 8.0-0 ♖ge7 9.♘b3 ♖d6 10.♖g5

This was Karpov's most frequent choice in this line. He played it three times in total, although he tried some other moves as well. Overall he won three games and drew four from this variation, although he was never able to hurt Korchnoi.

10...0-0 11.♖h4 ♙c7?!

This move was criticized by several commentators at the time. Indeed, just a few moves later the queen will lose a tempo by moving to b6. A few months later the French expert Uhlmann deviated with the more common 11...♖g4, but even this did not enable him to solve all his problems: 12.♖e2 ♖h5 13.♙e1 ♙b6 14.♘fd4 ♖g6 15.c3 ♙fe8 16.♖f1 ♖e4 17.♖g3 ♖xg3 18.hxg3 a5 19.a4 ♘xd4 20.♘xd4 ♘c6 21.♖b5 ♙ed8 22.g4 ♘xd4 23.♙xd4 ♙xd4 24.cxd4 White went on to win an instructive endgame, Karpov – Uhlmann, Madrid 1973.



12.♖g3 ♖xg3?!

There was no reason not to develop with 12...♖g4 or 12...♙d8. Even if Black intends to exchange bishops, why reveal his cards so early?

13.hxg3 ♖g4 14.♙e1 ♙ad8 15.c3 ♙b6 16.♖d3 ♖g6

Black stops 17.♖xh7†, but as the game develops his knight will not stand well on g6.

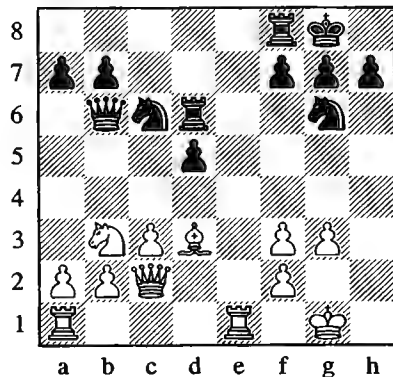
17.♙c2 ♖xf3?!

Giving up the bishop voluntarily enables White to dominate on the light squares. In addition Black strengthens White's pawn structure. This last factor can be directly attributed to Black's decision to exchange bishops on g3.

17...♙fe8 was better, for instance 18.♘fd4 ♘ce5 (or 18...a6) 19.♖b5 ♙e7 and Black should be able to live with the isolated pawn.

18.gxf3 ♙d6

18...d4 was worth considering, although after 19.♖e4 White is slightly better thanks to his strong bishop.



19.f4!

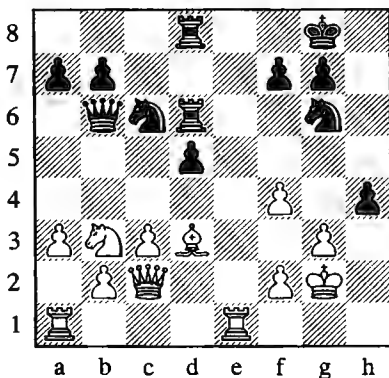
Gaining space and taking away the e5-square from the black knights.

19...♟fd8 20.a3!

Karpov is anticipating ...d4, which can now be met by c4 as the reply ...♟b4 is no longer possible.

20...h5

Kuzmin wants to get some play on the h-file. It is true that White's king does not have many defenders, but Black's pieces are far away from that area as well.

21.♔g2 h4**22.♟e2!**

Another small improving move by Karpov, protecting the f2-pawn and preparing to double on the e-file. If 22.♟d2 then 22...h3†! is annoying.

22...♟f8 23.♟d2!

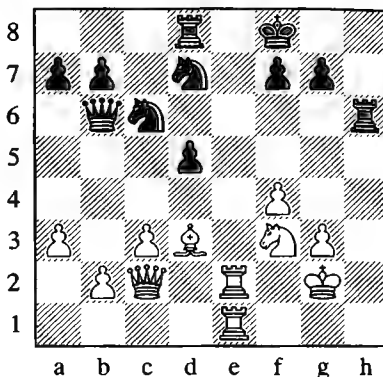
Karpov improves his knight by transferring it to the kingside.

23...♟h6 24.♟f3 h×g3

Pushing the pawn to h3 would mean losing it in the long run.

25.f×g3 ♟d7 26.♟ac1 ♟f8

Out of the blue, Black has back rank problems. If 26...♟f6 27.g4! is strong.

**27.g4!!**

This is a brilliant move, gaining space and driving the black rook away from its ideal post.

27...♟c7 28.g5 ♟h8?

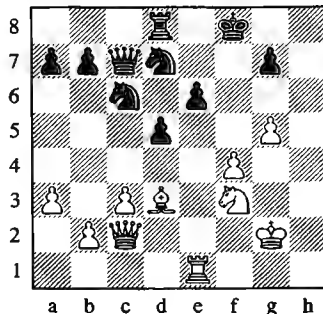
The rook will have no function on the h-file. A better chance was:

28...♟e6

This would have eased the pressure along the e-file. White can maintain a big advantage, but he has to be precise:

29.♟xe6

After 29.♔g3 ♟c5 30.♟f5 ♟xe2 31.♟xe2 ♟e7 32.♟c2 White is somewhat better, but the text move is more ambitious.

29...f×e6**30.♔g3!!**

White can settle for a positional advantage

with 30.♖d2 or 30.♘h4 ♖e7 31.♘g6†
 ♘xg6 32.♙xg6, but the stronger text
 enables him to develop an attack along the
 h-file.

31...e5

Or 30...♖c5 31.♙g6 ♖e7 32.♖f2 and White
 is better.

31.♙g6

31.♖h2 e4 32.♖h8† ♖f7 33.♖h5† ♖e7
 34.♘h4 ♖f8 35.c4 is also dangerous.

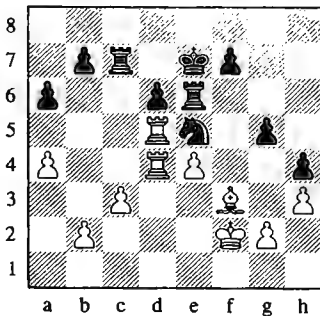
31...exf4†

After 31...e4 32.♖h2 ♖e7 33.c4 ♖f8
 34.cxd5 White has a huge advantage.

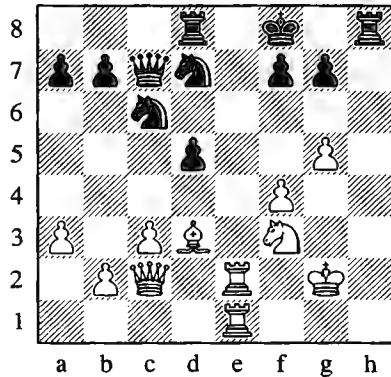
32.♖g2 ♖g8 33.♖f5 ♖f8 34.♙e8

Black is in trouble.

Let me cite another Karpov game in which his
 opponent neglected to ease the pressure being
 exerted by doubled rooks:



This position was reached in Karpov –
 Polugaevsky, Moscow (4) 1974. According to
 Kasparov in his *My Great Predecessors* series,
 36...♖c5!† was the best defence as it forces the
 exchange of one of the strong rooks. Kasparov's
 analysis continues: 37.♙e2 ♖xd5 38.♖xd5 ♖d7
 39.♖xg5 ♖c5 40.♖g4 ♖xe4† 41.♖f3 ♖d2†
 42.♖f2 ♖e4† with a perpetual. Polugaevsky
 played differently and lost. It was a vital win
 for Karpov.



29.♖g3!

Karpov uses his king effectively. It is
 reminiscent of Game 29 (Karpov – Gligoric)
 in which he also advanced his king to the third
 rank in order to facilitate the transfer of heavy
 pieces along the second rank.

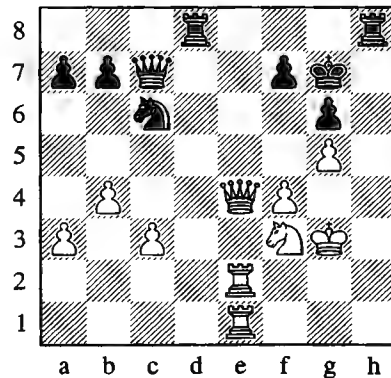
29...♖c5 30.♙f5

Threatening ♖h2.

30...g6 31.b4 ♖e4†

Black must sacrifice a pawn to stop White's
 attack. If 31...♖d7 32.♙xg6 wins.

32.♙xe4 dxe4 33.♖xc4 ♖g7

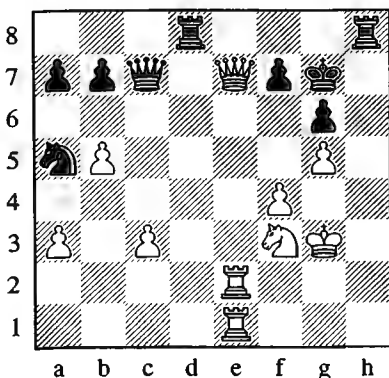


34.b5!

Karpov has already outplayed his opponent strategically, and now he allows no time for Kuzmin to bring his h8-rook into the game.

The alternative was 34.c4, intending to convert White's extra pawn by slow technical means. If 34...♖c8 35.c5 ♕h3† 36.♖f2 and Black's attack is halted, as 36...♗g4 can be met by 37.♗g1.

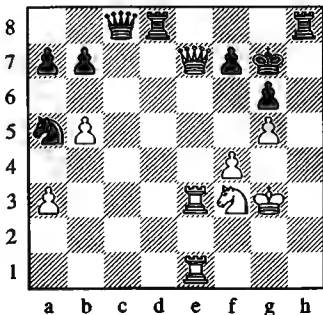
34...♠a5 35.♖e7!



White takes advantage of a tactical opportunity to conquer the seventh rank.

35...♗xe7

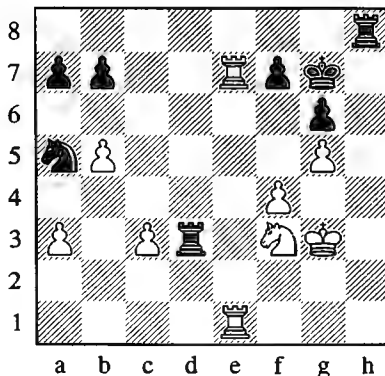
35...♗xc3 can be refuted as follows: 36.♗e3 ♗c8 (36...♗b2 37.♗b1! This is not the only win, but it is the fanciest. 37...♗xb1 38.♗f6† ♕g8 [38...♕h7 39.♗xf7#] 39.♗xd8† ♕h7 40.♗xa5 And White wins.)



37.♗e6!! This lovely attacking move crushes the opponent's defences: 37...♕g8 38.♗xg6† fxg6 39.♗e6 And Black can resign.

36.♗xe7 ♗d3

36...♗c8 can be met by 37.♗e3, when ♕e5 is coming with decisive effect.



37.♗c7

Doubling the rooks on the seventh rank simply dismantles Black's defences.

37...♠b3 38.♕g4

38.♗e7 ♕d2 39.♗xf7† ♕g8 40.♗fd7! wins as well.

38...♗f8 39.♗e7

1-0

In the next game Karpov survived a scare as his countryman Tal, who was having a bad tournament, missed an easy win against him. Next he beat Quinteros and drew two more games. He had reached 'plus five' when he met the strongest ever East German player Wolfgang Uhlmann, who had made it as far as the candidates matches in the previous decade. By 1973 Karpov was ahead by 1½-½ in their personal meetings. He added two more victories, including the following game. The grandmaster from Dresden played thirty nine games against the World Champions. He has

drawn 21 times, with sixteen losses and two wins; Fischer and Botvinnik were his victims.

Game 32

Wolfgang Uhlmann – Anatoly Karpov

Leningrad Interzonal 1973

1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e3

Back in 1971 the East German grandmaster played 5.g3 against Karpov and the game ended in a draw.

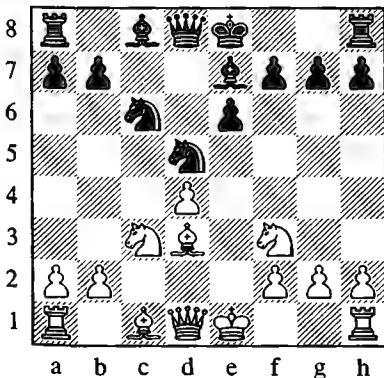
5.d4 is probably the most testing move, when Black has to transpose to another opening. He can choose between the Grünfeld, the Semi-Tarrasch and the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Karpov tried each of them once.

5...e6 6.d4 ♗c6 7.♗d3 cxd4

Many have tried to benefit from delaying this capture, but Karpov does not mind allowing White a few more options.

8.exd4 ♗e7

In the nineties when Karpov reached the same position from the Panov variation of the Caro-Kann, he repeated the text move but also tried 8...♗b4 on some occasions. He made a plus score with both moves.



9.0-0-0 10.♞e1 ♘f6

Karpov won two and drew four of his six games with 10...♗f6, but on his last attempt he was in trouble against Anand in their 1998 world championship final, although he eventually won that game.

11.a3!

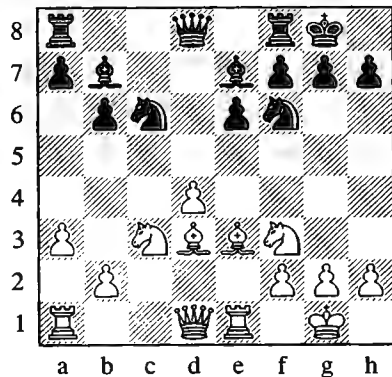
Black eases his position if he can play ...♗b4 followed by ...b6.

11...b6 12.♗e3

Upon facing 12.♗e3 against Smyslov in the 1971 USSR Championship, Karpov responded with 12...♗b7 and lost.

Later he improved with 12...♗a6!, and went on to make an interesting pawn sacrifice: 13.♗f4 ♞c8 14.♞c1 ♗c4 15.♗g3 g6 16.♗a4 a6 17.♞xc6 ♞xc6 18.♗e5 ♞c8 19.♞a4 ♗d5 20.♘d5 ♘d5 21.♗c6 ♞d7 22.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 23.♞xa6 ♞d7 24.h3 ♞c6 25.♞e2 ♞fc8 26.♞d2 b5 Black obtained reasonable compensation and went on to draw in Timman – Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

12...♗b7



13.♞c1?

This is a natural-looking way to develop the rook, but it does nothing on c1. The most common move here is 13.♗c2!, intending to

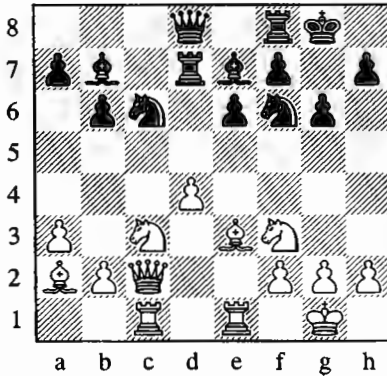
put the queen on d3 and rook on d1, where it supports a future d4-d5 break.

13...♖c8 14.♗b1 ♖c7!?

Black is also doing fine after 14...♗a5 15.♗e5 ♗c4.

15.♞d3 ♞d7 16.♞c2 g6 17.♗a2

17.h3!?, deserved attention.



17...♗g4!

Karpov exchanges the dark-squared bishop.

18.♖cd1 ♗xe3 19.fxe3 ♗f6!

White controls slightly more space and is strong in the centre, which is why Karpov takes the time to improve his pieces carefully before daring to open the position for his bishops.

20.♞f2 ♗g7 21.♞d2 ♗e7! 22.e4

White is not interested in exchanging more minor pieces, so he stops ...♗d5.

22...h6! 23.♞ed1 ♞b8 24.♞e3 ♞f8

Karpov keeps improving his position.

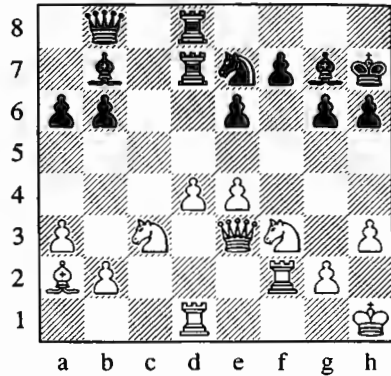
25.h3 ♗h7

He cares about his king as well.

26.♗h1 a6!

It is remarkable how Black now controls all the squares on the fifth rank with his pawns.

27.♖f2



27...♗g8!

Improving the last piece.

28.♖df1 b5 29.h4?

White hopes to get an attack, but he merely weakens his position. Kotov suggested 29.♗b1 and evaluated the position as equal, but I would say Black has the better chances after active moves such as 29...♞a7 or 29...f5!.

The most principled move looks to be 29.♗e5!?, which can lead to interesting complications: 29...♖xd4!?. (After 29...♗xe5 30.dxe5 ♗g7 31.♞f4 ♗c6 Black has a slight initiative on the queenside, but it will probably not be enough to achieve anything serious.) 30.♗xf7 ♞d3 31.♞e2 (31.♞c1 ♗e8) 31...♞d2 32.♞e1 ♖xf2 33.♞xf2 ♞d3 Black will have compensation even if he drops the e6-pawn, but it is not clear if he really stands better. 34.♗xe6 (34.♞h4 ♞g3 35.♞xg3 ♖xg3) 34...♗f6 35.e5 ♗h5 The position is unclear.

29...♗f6! 30.♗e5 ♖xd4

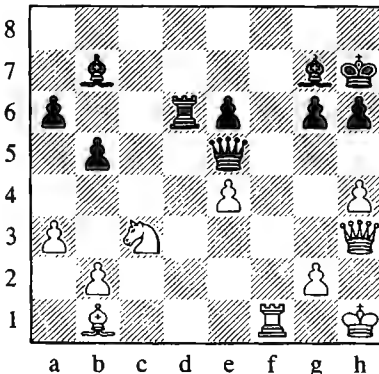
Karpov has correctly evaluated that the opening of the position will work in his favour.

31.♖xf6 ♞xe5 32.♖xf7 ♞d7 33.♖xd7 ♖xd7

Black has sweet prospects. His pieces are working in harmony, and he has strong control over the dark squares. Uhlmann may have been short of time, as he fails to offer much resistance.

34. ♖h3? ♜d6 35. ♙b1?

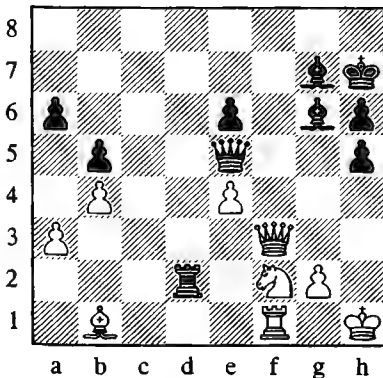
White commits another error, but his position was bad anyway, for instance 35. ♖e3 a5 with a clear plus for Black.



35... ♜d1! 36. h5 g×h5 37. ♖d1 ♙c6

Karpov continues to wear down his opponent. 37... ♙xe4 should be winning as well.

38. ♖f3 ♙e8 39. b4 ♙g6 40. ♖f2



40... ♜d4

Black has achieved complete positional domination.

41. ♖h3 e5

This paralyzes the knight as well. White could almost have resigned here.

42. ♖f2 ♙b2 43. ♖h2 ♖c4 44. ♜d1 ♙b3
45. ♖d3 ♖xe4

0-1

Karpov won the next two games, followed by a draw. In the penultimate round he had a very tense game against Smejkal, who started with two early losses but bounced back strongly and even enjoyed a seven game win streak in the middle of the event. The Czech player was on 'plus-five' when he met Karpov, and he needed to win to keep his qualifying chances alive. Smejkal had his chances, but after a blunder Karpov won a pawn. Smejkal thought he had an easy draw, but Karpov skilfully found a way to cause him problems, and although Smejkal may have had a study like defence, he did not find it and eventually lost. Karpov beat Torre in the last round for a final tally of 13½/17, with ten wins and seven draws. With this fine result Karpov not only qualified for the candidates matches, but finished in equal first place with Korchnoi. The fact that the event took place in his home country may have helped him slightly, but even so, there was no questioning his worthiness as a world title candidate.

Karpov's next event was the European team championship, where he began with three wins and two draws. In the last round he defeated Ribli from Hungary, thus raising his score to a superb 5/6.

His form took a slight dip in the USSR Championship Final, even though his results looked okay on paper. He had difficult positions and was quite possibly lost in both of his first

two wins. He won from a position a pawn down against Korchnoi; he had some compensation but would never have expected to defeat such a formidable rival from such a situation. Later he was a piece up for inadequate compensation against Spassky, but only drew, and then he lost against Petrosian. He recovered to defeat Kuzmin, and ended with six draws and a final round win over Rashkovsky. Spassky won the championship, and Karpov shared the second to fifth places with Petrosian, Polugaevsky and Korchnoi. His performance can be judged in different ways. It is unlikely that the quality of his play would have frightened Fischer, but on the other hand his final result was incredibly good if one takes into account the fact that he was clearly not on form.

Karpov's last tournament of the year was in Madrid. He began by blundering an exchange but still winning against Pomar, and drew in round two. Next he faced Ulf Andersson, in their first encounter since 1969 (see Game 17, page 85). Karpov managed to overcome his dubious run of form to produce another masterpiece against the Swede.

Game 33

Anatoly Karpov – Ulf Andersson

Madrid 1973

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3

Karpov allowed the Nimzo-Indian in less than 20% of his games after 2...e6. His winning percentage was also lower in that opening.

3...b6 4.g3

Occasionally Karpov tried other moves, but this was his main weapon all the way. He scored well with it, winning thirty nine games out of seventy seven – more than half. He lost five as well, but most of those games occurred towards the end of his career.

4...♙b4†

Usually the Swedish grandmaster gave this check one move earlier. For some reason he achieved amazingly poor results with the text move, achieving just three draws and six losses from nine games.

5.♘bd2

Later Karpov blocked the check with the bishop.

5...♙b7

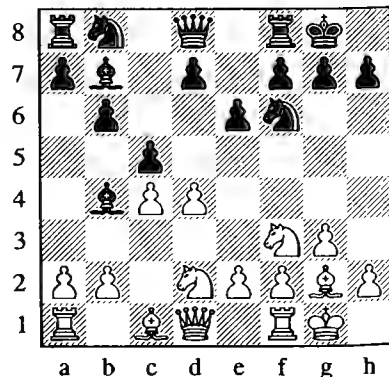
5...♙a6 would have led to a well known position that is usually reached via the 4...♙a6 move order.

6.♙g2 0–0

Black can also opt for a Hedgehog position with 6...♙e7 as the knight is passive on d2. If 7.0–0 then 7...c5 can be played.

The immediate undermining of the centre with 6...c5 should be playable as well: 7.a3 ♙xd2† 8.♙xd2 (after 8.♙xd2 cxd4 9.♙xd4 ♘c6 10.♙h4 ♘e7 Black's fast development gives him a good game) 8...cxd4 9.♙b4 ♘a6 10.♙d6 ♘e4 And Black has a free game.

7.0–0 c5



8.a3!

White secures the advantage of the bishop pair.

8...♙xd2 9.♙xd2 cxd4?

This inaccuracy will cause Black a lot of suffering. Instead he should have settled for a slightly worse position with 9...d6.

10.♙b4! ♖e8 11.♙d6!

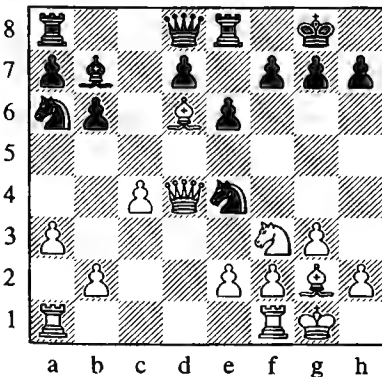
The bishop manoeuvre secures a space advantage and fixes the d7-pawn as a potential target.

11...♗e4

Or 11...♙xf3 12.exf3 ♗c6 13.f4 ♖c8 14.♖c1 and Black is rather passive here as well.

12.♞xd4 ♗a6

12...f5 is well met by 13.♗e5! (after 13.♖ad1 ♗c6 14.♞e3 ♞f6 Black becomes active) 13...♗c6 14.♗xc6 ♙xc6 15.♙e5 ♞e7 16.♖ad1 and White's strong dark-squared bishop gives him the edge.



13.b4!

Isolating the poorly placed knight on a6.

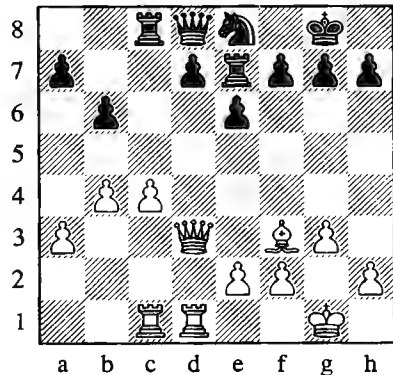
13...♖c8 14.♖ac1 ♗xd6

Another line is: 14...f6 15.♖fd1 e5 16.♞e3 ♗xd6 (16...♖e6 17.♗g5 ♖xd6 18.♙xe4 ♖xd1† 19.♖xd1 ♙xe4 20.♗xe4 is no fun for Black)

17.♖xd6 ♖e6 18.♖d2 And White maintains the pressure.

15.♞xd6 ♗c7 16.♖fd1 ♖e7 17.♞d3 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♗e8

Black improves his awkwardly placed knight. 18...♖b8?! would prevent the coming invasion, but it is too slow. 19.c5! (19.♙c6 ♞f8; 19.e3 ♗e8 20.♗g2 ♗f6 is better for Black than the game.) 19...bxc5 20.♖xc5 ♗e8 21.♖dc1 White's undisputed control over the c-file gives him a clear advantage.



19.♙b7!!

Although Black is obviously somewhat worse, his position is solid and lacks any obvious weaknesses. Karpov maintains and increases his advantage in a subtle and unusual way. The artistry with which he orchestrates his position using a limited number of pieces is simply magical.

19...♖c7 20.♙a6!!

Black's queenside is paralysed in a most original way.

20...♖c6?

Even such a strong grandmaster as Andersson, with his finely tuned positional sense, did not anticipate what was coming. The text move wastes valuable time. He should have played

more consistently by improving his knight with 20...♖f6!. Then play may continue 21.♗b5 d5 (21...e5 22.e4) 22.c5 bxc5 23.bxc5 h6 when White keeps an edge, but a much smaller one than in the game.

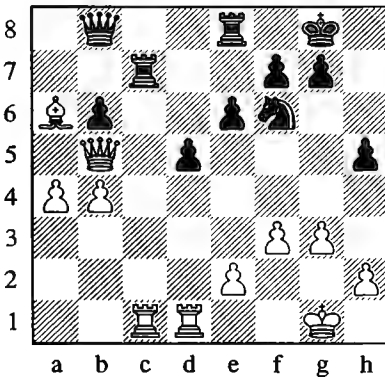
21.♖b3! ♖b8 22.♖a4! ♜c7 23.♖b5!

This whole sequence is immensely strong. White's queen and bishop have taken up strong attacking positions from which they cannot easily be dislodged. It is only a matter of time before he increases the pressure with a pawn advance.

23...♖f6 24.f3 d5

24...♖e8 25.♞d6 is highly unpleasant for Black.

25.c5 h5 26.a4 ♞e8 27.cxb6 axb6



28.a5!

Having built up a commanding position, Karpov wastes no time in breaking through on the queenside.

28...♞xc1 29.♞xc1 ♖e5 30.♖xb6 d4

Black's counterplay is too little, too late.

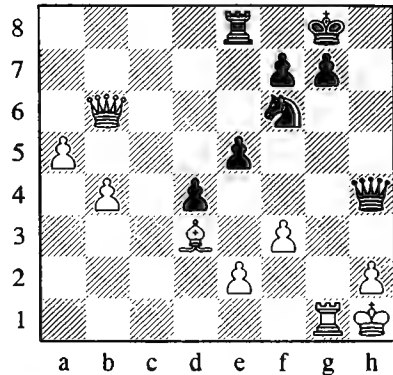
31.♗h1 ♖e3 32.♞f1

White's queenside pawns will be unstoppable, so he can afford to put his rook in a passive

position in order to prevent any kingside threats.

32...e5 33.♗d3 h4 34.gxh4 ♖f4 35.♞g1 ♖xh4

Black has made some progress, but he has not managed to create any threats, so the time has finally come for White to cash in on his queenside pawns.



36.a6 g6 37.a7 ♖g7 38.♗xg6

1-0

This was a true masterpiece. The manoeuvres ♗a6-b7 and ♖b3-a4-b5 were stunningly original and effective. And once Karpov achieved a dominating position on the queenside, he wasted no time and broke through with his characteristic directness and efficiency.

Over the next seven games Karpov achieved a win against Silvino Garcia and six draws. Then suddenly he shifted into top gear and scored four wins and one draw from his last five games, for a total of 11/15 with seven wins and eight draws. His final four victims were Kaplan, Uhlmann, Calvo and Planinc. This strong finish enabled him to claim sole first place, half a point ahead of Tukmakov and a further half in front of Furman, his trainer.

In 1973 Karpov was as strong as any other tournament player in the world. His form took a slight dip after the Interzonal, but he nonetheless cemented his reputation as a world class player and future contender for the ultimate crown.

1973 Summary

Budapest (2nd place): $9\frac{1}{2}/15$ (+4 =11 -0)

Three Team event, Moscow (Board one): $3/4$ (+2 =2 -0)

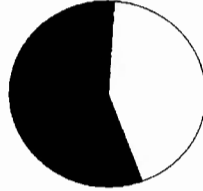
Leningrad Interzonal (1st-2nd place): $13\frac{1}{2}/17$ (+10 =7 -0)

European Team Championship, Bath (Board four): $5/6$ (+4 =2 -0)

USSR Championship (2nd-6th place): $10\frac{1}{2}/17$ (+5 =11 -1)

Madrid (1st place): $11/15$ (+7 =8 -0)

Total 70.9% (+32 =41 -1)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1974

Rating 2700 (2 in the World)

This was the year in which Karpov effectively earned the title of World Champion through his efforts over the chessboard. 1975 was more a matter of tying up the loose ends.

The first order of business was a candidates quarter-final match against Polugaevsky. Karpov entered the match as the clear favourite, having qualified in a much more dominant fashion, while also boasting a seventy point rating advantage.

Before the match they had drawn twice. Overall they played each other twenty four times, with Karpov winning five, and the remaining nineteen ending in draws. Polugaevsky played 136 games against world champions, starting with Botvinnik and finishing with Anand (with the exception of Kramnik). He won seventeen games, drew ninety five and lost twenty four. On the basis of these results, Polugaevsky can be considered one of the best of the players who never challenged for the world title.

In the first three games of the match Karpov had no real chances to win. In the fourth, he achieved no advantage and may have even stood slightly worse, but he showed the skill and determination needed to grind out a victory. This game was briefly referenced in the note to Black's 28th move in Game 31 (Karpov – Kuzmin). The way in which he slowly outplayed Polugaevsky was truly a world champion's performance. However, one gets the impression that Karpov would have had more trouble achieving such results against the Fischer of 1972.

In the next game, in a 4.e3 Nimzo-Indian (which occurred in all the match games in which Karpov played Black), Polugaevsky outplayed Karpov and got an extra exchange, but he was unable to break Karpov's resistance; maybe he even realized Karpov's middlegame strength was too much for him. In Game 6 Karpov sacrificed a pawn and later broke through after Polugaevsky failed to find the most accurate defence. Karpov held the seventh game, with the black pieces.

The winner of the match would be the first player to obtain three wins. Here is the eighth game, in which Karpov sealed a convincing match victory.

Game 34

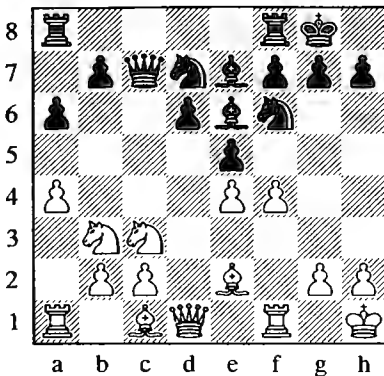
Anatoly Karpov – Lev Polugaevsky

Candidates quarter-final, Moscow (8) 1974

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♙c7 8.0-0 ♙e6 9.f4 ♖c7
10.a4 ♘bd7 11.♙h1

According to the Hungarian commentator Florian, it was Efim Geller – one of Karpov's seconds in the present match – who first introduced this move at the 1973 Avro tournament.

11...0-0



12.♖e3

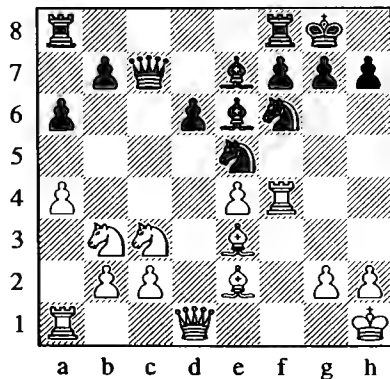
According to my database this move was first played in Game 2 of the present match. Karpov stuck to this move in all four of the games in which he had the white pieces.

12...exf4

Polugaevsky also kept repeating his move.

13.♞xf4 ♖e5

Polugaevsky played 13...♞fe8 in the second game. He probably hoped to put exert pressure against the e4-pawn with the rook. The game continued 14.♘d4 ♖e5 15.♗f5 ♘g6 16.♞f1 ♙f8 17.♞d4 ♖e5 18.♙g5 ♗fd7 19.♞ad1 ♘c5 20.♘xd6 ♙xd6 21.♞xd6 ♞xd6 22.♞xd6 ♙d7 23.b3 ♙c6 24.♙f3 f5 and Black got enough play for the pawn.



14.a5

This multifunctional move gains space on the queenside, secures the b6-outpost and also frees the a4-square for the white pieces.

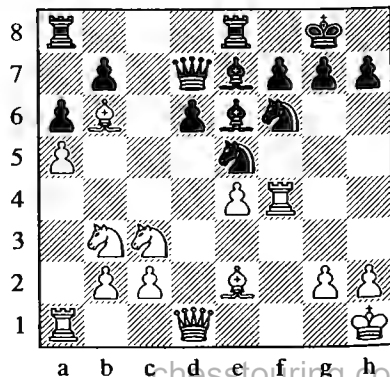
The fourth game continued as follows: 14.♘d4 ♞ad8! 15.♞g1 ♞d7 16.♞d1 ♞e8 17.♗f5 ♙d8 18.♘d4 ♘g6 19.♞ff1 ♖e5 20.♙f4 ♞c5 21.♘xe6 ♞xg1† 22.♞xg1 ♞xe6 23.♙f3 ♘eg4 24.♞g1 ♙b6 Karpov had some problems here, but managed to turn things around and eventually won, as noted previously.

14...♞fe8

The text move was Polugaevsky's improvement on the sixth game, which continued: 14...♘fd7 15.♞f1 ♙f6 16.♘d5 ♙xd5 17.♞xd5 ♞xc2 18.♘d4 ♞xb2 19.♞ab1 ♞c3 20.♗f5 ♞c2 21.♞be1 ♘c5 22.♘xd6 ♘cd3 23.♙xd3 ♘xd3 24.♞d1 ♘b4 25.♞xb7 ♞ab8 26.♞a7 ♞c6 27.♙f4 ♞a8 28.♞f2 ♞ad8 29.♞g3 And White went on to win.

In 1976 in Manila, Walter Browne introduced a significant improvement in 14...♞ac8!, preventing the idea seen on move 16 of the present game. Karpov was unable to obtain any advantage and the game was agreed drawn on move 28.

15.♙b6 ♞d7



16. ♖a4!

Karpov makes full use of his 14th move, by activating his rook in an imaginative way.

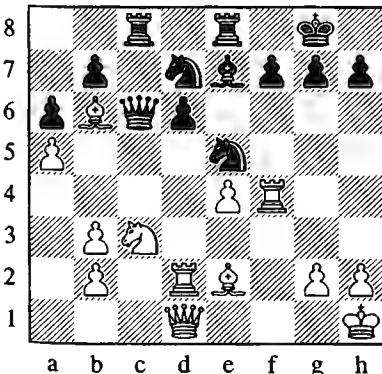
16... ♜ac8 17. ♘d4! ♜c6

After this game Polugaevsky recommended the exchange sacrifice 17... ♜xc3 18. bxc3 ♜c6, but I doubt that he would have been eager to test this idea if they played again.

It was worth considering a waiting move such as 17... h6!?

18. ♘d2 ♙xb3?

Polugaevsky misjudges the consequences of the ensuing change in the material balance. After the safer 18... ♖g6 19. ♘d4 Black should just give up his plan with 19... ♜d7, when his position should be playable. Note that 19... ♜xc3?! would be misguided, as after 20. bxc3 ♖xf4 21. ♙f3 Black does not have enough for the queen.

19. cxb3 ♖fd7**20. ♙g1!**

Karpov intends to focus his attention on the queenside, so he tucks his bishop away on a safe spot where it also helps to protect his king.

20... ♙g5?

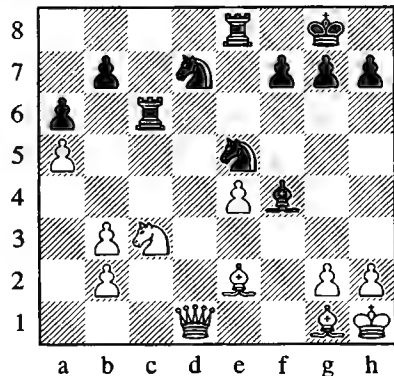
This was probably planned on the previous move. In fact, it is possible that Polugaevsky even analysed this position before the game.

20... ♜cd8 was possible, but after 21. ♘d5 White's knight is strong and 21... ♙g5? achieves nothing after 22. ♜c2.

Alternatively, after 20... ♘c5 21. b4 ♖e6 22. b5 White gains valuable space on the queenside and maintains a solid plus. A slightly deeper analysis reveals a neat tactical motif: 22... ♜d7 23. ♙f5 ♖c4 24. ♙xc4 ♜xc4 25. bxa6 bxa6 26. ♙xf7! White wins a pawn with this lovely shot. 26... ♜xc3 (26... ♖g5 27. ♙f4) 27. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 28. bxc3 And White is clearly on top.

21. ♜xd6!

Karpov shows excellent judgement in swapping his two rooks for a queen and a pawn. The idea works to perfection, as Black's queenside is weak while his rooks are unable to achieve anything constructive.

21... ♙xf4 22. ♜xc6 ♜xc6**23. b4!**

With this move Karpov immediately seizes the initiative on the queenside.

23... ♖f6

The Russian grandmaster strives for counterplay in the centre. Waiting passively with 23...♖c8 would have led to a difficult position as well: 24.b5 axb5 25.g3 ♕h6 26.♗xb5 ♖ed8 27.♗d6 Black is badly tied up.

24.b5 ♖ce6 25.bxa6

White has a choice of strong continuations. 25.♘d5 was also tempting, for instance: 25...♘g6 (or 25...♘xd5 26.exd5 ♖f6 27.g3 ♗g5 28.bxa6 bxa6 29.♗a4 ♖f8 [29...♖b8 30.♗a7] 30.♗d4 ♖f5 31.d6 and Black is in trouble) 26.♗c4 ♖xe4 27.♘xf6† gxf6 28.♗d5 White has a clear advantage.

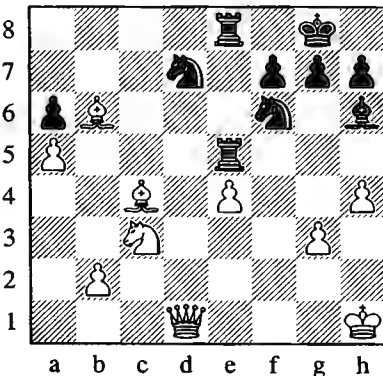
25...bxa6 26.g3!

Karpov gives his king some breathing room and ensures that Black's bishop will be cut off from the queenside.

26...♗g5 27.h4 ♗h6 28.♗b6

It is likely that Karpov appreciated the potential weakness of the a6-pawn in this type of position as early as move 20.

28...♘ed7 29.♗c4 ♖e5



30.♗b3!

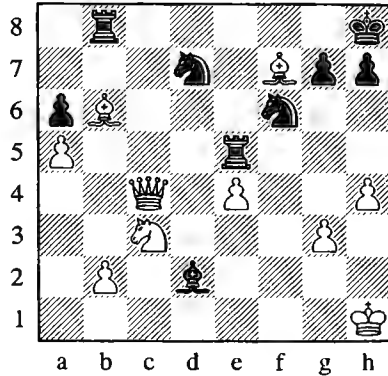
Before taking on a6, Karpov first goes after the f7-pawn.

30...♖b8

30...♖f8 is met by 31.♗c7, and if 31...♖h5 then 32.♗d6 wins.

31.♗xf7† ♖h8 32.♗c4 ♗d2

After 32...♘xb6 33.axb6 the b-pawn becomes far too strong: 33...♖e7 34.e5 ♖xe5 35.b7 The mighty pawn decides the game.



33.♗c7!

Simplifying to an easily winning endgame.

33...♖c5 34.♗xc5 ♘xc5 35.♗xb8 ♗xc3 36.bxc3 ♘fxe4 37.c4

White is not only a pawn up, but his bishops are also much stronger than Black's knights.

37...♘d7 38.♗c7 g6

Black is trying to activate his king, but the plan is too slow.

39.♗e6 ♘ec5 40.♗xd7

This wins a piece.

40...♘xd7 41.♗d6

1-0

Thus Karpov won the match with three wins and five draws – a superb result against one of the most formidable Soviet grandmasters of the time. Nevertheless, there were some moments when Karpov's play was not totally convincing. After the match Polugaevsky told

Tibor Florian “I got excited and fired up, but Karpov was like water – he came at me firmly and evenly, and gradually he put out my fire. It hurt...the heavy defeat really hurt, but later I understood everything: I had lost to the future World Champion!”

Candidates semi-final match

Karpov’s semi-final opponent was Spassky, who two years earlier had lost the crown to Fischer. Karpov had defeated Spassky once before; indeed, the passage of time has demonstrated that Spassky’s style suited Karpov very well. Their all time personal score is simply astonishing, as Karpov won fifteen games with just two defeats, draws not included. This is the most lopsided head to head score between any two world champions.

In view of the above, the reader may be surprised to learn that Spassky started the match in the best possible way, winning the very first game with the black pieces. Karpov managed to get two pieces for a rook, but Spassky had two dangerous passed pawns, and eventually Karpov had to give up a piece for them and subsequently lost.

Semyon Furman, Karpov’s trainer, later explained that they had noticed that Spassky did not like to solve new opening problems over the board. Therefore in Game Two Karpov unveiled a surprise with 4...♗f5 in the Caro Kann, and effortlessly held a draw in a mere 17 moves. In the third game Karpov again surprised his opponent with 1.d4. Spassky responded with a King’s Indian, which he rarely used. Maybe he wanted to bring Karpov into unknown territory. It turned out to be a bad decision, as he played the opening poorly and got a very passive position, which may even have been losing outright in an absolute sense. The game lasted fifty five moves, yet it was a one-sided affair.

In the next Caro-Kann, Spassky was once

again unable to develop any pressure and the game was drawn. In Game Five Spassky wisely played the Nimzo-Indian, an opening that he knew much better than the King’s Indian, and drew fairly comfortably. In the sixth game Spassky tried a different plan against Karpov’s 4...♗f5 Caro-Kann. After the normal moves 5.♘g3 ♗g6, he opted for an unfashionable yet challenging set-up without the move h2-h4. This time an interesting battle ensued. Spassky obtained a small edge, but was unable to achieve anything serious and later simplified to a balanced endgame. Unfortunately for him, Karpov played the endgame incredible well and went on to win, taking the lead in the match for the first time.

In the seventh game Spassky played a Stonewall set-up and got a terrible position. However, Karpov went on to open up the position in a less than optimal way, allowing his opponent just enough counterplay to save the game. In the eighth game Spassky played a main line against Karpov’s Caro-Kann, which he had seemed reluctant to do until this point. It seems that his strategy at the start of the match had been to play relatively offbeat openings, perhaps because he feared the analytical power of Karpov’s team of seconds. However, as the match went on it looks as though he came to the realization that main lines would be required. In this game he was pressing, but Karpov held.

Game Nine was the best of the match.

Game 35

Anatoly Karpov – Boris Spassky

Candidates semi-final, Leningrad (9) 1974

1.e4

Karpov returns to his main weapon.

1...c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6

5. ♖c3 d6

Nowadays the Scheveningen is rarely seen at the highest levels with its original move order.

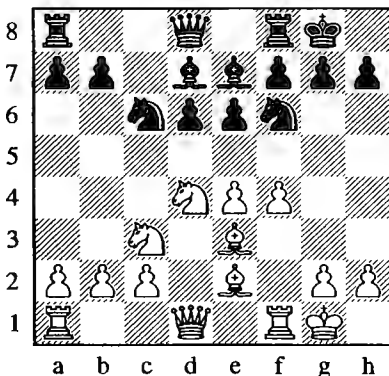
6. ♗e2

Karpov only opted for this move in five games out of twenty two, preferring the Keres Attack with 6.g4 in all the rest.

6... ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.f4 ♖c6 9. ♗e3 ♗d7

Spassky decides to do without the move ...a7-a6. Interestingly he had only played this position once prior to this match.

In the first game of the match Spassky preferred 9...e5. The game continued: 10. ♖b3 a5 11.a4 ♖b4 12. ♗f3 (Spassky later repeated this variation against Kavalek and Mecking, both of whom preferred 12. ♖h1 over Karpov's move.) 12... ♗e6 13. ♖h1 ♖c7 14. ♖f2 ♖fd8 15. ♗d2 ♗c4 16. ♖b5 ♗xb5 17. axb5 a4 18. ♖c1 d5 19. fxe5 ♖xe4 20. c3 ♖xd2 21. ♗xd2 ♖xe5 22. cxb4 ♖xb2 23. ♖d3 ♖d4 Spassky went on to win this unclear position.



10. ♖b3!?

A logical move. Black is looking to save time by omitting or postponing ...a7-a6. In response Karpov stops him from carrying out his plan of ...♖xd4 and ...♗c6. Other moves turn out fine for Black:

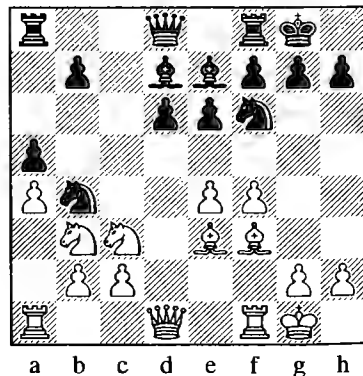
10. ♖e1 ♖xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♗c6 12. ♖g3 g6 13. ♗f3 (13. ♗d3 ♖h5 14. ♖f2 ♖xf4) 13...b5 14. ♗ad1 b4 with good counterplay.

10. ♖h1 a6 (There is also 10... ♖xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♗c6 12. ♗d3 ♖d7 and Black carries out ...e5.) 11. ♖e1 ♖xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♗c6 13. ♗d3 ♖d7 14. ♗d1 e5 15. ♗e3 b5 16. ♖d5 ♗xd5 17. exd5 ½-½ Karpov – Dzindzichashvili, USSR 1971.

10...a5!?

This is an ambitious and risky move. If Black does not obtain enough activity, White may be able to exploit the weakness of the b5-square in the long run. Karpov was able to do the same thing in some of his games against the Dragon; see for instance Game 46 (Karpov – Sosonko).

11.a4 ♖b4 12. ♗f3



12... ♗c6?

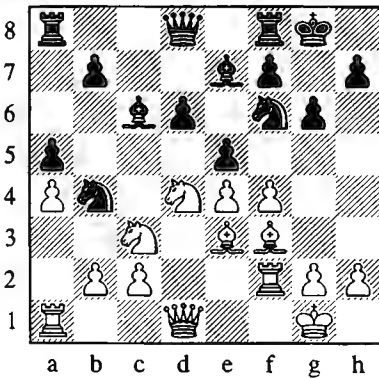
This automatic move does not fully meet the demands of the position. It is now known that 12...e5! is better, for instance 13. ♖f2 ♖c8!! with interesting play.

13. ♖d4 g6

13... ♖d7 was another idea, followed by developing the rooks and intending ...d5 at the right moment.

14. ♠f2 e5?!

Spassky opens the position, but he will sorely miss the light-squared bishop.

**15. ♖xc6! bxc6 16. fxe5 dxe5 17. ♗f1!**

Karpov manoeuvres his queen to an ideal spot on c4.

17... ♗c8

Botvinnik recommended 17... ♖d7, but added that 18. ♗c4 maintained White's advantage.

18. h3!

A useful waiting move. From now on Karpov can use his light-squared bishop more freely as ... ♖g4 can no longer be played.

18. ♗c4 was less ambitious but still promising, for instance: 18... ♗a6 19. ♗xa6 ♖xa6 20. ♖e2 ♖g7 Black can probably live with his slightly passive endgame, although it would not be much fun against Karpov.

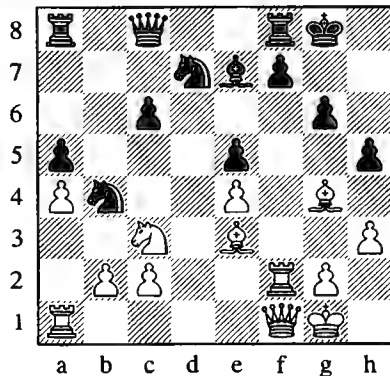
18... ♖d7?!

This attempt to exchange the dark-squared bishops is too transparent. More resilient was 18... ♗b7! 19. ♗c4 (19. ♖d1 ♖ad8) 19... ♖d8 (after 19... ♗a6 20. ♗xa6 ♖xa6 21. ♖e2 White is somewhat better) 20. ♖af1 (20. ♖h2 ♖b6 21. ♖xb6 ♗xb6 22. ♖d2 ♖fd8) 20... ♖b6

21. ♖xb6 ♗xb6 22. ♖h2 ♖e8 and Black consolidates his position.

19. ♖g4 h5?!

Kasparov prefers 19... ♗c7, aiming for a similar position but without moving the h-pawn. After 20. ♖xd7 ♗xd7 21. ♗c4 he evaluates the position as better for White, but Black's kingside is certainly a bit more secure with the pawn on h7.

**20. ♖xd7**

It is often said that one of the advantages of the bishop pair is the ability to exchange a bishop for an enemy knight at an opportune moment.

20... ♗xd7 21. ♗c4 ♖h4?

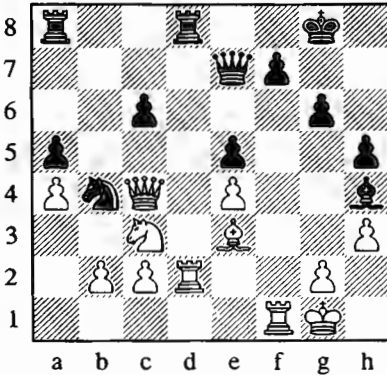
Interestingly Kasparov does not mention the improvement of 21... ♗e6!?, which is somewhat passive but perhaps the best chance to make the black position playable. Kasparov almost always preferred to look for complications in worse positions, rather than defend passively. After 22. ♗xe6 fxe6 White's advantage may not be decisive, but Black will obviously have to fight to make a draw. Spassky probably wanted to maintain some chances for a third result.

22. ♖d2 ♗e7 23. ♖f1

23. ♖c5 can be met by 23... ♗g5.

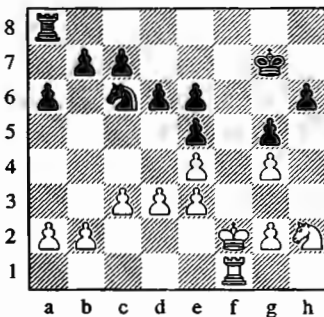
23...♞fd8

After 23...♞ad8 24.♖b1 ♕g5 25.♗c5 ♜c7 26.♗xf8 ♗xd2 27.♖xd2 ♞xd2 28.♗xb4 axb4 29.a5 the passed a-pawn is dangerous.

**24.♖b1!!**

This is one of Karpov's deepest moves. The knight has little function on c3, so Karpov improves it with a backward move. Apart from the overall beauty of the idea of improving a piece by retreating it to its original square, there is something else that makes this move so special. We all can see White has the initiative, but when we appreciate the power of the ensuing knight manoeuvre we come to the realization that Black's position is probably already beyond salvation.

This was not Karpov's only amazing knight retreat. Consider the following:

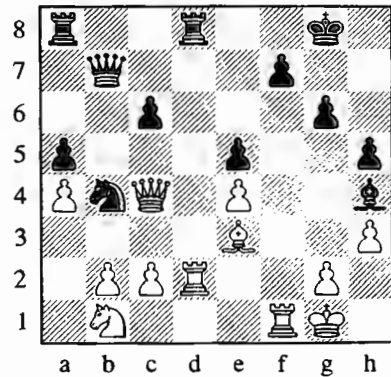


25...♖b8!! 26.♖f3 ♖d7 27.♗g3? ♖c5 28.♞d1 a5 29.♗f2 ♞a6 30.♗e2? ♖a4! Black went on to win in Bouaziz – Karpov, Hamburg TV 1982.

Unlike Karpov's Tunisian opponent in the above example, Spassky was a world class player and was not in the habit of making big mistakes, and yet still he is unable to muster much resistance in the game.

24...♞b7

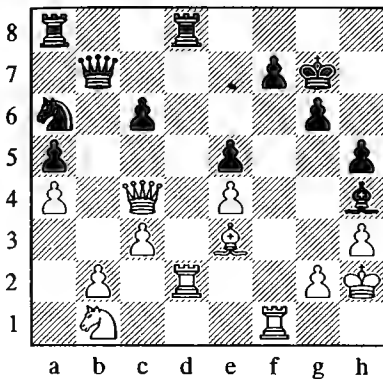
24...♗g3? 25.c3 wins a pawn.

**25.♗h2!!**

This is all part of Karpov's plan. Before he transfers the b1-knight to f3, he uses his king to take away the g3-square from the enemy bishop. If 25.♞e2 ♗g3 26.♖d2 ♜c7 Black is still in the game.

25...♗g7 26.c3 ♖a6

The knight finds itself far away from the area where the actions will take place. 26...♞xd2 27.♖xd2 ♖c2 was also unsatisfactory: 28.♗c5 (There is also 28.♗g1 ♖e1 29.♞xe1 ♗xe1 30.♖f3 ♞xb2 31.♖xe1 when White's two pieces are superior to Black's rook.) 28...♖e1 29.♖b3 (or 29.b4 axb4 30.cxb4 with a positional advantage) 29...♖d3 30.♞xd3 ♞xb3 31.♞d6 ♞e6 32.♞xc6 fxe6 33.♞d1 Black is unlikely to survive this difficult endgame.



27. ♖e2!

Karpov keeps the rook to defend the b2-pawn. Later it can assist in an attack on the f-file or an invasion along the d-file.

27... ♜f8?

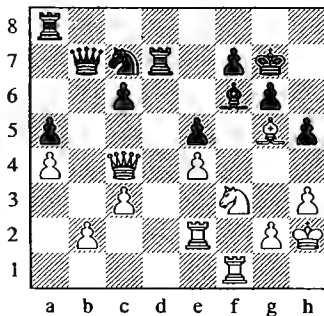
27... ♜d7

This would have offered more resistance, but Kasparov shows the way forward for White with the following beautiful line.

28. ♘d2 ♘c7 29. ♘f3

29. ♘b3 is adequately met by 29... ♘e6.

29... ♙f6 30. ♙g5



30... ♙xg5

I decided to check what happens if Black tries to exchange queens: 30... ♜a6 31. ♙xf6† ♜xf6 32. ♜c5! ♜g7 (32... ♜xe2? 33. ♜xe5#) 33. ♜e1! White switches the rook to the d-file to invade. (33. ♜f2 f6 defends) 33... f6

34. ♙d1! ♙a8 35. ♘xe5 And White wins.

31. ♘xg5 f6 32. ♜f2 ♜f8 33. ♜c5 h4

After 33... ♜a8 34. h4! Black is in zugzwang!

34. ♘h7! ♘e6 35. ♜c4

With a clear advantage according to Kasparov.

28. ♘d2 ♙d8

On 28... ♙e7 Kasparov's 29. ♘b3 is strong.

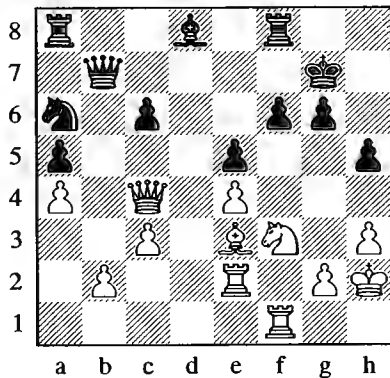
Black has no time to play 28... ♘b8 to bring the knight to the centre, as demonstrated by the following short line: 29. g3! (29. ♘f3 is also promising) 29... ♙d8 30. ♜f2 f6 31. ♘f3 ♘d7 32. ♜e6 Black's position is about to fall apart.

29. ♘f3

29. ♘b3 ♙b6 defends.

29... f6

If 29... ♙f6 30. ♜f2 ♘c7 (30... ♜ae8 31. ♙g5 ♙e6 32. ♘d4 wins.) 31. ♙g5! White eliminates the strongest defensive piece and Black's position soon collapses: 31... ♘e6 32. ♙xf6† ♜xf6 33. ♘xe5†! ♜xe5 34. ♜d3! And White catches the enemy king.



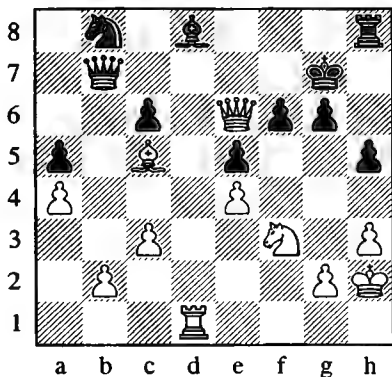
30. ♙d2!

Spassky has temporarily stabilized his king, but allowed White to achieve total domination on the d-file.

30...♙e7 31.♖e6 ♖ad8 32.♗xd8

Karpov exchanges in order to invade.

32...♙xd8 33.♗d1 ♘b8 34.♙c5 ♖h8



35.♗xd8!

1-0

Spassky resigned in view of 35...♗xd8
36.♙e7.

To win the semi-final match required four wins: one more than the quarter-final. This meant that after the above game Karpov required just one more win to seal victory and advance to the candidates final.

In Game Ten Karpov departed from the Caro-Kann in favour of the Breyer variation of the Ruy Lopez. He fared quite well with this system, although he never tried it against Kasparov. Spassky pressed for a long time but Karpov held the draw. In Game Eleven Spassky employed the Orthodox Queen's Gambit, but instead of defending patiently he played much too riskily and soon found himself in a desperately lost position. Karpov made no mistake and the match was over.

With hindsight it is clear that Spassky had a faulty match strategy, especially with regard to his opening choices, nevertheless Karpov proved himself to be the stronger player and deserved to win. His overall result in this

match – four wins, six draws and one loss, against a recent World Champion – must rank as one of his most impressive accomplishments of Karpov's career, and can be compared with Fischer's Reykjavik win. It was arguably even better than the drawn championship match against Kasparov in 1987.

Karpov's next event was the Nice Olympiad, where he played on the top board for the very first time. He won all five games in the qualification stages, one of which was a gem. His Welsh opponent never faced any other world champions. His rating was 2405 at the time of the game, which would equate to at least 2500 nowadays.

Game 36

Howard Williams – Anatoly Karpov

Nice Olympiad (qualification stage) 1974

1.d4

Williams usually played 1.e4, so he must have prepared his opening especially for this game.

1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♙g5

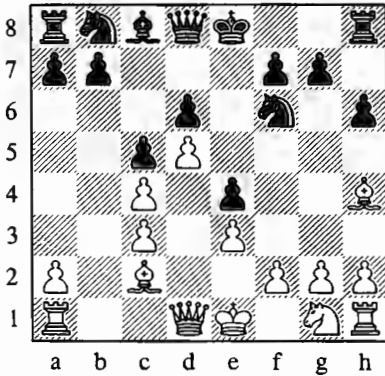
In a way it is not a bad decision to play a sideline against a top player, who may not be used to facing unusual lines in high level events. On the other hand Karpov had just played a match against Spassky, who often played the Leningrad Variation, so Karpov must have been thoroughly prepared for this particular option. Over his career Karpov faced the Leningrad Variation five times, winning three and drawing two.

4...h6 5.♙h4 c5 6.d5 d6 7.e3 ♙xc3† 8.bxc3 e5 9.♙d3

More than two decades later Artur Yusupov tried a different approach: 9.♖c2 ♗e7 10.♘f3

g5 11.♔g3 ♖h5 12.♙d3 ♜d7 13.♜d2 ♜df6
 14.h3 ♙d7 15.♞b1 b6 16.a4 ♜g7 17.f3 ♜fh5
 18.♙h2 ♜d8 19.a5 ♜c7 20.0-0 f5 21.♞b2 f4
 22.♞a1 ♞hb8 23.♞ba2 a6 24.♞b2 bxa5 Karpov
 went on to win this balanced position, Yusupov
 – Karpov, Baden-Baden 1995.

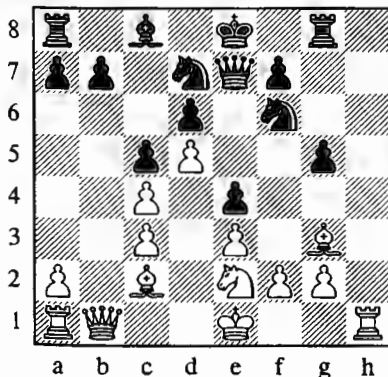
9...e4 10.♙c2



10...g5

Karpov decides early where he will put his king.

11.♔g3 ♞e7 12.h4 ♞g8 13.hxg5 hxg5
 14.♜e2 ♜bd7 15.♞b1



15...♜d8!

This was a novelty at the time, although it is well known that the king tends to be safe on c7 in such positions.

16.a4?

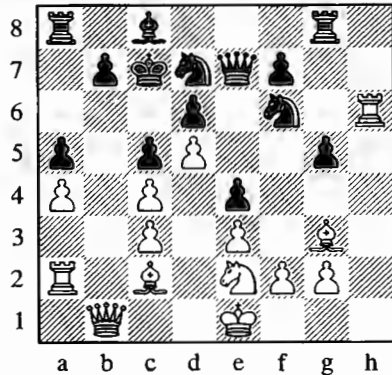
Later games have seen 16.♞b5!? score two wins for White, but Black should be doing alright after 16...♜e5.

16...a5!

The move blocks the queenside and paralyzes the c2-bishop.

17.♞a2 ♜c7 18.♞h6!?

White wants to pin the knight, but Black's inconvenience is only temporary.



18...♞a6!

Karpov activates the rook and defends the d6-pawn.

19.♞b5 ♜b8

Karpov is not lazy, and takes the time to bring his king to the safest possible location.

20.♞b2 ♜a7!

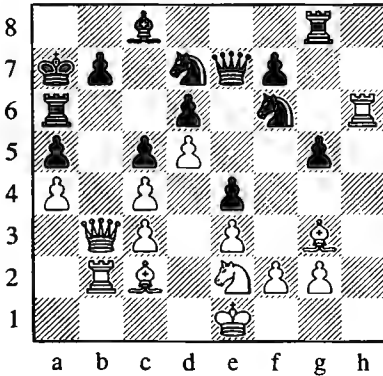
Black should avoid the temptation to win the queen with 20...♞b6, which turns out badly after 21.♞xd7! ♜xd7 22.♞xb6 when the d6-pawn is weak.

It is also worth mentioning the possibility of a stunning ♜d4 sacrifice, which can

sometimes be played to good effect in this variation. Perhaps this was also a factor in Karpov's decision to retreat his king to a safer spot.

21. ♖b3?

Retreating the queen loses time and allows Black to exchange the rooks. Williams may have been worried about ... ♖b6 and ... ♗d7, but it was not necessary to retreat just yet. 21. ♗b1 was better: 21... ♖g4 (21... ♖b6 is adequately met by 22. ♖b3 ♗d7 23. ♖a2) 22. ♗h7 ♖b6 23. ♖b3 ♗f5 Black remains somewhat better, but he will have to work hard to achieve a serious advantage.



21... ♖g4!

Karpov was able to improve his pieces a lot on the queenside, and now he does the same on the other wing.

22. ♗h1 ♔ 23. ♗d1 ♗b6! 24. ♖a2 ♗xb2

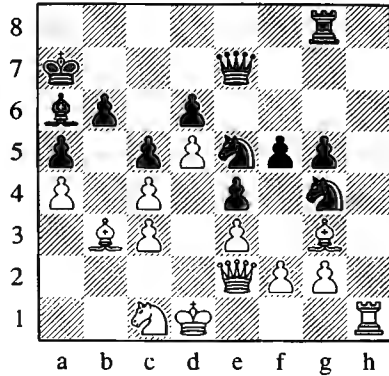
After the rook exchange White has no chance of hurting his opponent on the queenside.

25. ♖xb2 b6!

Suddenly the c4-pawn comes under fire, and it soon becomes clear that Black is simply winning.

26. ♗b3 ♗a6 27. ♖c1 ♖de5 28. ♖e2

Taking the knight would also have failed to solve White's problems: 28. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 29. ♗h7 ♖g7 30. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 31. ♖d2 ♖h8 Black should win.



28... ♖g6!

Karpov prepares to push his opponent back even further. 28... ♖f4! was also good enough, as after 29. exf4 gxf4 30. ♗xf4 ♖xc4 31. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 Black is winning.

29. ♗d2 ♖f6 30. ♖d1 ♖4

0-1

White is almost paralysed, and chose to end his suffering sooner rather than later.

Karpov did not slow down in the finals, where he began with a good win over Hort. Finally, after six consecutive wins, Karpov was briefly slowed down by Hartston who managed to draw with him. Karpov followed up by winning a true positional masterpiece against Wolfgang Unzicker.

Before this encounter, the two protagonists had only played one game, which was drawn. Their lifetime score was four wins to Karpov, with two draws. Although Karpov played very well in several of these games, it must be said that the German grandmaster's best years were behind him.

Unzicker is one of the very few western players to have won a top level tournament in Soviet

Russia, when in 1965 he tied for first prize with Spassky at the Chigorin Memorial in Sochi. He played on the top board for West Germany at ten Olympiads, and played a total of sixty six games against all the world champions from Euwe to Kasparov. He beat them four times, drew forty two and lost twenty. His accomplishments are even more impressive in light of the fact that his primary occupation was as a lawyer rather than a chess professional. At his peak he was regarded as the strongest amateur player in the world.

Game 37

Anatoly Karpov – Wolfgang Unzicker

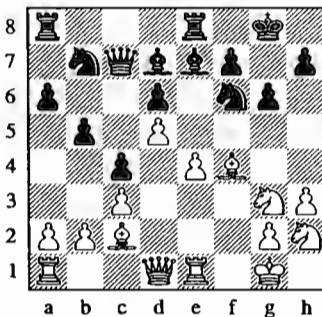
Nice Olympiad 1974

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6
5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3
♘a5

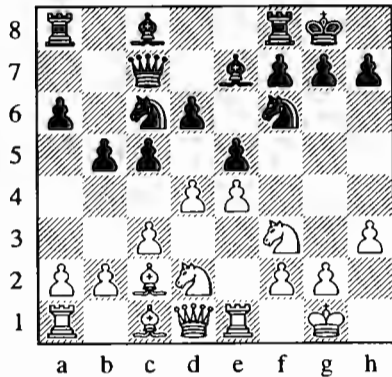
Unzicker also played the Open and Breyer variations, but today he opts for the Chigorin.

10.♗c2 c5 11.d4 ♞c7 12.♘bd2 ♘c6

Karpov faced this move five times. Surprisingly he won only the present game and drew the others. A year later Unzicker switched to 12...♗d7 against Karpov, no doubt hoping to avoid the kind of slow torture that happened in the present game. In a way he succeeded, although not in the manner he intended, as the game was over in just ten more moves: 13.♘f1 ♞fe8 14.d5 ♘b7 15.♘3h2 g6? 16.♘g3 c4 17.f4! exf4 18.♗xf4



18...♗f8? 19.♗g5 ♗e7 20.♞d2 ♗c8? 21.♞f1
♘d7 22.♘g4 1-0 Karpov – Unzicker, Milan
1975.



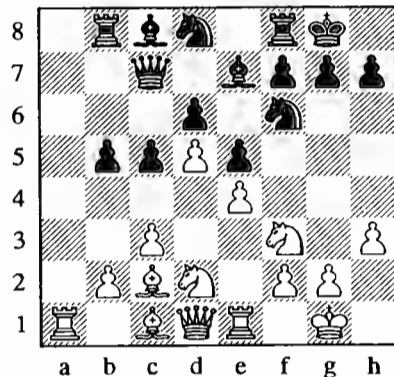
13.d5! ♘d8 14.a4!

Karpov fights for the a-file. In a game from 1967 he only played on the kingside, but by now he understood the need to combine play on both flanks.

14...♞b8

If 14...b4 15.a5!? White will utilize the c4-square to his advantage.

15.axb5 axb5



16.b4!

White fights for queenside space and stops Black from improving his knight by means of ...c4, ...d**b**7 and ...d**c**5.

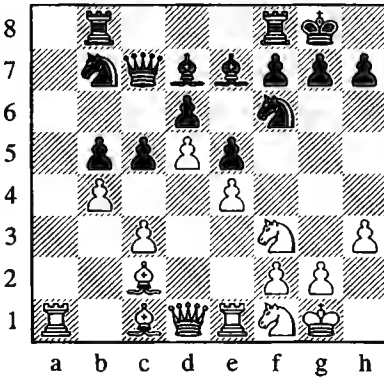
16...d**b**7?

The German grandmaster follows a Spassky – Korchnoi game and also hopes to improve on one of Karpov's games from the Soviet Championship. The problem is that the knight has no future on b7.

After 16...c4 17.d**f**1 d**e**8 18.d**h**2 f6 19.f4 d**f**7 20.d**f**3 g6 21.f5 d**g**7 22.g4 Karpov subjected his opponent to unpleasant pressure although Black eventually held the draw in Karpov – Spassky, Soviet Union (ch) 1973.

Nowadays 16...d**d**7 and 16...d**e**8 are regarded as better and more flexible moves.

17.d**f**1 d**d**7



18.d**e**3!

Spassky developed his knight to the same square but got nowhere: 18.d**d**2 d**a**8 19.d**e**3 d**f**c8 20.d**h**2 d**a**x1 21.d**a**x1 d**d**8 22.d**a**7 d**a**8 23.d**b**x7 d**b**8 ½-½ Spassky – Korchnoi, Kiev (1) 1968.

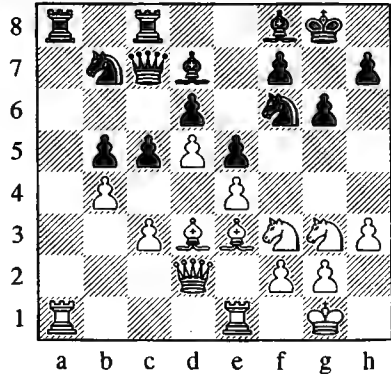
18...d**a**8 19.d**d**2 d**f**c8 20.d**d**3 g6?!

Later Black chooses to push with ...c4, but it

would have been better to do so immediately, as the white bishop would have had to settle for a slightly worse retreat square.

21.d**g**3 d**f**8

21...d**a**4 does not help Black: 22.d**a**x4 b**x**a4 23.d**a**6 d**b**8 24.d**a**2! The knight will come to d2 and White will keep the upper hand on the queenside.



22.d**a**2!

Karpov fights for the only open file.

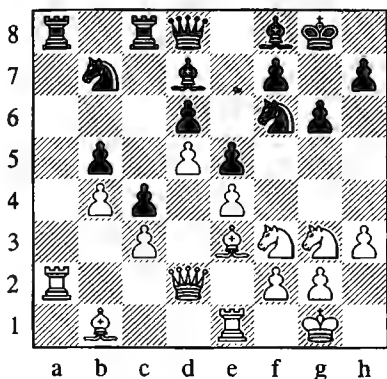
22...c4 23.d**b**1!

This deep move is connected with the idea of gaining space with f2-f4. By keeping the bishop on this diagonal, White defends the e4-pawn in advance.

23...d**d**8?

Unzicker wants to exchange rooks, but he has overlooked Karpov's brilliant response. The immediate exchange with 23...d**a**x2 was somewhat preferable, but White would remain clearly better after 24.d**a**x2 d**b**8 25.d**c**2.

The best chance was 23...d**d**8!, correcting the error from the sixteenth move. White keeps a nice plus after 24.d**e**2, but his advantage is smaller than in the game after either 24...d**b**7 or 24...d**a**x2 25.d**a**x2 d**b**7.



24. ♙a7!!

Karpov covers the a-file in order to double his rooks without allowing exchanges, which would relieve the congestion in Black's cramped position. Interestingly, Karpov mentions that Spassky played the same ♙a7 move against him in the tenth game of their candidates match.

I often show the present game to my pupils but the text move does not come naturally to them, despite my efforts to explain in advance that the player with more space should generally strive to avoid swapping pieces. By the way, there are exceptions to this principle. For example, in the main Ruy Lopez White often plays the move ♘f5, not fearing the reply ...♙xf5, because the change in the pawn structure after exf5 may yield additional benefits to White (extra kingside space, increased scope for the c2-bishop and so on).

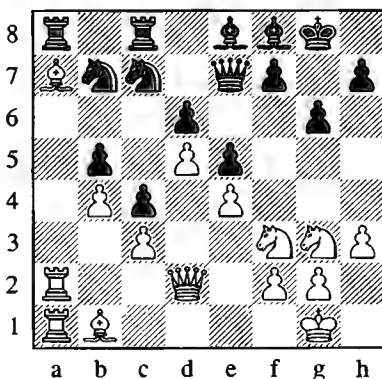
24... ♛e8

Black can do nothing but wait passively.

25. ♙c2 ♘c7 26. ♖e1

Black will constantly have to reckon with the idea of White retreating his bishop and invading on the a-file.

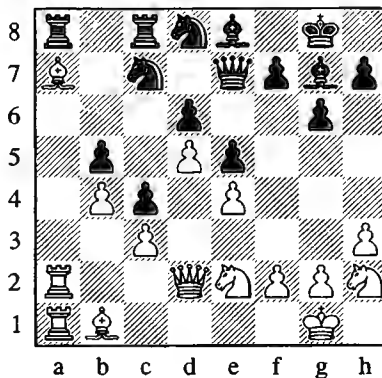
26... ♜e7 27. ♙b1 ♙e8



28. ♛e2!

The point behind this subtle move is that White is planning to play f4 in the near future, and if Black exchanges pawns, White will quickly occupy the d4-square with his knight.

28... ♜d8 29. ♘h2 ♙g7



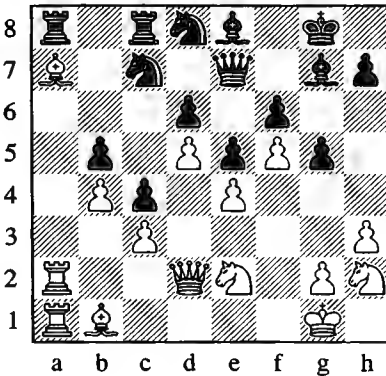
30. f4!

Karpov has improved his pieces as much as possible, and the time has come to expand on the kingside.

30... ♜f6?

Black was already clearly worse, but he should at least have taken on f4 in order to obtain some breathing room for his pieces. Now his position becomes hopelessly passive.

31. f5! g5

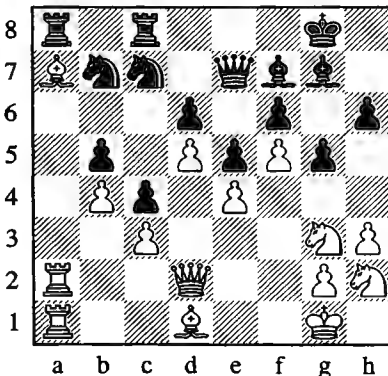


32. ♖c2!

The bishop fulfilled its earlier duty by guarding the e4-pawn, but this function is no longer needed so Karpov immediately finds a better role for it.

32... ♖f7 33. ♖g3 ♖b7 34. ♖d1! h6?

Black's position was already depressing, but this move voluntarily weakens another light square near the king.



35. ♖h5!

Completing the manoeuvre. In this particular case the side with extra space is happy to exchange a pair of pieces, considering that we

are talking about Black's best defensive piece.

The text move illustrates another important principle: in positions with a space advantage, one of the most effective strategies is to attack on both flanks. The defending side may be able to protect one weakness, but the difficulties associated with transferring defensive pieces from one side to the other will often prove insurmountable.

My experience as a junior trainer has been that young players tend to have problems with exchanging pieces and attacking both sides, because they are not aware of these basic principles.

35... ♗e8 36. ♗d1 ♖d8 37. ♖a3

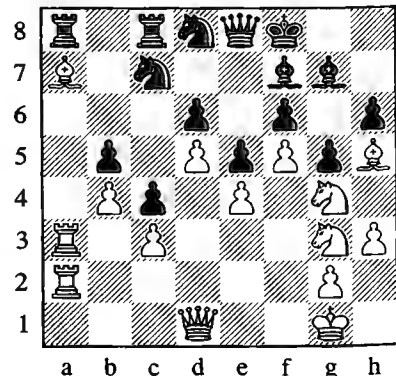
Perhaps Karpov was thinking about tripling on the a-file, with the queen behind the two rooks. On the other hand the whole idea may have been a bluff, designed to tire his opponent and keep him thinking that the invasion would come from the queenside.

37... ♖f8 38. ♖1a2 ♖g8 39. ♖g4

It is fancier to transfer the knight via the g4-square.

39... ♖f8

Black was unable to take twice on h5 for obvious reasons.

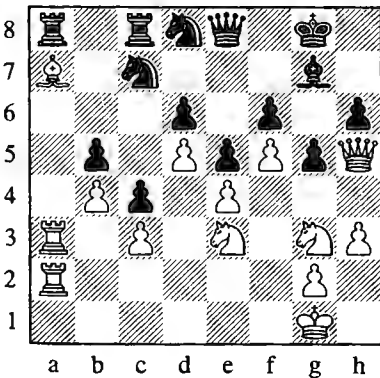


40. ♖e3 ♗g8 41. ♗xf7+ ♖xf7

If 41... ♗xf7 42. ♗h5 ♗h5 43. ♖xh5 ♖b7 44. ♖g4 ♗f7 White will win by bringing his king to the queenside and playing ♗b6. 44... ♖e8 is no improvement because of 45. ♗a6.

42. ♗h5 ♖d8

Covering the g6-square by 42... ♖h8 would not have helped. Karpov gives the following line, which he finds amusing: 43. ♖g4 ♗xh5 44. ♖xh5 ♗f7 45. ♗b6 ♗xa3 46. ♗xa3 ♗a8 47. ♗xa8 ♖xa8 48. ♗a5 Karpov calls this total zugzwang, and it is hard to argue with somebody who creates a masterpiece like this.



43. ♗g6! ♗f8 44. ♖h5
1-0

Unzicker could take no more of the torture. He was below par although perhaps he derived some consolation from the fact that he took part (or more precisely, was *taken apart*) in a classic game.

In the next round Karpov drew quickly with black against Andersson. Next he faced Lubomir Kavalek, a strong grandmaster who had recorded a win in their first meeting. Kavalek faced the world champions fifty eight times, winning five games, losing twelve and drawing forty one. The final phase of the following game has attracted many

commentators, and is one of Karpov's most analysed endgames. This is not by accident, as the endgame is the culmination of Karpov's fine strategic play, and contains numerous subtle finesses. In this particular endgame there is so much beauty, not only in the moves that appear on the board, but also in the analysis of the many superb commentators.

Game 38

Anatoly Karpov – Lubomir Kavalek

Nice Olympiad 1974

1.c4

Karpov probably wanted to hide some of his main openings for his impending match against Korchnoi. He played the English quite a few times in Nice.

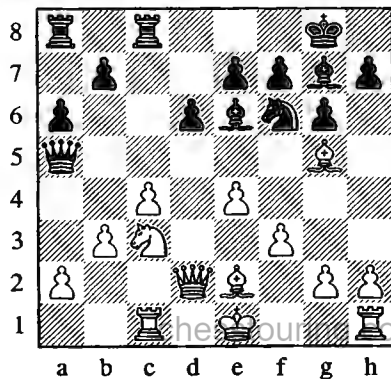
1...c5 2. ♖f3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖c6 5.e4

Karpov employed the Maroczy Bind a total of nine times, through several opening move orders. He scored five wins and four draws.

5... ♖f6 6. ♖c3 d6 7. ♗e2 ♖xd4 8. ♗xd4 ♗g7 9. ♗g5

Fifteen years later Karpov preferred 9.0-0 and defeated Petrusson.

9...0-0 10. ♗d2 ♗e6 11. ♗c1 ♗a5 12. b3 ♗fc8 13. f3 a6



14. ♖a4

This move was first played in 1974, although it is not completely clear whether or not it was technically Karpov's novelty, as there was another game without an exact date. In any case, Karpov writes in *My Best Games* that the move was an original idea for him. The move was also seen in a game between Samuel Reshevsky and Walter Browne in the 1974 US Championship, in which Black eventually prevailed.

14... ♜xd2† 15. ♕xd2

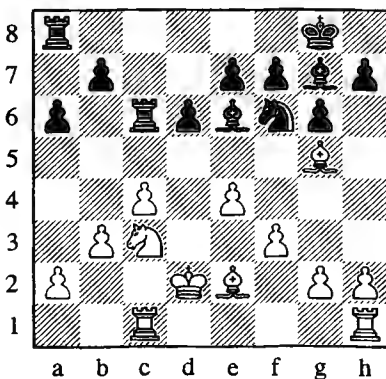
The king is well placed here in the position without queens.

15... ♜c6

Later 15... ♘d7 became more popular, intending to push the f-pawn.

16. ♘c3

Returning the knight to the centre is more logical than 16. ♙e3, as played by Reshevsky in the aforementioned game.

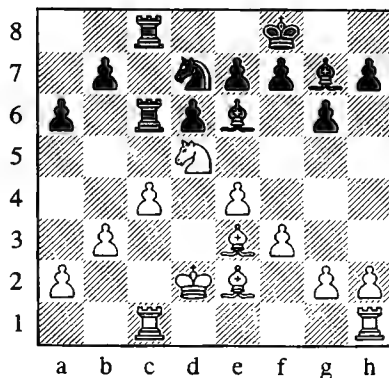
**16... ♜ac8**

Some players have preferred 16... ♜c8! which looks weird, but is not without logic. Unlike in the current game it allows Black to take on d5 with the knight after 17. ♘d5 ♘xd5 18. cxd5 ♙d7 19. ♜xc8† ♜xc8 20. ♙xe7 ♙h6† when Black has compensation for the pawn.

The world of endgames is deeply fascinating, but openings can be wonderful as well. In this game Karpov plays both simultaneously.

17. ♘d5! ♕f8

After 17... ♙xd5 18. exd5 ♜6c7 19. ♜he1 White is slightly better.

18. ♙e3 ♘d7**19. h4!**

Karpov contrives to gain space on the kingside.

19... ♙xd5?!

Black's position is already a bit worse and this exchange only helps White to gain additional space. 19... h5 was also not helping, as after 20. ♘f4 White exchanges the e6-bishop and will prepare g4 later.

A better alternative was 19... f5!?, as Karpov mentions. In that case White should probably proceed with 20. h5 or 20. g4, maintaining a slight plus.

20. exd5 ♜6c7 21. h5

Gaining space on the queenside with 21. b4 would be premature in view of 21... ♘e5 when Black obtains counterplay.

21... ♕g8

Presumably Kavalek wanted to prevent a rook invasion on h7.

22.f4!

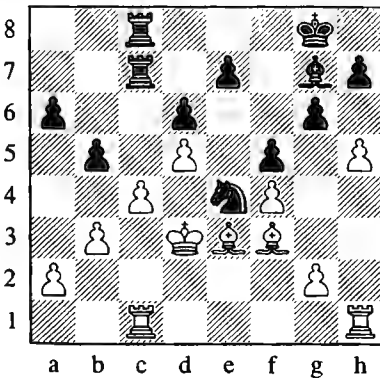
This move controls e5, gains space and most importantly opens the diagonal for the light-squared bishop.

22...♖c5 23.♗g4!

White improves the bishop and occupies the important diagonal. If permitted, he may also advance his f-pawn, which may explain Black's next two moves.

23...♖c4† 24.♔d3 f5 25.♗f3 b5

Black tries to undermine White's pawn structure, but this is where the active king proves its value. Indeed, Black must be careful not to exchange too many pieces as White's king can then dominate the scene, even if it means giving up a pawn.



26.g4!

Karpov undermines Black's pawns.

26...bxc4† 27.♗xc4!

Exchanging helps to safeguard White's king, as Black will have a hard time creating threats with only one rook. In playing this way, Karpov avoids committing the same error that Polugaevsky made against him in the

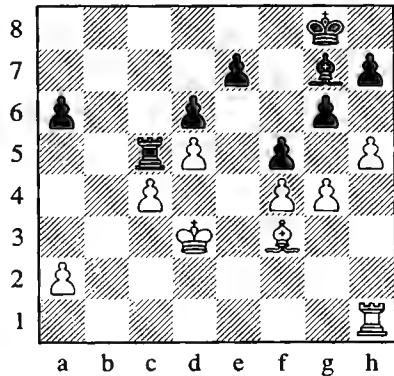
encounter mentioned in the note to White's 28th move in Game 31.

27...♗xc4 28.bxc4 ♖c5† 29.♗xc5

If 29.♗c2 ♗b8 Black obtains counterplay.

29...♗xc5

After 29...dxc5 30.♗b1! Black's position is extremely unattractive.



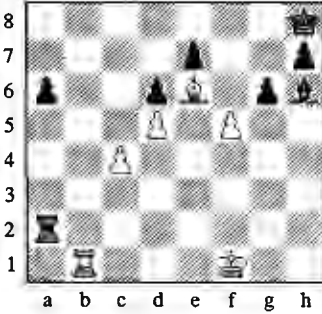
30.h6!

This is not the first time that Karpov has pushed a flank pawn all the way to the sixth rank. This time it does more than fix the opponent's pawn as a long term weakness – it also helps to weave a mating net.

30...♗f8

This endgame has captured the attention of several players and has been analysed extensively. In particular I would like to mention Dvoretsky, Marin and Karpov himself as three analysts who have made especially important contributions to our understanding of this endgame. I decided to take a detailed look at this endgame, and since I enjoyed the immense benefit of “standing on the shoulders of giants”, I was able to discover some important finesses which had not been mentioned previously.

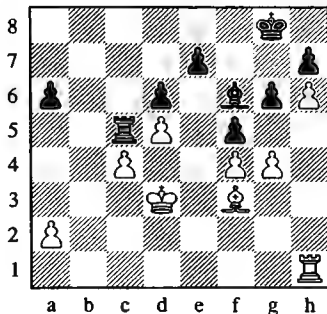
30...fxg4?! is a weaker option than the game move, because of 31.♙xg4 ♕f8 (31...♙f6 32.♙e6† ♖f8 33.♞b1 wins.) 32.♙e6† ♖h8 33.f5 ♞a5 (33...g5 34.♞h5) 34.♞b1 ♞a3† 35.♖e2 ♞xa2† 36.♖f1 ♙xh6



37.f6!! Karpov pointed out this lovely creation of a mating net.

30...♙f6!?

This move was brought to my attention by my editor Andrew Greet, who suggested it in his book on the Accelerated Dragon. Black tries to build a fortress, and compared with the game his active bishop brings certain advantages. Nevertheless White has a subtle way to break through.



31.g5!

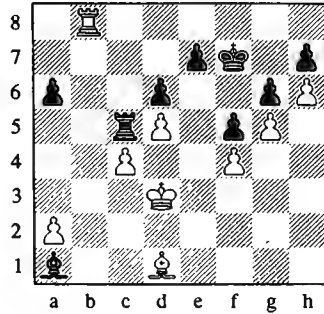
After 31.♞b1 ♞a5 Black obtains counterplay.

Greet mentions the line 31.gxf5!? gxf5 32.♞b1 ♞c8 33.♞b6 a5 (33...♞a8? 34.c5!

35.d6 c4† 36.♖e3+–) 34.♞b5 ♞a8 35.c5 dxc5 36.d6 ♞d8 37.♙d5† ♖f8 38.d7! e5! 39.♙e6 exf4 40.♙xf5 when White is better, but it is not clear if he can win.

31...♙h8 32.♞b1 ♖f7 33.♞b8 ♙a1 34.♙d1!

The bishop wants to invade via a4 and e8, so Black's reply is forced.

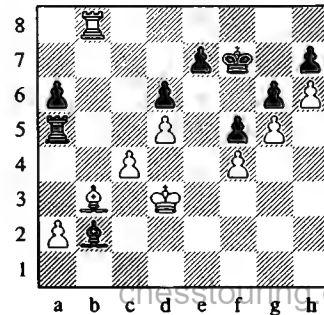


34...♞a5 35.♙b3

This move in itself is not special, as White needs to defend the a-pawn. However, it also contains a deeper point, as Black is actually in zugzwang! It underlines the fact that zugzwang is often the key to breaking a fortress.

35...♙b2

The bishop has to move to a more exposed square. Had it been able to remain on a1, Black would probably have survived. Greet ends his analysis here, concluding that it is not clear if White can break through. It turns out that he can do so in an instructive and spectacular fashion.



36.c5!!

This breakthrough only works thanks to the position of the bishop on b2.

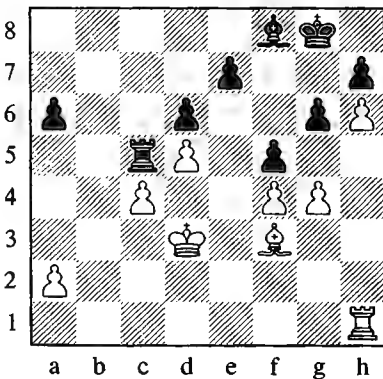
36.♠a4 ♚xa4 37.♚xb2 ♚a3† is unconvincing. White does not have time to escape the checks and penetrate with his rook to h8 to good effect, as his f- and g-pawns are too vulnerable.

36...♚b5

After 36...♚xc5 37.♠a4 ♚xd5† 38.♔c2 White is winning, as the black rook is about to be pinned.

37.♚d8 ♚xc5 38.♠a4

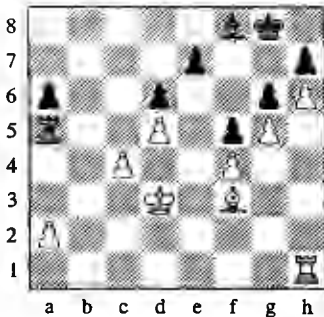
Black is defenceless against the impending bishop invasion.



31.♔c3?!

Karpov adopts the policy of restriction, planning to meet ...♚a5 with ♔b3. However, he should have taken the opportunity to lock in the opponent's kingside pieces with:

31.g5! ♚a5



Black must make the most of his one active piece. He can win the a2-pawn, but White should be able to exploit his positional pluses to break his opponent's defences. The key to success will almost always be the activation of the light-squared bishop. In certain positions this can be achieved by means of a bishop manoeuvre to d1 and a4, while in others White will have to resort to a breakthrough with c5 and possibly d6.

For an endgame with so few pieces, the position contains an incredible range of subtle resources. We will consider two possibilities for White.

a) 32.♚b1

This is the obvious move, and it gives excellent winning chances. We will analyse two responses in detail.

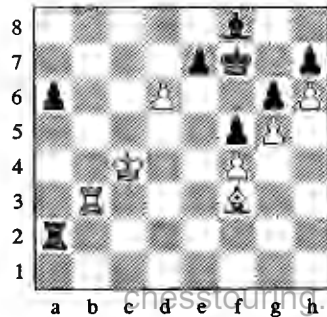
a1) 32...♔f7

It should be mentioned briefly that taking the pawn loses with little resistance: 32...♚a2 33.c5 ♚a3† 34.♔e2 dxc5 Otherwise the pawn marches towards c8. 35.d6 exd6 36.♠d5† ♔h8 37.♚b8 And mate follows shortly.

33.♠d1!!

Activating the bishop is the key to White's success in this and several other variations.

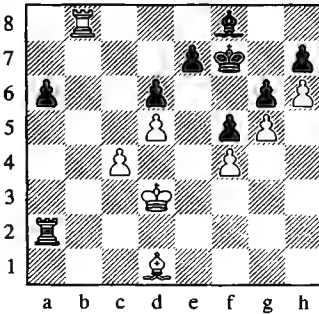
33.♚b2 is less effective: 33...♚a3†! 34.♚b3 (34.♔e2? ♚c3) 34...♚xa2 With the rook on b3 Black can safely take this pawn. 35.c5 dxc5 36.d6 c4†! (36...♔e6 37.♚b8!) 37.♔xc4



37...♔e6! This fine defensive move was found by Dvoretzky. 38.♞b8 ♞a4† 39.♔d3 ♙xh6 40.dxe7 ♔xe7 41.♞b7† ♔e6 42.gxh6 ♞xf4 43.♔e3 ♞h4 44.♞xh7 ♔f6 Black will soon eliminate the h-pawn to reach a drawn ending.

33...♞xa2 34.♞b8

White threatens to bring his bishop into the attack via b3 or a4.

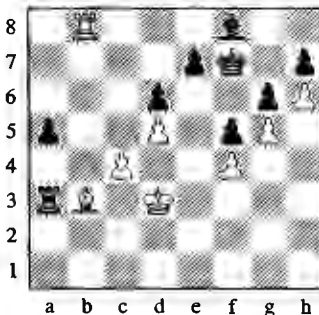


34...♞a3†

34...a5 35.c5! dxc5 36.♙b3 ♞a3 transposes to the main line below.

34...♞a5 is inadequate: 35.♙b3 ♔g8 (35...♞c5 36.♙a4 wins) 36.♞b4! The subsequent ♙a4 will overwhelm the defence.

35.♙b3 a5



36.c5! dxc5

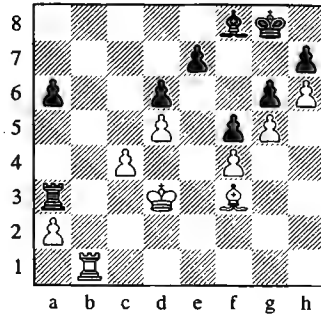
36...a4 37.c6! wins.

37.♔c2 a4 38.♙c4

Black has no defence. However, he could have improved earlier as we will now see.

a2) 32...♞a3†!

This is Black's best chance, although it is probably still not enough to hold the game.



33.♞b3

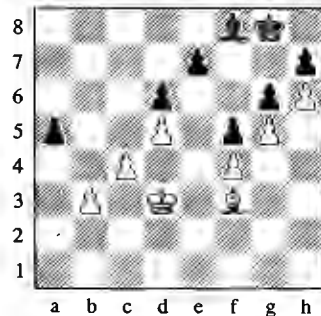
Now we reach a further branching point.

a21) 33...♞xb3†? 34.axb3

Black is unable to hold this opposite-coloured bishop endgame.

34...a5

Black must try to blockade on the dark squares. After 34...♔f7 35.b4 e5 36.dxe6† ♔xe6 37.♙d5† ♔d7 38.♙g8 ♔e8 39.♔d4 White's king invades.

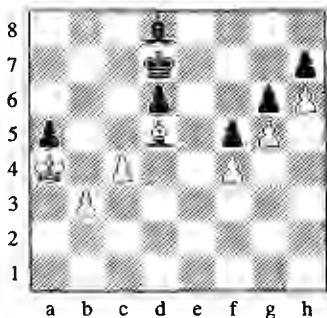


35.♔d4!

This lovely move was discovered by Morylev. It is in the spirit of many opposite-coloured bishop endings. White chooses a plan and executes it aggressively.

35.♔c3 is tempting, but not quite good enough: 35...♔f7 36.♔b2 ♔e8! (36...e5

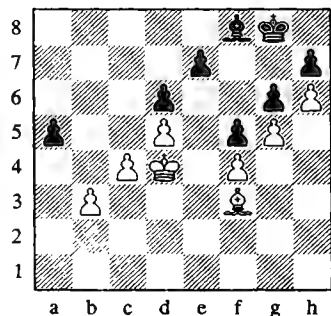
loses in instructive fashion: 37.dxe6† ♖xe6
38.♗d5† ♜d7 39.♗a3 ♗e7 40.♗a4 ♗d8



41.♗b5! [According to Karpov White can win with 41.♗g8 ♖e8 42.♗b5, but Dvoretzky points out that Black can draw with 42...d5! 43.cxd5 ♗c7, attacking White's kingside pawns.] 41...♗e7 42.♗c6 and White wins, as analysed by Dvoretzky.)

37.♗a3 e5! This is a cunning way to utilize the seemingly dead bishop on f8. 38.dxe6 Alternatives are no better. 38...d5† 39.♗a4 dxc4 40.bxc4 ♗d6 41.♗h5 ♗xf4 42.♗xg6† ♗e7! Black survives.

After Motylev's move, Black's position soon crumbles.



35...♗f7 36.c5! dxc5†

36...♗e8 37.c6 is hopeless for Black.

37.♗e5!

Black is in zugzwang and any move allows the White king to invade.

37...e6 38.d6!

And White wins.

a22) 33...♗xa2

The delayed capture is the best drawing chance. White will be hindered by the unfortunate placement of the rook on b3.

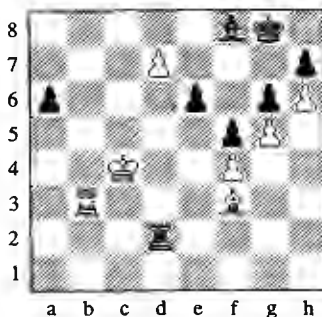
34.c5! dxc5 35.d6 e6! 36.d7 c4†!

This is why Black had to entice the rook to the b3-square.

37.♗xc4

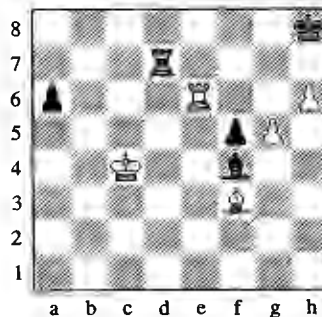
37.♗c3? gets nowhere after 37...♗c2†!

37...♗d2



38.♗c6!

38.♗b7 is weaker: 38...♗e7 39.♗b8† ♗f7 40.♗h8 ♗xd7 41.♗xh7† ♗g8 42.♗g7† ♗h8 43.♗xg6 ♗d6 44.♗xe6 ♗xf4



Black should draw.

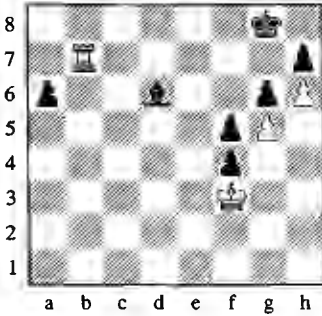
38...♗c2† 39.♗d3 ♗xc6

This trick keeps Black alive, but his problems are not yet over.

40. d8=♖ ♔d6† 41. ♖xd6 ♕xd6 42. ♔e3 e5
43. ♖b7

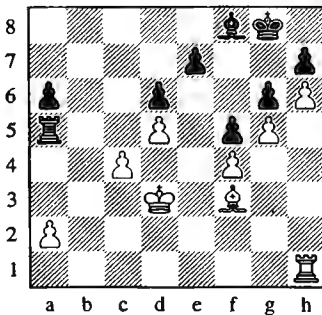
43. fxe5 ♕xe5 44. ♖b7 a5 45. ♖a7 ♕c3 is not
an improvement for White.

43...exf4† 44. ♔f3



White should be winning this endgame, as his kingside pawns are too strong.

b) Returning to the position after 31...♖a5, White also has a more subtle route to a probable victory:



32. ♕d1!?

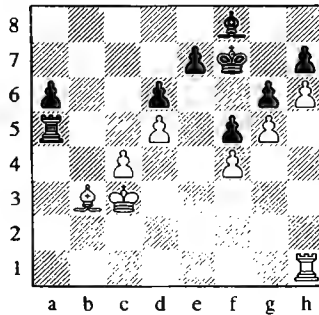
As far as I am aware, the only commentator to have mentioned this move is Dvoretzky, in his remarkable analysis on the www.e3e5.com website. The choice of punctuation is not easy. Even with the benefit of extensive analysis, it is not clear whether the text move is objectively stronger than 32. ♖b1, and it may well be that both

moves lead to eventual victory. But if we were awarding exclamation marks for ingenuity, then the bishop retreat would undoubtedly have received a well deserved “!!”.

32...♖xa2 33. ♕b3 ♖a5

After 33...♖f2?! 34. c5 ♖f3† 35. ♔c2 ♖f2† 36. ♔b1 ♖f3 37. ♔b2 White obtains a strong passed pawn and excellent winning chances.

34. ♔c3 ♔f7



35. ♔b4!

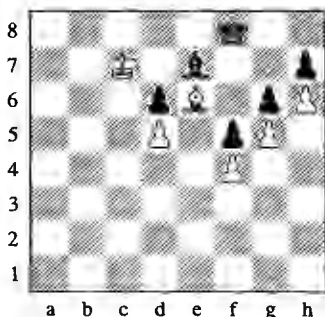
35. ♖e1 allows an amazing saving resource: 35...e6!! (Alternatives are insufficient: 35...♖c5 36. ♕a4 White has excellent attacking chances; 35...e5? 36. fxe5 dxe5 37. d6 ♖c5 38. ♔d1 ♔e8 39. ♕a4† ♔d8 40. ♔b4+→) 36. ♔b4 ♖c5 37. ♖xe6 ♕e7 According to Dvoretzky White's advantage is not enough to win.

35...♖c5 36. ♖e1!

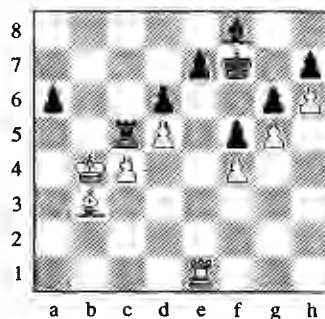
Now this move works well.

36. ♕a4 e5! enables Black to obtain some breathing space.

36. ♖a1 a5† 37. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 38. ♔xa5 reaches an interesting opposite-coloured bishop endgame, which should be tenable for Black: 38...e6 39. ♔b6 (Or 39. dxe6† ♔xe6 40. c5† ♔d7 41. ♕g8 dxc5 42. ♕xh7 ♕d6 and Black starts taking the pawns in time.) 39...exd5 40. cxd5 ♕e7 41. ♔c7 ♔e8 42. ♕a4† ♔f7 43. ♕d7 ♔f8 44. ♕e6

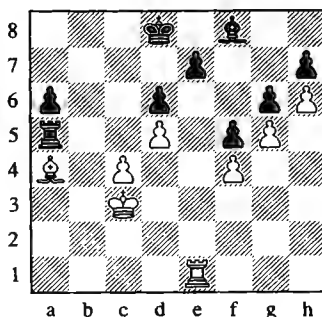


44...♔d8†! This stalemate finesse is simpler than Dvoretzky's line – it draws almost effortlessly. (44...♗e8 45.♗c8 ♔f8! 46.♗c7 ♔e7 47.♔g8 ♗f8 48.♗d7! [48.♔xh7 ♗f7 49.♗d7 ♔xg5!] 48...♔xg5! as Dvoretzky indicated, Black holds the ensuing queen endgame – if White takes the pawn a perpetual check follows.) 45.♗xd6 ♔a5 Black can live with being a pawn down, as White's kingside pawns are too vulnerable. 46.♗e5 ♔c3† 47.♗d6 ♔d2 48.♗c6 ♔xf4 49.d6 ♔xg5 Black draws.

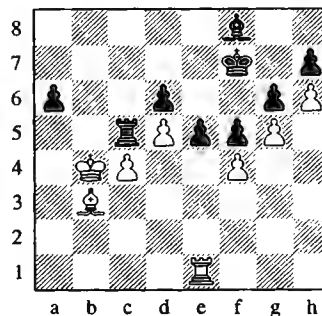


36...e5!

This active try is Black's best chance. If Black tries to wait with 36...♗e8, he can eventually be broken down: 36...♗e8 37.♔a4† ♗d8 38.♗c3! This subtle move opens the b-file for the rook to invade. (38.♔c6 e5! gives Black some chances, despite the fact that White keeps an edge with 39.♗c3.) 38...♔a5



39.♔c6! (The attempt to invade immediately with 39.♔b1 does not quite work: 39...♔xa4 40.♔b8† ♗d7 41.♔xf8 ♔a3† 42.♗b4 ♔f3 43.♔f7 ♔xf4 44.♔xh7 ♔g4 45.♔g7 ♔xg5 And Black is safe.) 39...♔a3† 40.♗b4 ♔a2 (40...♔f3 41.♔a1+–) 41.♗b3 ♔a5 42.♔b1 ♗c8 43.♔e8 White invades successfully, this time with the bishop.



37.dxe6† ♗e7 38.♗c3

38.♔a1 a5† 39.♔xa5 ♔xa5 40.♗xa5 ♗xe6 41.c5† ♗d7 42.♔g8 It is not enough for a win. 42...dxc5 43.♔xh7 ♔d6 44.♔xg6 ♔xf4 Black draws easily.

38...♔a5 39.c5 ♔xc5† 40.♗d4

Dvoretzky says it is not clear how much better White really is. I decided to analyse further, and have concluded that Black is in serious trouble due to the threat of ♔d5 followed by an invasion along the b-file. Here is a plausible continuation.

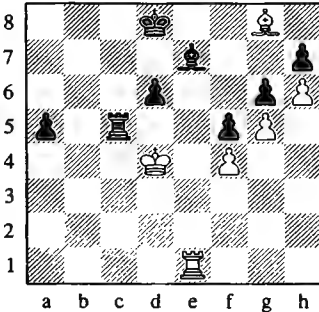
40...a5 41.♔d5

41. ♖c4!? is also dangerous.

41...a4

41...♔d8 gives White two options:

42.e7† ♕xe7 43. ♖g8 looks tempting, but Black can remain in the game with the help of careful defence.



43...♖b5! Black must go after the base of White's pawn chain. (43...♖c7 44. ♖xh7 ♖xg5 45.fxg5 ♖xh7 46. ♖e6 White wins.) 44. ♖xh7 ♖b4† 45. ♔d5 ♖xf4 46. ♖xg6 ♖xg5 In this endgame Black has chances to survive.

Therefore White should prefer 42. ♖b1!, improving the rook before attempting to break through. 42...♕e7 43. ♖b6 ♖c1 44. ♖a6 ♖d1† 45. ♔c4 ♖c1† 46. ♔b3 ♖c5 47. ♖a8† ♖c8 48. ♖xa5 Black is very passive, and it is doubtful that he will survive.

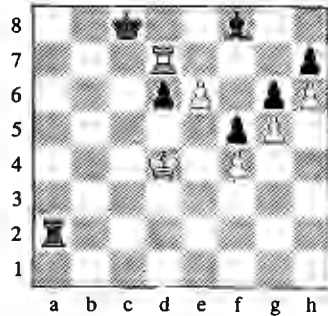
42. ♖a1

There is a second promising line: 42. ♖b1 ♔d8 43. ♖b4 (After 43.e7† ♕xe7 44. ♖g8 d5 45. ♖xh7 ♖c4† 46. ♔xd5 ♖xf4 Black is worse but the game goes on.) 43...♖c1 (43...♖a5 44. ♖b8†) 44. ♖xa4 ♖d1† 45. ♔c4 ♖c1† 46. ♔b4 It is not over yet, but White's advantage is considerable.

42...♖a5 43. ♖b1 a3

43...♖a7 44. ♖b8 a3 45. ♖c6 ♔xe6 46. ♖xf8 a2 47. ♖d5† wins.

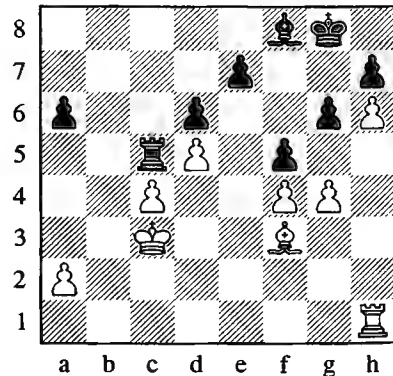
44. ♖b7† ♔e8 45. ♖c6† ♔d8 46. ♖d7† ♔c8 47. ♖d5 a2 48. ♖xa2 ♖xa2



49.e7!

White wins.

The above analysis was extensive and contained a huge number of subtle finesses. It would be interesting to know exactly how much Karpov calculated at the board, and which of Black's defensive possibilities he found most troubling.



31...fxg4 32. ♖xg4 ♔f7

Black decides to jettison the h7-pawn in order to improve his king. The alternative was:

32...♖c7 33. ♖e6† ♔h8

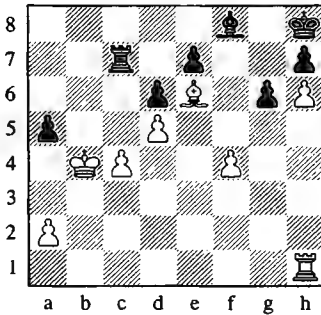
This time Black maintains material equality, but allows his king to be driven to an unpleasant position. There are two responses that we should consider.

a) 34.♔b4!?

An idea of Inarkiev.

34...a5†

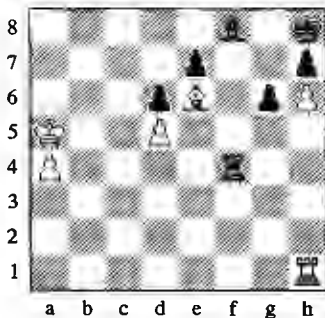
34...♞c5 is less resilient: 35.f5 ♞c7 (35...a5† 36.♕c3 ♞c7 37.♞b1 ♔xh6 38.f6 wins with a nice mating net.) 36.♞h2! (The immediate 36.♕a5 allows 36...♞xc4 37.♞b1 ♔xh6 38.f6 ♔d2† when Black survives.) The text move prepares ♕a5 and the rook covers the checking square on d2. It is not easy to suggest a defence for Black.



In this position White must choose the correct route for his king. The immediate capture on a5 would lose the a2-pawn, so the king must go a different way.

a1) 35.♕a4?! ♞xc4† 36.♕xa5 ♞xf4 37.a4

Dvoretsky evaluates this position as winning for White, who is indeed striding ahead in the pawn race. However, a closer inspection reveals that Black is not without resources.



37...g5!

This enables Black to simplify the position.

38.♕b5

38.♞h5 ♞f6 39.♞xg5 ♞g6 40.♞xg6 hxg6 41.♕b6 ♔xh6 Black can sacrifice his bishop and draw by attacking d5 and using the g-pawn to divert the white bishop if necessary.

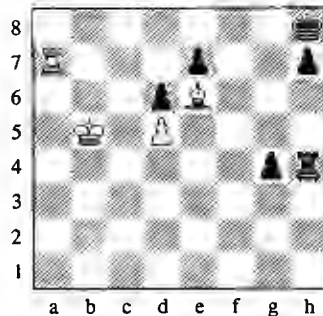
38...♞h4 39.♞a1

39.♞xh4 gxh4 40.a5 ♔xh6 41.a6 ♔e3 draws. 39.♞g1 is more interesting, but Black can still hold with careful defence. 39...♔xh6 40.a5 g4 (Another drawing line is: 40...♞h2 41.a6 [41.♞b1 ♔g7 42.a6 ♔d4 43.♕c4 ♔c5 44.♞b7 ♞a2=] 41...♞b2† 42.♕c6 ♞c2† 43.♕b7 ♞b2† 44.♕a8 ♕g7 45.a7 ♕g6 46.♞f1 g4 Black should draw.) 41.♞g3 (41.♞xg4 ♞xg4 42.♔xg4 ♔e3=; 41.♔xg4 ♔e3 42.♞g3 [42.♞g2 ♕g7] 42...♔f4 43.♞g2 ♞h2=) 41...♔g7 42.a6 ♔d4 Black should be able to hold, although White would still have some practical chances to play for a win over the board.

39...♔xh6 40.a5 g4 41.a6 ♔e3

The bishop arrives on the key diagonal just in time.

42.a7 ♔xa7 43.♞xa7



43...♕g7! 44.♞xe7† ♕f6 45.♞f7†

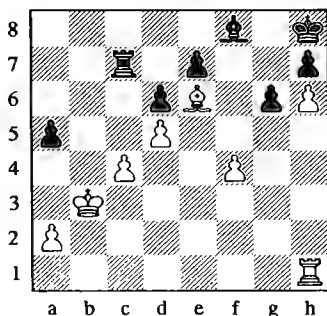
45.♞e8 ♕e5 46.♕c6 g3! is good enough.

45...♕e5 46.♞g7 h5 47.♕c6 ♞h1 48.♕d7 ♞h2

Black has just done enough to draw.

a2) In view of the above, White should not dive head first into a race. Instead he can improve with:

35.♖b3!



This small finesse effectively gains a tempo.

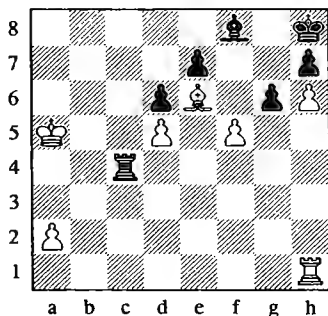
35...♙c5

35...♙b7† 36.♖a4 ♙b4† 37.♖xa5 ♙xc4

38.f5 transposes to the main line below.

White could also consider 38.a4, with a full extra tempo over line a1 above.

36.f5 ♙c7 37.♖a4 ♙xc4† 38.♖xa5



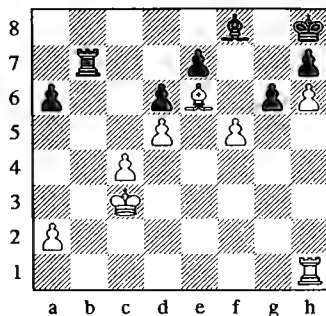
Compared with line a1, White has gained the free move f4-f5. Obviously this difference should work heavily in his favour, so his winning chances are excellent.

b) 34.f5

This active move is perhaps a more natural choice, and it also offers good winning chances.

34...♙b7

Black should take the opportunity to improve his rook.



35.a3!!

35.♙f7? would be a mistake because of 35...♙xh6! 36.♙xh6 ♖g7.

The text move is a wonderful idea of Mihail Marin. It takes some time to understand the reason for it. The main purpose is to prevent a future rook check on b4. The following analysis is based on that presented by Marin in *Learn from the Legends*. Black has two main replies.

a) 35...♙b8

This is a consistent follow-up to Black's last move. By positioning his rook on the back rank Black prepares to capture on f5, as the reply ♙g1 will no longer force mate.



36.♖d4

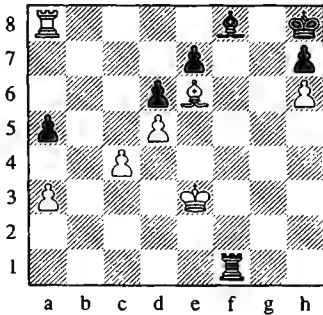
White prepares a timely c4-c5 to activate his king. It is here that the usefulness of the earlier a2-a3 becomes apparent.

36...gxf5 37.♙xf5 ♖b2 38.♙e6 ♗g2

Other moves do not change the result:

38...♖b8 39.c5 dxc5† 40.♙xc5 a5 41.♙c6 a4 42.♙c7 ♖a8 43.♖h2! This places Black in zugzwang, and after 43...♗e8 44.♙d7 ♖a8 45.♙c6 he must lose his rook.

38...♗d2† 39.♙c3 ♗g2 40.♖b1 a5 41.♖b8 ♖f2 42.♖a8 ♖f3† (42...a4 43.c5 dxc5 44.♙c4) 43.♙d4 ♖f4† 44.♙e3 ♖f1



45.c5! This temporary sacrifice enables White to penetrate with his king. 45...dxc5 46.♙d3 ♖f4 47.♙c3 a4 48.♙d3 c4† 49.♙c3 Black is in zugzwang and must allow the king to advance. White will then win in a similar fashion as in the main line below.



39.♖b1 a5 40.♖b8 ♖f2 41.c5 dxc5† 42.♙xc5 ♖c2† 43.♙d4 ♖f2 44.♖a8 a4 45.♙c5 ♖c2†

46.♙b6 ♖c6† 47.♙b7 ♖c7† 48.♙b8 ♖b7† 49.♙c8 ♖c7† 50.♙d8

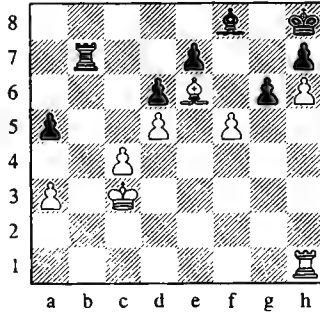
White escape from the stalemate checks.

50...♖c1 51.♙e8 ♖f1 52.♙f7 ♙xh6 53.♙xe7†

White wins as Marin's lovely analysis shows.

b) There is a second move that should be considered:

35...a5



This is a principled response to White's last move. Black is preparing to attack the a3-pawn.

36.♙d4

Now we reach a further dividing point.

b1) 36...a4

This was the only move considered by Marin.

37.c5 dxc5† 38.♙xc5 ♖b3 39.♙c6 ♖xa3 40.♙d7 ♖b3 41.d6!

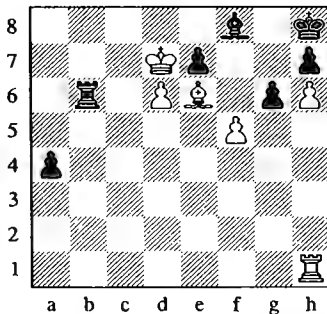


The discovered attack on the rook appears difficult to meet. However, at this point there is an obstacle to Marin's superb analysis in the form of:

41...♖b6!

The Romanian grandmaster mentions the line 41...♖d3 42.♗e8 ♜xd6 43.♗xf8 gxf5 44.♞g1 ♖d8† 45.♗f7 a3 46.♞g7 a2 47.♙xf5 when White checkmates.

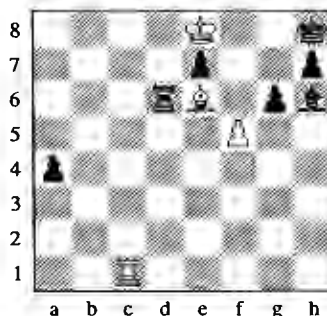
The text move forces White to come up with an extraordinary reply.



42.♞c1!! ♖xd6†

42...♖b8 43.♗c7! ♖a8 44.d7 wins.

43.♗e8 ♙xh6



44.♞c8!!

This is a splendid example of the power of a battery.

44...♗g7 45.♗xe7 ♖xc6†

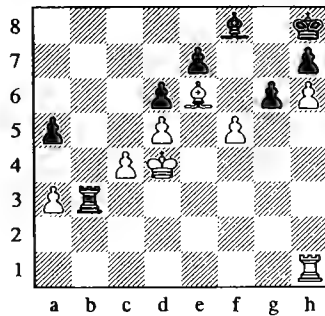
45...♙f4 46.f6† wins.

46.fxe6

And White wins.

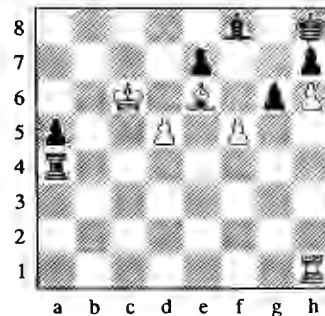
a2) The author of the idea does not mention what happens if Black attacks the pawn at once with:

36...♖b3



It turns out that White can force a win, but once again it relies on some spectacular finesses.

37.c5! dxc5† 38.♗xc5 ♖xa3 39.♗c6 ♖a4



40.f6!!

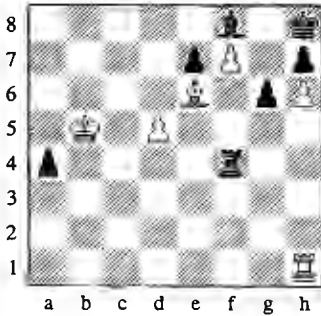
The obvious 40.♗d7 is not quite good enough: 40...♖b4 41.♗e8 ♖b8† 42.♗f7 gxf5 43.♙d7 (43.♙xf5 e6! [43...♖d8 44.♙c2] 44.dxe6 [44.♙xc6 a4=; 44.♙xc6 a4=] 44...♙d6 45.e7 ♖b7 46.♖e1 ♖xe7† 47.♖xc7 ♙xe7 Black has simplified to a theoretical draw.) 43...♖d8 44.♙e8 ♙xh6 45.♖xh6 ♖xd5 46.♖a6 ♖d6! and Black survives. (But note that he must avoid 46...f4?? 47.♙d7!! when White checkmates in two.)

40...♖c4†

40...exf6 41.d6 wins.

41.♖b5 ♖b4†

41...♞f4 42.f7 a4

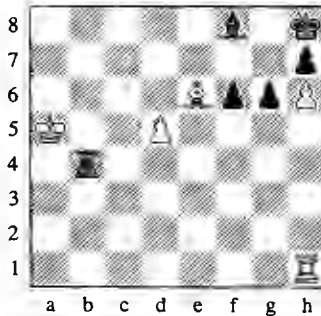


43.♞h3! This forces Black into zugzwang.
43...g5 (43...♞d4 44.♞c3! wins) 44.♞h5 ♞f6
45.♞xg5 ♞g6 46.♞f5 ♞xh6 47.♖xa4 White should be winning this ending.

42.♖xa5 exf6

After 42...♞f4 43.f7 g5 44.♞c1 ♖xh6
45.♞c8† ♖g7 46.♞g8† ♖f6 47.♖b6 White has excellent winning chances.

After the text move White must once again find something spectacular.



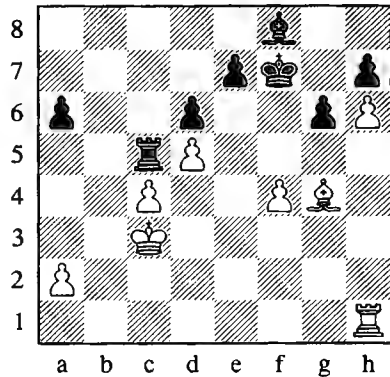
43.d6!! ♖xd6 44.♞d1

Black must lose his bishop.

44...♞b8 45.♞xd6 f5 46.♞d7

White's king crosses the b-file, and the resulting endgame should be winning. If Black advances his f- and g-pawns then h7 will fall.

We now return to the game.



33.♖e6† ♖f6 34.♖g8 ♞c7

34...♖xh6? does not work here, as 35.♞xh6 ♖g7 36.♞xh7† ♖xg8 37.♞xe7 wins for White.

Interestingly the various commentators seem to have missed the tactical defence offered by: 34...e6! 35.♖xe6 (after 35.dxe6 ♞h5 36.♞b1 ♞xh6 37.♖d4 ♞h2 Black's position should be tenable) 35...♞c7 36.♖d4 a5 Black is a pawn down but he has stabilized his position, and White's rook remains tied to the defence of the h6-pawn. Black has decent drawing chances.

35.♖xh7 e6

If 35...♖f7 36.f5 g5 37.f6 exf6 38.♖f5 ♖g8 39.h7† ♖h8 40.♞b1 White wins.

36.♖g8 exd5 37.h7 ♖g7?

This loses without a fight. It seems that the long and gruelling defence finally took its toll. Kavalek must have missed a finesse somewhere in the following line:

37...♞xc4†

This should give good drawing chances.

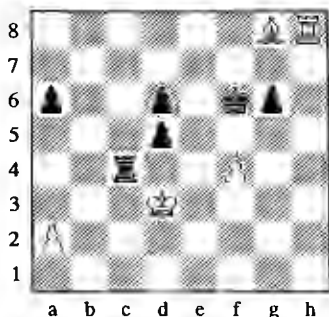
38.♖d3 ♖g7 39.h8=♞

Objectively White's best winning chance is 39.♖xd5 ♞c5 40.♖e4! (40.♖e4 ♞h5=) 40...♖h8 when he still has chances to press for a win, but I suspect that Black should be able to hold with correct defence. Essentially

the position has the same character as the game continuation, except that White is without his c4-pawn, which obviously improves Black's chances considerably.

39...♙xh8 40.♖xh8

Perhaps it was here that Kavalek overlooked the key defensive move:



40...♞c8!

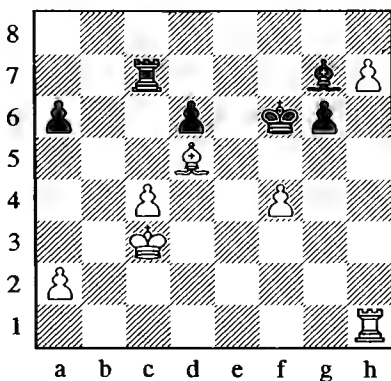
After the obvious 40...♜g7? 41.♙xd5 ♞c5 42.♞g8† ♜h7 43.♙b3 White saves the bishop and wins.

41.f5 ♜g7 42.♞h7† ♜xg8

Black draws easily.

38.♙xd5

The rest is not difficult – White simply piles up his forces on the weak g6-pawn.



38...♙h8 39.♜d3 ♜f5 40.♜e3 ♞e7† 41.♜f3

a5 42.a4 ♞c7 43.♙e4† ♜f6 44.♞h6 ♞g7

After 44...♜g7 45.♞xg6† ♜xh7 46.♞g1† ♜h6 47.♞h1† ♜g7 48.♞h7† White wins the rook.

45.♜g4

1-0

Apart from the inaccuracy on move 31, Karpov conducted this masterpiece almost flawlessly.

After this win Karpov slowed down momentarily for a quick draw with the black pieces against Gheorghiu, but he immediately followed up with a victory over Westerinen of Finland. He then repeated the pattern in the final two rounds, drawing quickly against Radulov and beating the Spanish grandmaster Pomar. His overall result from the Nice Olympiad was a staggering ten wins and four draws with no defeats.

Candidates Final

In this, Karpov's last and most important event of the year, he battled Korchnoi for the right to challenge Fischer. The match took place in Moscow, and had a fixed duration of twenty four games.

After a fighting draw in Game 1, Karpov unleashed a devastating piece of opening preparation against Korchnoi's Dragon and won convincingly. The next three games were drawn, although they were all hard fought and contained interesting moments. Then in Game 6 Korchnoi played the Petroff and tried a risky pawn sacrifice, but was unable to generate enough compensation and lost.

It seems that Korchnoi took a while to realize that he should aim for safety with the black pieces instead of taking risks. It is remarkable that both Spassky and Korchnoi misjudged Karpov and had to adjust their openings during the match.

Games 7-12 were hard fought but all ended in draws. In Game 13 Karpov avoided a perpetual and tried to press for a win with the black pieces, but went wrong and allowed a forced win. But Korchnoi missed his chance, and even though he kept a clear advantage in the endgame he was unable to convert it. The next three games were draws, but then Korchnoi suffered a disaster, blundering in an equal position with the white pieces.

With a 3-0 advantage and just seven games to play, it appeared that Karpov was almost assured of victory. But to his great credit, Korchnoi almost staged a remarkable comeback. First he stayed disciplined and held a French with an isolated queen's pawn. Then in Game 19 he finally scored his first win after Karpov became a bit too relaxed in an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops. In Game 20 Korchnoi played a risky opening with Black and almost paid the price, but Karpov failed to capitalize. Then he played a prepared novelty in the Queen's Indian which suffered from a huge tactical flaw, and Korchnoi destroyed him in a mere nineteen moves (you can find it on page 199, in the note to Black's 7th move in Game 41). Suddenly the match was wide open.

With three games remaining, Karpov managed to compose himself. The fact that he had the white pieces in two of these games must have been a big help. He held the next two games comfortably, which meant that only one more draw was required to seal the match. Here is the game.

Game 39

Anatoly Karpov – Viktor Korchnoi

Candidates final Moscow (24), 1974

1. ♘f3

For most of the match Karpov opened with 1.e4. Although he had been successful with the

king's pawn, scoring two wins and eight draws without a loss, he switched to the text move for the last couple of games when he was content to draw.

1... ♘f6 2.d4

In Game 22 Karpov preferred 2.c4 and drew solidly: 2...e6 3.g3 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.♖a4 ♗bd7 6.♗xc4 b6 7.♙g2 ♙b7 8.0-0 c5 9.♙d1 a6 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.b4 ♙e7 12.♙b2 b5 13.♗d4 ♙c8 14.♗bd2 0-0 15.a3 ♙c2 16.♗e1 ♙c7 17.♙xb7 ♙xb7 18.♗b3 ♙a8 19.♙ac1 ♙c8 20.e4 ♙bc7 21.♙xc7 ♙xc7 22.f3 Karpov obtained a super-safe position and a draw was agreed a few moves later.

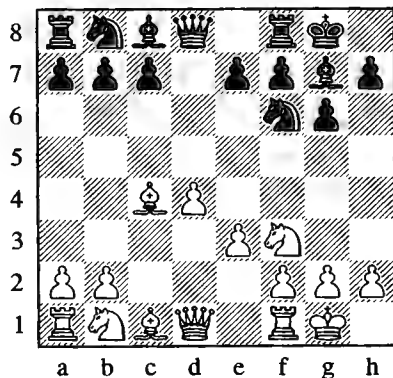
2...d5

It is a bit surprising that Korchnoi opts for a symmetrical set-up.

3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 g6!?

The combination of the Queen's Gambit and the Grünfeld is not highly regarded by theory, but Korchnoi was in a must-win situation so his choice is understandable.

5. ♙xc4 ♙g7 6.0-0 0-0



7.b3!?

Given the match situation, this was a clever choice. Black either gives up on ...c5 for a

long time, or plays it but allows considerable simplifications in the centre.

7...c6?!

Korchnoi prefers to keep the position more complex, but his choice enables White to claim a long-lasting space advantage.

8.♖b2 ♖g4 9.♘bd2!

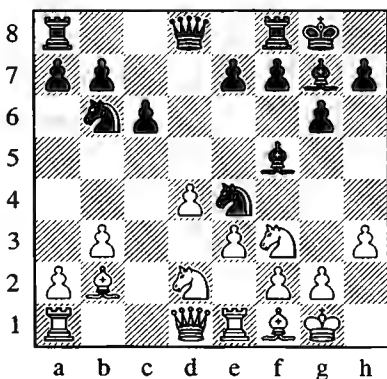
Black's only active plan involved ...e5, so Karpov prefers not to develop his knight on c3.

9...♘bd7 10.h3 ♖f5

After 10...♖xf3 11.♘xf3 White's bishop pair gives him a nice edge, while Black is not any closer to creating counterplay.

11.♞e1 ♘b6 12.♖f1 ♘e4

Korchnoi stops e4, but in doing so he exchanges a pair of minor pieces, which is not against Karpov's interests in this game.



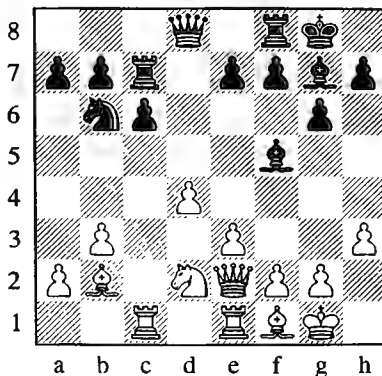
13.♘xe4 ♖xe4 14.♘d2 ♖f5 15.♞c1

Karpov develops his last piece. Under normal circumstances he may well have preferred the more ambitious 15.e4 ♖e6 16.♘f3, when White has gained space and enjoys a pleasant positional advantage.

15...♞c8?

Korchnoi is having trouble finding a plan. A better idea was 15...a5!, hoping for some queenside play, when Black is only a bit worse.

16.♞e2 ♞c7



17.a4!

Karpov gives himself the option of driving the enemy knight away, and in some positions the pawn might advance all the way to a6 in order to undermine the c6-pawn.

17...♖c8

Korchnoi has no idea how to find a target in Karpov's position; his choice of opening turned out to be a disaster for this game.

18.♖a3

Karpov allows no counterplay.

18...♖c6

If 18...♞e8 19.♘e4 is strong.

19.♞d1 ♞e8 20.♘e4

Karpov does not just wait, but improves his knight.

20...f5 21.♘c5 ♖f7 22.♖b2?!

The huge pressure of the occasion can be felt in this somewhat passive move. One stronger idea was 22.♞c2!?, for instance 22...e5 23.dxe5

♙xe5 24.♞cd1 and Black faces problems as 24...♜d5 is well met by 25.e4.

22...♜d7 23.♜d3 ♞c8

23...e5 is a reasonable move, but after 24.dxe5 ♜xe5 25.♙xe5 ♙xe5 26.♜xe5 ♞xd1 27.♞exd1 ♞xe5 28.♙c4 we reach a sterile endgame, which Karpov would have drawn easily.

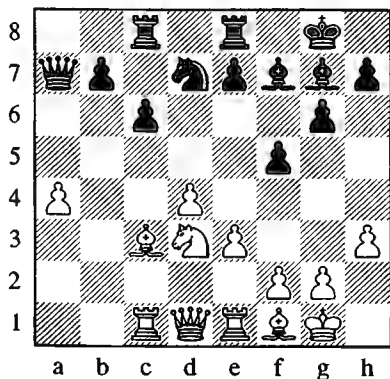
24.b4

Karpov gains space.

24...a5?!

Korchnoi loses patience. He should have improved his queen with 24...♞c7 25.b5 ♞d6 when the position is balanced.

25.bxa5 ♞xa5 26.♙c3 ♞a7



27.a5!

Karpov fixes Black's queenside.

27...c5?!

27...♜f6 was better, although after 28.♜c5 White has the initiative on the queenside. Korchnoi cannot resist the urge to instigate a direct confrontation, but Karpov is up to the challenge.

28.♞a4!

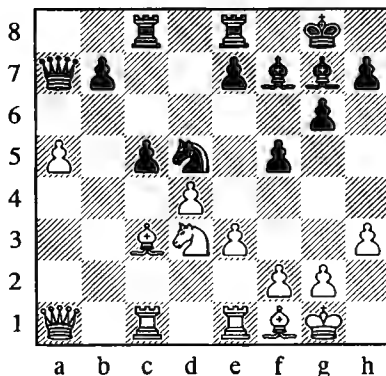
Exploiting the vulnerability of the black knight.

28...♜b6?

This loses a pawn, but even after the superior 28...♞ed8 29.♞b5, White's queen dominates on the queenside.

29.♞a1 ♜d5?!

After 29...♜d7 30.dxc5 White is a pawn up for nothing, but still it was better than the game continuation.



30.♜xc5 ♜xc3 31.♞xc3

½-½

Karpov took a draw here, which was as good as a win in view of the match situation. Indeed, at this level the final position can be regarded as close to winning for White. Karpov's play in the final game was not only objectively strong, but also perfectly suited to the match situation.

Although the match was close, Karpov played the better chess overall, he held his nerves when needed and deserved his victory. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the Soviet authorities favoured Karpov, perhaps for political reasons, but mainly because he clearly had the best chance to wrest the coveted crown from Fischer, especially in future championship cycles if not the present one.

Being disfavoured in his home country must have been hard for Korchnoi, and soon after the match he defected from the Soviet Union.

1974 Summary

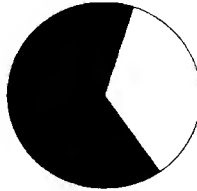
Candidates quarter-final versus Polugaevsky, Moscow: Won $5\frac{1}{2}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$ (+3 =5 –0)

Candidates semi-final versus Spassky, Leningrad: Won 7–4 (+4 =6 –1)

Nice Olympiad (Board one): 12/14 (+10 =4 –0)

Candidates final versus Korchnoi, Moscow: Won $12\frac{1}{2}$ – $11\frac{1}{2}$ (+3 =19 –2)

Total 64.9% (+20 =34 –3)



☐ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1975

Rating 2705 (2 in the World)

This was the year in which Fischer forfeited his World Champion title when he refused to take part in a match against Karpov under the prevailing FIDE regulations. In March the FIDE congress had agreed to Fischer's demand that the match would continue until one player scored ten wins. However, it did not accept Fischer's insistence that the champion would retain his title if the score became tied at nine wins apiece.

It is hard to determine the extent to which Karpov was personally involved with the negotiations. It seems likely that the Soviet authorities would have had at least some involvement. Later Karpov referred to a "gap" in his career, created by the lost experience of playing Fischer for the title. Given the chance to turn back the clock, would Karpov have accepted the conditions laid down by Fischer – or were matters completely out of his hands?

In conversation with my Russian trainer colleagues, many of them have told me they believe Fischer was scared to face Karpov. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is not an opinion I have heard from many westerners. Personally I doubt that this was Fischer's main motivation, although it should be remembered that he had not played a competitive game since winning the title from Spassky in 1972. Karpov's impressive results may have made Fischer understand that he would have to muster all his strength, and perhaps he did not feel capable of achieving this.

Unfortunately we cannot do more than speculate at this stage. If I had to give my own best guess as to the reason for Fischer's behaviour, I would suggest that he had already achieved his main goal in becoming World Champion and lacked the necessary motivation to keep on playing.

The history of chess is full of epic matches that never happened. Tarrasch never got a chance against Steinitz. Rubinstein and Maroczy were never able to test Lasker. Alekhine never gave a return match to Capablanca. And Keres never faced Botvinnik.

There is no way of knowing who would have won had Karpov and Fischer met in 1975. Karpov was certainly strong enough to compete with the American, especially considering Fischer's inactivity over the previous few years. On the other hand Karpov lacked any previous match experience at World Championship level. When Kasparov stepped up to challenge Karpov in 1985, he was almost massacred in the early stages of the match, and needed time to adapt to the playing strength of an opponent who was head and shoulders above anyone he had faced previously. It is possible that a similar fate may have befallen Karpov.

Had Karpov played a match or matches against Fischer, it is likely that he would have beaten him at some point; if not in 1975, then probably by the early 1980s. Perhaps more importantly, there is no doubt that playing Fischer would have deepened Karpov's chess understanding and made him an even more formidable player – especially in match play. We can only wonder how

Karpov's matches with Kasparov would have played out, had the 1975 match gone ahead.

When Karpov went back to Zlatoust, the whole town filled the streets to celebrate the success of their hero. Grandmaster Yuri Razuvayev, who worked so much with Karpov in the 1970s, told me he did not go to the theatre with him as he did not like the Beatles-style adoration with which ordinary people treated Karpov in public. On one occasion, when Karpov was spotted in a car, the mob of fans lifted the vehicle off the ground!

Having won the highest title by default, Karpov had to prove he was a true champion. He was never as charismatic as his predecessor but his results over the board left no doubt that he was the strongest active player in the world.

His first event in 1975 was the Portoroz/Ljubljana tournament. In his first game as the World Champion he defeated Portisch for the first time, after the Hungarian grandmaster made an unfortunate error. In the next round he met the Slovenian player Rudolf Osterman, who never faced any other world champions.

Game 40

Rudolf Osterman – Anatoly Karpov

Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.e3

Karpov faced this move ten times. He won four games, drew four and lost two, the last number being more than one would normally expect from him.

4...♗b7 5.♘c3 d5

Karpov usually plays this way; only once has he opted to transpose to the Nimzo-Indian with 5...♗b4.

6.♗d3 ♗c7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞e2 c5

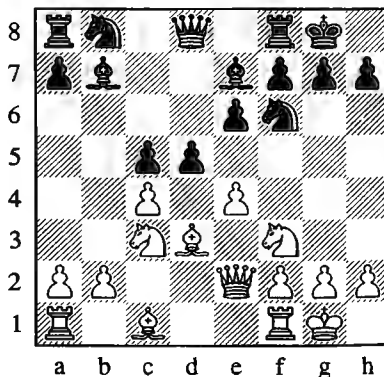
Karpov had played the same way a few years back, so Osterman had probably prepared for that.

9.dxc5 bxc5

It was necessary to improve on the aforementioned game, which continued: 9...dxc4? 10.♗xc4 ♗xc5 11.e4 ♘bd7 12.e5 ♗xf3?! 13.gxf3 ♘h5 14.♗d1 ♞e7 15.f4 g6 16.f5! exf5 17.e6 ♘df6 18.exf7† ♘g7 19.♞xe7 ♗xe7 20.♘b5 Black got a bad position and went on to lose, Petrosian – Karpov, Moscow 1973.

10.e4?!

10.♗d1 is reasonable and leads to a balanced position.



10...d4 11.♘b1

In such situations one must always consider the possibility of 11.e5, but here it achieves nothing and after 11...dxc3 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.bxc3 ♘d7 Black has a pleasant position.

11...♘bd7 12.e5

The other main option is:

12.♗f4

But it turns out that White cannot stop ...e5.

12...♘h5! 13.♗d2 e5! 14.♘xd4

After a quieter continuation such as 14.g3

♖b6 Black's space advantage gives him the upper hand.

14...cxd4 15.♗xh5 ♘c5 16.♗h3

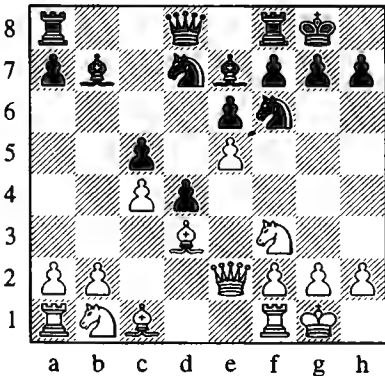
After 16.♗e2 f5 17.f3 fxe4 18.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 19.♙xf1 ♖b6 Black has far too much activity for a pawn.

16...♗c8!

After the less incisive 16...♗xe4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗f5 ♘d6 19.♗xe5 ♘xc4 20.♖b5 White can live with his position.

17.♗g3 ♗e6 18.b4 ♗h4! 19.♗f3 ♘xd3 20.♗xd3 f5

Black has tremendous compensation for the pawn.



12...♗xf3! 13.gxf3 ♘e8

It is hard to tell why Karpov preferred this over 13...♘h5. Perhaps he expected the continuation 14.f4 g6 against either knight move, and planned to transfer the knight to f5 via g7, in which case it makes no difference. I find it doubtful that he intended to put the knight on c7, where it has very few prospects.

14.♗f4

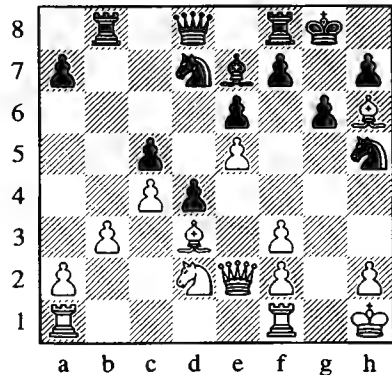
14.f4 is the natural alternative, when Karpov would probably have played 14...g6. Another idea is 14...f5 15.exf6 ♖xf6, but after 16.♘d2 White's two bishops and active pieces do a reasonable job of making up for his structural deficiencies.

14...♖b8 15.b3 g6 16.♘d2 ♘g7 17.♙h1?

This is too slow. 17.♗h6? ♗g5 is also bad for White, but he should have preferred 17.♗g3 ♘f5 18.h3. Even here though, Black has a comfortable position and can exert pressure both on the queenside with ...a5-a4, and on the kingside by transferring his bishop to h6.

17...♘h5 18.♗h6

After 18.♗g3 ♗g5 19.♖ad1 ♗f4 the e5-pawn falls.



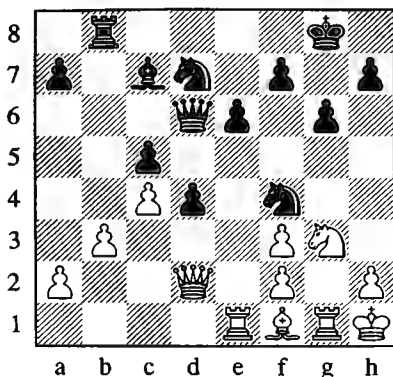
18...♗g5!!

Exchange sacrifices are often not difficult to understand; the problem is that they may not occur to us easily. This one is strong for several reasons. White's rooks have no useful files, the e5-pawn will soon perish and White's f-pawns are also weak. Finally, the f4-square will be a tremendous outpost for the black pieces, especially the knight.

19.♗xf8 ♗xf8 20.♖g1 ♗f4 21.♘e4 ♗xe5 22.♘g3 ♘f4 23.♗d2 ♗c7!

Black has plenty of time to build his position. With his last move he withdraws his bishop to a safe spot while preventing any future queen invasions on a5.

24.♗f1 ♗d6 25.♖e1



25...f5!

Preventing the white pieces from using the e4-square.

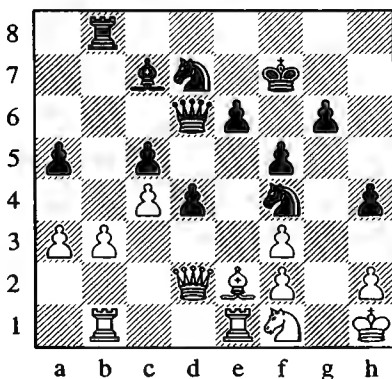
26.♙e2 ♖f7 27.♞b1 a5

Karpov makes sure that White will not be able to open a file on the queenside.

28.a3 h5!

Preparing to push White back even further.

29.♞ge1?! h4 30.♖f1



30...♞e7!

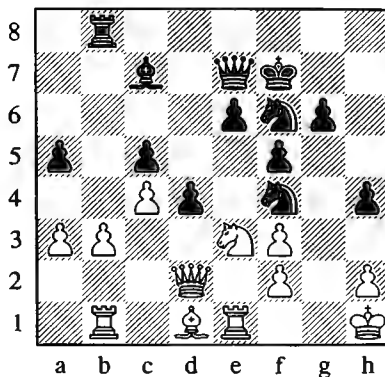
Karpov exploits White's error on the previous move. The rook has vacated the g-file, so he immediately looks to invade there.

31.♖e3!? ♖f6!?

Karpov does not even bother taking the knight yet. He can afford to leave it as his positional advantage is so great.

32.♙d1

If 32.♖g2 ♖xe2 33.♞xe2 h3 34.♖e1 ♞d6 35.f4 ♖e4 wins.



32...dxe3

Karpov was not obliged to take this piece, but it is the simplest way to exploit Black's advantage. In the resulting position he is ahead on material while also retaining most of his position plusses. It is a bit surprising that Osterman played on for another fourteen moves against the reigning world champion. The remaining moves require no comment.

33.fxe3 ♞d8 34.♞c2 ♖d3 35.♞f1 e5 36.e4 ♞d4 37.exf5 gxf5 38.b4 axb4 39.axb4 cxb4 40.♞g2 e4 41.fxe4 ♞xc4 42.♙f3 ♞e5 43.♞a1 b3 44.♞a7 b2 45.♞b7 ♞xc4 46.♙d1 ♞c1 0-1

Karpov went on to win the event convincingly with a score of 11/15, with seven wins and eight draws. Amongst his main rivals he defeated Portisch and Velimirovic and drew with players like Hort, Ljubojevic and Gligoric. His score against the lower ranked players was a massacre.

The recently crowned champion's first event in his home country was the USSR Spartakiad team event. Following a first round draw with Beliavsky, he won three consecutive games against Grigorian, Georgadze and Kupreichik. He then made a quick draw with Petrosian before meeting Spassky in round six. This game later won the award for the best game of the year.

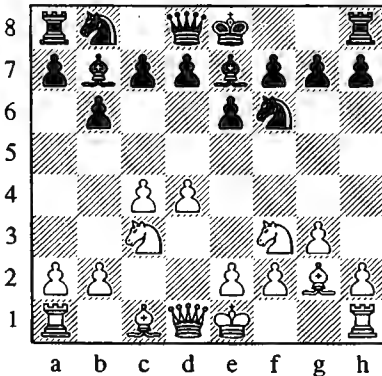
Game 41

Anatoly Karpov – Boris Spassky

USSR Team Championship, Riga 1975

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙b7 5.♙g2
♙e7 6.♘c3 0–0?!

This is inaccurate. The correct 6...♘e4!
reduces White's options.



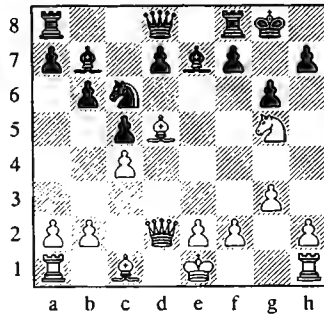
7.♙c2?!

White tries to take advantage of the delayed castling by threatening to occupy the centre with e4. Karpov had suffered an unpleasant defeat on the black side of this variation in his match against Korchnoi, so it looks like the idea made a positive impression on him.

7...d5

The aforementioned game was a disaster for

Karpov: 7...c5 8.d5 (Interestingly Aronian did not go for the Benoni type of position and preferred 8.dxc5, but all he got was a quick draw: 8...bxc5 9.0–0 d6 10.♙d1 ♙b6 11.♙e3 ♘c6 12.♙ab1 ♙ab8 13.a3 ♘a5 14.b3 h6 15.h3 ♙fd8 16.g4 ½–½ Aronian – Grischuk, Moscow 2006.) 8...exd5 9.♘g5 ♘c6 (In Game 5 of the Korchnoi match Karpov had preferred 9...g6, but he stood worse and obviously felt the need to improve his play.) 10.♘xd5 g6 11.♙d2 ♘xd5 12.♙xd5



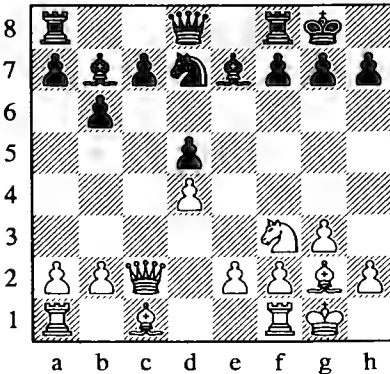
12...♙b8?? Karpov claims this move was prepared by one of his seconds and he did not check it. 13.♘xh7! ♙e8 14.♙h6 ♘e5 15.♘g5 ♙xg5 16.♙xg5 ♙xg5 17.♙xg5 ♙xd5 18.0–0 ♙xc4 19.f4 1–0 Korchnoi – Karpov, Moscow (21) 1974. This was one of the worst defeats of Karpov's career. On the other hand it did not affect the overall outcome of the match, and he never again lost such a game as a result of bad home analysis.

8.cxd5 ♘xd5

Perhaps influenced by the course of this famous game, defenders of Black's side tended to prefer 8...exd5 in later years. The reality is that White has a pleasant advantage in both cases. Two years later Spassky himself tried 8...exd5 against Korchnoi and was alright for a while, although he eventually went down.

9.0–0 ♘d7 10.♘xd5 exd5

Thirteen years later, the long time number one West German player tried taking with the bishop, but also failed to equalize: 10...♗xd5 11.e4 ♖b7 12.♞d1 ♘f6 13.♙e5 ♜e8 14.♗e3 ♝c8 15.d5 ♗d6 16.♙c4 exd5 17.exd5 ♜e7 18.a3 ♝f8 19.♞a1 White maintained an edge and went on to win, Ribli – Unzicker, Germany 1988.



11. ♞d1 ♘f6?!

It is a bit too early to determine the placement of the knight.

11...c5

Playing this move immediately would have reduced White's options.

12.dxc5 bxc5

12...♙c5 is another idea, when Black should only be slightly worse.

13.♙h4!?

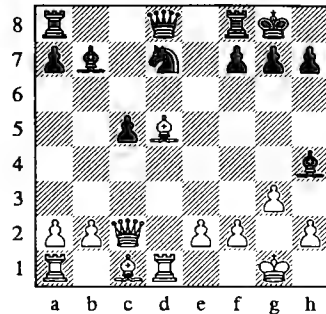
This move has yet to be played, but the quieter 13.♙e1 and ♗f4 do not give White much.

Another energetic and untested continuation that deserves attention is 13.e4! d4 14.b4!.

13...♗xh4

After 13...♙f6 14.♙f5 ♝e8 15.♗g5 White exerts unpleasant pressure against the hanging pawns.

14.♗xd5

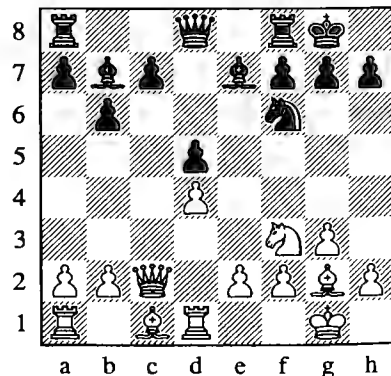


14...♞b8!

After 14...♗xd5 15.♞xd5 ♗f6 16.♞d2 White wins back the piece. Black will obtain some compensation for the pawn, but probably not enough.

15.♗xh7 ♞xb7 16.♞e4 ♞b4 17.♞f5 ♞b7 18.gxh4 ♞xh4

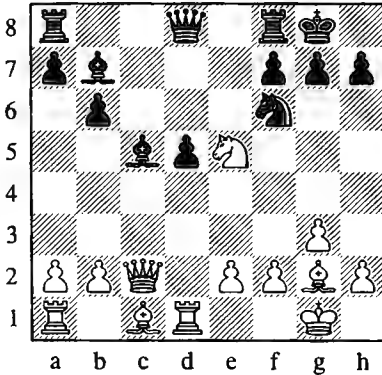
Black seems to be okay in this sharp line. White's king is a bit exposed, and he cannot take on d7 as the reply ...g6 wins material.



12.♙e5! c5 13.dxc5 ♗xc5

13...bxc5 was also possible. Black's pieces are not ideally placed to coordinate with the hanging pawns, but on the other hand it is not clear if White can exploit this in a convincing manner. A possible continuation is: 14.♗g5 (14.♙c4 ♞d7 15.♙a5!?) 14...♝c8 (14...h6?! 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♙d3) 15.♙c4 ♞d7 16.♞d2

(after 16.♙xf6 ♗xf6 17.♙xd5 ♗xd5 18.e4 ♗d4 19.exd5 ♞xd5 the position is balanced) 16...♟fd8 17.♟ad1 d4 and White only has a small edge.



14.♘d3!

The knight is heading for f4, where it will attack the isolated pawn.

14...♗d6 15.♗f4!

Minor piece exchanges are known to help the side playing against the isolated pawn.

15...♞e8

15...♗e7 loses time, and after 16.♞ac1 White can look to invade on the c-file.

16.e3 ♘e4 17.♗xd6 ♞xd6 18.♘f4 ♞ac8?

Spassky probably miscalculated something in the tactical sequence that follows this move. Karpov recommended 18...♞ad8, although after 19.♞d4 White is in control, and has a simple plan of doubling rooks and playing ♞a4 or ♞b3.

Black can also try 18...♞e5, but once again after 19.♞d4 ♞ac8 20.♞b3 White is pressing.

19.♞a4!

Karpov sets up a double attack as the knight on e4 is also hanging.

19...♞e7?

Spassky aims to put pressure on e3, but the queen is stepping into a pin. A better try was: 19...♞f6 20.♞xa7 ♗a8

Black is hoping to generate some threats on the long diagonal.

21.♗xe4

This looks best.

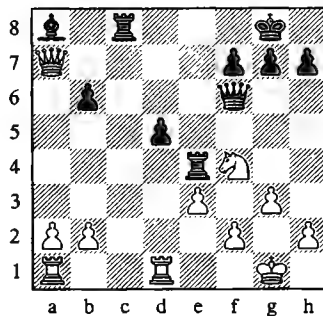
After 21.♞a3 ♞c2 22.♗xe4 dxe4 23.♞ac1 ♞xb2 White is a bit better, but Black should be able live with it.

21.♞d4 should be met by 21...g5! (after 21...♞c2 22.♗xe4 dxe4 23.♞ad1 Black does not have much for the pawn) 22.♘d3 Black has some compensation for the pawn, and can choose between 22...♞c2 and 22...♞e7 followed by ...♞ec7.

21...♞e4

Black needs to maintain the possibility of opening the long diagonal for his bishop.

After 21...dxe4? 22.♞d2 he has no compensation.



22.♘xd5

This is probably not best, but it is an interesting move to analyse.

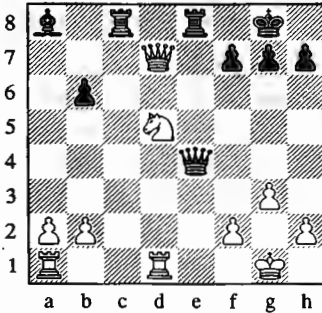
Instead of grabbing another pawn White should improve his position with 22.♞ac1 or 22.♘e2!?, both of which leave Black short of compensation.

22...♞f3

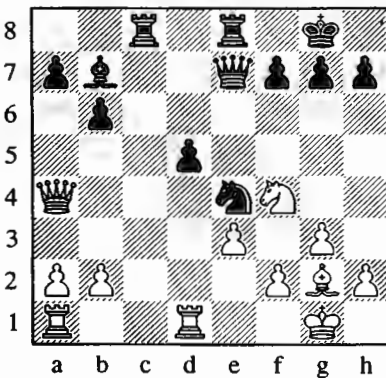
This sets up a hair-raising position.

23.♞d7!

After 23.♖a3 ♜e5 24.e4 ♗xe4 25.♞ac1
 ♞ce8 26.f3 ♗e2 27.♘f4 ♗xf3 28.♗xf3 ♙xf3
 29.♞d2 the endgame is equal.
 23...♞e8 24.e4 ♗xe4



25.♞d4! ♗e2 26.♞d2 ♗e4 27.♞ad1
 White keeps an extra pawn, but converting
 it will not be easy due to his vulnerable
 king.



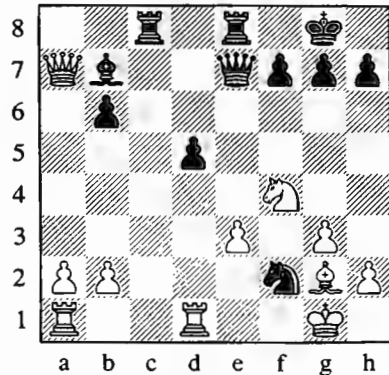
20.♗xa7!

After playing an excellent positional game
 up to this point, Karpov demonstrates sharp
 calculation. A word of warning to the readers:
 if you are thinking about venturing into enemy
 territory with your queen, then make sure she
 can come back in time!

The main alternative was 20.♙xe4 ♗xe4
 21.♞d4 ♗c2 22.♗xa7 ♗xb2 23.♞ad1 ♙a8

24.♘d5 ♙xd5 25.♞xd5 g6. In the resulting
 position Black is likely to be able to exchange
 the final two queenside pawns to leave an
 endgame with four versus three on the
 kingside, which he would have good chances to
 hold.

20...♘xf2



21.♘xd5!

21.♘xf2?? is of course impossible due to the
 direct 21...♗xe3† 22.♘f1 ♞c2 followed by
 mate.

21...♙xd5 22.♗xe7 ♘d1?!

Spassky gives up his queen, hoping to build a
 fortress. On balance, the following alternative
 would have given better chances to fight for a
 draw:

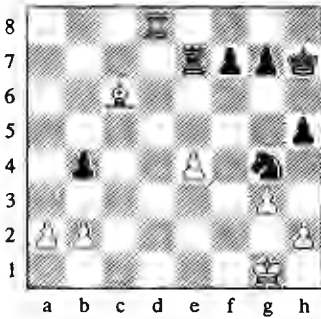
22...♗xe7 23.♞xd5 ♘g4 24.♞d6
 Another idea is 24.♙h3?! ♘xe3 25.♙xc8
 ♘xd5 26.♞d1.

24...b5

After 24...♘xe3?! 25.♞e1 ♘f8 26.♞xb6
 White should win.

25.♙c6 b4 26.♞ad1 h5 27.♞d8†

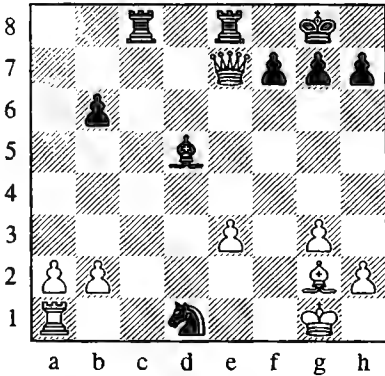
Another possibility is 27.e4 ♘h7 28.♞f1,
 when it is hard to tell if White can win with
 his extra pawn. chesstouring.com
 27...♙xd8 28.♞xd8† ♘h7 29.e4



29...b3!!

29...c7 30...a4! maintains good winning chances.

30.axb3 c7 31.d6 e5 32.d5 c1+
Black has decent drawing chances.



23.c1!!

It is instructive and beautiful, although White should be able to win by less spectacular means as well.

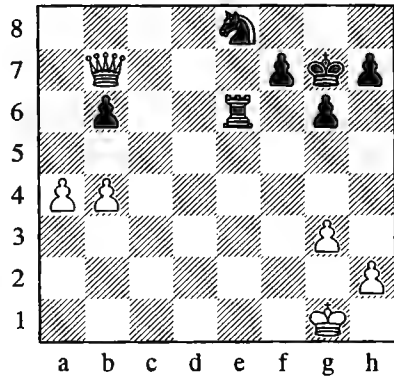
23...b8 24.b4 xg2 25.xg2 xe3+
26.g1 e6 27.f4 d8 28.d4 de8
29.d7! g4 30.c8!

White exchanges rooks in order to ensure that Black will not have enough pieces to hurt his king.

30...f6 31.xe8+ xe8 32.b7 e6
33.b8+ e8 34.a4 g6 35.b4

Black's last remaining drawing chance involves sacrificing his knight to eliminate White's last queenside pawn. But Karpov is an endgame maestro, and is unlikely to fall for such tricks. For the moment he improves his position and prepares to create a passed pawn.

35...g7 36.b7



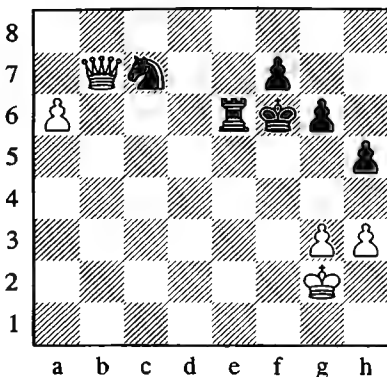
36...h5?

This damages Black's chances of constructing a successful fortress. The point is revealed in the event that Black manages to sacrifice his knight to eliminate White's last queenside pawn. In the resulting endgame with rook and three pawns against queen and two pawns on the kingside, Black can draw with a pawn on h6 but would lose with the pawn on h5, as in the latter case the white king can invade using the g5-square.

For this reason Black should have preferred 36...h6.

37.h3 f6 38.g2 d6 39.a5 bxa5 40.bxa5
e6 41.a6 d7!

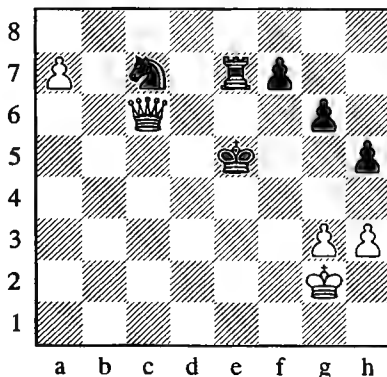
Black's best chance is to try and sacrifice his knight for the a-pawn, even if the resulting fortress is less than watertight.



42.a7!

After 42.♖xc7 ♜xa6 43.♖c3† ♔e6 44.♖g7 White is winning, and would still be winning even if the black king was on h7, due to the availability of the g5-square as explained previously. Nevertheless Karpov's move is more precise and enables a quicker kill.

42...♞e7 43.♖c6† ♔e5



44.♔f3!

1-0

Karpov reveals the major problem associated with a fortress – zugzwang. It is one thing to build a fortress, but one must also have a spare move to play. Fortresses and zugzwangs are similar to exchange sacrifices: they are often

easy to understand once you see them, but the hard part can be finding them in the first place.

Karpov finished the team event with a quick draw against Tal, thus scoring a total of four wins and three draws.

Karpov's last event of the year was the Milan super-tournament. Technically speaking he won the competition, although the result was not as superlative as it sounds. The event began with a round robin tournament. This was won by Portisch, who played arguably the best tournament of his life to achieve a score of 7/11, one point ahead of Karpov, Petrosian and Ljubojevic. According to the regulations, the top four players would qualify for a knockout competition to determine the overall champion.

In the semi-final stage, Karpov recorded four dull draws with Petrosian. He qualified for the final, although the database does not make it clear on what basis he overcame Petrosian. Perhaps he won a tie-breaker at a fast time limit which did not make it to the database. Or maybe there was another tie-break system based on their results in the round robin tournament.

In the other semi-final Portisch continued his fine form and defeated Ljubojevic, thus setting up a dream finale between the winner of the round robin and the reigning world champion. In the first game Karpov went for safety with the black pieces and secured a draw. We will look at their second game shortly.

Portisch qualified for the candidates stage of the world championship cycle eight times, and was the top ranked Hungarian player for nearly three decades. He never played Euwe, but played against all the subsequent world champions from Botvinnik to Anand. Over 242 encounters, Portisch won twenty six of these encounters, with 161 draws and fifty five losses.

Game 42

Anatoly Karpov – Lajos Portisch

Milan Final (2) 1975

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 d6

Portisch was strong in the openings. He had a wide repertoire, although he tended to pick one main opening for each tournament and stick with it throughout. In Milan he answered 1.e4 with 1...e5 in all but one case, so Karpov must have been expecting it. Over his career Karpov scored a perfect 5/5 against the present variation.

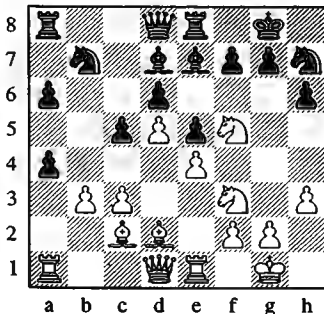
5.0–0

Karpov chose this move in two of the five games.

5...♗e7

Karpov must have anticipated this move, as Portisch had already used it to defeat Walter Browne in the round robin tournament.

A year earlier Karpov had faced 5...♗d7 and gained the upper hand as follows: 6.d4 ♘f6 7.c3 ♗e7 8.♘bd2 0–0 9.♗e1 ♗e8 10.♘f1 h6 11.♘g3 ♗f8 12.♗d2 b5 13.♗c2! The right square for the bishop. 13...♘a5 14.b3 c5 15.d5 ♘h7 16.h3 ♗e7 17.♘f5 ♘b7 18.a4 bxa4



19.b4! Playing against the knight on b7. 19...a5 20.♗xa4 axb4 21.cxb4 ♗f8 22.♗c6! ♗c7 23.b5 Karpov outplayed his opponent and converted his advantage in Karpov – Westerinen, Nice (ol) 1974.

6.♗xc6†

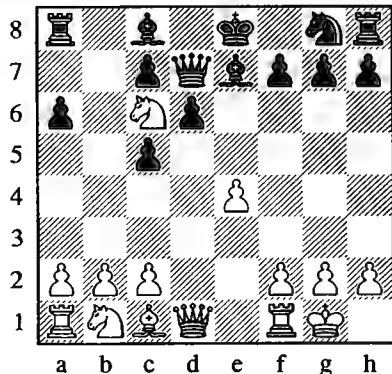
This is a surprising decision from Karpov. He probably just wanted to get a playable position.

Portisch's earlier game had continued: 6.c3 ♗g4 7.d3 ♘f6 8.♘bd2 ♘d7 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♗c2 ♘f8 11.g4 ♗g6 12.d4 h5 13.d5 ♘b8 14.♘c4 ♘bd7 15.♘g2 hxg4 16.hxg4 ♘f6 17.♘e3 ♗d7 18.♘d2 c6 19.c4 ♗d8 20.f3 ♗b6 21.♘f5 ♗xf5 22.exf5 ♗e3 23.♘e4 ♗d4 24.♘xf6† gxf6 Black went on to win this highly complex position, Browne – Portisch, Milan 1975.

6...bxc6 7.d4 exd4 8.♘xd4

Another possibility is 8.♗xd4 ♘f6.

8...c5 9.♘c6 ♗d7



10.♘a5!?

The knight is not badly placed here, and it is useful to prevent ...♗b7. Nevertheless Black has a number of routes to a decent position.

10...♗f6

10...♖f6 and 10...♗b5 11.♖b3 ♖f6 were equally valid alternatives.

11.♗d3

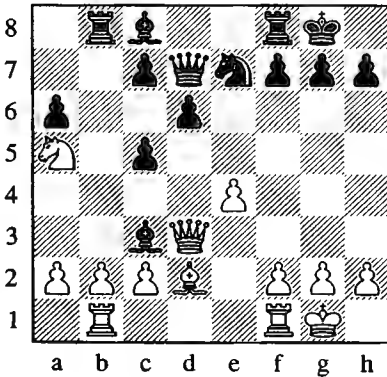
Karpov does not want to have doubled c-pawns.

11...♖e7

Also after 11...♗b5 12.♖c4 ♗e6 13.♖ba3 ♗d7 Black should be fine.

12.♖c3 ♗b8 13.♗b1 0-0 14.♗d2 ♗xc3

Portisch decides to simplify the position. It is probably no better or worse than keeping the pieces on the board, for instance 14...♖c6 15.♖d5 ♗d8 16.♖c4 ♖e7, or 14...♗e6 15.f4 ♗d7 16.f5 ♗e5, with a balanced position in both cases.



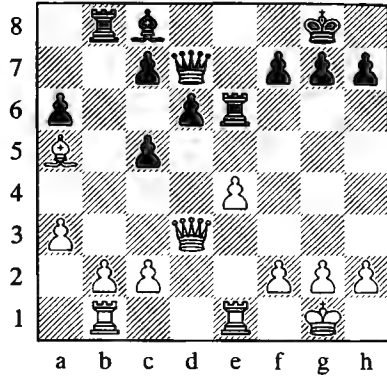
15.♗xc3 ♖c6

The active 15...f5 16.♗be1 ♖g6 is also possible.

16.a3 ♖xa5

Another possibility was 16...♗e8 17.♖c4 f5 18.♗be1 ♗f7 with a balanced position, but Portisch prefers to exchange the knights, perhaps expecting to simplify to a draw. Indeed, with opposite-coloured bishops it looks as though it will be hard for either side to achieve much, so it is highly instructive to observe the way in which Karpov improves his position.

17.♗xa5 ♗e8 18.♗fe1 ♗e6

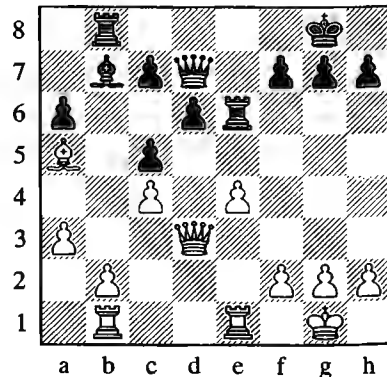


19.c4!

Karpov carries out an interesting strategy. He positions his pawns on light squares in order to choke Black's bishop. He used the same idea in a number of his games, including against Ljubojevic earlier in the same event. Obviously White must use this tool with skill, as if it goes wrong then the pawns could fall prey to the enemy bishop in an endgame.

19...♗b7

It was worth considering 19...♗c6!? 20.♗c3 ♗g6. Later Black can move his bishop to d7 or e6, followed by ...♗f8 and eventually ...f5.



20.f3!

Karpov strengthens the e4-pawn and continues his policy of restricting the enemy bishop.

20...♖b8?!

This move looks natural, but it lacks any real purpose and indeed Portisch chooses to bring it back to b8 a few moves later. 20...♖f8!?, deserved consideration in order to prepare ...f5.

21.♗d2 ♙c6?!

Once again Black should have tried to undermine White's centre or at least generate some activity on the kingside. For instance:

21...♗g6 22.♙c3

22.♗f4 can be met by 22...♖f6.

22...f5

Black can also play on the h-file with 22...♗h3 23.♗h1 ♗h5 or 23...♗h6.

23.exf5 ♖xe1† 24.♖xe1 ♗xf5 25.♖e8† ♗f7

26.♗e2 ♗g5

Both sides are somewhat tied up with the task of defending their kings.

Black can simplify to an opposite-coloured bishop ending with 26...♖e6 27.♖xe6 ♗xe6 28.♗xe6† ♗xe6 29.♙xg7, but it is not clear if he can hold.

27.♖h8

Or 27.♖e3 ♙c6.

27...♖e6 28.♗d3 ♗g6

Black should be able to live with his small disadvantage.

It seems like Portisch failed to appreciate the danger, and thought he could draw the position by keeping his pieces in a defensive formation.

22.b3

Karpov places another pawn on a light square.

22...♗e7

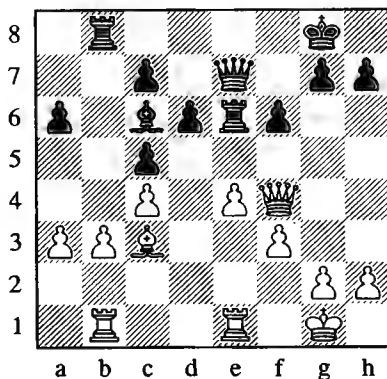
Freeing the position with 22...f5!?, would cost a pawn. Nevertheless after 23.exf5 ♖xe1† 24.♖xe1 ♖xe1† 25.♗xe1 ♗xf5 26.♙xc7 Black should be able to hold the ending.

23.♗f4 ♖b8?!

Once again Portisch eschews any active ideas, such as 23...♖f6!?, in favour of a passive move. Portisch is used to facing formidable opponents, and there is no doubting his toughness and ability to withstand pressure. However, this was his first time playing a match against a reigning world champion, and perhaps the occasion got the better of him.

24.♙c3 f6?!

Portisch decides to sit firmly and hold the position, but his last move presents White with an important target. The way in which Karpov increases his advantage from this point is magical.

**25.♗f2!**

Karpov immediately visualizes the attack on the g-file and frees the g1-square for his rook.

25...♗f7 26.h4! ♖e8 27.g4!

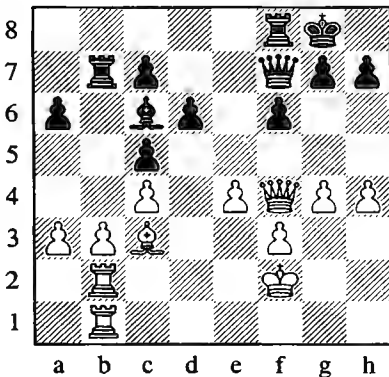
With the last two pawn moves Karpov has gained a lot of space.

27...♖b7

Barczay proposes the interesting sacrifice 27...♖xb3!? 28.♖xb3 ♜xc4 29.♖eb1 ♔a4, although he mentions that Portisch preferred not to play messy positions of this type. Play continues 30.♖b8 (another possibility is 30.♖b7 ♜xc3) 30...♜xc3 31.♖xe8† ♕xe8 32.♖b8 ♜d4† when Black is worse, yet he has some chances to hold (analysis by Barczay).

28.♖b2 ♖cb8 29.♖cb1 ♖f8?

By moving the rook away from the b-file, Black liberates one of his opponent's rooks from its defence of the b-pawn. He should have preferred a waiting move such as 29...♔f8.

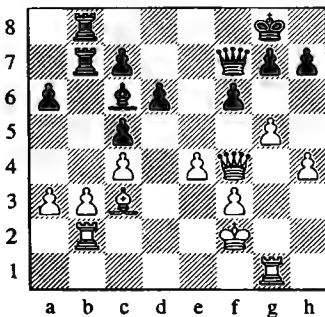


30.♖g1 ♕e8

Portisch may have been running low on time, which would explain why he resorted to shuffling around with his bishop. The critical alternative was:

30...♖fb8 31.g5!

White does not have to defend the b-pawn, but instead presses on with the attack.



31...♖xb3!?

This is rather risky, but it is the most interesting move to analyse.

The objectively best continuation is: 31...fxg5 32.♜xg5 g6 33.♖g4 (33.h5? ♕xe4) 33...♖f8 (after 33...♖xb3? 34.♖xb3 ♖xb3 35.♖f4 ♖e6 36.♜h6 ♜e7 37.h5 ♕e8 38.♕f6 ♜f8 39.♜g5 h6 40.♜h4 White's attack is too strong) 34.♜e3 ♕d7 35.♖g3 ♜f4 Black survives to the endgame, although White still keeps some pressure after 36.h5.

32.♖xb3 ♖xb3 33.gxf6 g6 34.♖c1 ♖xa3

The alternative is 34...♜xc4 35.h5 ♖xc3 (35...♜f7? loses to 36.hxg6 hxg6 37.♜h4!) 36.f7† ♜xf7 (36...♔f8 37.♜h6† ♔xf7 38.♜xh7† ♔f8 39.♜h8† ♔e7 40.♖xc3 wins) 37.♜xf7† ♔xf7 38.hxg6† in this endgame White's rook should prevail over Black's bishop and pawns.

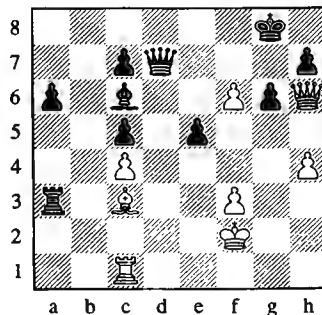
35.e5!

After 35.h5 ♖a2† 36.♕d2 ♖xd2† (36...a5 37.♖b1) 37.♜xd2 ♜xf6 White's aspirations of winning the game are hampered by the exposed position of his king.

35...♜d7

35...dxe5 36.♜xe5.

36.♜h6 dxe5

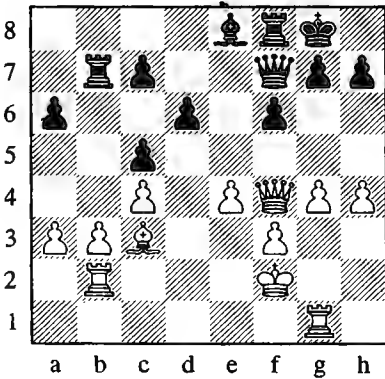


37.♖d1! ♖a2† 38.♔g3 ♖g2†!

A beautiful resource, but even this is not enough to solve Black's problems fully.

39.♔xg2 ♕xf3† 40.♔xf3 ♜xd1† 41.♔e4 ♜g4† 42.♔e3

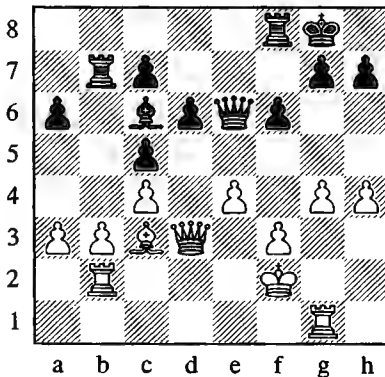
White avoids the perpetual and has good winning chances.



31. ♖e3!

For several moves the queen stood well on f4, where it prevented Black from becoming active and helped to threaten an attack. Now her work is done, so Karpov finds another role for her.

31... ♗e6 32. ♗d3! ♕c6



33. b4!

This was Karpov's idea – the queen defended the c-pawn in order to facilitate this advance. Now White can exert pressure on the kingside as well.

33... ♝b4 34. ♝b4 ♕e8 35. ♗d2 ♖b6

35... ♕f7? allows White to break through on the kingside with 36.g5.

A better way of improving the bishop was 35... ♕a4, although White maintains strong pressure after 36. ♗d4 (Another idea is 36. ♗a1 ♕b3 37. ♗d5 ♗xd5 38. ♝d5 ♕c4 39. ♗c2, with a pleasant endgame for White.) 36... ♕b3 37. g5 ♗xc4 38. ♝f6 ♗xd4† 39. ♕xd4 g6 40. h5 when Black faces a difficult defence.

36. ♗d4 ♗e5?

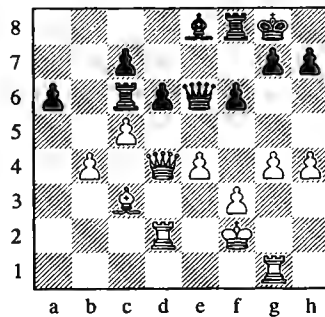
Under pressure, Portisch overlooks an elementary tactic. The best chance was to counterattack with:

36... ♗c6

Waiting passively leads to a tough situation: 36... ♝h8 37. g5 ♗h3 38. ♗g4! ♕g6 39. ♝e3! ♗bb8 40. ♗f4 And White is dominating on the dark squares.

37. c5

Nullifying the threat, while also caging the black rook.



37... a5!

Black had better free the rook.

37... ♕f7 38. g5 ♝xc5 39. ♝xc5 ♗h3 40. ♝e3! ♗xh4 41. ♗dg2 All of White's pieces are participating in the attack, and Black is in trouble.

37... ♗f7 38. ♗d5! ♕d7 (38... ♝xc5 39. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 40. ♝xc5 leads to a tough ending

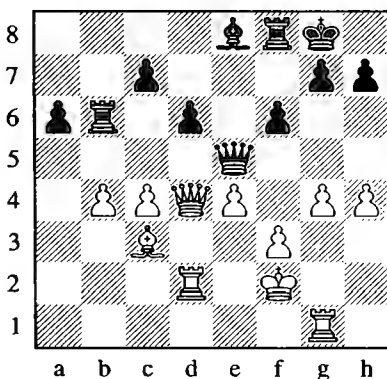
for Black) 39.♖xe6 ♗xe6 40.♗d4 White continues to press, even without queens.

38.bxa5

38.g5 axb4 39.gxf6 bxc3 40.♖xg7† ♔h8 41.f7 looks frightening, but after 41...♗e5 42.♗xe5 dxe5 43.fxe8=♗ ♖xe8 44.♖dd7 White has no more than a perpetual on the seventh rank.

38...♖xc5

White keeps some advantage after 39.♖b2 or 39.a6, but Black has chances to defend and the position is no longer one-sided.



37.♗xb6!

As is typical for him, Karpov not only plays a great strategic game, but also seizes upon the tactical opportunity.

37...♗h2† 38.♔e1! ♗xd2† 39.♔xd2 cxb6 40.♖a1

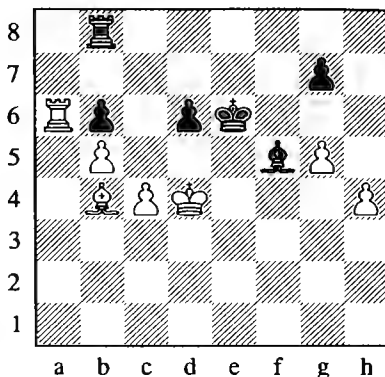
The tactical skirmish ends with White winning a pawn. His pieces are also much more active, so the position should be winning in spite of the opposite-coloured bishops.

40...♗f7 41.♖xa6 ♖b8 42.♔d3 h5!?

This is a good attempt to soften White's pawn chain, but it does not solve the problem of the queenside.

43.b5 hxg4 44.fxg4 ♖c8 45.♖a4 ♗c6 46.g5

f5 47.cxf5 ♗xf5† 48.♔d4 ♔f7 49.♗b4 ♔e6 50.♖a6 ♖b8



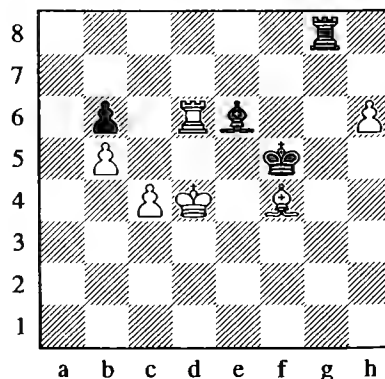
51.h5!

Black has consolidated his queenside, so White creates a passed pawn on the kingside. Black will not be able to cope with the threats on both flanks.

51...♗g4 52.h6 gxh6 53.gxh6 ♗f5 54.♗d2 ♖g8 55.♗f4 ♖b8 56.♖a7 ♔f6 57.♖g7 ♗e6 58.♖c7 ♖h8 59.♖c6

Finally the queenside pawns fall.

59...♖g8 60.♖xd6 ♔f5



61.♖xb6! ♖g4 62.♖xc6! ♔xc6 63.♔e4 ♖g8

64.b6**1-0**

The next two games ended in draws. In the fifth game Portisch had a forced win, but chose an incorrect move order which allowed Karpov to find a great defensive resource which enabled him to hold an endgame a pawn down. The final game ended in a draw in twenty one moves, which gave Karpov a $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ victory.

This was Karpov's last event of 1975. Over the year he did not seem to suffer from any additional pressure from his status as World Champion, and produced a series of results that were worthy of the title.

1975 Summary

Ljubljana/Portoroz (1st place): 11/15 (+7 =8 -0)

Spartakiad USSR (Board one): 5½/7 (+4 =3 -0)

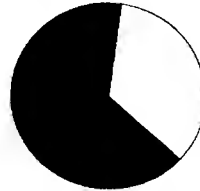
Milan

Preliminary (2nd-4th place): 6½/11 (+3 =7 -1)

Semi-final match versus Petrosian: Drew 2-2 (+0 =4 -0)

Final match versus Portisch: Won 3½-2½ (+1 =5 -0)

Total 66.3% (+15 =27 -1)



Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1976

Rating 2695 (1 in the World)

Karpov's first event of the year was a tournament in Skopje, Macedonia. He began brightly, scoring three wins and a draw from his first four games, including two well executed attacking victories against Vaganian and Velimirovic. In round five he met the former World Junior Champion, Bojan Kurajica.

The contestants had met just once before, a few years back in Hastings, when Karpov was victorious. After the present game they played three more games, all of which were drawn. Kurajica faced all the world champions from Smyslov to Kramnik, winning two games, drawing nine and losing seven.

In the present game we see how Karpov deals with the problem of how to press for a win against an opponent who is playing for a draw. All chess players face this problem, and it must have become all the more common for Karpov as he moved up the world rankings and especially after he won the world title. Many players have ended up losing such games after making unreasonable attempts to win. It is remarkable how relaxed Karpov remains throughout this game.

Game 43

Bojan Kurajica – Anatoly Karpov

Skopje 1976

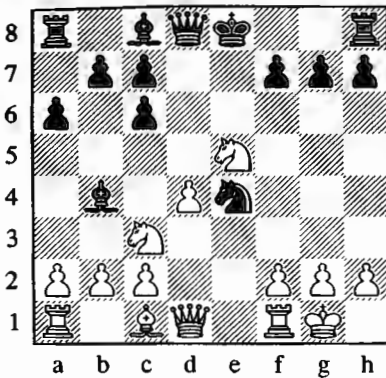
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.♗xc6

Karpov scored exceptionally highly against the early sidelines of the Ruy Lopez, so with hindsight we can say that White already made a bad choice. Out of thirteen games he won ten, drew two and lost just one, and that solitary defeat came against Ribli when Karpov was still a junior. Karpov also performed solidly against the main Exchange Variation with 4.♗xc6, scoring two wins and seven draws with no defeats.

5...dxc6 6.♘c3 ♗d6 7.d4 ♗b4!

Karpov aims to take the e4-pawn. The tempo loss is of no consequence, which is hardly surprising considering that White already lost a tempo on the fifth move.

8.♘xe5 ♘xc4 9.0-0



9...xc3

Karpov gives up the bishop pair in return for more fluent development. After 9...xc3 10.bxc3 d6 11.e1 0-0 12.d4 e7 13.f4 White will attack the c7-pawn, so Black will probably have to relinquish the bishop pair anyway.

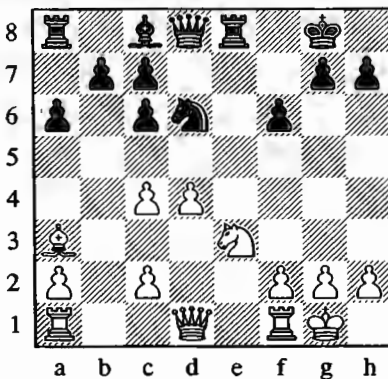
10.bxc3 0-0 11.e1 d6 12.c4

Otherwise Black's knight will have a chance to occupy the c4-square.

12...f6!

The knight has to be driven away.

13.dg4 e8 14.d3



14...f5!

Karpov has no qualms about playing a position with opposite-coloured bishops, as he has seen that he will be able to exert enough pressure to cause practical problems for his opponent.

15.f5 f5 16.d2 e6 17.c3 d7 18.f1 f7

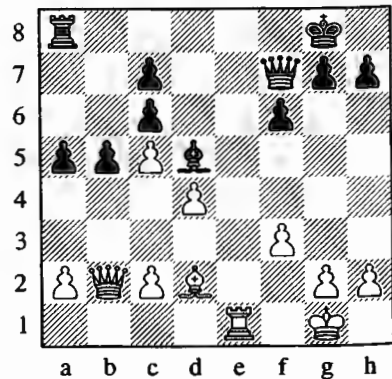
Karpov forces White to give up the d5-square while also blocking the a3-bishop.

19.b2 b6 20.c5 b5 21.b4 a5! 22.d2 d5 23.f!

Kurajica sensibly limits the power of the enemy bishop.

23.a3? would have been extremely risky to play over the board. 23...g6 24.g3 f5 25.c3 White might be able to survive, but who would want to play such a position? 25...g5 (Also after 25...h3 26.f3 g5 27.d3 f7 White is living very dangerously.) Black keeps a strong initiative, and the attempt to defend by exchanging rooks backfires on White: 26.fxe8? fxe8 27.e1 xe1 28.xe1 h3 29.f3 xc4 White is defenceless.

23...xe1 24.xe1



24...b4!

This move virtually guarantees Black a passed a-pawn. Karpov is still a long way from winning the game, but he continues to improve his position, bit by bit.

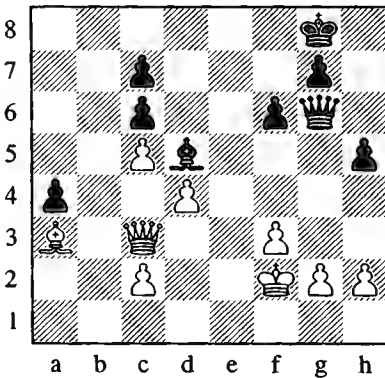
25.a4 bxa3 26.♖xa3 a4 27.♙b4

A better idea may have been 27.♙f4!? ♖g6 28.♞e2 ♙c4 29.♞e4 when it is difficult for Black to make progress.

27...♖g6 28.♖c3 h5 29.♙a3 ♞e8

Black has to exchange the rooks in order to create some possibilities to invade.

30.♞xe8† ♖xe8 31.♜f2 ♖g6



32.♖d3?!

32.h4!? was a better option. White cannot resist the temptation to exchange queens, but in fact this gives Black additional chances to squeeze him.

32...♖xd3 33.cxd3

Material is level, but Black has a much better pawn structure. His passed a-pawn is an important asset which renders White's bishop very passive. Nevertheless White's position is difficult to penetrate and he should still be able to draw with accurate defence.

33...h4!

Karpov begins by securing some additional kingside space.

34.g3?!

This does not lose, but it renders White's defensive task more difficult. The correct move was:

34.g4!

Gaining some additional kingside space.

34...h3!

Karpov comments that if White were allowed to play h3 then the position would be completely drawn.

35.♜g3 ♜f7 36.f4 ♙g2

After 36...g6 37.♜xh3 ♙f3 38.♜g3 ♙e2 39.h4 ♙xd3 40.h5 White holds.

37.♜f2

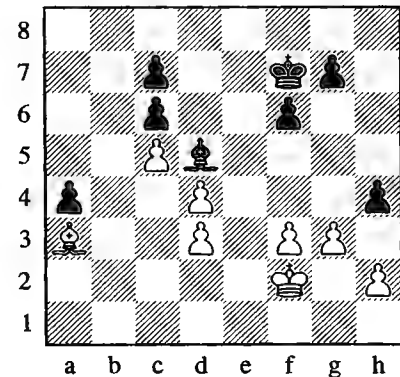
Black has no way to invade, for instance:

37...♜e6 38.♜e3 ♜d5 39.♙b2 ♙f1 40.♜d2 g6 41.♜e3

Black can make no further progress.

34...♜f7

For an endgame involving so few pieces, the number of subtle resources and finesses is astonishing. Just as with the ending of Game 38 (Karpov – Kavalek), I decided to explore the endgame in detail in an effort to get closer to the truth of the position.



35.♜e3

White decides to wait and see. There is nothing wrong with this, but he could also have drawn with:

35.gxh4!?

It looks risky for White to fracture his kingside; on the other hand, he picks up a pawn and also prevents Black's g-pawn from advancing as it does in the game.

35...♔g6 36.♔g3 ♕h5 37.♖b2 ♖g8

According to Karpov, Black will win the d3-pawn and the game. But White has a finesse.

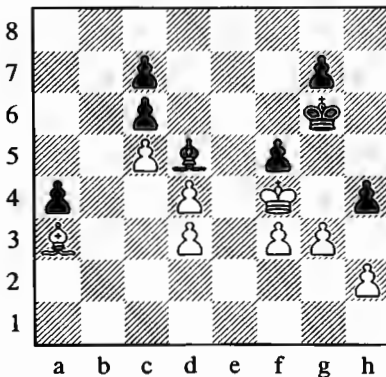
38.♖a3 ♖h7 39.d5!

Without this White would indeed be losing.

39...cxd5 40.d4

White should draw without difficulty. The change in the pawn structure was of vital importance. Had the black pawn remained on c6, Black could have brought his king to d5 and bishop to d1, followed by a decisive king penetration on one flank or the other. Now that the d5-square is blocked, the black king does not have a convincing route into the white position.

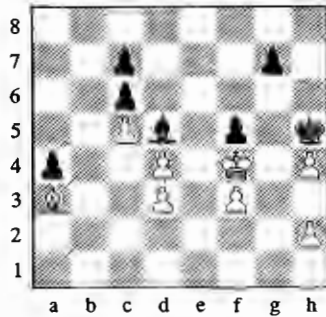
35...f5 36.♔f4 ♔g6



37.♔e3

Another option was:

37.gxh4 ♕h5



From here, White can play the position in two different ways.

a) 38.♔xf5!?

This move was analysed in *Anatoly Karpov's Games as a World Champion 1975-77* by O'Connell and Levy. White simply plans to exchange as many pawns as possible. It leaves the door open for the black king to invade, but in the end White should be able to hold.

38...♖xf3

38...♕xh4 39.f4! should hold without too many problems.

39.♔f4!

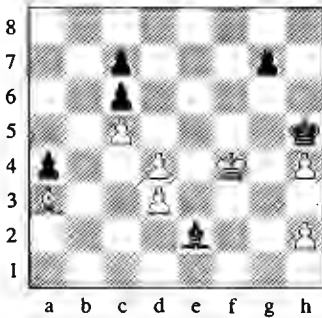
This king must retreat. Other moves are not good enough, for instance: 39.♖b2 ♖d5 40.♖c1



40...♔xh4! After a liquidation of the remaining kingside pawns Black will invade on the queenside. (Surprisingly Karpov only

mentioned 40...♙f7? in his 1975-77 book, and even repeated the mistake in his 2007 edition of his best games. 41.♙b2 ♖xh4 42.d5 And White draws.) 41.♖g6 ♖h3 42.♗xg7 ♖xh2 43.♗f6 ♖g3 44.♗e7 ♗f3 45.♗d7 ♗e2 46.♗xc7 ♗d1 47.♙a3 ♗c2 48.♗b6 ♗b3 Black wins easily.

39...♙e2



40.♗e5

But not 40.♗e3? ♙f1 when White is in trouble.

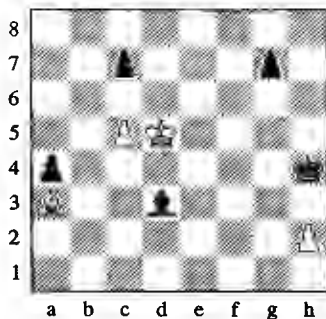
However, there was a second route to a draw in 40.♖g3 ♙xd3 41.♙c1 ♙c4 42.♙b2 ♖g6 43.♗f4 when the black king has no way through.

40...♙xd3

After 40...♙f3 41.♗f4 Black gets nowhere.

41.d5 cxd5 42.♗xd5 ♖xh4

42...♙b5 leads to the same result: 43.c6 ♖xh4 44.♙b2 g5 45.♙e5 a3 46.♙xc7 g4 47.♙e5 a2 48.c7=

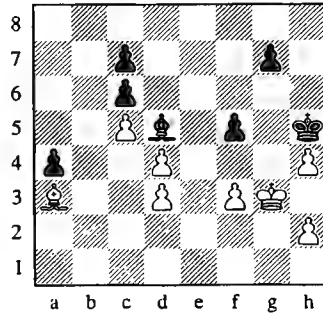


43.♗c6 ♖h3 44.♗xc7 ♖xh2 45.c6 g5 46.♗b6 g4 47.c7 ♙f5 48.♗a5

White holds.

b) White can also adopt a strategy to block all invasions with:

38.♖g3

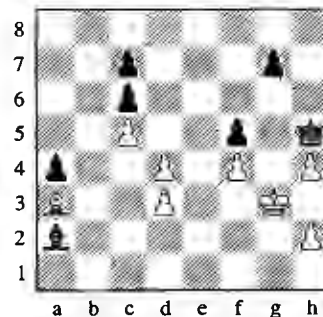


38...g6

Now we will examine a couple of different approaches from White.

b1) 39.f4?!

This does not lose, but it leads to a further weakening of the light squares which increases Black's chances to invade. Even though it is not the best move, it is worth analysing as some of the variations are fascinating.

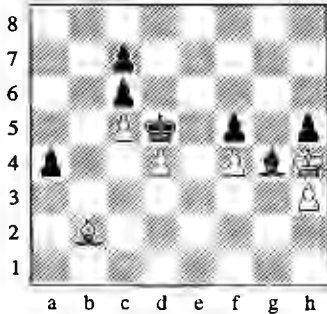


39...♙a2

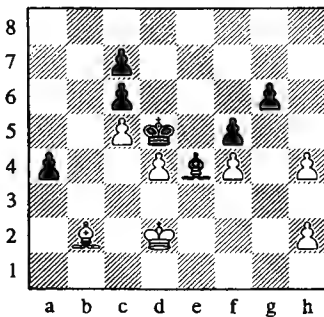
Interestingly, in his *Chess Informant* analysis Karpov evaluates a position with similar characteristics to this as winning for Black.

40.♔h3 ♖b1 41.♗g3 ♜xd3 42.♔h3 ♜e4
43.♗g3 ♔h6 44.♗f2

The attempt to use the king actively on the kingside is doomed to failure: 44.♖b2? ♜d5 45.♖a3 ♗g7 46.h5? gxh5 47.♔h4 ♗g6 48.♖b2 ♜f3 49.♖a3 ♗f6 50.♖b2 ♗c6 51.♗g5 ♜g4 52.♔h4 ♔d5 53.h3



53... ♗c4! And Black wins.
44... ♗g7 45.♖b2 ♗f7 46.♔e3 ♗e6 47.♔d2 ♔d5



48.♔c3!

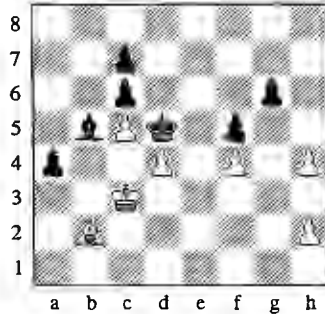
White must walk a narrow path to a draw. His first task is to prevent the black king from assisting the a-pawn.

48.♔e3? is not good enough: 48...♔c4 49.♔d2 ♔b3 50.♖a1 a3 51.♜c3 ♜c2 52.♖a5 (52.♖a1 ♖b1 53.♜c3 ♜e4 54.♖a5 ♔b2 Black wins.) 52...♔b2 (52...♖b1 53.♜c3 ♜e4 also wins thanks to the zugzwang.) 53.d5 cxd5 54.♜xc7 ♖a4 and Black wins.

48...♖b1

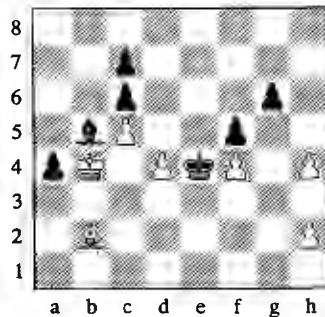
White's situation appears desperate, as he cannot cover both flanks against the invasion of the black king, but we will see that his resources are not yet exhausted.

49.♔b4 ♜c2 50.♔c3 ♖b3 51.♔d3 ♜c4†
52.♔c3 ♖b5



53.♜c1

53.♔b4!? This should also be enough to draw, although it relies on a spectacular follow-up on the next move. 53...♔e4

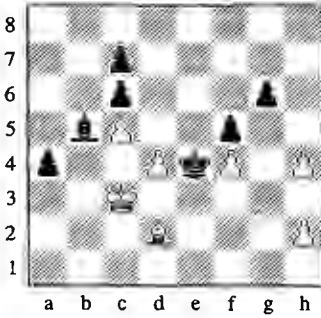


54.d5!! Here we see another illustration of the principle that in opposite-coloured bishop positions one often has to play with extreme purposefulness to achieve one's goal. (54.♖a1? ♔xf4 55.d5 loses to 55...cxd5 56.♔xb5 ♔e4 57.♔c6 f4 58.♔xc7 ♔3 and Black promotes.) 54...♔xd5 55.♜e5 ♔e4 56.♜xc7 ♔f3 57.♜e5 ♗g4 58.♜d6 ♔xh4 59.♜e7† ♗g3 60.♜g5 And White holds.

This is an important drawing position which can be reached in several ways.

53...♗e4 54.♘d2

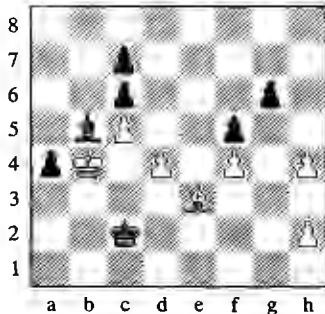
Now Black can cause problems with:



54...♗e2!

This nice manoeuvre was found by Filipino IM Lito Maninang. The point is that the bishop is vulnerable when it defends the a-pawn from b5, so Black relocates it.

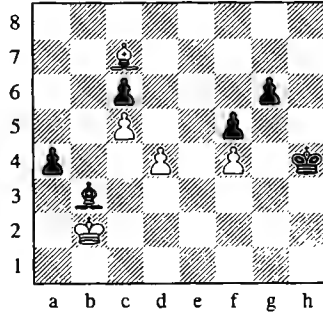
The immediate invasion does not quite work: 54...♗f3 55.♗b4! ♗e2 56.♗c1 ♗d1 57.♗e3! (after 57.♗a3 ♗c2 58.d5 cxd5 59.♗xb5 ♗b3 Black wins) 57...♗c2



58.♗f2! (The tempting 58.d5? loses: 58...cxd5 59.♗xb5 a3! (59...♗d3 60.♗c1 ♗c2 61.♗e3 repeats) 60.♗a4 a2 61.♗d4 c6 62.h5 gxh5 63.h4 ♗b1 64.♗a5 a1=♖† 65.♗xa1 ♗xa1 66.♗b6 d4 67.♗xc6 d3 68.♗b7 d2 69.c6 d1=♖ 70.c7 ♖d7 71.♗b8 ♗b2 72.c8=♖ ♖xc8† 73.♗xc8 ♗c3 74.♗d7 ♗d4 75.♗e6 ♗e4→) 58...♗d3

(After 58...♗b2? 59.d5! Black is suddenly in trouble!) 59.♗e1 White can afford to lose the d-pawn and still draw comfortably.

55.♗c1 ♗d1 56.♗d2 ♗b3 57.♗c3 ♗f3 58.♗d2 ♗g2 59.♗b2 ♗xh2 60.♗a5 ♗g3 61.♗xc7 ♗xh4



62.♗d8†!

White has to stop Black from creating a kingside passed pawn.

62.♗a3? ♗g4 63.d5 Black will have only one passed pawn but as White's king finds himself out of play it is enough. 63...♗xd5 64.♗xa4 g5 65.fxg5 f4 66.♗a5 ♗xg5 67.♗e1 ♗g4 68.♗b4 ♗f3 69.♗d2 ♗e4 wins.

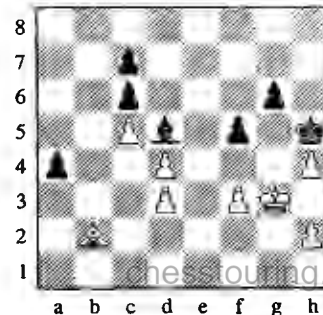
62...♗g4 63.♗g5 ♗f3 64.♗c3 ♗e4 65.♗h6 ♗d5

65...♗d1 66.♗b4 changes nothing.

66.♗b4

In the end White also holds the position according to Maninang's plan. Not 66.♗g5?? a3 67.♗h6 a2 68.♗b2 ♗xd4 69.♗f8 g5 wins.

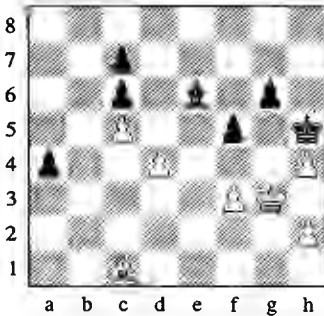
b2) 39.♗b2



Although 39.f4 did not lose, it seems preferable not to weaken additional light squares.

39...♖b3 40.♙c1 ♙c2 41.♖b2 ♙xd3 42.♙c1 ♙c4 43.♖b2 ♙d5 44.♙c1 ♙e6

The direct try with 44...f4† is not good enough for a win. 45.♗xf4 (45.♙xf4 a3 46.♙c1 a2 47.♖b2 ♗h6 48.♗f4 ♗g7 49.♙a1 ♗f6 50.♖b2 White can probably hold.) 45...♗xh4 46.♗e3 ♗h3 47.f4 White can hold this endgame, just as in the main line below.



45.♖b2

White continues to wait.

45...♙c4

45...♗h6 46.♗f4 reveals the advantage of keeping the pawn on f3. 46...♙d5 47.♙c1 ♗g7 48.h5 gxf5 49.♗xf5 ♙xf3 50.h4 White can block all invasions.

45...f4† 46.♗xf4 ♗xh4 keeps some chances alive, but White can achieve a draw through active defence: 47.♗e5 ♙d5 48.f4 ♗h3 49.♗f6 ♙e4 50.♗e5 White seems to be holding, for instance: 50...♙d3 51.d5 cxd5 (51...♙f5 52.dxc6) 52.♗xd5 ♗xh2 (52...♖b5 53.c6) 53.♗c6 ♗g3 54.♙c1=

46.♙a3 f4† 47.♗xf4 ♗xh4 48.♗e3 ♗h3 49.f4

White should draw this type of endgame, as has already been noted in the analysis of 44...f4† above.

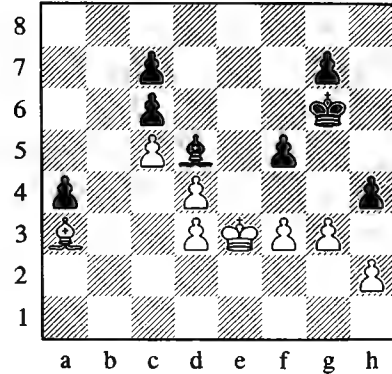
49...♗xh2 50.♙c1 ♗g2 51.♗d2 ♗f3 52.♗c3 ♙e6 53.♗c2 a3

53...♗e2 54.♗c3

54.♙xa3 ♗xf4 55.♙c1† ♗f5 56.♗d2

White draws.

Thus we can conclude that 37.gxf4 would have drawn if followed up correctly. Nevertheless there was nothing wrong with White's choice in the game. Let us return to it now.



37...♗h5 38.♖b4 g5!

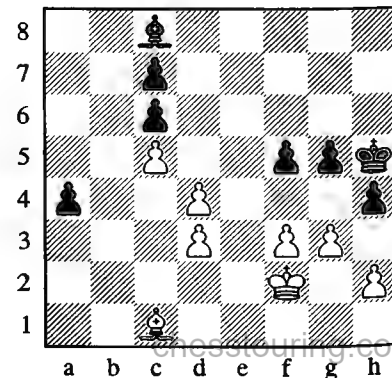
Planning a possible breakthrough with ...f4† and g4.

39.♗f2 ♙a2

Karpov wants to wear out his opponent before revealing his intentions.

40.♙a3 ♖b1 41.♗e2 ♙a2 42.♙c1 ♙e6

43.♗f2 ♙c8



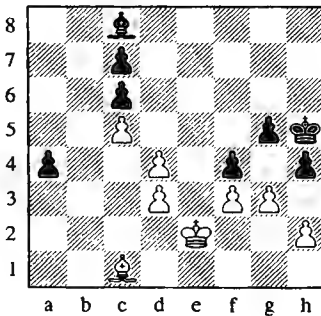
44.d5?

Kurajica cannot stand to wait passively any longer, but this impetuous move seals his own fate. It was not at all easy to recognize the many nuances in the position.

The right move was 44.♖c2, after which Black has a couple of ideas:

a) 44...f4

This move was recommended by Kasparov, but it allows White to draw without too many problems.



45.gxf4?!

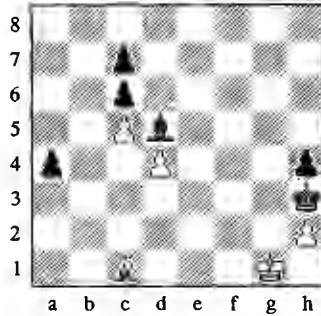
This is not the best move, but I will keep it as the main line, as it leads to an interesting finish where White draws by the skin of his teeth.

Curiously, the best reply does not appear to have been mentioned by any other analysts. 45.g4†! This draws comfortably: 45...♗xg4 (After 45...♖g6 46.h3 Black has no way through.) 46.fxg4† ♕xg4 47.♖f2 ♖f5 (47...♖h3 48.♖g1=) 48.♖f3 g4† 49.♖g2 Black is unable to make any headway.

45...g4 46.♖f2 ♗f5 47.♗a3 ♗xd3 48.♗c1 ♗c4 49.♗b2 ♗d5 50.fxg4† ♖xg4 51.♗c1 ♗b3 52.♖g2 ♗c4 53.♖f2 ♗d5 54.f5!

White has to give up this pawn as he is in zugzwang.

54...♖xf5 55.♖e3 ♖g4 56.♖f2 ♖h3 57.♖g1

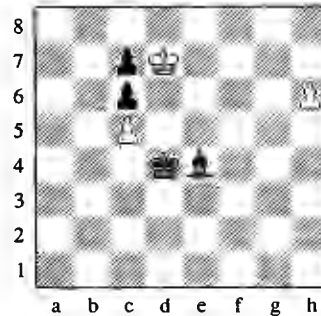


The position is very similar to that which occurs in the game, the only fundamental difference being that the black pawn stands on c7 instead of d5. That one small change is enough to bring about a different evaluation.

57...♗f3 58.♖f2 ♗h5 59.♖g1 ♗d1 60.♖h1 ♖g4 61.♖g2 ♖f5 62.♖h3 ♖e4 63.♗b2 ♖d3 64.♖xh4 ♖c2 65.♗a1 a3 66.♖g5 a2 67.♖f6 ♖b1 68.♗c3 a1=♙ 69.♗xa1 ♖xa1

White is just in time to destroy the last two enemy pawns.

70.♖e7 ♖b2 71.♖d7 ♗f3 72.h4 ♖c3 73.h5 ♖xd4 74.h6 ♗e4

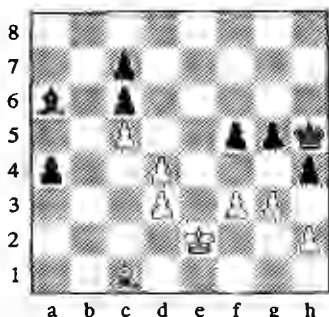


75.h7

And White draws by one tempo.

b) 44...♗a6!

This is a bit more challenging. Black improves his bishop and waits for the best moment to break with ...f4. Nevertheless White has more than one route to a draw here as well.



45.♗e3!

This is the most comfortable drawing line.

45.♘b2 is also good enough: 45...hxg3 46.hxg3 f4 47.gxf4 (But not 47.g4†? ♗h4 48.♗f2 ♗h3 49.♘a3 ♘xd3 when Black will win with the aid of a bishop sacrifice on g4.) 47...gxf4 48.♘c1 ♗g5 Karpov evaluated this position as 'minus-plus', but a closer inspection reveals no win for Black: 49.♘b2 ♗h4 50.♗f2 (50.d5? cxd5 51.♘e5 ♗g3 52.♘xc7 a3 53.♘e5 ♘b5 54.♘a1 a2 55.♘c3 ♘d7 56.♘e5 ♗g2 57.♘d4 ♘g4 wins) 50...♘xd3 51.♘c1 ♗g5 52.♘b2 ♘c2 (also after 52...♘c4 53.♘c1 ♘d5 54.♗e2 White should hold) 53.♗e2 ♗h4 54.♗f2 ♘d1 55.♘c1 ♗g5 56.♘b2 ♗f5 57.♘c1 ♗e6 58.♘xf4 a3 59.♘c1 a2 60.♘b2 ♗d5 61.♗e1 ♘xf3 62.♗d2 White is safe.



45...f4†! 46.gxf4 g4

Black's hopes for a win rest on this breakthrough, but it is not enough.

47.f5!

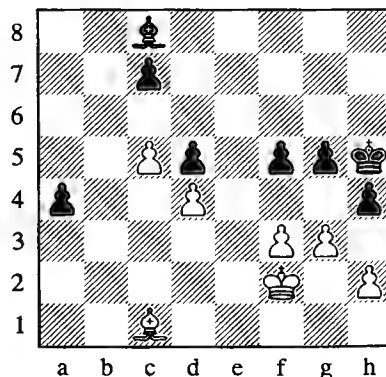
Karpov showed that White can draw by playing actively.

Kasparov points out a second route to safety: 47.fxg4† ♗xg4 48.♗e4 ♘c8 49.♗e5 ♗h3 (or 49...♘f5 50.d5 cxd5 51.c6 ♘xd3 52.♗xd5 ♗h3 53.f5! and White has no problems) 50.f5 ♘xf5 51.♗xf5 ♗xh2 52.d5 cxd5 53.♘f4† ♗g2 54.♘xc7 And the race is even.

47...g3 48.hxg3 hxg3 49.f6 ♗g6 50.f4 ♘xd3 51.♗f3 ♗xf6 52.♗xg3 ♗e6 53.♗g4 ♗d5 54.♘b2 ♗c4 55.f5

White is not slower in the race.

44...cxd5 45.d4



45...f4!

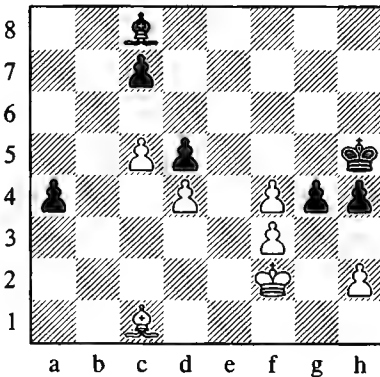
To repeat an earlier statement, one must often play extremely purposefully in opposite-coloured bishop endgames. This opens the way for an invasion.

46.gxf4

After 46.g4† ♗g6! Black just transfers his king to the queenside and wins. If the white king tries to follow, the black bishop will gobble the kingside pawns.

I should say that 46...♘g4? 47.fxg4† ♗xg4 does not work due to 48.c6! when White obtains enough counterplay to draw.

46...g4!



47.♔g2?!

This is too passive. It is a strange choice, considering that Kurajica already sacrificed one pawn three moves ago. He should have continued his policy of active counterplay with:

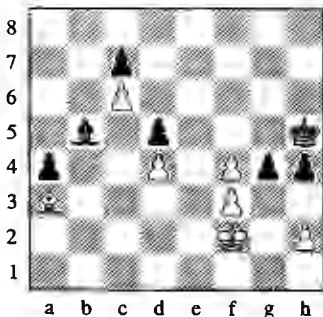
47.c6!

This superb idea was recommended by GM Groszpetter. The idea is to use the c-pawn as a decoy, thus allowing White to keep his f4-pawn. Opening the a3-f8 diagonal also helps the white bishop to play a more active role in the game. I believe Black should still be able to win with precise play, but this was undoubtedly White's best chance.

47...♕a6!

47...♕f5 is possible, but there is no reason for Black to delay rounding up the c-pawn.

48.♕a3 ♖b5



At this point White must decide whether to sit and wait, or advance his f-pawn.

a) 49.♕e7 ♖xc6 50.♕c5

White waits passively, using his bishop to restrain both of Black's spare queenside pawns.

50...♖b5!

The bishop heads for d1, in order to force the capture fxc4.

51.♕e7 ♖d3 52.♕c5 ♖c2 53.♕e7 ♖d1

54.fxc4 ♔xg4

Finally the black king reaches its ideal location.

55.♔e3 ♖c2 56.♖b4 ♔h3 57.♕e7

The bishop is doing sterling work, preventing ...a3 while menacing the h4-pawn, thus inhibiting ...♔xh2. Unfortunately for White, this key piece is overloaded.



57...♕f5!

First Black ensures that the f-pawn will remain immobile.

58.♔f3 c6!

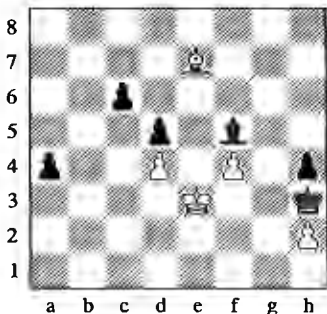
This puts White in zugzwang.

59.♔e3

Bishop moves would allow either ...a3 or ...♔xh2.

If 59.♔f2 ♔xh2 60.♖xh4 a3 the white king blocks the bishop from returning to the queenside via the e1-square.

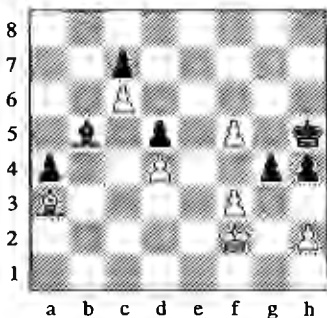
59.♖e2 c5! 60.dxc5 a3 61.♙f6 a2 With ...♗xh2 coming next, Black is winning easily.



59...c5! 60.♙xc5
60.dxc5 a3 61.♙f6 ♖xh2 62.♙xh4 d4†!
63.♖xd4 a2-+
60...♗xh2 61.♖f2 ♗h3
Black wins easily.

b) 49.f5

Black will have to keep an eye on this pawn, but he should still be able to win.

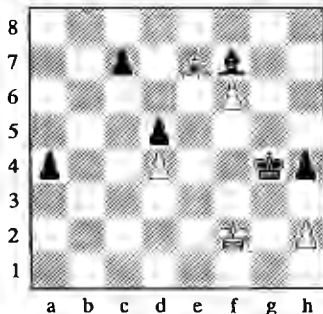


49...♙xc6 50.f6 ♙e8 51.♙e7 ♙f7 52.♙c5
Taking on g4 would free the black king, so White tries to postpone it for as long as possible.
52...♗g5 53.♙e7 ♗f5
White will be forced to exchange on g4 in another move or two.
54.♙a3

54.fxg4† ♖xg4 is similar to the main line.
54.♖e3 g3 55.hxg3 hxg3 56.♖e2 ♙h5 is winning for Black.

54...♙h5! 55.fxg4† ♖xg4 56.♙e7 ♙f7

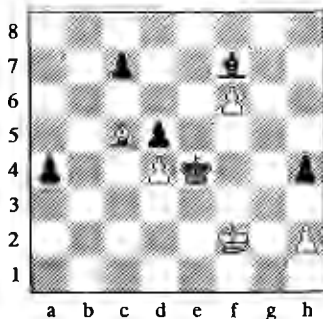
This is not strictly necessary, but Black may as well prevent the f-pawn from advancing altogether.



57.♙a3

White can do little except keep his bishop on the long diagonal. If he centralizes his king then the h-pawn will fall.

57...♖f4 58.♙e7 ♖e4 59.♙c5



59...a3!

The a-pawn looks much more dangerous than the d-pawn, yet Black has to exchange the outrider.

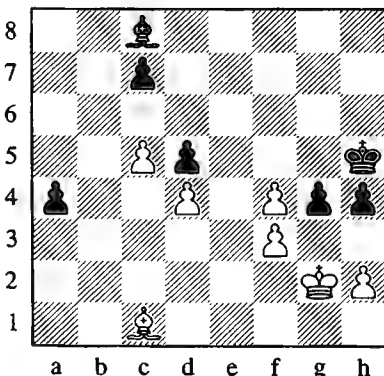
Black can win the enemy bishop, but it will not win him the game: 59...♖d3 60.♖f3 ♖c3 61.♖g4 ♖b3 62.♖xh4 a3 63.♙xa3 ♖xa3 64.♖g5 ♖b4 65.h4 c5 66.dxc5 ♖b5!

(After 66...♔xc5?? 67.h5 Black is losing, as he will lose his bishop to a check on f8. Incidentally, Black can arrange to enter the same ending with the bishop on e8 instead of f7, but the game ends in a draw there too.) 67.h5 d4 68.h6 d3 69.h7 d2 70.h8=♚ d1=♚ 71.♚b8† ♔c4 It is a draw.

60.♙xa3 ♔xd4

Despite White's efforts, it is doubtful that he can hold this endgame, although it is not a trivial position for the human mind to evaluate. It is worth bearing in mind that the endgame with no kingside pawns on the board would be winning for Black (with mate in twenty five according to the tablebases). In the present position I cannot think of any way for White to utilize his kingside pawns in a way that would affect the result. One idea is to try to force Black's h-pawn to h3 and sacrifice his bishop for the c- and d-pawns, which would lead to a draw, but I do not see how White can make it happen.

Thus it seems that the active 47.c6 is not quite enough to hold the draw against perfect play from Black, but from a practical perspective it was clearly the best chance by far.



47...♙f5

Compared with the last note, White's bishop is passive and he has no chance to defend himself against the invasion of the black king.

48.♔f2 gxf3 49.♔xf3 ♙e4† 50.♔f2 ♔g4

White is in zugzwang; he could push the c-pawn but that would not change anything.

51.♙b2 ♔xf4 52.♙c1† ♔g4

When I presented this endgame to the young Peter Leko to solve, he came up with an alternative winning method to the one used by Karpov in the game. Unfortunately I can no longer remember the details of his solution.

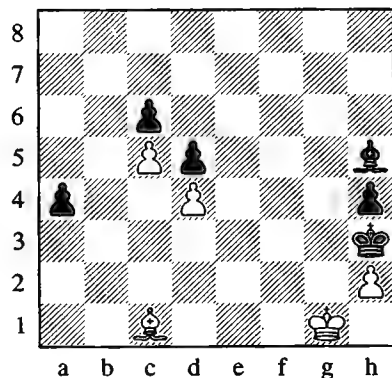
53.♙b2 c6 54.♙c1

Black's last remaining obstacle concerns the transfer of his king to the queenside. Karpov solves the problem beautifully and in a most instructive way.

54...♔h3 55.♔g1 ♙g6 56.♔h1 ♙h5!

Black needs to show some finesse to secure the victory. Instead after 56...♔g4 57.♔g2 ♔f5 58.♔f3 ♙h5† 59.♔e3 the path is blocked.

57.♔g1



57...♙h5!

0-1

Drawn into a deadly zugzwang Kurajica resigned. Here are a few sample lines:

58.♔h1 ♔g4 59.♔g2 ♔f5 60.♔f2 ♔e4 61.♔e1 ♙h5 62.♙b2 ♔d3 Black wins.

58.♖b2 ♘g4 59.♙g2 ♕f3† reveals why the bishop had go to d1. (59...h3†? would spoil the win: 60.♙f2 ♘f4 61.♙e1 ♕h5 62.♙d2 ♙f3 63.♙d3 ♘g2 64.♙e3 ♙xh2 65.♙f2 The black king has buried himself in a cage and cannot get out.) 60.♙f2 ♘f4 And the black king reaches the queenside.

Kurajica told me a few interesting facts about this game. He had analysed the adjourned position with grandmaster Ivanovic for half an hour and they concluded that it was a draw. At the end of the analysis they started to drink wine, and he still had a bad hangover when play was resumed. Kurajica also felt that Karpov in his published analyses was more proud of this endgame than he should have been. The Bosnian grandmaster wisely decided not to drink before any of their subsequent games, and indeed he was able to draw all three of them, as was noted in the introduction to this game.

In the next round Karpov continued his fine form with a neat positional beauty. This was Sofrevski's only encounter with Karpov, and he lost two other games against world champions.

Game 44

Anatoly Karpov – Jovan Sofrevski

Skopje 1976

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♗c3 ♖bd7 4.e4 e5
5.♗g3 c6 6.g3

Interestingly Sofrevski had the same position with black in rounds two and four. He lost both games, and Karpov feels no need to change White's play.

6...g6

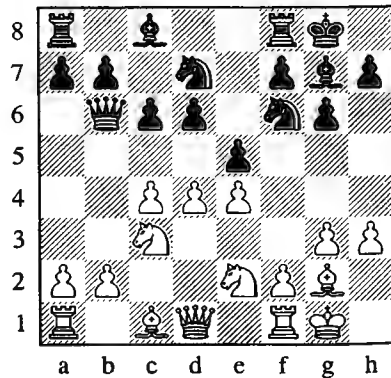
Sofrevski decides to transpose to a King's Indian. In the other two games he tried different approaches.

In the second round he tried to act in the centre:
6...♖b6 7.b3 exd4 8.♙xd4 d5 9.cxd5 cxd5
10.♗g5 ♕e7 11.♕xf6 ♕xf6 12.e5 ♕e7 13.♗g2
♕e6 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗f4 ♖c8 16.♗cxd5 ♕c5
17.♙d3 ♕xd5 18.♕xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xd5 ♖e8
20.♖f1 White was a pawn up in Timman – Sofrevski, Skopje 1976.

Two rounds later he played more modestly but again failed to equalize: 6...exd4 7.♗xd4 ♖b6 8.♙e2 ♕e7 9.♗g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 11.♖d1 ♕f8 12.♙f1 ♗g4 13.♖e1 ♕d7 14.h3 c5 15.♗c2 ♗a4 16.♗d1 ♕c6 17.b3 ♖b6 18.♗c3 ♖b8 19.♕b2 a6 20.♖ad1 Vaganian – Sofrevski, Skopje 1976.

7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3 ♙b6?!

In the more common position with the white knight on f3 instead of e2, this is considered the main line, but in the present position it does not work so well. 9...♖e8 is better.



10.d5!:

Karpov goes for safety – a typical reaction for him when he faces a new problem in the opening. Even in the event that the opponent had analysed this move in advance, he could not have prepared anything shocking in the closed position that arises.

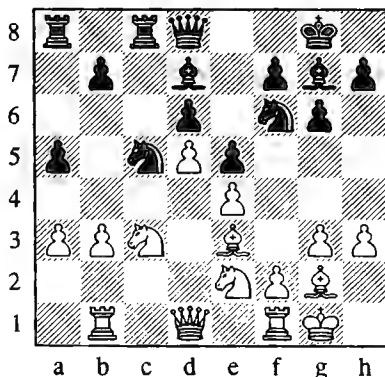
10.♗e3! scores better and is objectively the

stronger move, as 10...♖xb2? 11.a3! traps the queen and 10...exd4 11.♗xd4 is better for White.

10...cxd5 11.cxd5 ♖c5 12.♖b1!

White prepares to play on the queenside, as is customary for this pawn structure.

12...a5 13.b3 ♗d7 14.a3 ♖fc8 15.♗e3 ♗d8



16.♗d2

Karpov is true to himself and does not rush his queenside activity. Indeed after 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 ♖a4 18.♗d3 (18.♗b3 ♖b6) 18...♖xc3 19.♖xc3 ♖a3 20.♗d2 (If 20.♖fc1 ♖xe4! 21.♗xe4 f5 Black takes over the initiative.) 20...♗b6 Black has nice play.

16...b5?!

This might look active, but the pawn will soon be fixed and become a target.

Two years later Bielczyk improved on Black's play by keeping the b-pawn on its original square: 16...♖e8?! 17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 ♖a4 19.♖xa4 ♖xa4 20.♖a1 (20.♖b3 ♖c4 21.♗b2 ♗c8 22.♖c3 ♖a8 23.♖h2 f5 Black is okay here as well.) 20...♖ca8 21.♖xa4 ♖xa4 22.♖b1 f5 Black has equalized, Grahn – Bielczyk, Slupsk 1978. According to my database the position has not occurred since.

Black can play actively as well: 16...a4!? 17.bxa4 (17.b4 ♖b3 18.♗d3 is possible, although the knight has some nuisance value on b3.) 17...♖xa4 18.♖xb7 ♖c5! (After 18...♖xc3 19.♖xc3 ♖xa3 20.♖b5 White has an edge despite the absence of pawns on the queenside.) 19.♗xc5 ♖xc5 Black has good compensation for the pawn.

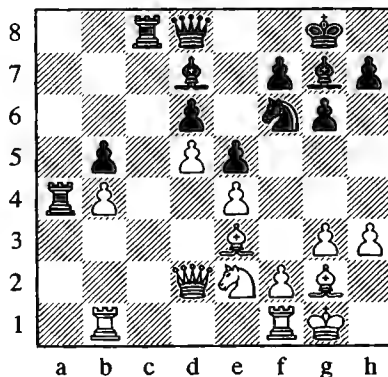
17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 ♖a4?

Exchanging knights help White, as he can solve the problem of the passive e2-knight. With fewer pieces on the board White will find it easier to target the weak b5-pawn.

18...♖a6! 19.♖b3 ♖c4! was better, when White will, to some extent, be tied up defending the b4-pawn. 20.♗b2 ♗f8 (Black can also try 20...♖h5 intending ...f5.) 21.♖a1 ♗h6 Black is still in the game.

19.♖xa4 ♖xa4

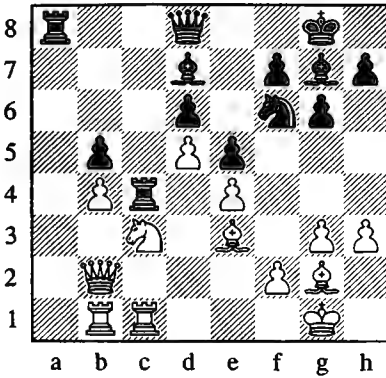
If 19...bxa4 20.b5 ♗a5 21.♗xa5 ♖xa5 22.b6 White's passed pawn is the more dangerous.



20.♖c3

Karpov is happy to improve his bad knight, while also opening the f1-a6 diagonal for his bishop.

20...♖a3 21.♖fc1 ♖c4 22.♗b2 ♖a8



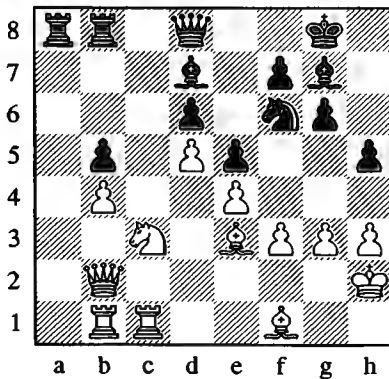
23. ♖h2!

This type of prophylactic move is so typical of Karpov. He defends the h3-pawn, anticipating Black's counterplay on the kingside.

23...h5

Defending the pawn at once with 23...♗b8 does not solve Black's problems. 24. ♕f1 ♖xc3!? (After 24...♖c7 25. ♖a1 White is clearly better.) 25. ♖xc3 ♜xe4 Under different circumstances, this type of exchange sacrifice can work well, but here the position is too open. 26. ♖a3 ♗b7 27. ♖ba1 White invades.

24. ♕f1 ♖cc8 25. f3 ♖cb8



26. ♖a1!

Karpov fights for control of the a-file, which will also help him to get closer to the b5-pawn.

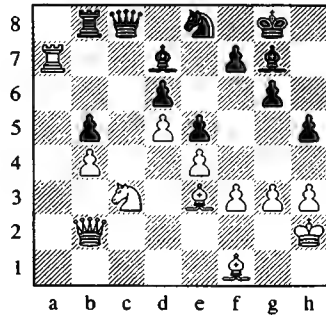
26...♖xa1 27. ♖xa1 ♜e8 28. ♖a7

Karpov wastes no time posting his rook on the seventh rank.

28...f5

Black tries to generate counterplay on the kingside, but he does not have the piece power to make anything happen there.

28...♗c8!?



Black could try to transfer his passive bishop to b6.

29. ♖a5!?

White forces the knight to block the diagonal.

Another possibility is 29. ♗d2 (29.h4 is also sensible) 29...♕f6 30.h4 ♕d8 31. ♕d3 ♕b6 32. ♕xb6 ♖xb6 33. ♖a5 ♜c7 34. ♗c1 ♗b8 35. ♗a3 Black has a passive but solid position, with reasonable chances to hold on for a draw.

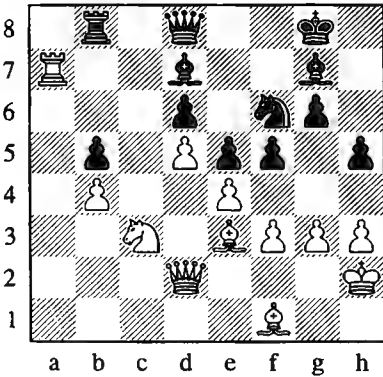
29...♜c7 30.h4 ♕f8 31. ♕d3

White has a stable advantage, and in the next few moves he can proceed to transfer his king to the centre.

29. ♗d2 ♜f6?

It was not too late for Black to opt for passive defence with: 29...h4! 30.g4 f4 31. ♕f2 ♕f6

32. ♔d3 ♖c8 Play is very much one-sided, but with the kingside closed it will not be easy for White to invade.



30. exf5!

The world champion switches his attention to the kingside.

30... gxf5

30... ♔xf5? 31. ♔xb5 White's extra pawn should decide the game.

31. ♔h6!

Black's king is vulnerable, so Karpov exchanges its key defender.

31... ♖e8 32. ♔xg7 ♖xg7 33. ♖h6?!

Karpov goes for the knockout punch, but his pieces are somewhat scattered and his king is slightly exposed to checks. The prophylactic 33. ♔g2! would have been objectively stronger.

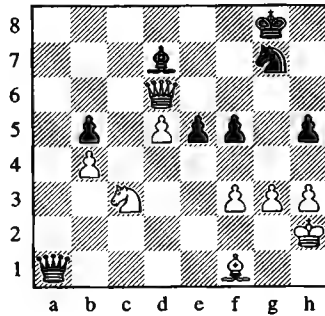
33... h4?

Black misses a chance to get right back into the game with:

33... ♖a8!!

This does not completely solve Black's problems, but it gives him some practical chances. The main line runs as follows:

34. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 35. ♖xd6 ♖a1!!



36. ♔g2!

Senseless is 36. ♖xd7? ♖xf1.

36. ♔g2 is also less than ideal: 36... ♖xc3

37. ♖xd7 ♖xb4 38. d6 (or 38. ♖c7 h4!)

38... h4! Black obtains counterplay against White's king.

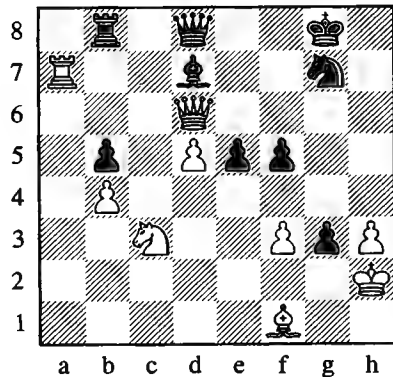
36... ♖xc3 37. ♖xd7 ♖d2+ 38. ♔h1!

After 38. ♔g1 ♖d4+ 39. ♔h2 f4! Black has enough counterplay.

38... ♖xb4

White is still much better after 39. ♖xb5 or 39. d6, but it is hard to say if his advantage is enough to win the game.

34. ♖xd6 hxg3+



35. ♔g2!

Now Black gets no play against the king.

35...♙e8 36.♖xe5

White has an extra pawn on d5, as well as the safer king. Karpov makes no further mistake and the game is over in a few short moves.

36...♙f7 37.♖c7 ♖b6 38.♙xb5 ♖h6 39.♙d3
♗g5 40.♘c2 ♖xh3 41.♙xh3 ♗h5† 42.♙xg3
f4† 43.♗xf4
1-0

Karpov followed this win with a quick draw against Reshevsky and then a victory over Ivanovic. He drew his next two, and then won three in a row against Jancev, Georgievski and Tarjan. He then drew a hard fought game with Timman, bringing his total score to 11½/14 with one round to play. In the final round he met the number one East German player, Wolfgang Uhlmann, who was also having an excellent tournament and occupied sole second place, just half a point behind Karpov. Interestingly Karpov turned down a draw, which would have guaranteed him sole first prize, and went on to win. Perhaps he felt he needed to fight on to justify his world title. Whatever Karpov's motivation, his final tally of ten wins and five draws with no defeats was one of the highest percentage scores of his career.

Karpov's next event was a team competition in the Georgian capital Tbilisi. He won two games against Anikaev and Romanishin and drew the other three.

After that he travelled to Amsterdam for a four player, double round robin tournament. There he took first prize, winning two games and drawing the other four.

He then went all the way to Manila to play in another event of the same type. This one did not go so well. He drew the first game quickly, and in round two he met with an inspired Eugenio Torre, who beautifully outplayed and beat the world champion

with the black pieces. Although their lifetime score is in Karpov's favour, the Philippine grandmaster beat him twice when he was the reigning World Champion, which is quite an achievement. Torre went on to win his next two games, and won the short tournament by a remarkable one and a half point margin. Karpov finished on fifty percent after beating Ljubojevic.

Karpov's next tournament was in Montilla, Spain, and was somewhat weaker than those in which he normally participated. He started with 3½/5, and in round six he faced a local player named Fraguela Gil. The Spaniard had no other game against the world champions, and after finishing last in this event, he virtually stopped playing chess altogether.

Game 45

Jose Miguel Fraguela Gil – Anatoly Karpov

Montilla 1976

1.g3 c5 2.♙g2 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.♘c3 ♘c6

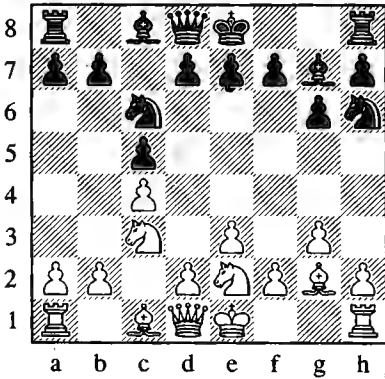
Karpov used the symmetrical set-up with a view to drawing with strong opponents and outplaying lower rated ones.

5.e3 ♘h6

Karpov had previously won two games with 5...e5 and drawn twice with 5...e6. He only ever tried the text move in the present game.

6.♘ge2

6.h4! is interesting. Some players like to push the h-pawn at a time when the opponent cannot respond with a move of their own h-pawn. The same idea sometimes occurs with reversed colours as well.



6...♖f5

Karpov stops d2-d4, which is the primary purpose of his chosen set-up.

7.a3 0-0 8.♜b1 a5

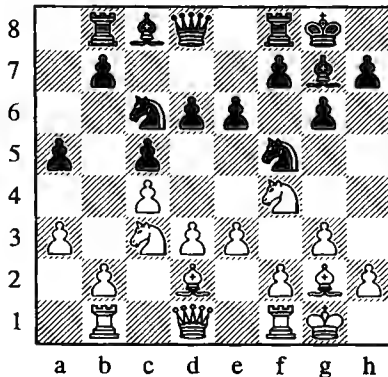
Karpov liked to prevent b2-b4 in this type of symmetrical position.

9.0-0 d6 10.d3

Interestingly Karpov once reached a similar position with reversed colours against Larsen.

10...♜b8 11.♘d2 e6 12.♗f4

White could have carried out his queenside expansion by means of 12.♗a2, when play may continue 12...♗e5 13.♜c2 ♘d7 14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 b5 with equal chances.



12...♗fe7!

Flexible thinking. White moved away the knight and his bishop covers the d-file, so there is no special reason to keep the knight on f5.

13.♜c2 b6 14.♜bd1?!

The rook stood better on b1.

14...♘b7

Karpov neutralizes White's strong bishop.

15.♗b5 ♜d7 16.♘c3?!

Fraguela wants to exchange the dark-squared bishops, but the plan is flawed. Instead White should have played on the queenside:

16.b4

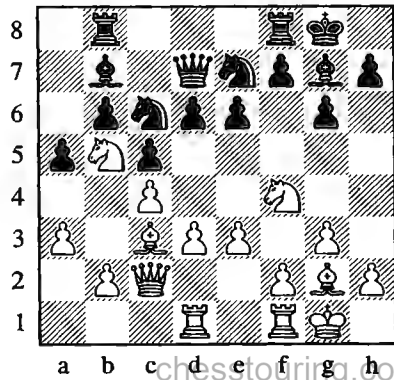
Also after 16.♜b1!? ♗e5 17.b4 ♘xg2 18.♗xg2 ♜c6† 19.e4 White is not worse.

16...e5 17.♗c2!

Better than 17.♗d5 ♗xd5 18.♘xd5 (After 18.cxd5 ♗e7 19.♗c3 axb4 20.axb4 cxb4 21.♗a2 ♘xd5 22.♘xd5 ♗xd5 23.♜b3 Black is better, although White does have some pressure on the b-file.) 18...♗xb4! This is a sweet tactic. 19.axb4 ♘xd5 20.cxd5 ♜xb5 21.bxa5 bxa5 22.♜b1 ♜a6 Black is a pawn up.

17...axb4 18.axb4 ♗xb4 19.♘xb4 ♘xg2 20.♗xg2 cxb4 21.♜b3

White wins back the pawn to reach an equal position.



16...♖e5!

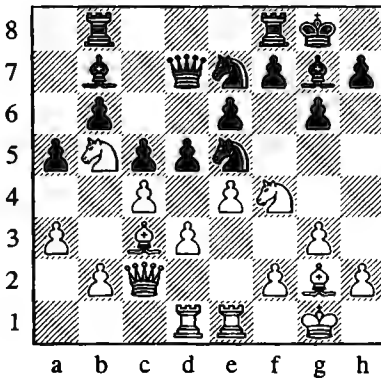
Karpov is ready to exchange a pair of bishops – but it will be the one next to his opponent's king, rather than the defender of his own monarch.

17.e4

In view of the way the game develops, with hindsight White might have considered exchanging a few pieces with: 17.♙xb7!? ♖xb7 (Black can also consider 17...♗xb7 18.♗e2 d5) 18.e4 (After 18.♖xd6?! ♖f3† 19.♗h1 ♗c6 White is in danger on the long diagonal.) 18...d5 Black still has a comfortable position, but the plan of ...d5-d4 is less appealing than in the game.

17...d5!

Karpov gains space.

18.♗fe1**18...d4!**

This move not only secures additional space, but also shuts the b5-knight out of the game for a long time to come. The knight may look as though it is occupying an outpost, but in reality it has no weaknesses to attack and is not much more than a spectator.

19.♙d2 ♙c6!

Karpov forces a4, thus ensuring that White will never be able to open the queenside with b4. Had White exchanged bishops on b7 earlier, this idea would not have been possible.

20.a4 ♙b7!

The bishop has accomplished its aim, and now it vacates the c6-square for the e5-knight in case it is attacked.

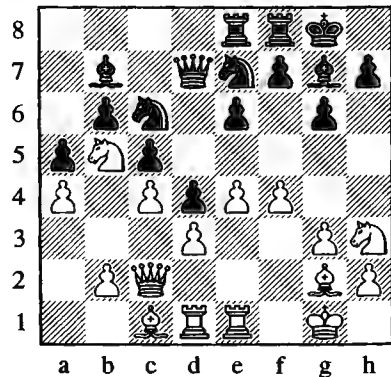
21.♙c1 ♗be8 22.♖h3?

The knight stood well on f4. It may not have been doing anything active, but it was discouraging Black from advancing on the kingside. In the event of ...e5 then the knight would have hopped into d5, while if ...g5 then ♖h5 would be annoying.

A better idea was 22.♗e2, intending to bring the misplaced knight back into play, perhaps via e1. Play might continue 22...♖5c6 23.♖a3 ♖b4 24.b3, when White's disadvantage is not too severe.

22...♖5c6 23.f4?

White misunderstands the situation and allows the position to be opened up on the side where he is weaker.

**23...e5!**

Karpov opens the kingside and makes White pay heavily for his offside knight on b5.

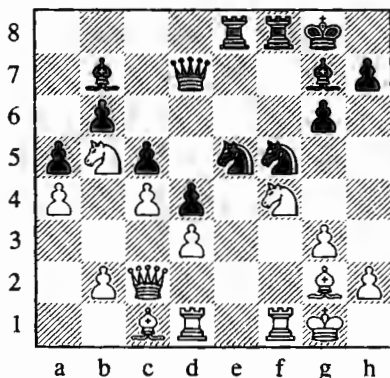
24. ♖f1 ♜5! 25. ♜e5

25. ♗d2!? may have been better, although White is struggling here as well.

25... ♖xe5 26. exf5?

26. ♖f4! was the best chance. By exchanging voluntarily, White only helps to activate his opponent's pieces.

26... ♖xf5 27. ♖f4



27... ♗h6!

Karpov wants to exchange pieces. The fewer pieces that remain on the kingside, the greater the influence of his extra piece over that part of the board.

28. ♖d5 ♗xc1 29. ♖xc1 ♗xd5!

Karpov continues his policy of exchanging. The text move wins the e3-square for his knight, and secures a decisive advantage.

30. ♗xd5† ♖g7 31. ♗e4 ♖e3

Karpov completes his strategy and the game is over.

32. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 33. ♖e1 ♖h3

0-1

White resigned as he cannot avoid being mated.

In the next game Karpov beat Pflieger with the black pieces after a remarkable grind. He finished the tournament with three quick draws, to win by a comfortable one and a half point margin ahead of Stean, Kavalek and Calvo.

USSR Championship

In 1976 Karpov was the champion of the world, but he was still not the champion of his country. He entered this year's USSR Championship as the clear favourite, especially as two of his main rivals had left the Soviet Union; Korchnoi defected and Spassky married a French lady and moved to France. Karpov started the 1976 USSR Championship with two draws, but then things went badly wrong when he experimented with the French Defence against Geller. The older grandmaster found his magic touch and made a most imaginative queen sacrifice, which eventually resulted in a rook endgame in which Geller was two pawns up. It required skill to clinch the victory, but he was up to the task.

In the next round Karpov defeated Balashov, who had often worked in his analysis team. The end of the game was rather mysterious, as Balashov made a freakish blunder, placing his queen on a square where it could simply be captured by Karpov's knight. This appeared suspicious, and not only to Fischer.

Over the next six rounds Karpov won two games against Kupreichik and Dorfman, and drew four, although two of these could easily have been losses, as he was in serious trouble against Tal and he had to suffer against Petrosian in a rook endgame against his opponent's extra f- and h-pawns.

After that shaky period he began to play better. First he beat Zakharov in a wonderful endgame, then drew with Sveshnikov, before going on a rampage that saw him drop just half a point out of his final five games. His last

four victims were Gulko, Vaganian, Karen Grigorian and Tsheskovsky. His final score of 12/17 was enough to secure sole first place, a point clear of Petrosian, Polugaevsky and – crucially – Balashov, whose blunder in round four turned out to be very significant indeed.

1976 Summary

Skopje (1st place): 12½/15 (+10 =5 -0)

USSR Team Cup (Board 1): 4/6 (+2 =4 -0)

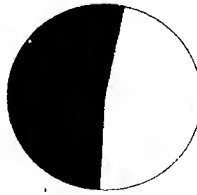
Amsterdam (1st place): 4/6 (+2 =4 -0)

Manila (2nd place): 3/6 (+1 =4 -1)

Montilla (1st place): 7/9 (+5 =4 -0)

USSR Championship, Moscow (1st place): 12/17 (+8 =8 -1)

Total 72% (+28 =29 -2)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1977

Rating 2690 (1 in the World)

Karpov began his schedule in 1977 with a convincing tournament victory in the German holiday resort of Bad Lauterberg. His first opponent was Gennady Sosonko, who he had not faced previously.

Out of his first five games against Sosonko, Karpov only conceded a single draw. Surprisingly, he was unable to beat him in any of their next seven games, most of which were quick draws. Sosonko played all the world champions from Smyslov to Kasparov, with the exception of Fischer. Out of thirty three encounters he won two games, drew twenty and lost eleven.

Game 46

Anatoly Karpov – Gennady Sosonko

Bad Lauterberg 1977

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 g6

Sosonko was a Dragon expert, who once remarked that one should either play the Dragon in every game, or not at all.

6.♗c2

Karpov also scored extremely well with the Yugoslav Attack, and indeed he used it to defeat Sosonko two years later. Here are a few of the relevant games he played in the 1970s.

6.♗c3 ♗g7 7.♗c4 ♗c6 8.f3 0–0 9.♞d2

Karpov scored a highly impressive 14½/16 from this variation, losing only one game to Korchnoi.

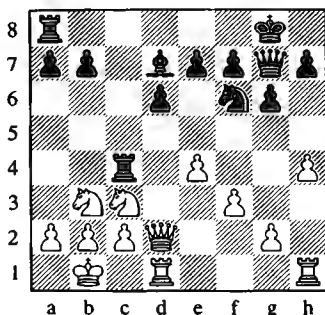
9...♗d7 10.0–0–0

10.h4 h5 11.0–0–0 ♗e5 12.♗b3 ♞c8 13.♗g5 ♞c5 14.♞he1 b5 15.f4 ♗c4 16.♗xc4 bxc4 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6 18.e5 ♗g7 19.e6 ♗c8 20.exf7† ♞xf7 21.♗e6 ♗xe6 22.♞xe6 ♞a5 23.♞e3 ♗xc3 24.bxc3 ♞xa2 25.♞xg6† White broke through to his opponent's king in Karpov – Sosonko, Tilburg 1979.

10...♞a5 11.♗b3 ♞fc8 12.h4 ♗e5 13.♗b1 ♗c4

13...b5 14.♗xb5 ♞a6 15.♗c3 ♗c4 16.♞d3 ♞ab8 17.♗c1 Karpov consolidated his extra pawn and eventually prevailed in Karpov – Garcia Martinez, Ljubljana 1975.

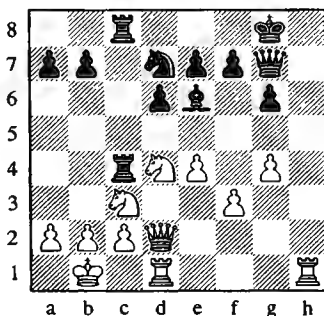
14.♗xc4 ♞xc4 15.♗b3 ♞d8 16.♗h6 ♞f8 17.♗xg7 ♞xg7



18.g4!

With the queen on g7 Black is unlikely to carry out a successful queenside attack, so White has time to build up patiently on the kingside.

18...♖e6 19.♘d4 ♘d7 20.h5 ♞ac8 21.hxg6 hxg6



22.♘ce2!

Karpov reinforces the knight on d4 and prevents the thematic exchange sacrifice on c3.

22...♞c4 23.c3 ♘f8 24.♞dg1 ♖e5 25.♘g3 g5 26.♘gf5 ♙xf5 27.gxf5 f6 28.f4 ♖xe4† 29.♙a1 ♙f7 30.fxg5 fxg5 31.♖xg5 ♞e5 32.♖h5†

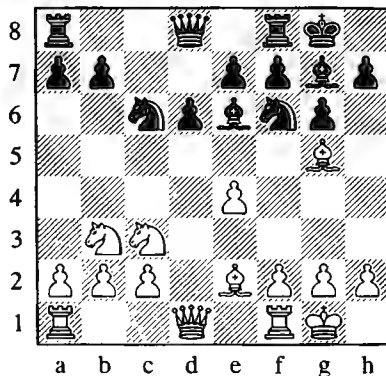
1-0 Karpov – Whiteley, Bath 1973. This was a superb example of how to defuse Black's counterplay and win with a controlled kingside attack.

6...♙g7 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘b3 0-0 9.♙g5!?

The bishop usually goes to e3 in these positions, but the text move is also quite

playable. One advantage it that the potential freeing break ...d5 will be harder for Black to carry out.

9...♙e6



10.♙h1!

This was first played in 1962 by Skold, but Karpov probably picked up the idea from a 1976 encounter between Gaprindashvili and Gy. Szilagyi. The hasty 10.f4 allows Black to obtain counterplay with 10...b5!.

Grandmaster Razuvaev, who was a long time helper of Karpov, explained to me that the job of their analysis team was not necessarily to find lines that guaranteed an advantage, but rather to find ideas that suited Karpov's style. If the text move was suggested by Karpov's trainers, then on this occasion they did an excellent job.

10...a5!?

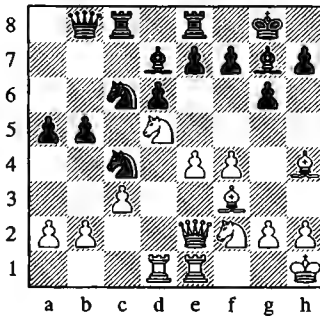
This is a thematic idea in such positions, but on this occasion White seems to be able to stifle Black's counterplay and slowly choke him with the help of the outpost square on b5.

In later years Black tested many different ideas from this position. Two of the better ones are 10...h6!? 11.♙h4 g5 12.♙g3 d5, and

10...♖a5!? 11.f4 ♘c4 12.f5 ♘xb2, both of which give Black sufficient counterplay in a complex position.

Karpov himself faced a couple of other approaches, including in round ten of the same tournament: 10...♞c8 11.f4 ♜d8 12.♙f3 ♙c4 13.♞f2 e6 14.♜d2 ♞c7 15.♞e1 h6 16.♙h4 ♜d7 17.♜ad1 e5 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♙g4 exf4 20.♙xd7 White went on to convert his extra exchange in Karpov – Miles, Bad Lauterberg 1977.

A few months later Karpov faced another improving attempt: 10...a6 11.f4 b5 12.♙f3 ♞c8 13.♘d5 ♘d7 14.c3 ♘b6 15.♞e2 ♘c4 16.♜ad1 ♞d7 17.♞fe1 ♞a7 18.♙h4 ♞fe8 19.♘c1!? Karpov embarks on a remarkable transfer of his knight to the kingside. 19...♞b8 20.♘d3 a5 21.♘f2 ♙d7



22.♙g4! This time Karpov is not playing for a positional advantage, but for a direct attack on the black king. 22...♙xg4 23.♘xg4 a4 24.a3 ♞b7 25.♞f1 ♘d8 26.f5 f6 27.♙xf6! And White's attack broke through, Karpov – Martin Gonzalez, Las Palmas 1977.

11.a4!

Karpov prevents the further advance of the a-pawn.

11...♘d7

Sosonko opens the diagonal of the bishop by transferring his knight to the queenside. Karpov enjoyed success in yet another game later the same year: 11...♞c8 12.f4 ♘b4 13.♘d4 ♙c4 14.♘db5 ♞b6 15.♙h4 ♞c5 16.♙d3 ♞fd8 17.♙f2 ♞h5 18.♙b6 ♞xd1 19.♞fxd1 ♞f8? 20.♘a7! ♙xd3 21.♘xc8 ♙xc2 22.♘xe7† ♘h8 23.♙xa5 The outcome was already decided in Karpov – Hernandez, Las Palmas 1977.

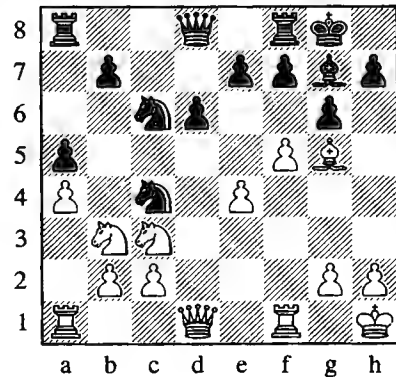
12.f4

12.♙e3 and 12.♞b1 are also possible.

12...♘b6?

Black scores better with 12...♙xb3 13.cxb3 ♘c5.

13.f5 ♙c4 14.♙xc4 ♘xc4



15.♞e2!

With the help of some simple tactics, Karpov pushes back the knight.

15...♘b6

15...♘xb2? loses a piece after 16.f6! exf6 17.♙c1!.

15...♙xc3!? looks risky, but it is playable. 16.bxc3 ♘6e5 17.f6 exf6 18.♙xf6 ♞c8 Black will be able to chase the dangerous bishop away.

16. ♖b5 ♘d4?!

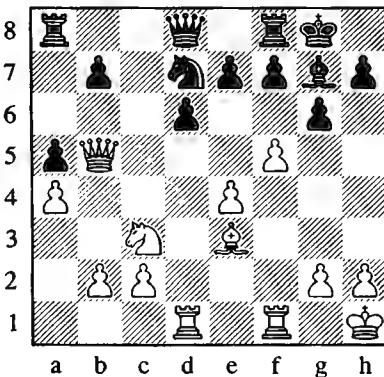
This does not achieve much, apart from swapping White's passive knight.

17. ♘xd4 ♗xd4 18. ♖ad1 ♗g7

After 18... ♗xc3 19. bxc3 ♖c8 20. ♖d3 Black is under pressure.

19. ♗e3 ♘d7?!

After the superior 19... ♖a6 20. ♖d3 ♖e8 21. ♖b3 Black is still worse, but his problems are less severe than in the game.

**20. ♘d5**

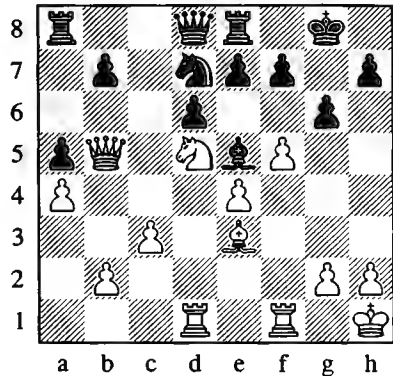
From this square the knight dominates the board.

20... ♖e8

It was worth considering 20... ♘f6!?, trying to exchange the powerful knight, although White remains clearly better after: 21. c3 (Also tempting is 21. ♖b6 ♖a6 22. ♖d3 ♘xe4 23. ♘d7 ♖e8 24. ♖xb7 ♖a8 25. ♖b5 when Black has problems.) 21... ♘xd5 (21... ♘xe4 22. ♖xb7) 22. ♖xd5 Black is passive, but it will not be easy to crack the defence.

21. c3 ♗e5

On 21... ♖c8 22. ♗b6 is not dangerous because of 22... ♖c6, but 22... ♗g5! is unpleasant for Black.

**22. ♗b6!**

This is an excellent positional move. The exchange of minor pieces will only magnify the difference in quality between White's monstrous knight and Black's passive bishop.

22... ♘xb6 23. ♘xb6 ♖a6 24. ♘c4 ♖b8

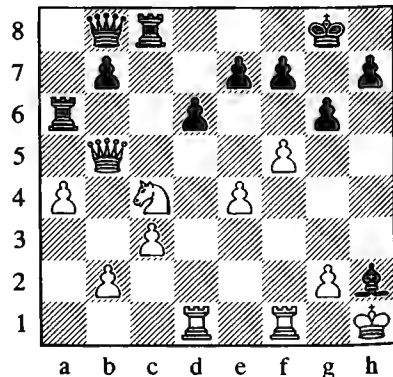
24... ♗g7 25. e5 is horrible for Black.

25. ♘xa5

25. fxc6 hxc6 26. ♘xe5 dxe5 27. ♖d7 was decisive as well.

25... ♖c8 26. ♘c4 ♗xh2!?

After 26... ♖c5 27. ♖b3 ♖e8 28. a5 ♖b5 29. ♖c2 White is just a pawn up.



27. ♖b6

Collecting the exchange.

27... ♙xb6 28. ♗xb6 ♕e5 29. a5 ♖c6 30. ♗e3 ♗c7 31. ♗d5 ♖a6 32. ♗d3

Karpov is ready to give back a pawn in order to exchange queens.

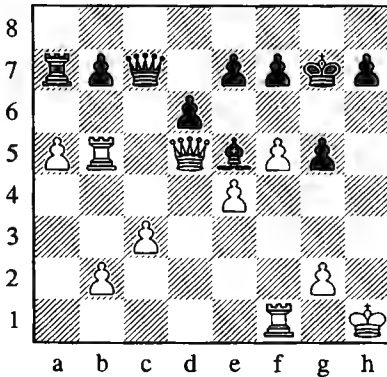
32... ♖g7

After 32... ♖xa5 33. ♖xa5 ♗xa5 34. fxg6 hxg6 35. ♗d5 White forces a queen exchange, then collects the b-pawn and wins.

33. ♖b5 g5 34. ♗d5

Karpov withdraws the offer of the a5-pawn and improves his pieces.

34... ♖a7



35. g4!?

One of several winning plans available. The loosening of the kingside is insignificant, as Black's heavy pieces are too far away from that area.

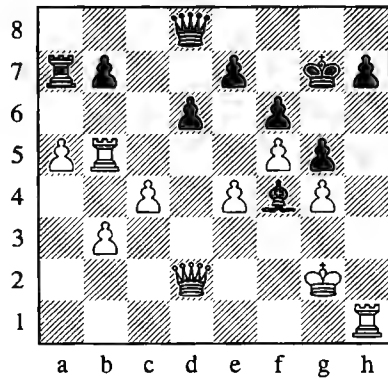
35... ♗c8 36. ♖g2 ♗d7 37. c4! ♗e8 38. b3! ♗d8 39. ♗d2!

Karpov attacks the g5-pawn to provoke a weakness.

39... ♖f6 40. ♖h1

Now he prepares to attack on the h-file.

40... ♖f4



41. ♗c3!

Transferring the queen while keeping the a5-pawn defended. Black has no good response and the game is soon over.

41... ♗h8 42. ♗h3 h5 43. ♗xh5 ♗xh5 44. ♖xh5 ♕d2 45. b4

1-0

Karpov played this opening variation only in 1977. This seems surprising, as it served him extremely well, as evidenced by the series of wins mentioned in the notes to the present game.

In round 2 Karpov quickly drew with his trainer Furman, then won four consecutive games against Timman, Wockenfuss, Gerusel and Liberzon. Then he slowed down with three draws, followed by a nice win over Miles, and then another draw. Karpov then won his final three games, albeit somewhat fortuitously. He beat Hermann convincingly, but then got a lost position a piece down against Csom, but the Hungarian blundered. In the final round Karpov avenged his loss to Torre, who also blundered, although this time the position was balanced.

Overall Karpov won nine games and drew six. This dominant performance gave him first place, two points ahead of Timman and three ahead of Furman. This was Furman's last tournament; perhaps he was already ill by that time.

Karpov's next event was the European Team Championship in Moscow. After starting with a fine victory over Smejkal, he then faced Ljubomir Ljubojevic.

The Yugoslav grandmaster was arguably the strongest player in chess history never to become a world championship candidate. When he was on song he was as strong as anybody. Twice in major tournaments he finished equal first with Kasparov when the latter was World Champion.

Up until the present game, Karpov had beaten Ljubojevic twice and drawn three times without a loss. They would go on to contest a total of forty five games, from which Karpov registered seventeen victories and twenty two draws, with six losses. The longstanding Yugoslav number one played 134 games against the World Champions, from Smyslov all the way through to Anand, with the one exception of Fischer. He scored fifteen wins, seventy seven draws and forty two losses.

Game 47

Ljubomir Ljubojevic – Anatoly Karpov

European Team Championship, Moscow 1977

1.c4?!

Of course there is nothing objectively wrong with the move, but it was a strange choice against the world champion: Ljubojevic played it very rarely and did not achieve good results with it.

1...d1f6 2.d1f3 b6 3.g3 d6 4.d2 e6 5.0-0 d7 6.d3 0-0 7.Bc1?!

This variation leads to a complex fight, instead of the well known lines of the Queen's Indian. A decade later Karpov started to have problems against this move.

7.d4 transposes to one of the main lines of the Queen's Indian. Interestingly, Karpov defended Black's side of this position more than forty times without losing a single game, except for a blitz encounter with Korchnoi in 1987. His solidity is to be admired, although he only won four games, so the position proved solid and reliable for his opponents as well!

7...d5 8.cxd5 exd5

Later in Karpov's career he recaptured with the knight, but this time he opts for the hanging pawn centre.

9.d4 c5 10.dxf4

At the time of the game, this variation had hardly ever been played, and according to the database the text move was a novelty. Nowadays the whole line has been tested and analysed extensively, and Ljubojevic's move is regarded as the best at White's disposal.

Two years later Portisch tried a different approach, but it did not win many followers: 10.dxe3 d1a6 11.Bc1 d1c7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.d1a4 d4 14.d2g5 d1e6 15.d2xf6 d2xf6 16.d1xd4 d2xd4 17.d2xb7 Bb8 18.d2g2 d2xb2 19.Bb1 d2a3 20.Bc2 d1d4 Portisch – Karpov, Tilburg 1979. Black had an active position and the game was soon drawn.

10...d1a6!?

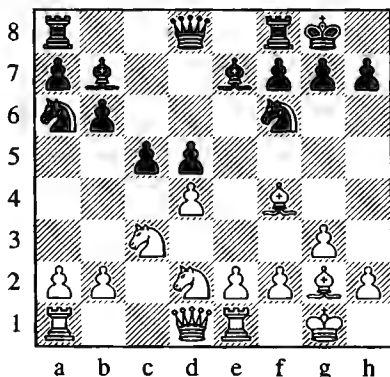
The concept of developing the knight to a6 is a position featuring this pawn structure was first introduced by Robert Hübner in 1976. Karpov utilized the same idea in a few games in 1977. He won against Browne and Garcia Padron, but then drew a game against Kochyev which seemed to put him off the idea.

Compared with the more typical destination of d7, the development of the knight to a6 has several advantages. On a6 the knight does not block the d-file, which means Black has to worry less about the d5-pawn. The c8-h3 diagonal is not blocked, so Black's queen can go to e6 if needed. Sometimes the white queen will go to a4, in which case the reply ...♖e8 can be useful. Finally, in the event of ♖f3-e5, Black does not have to exchange knights and can instead manoeuvre his knight to e6 via c7.

11. ♖d2?!

This strange move has never been repeated. The idea must have been to manoeuvre the knight to e3, but White never gets a good chance to do it.

Nearly two decades later, Karpov reached the same position but came unstuck: 11.dxc5?! ♖xc5 12.♞c1 a6 13.a3 ♞e8 14.♗d4 ♗d6?! 15.♗xd6 ♞xd6 16.♞d2 ♞ad8 17.♞ed1 g6 18.♞f4 ♞xf4?! 19.gxf4 ♗f8 20.e3 White had a stable advantage and went on to win a positional masterpiece in Gelfand – Karpov, Vienna 1996.



11...♞d7!

White's last move was illogical but there is no direct refutation, so Karpov just continues developing.

12. ♖f1?

This seems consistent, but it is a mistake as the knight has no real chance to go to e3.

12...♞fd8 13.h3

Another mysterious move. It clears the h2-square for the knight, but surely White was not planning to bring this piece to h2 and then back to f3!

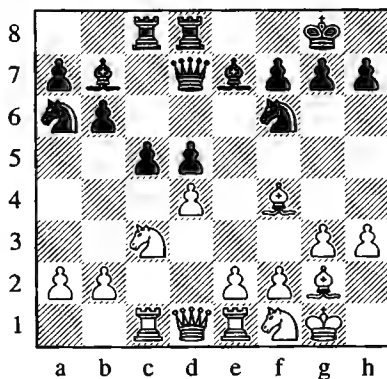
It must be said that the alternatives were also unattractive: 13.♗e3?? cxd4 14.♞xd4 ♗c5 wins a piece, and after 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.e3 ♗fe4 White is also struggling.

13...♞ac8

Bringing his last dormant piece into play.

14. ♞c1

If 14.♗h2 cxd4 15.♞xd4 ♞c4 16.♞d1 d4 17.♗xb7 ♞xb7 18.♗b1 ♗b4 19.♗a3 ♞cc8 White is clearly worse.



14...cxd4!

Having developed all his pieces, the time has come for Black to take action. Karpov goes for the isolated pawn middlegame, having seen that he can force matters with a series of energetic moves.

15. ♞xd4 ♞c4! 16. ♞d1

16. ♖d3?! only entices the enemy knight to the centre: 16... ♖c5 17. ♖b1 d4 18. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 19. ♖e4 ♖xc1 20. ♖xf6† ♗xf6 21. ♖xc1 ♖d7 White's pieces are disorganized, and Black's position is slightly better than in the game as his knight is on c5 instead of a6.

16...d4!

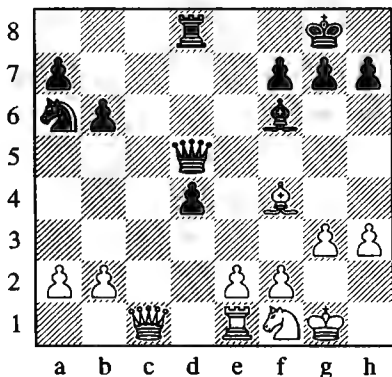
It is often said that when an isolated pawn gets to the fifth rank, it becomes strong. In the present position it exerts a powerful choking effect on White's position.

17. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 18. ♖e4!

Having less space, the Yugoslav grandmaster correctly decides to exchange pieces.

18...♖xc1 19. ♖xf6† ♗xf6 20. ♖xc1 ♖d5

Karpov centralizes the queen with gain of tempo.



21. ♖b1?!

With this move Ljubojevic wastes a tempo, which costs him a lot.

21. ♖h2!?

White can improve the knight at once; it gives better practical chances than the game continuation.

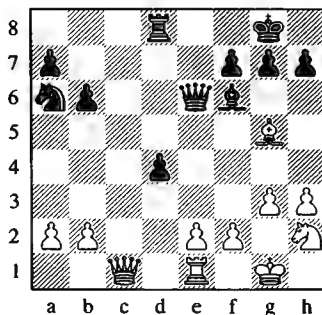
21...♖e6!?

Black has several tempting ideas, none of which are totally convincing.

21... ♖c5 22. b3 d3 23. ♖f3 h6 (23... ♖e6 24. ♖e3) 24. ♗g2 ♖b7 25. ♗e3 White survives. 21... ♖xa2 22. ♖a1 ♖a5 23. ♖xa5 bxa5 24. ♖g4 ♗e7 25. ♖e5 Black has an extra pawn, but it is a doubled pawn on the a-file, so White has decent chances to hold.

The text move is a witty idea. If White defends the h3-pawn naturally with the king, then Black will capture the a2-pawn as the check on d5 will make a big difference.

22. ♗g5



22...♗g5

After 22... ♖c8 23. ♖d2 ♗g5 24. ♖xg5 ♖c5 (or 24... ♖xa2 25. ♖c1! with counterplay) 25. ♖g4 ♖xg4 26. ♖xg4 ♖e6 27. e3 White gets away with it.

23. ♖xg5 f6 24. ♖c1 ♖xa2

In the event of 24... ♖c5 25. b4 ♖e4 26. ♖c7 the active queen gives White enough counterplay.

25. ♖a1 ♖a5

If 25... ♖c4 26. ♖f3 White starts counter-attacking the d4-pawn.

26. ♖xa5 bxa5 27. ♖c1

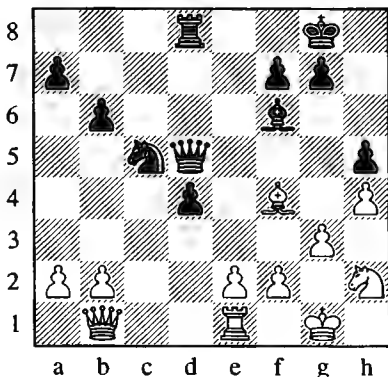
White has reasonable drawing chances.

21... ♖c5 22. ♖h2 h5!

Karpov softens White's kingside while incidentally creating an escape square for his king. This is fully in accordance with the principle that the side with more space should try to crack the opponent's position from multiple angles.

23.h4

Other continuations were unsatisfactory as well, for instance 23.♘f3 d3 or 23.b4 ♘e4 24.♙d3 ♖c8.

**23...d3!**

Karpov opens the position before his opponent can regain his coordination. The white kingside is quite vulnerable with the queen so far away.

24.exd3

An alternative was 24.♘f1 ♖c4!?. This is not the only move that leads to an advantage, but it seems to be the most purposeful in view of the pressure against the e2-pawn. 25.b4 ♙c3 26.bxc5 dxe2 27.♙c2 (After 27.♘e3 ♙xe1 28.♘xc4 ♙d1 29.♙e4 ♙b4† Black wins) 27...exf1=♙† 28.♙xf1 ♙xc5 Black is a pawn up.

24...♘d3 25.♙d1 ♙b5?!

Up to this point Karpov has played brilliantly, but now he makes a slight inaccuracy.

The most precise continuation was: 25...♙d4! Attacking f2 and b2. 26.♙d2 (After 26.♙e3 ♙xb2 27.♙xb2 ♙xb2 28.♘f3 ♙f6 Black is simply a pawn up.) 26...♙e4! 27.♙g5 ♙xg5 28.hxg5 ♙d4 29.♙c2 (29.♘f1! is possible, although 29...h4 maintains the pressure) 29...♙d5! 30.♙b3 ♙xb3 31.axb3 ♘f4! Black

wins a pawn and should prevail in the knight ending.

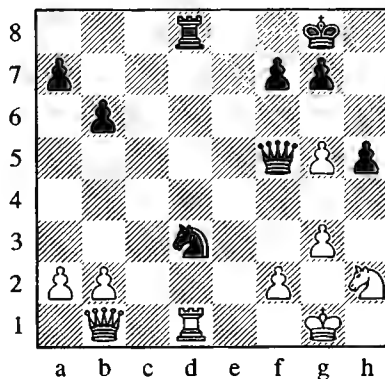
The text move also looks appealing, as Black creates a double threat of gobbling the b2-pawn and exchanging on f4 to shatter White's kingside. Perhaps Karpov did not fully appreciate his opponent's resourceful response.

26.♙g5!

Ljubojevic finds the only move to keep himself in the game.

26...♙xg5 27.hxg5 ♙f5

With his next few moves Karpov opens up the enemy kingside. White must remain alert if he is to stay in the game.

**28.♙d2?!**

White should have preferred:

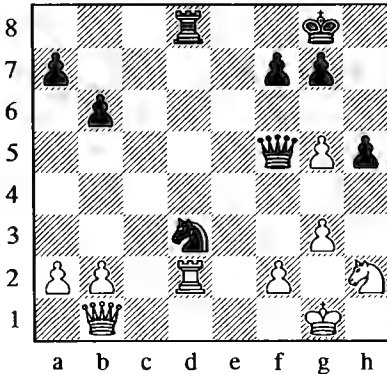
28.♙c2!

The idea is to transfer the queen to e2, where it stands so much better. Black does not seem to have anything decisive, for instance:

28...♙d4

28...♙e4 prevents White from placing his queen on e2, but allows him to improve his knight: 29.♘f1! ♙d4 30.♘e3 And it is not easy to suggest a way for Black to make progress.

Also after 28...♞d5 29.♞e2 g6 30.♞f3 ♞d7
 31.♞d2 White gets himself together.
 29.♞c2 g6
 29...♞d7 30.♞e3 is okay for White.
 30.♞f3 ♞d5 31.♞h4 ♞d7 32.♞e4
 White holds.



28...♞d4

Karpov brings the rook closer to the enemy king, while also removing it from the square on which it could be captured with check.

29.♞c2?

29.♞f1!

This move makes it harder for Black to unpin the knight.

29...♞e4

After 29...♞f3 30.♞d1 ♞e4 31.♞e3 Black is only fractionally better.

The more aggressive 29...h4 is also not totally convincing: 30.♞e3 ♞d7 (30...♞f3 31.♞d1) 31.gxh4 ♞g4† 32.♞f1 ♞d4 33.♞g1 And White is alive.

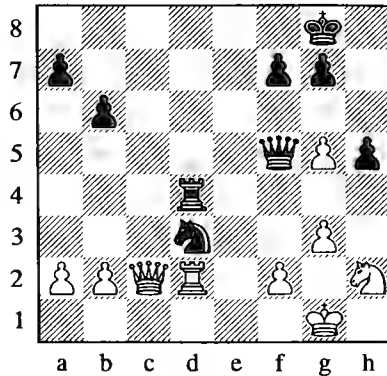
Another line is 29...♞d7 30.♞e3 ♞e5 31.♞xd4 ♞xd4 32.♞g2 ♞d3 and now White should be able to hold after 33.♞d1!, but not 33.b3? ♞e4† when Black wins a pawn.

30.♞c2

Also after 30.♞e3! ♞xf2 31.♞xe4 ♞h3† 32.♞g2 ♞xe4 33.♞xh3 ♞xe3 34.♞d8† White probably holds, despite the pawn deficit.

30...♞h7 31.♞e2 ♞c4 32.♞d2 ♞g6

White is somewhat worse, but he has good chances to hold.



29...h4!

Karpov softens up his opponent's kingside, exploiting the fact that the white pieces are tied up in the centre.

30.gxh4?!

It was better to improve the knight with:

30.♞f1!

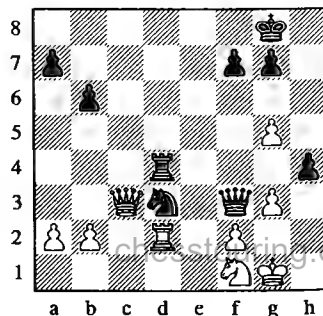
It is useful to have the option of ♞e3, which defends against the potential mate on g2 and gains a tempo in some lines by attacking the enemy queen.

30...♞f3

30...h3?! 31.♞e3 is okay for White.

30...hxg3 31.♞xg3 ♞d7 leads to a position where Black can press for a while, but White should survive as long as he defends carefully.

31.♞c3



31...♖e1

31...♗d6 can be met by 32.♞c7.

32.♖e3 ♞e4

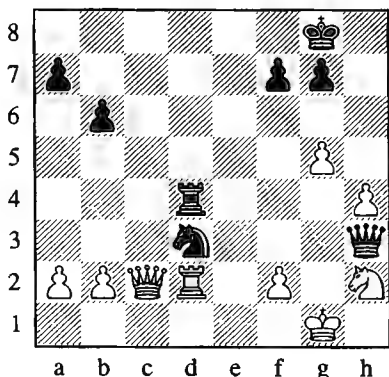
32...♗xd2 33.♞xd2 ♞g2† looks lovely but does not lead to anything special.

33.♗xd4 ♖f3† 34.♗f1 ♖xd4 35.♞c8† ♗h7

36.♞h3

White is okay.

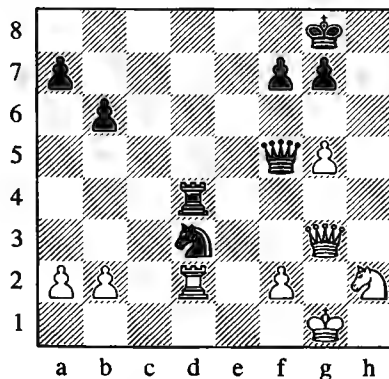
30...♞h3



31.♞c6!

31.f3 is not good enough: 31...♖e1 32.♞c3 ♗d3! This finesse is not only cute, but important as well. 33.♞c1 ♖xf3† 34.♖xf3 ♗xf3 35.♗g2 g6 White's king is too exposed to survive.

31...♗xh4 32.♞g2 ♞f5 33.♞g3 ♗d4



34.g6!

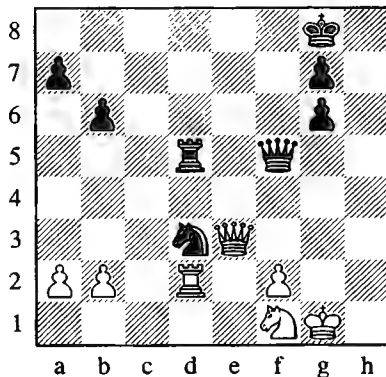
Ljubojevic correctly decides to jettison a pawn. Other continuations would not have helped him, for instance: 34.♗h1?! ♞e4† 35.♖f3 g6! Black prevents the g5-g6 idea and prepares ...♗g7 followed by a rook transfer to h8. 36.♗h2 ♗c4 37.a3 (37.♞h3 ♗c5) 37...♗g7 38.♞h3 ♗c1 White is in deep trouble.

34...fxg6

Black's extra pawn is not the best, but it still adds considerable value to his position, especially in terms of the protection it offers to the king.

35.♞e3 ♗d5 36.♖f1

Although some of his earlier play was erratic, Ljubojevic has shown his quality by finding a series of strong moves to stay in the game.



36...♖f4!?

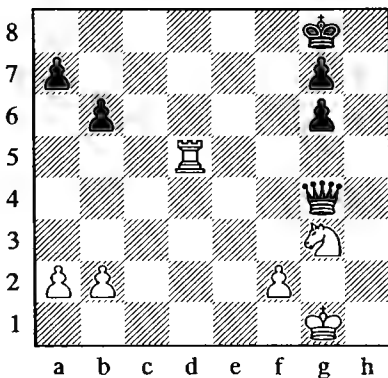
Karpov decides to offer a rook exchange. Simplification should help the side with the extra pawn, even if it is a doubled one.

37.♞xf4?

The idea of a fortress in a position with so many pawns is an illusion. 37.♖g3! would have kept White in the game for a while longer. After 37...♞g4 38.♗d5 ♖xd5 39.♞b3 ♞e6

Black's extra pawn gives him decent winning chances, but a long fight lies ahead.

37...♙xf4 38.♞xd5 ♖g4† 39.♘g3



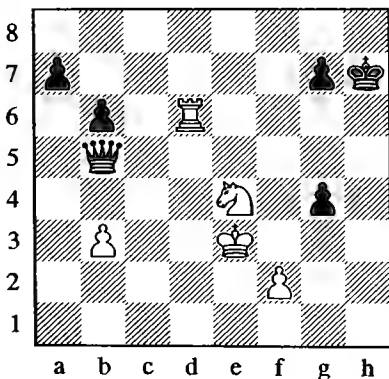
39...♙c4!

This is virtually the end for White, as he must lose a queenside pawn.

40.♞d8† ♔h7 41.b3 ♖c2 42.♔g2 g5!

Karpov was always a cautious player. In view of his opponent's potential mating attack, he makes room for the king and gives up the e4-square as late as possible.

43.♞d6 ♖xa2 44.♘e4 ♖a5 45.♔f3 ♖f5†
46.♔e3 ♖b5 47.♔d4 g4 48.♔e3



48...♙xb3†

Karpov has seen that he can neutralize White's mating threats, so he takes another pawn.

49.♔f4 ♖f3† 50.♔e5 ♖f8!

This is the simplest win.

51.♘g5† ♔g8 52.♘e4 b5 53.♞e6 b4
0-1

After this excellent game Karpov continued his fine form, and went on to win all three of his remaining games against Gheorghiu, Portisch and Keene, thus ending on a perfect score of five wins from five games.

Semyon Furman

Furman was the captain of the Soviet team at the European Team Championship, and he must surely have contributed towards Karpov's perfect score there. This seems like a good time as any to reflect on the influence of Karpov's trainer. Furman was undoubtedly a major contributor to Karpov's meteoric rise. Indeed, his great rival Korchnoi once wrote that if Furman had stayed with him and never joined Karpov, chess history would have been different.

I managed to obtain a page of an old Russian chess publication (probably the famous *64* magazine) in which Karpov had written about his trainers. I have already cited his comments about both Grattol and Botvinnik. Here is the translation of his warm words on Furman:

"To my good fortune, at the Army tournament of 1969 I met grandmaster S. Furman. He took me under his wing and took care of my chess education. We never separated and he is still my trainer. Semyon Abramovich is a remarkable person and chess player. He helped me to obtain the

title of World Junior Champion as well as my subsequent successes, for which I feel obliged to give him a lot of credit.

I was often asked the question about the role of a trainer in the period when a pupil overtakes his teacher as a competitive chess player. Firstly, it would be naive to suppose that the win would come easily for me in a hypothetical match against Furman. Even today when he is long past his fiftieth birthday, he remains a successful competitor in international tournaments. But this is not the most important thing. Even if Furman's practical strength has decreased, his understanding of the game remains much higher than that of many well known grandmasters. Regarding his theoretical knowledge, it is not by accident that people call him "Mr Chess Academy". Because of his skill, I always welcome his suggestions and recommendations and pay serious attention to them.

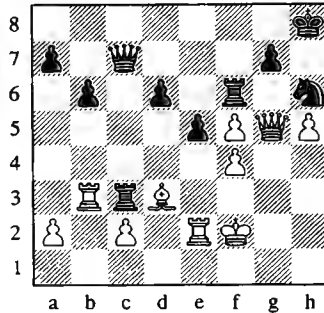
The role of a trainer is not limited to technical functions. It is also vitally important that trainers follow the latest developments of theory and practice. Because I was overloaded with my tournament schedule, often I was unable to play over so many hundreds of games. It is also clear that, when analysing adjourned positions during a tournament, one must listen to people with sufficiently high qualifications. The most important thing is to feel trust in one's own trainer.

Here a lot depends on the elder. To encourage in the times of disappointment and adversity. And to ensure that one still keeps their feet on the ground in times of victory and successes. This can only be done by friends who possess great instructional tact. Semyon Abramovich fully has all these qualities."

Over the course of his career, Furman played a total of forty games against world champions.

He won seven of them, drew eighteen (including three draws with his famous pupil) and lost the remaining fifteen games.

Here is a brief extract from one of his best wins. Tigran Petrosian was renowned for his brilliant exchange sacrifices, but Furman managed to beat the great Armenian with his own weapon!



41... $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xd3!}$ 42. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xd3}$ e4 43. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{h3}$ d5 Black converted his advantage as follows: 44. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{g1}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xf5}$ 45. $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{g6}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{c5}\dagger$ 46. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xf4}$ 47. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{g2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{c7}$ 48. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h1}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{f1}\dagger$ 49. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{g1}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{f7}$ 50. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{hg3}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{e5}$ 51. $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{g5}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{f5}$ 52. $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{d8}\dagger$ $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{g8}$ 53. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{g5}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{c3}$ 54. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{d2}\dagger$ 55. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{1g2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f4}\dagger$ 56. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{g1}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{e3}\dagger$ 57. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f4}\dagger$ 58. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{2g3}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f2}\dagger$ 59. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h3}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f1}\dagger$ 60. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f2}\dagger$ 61. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h3}$ e3 62.h6 e2 63.h7 $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f1}\dagger$ 64. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{f2}\dagger$ 65. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{g2}$ $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xg2}\dagger$ 66. $\text{\textcircled{R}}\text{xg2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f4}\dagger$ 67. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h3}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{f3}\dagger$ 68. $\text{\textcircled{C}}\text{h2}$ $\text{\textcircled{W}}\text{h5}\dagger$ 0-1 Petrosian – Furman, Gorky 1950.

After his tremendous success at the European Team Championship, Karpov's next event was an individual tournament at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. He continued his winning streak with five consecutive victories, and showed his versatility by beating his opponents using different styles of play.

In round 6 he met Tony Miles. Overall Karpov won twelve games, drew the same number and lost just once against the first English grandmaster of the modern era. Altogether Miles played seventy nine games

against all the world champions from Smyslov to Anand, except for Fischer and Topalov. He won ten of these games, drew forty two and lost twenty seven.

Game 48

Anatoly Karpov – Tony Miles

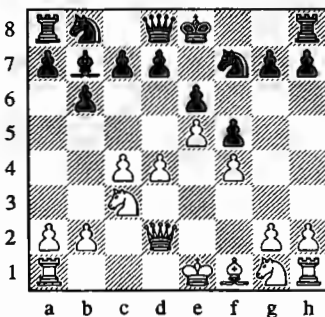
Las Palmas 1977

1.c4 b6

Fifteen years later Miles tried to play a similar opening when Karpov opened with the queen's pawn. In this game we can also see his magic positional touch:

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♟b4† 3.♟d2 ♟xd2† 4.♞xd2 b6 5.♟c3 ♟b7?! 6.e4!

Karpov occupies the centre.
6...♟h6 7.f4 f5 8.e5! ♟f7



9.0–0–0!

The bishop on b7 is powerful, so by castling on the queenside Karpov decreases its significance.

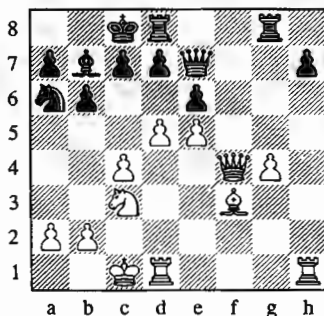
9...g5 10.♟f3 ♞g8 11.♟e2 ♟a6 12.h3!

Ensuring that the kingside will be opened.

12...gxf4 13.♞xf4 ♞e7?!

Miles must have judged 13...♞xg2 to be too risky, but after 14.♞dg1 ♞g6 15.♞xg6 hxg6 16.♞g1 White's advantage is smaller than in the game.

14.g4 fxg4 15.hxg4 ♟g5 16.d5 ♟xf3 17.♟xf3 0–0–0



18.♞h6

18.♟e4!? was worth considering.

18...♞g7?!

After the superior 18...♞g5 19.♞xg5 ♞xg5 20.♞e1 ♞f8 21.♞e3 White is somewhat better, but victory is a long way off.

19.♞f6! exd5 20.cxd5 ♞e8 21.g5 ♟b8 22.♟h5 ♞g8 23.♟f7

Karpov got a clear advantage and went on to win, Karpov – Miles, Biel 1992.

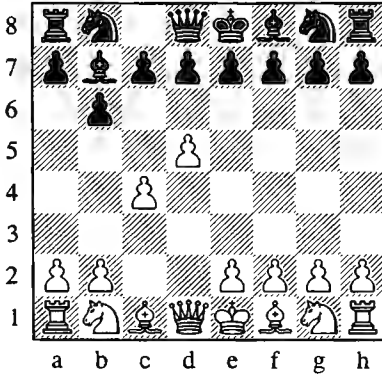
2.d4 ♟b7

In the following year Miles tried to improve on the same opening by 2...e6. The game continued as follows: 3.d5!? ♞h4 4.♟c3 ♟b4 (Maybe Miles should have taken the pawn with 4...♞xc4!?, even though White will obtain compensation for it.) 5.♟d2 ♟f6 6.e3 ♟xc3 7.♟xc3 ♟e4 8.♞c2 ♟xc3 9.♞xc3 0–0 10.g3 ♞e4 11.f3 ♞g6 12.♟e2 ♟b7 13.0–0–0 d6 14.g4 ♟d7 15.h4 ♞f6 16.♞xf6 ♟xf6 17.e4 ♟d7 18.♟c3 ♟e5 19.♟e2 ♟g6 20.♟d2 White went on to win a nice endgame, Karpov – Miles, Bugojno 1978.

3.d5!?

A very ambitious move, which aims to restrict the b7-bishop and facilitate the acquisition of considerable space in the centre. Interestingly Karpov refrained from playing this move

against Morozevich in 2002. Presumably the decision to refrain from the sharp and ambitious approach was partially influenced by his age, as well as the playing style of his young opponent.



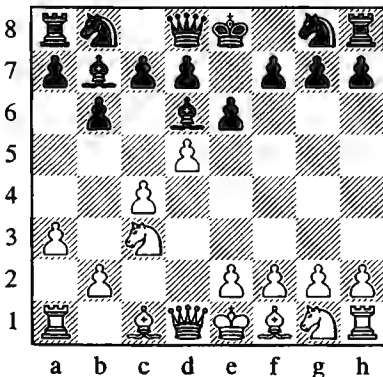
3...e6 4.a3!?

By stopping ...♟b4 Karpov consolidates the space he gained.

4...♟f6!?

4...g6 and 4...♞h4 have also been played, although neither should be sufficient to equalize. 4...f5 seems to be Black's best chance to reach an acceptable position.

5.♟c3 ♟d6

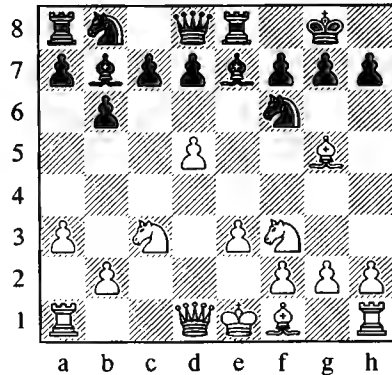


6.♟f3!

Having already prevented ...♟b4, Karpov now stops the bishop from harassing the knight from the e5-square.

6...exd5 7.cxd5 0-0 8.♟g5 ♜e8 9.e3 ♟e7

Maybe Black should have tried 9...c6 intending a knight transfer to c7, although White keeps an edge here too.



10.♟c4!

Karpov strengthens the d5-pawn, securing his space advantage.

10...h6 11.♟f4 ♟h5 12.♟e5

Karpov refuses to allow the valuable bishop to be exchanged for a knight.

12...♟f6

12...d6? wins a tempo, but resigns Black to a pawn weakness on c7 or d6 in the long run.

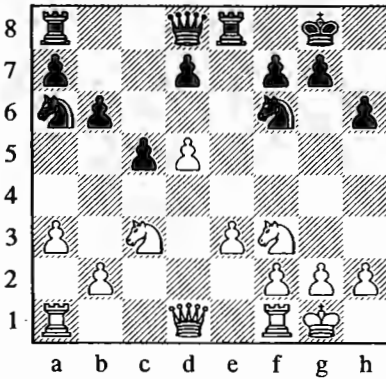
13.♟d4 ♟a6 14.♟xa6 ♟xa6 15.0-0 c5

Miles removes the weakness from c7 and transforms the position into one resembling a Modern Benoni, at least in terms of the pawn structure. The Benoni has never been very popular at the highest levels, so it is interesting to see how Karpov handles the white position.

16.♟xf6 ♟xf6

Compared with a normal Benoni, the absence of a bishop on g7 reduces Black's prospects for dynamic counterplay.

This is a very strong positional move. White seizes the initiative on the queenside before Black can gain any space there. Black now faces a difficult decision. The prospect of $bxc5$ is unpleasant for him. If he recaptures with the d-pawn it opens the way for White's central pawns, while if he takes with the b-pawn then the outpost square on c4 will become a long term feature of the position.



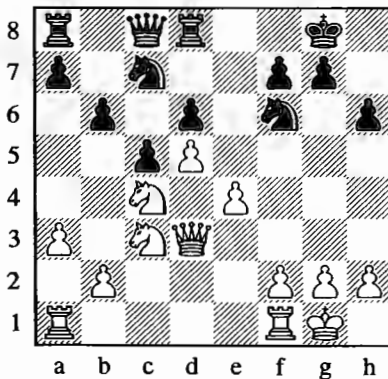
17. ♖d3! ♜c8 18. ♘d2!

After the queen, Karpov improves the knight as well.

18...d6 19. ♘c4 ♙d8 20.e4!

Karpov secures the d5-pawn. It was too early to go for the d6-pawn with 20. ♘b5?! as after 20... ♘c7! 21. ♘bxd6 ♜b8 22.a4 (22.e4? b5) 22... ♘cxd5 Black has eased his position.

20... ♘c7



21.b4!

21... ♘a6!?

Miles prepares for the capture on c5, but allows something equally unpleasant. The best chance was:

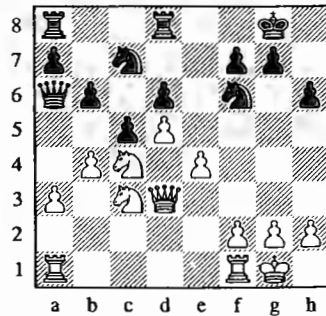
21... ♜a6!?

Searching for counterplay with the queen is the best chance. Alternatives are worse:

21...b5 22. ♘e3 c4 23. ♜d4± Black's queenside play has come to a swift halt, and he will soon be pushed back by means of f4 and e5.

21...cxb4 This gives up the d4-square, and also opens the a-file for the white rook. 22.axb4 ♜d7 23.f3 White can improve his position by doubling his rooks on the a-file, and/or transferring the c4-knight to d4, probably via e3 and f5.

After the queen move White must choose from a variety of options.



22. ♙f1!?

This is arguably the strongest idea at White's disposal.

22.bxc5?! bxc5 23.f4 ♖d7! The queen on a6 is irritating for White, who will have trouble improving his position.

22.b5?! The tactical attempt brings no advantage: 22...♖xb5 23.♖xd6 ♜xd6 24.e5 c4! 25.♙xc4 ♜c8 26.♙xb5 ♙xb5 27.♖xb5 ♜xd5 And Black has equalized.

22.♜f1!? This is a sensible way to prepare the pawn advance. 22...♜ab8 23.b5! ♖xb5 24.♖xd6 ♜xd6 25.♖xb5 ♜d7 26.a4 White has the better structure, and Black will have a hard time trying to restrain the advance of the central pawns.

22...b5

Otherwise b4-b5 will lead to a clear positional plus for White, just as in the game.

23.♖e3

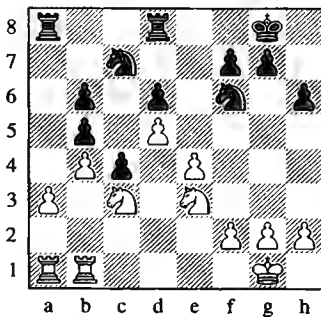
23.♖a5!? is also promising.

23...c4 24.♙d4 ♙b6 25.♙xb6

25.♖f5 is also excellent for White.

25...axb6

Both sides have pawn weaknesses, but Black's are more significant.



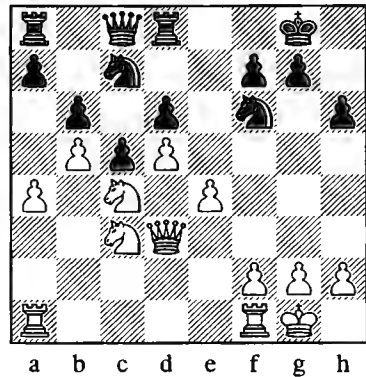
26.♖c2

Also after 26.a4!? bxa4 27.b5 Black is in trouble.

26...♜a6 27.♖d4 ♜da8 28.f3 ♜xa3 29.♜xa3 ♜xa3 30.♜c1!

White is temporarily a pawn down, but he will soon earn it back with interest.

22.b5! ♖c7 23.a4

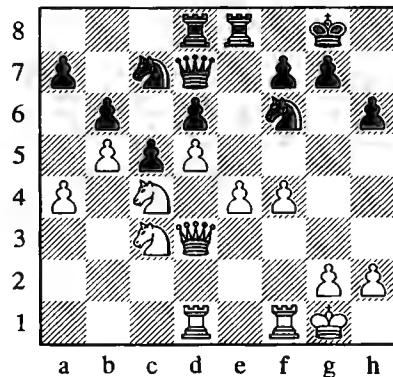


With his last two moves Karpov gained additional space on the queenside and completely nullified any potential counterplay there. Next he will turn his attention to the centre. Note that the protected passed pawn on c5 contributes nothing to Black's position here.

23...♙d7 24.f4

Karpov keeps his rook on f1, anticipating the opening of the f-file after a future e4-e5.

24...♜e8 25.♜ad1 ♜ad8



26.h3!?

After a couple of natural improving moves Karpov switches to prophylaxis. He prevents

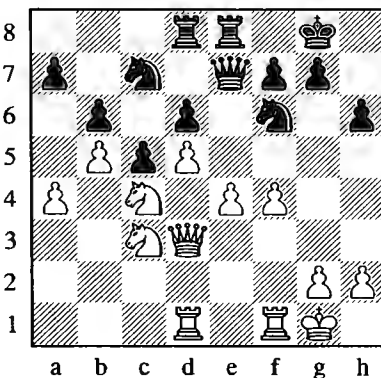
any possibility of ... $\text{d}g4$, as well as setting up ideas like $\text{f}3$ and $g4$. The quiet text move also cleverly highlights the fact that Black is in a mild form of zugzwang: his pieces are poised in anticipation of $e4$ - $e5$, but apart from that they are accomplishing nothing.

26... $\text{f}e7$?

Perhaps Miles wanted to attack the $e4$ -pawn or maybe it was just an unfortunate choice of waiting move, as the queen is too exposed here.

26... $h5$?! was not much good, as after 27. $\text{f}3$ White remains in control and the weakening of the black kingside will tell eventually.

The best chance was 26... $\text{c}8$ intending to shelter the queen in the corner, although Black is still in trouble after something like 27. $\text{f}3$ $\text{a}8$ 28. $g4$ $\text{d}7$ 29. $\text{d}3$. White can double his rooks on the d-file and break through when the time is right with $e5$ or perhaps even $g5$.



27.e5!

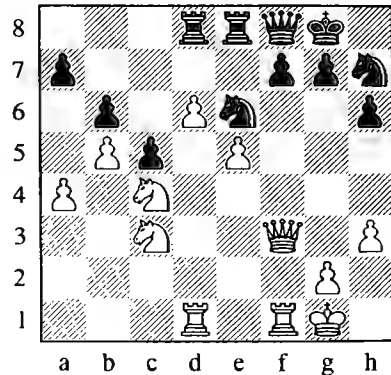
Again we see a familiar story for Karpov. For most of the game he builds his advantage in a patient and strategically powerful way, but as soon as an opportunity arises to finish his opponent by tactical means, he immediately pounces upon it.

White should be able to win more slowly by means of 27. $\text{f}3$ followed by $g4$ and so on, but the game continuation move is much more efficient.

27... $\text{d}xe5$ 28. $\text{d}6!$ $\text{f}8$

After 28... $e4$ 29. $\text{f}e2$ Black loses material.

29. $\text{f}xe5$ $\text{d}h7$ 30. $\text{f}3$ $\text{d}e6$



31. $\text{f}b7!$

Having virtually paralysed his opponent, Karpov can afford to go after the $a7$ -pawn.

31... $\text{f}a8$ 32. $\text{d}d5$ $g6$

Otherwise the knight could have checked on $e7$ then gone to $g6$ to win the queen.

33. $\text{d}e7$ † $\text{c}g7$ 34. $\text{d}c6$

1-0

Miles resigned as White has too many threats, including $d7$ and $\text{d}xa7$.

More than two decades ago I asked Daniel King, a very fine positional player, why he did not play 1. $d4$. He told me he did not feel at home in the Benoni positions. I remembered his words: around the time of Leko's thirteenth birthday I started to teach him 1. $d4$, and the first defence we looked at was the Benoni. We never finished our work on 1. $d4$. Leko started

playing 1.d4 and 2.c4 for the first time against Kramnik in their 2004 world championship match. With two games remaining, Peter was leading by one point, which meant that Kramnik needed $1\frac{1}{2}$ to tie the match and retain his title. In the penultimate game he gambled with the Benoni and Peter played poorly, although he did manage to draw in the end. Nevertheless I suspect that this game gave Kramnik a confidence boost, which helped him to obtain the win he so desperately needed in the final game.

In the above game we saw that the Benoni structure gave Karpov no problems whatsoever, and he simply outclassed Miles.

In round seven Karpov drew with Timman, thus bringing to an end an extraordinary winning streak. With his three wins at the end of Bad Lauterberg, five at the European Team Championship and six at the start of Las Palmas, Karpov achieved a total of fourteen consecutive victories, one of the longest winning streaks in chess history at the top level.

After drawing with Timman he beat Adorjan, then drew against Larsen. Karpov then produced another winning run, posting five consecutive victories against mainly Spanish opponents. In the final round he drew with Tal, to finish with a remarkable total of $13\frac{1}{2}/15$, with twelve wins and three draws. He finished a massive two and a half points ahead of Larsen who was second, three and a half more than Timman who was third, and a further point ahead of Tal, Browne and Hernandez.

Karpov's next event was a tournament in Leningrad, which celebrated the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution. In round one he suffered a setback, falling for a beautiful checkmating combination against Taimanov. He drew in round two, then got back to fifty percent by beating Smejkal. But

in the fifth he lost again, forfeiting on time in an otherwise promising position against Beliavsky.

Over the course of the remaining twelve games, Karpov gradually clawed his way up the ranks with wins over Kuzmin, Mariotti, Garcia Gonzales and Gheorghiu. But he drew a lot of games along the way, and his final score of 10/17 was only good enough to share fourth and fifth place.

1977 was the first year in which the Dutch city of Tilburg organized its prestigious tournament, and Karpov took part in the inaugural event. Out of the first five games he only won in round two, thanks to some strong opening preparation against Miles. In rounds six and seven he moves through the gears, beating Balashov and Hübner. After a short draw with Kavalek, he then defeated both Olafsson and Andersson, before securing his overall victory with a final draw against Hort. Karpov took the first prize convincingly, a point ahead of Miles. His final tally of five wins and six draws was an excellent result against this strong field.

1977 Summary

Bad Lauterberg (1st place): 12/15 (+9 =6 -0)

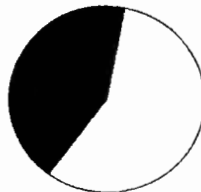
European Team Championship (Board one): 5/5 (+5 =0 -0)

Las Palmas (1st place): 13½/15 (+12 =3 -0)

October Revolution, Leningrad (4th-5th place): 10/17 (+5 =10 -2)

Tilburg (1st place): 8/11 (+5 =6 -0)

Total 77% (+36 =25 -2)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1978

Rating 2725 (1 in the World)

Three years had passed since Fischer was stripped of his crown, and the time had come for Karpov to defend his coveted title. His challenger was a familiar opponent: his old rival, Viktor Korchnoi.

Before we explore that subject fully, it is worth noting briefly that 1978 was the year in which the young Garry Kasparov made his first serious mark on the chess world, when he won the Sokolsky Memorial in Minsk. The year after he won the Banja Luka grandmaster tournament, a massive three points ahead of Smejkal and a further half point ahead of Petrosian and Andersson. From this point on, one can imagine Karpov's attention gradually shifting away from the 'retired' American and towards the young rising star.

For obvious reasons, world champions tend to play fewer tournaments during the year of their title defence, and Karpov was no exception. He only played one tournament in 1978, in Bugojno, located in the former Yugoslavia (now Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Karpov began with a nice win over Larsen, then he had to struggle to draw with Ivkov, who was a pawn up for a long time. After a convincing win over Miles in round three, Karpov drew with Balashov fairly quickly. He then suffered a setback, as Timman outplayed him and collected the full point. It slowed him down – he drew the next four. He then managed to regain his momentum, defeating Ljubojevic in a sharp Sicilian, drawing a hard fought game with Vukic, and then quickly beating Hort.

At the start of the penultimate round he was trailing half a point behind Spassky, when he met the Yugoslav grandmaster Enver Bukic. This was their first and only meeting over the board. Bukic played six games against the champions, drawing twice and losing four times.

Game 49

Anatoly Karpov – Enver Bukic

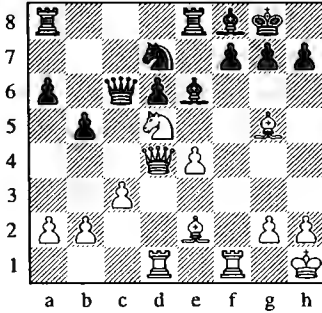
Bugojno 1978

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♗e2 e5 7.♗b3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.a4

This is the only time Karpov played the move. His most frequent choice was 9.♗e3, an example of which can be found in Game 65.

He also used 9.♗g5 against two formidable opponents: 9...♗e6 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 ♗c6 12.♖h1 ♗e8 (12...d5 13.e5 ♗e4 14.♗d3 ♗5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗c4 18.♗d6 ♗xf1

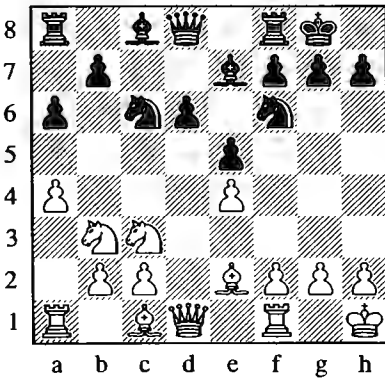
19.♖d5† ♘h8 20.♞h5 g6 21.♙xg6 ♙xg2†
 22.♗xg2 ♜d7 Black managed to hold his somewhat worse position in Karpov – Anand, Buenos Aires 1994.) 13.♞e1 ♘d7 14.♞d1 ♘de5 15.♘d5 ♙f8 16.♞f2 ♘d7 17.♙g3 ♘ce5 18.♙h4 ♞c8 19.c3 b5 20.♙g5 ♞b7 21.♘a5 ♞c8 22.♞d4 ♘c6 23.♘xc6 ♞xc6



24.c4! Karpov went on to convert his slight plus into a win in Karpov – Kavalek, Waddinxveen 1979.

9...♘c6 10.♖h1

The king steps aside before the f-pawn moves.



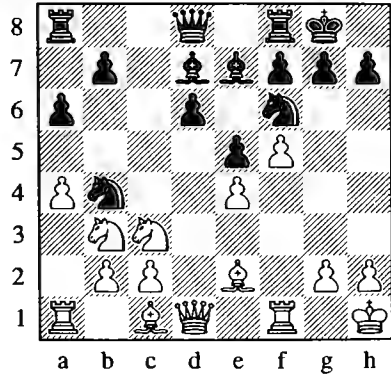
10...♙c6

Later in the same year Kavalek introduced 10...♘b4, when play continues 11.f4 ♙d7 12.♙c3 ♙c6. Several players followed his

example, and overall Black has made an excellent score from this position.

11.f4 ♘b4 12.f5 ♙d7

After 12...♙xb3 13.cxb3 d5 14.exd5 ♘fxd5 15.♙f3 ♘f6 16.♙e3 White is a bit better thanks to his strong light-squared bishop.



13.♙g5!

Karpov does not allow his opponent to free his position. The weaker 13.♙f3?! allows 13...d5! and after the further 14.♘xd5 ♘fxd5 15.c3 ♘b6 16.cxb4 ♘xa4 Black was already better in Parr – Akesson, Gausdal 2001.

13...♙c6 14.♙f3 ♞c8?!

Bukic could have played more actively with 14...b5 15.axb5 (15.♞e2 ♞b6) 15...axb5 16.♙xa8 ♞xa8 17.♞d2 ♞c8 18.♞d1 ♞d7 when Black has a playable position.

15.♞e2

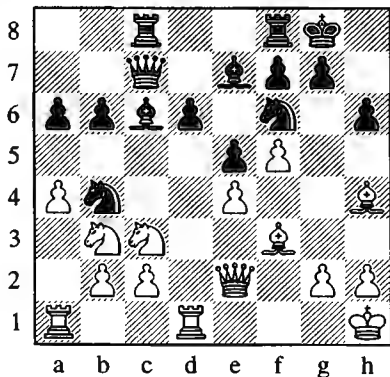
Karpov wastes no time in taking control over the b5-square.

15...h6 16.♙h4 b6

16...b5 was still possible. Objectively the text move is okay, but with hindsight the decision to embark on a slow manoeuvring battle against Karpov was a questionable one. Amazingly, over the entire course of the remaining twenty

six moves of this game, Black not only fails to obtain any counterplay, but does not even make a single pawn move.

17. Bfd1 Bc7



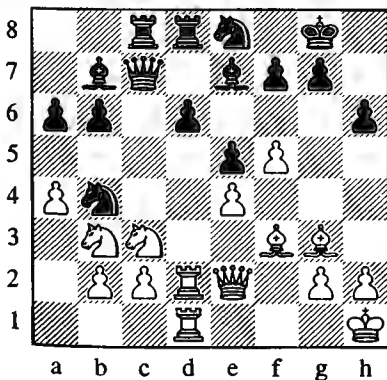
18. $\text{Bg3!?$

Why does Karpov retreat his bishop to a blocked diagonal where it seemingly has no future? The answer is prophylaxis: he wants to ensure that Black will not be able to free his position with ...d5.

18... Bb7 19. Bd2 Bfd8 20. Bad1

Karpov directs his full force against the ...d5 push.

20... Be8



21. h4!

Karpov keeps preventing his opponent's ideas, but at the same time he gains space and builds his position.

21... Qf6

Black is just waiting.

22. Qf2

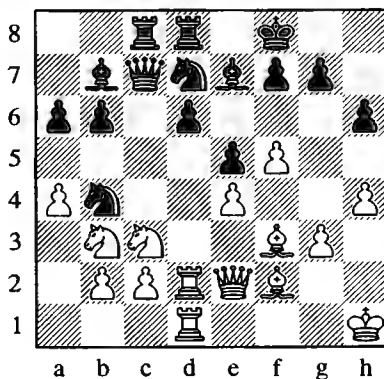
For the first time in a while, Karpov does not play against a particular idea of his opponent, but improves a piece for its own sake.

22... Qd7 23. g3

A minor improvement is still an improvement.

23... Qf8

Black continues his policy of waiting. A more enterprising approach was 23... $\text{Bb8!?$, intending to double rooks on the c-file and perhaps carry out a thematic exchange sacrifice on c3.



24. $\text{Qc1!?$

The knight does little on b3, so Karpov relocates it to a better square.

24... Qc4 25. Qe1 Bc7 26. Qg1

The queen had no future on e1 or e2, so Karpov continues regrouping.

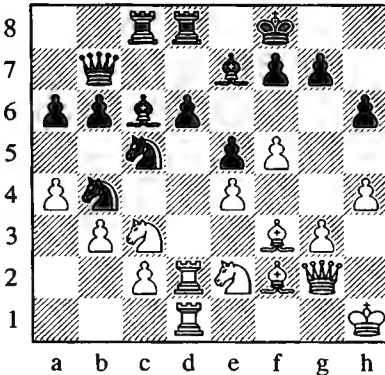
26...♖c5 27.♘1e2

From this square the knight helps to support its partner on c3.

27...♗c6

The bishop's return to c6 is a clear indication that Black is struggling to find a constructive plan.

28.b3 ♖b7 29.♖g2



29...♖c7

Had Black sensed what was to follow, he might have tried:

29...♗c8!?

Preparing to evacuate the king to the centre.

30.g4 f6 31.♗e3 ♗f7 32.♖g1

The immediate breakthrough fails to deliver:

32.g5 hxg5 33.hxg5 fxg5 34.♗xg5 ♗xg5

35.♖xg5 ♖e7 Black is not worse.

32...♗e8 33.♘d5!?

After 33.g5 hxg5 34.hxg5 ♗d7 Black is very much in the game.

It is possible that Karpov would have continued to play patiently with a move like 33.♗h2, but after 33...♗d7 we see that Black can also improve his king. The position is unclear.

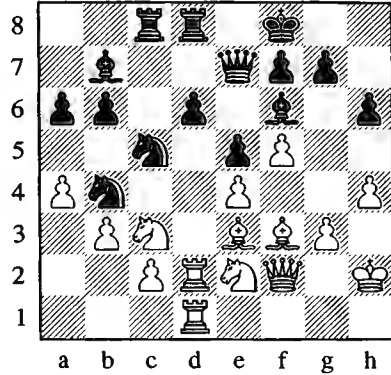
33...♘d5 34.exd5 b5 35.axb5 axb5 36.♘g3

White is a bit better, but a lot of work will be required if he is to achieve anything serious.

30.♗e3

Another small improvement.

30...♗f6 31.♗h2 ♖e7 32.♖f2 ♗b7



33.♗g2!?

One could be forgiven for thinking that Karpov is merely shuffling his pieces aimlessly.

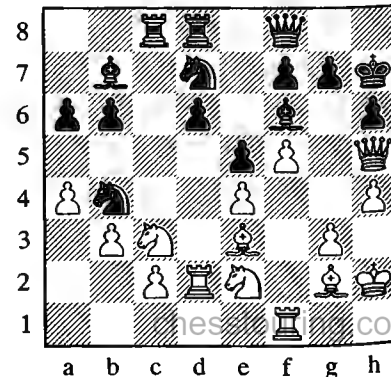
33...♗g8?! 34.♖f3

Here we see his idea: he wanted to vacate the f3-square for the queen.

34...♗h7 35.♖h5!

Karpov finds a dangerous plan of attack. Black has enough resources to survive it, but he needs to play accurately and over the board the problems were too much for him.

35...♖f8 36.♖f1 ♘d7



37.♞c1!?

This turns out to be a tricky move for Black.

37...♞c6!?

Bukic fails to sense the danger associated with the queen on h5.

Expelling the queen with 37...g6?! was not an ideal solution: 38.♞f3 h5 (38...♞e7 39.fxg6† fxg6 40.h5 opens up Black's kingside) 39.g4 hxg4 40.♞xg4 Black is under strong pressure on the kingside.

The best defence was: 37...♙e7! Black prepares to drive the queen away without resorting to weakening pawn moves. 38.♘d5?! White would do better to retreat the queen, but this would mean finding a new angle of attack. 38...♙xd5 39.exd5 ♘f6 40.♞f3 e4 41.♞f4 ♖bxd5 42.♞xd5 ♘xd5 43.♞xe4 ♘f6 White has some play for the exchange, but I doubt that Karpov would have chosen this route.

38.♘d5!

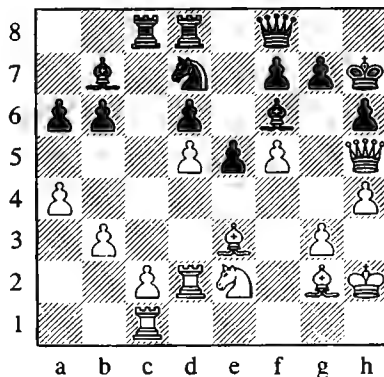
Though I cannot be sure, I suspect that Karpov intentionally sharpened the position before the time control. If that is the case, the text is not only a strong move in its own right, but also a powerful psychological weapon.

38...♘xd5??

Bukic cannot resist the temptation to exchange the powerful knight, but the clearing of the e4-square proves fatal for him.

Black could have kept himself in the game with 38...a5. The best response is 39.c4!, consolidating White's space advantage on the queenside. (After the hasty 39.g4? g6 40.♞xh6† ♞xh6 41.♙xh6 ♙xh6 42.♘xf6 ♘xf6 43.g5† ♙g7 44.gxf6† ♙xf6 Black has a playable position.) 39...♙e7! (39...♘xd5

40.exd5 ♞c7 41.♙e4 resembles the game.) 40.♘ec3 White's positional advantage extends across the board. He continues to dominate, but Black can survive for a while longer.

39.exd5 ♞cc8**40.♙e4!**

Karpov not only brings a piece into the attack, but also prevents any counterplay. The premature 40.g4? allows 40...e4! 41.g5 ♞e8! when Black is still in the game.

40...♘c5

40...♙h8 41.g4 ♙e7 42.g5 wins.

41.♙xc5! ♞xc5 42.g4**1-0**

My guess is that the game was adjourned here, and Black resigned after failing to find a satisfactory defence against White's pawn onslaught. It is remarkable how, after failing to obtain any advantage from the opening, Karpov was able to shut down his opponent's counterplay and gradually improve his position to the point where he seemed to be winning out of nowhere. He developed his attack in imaginative way, with the queen manoeuvre to h5 and subsequent knight jump to d5 in order to clear the e4-square. Overall it was a highly instructive example of outplaying a

somewhat weaker but still tough opponent from a balanced position.

Karpov also won his last round game against Portisch, leading to a final tally of six wins, eight draws and one loss. This was enough to tie for first prize with Spassky. After this warm-up tournament, it was time for the champion of the world to defend his crown.

World Championship match versus Korchnoi

The 1978 world championship match took place in Baguio City in the Philippines. The organizer was Florencio Campomanes, the Philippine delegate to FIDE who would later go on to become FIDE President. The rules of the match stipulated that the winner would be the first player to score six wins, draws not counting.

With a rating advantage of 2725 versus 2665, Karpov was the rightful favourite, but at the same time there was every reason to expect the match to be competitive. In March 1978, just three months before the start of the match, Semyon Furman died, which must have come as a hammer blow to Karpov. No-one knew Karpov as well as his long-time trainer, and there is no telling how much he was affected by the loss, not only on a personal level, but also in terms of Furman's chess experience and expertise.

Karpov's official seconds for the match were grandmasters Yuri Balashov and Igor Zaitsev. Mikhail Tal was in Baguio, and it was obvious that he was also there to help Karpov.

Korchnoi's seconds were the English grandmasters Raymond Keene and Michael Stean, and the strong theoretician Jacob Murey, an émigré from the USSR to Israel. The same trio had also helped Korchnoi during his candidate match wins over Polugaevsky and Spassky. The team was later strengthened by the Argentine grandmaster Oscar Panno.

A Formidable Adversary

Viktor Korchnoi is one of the greatest players in chess history never to win the world championship. There was never a time when Korchnoi could have been regarded as the world's strongest player. On the other hand, it is hard to name another grandmaster who consistently finished at or near the top of so many tournaments and remained among the leading players in the world for such a long period.

Overall Korchnoi played 290 games against world champions; the huge number already speaks for itself! He scored fifty one wins, 160 draws and seventy nine losses. His lifetime score against Karpov stands at fourteen wins, sixty two draws and twenty eight losses.

Interestingly, if we remove Korchnoi's encounters with Karpov and Kasparov, his percentage score against the 'normal' world champions reaches almost 50%. (He had a very poor record against Kasparov, with just one win, fourteen draws and fourteen losses.) This figure also includes several defeats against the modern day champions Anand, Kramnik and Topalov, outstanding players who Korchnoi met when he was past his best. Korchnoi made an equal score with Fischer (+2 =4 -2), and was more than competitive against his other rivals including Spassky (+17 =29 -11) and especially Tal, who he dominated convincingly (+12 =23 -4).

At the start of the match, Karpov and Korchnoi had met in thirty five games, with Karpov enjoying a narrow lead of seven wins to six, with twenty two draws. Since the 1974 match they had not met over the board. Korchnoi had defected from the Soviet Union, and the Soviet authorities reacted by boycotting any tournaments to which Korchnoi was invited.

Since his defeat to Karpov in 1974, Korchnoi had notched up a series of tournament successes.

He was extremely effective at defeating average grandmasters. Since his defection he obviously did not play in any Soviet tournaments, so his level of competition may have been slightly lower than Karpov's. On the other hand, in his 1977 candidate matches he had to overcome such distinguished Soviet grandmasters as Petrosian, Polugaevsky and Spassky in order to earn the right to challenge for the title.

Karpov had played magnificently since becoming World Champion. He won nine tournaments outright and finished equal first in one other. Only twice did he fail to finish in first place. Once he was runner up, and in one event he was equal fourth. In addition he performed extremely well at team events.

Although Korchnoi's tournament record between 1974 and 1977 was impressive, it was not at the level of Karpov's. On the other hand, the title of World Champion would be decided by a match, and Korchnoi had more match experience than almost anyone. He had lost in the final candidate match in two previous world championship cycles, before finally winning one in 1977. He had also played a few dozen other matches over the previous two decades, and won most of them.

The Match

The first seven games were drawn. Several were solid affairs, but there was plenty of drama as well. For instance, in the fifth game Korchnoi missed a simple win at one point after the adjournment. He continued pressing, but Karpov managed to get into a theoretically drawn endgame that had been analysed by Averbakh back in the fifties. At 124 moves, the game was the longest ever played in a world championship final.

In the eighth game the deadlock was finally broken, in Karpov's favour. Korchnoi played

a rare and risky ...g6 in the Open Spanish, against which Karpov introduced a novelty. Korchnoi snatched a pawn but failed to defend correctly and his position soon collapsed.

A couple of draws ensued, before Korchnoi equalized the match in Game 11. After the opening moves 1.g3 c5 2.♗g2 ♘c6 he transposed into a Sicilian with 3.e4!?. He was already clearly better when Karpov blundered and lost an exchange.

Korchnoi was unable to build on this success, and the match soon swung heavily in favour of the champion. In the thirteenth game Korchnoi reached an endgame with two pawns for the exchange and decent winning chances, but then blundered in an extraordinary way, almost allowing his queen to be trapped in an open position. He saved the queen but only at the cost of a fatal weakening of his position, which Karpov quickly exploited. In Game 14 Korchnoi found himself in a passive endgame, and eventually succumbed to the pressure. Because the previous game had been adjourned, the score went from being tied at 1-1 at the start of the day to 3-1 in Karpov's favour by the end of it.

In Game 17 Karpov played rather riskily in a Nimzo-Indian. Korchnoi was better, but under time pressure, with only a few pieces on the board, he allowed a beautiful checkmate in three. Of course Karpov did not miss it. He was much more adept at attacking the enemy king than one might think. After this success, only two more wins were needed.

After a couple more draws, the momentum began to shift back towards the challenger. In Game 20 Korchnoi made some mistakes and found himself in serious trouble, but Karpov failed to capitalize. He did not seal the winning move before the adjournment, and later he made another mistake which allowed Korchnoi to escape with a miraculous draw.

In the very next game Korchnoi played superbly to convert his advantage in the endgame.

A series of draws followed, but then in Game 27 Korchnoi made some mistakes in an equal position and lost a pawn followed by the game. Thus the score rose to 5–2, with Karpov just one more win away from a convincing match victory.

What happened next is remarkable. Karpov – the reigning World Champion, who had built a commanding lead in the match – suffered a near collapse, scoring just half a point out of his next four games. In Game 28 Korchnoi equalized with the Open Spanish then gradually took over the initiative and won a nice endgame. In Game 29 Korchnoi obtained no real advantage with the white pieces, but Karpov made some mistakes after the adjournment and eventually lost. Karpov tried to bounce back in the next game but was unable to make anything of his slight pressure, and had to settle for a draw in a rook ending.

In Game 31 Korchnoi executed a minority attack against the Orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined. He reached a better endgame, and Karpov eventually succumbed to the pressure after missing some chances to hold. Karpov is one of the greatest endgame players of all time, so it is amazing that he lost three endings in such a short period. Credit must also go to Korchnoi, who played remarkably well.

From the start of Game 28 to the end of Game 31, Korchnoi amazingly clawed his way back from a 5–2 deficit to tying the match at 5–5. Now both players were just a single victory away from ultimate success, but the momentum was firmly on the side of the challenger. Here is the thirty second and decisive game of the match.

Game 50

Anatoly Karpov – Viktor Korchnoi

World Championship, Baguio City (32) 1978

1.e4 d6

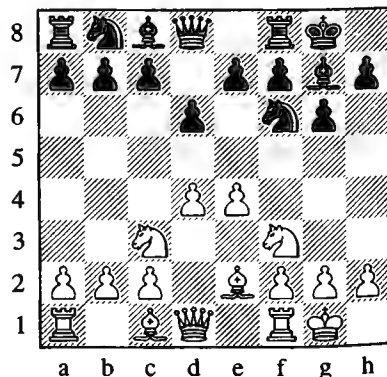
At the start of this game Korchnoi faced a tough dilemma. One approach would have been to play for a safe draw, intending to press for a win in his next game with the white pieces. On the other hand this might have given the wounded Karpov a chance to recover his energy and composure.

Instead Korchnoi decided to gamble with a provocative choice of opening. He obviously wanted to obtain a complicated position in order to capitalize on the momentum he had obtained with his recent winning streak. Who knows what might have happened had he opted for the former approach?

2.d4 ♘f6 3.♙c3 g6 4.♘f3

Karpov goes for the line that he had played most often.

4...♙g7 5.♙e2 0–0 6.0–0



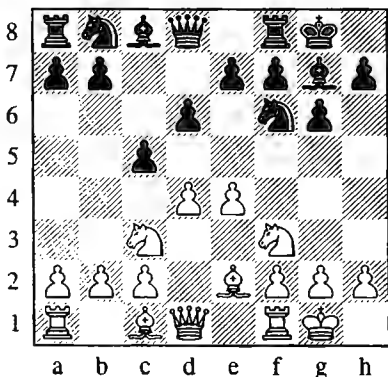
6...c5?!

With hindsight this was a risky decision,

despite the fact that Karpov did not have much experience facing it.

Previously Korchnoi had used 6...♘c6 to draw easily with Karpov at the 1973 Leningrad Interzonal tournament.

Another option is 6...♗g4, although Karpov had faced this move three times in 1977 and won on each occasion.



7.d5!

7.dxc5 dxc5 often results in an exchange of queens, with White enjoying slightly better prospects. Normally one would expect such a scenario to appeal to Karpov, but we should not forget that he has just lost three endings out of the previous four games. Under the circumstances, the text move was definitely the right choice.

7...♘a6 8.♗f4 ♘c7 9.a4 b6

Korchnoi plays the most common move. Browne had drawn with Karpov in Madrid 1973 with 9...♗g4, although White maintained a slight edge for most of that game. 9...a6 is another standard move.

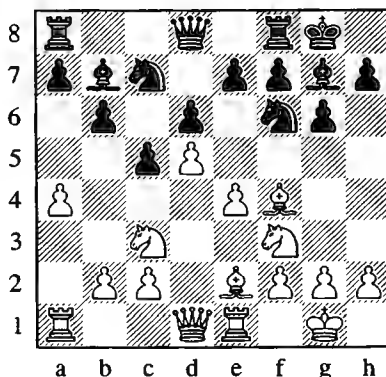
10.♞e1

Another relevant game continued as follows: 10.h3 ♗b7 11.♞e1 ♞e8 12.♗c4 a6 13.♞d3 ♘d7 14.e5 dxe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♗xe5

♞d7 17.♗xg7 ♘xg7 18.♞ad1 ♞ad8 19.b3 ♞f5 20.♞g3 ♘a8 21.♗d3 ♞d7 22.♗e4 ♞d6 23.♞e3 ♘c7 24.♗f3 f5 25.h4 White was better and went on to win in Kluger – Tal, Kislovodsk 1964.

This was probably the best win of Gyula Kluger's career. The Hungarian IM once told me he had a hunch that Tal, who was present in Baguio City, had showed Karpov this game.

10...♗b7



11.♗c4!

Just like Kluger, Karpov defends the d5-pawn in order to carry out the advance of the e-pawn. For the moment he saves time by omitting h2-h3.

11...♘h5?!

Korchnoi thinks it is worth a tempo to divert the bishop from f4, but it hard to believe that this can be correct.

After the natural 11...♞d7 12.♞d3, Karpov evaluates the position as very tense, with somewhat better chances for White. A logical continuation would be: 12...a6 (After 12...♞ad8 Hort recommends 13.♘b5, but 13.a5 also looks strong.) Had this position been reached, it would have been interesting to see whether Karpov would have tried to utilize the presence

of the bishop on f4 with the direct 13.e5, or instead build his position more patiently with 13.h3 ♖ad8. In the latter case his most promising idea looks to be 14.♖ab1 with the idea of gaining space on the queenside.

12.♗g5 ♖f6

This loss of a tempo does not make a good impression. It was worth considering: 12...h6 13.♗e3 (or 13.♗h4 g5 14.♘d2 ♖f4 15.♗g3 with a complicated game) 13...e6 From this point one game continued 14.♙d2 exd5 15.exd5 g5 16.h3 and the draw was agreed in Komarov – Lemmers, Sremic Krsko 1998. It seems to me that White can improve with 14.dxe6, which should suffice for an edge.

13.♙d3!

It is quite possible that Karpov knew the Kluger – Tal game, although of course he is more than capable of finding good positional moves on his own.

13...a6 14.♖ad1 ♖b8 15.h3?!

This is unnecessary. Karpov later explained that he felt the pressure of the occasion and did not want to take a risk. He preferred a slight advantage in a stable position, but objectively he had every right to play more ambitiously.

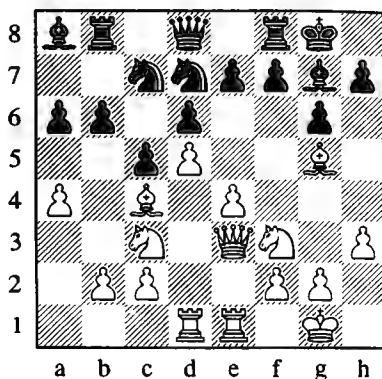
15.e5! was correct: 15...dxe5 16.♘xe5 b5 (16...♙d6 17.♙f3! ♖be8 18.♗f4 ♙d8 19.♘c6 ♙d7 20.♗e5±) 17.axb5 axb5 18.♗xb5 ♘cxd5 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.♙xd5 ♗xd5 21.c4 Kasparov says that White's advantage is huge.

15...♘d7 16.♙e3

By creating an escape route for his bishop to f1, Karpov stops any counterplay based on ...b5 followed by ...♘b6.

Another idea was 16.♗f4!? intending to push the e-pawn.

16...♗a8

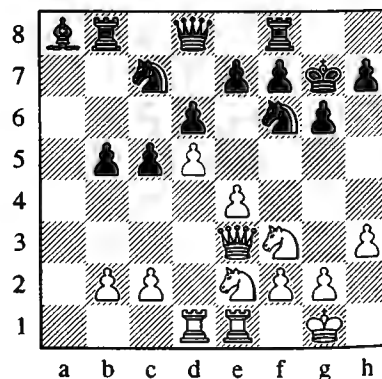


17.♗h6!

By exchanging bishops Karpov not only weakens his opponent's kingside, but also robs the black position of much of its dynamic potential and takes the sting out of a future ...b5.

17...b5 18.♗xg7 ♖xg7 19.♗f1 ♖f6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♘e2

Karpov plays rather cautiously. It was worth considering 21.♖a1!?, occupying the open file.



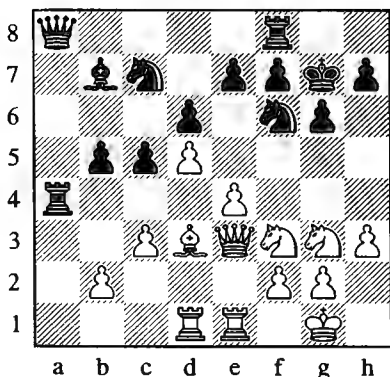
21...♗b7?!

Korchnoi concentrates on carrying out his queenside play. On balance, a more promising approach would have been 21...e6!? to obtain some space in the centre. After the further

22.dxe6 ♖xe6 23.♘g3 ♖c7 Black's position is playable according to Kasparov.

22.♘g3 ♖a8 23.c3 ♖a4 24.♗d3 ♖a8!?

Korchnoi continues to focus on the queenside, but this approach leaves little room for mistakes later in the game. He may have underestimated White's attacking resources.



25.e5!

The point of such a breakthrough is usually to push back the opponent. This time it has the additional advantages of improving the queen and undermining the c5-pawn.

25...dxe5

Korchnoi had no real choice:

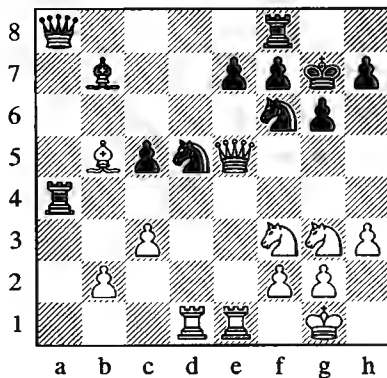
Taking the d-pawn leaves the king unprotected: 25...♘f4d5? 26.♘h5†! (26.♘f5† wins as well) 26...gxh5 27.♖g5† ♔h8 28.♖h6 f5 29.♘g5 And White checkmates.

25...♘g8?! Retreating is not only passive, but also costs Black at least a pawn. 26.exd6 ♘xd5 (26...exd6? 27.♘f5†! ♔h8 28.♘xd6 ♗xd5 29.♘e5 wins) 27.♖xc5 ♖c8 (27...exd6 28.♖xd6) 28.♖xb5 exd6 29.♘d4 White is a pawn up.

26.♖xe5 ♘cxd5

26...♖d8 Coming back with the queen was possible, but hardly sufficient for Black to achieve a satisfactory game: 27.♗c2 ♖a6 (27...♖a2? 28.d6) 28.♘e4 ♗xd5 29.♘xc5 White is clearly better.

27.♗xb5



27...♖a7?

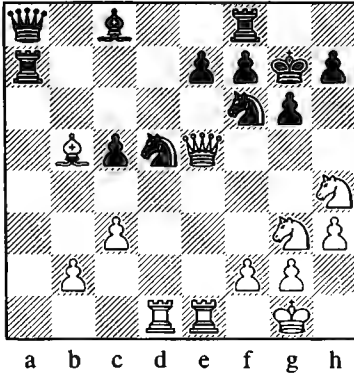
Defending the e7-pawn looks natural, but it is a bit slow. Kasparov suggested the improvement 27...♖a5!, which wins an important tempo by attacking the bishop. Play continues 28.c4 (28.♗d3 ♘g8 is okay for Black) 28...♖b8! 29.♖g5 (29.♘d2 ♘f4! [29...♗a8 30.♘b3 ♖a2 is slightly better for White according to Kasparov] 30.♘b3 ♖xb5 31.cxb5 ♗xg2 32.♘xc5 ♗f3 Black has decent counterplay.) 29...e6 30.cxd5 h6 31.♖e3 ♖xb5 32.dxe6 ♗xf3 33.♖xf3 ♖b3 Black can rescue himself by simplifying to an ending with three pawns versus two on one side of the board, as pointed out by Kasparov.

28.♘h4 ♗c8

After 28...♗c6? 29.♗xc6 ♖xc6 30.c4 ♘b6 31.♗d6! White wins (Karpov). 31...♖c7 32.♖g5 gives White a crushing attack.

28...♖b8! looks to me like the best practical chance, although even here White has a strong

answer: 29.♖g5! Maintaining the pressure against both the king and the c5-pawn. (29.c4 ♜xe5 30.♞xe5 ♞a5!) 29...e6 30.c4 ♜f4 (30...♜c7 31.♞d6) 31.♞xc5 ♞a2 (31...h6 32.♞d6) 32.♞d4 ♞c8 White is a pawn up but the game is far from over, and Black has chances for counterplay based on ...g5.



29.♖e2!?

Despite having just made a threatening move on the kingside, Karpov shows that he has not forgotten about the queenside. With this move he retreats the undefended bishop from b5 and threatens a deadly pin from f3. From a psychological perspective, Karpov may also have liked the idea of confronting Korchnoi with what may well have been an unexpected move.

Kasparov mentions that White could also have targeted the c5-pawn directly by means of 29.♜e4! ♜c7 30.♖d3 ♜e6 31.♜xc5 and the lonely soldier falls.

29...e6 30.c4 ♜b4 31.♞xc5

White's extra pawn gives him a significant advantage, but the game is still far from over.

31...♞b8

31...♜c2 does not achieve much, and after 32.♖f3 ♞b8 33.♞e2 ♜b4 (33...♞c8 34.♞g5)

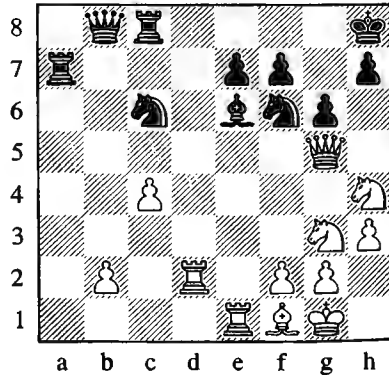
34.♞g5 ♖h8 35.b3 White consolidates his material advantage.

32.♖f1 ♞c8

Kasparov recommends 32...h6, but doubts that it would have saved Korchnoi from ultimate defeat. After 33.♞d2 ♞c8 34.♞e3 ♞b7 White is a long way from victory, but his extra pawn is secure and he should be able to improve his position gradually.

33.♞g5 ♖h8 34.♞d2 ♜c6

34...♖xc4 is unsatisfactory: 35.♞xe7! ♜g8 36.♞xa7 ♞xa7 37.♞e5† f6 38.♞c3 ♜a2 39.♞d4 ♞xd4 40.♞xd4 And White is a healthy pawn up.



35.♞h6

This is a strong attacking move, and a frightening one to face over the board. The primary threat is ♜f3-g5.

35...♞g8?

With just seconds remaining on his clock, Korchnoi defends his king in the most natural way, which turns out to be a mistake as it reduces his influence on the queenside. Two alternatives deserve attention.

35...♜g8 36.♞e3 ♜f6 was a better idea according to Kasparov, who stops his analyses

here. While this may be an improvement over the game continuation, White can still sail home to victory with the help of a few good moves: 37. ♖f3! ♘a5 38. ♖a1 ♖a6 39. ♗c3 ♙xc4 (39... ♗b6 40. ♖a4) 40. ♖xa5 ♙xf1 41. ♖c5 ♖xc5 42. ♗xc5+—

35... ♘e5!?

To my knowledge, no other commentator has suggested this move, but according to my analysis it is Black's best chance to resist. The main idea is to stop ♖f3.

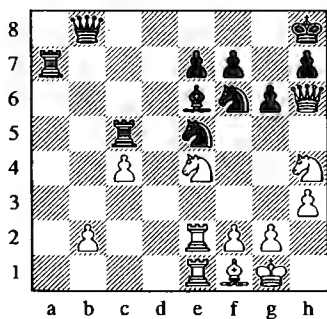
36. ♖de2

After 36.b3 ♖b7 37. ♗e3 ♘c6 Black has serious pressure against the queenside pawns.

36... ♖c5

In the event of 36... ♘g8 37. ♗e3 ♖xc4 38. ♗xe5† ♗xe5 39. ♘g6† hxg6 40. ♖xe5 ♖b4 41. ♖b5 ♖aa4 42. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 43. ♖e2 White's extra pawn gives him good winning chances.

37. ♘e4



37... ♘g8!

37... ♘eg4? is a witty idea, but White has a powerful rebuttal: 38. hxg4 (after 38. ♘g6† fxg6 39. hxg4 ♖h5 40. gxh5 ♘g4 41. ♘g3 ♘xh6 42. ♖xe6 ♘g4 Black has chances to hold) 38... ♖h5 (38... ♘xg4 39. ♘g6† fxg6 40. ♗h4+—) 39. ♗e3! (39. gxh5 ♘g4 40. ♘g6† fxg6 41. ♘g3 ♘xh6 42. ♖xe6 is possible, but the text move is better.)

39... ♖xh4 40. g3! ♖xg4 41. ♘xf6 exf6 42. ♙h3 White traps the rook and wins.

38. ♗e3 ♖xc4 39. ♖d2

Another possibility is 39. ♗g3 ♘d7.

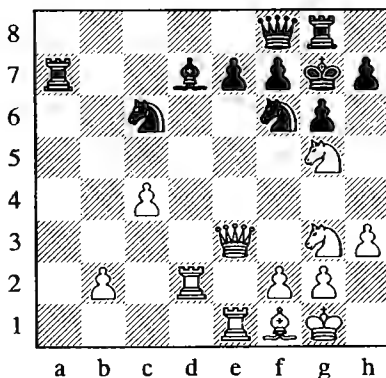
39... ♖c6 40. b4

Black is still on the defensive, but he has chances to hold.

36. ♘f3 ♗f8 37. ♗e3 ♘g7?!

An inaccuracy, although even after the superior 37... ♖b7 38. ♘g5 ♙d7 39. c5! White should win as his bishop will become active on c4.

38. ♘g5 ♙d7



39. b4!

Playing this move must have come as a great pleasure and relief to Karpov. With his pawns advancing in unison, he must have sensed he would win this game and with it the match.

39... ♗a8 40. b5 ♘a5 41. b6 ♖b7 1-0

The game was adjourned here but Korchnoi saw no point in continuing this hopeless position. Thus Karpov retained his crown for another three years and the Soviet Union narrowly avoided seeing their shining star lose to a defector. Karpov showed great fortitude in recovering from his losing streak near the

end of the match. Nevertheless the overall quality of his play was well below par. This is partially attributable to the loss of Furman, but mainly due to the overwhelming tension surrounding the match. Karpov was the golden boy of Soviet chess, and one can only imagine the pressure on his shoulders to beat – and preferably humiliate – the despised defector. Karpov and Korchnoi had to concern themselves not only with the moves occurring on the board, but also with the numerous antics that took place off the board. Both of the players and their support teams became embroiled in a game of psychological warfare, replete with covert agents, parapsychologists, propaganda and the infamous “yogurt pot” protest.

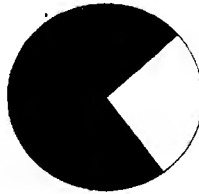
Nevertheless, in defending his title Karpov solidified his status as the strongest player in the world; or strongest *active* player, depending on how one estimates Karpov’s strength relative to Fischer at the time. Another thing that became clear was that Karpov did not radiate the same level of charisma as the American. Had he done so, there is a chance that Fischer may even have been tempted out of retirement.

1978 Summary

Bugojno (1st-2nd place): 10/15 (+6 =8 -1)

World Championship Match versus Korchnoi, Baguio City: Won 16½–15½ (+6 =21 -5)

Total 56.4% (+12 =29 -6)



○ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1979

Rating 2705 (1 in the World)

Karpov's first tournament after retaining his title was in Munich. After beating a local player named Dankert in round one, he met his countryman Balashov, who for a long time had been one of his trainers. The Russian grandmaster qualified for many Interzonal tournaments, but never made it through to the candidate matches. I found sixty one games in which Balashov faced the world champions. He performed solidly against them with seven wins, forty four draws and ten losses. Against Karpov the database shows a record of one win, eight draws and four defeats, although the two players were of a similar age so they probably met in several junior events which never made it to the database.

Game 51

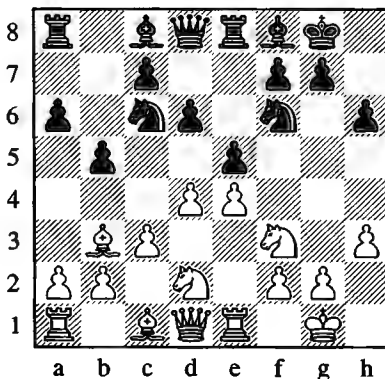
Anatoly Karpov – Yuri Balashov

Munich 1979

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♗e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 h6

Balashov chooses the Smyslov variation. I think a more appropriate name would be the Smyslov-Gligoric variation as the Yugoslav grandmaster played it much more often. Black's main idea is to bolster the e5-pawn and then decide whether to put his light-squared bishop on b7 or d7. It is not easy to decide on a set-up to play against Karpov in the main line of the Ruy Lopez, as he scored heavily against all of them and never lost a single game with White!

10.d4 ♗e8 11.♘bd2 ♙f8



12. ♖c2!

This the most testing move in the position. It sounds strange to say, but it puts Black in a mild form of zugzwang! The point is that Black has played most of his useful regrouping moves and must decide at some point where to develop his light-squared bishop. White will then decide accordingly whether to play on the kingside or the queenside.

12.a4 is not so effective in view of 12...♗d7! when Black has no problems on the queenside.

On the other hand, if White looks towards the kingside with 12.♖f1 then 12...♗b7! is a good answer, as demonstrated by the following encounter between the same players, which took place eight years before the present game: 13.♖g3 ♖a5 14.♗c2 ♖c4 15.b3 ♖b6 16.♖h2 d5 17.dxe5 ♖xe4 18.♞d3 ♖d7 19.f4 ♞h4 20.♖hf1 ♖dc5 Black equalized comfortably and a draw was agreed a few moves later, Karpov – Balashov, Moscow 1971.

12...♗b7

The other main line is 12...♗d7, when 13.♖f1 is known to lead to a somewhat better position for White.

The present position can also occur from the Zaitsev variation, although when Karpov played the black side of that line he preferred to play ...g6 or ...♖b8 instead of the less useful ...h6.

13.d5

Now that Black has committed his bishop to b7, White blocks the long diagonal. 13.♖f1?! is premature in view of 13...exd4! 14.cxd4 ♖b4 when Black is fine.

The other main line is 13.a4, which also gives White chances to fight for an advantage. Karpov would go on to defend the black side

of this position many times after taking up the Zaitsev system.

13...♖b8 14.b3

Karpov gets ready to bolster the d5-pawn.

14...c6

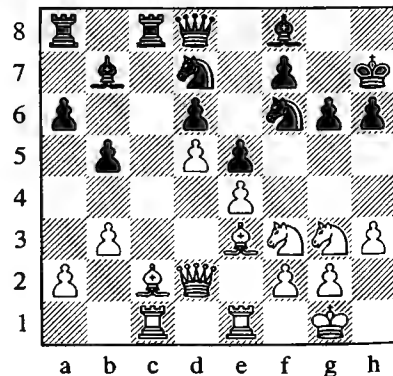
In previous games Black played for ...c5.

15.c4 ♖bd7 16.♖f1

Having made some pawn moves, it is time for White to complete his development.

16...♞c7 17.♗c3 ♞ec8 18.♞c1 ♞d8 19.♖g3 cxd5 20.cxd5 g6

The disruptive 20...♞a5! was worth considering, and after 21.a4 bxa4 22.bxa4 g6 Black's position is playable.

21.♞d2 ♖h7**22.a4!**

Karpov softens the black queenside.

22...♖c5

Also after 22...bxa4 23.bxa4 ♖c5 24.♞b1 (24.a5!?) 24...♞ab8 25.♞b4 White has some pressure on the queenside.

23.axb5 axb5 24.b4 ♖a4 25.♗d3!

Karpov wastes no time in directing his pieces against the weak b5-pawn.

25...♖d7 26.♞xc8 ♜xc8 27.♘e2 ♞b7
28.♞c2!?

Karpov plays in his usual prophylactic style. White's main plan involves transferring a knight to b3, a5 and perhaps ultimately to c6. The knight on e2 requires fewer tempos to make this journey, but Karpov prefers to leave this knight where it is in order to guard against an invasion on c3. Therefore he makes room for the f3-knight to make the journey instead.

28...♙d7 29.♘d2 ♙e7

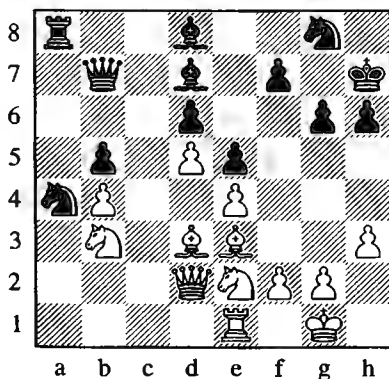
It was reasonable to improve the rook first with 29...♞c8.

30.♘b3 ♙d8 31.♞d2!

In his last few moves Balashov was focusing on the queenside, but now Karpov switches to the kingside.

31...♘g8

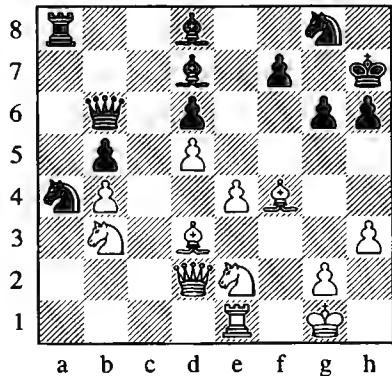
If 31...h5 32.f4 is strong.



32.f4!

Black now faces a dilemma: either he allows White the pleasant choice between fxe5 and f5, or he exchanges on f4 and gives his opponent's pieces the use of the d4-square.

32...exf4 33.♙xf4 ♞b6†



34.♙h1!

Karpov wants to keep the dark-squared bishops on the board in order to keep Black's position more congested. If 34.♙e3 then 34...♙g5! would lead to exchanges favouring the defender.

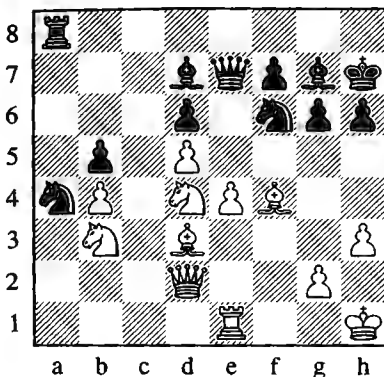
34...♙f6 35.♙e3 ♞d8 36.♘ed4 ♞e8 37.♞c1
♙g7 38.♙f4!

Just as in a Benoni position, the d6-pawn is vulnerable. In some cases White can consider a central breakthrough with ♙e1 and e5 as well.

38...♘f6 39.♞e1 ♞e7?!

The Russian grandmaster defends the weak pawn by the queen as he wants to activate his rook, but the queen on e7 will soon be hit by a knight on c6.

39...♞a6 was the lesser evil. The rook move is a bit passive, but it is more reliable than the game continuation. 40.♙h2! (The immediate 40.e5 ♘xd5 41.exd6 ♞b8 is not so clear, so White starts by moving his bishop out of harm's way.) 40...♘h5 41.♞c2 White keeps the upper hand as Black cannot relieve the pressure in a fully satisfactory way. After 41...♙e5 42.♙xe5 dxe5 (42...♞xe5 43.♙xb5) 43.♘e2 ♞a8 44.♘c5 White remains on top.

**40. ♖h2!**

This is another typical prophylactic move from Karpov. Black no longer can win a tempo with a knight hop to h5.

40... ♜c8 41. ♖a5!

Transferring the knight to c6 drives the queen away and blocks the defence of the b5-pawn as well. At the same time Karpov gives no counterchances at all.

41. ♖xb5 also works for White, but only narrowly. 41... ♜xb5 42. ♖xb5 ♖xe4 43. ♖xd6! ♜xd6! 44. ♜xe4 After the brief tactical fireworks White is a pawn up, but the task of converting his advantage will be harder than in the game.

41... ♖h5

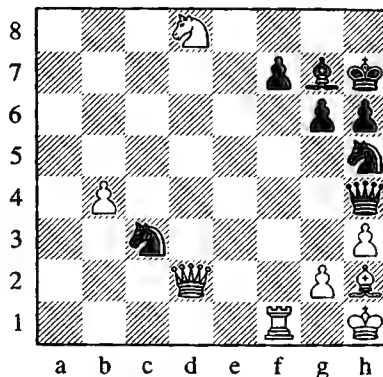
41... ♖g4 is also insufficient: 42. ♖ac6 ♜xc6 43. ♖xc6 ♜h4 (43... ♜xc6 44. dxc6 ♜c3 [44... ♖xh2 45. e5] 45. ♜e2 wins) 44. ♜f1! ♖xh2 45. ♖xh2 ♜c7 46. g3! White forces the queen exchange and the b5-pawn falls. 46... ♜h5 47. ♜e2 ♜g5 48. ♜xg5 hxg5 49. ♖xb5 White should win the endgame.

42. ♖ac6 ♜xc6 43. ♖xc6 ♜h4 44. ♜f1!

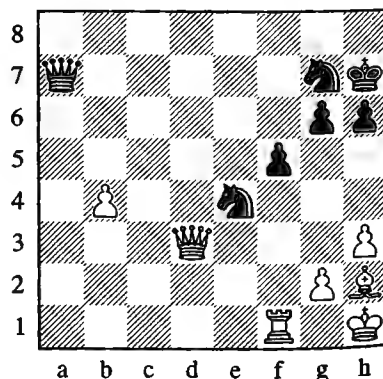
Karpov suddenly threatens to take three different pawns. Black cannot avoid losing material in one way or another.

44... ♖c3 45. e5 ♖xd5

Balashov sacrifices the exchange, hoping to change the course of the game. After 45... dxe5 46. ♜xc3 e4 47. ♜xf7 exd3 48. ♜xd3 Black is a pawn down with a hopeless position.

46. ♖xb5 ♖c7 47. exd6 ♖xb5 48. d7 ♜f8 49. d8=♜ ♜xd8 50. ♖xd8 ♖c3**51. ♜d3! ♖e4 52. ♖g1!**

Karpov could not prevent the knight from joining Black's kingside forces, but with these two fine defensive moves he neutralizes their activity.

52... ♜f5 53. ♖e6 ♜e7 54. ♖xg7 ♜a7† 55. ♖h1 ♖xg7

56.♙e5!

Once again we see Karpov's sharpness in spotting a chance to hurt the opponent's king in the endgame. Giving back the exchange is the simplest practical solution.

56...♖f2† 57.♞xf2 ♜xf2 58.♞d6 f4 59.♙xf4 g5

59...♖f5 60.♞c7† ♕g8 61.♕h2 wins.

60.♙e5

1-0

After this second victory in Munich Karpov made three draws. Then sadly he had to withdraw after hearing the news that his father had passed away. In a way his father was lucky, as most fathers of world champions died before their sons reached the pinnacle of the chess world. It must have been a special joy to witness Anatoly's many great successes.

Karpov's next event was the Tournament of Stars in Montreal. The name of the event was certainly justified by the distinguished list of participants. Karpov started with a quick draw with the black pieces against Hübner, before facing Timman in round two. Since their 1967 junior games these two great players did not cross swords for nine years. Between 1976 and 1979 they played seven games, with one win apiece and five draws.

Game 52

Anatoly Karpov – Jan Timman

Montreal 1979

1.e4

Interestingly Karpov only made a fifty percent score in twelve games with 1.e4 against Timman. With other first moves he was much more convincing.

1...d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♖c3 g6 4.g3

Karpov deviates from their previous game in this opening, in which he put his bishop on e2. Despite his success in the present game, Karpov never used the fianchetto line again.

4...♙g7 5.♙g2 0-0 6.♖ge2

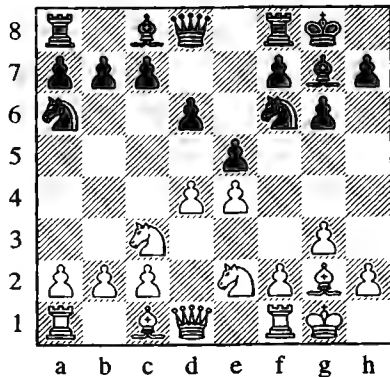
Previously Spassky had developed this knight on f3 against Timman.

6...e5

The next time Timman faced this variation, he changed his approach and opted for 7...♖bd7 followed by ...c5.

7.0-0 ♖a6!?

Usually this move is played in conjunction with ...c5 rather than ...e5. Timman had reached the same position a few years earlier, against Van der Vliet at the 1977 Dutch Championship. On that occasion he preferred 7...♖bd7. Later in the game White advanced his pawn to a4 in order to prevent ...b5. This may have influenced Timman's choice in the present game, as a subsequent a2-a4 will allow the black knight to take up residence on b4.



8.♞e1

Karpov anticipates any attacks on the e4-pawn well in advance.

8...c6 9.h3

This typical prophylactic move prevents Black from using the g4-square.

9...Ee8 10.g5!?

Karpov provokes the following pawn move in order to gain a tempo with ♖d2 later.

10...h6

After 10...exd4 11.♟xd4 h6 12.gxf4 g5 13.gxc1 White is somewhat better according to Karpov.

10...♟b6!/? leads to interesting play: 11.Eb1 exd4 (11...gxe6!?) 12.♟xd4 ♟g4!/? Black should take action before the weakness of the d6-pawn is felt. (12...♟c5 13.♟b3 is better for White; 12...d5 is more challenging, but after 13.exd5!? Eexl† 14.♟xe1 ♟xd4 15.dxc6 White has nice play for the piece.) 13.hxg4 gxd4 Black can live with the weak d6-pawn as his pieces are active enough.

11.gxe3 ♟c7

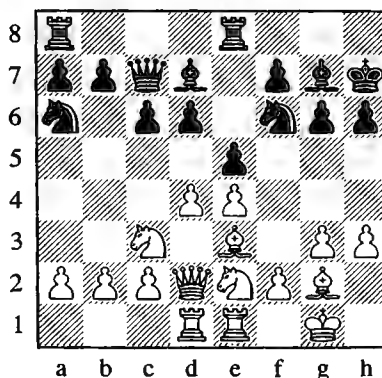
Karpov recommends the flexible 11...♟h7, pointing out that this move will have to be made at some point. 12.♟d2 exd4 13.♟xd4 ♟c5 14.f3 d5 (The more patient 14...♟c7 15.Ead1 a5 deserves attention.) 15.♟xc6 ♟cx4 (no better is 15...bxc6 16.gxc5 dxe4 17.♟xd8 Exd8 18.fxe4) 16.fxe4 (16.♟xd8?! ♟xd2 17.♟xf7 Eex3!) 16...bxc6 According to Karpov Black has a good game. However Kasparov points out that White can simply capture the d5-pawn with 17.exd5 cxd5 18.♟xd5, when Black does not have enough compensation.

11...exd4!/? is interesting, and could be an improvement for Black compared with the game. 12.gxd4 (White has to take this way, as 12.♟xd4? ♟c5 13.gxf4 ♟h5 is awkward for him.) 12...♟c7 (12...♟c5 is well met by 13.e5!) 13.♟f4 ♟e6 14.gxe3 White has

some pressure against the d6-pawn, but according to Kasparov Black's position remains playable.

12.♟d2 ♟h7 13.Ead1 g4?

It seems more natural to station this bishop on b7. 13...b5!/? deserved consideration, and after 14.a3 (14.dxe5 dxe5 15.♟d6 gxe6 is okay for Black) 14...♟b7 Black is only slightly worse.

**14.g4!**

Having brought the last piece into the game, White must decide on a plan. Karpov subsequently explained that he initially looked for opportunities in the centre, but realized that this strategy would not yield anything at this stage and so he found another way to strengthen his position.

14...Ead8 15.♟g3

Now the e4-pawn is securely defended.

15...gxc8 16.f4 b5 17.a3

It is useful to safeguard the position of the knight on c3.

17...b4?!

Timman was probably worried about White's build-up on the kingside, and was anxious to develop counterplay on the opposite

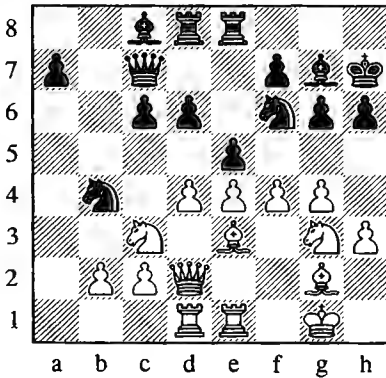
flank. Unfortunately for the Dutchman, he only succeeds in creating weaknesses for himself. Here are a few of the other candidate moves:

17...exd4 Exchanging this pawn is a concession, and Black fails to equalize after 18.gxd4 dxc5 19.♖f2. Black has obtained the c5-square, but his knight is not particularly stable there.

17...♗e7 clears the c7-square for the knight, but after 18.♖f2 ♖b7 19.dxe5 dxe5 20.f5 White is better.

17...d7!? was worth considering, with the idea of transferring the knight to b6.

18.axb4 dxb4



19.d7ce2!

Most commentators have called this a prophylactic move, designed to prevent the plan of ...a5 and ...a6. While this may have been a part of Karpov's motivation, I suspect that his main idea was to exert pressure against Black's weakened queenside.

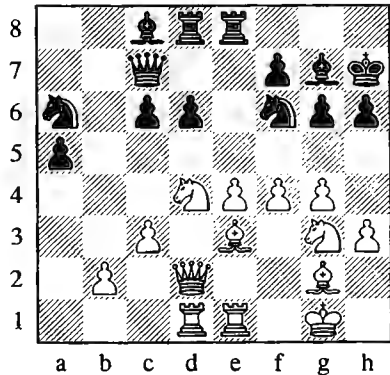
19...exd4?

After this exchange the e2-knight becomes active, while Black fails to obtain any significant pressure along the e-file.

19...c5? would have been a huge positional concession, and after 20.fxe5 dxe5 (20...cxd4 allows 21.exf6) 21.d5 Karpov evaluates Black's position as hopeless.

The best chance was 19...a5!? 20.c3 d6 21.♖a1 when White will develop pressure against the a5-pawn, but his advantage is smaller than in the game. If White instead plays for a kingside attack with 21.f5, Black can consider 21...exd4!? 22.cxd4 d6 23.b4 when he is not without chances.

20.dxd4 a5 21.c3 d6



22.♖c2!?

Karpov plays a typical prophylactic move, anticipating ...dxc5 which could now be met by the simple b4. The idea is nice, but it was not the strongest continuation available.

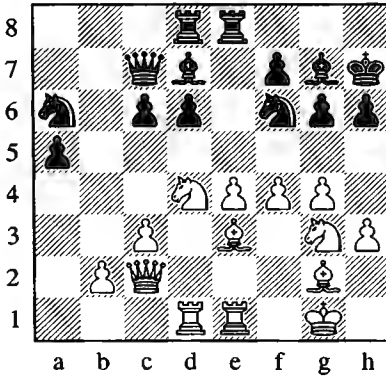
Interestingly no commentator seems to have mentioned the sweet possibility of 22.dxc6! ♖xc6 (22...dxc6 23.dxd8) 23.e5 d5 24.exf6 ♖xf6 25.♖f2 when White has a considerable positional advantage.

22...g7!?

Timman plans to put the bishop to e8, but blocking the d-file is rather clumsy.

The best chance was 22...g7. This keeps

the a6-knight defended, and also guards c6-pawn, which may enable Black to play ... $\text{d}c5$ under better circumstances than in the game. 23. $\text{d}f3!$ (after 23. $\text{e}a1$ $\text{d}c5$ 24. $b4$ $axb4$ 25. $axb4$ $\text{d}d5$ Black is kicking) 23... $\text{d}c5!$; 24. $e5$ $\text{d}d5$ 25. $\text{d}xc5$ $dx5$ 26. $\text{e}4$ $\text{e}d7$ White is better, but increasing his advantage will not be easy.



23. $\text{d}f3!$

This is a lovely dual purpose move. It fulfils the prophylactic function of preventing ... $\text{d}c5$, while also opening the d-file in order to exert pressure against d6.

23... $\text{e}7$

After 23... $\text{d}c5$ many strong commentators have given their thoughts on how White should improve the position. After the logical 24. $e5$ $\text{d}d5$ 25. $\text{d}xc5$ (25. $\text{d}f2!$?) 25... $dx5$ White has a few tempting ideas.

26. $\text{e}4!$? is Kasparov's suggestion, which certainly looks good enough to maintain an edge.

I also like Adianto's 26. $\text{d}h5!$, as after the natural 26... $\text{h}8$ (26... $\text{h}8$ 27. $\text{d}xg7$ $\text{c}xg7$ 28. $f5\pm$) 27. $\text{d}h4!$ White has excellent chances on the kingside.

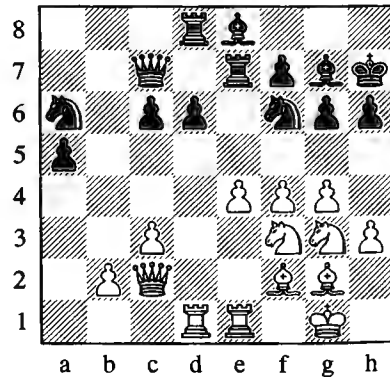
24. $\text{d}f2!$

Played in anticipation of Black's next move. The point of the bishop retreat is that a subsequent ... $\text{d}d5$ will no longer attack the bishop. See the note to Black's 25th move below.

If White tries to force matters too soon then he risks losing his advantage, for instance: 24. $\text{d}d3$ $\text{d}c8!$ (after 24... $\text{d}c5$ 25. $\text{e}4$ $\text{e}d6$ 26. $\text{e}d6$ $\text{d}xc6$ 27. $\text{d}xe4$ $\text{d}xe4$ 28. $\text{d}d1$ Black has a difficult ending) 25. $g5$ $hxg5$ 26. $\text{d}xg5$ $\text{c}g8$ 27. $e5$ $\text{d}d5$ 28. $\text{d}xd5$ $cx5$ 29. $e6$ $f5$ 30. $\text{e}d5$ $\text{d}f6$ White has won a pawn, but his e6-pawn is in jeopardy.

24... $\text{d}c8?$

This unfortunate move leaves the d8-rook and the a6-knight unprotected.



25. $\text{d}d3!$

This is so typical of Karpov's play. After a fine strategic performance, he exploits his tactical opportunities with computer-like efficiency.

25... $\text{b}7$

Moving the knight loses due to the pin along the d-file: 25... $\text{d}b8?$ 26. $e5!$ $\text{d}d5$ 27. exd6 $\text{e}xe1$ \pm 28. $\text{d}xe1$ $\text{e}d6$ 29. $c4+$ —

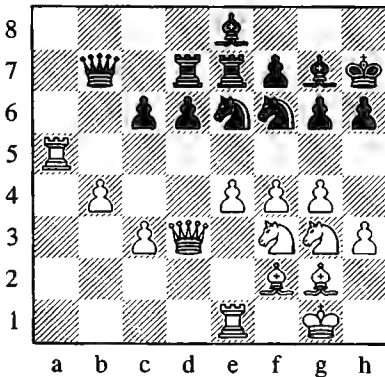
26. $\text{e}a1!$

26.g5 also wins a pawn after 26...hxg5 27.fxg5 ♖d7 28.♙xd6 ♜e6 29.♙a3, but Karpov's method is even more effective.

26...♖c7 27.♙xa5

White finally collects the pawn, while retaining a considerable space advantage and total control over the position. Black is simply lost.

27...♜dd7 28.b4 ♖e6



29.♗e3 c5?!

Timman tries to get some counterplay, but he only succeeds in giving White a passed pawn.

30.f5 ♖d8 31.b5

White's position is overwhelming, and the game does not last much longer.

31...♗h8 32.♗f2 ♜c7 33.♙a4 ♜b8 34.c4 ♙a7 35.♙xa7 ♙xa7 36.e5 dxe5 37.♖xe5 ♙a2 38.♗xc5
1-0

In round 3 Karpov drew with Larsen, before facing Boris Spassky in round 4. Since their match in 1974 they had played three times. On each occasion Spassky had the white pieces and a quick draw ensued. But now it was Karpov's turn to move first.

Game 53

Anatoly Karpov – Boris Spassky

Montreal 1979

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 d5 4.♖c3 ♗e7

Spassky plays an opening that he knows well, although Karpov also played the Orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined several times in his match with Korchnoi.

5.♗f4

This can be attributed to the influence of Korchnoi, who employed the text move against Karpov in Baguio. Karpov used it five times in total, winning two and drawing three. Interestingly he never tried it against Kasparov.

5...0-0 6.e3 c5

In 1983 Spassky elected to transpose to a Queen's Indian with 6...b6 against both Agdestein and Seirawan, but lost both games.

7.dxc5 ♖c6 8.♜c2 ♜a5 9.a3 ♗xc5 10.♙d1 ♗e7

Karpov tried the risky 10...♜e8 in one game in Baguio, but lost and never repeated it.

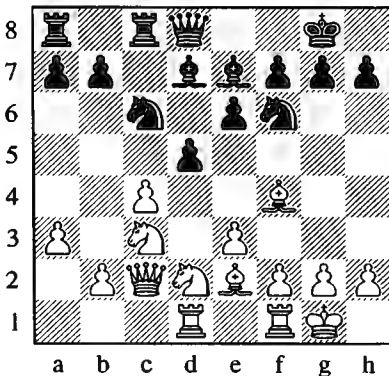
11.♖d2 ♗d7?!

At this stage of his career Spassky had lost some of his motivation to work diligently on his openings. Generally he was happy to develop his pieces and reach a playable middlegame. This approach was enough for the former champion to maintain a decent level, but dangerous against the top players in the world, especially with the black pieces.

The critical continuation is 11...e5 12.♗g5 d4 13.♖b3 when Black must decide where to put his queen. Karpov had reached this position twice with the black pieces in Baguio against

Korchnoi. In the first game he played 13...♙d8 and in the second he preferred 13...♙b6. Both games were drawn. Interestingly, in his 1981 match with Korchnoi he reverted back to 13...♙d8 and drew once again.

12.♙e2 ♜fc8 13.0-0 ♙d8



14.cxd5!

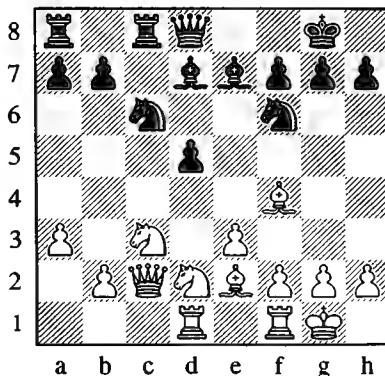
Spassky won some great games with an isolated pawn, but on those occasions he was able to attack. Here he is in no position to do so, and will have to defend a slightly worse position.

14...exd5

This line has only occurred in one other game, in which Black preferred 14...♟xd5. It would be interesting to know how Karpov was planning to respond. There are two tempting continuations:

a) One idea is to aim for active piece play: 15.♟c4!? ♙e8 This was Taborov – Lerner, Yalta 1981. In this position White has a number of ways to maintain some initiative. One somewhat surprising option is 16.♙e4!? ♟xc3 (after 16...♟xf4 17.exf4 ♜d8 18.b4 White is somewhat better) 17.bxc3 e5!? 18.♟xe5 ♟xe5 19.♙xe5 ♜xa3 20.♙d3 g6 21.♙f4 Black will have to tread carefully on the kingside.

b) It is more likely that Karpov would have gone for the isolated pawn position with 15.♟xd5 exd5 16.♙b1 ♙e6 (Getting rid of the isolani with 16...d4 leads to problems for Black after 17.♟e4 or 17.b4) 17.♟f3 ♙f6 18.e4 It is possible that Black can live with the pin, but it is hardly surprising that Spassky did not wish to venture down this path without having analysed it beforehand.



15.♟f3!

Of course Karpov blockades the d5-pawn.

15...h6

15...♙e6!?

This could have led to some remarkable tactics.

16.e4!?

This is the most ambitious move, and probably the one that Spassky feared.

White has some reasonable alternatives available. He can also start exchanging the minor pieces with 16.♟g5 or 16.♟e5, or he can make a small improving move such as 16.h3.

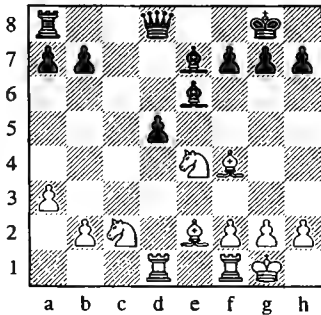
16...d4!

This is the soundest reaction.

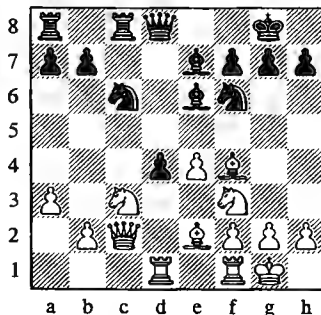
16...♙a5 does not solve Black's problems: 17.exd5 ♟xd5 18.♟xd5 ♙xd5 19.b4 ♙xa3 20.♙xd5 ♟xb4 21.♙e4 ♟xd5 22.♙xd5 In material terms Black is okay, but his king

will come under fire from White's queen and minor pieces.

16...♖xe4!? leads to heavy complications:
 17.♜xe4 ♘d4! 18.♜xd4 (18.♚d3 dxe4
 19.♚xd4 exf3 20.♚xd8† ♜xd8 21.♙xf3 g5
 22.♙g3 ♙c4 23.♜fe1 ♜xd1 24.♜xd1 ♙f6
 25.♙xb7 ♜e8! 26.b4 ♙b2 Black is okay.)
 18...♜xc2 19.♜xc2 White has a lot of
 material for the queen, but the drama is not
 yet over.



19...g5! 20.♙c1! This precise move keeps
 the e3-square available for the c2-knight.
 (After 20.♙e3 ♙f5 21.♙f3 g4 22.♜xd5
 ♚xd5 23.♜f6† ♙xf6 24.♙xd5 ♙xc2
 25.f3 Black is not far from equalizing.)
 20...♙f5 21.♙f3 ♜c8 (21...g4? 22.♜e3!)
 22.♜e3 ♙xe4 23.♙xe4 ♜xc1 24.♜xc1 dxe4
 25.♜f1 White keeps the upper hand, and
 can look to occupy the seventh rank with
 his rooks.



17.♙e3

The alternative is 17.e5 ♘d5 18.♜xd4 ♜xd4
 19.♜xd4 ♚a5 20.♚e4 ♜xc3 21.bxc3 ♚xc3
 22.♜f1 ♚xa3 and Black gets away with it.

17...♙c5

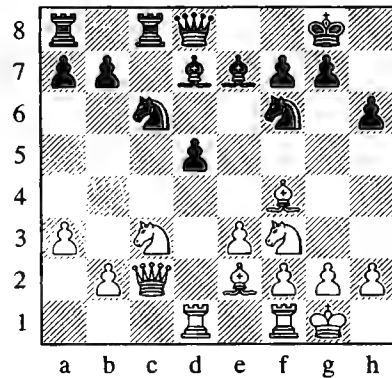
17...dxe3 18.♜xd8† ♙xd8 19.fxe3 ♙b6
 20.h3±

18.e5 ♜xe5! 19.♜xe5

19.♜xd4 is met by 19...♜fg4.

19...♚c7 20.♙xd4 ♙xd4 21.♜xd4 ♚xe5

White is only fractionally better.



16.♜e5! ♙e6 17.♜xc6!

Karpov adheres to the well known principle
 that the side playing against the isolated pawn
 should endeavour to exchange the minor
 pieces. It was well timed, as Black cannot
 recapture with the b-pawn due to the reply
 18.♙a6, winning an exchange.

Apart from these general considerations, the
 removal of the f3-knight also makes way for
 White's bishop to attack the d-pawn from that
 square.

17...♜xc6 18.♙f3 ♚b6 19.♙e5!

From this square the bishop not only prevents
 any future ...d4 ideas, but also threatens at any
 moment to eliminate the knight on f6, a key
 defender of the d5-pawn.

19...♜e4

Even though exchanges should favour White in principle, Spassky considers it more important to eliminate the knight on c3 in order to relieve the pressure against d5. A couple of other ideas deserved attention:

19...♖ac8

In such positions Black can sometimes give up the d-pawn in return for play on the c-file.

20.♞e2 ♜c4

20...♘d7 21.♙d4 ♞b3 (21...♞a5 22.e4! 22.e4! (The most energetic, although White can also keep an edge by means of 22.♞d3 ♞c4 23.♞fd1.) 22...dxe4 23.♙xe4 The position opens up in White's favour.

21.♘xd5 ♙d5 22.♙xd5 ♘xd5 23.♞xd5 ♙f6

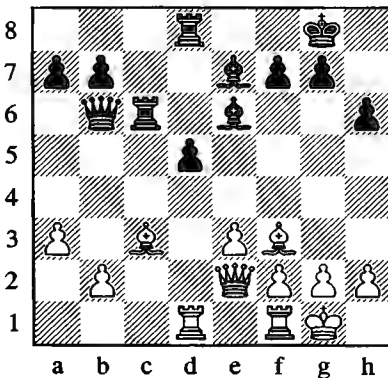
23...♞c2? does not work due to 24.♞g4!.

24.♙xf6 ♞xf6 25.♞d2

Black has no real compensation for the missing pawn, although White's technical task will not be easy.

19...♞d8!? was worth considering. Black is a bit passive, but his position is not easy to crack. 20.♞e2 (20.♞a4 ♜c4) 20...♞a5 21.♞d2 (21.♞d3 ♙f5 22.♞d4 ♘e4=) 21...♞cc8 22.♞fd1 ♘e4 23.♞d3 f6 24.♙d4 ♞a6 Black remains quite solid, and it is not easy for White to make progress.

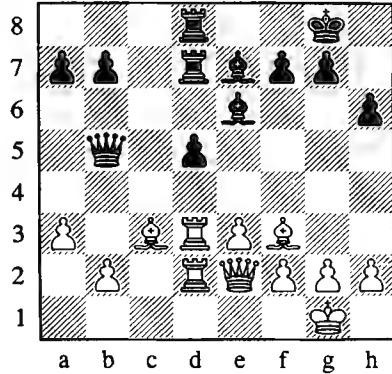
20.♞e2 ♘xc3 21.♙xc3 ♞d8



22.♞d3

Karpov starts focusing the full power of his heavy pieces against the d5-pawn.

22...♞cd6 23.♞fd1 ♞6d7 24.♙1d2 ♞b5

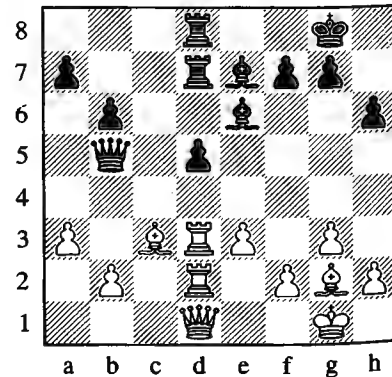


25.♞d1!

The rooks go in front and the queen goes behind. If it was the other way round then Black would be able to defend more easily.

25...b6 26.g3 ♙f8 27.♙g2 ♙e7

Spassky decides not to do anything, and challenges Karpov to find a way to make progress.



28.♞h5!?

A somewhat unpleasant move to meet. Now Black must worry about e4 ideas as the d-pawn is pinned along the fifth rank.

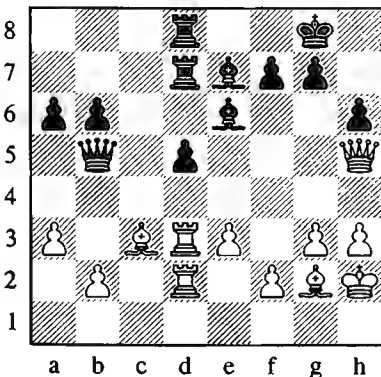
28...a6

Spassky defends the queen; he probably did not feel like calculating whether 28...♙g5 was an adequate response.

29.h3

Karpov characteristically improves his position in a modest way.

29...♞c6 30.♖h2 ♞b5



31.f4!

Black's light-squared bishop is a key defender, so Karpov destabilizes it.

31...f6

The cheeky attempt to play for a pin on the fifth rank with 31...♖h7? does not work: 32.f5! d4 33.♞xd4 ♞xd4 34.♞xd4 ♞xd4 35.♙xd4 ♞xf5 36.♞xf5† ♙xf5 37.♙xb6 And White wins with his extra pawn.

32.♞d1!?

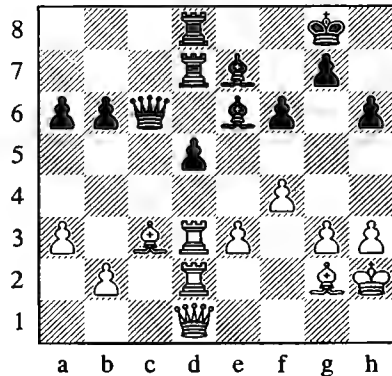
Karpov creates a subtle threat. 32.e4 would have been premature, and after 32...dxe4 33.♞xb5 axb5 34.♞xd7 ♞xd7 35.♞xd7 ♙xd7 36.♙xe4 White's advantage is merely symbolic.

32...♞c6?

Spassky almost certainly saw White's threat and acted against it, but c6 is a dangerous square for the queen.

A quiet move such as 32...♖h8 would have enabled White to reveal the point behind his last move: 33.♙d4! With the awkward threat of ♞b3. 33...♙c5 (After 33...♞c6 34.♞c3 ♞b7 35.♞b3 Black is being pushed back.) 34.♞b3 ♞c6 35.♞c3 ♞d6 36.b4 ♙xd4 37.♞xd4 And White gets closer to the d5-pawn.

A better reaction would have been 32...a5!?, preventing b4 and stabilizing the bishop on c5. Play may continue 33.♙d4 ♙c5 34.♞b3 ♞c6 35.♞c3 a4 and Black's position looks steady enough.



33.g4

Unusually for Karpov, he misses a tactical opportunity after outplaying his opponent strategically. The strongest continuation was 33.f5! ♙f7 (33...♙xf5 34.♙xd5† wins an exchange) 34.e4 ♙d6 35.exd5 It is not easy to invade Black's position, nevertheless White's extra pawn gives him excellent winning chances.

33...g5?

This is a strange choice; Spassky may have overlooked something, or perhaps he just cracked under the pressure.

Black could have kept himself in the game with 33...a5! as White still does not have the means to win the d5-pawn: 34.f5 (After 34.♖h1 ♜d6 Black moves the rook to a protected square.) 34...♙f7 35.e4 ♜d6†! The check covers the d-file and Black stays alive after 36.♖h1 dxe4 37.♞d4 ♞c7.

34.♖h1

Another good option was 34.f5 ♙f7 35.e4, as 35...♜d6† 36.♖h1 dxe4? 37.♙xf6 wins for White.

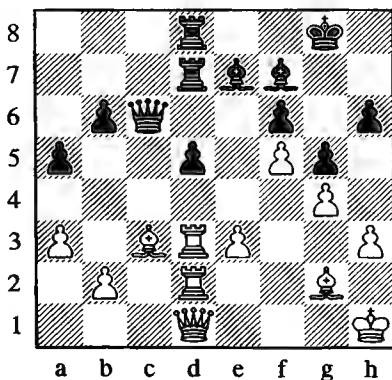
34...a5?

This allows White to win a pawn. After 34...gxf4 35.exf4 ♙f7 36.f5 Black is still clearly worse, but this would have been the lesser evil.

35.f5

Completing the idea that began four moves ago. By driving the bishop away from e6, Karpov weakens the defence of the rook on d7, thus enabling him to win the d-pawn at last.

35...♙f7



36.e4! ♖g7 37.exd5

It has been twenty three moves since Karpov made the decision to isolate the Black's d-pawn. Finally now he wins it, although 37.e5!?! was also strong.

37...♞c7 38.♞e2 b5?

Five moves earlier Spassky's defence deteriorated, and now with this blunder it collapses. 38...♜d6! would have enabled Black to resist for a while longer. Had that move been played, Karpov might have tried to invade on the c-file, although an exchange sacrifice with ♞e6 may well be the most effective plan.

39.♞xe7!

This wins a piece.

39...♞xe7 40.d6 ♞c4 41.b3

1-0

Karpov followed this victory with three draws. Interestingly, against Hort's Classical Sicilian he played a Rauzer set-up with 6.♙g5, but soon reverted to an English Attack formation, well over a decade before that system would start to become fashionable. Karpov had some advantage, but the most precise attacking methods were not fully understood at the time, and Hort was able to obtain some counterplay. The players agreed a draw in a position with mutual chances.

In rounds 8 and 9 Karpov notched up wins over Ljubojevic and Kavalek. The former was unable to hold an inferior ending, and the latter made an overambitious piece sacrifice. In round 10 Karpov drew with White against Hübner, then destroyed Timman using a prepared line against the English Opening that was intended for use in Baguio City against Korchnoi.

In the next round Karpov overpressed and lost against Larsen, but he recovered with a nice endgame win over Spassky. He drew four

of his last five games, his lone win coming after Ljubojevic became overambitious in a slightly better position.

Karpov's final tally of seven wins, ten draws and one loss was good enough to share first place with Tal, whose form in the second half of the tournament was inspired. It seems that working together for the Korchnoi match was beneficial to both of them.

After the gruelling tournament in Montreal, Karpov took part in a much shorter event in the Dutch town of Waddinxveen. In the double round robin competition he won both of his games against Sosonko and one against Kavalek, which provided a huge cushion and virtually guaranteed that he would win the tournament. In the last round he was White against Hort. Many players would have taken a quick draw in such a situation, as he was assured of first prize regardless, but Karpov was motivated to do better. Earlier he had drawn with the black pieces against Hort, and he probably wanted to stamp his authority on the tournament by winning all three of the two game mini-matches against his opponents. He achieved his goal by means of a classic exploitation of a small advantage in the endgame, thus finishing on the superb score of 5/6.

Karpov's next event was the Spartakiad, a Soviet team event. In the first game he suffered a shocking defeat against Igor Ivanov, who was rated not much above 2400. It seems to me that Karpov had lost touch with the level of an ordinary player and underestimated his opponent, who played extremely well. Karpov quickly regained his composure and scored three wins and three draws from his six remaining games.

Karpov's last tournament of the year was in Tilburg. In the first round he took on Sosonko in a main line Dragon and won a nice game,

as shown in the note to White's sixth move in Game 46 (a previous Karpov – Sosonko encounter). He drew his next three before meeting Bent Larsen.

The Danish grandmaster was regarded as one of the strongest western players throughout the 1960s and 1970s. He was one of the few players of any nationality who Karpov had not yet managed to dominate; their previous seven meetings had resulted in one win apiece and five draws. This changed as Karpov got stronger and Larsen got older, and their lifetime score ended up at seven wins to Karpov, with nine draws and just two wins to Larsen.

Larsen is a true legend of the game, so it is a pity that his most famous result was his 6–0 defeat to Fischer in their 1971 candidates semi-final match. Although he remained a great player for the next few decades, there is no telling how much this humiliating defeat may have affected him. Larsen played all the world champions from Euwe to Anand, with the sole exception of Kramnik. From his 168 games against them he scored twenty one wins, seventy six draws and seventy one losses.

Game 54

Anatoly Karpov – Bent Larsen

Tilburg 1979

1.e4 c6

Karpov won a total of twenty games against the Caro-Kann, with twelve draws and not a single defeat. It is a remarkable score, and he also played it from Black's side with considerable success.

2.d4 d5 3.♘d2

Karpov employed the Panov in a few games, but they all began with the move order 1.c4 c6 2.e4.

3...dxe4 4. dxc4 5. dxf6 6. dxc3

Karpov knew that after 5. dxc3 f6 Larsen would reply with 5...gxf6, so he settles for a less theoretically challenging continuation in order to avoid his opponent's pet system.

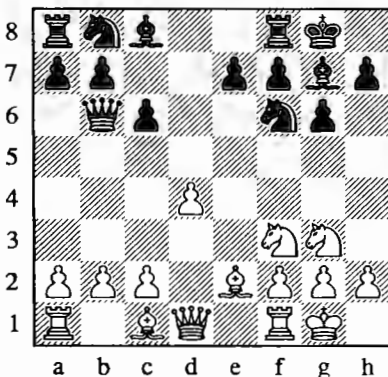
5...g6!?

Out of many possible moves, Larsen decides to reduce the scope of the knight on g3.

6. dxc3 7. g6 7... e2 0-0 8. 0-0 9. b6

Larsen was always known for playing creatively, and here he opts for a somewhat unconventional deployment of the queen, with the idea of exerting pressure against b2 and d4.

A more classical continuation would have been 8... b2d7 intending ...b6, ... b7 and ...c5, with nice play for Black.



9. b3 g4

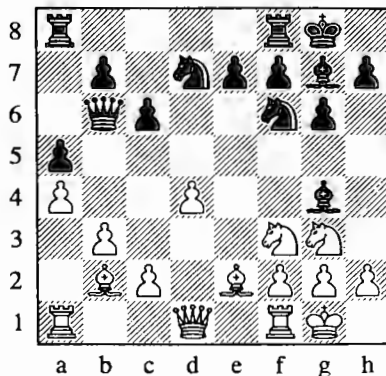
Larsen wants to increase the pressure against d4 by eliminating the defending knight. Two rounds later he deviated: 9...a5!? 10. a4 b4 11. h3 b4 12. e1 c7 13. b2 b6 14. d2 b7 15. c3 bd5 And Black had a reasonable position, Sax – Larsen, Tilburg 1979.

10. b2 a5 11. a4 b2d7!?

Larsen fails to enforce the strategy dictated by his eighth and ninth moves. By blocking

the d-file, he loses the chance to exert any meaningful pressure against the d-pawn.

The more consistent continuation would have been: 11... d8! 12. h3 (after 12. d5 e2 13. dxe2 e6 Black has no problems) 12... dxf3 13. dxf3 e5 With equal chances, as White's bishop pair is not particularly effective.



12. h3

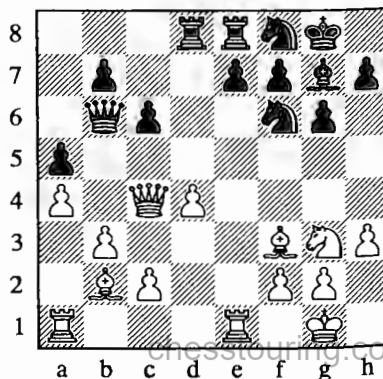
Karpov has time to obtain the advantage of the two bishops and consolidate his centre.

12... dxf3 13. dxf3 ead8 14. e2 fe8 15. fe1 d8

Intending to attack the d4-pawn from e6. 15... d5!? was worth considering.

16. e4!

Anticipating Larsen's reply.

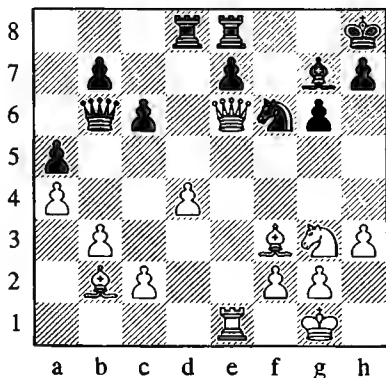


16...♖e6!?

Objectively this is just about playable, but in practice it was a risky choice. The safer continuation would have been 16...♘d5 17.♙ad1 (17.♘e4 ♘e6) 17...♙b4 18.♘e4 ♘e6 when Black's pieces stand well.

17.♙xe6!

Larsen must have underestimated this positional sacrifice. In return for his small material investment White increases his domination over the light squares and weakens the enemy kingside. Note that the enemy rooks have limited active prospects, which is often a prerequisite for a successful exchange sacrifice.

17...fxe6 18.♙xc6† ♘h8 19.♙e1**19...♙b4**

Larsen brings his queen back into play. The idea is sensible, but the most accurate continuation was:

19...♘d5!

By attacking the d4-pawn Black hopes to upset his opponent's coordination.

20.♘e4!?

20.h4? ♙xd4 is too slow for White.

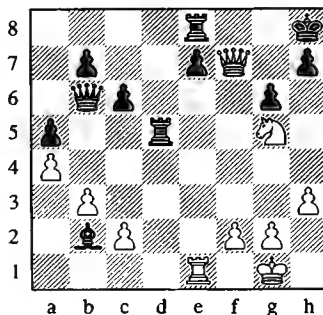
20.♘e2 is possible, but after 20...♙b4 Black has a better version of the game as he gains an important tempo by attacking the rook on e1.

20.♙e4 ♙b4 21.♙h4 (21.h4 ♙d2! Compared with the game, this invasion really hurts.) 21...♙f6 and Black is safe.

The text move looks dangerous, but Black can survive by the skin of his teeth.

20...♙xd4! 21.♘g5! ♙xb2 22.♙xd5 ♙xd5 23.♙f7

It looks as though Black can resign, but he can save the day with the help of a truly magical defence.

**23...♙xf2†! 24.♘xf2**

After 24.♙xf2? ♙d4 25.♙e3 ♙xg5 White faces a difficult ending.

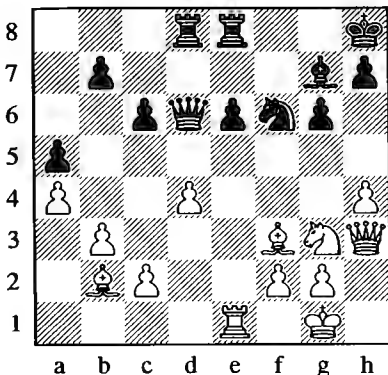
24...♙f5†

The game is likely to end in a draw. Needless to say, this would not have been an easy variation to find over the board.

20.h4 ♙d6 21.♙h3 e6?

From this point on White has the advantage, as it is hard for Black to exchange the active enemy pieces on the kingside. Larsen must have either overestimated his position after the text move, or miscalculated the alternative: 21...♙d7 22.♙e6 (22.♙h2?! ♘g4) 22...♘g8 (Also after 22...♘d5! 23.♙xd5 ♙xd5 24.h5 gxh5 25.♙e4 White has decent compensation but Black should not be worse either.) 23.♘e2 ♘d5 24.h5 ♘c7 25.♙g4 gxh5 26.♙f5 ♙f8 27.♙f6 e6 28.♙xf8† ♙xf8 29.♙d3 ♙f7 30.♙g3 Black's pieces are still less than ideally coordinated, but his extra exchange it still a

relevant factor. Overall the position is close to equal.



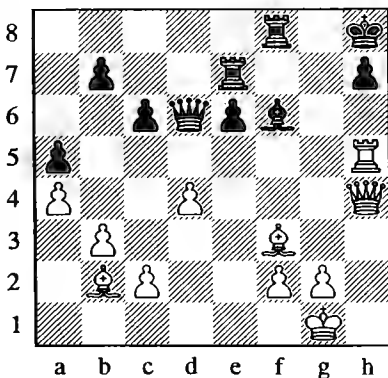
22.h5!

Karpov softens up the kingside.

22...gxh5 23.♞e5 ♜e7 24.♞h4!

White has time to defend the d4-pawn before taking on h5.

24...♞f8 25.♜xh5 ♜xh5 26.♞xh5 ♜f6



27.♞c4 ♞d8 28.♞xa5 ♜xd4 29.♜c1 ♞f7 30.♞h5 ♜f6?!

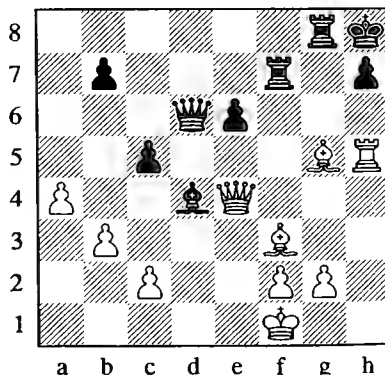
It was worth giving back a pawn in order to exchange the dangerous enemy rook. This could have been achieved with 30...♞f5! 31.♞xf5 (or 31.♞h6 ♞c5 32.♞xe6 ♜xf2†

33.♜f1 ♜d4 34.♜h6 ♞d5 and Black keeps his position together) 31...exf5 32.♞xf5 ♞e5 and Black is not in danger of losing the game.

31.♜e3

31.♜f4! was slightly more accurate, driving back the enemy queen. Play might continue: 31...♞e7 32.♜e3 ♞d6 (or 32...♞g7 33.♞h6 ♞d5 34.♞c4 with a promising initiative) 33.♜c5 ♞d7 34.♜b6 ♞g8 35.g3 White has ongoing pressure in return for a small material deficit.

31...♜d4! 32.♜g5 ♞g8 33.♜f1 c5



34.♜c1?!

Karpov misses the opportunity to simplify to a favourable endgame with the witty 34.♜f4! ♞e7 35.♜e5† (35.a5! is promising, but the text is more straightforward) 35...♜xe5 36.♞xe5† ♞gg7 37.♜e4 ♞f6 38.♞xc5 and Black faces an uphill struggle to survive.

Judging from Karpov's play over the next few moves, I have a hunch that he may have been trying to play on Larsen's time trouble.

34...♞a6†?!

It is dangerous to move towards the queenside while the king is under heavy pressure. Instead Black could have stabilized his position with 34...e5 intending ...♞g6.

35.♔g1 b5?

Continuing the faulty plan. 35...♖d6 was safer.

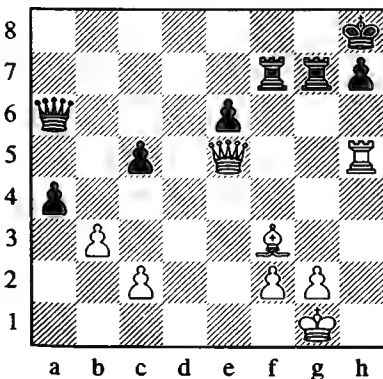
36.♁f4?

White could have obtained a serious advantage with the help of a small finesse: 36.c3! ♁f6 (After 36...♁xc3 37.♖xc5 b4 38.♁e3 Black's king is dangerously exposed, and it is doubtful that he can survive.) 37.♖xc5 bxa4 38.bxa4 With two pawns for the exchange plus a strong initiative, White has excellent winning chances.

36...bxa4 37.♁e5†

37.♖h6 is tricky but it looks as though Black can survive: 37...♖gg7 38.♖xe6 ♖xf4 (38...♖xe6? 39.♖xe6 ♖xf4 40.c3! ♖xf3 [40...♁xc3 41.♖e8† ♖g8 42.♖e3] 41.cxd4 ♖xb3 42.♖e8† ♖g8 43.♖e5† ♖g7 44.dxc5 White has excellent winning chances as Black's rooks are not well placed to stop the c-pawn.) 39.♖e8† ♖g8 40.♖xg8† ♔xg8 41.♖xf4 a3 42.♁d5† ♔g7 White has no more than a perpetual.

The simple 37.bxa4!? deserved attention. White simply recaptures and returns the ball to his opponent's court. Black's position remains unpleasant and difficult to defend.

37...♁xe5 38.♖xe5† ♖gg7**39.♖g5?!**

Karpov sets up a primitive back rank checkmate. 39.♖h6 should have been the harder move to meet. The best defence is: 39...♖a7! 40.♖xe6 (after 40.♁e4 c4 41.♖xh7† ♔g8 42.♖xg7† ♖xg7 43.♖xe6† ♖f7 Black seems to escape) 40...♖f8 41.♁d5 ♖f7 42.f3 ♖d7 43.bxa4 ♖xa4 Black is living dangerously but I see no win for White.

39...axb3??

Larsen overlooks the threat – he must have been very short of time. Black could have kept himself in the game with 39...♖b6 40.bxa4 ♖c7.

40.♖b8†**1–0**

It is difficult to assess the overall value of this game. In the opening Karpov did not achieve much, but he used the positional exchange sacrifice to strong effect to create problems for the defender. On the other hand, Karpov was noticeably less sharp than usual in noticing tactical finesse. In the end he was slightly lucky as Larsen blundered to allow a simple checkmate.

Karpov's style is often compared with that of Petrosian, and not without reason. Interestingly, Karpov did not utilize the positional exchange sacrifice as much as Petrosian, but the present game demonstrates that this weapon was very much a part of his arsenal.

Karpov drew his next three games in Tilburg. Then against Hort his superb endgame play yielded another victory. In the penultimate round he drew with Timman, before finishing with a win over Smyslov. His total of four wins and seven draws was enough to win first prize, half a point ahead of Romanishin.

1979 Summary

Munich (withdrew after round five): $3\frac{1}{2}/5$ (+2 =3 -0)

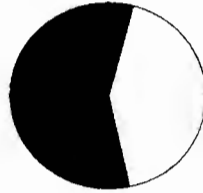
Montreal (1st place): $12/18$ (+7 =10 -1)

Waddinxveen (1st place): $5/6$ (+4 =2 -0)

Spartakiad USSR, Moscow (Board one): $4\frac{1}{2}/7$ (+3 =3 -1)

Tilburg (1st place): $7\frac{1}{2}/11$ (+4 =7 -0)

Total 69.1% (+20 =25 -2)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1980

Rating 2725 (1 in the World)

Karpov's first event of the new decade was the Soviet Team Championship, where he drew all three of his games. He then took part in a double round robin tournament in Bad Kissingen, Germany, against three strong opponents. He won a fine attacking victory over Hübner and drew the return game with the black pieces. He drew twice against Spassky and beat the other German participant, Unzicker, in a nice endgame. Here is his second game against Unzicker.

Game 55

Wolfgang Unzicker – Anatoly Karpov

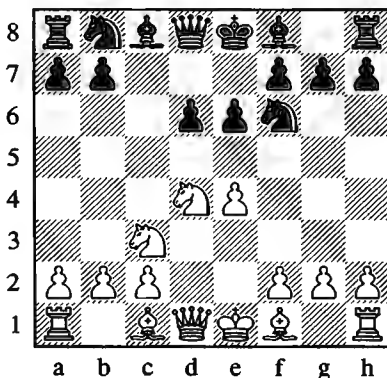
Bad Kissingen 1980

1. e4 c5

Karpov's choice of opening indicates that he was playing for a win right from the start.

2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 d6

He had only used the Scheveningen in two previous games, both of which ended in draws.



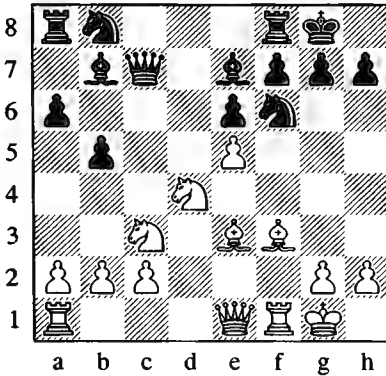
6. ♗e2

The longstanding German number one only seldom played the Keres Attack.

6... ♗e7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. f4 a6 9. ♗e3

In the latter part of the 1980s 9.a4 became established as the main line.

9...♖c7 10.♖c1 b5! 11.♙f3 ♘b7 12.e5 dxe5
13.fxe5



13...♗e8!

This was a new move at the time, and it has only been repeated a few times subsequently. This knight retreat was more frequently seen without the pawn exchange on e5. Another much more popular approach was 13...♗fd7. Interestingly Unzicker had already encountered this move twice previously. He was successful in 1956 against Golombek, but lost in 1971 against Korchnoi.

14.♙xb7

14.♖g3 looks better. This was played in all four of the subsequent games shown on the database, with White winning three and losing one.

14...♖xb7 15.♗f3 ♗d7 16.♙d1 ♜c8!

Karpov brings his rook to a good square while concealing his intentions with the d7-knight for the moment.

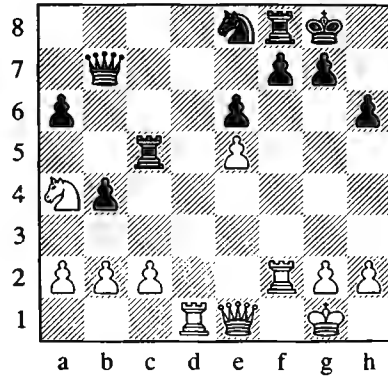
17.♙f2 ♗c5

In the event of 17...♗b6 18.♙d4 ♗c4 19.♗e4 White has a small plus.

18.♙g5

The patient 18.a3! deserved attention.

18...♙xg5 19.♗xg5 h6 20.♗ge4 b4 21.♗xc5
♜xc5 22.♗a4



22...♜d5!

Karpov brilliantly senses his chances in the ensuing semi-endgame position. His strategy is based on the slight weakness of the white king. Such an approach requires imagination and ingenuity, and Karpov has plenty of both.

23.♜x5?!

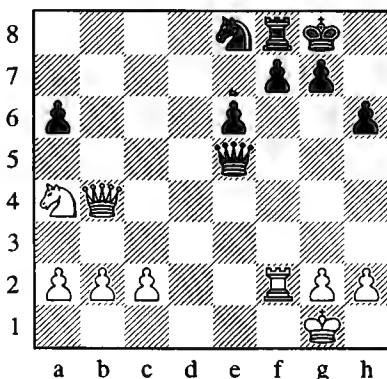
After 23.c4! bxc3 24.♗xc3 the position is equal.

23...♖xd5 24.♖xb4?!

Unzicker continues down the tempting but ultimately flawed path.

24...♖xe5

White has a two pawn majority on the queenside, which could potentially decide the endgame in his favour. For the time being, however, those pawns are far from promotion, and meanwhile White's king is not completely safe. The game continuation shows that it is White who is in more danger.



25.♖c5

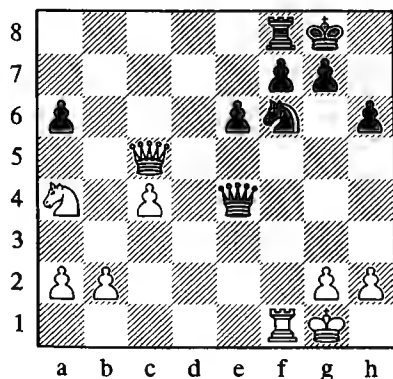
Activating the knight with 25.♖c5 was a better bet.

25...♞e1†

Of course Karpov keeps his queen on the board.

26.♞f1 ♞e4 27.c4 ♘f6!

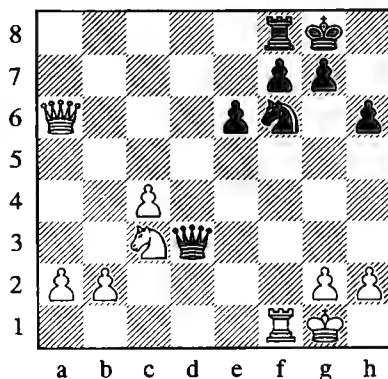
The knight quickly comes closer to White's king.



28.♘c3

Better was 28.b3! ♜d8 29.♞f2 a5 when Black is still at least equal, but White is safer than in the game.

28...♞c2 29.♞b6 ♞d3! 30.♞xa6



30...♞d4†!

Karpov goes after White's somewhat deserted king.

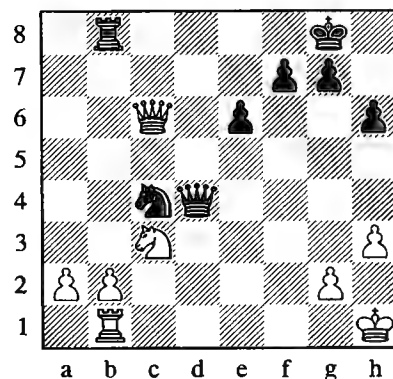
31.♘h1 ♘g4 32.h3

There is no other decent defence against the check on f2.

32...♘e3 33.♞b1 ♞b8!

It is time to bring a third piece into play.

34.♞c6 ♘xc4



35.♞d1!?

This wins a tempo and drives the enemy queen away from the centre, yet it was not the best.

35. ♖c7!

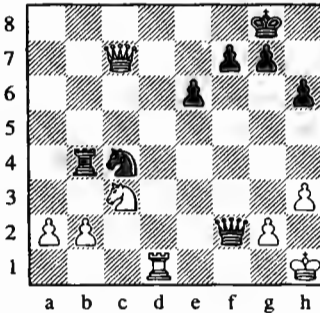
White should attack the f7-pawn.

35... ♖b4

Or 35... ♖a8 36. ♖f1 ♖e5 37. a4 f6 38. ♖b7 and it is not easy to improve Black's position.

36. ♖d1 ♖f2

36... ♖h4 37. ♖f1 is annoying for Black.



37. ♖e4!

This is a difficult move to find in advance.

37... ♖xb2

After 37... ♖f5 38. a3! ♖e3 39. axb4 ♖xd1 40. ♖d8† ♖h7 41. ♖xd1 White is not worse in the queen ending.

38. ♖d8† ♖h7 39. ♖xf7 ♖b1† 40. ♖h2 ♖xe4 41. ♖g8† ♖g6 42. ♖e8†

Black cannot escape the checks, so the game ends in a draw.

35... ♖h4 36. b3 ♖e3

Karpov brings the knight closer to Unzicker's king.

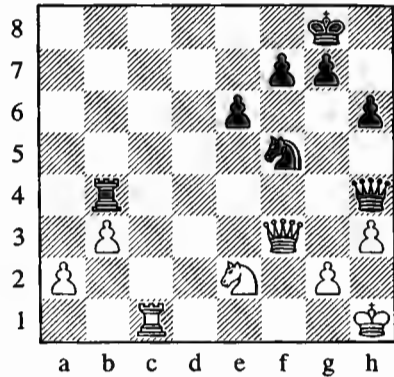
37. ♖c1 ♖f5 38. ♖f3 ♖b4!

Karpov finds a nice way to bring his rook into the attack. If 38... ♖d8 39. ♖d1 White would be glad to exchange pieces.

39. ♖e2

39. ♖d5 is well met by 39... ♖e4! stopping the knight from coming to e3. Play may continue 40. ♖h2 ♖e5 41. ♖c4 ♖d8 (41... ♖e1!?) 42. ♖f4

(42. ♖c3 ♖e1) 42... ♖e3 43. ♖f1 ♖d2 when Black's pieces and attack have grown too strong.



39... ♖e4! 40. ♖g1?

Unzicker prevents ... ♖xe2, but his kingside remains fatally weak. A more resilient continuation would have been:

40. ♖c3!

But even this loses after correct play from Black:

40... ♖e1† 41. ♖g1



41...g5!!

This wonderful attacking move makes the f4-square available for the rook, while also giving the black king some extra breathing room.

42. ♖d3

42. a4 ♖g7 43. ♖c7 (43. a5 ♖f4 wins or

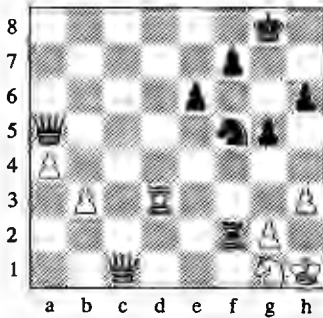
43.♠d3 ♘d4 44.♚d1 ♚xd1 45.♠xd1 ♘xb3
wins.) 43...♠d4 44.♠c2 ♚e5! 45.g4 ♘h4
White's king soon will be caught.

42...♠f4 43.♚d1 ♚a5!

Black wins a vital tempo by attacking the a2
pawn.

44.a4 ♠f2! 45.♚c1

45.♠f3 ♠d2 46.♚c1 ♚d5 wins.



45...♚a8!

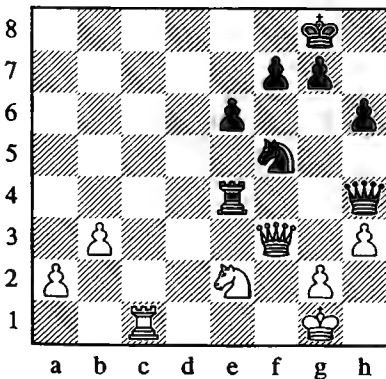
Black utilizes the full dimensions of the
board to press home his attack.

46.♠f3

46.♘f3 ♠f1+

46...♚b8

And Black wins. The queen completed a
remarkable journey from h4 to b8.



40...♠e3! 41.♚f2

41.♚g4 ♚d8! 42.♚c4 ♚d2 wins.

41...♚e4 42.♘f4 ♘g3
0-1

Unzicker resigned as there is no defence
against ...g5. Karpov based his strategy on
White's somewhat weakened king, and
punished his opponent's errors with laser beam
accuracy. His final score of 4½/6 was enough
to win the tournament by an impressive one
and a half point margin.

Karpov's next event was the European Team
Championship in Skara, Sweden. Interestingly
this was the first team competition in which
the Soviets fielded both Karpov and Kasparov.
It is not something that would happen many
more times.

In his first game, against Miles, Karpov
suffered what would turn out to be one of
his most famous losses after the Englishman
answered 1.e4 with the astonishing 1...a6. It
was an amazing result, especially considering
that Karpov had accumulated a heavy plus score
in his previous meetings with Miles. Karpov is
a confident player, but this reversal seemed to
shake him. He only played four more games in
the event, all of which ended in draws.

The effects of the loss against Miles seemed
to remain with Karpov at the start of his next
tournament in Bugojno, where he began with
four draws against players he would normally
have expected to beat had he been in good form.
In round five he finally ended the slump with
a good endgame win over Ivkov. He followed
this by drawing with Hort and Polugaevsky,
then moved up to top gear by beating Tal and
Timman.

His next opponent was Kavalek, who he had
met nine times since their 1974 encounter
which we examined in Game 38. Seven of
those games ended in draws, and Karpov won
the other two.

Game 56

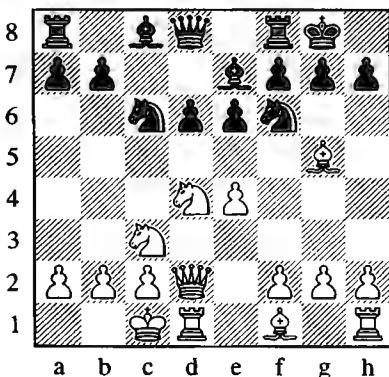
Anatoly Karpov – Lubomir Kavalek

Bugojno 1980

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖f6
5.♗c3 ♗c6

Kavalek chooses a surprise weapon; he hardly ever played this particular Sicilian variation.

6.♗g5 e6 7.♞d2 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0



9.f4

A year earlier Karpov played a different way: 9.♗b3 ♞b6 10.♗e3 ♞c7 11.f3 a6 12.g4 b5 13.♗b1 ♗d7 14.f4 ♗b6 15.♞f2 ♗a4 16.♗e2 ♗b7 17.♗g2 ♞ac8 18.♗ec1 b4 19.g5 ♞fe8 20.h4 ♗a5 21.♗xa5 ♞xa5 22.♗b3 ♞c7 23.h5 And White went on to win, Karpov – Sosonko, Waddinxveen 1979. Presumably he deviated in order to avoid Kavalek's preparation.

9...h6 10.♗xf6?!

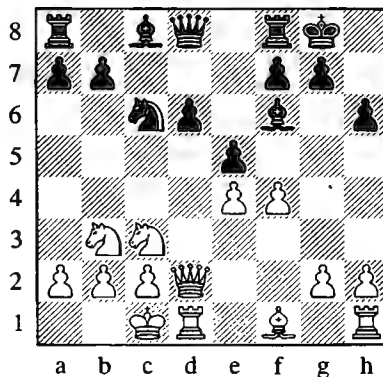
10.♗h4 is more critical. The text move should not be dangerous.

10...♗xf6 11.♗b3

Black also scores well against other moves.

11...e5!?

Kavalek plays ambitiously, giving up the d5-square in order to generate play on the dark squares. The simple retreat 11...♗e7!? also deserved attention, as it will not be easy for White to execute a pawn storm without his dark-squared bishop.



12.g3!

Karpov refuses to relinquish control over the dark squares.

12...♗g4 13.♞e1

After 13.♗e2 ♗xe2 14.♗xe2 ♞e8 15.♞he1 exf4 16.♗xf4 ♗e5 Black has no problems.

13...a5!

Kavalek continues to play actively. It is important to do so, otherwise the weak d5-square could become a problem.

14.a4

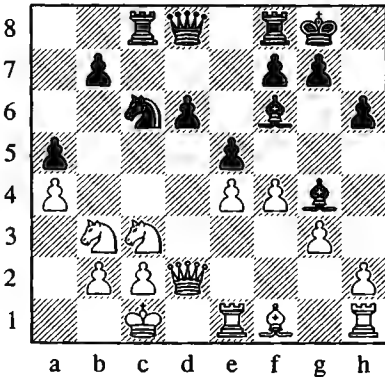
After 14.♗b5 ♞b6 Black is doing fine.

14...♞c8?!

This is inaccurate. In other games Black has preferred 14...♗b4!, and after 15.♗b1 both 15...♞c8 and exf4 should be at least equal for the second player.

When a player opts for a new opening variation like Kavalek did in the present game, he *takes*

on a certain level of risk. The advantage is that the opponent will be surprised and unprepared. On the other hand, the player who chooses the surprise opening will lack the subtle understanding that comes with years of experience of handling a particular line. It looks like Kavalek suffered from this problem, as his play over this and the next few moves lacks the precision that one would normally expect from a grandmaster of his stature.



15. ♖d5!

Karpov immediately shows why the knight should have gone to b4 on the previous move.

15... ♗e6

The strong knight must be eliminated. Kavalek plans to exchange his bishop for it, but it would have been better use the knight instead:

15... ♖b4! 16. ♖xb4 axb4

Black can even consider the cheeky 16... ♗b6!?

17. ♖d5 ♗xb3 18. ♗b5 ♗a2 19. c3 ♗e6 when the position is unclear.

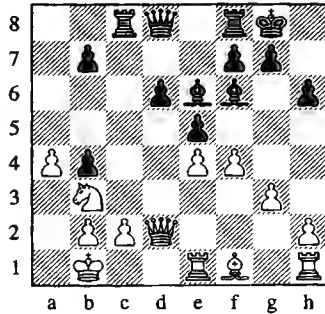
17. ♗b1!

After 17. ♗e2 ♗c6 18. ♗xb4 (18. ♗b1 ♗c7 19. ♗d3 ♗c4 Black has a reasonable position)

18... ♗c7 19. ♗d3 d5 Black has a lot of activity for a mere pawn.

17... ♗e6

17... ♗f3 can be met by 18. ♗h3! (18. ♗g1 d5) 18... ♗xh1 19. ♗xc8 ♗xe4 20. ♗xe4 ♗xc8 21. ♗xb4 when I prefer White.



18. f5

18. ♗xb4 is risky, as after 18... ♗c7 19. ♗d3 d5 Black is very active.

After 18. ♗b5 ♗c7 19. f5 ♗c4 White has no time to take his opponent's pawns.

18... ♗d7

18... ♗xb3? is a positional error, and after 19. cxb3 White has a firm grip over the light squares.

19. ♗xb4

19. a5!? could be considered.

19... d5

Black has decent compensation for the pawn.

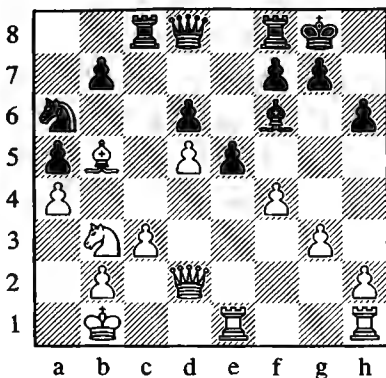
16. ♗b1 ♗xd5?!

16... ♗b4! is still okay for Black: 17. ♗c1 (17. ♖xa5 ♖xc2 18. ♗c1 ♗xd5 19. ♗xd5 ♖e3 20. ♗xc8 ♗xc8 21. ♗b3 exf4 22. gxf4 ♗c5 Black has a free position.) 17... ♖xd5 18. exd5 Now both 18... ♗f5 and 18... ♗d7 should give Black a reasonable game.

17. exd5

Now that the centre has been stabilized, Karpov sets about neutralizing Black's queenside play before improving his pieces.

17... ♖b4 18. c3 ♖a6 19. ♗b5



19...d7!

Black should have preferred 19...d5 20.dxc5 e5 21.ehf1, when he is a bit worse but reasonably solid. Perhaps Kavalek's painful defeat to Karpov at Nice 1974 (Game 38 in this book) may have left a scar in his memory, and made him reluctant to enter another opposite-coloured bishop position.

20.cxd3 exf4

With this and the next exchange Kavalek transforms the position in a way that enables Karpov to carry out his plan. On the other hand it was hard for him to do anything constructive.

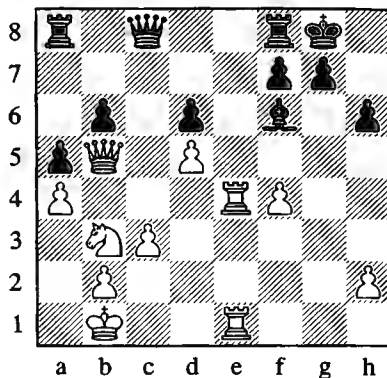
21.gxf4 dxb5 22.cxb5 e8 23.e4!

Karpov nicely improves his rook and prepares to double on the e-file.

23...c8 24.eh1

Karpov decides not to give Black any counterplay whatsoever. Taking the pawn with 24.dxa5!? requires precise calculation; but also leads to a large advantage: 24...c7 25.eh1 fe8 26.cxd3 exd4 (or 26...d7 27.d4 exd4 28.exd4 cxa4 29.dxd6 and Black has nothing for the pawn) 27.e8 d7 28.d4 exa4 29.dxd6! c6 30.c2 White holds onto his extra pawn and keeps his position together.

24...b6



25.d2!

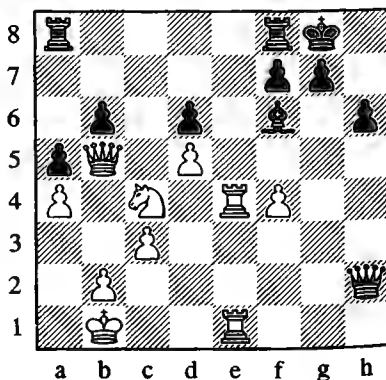
Karpov wastes no time in improving his knight.

25...c3

If 25...c5 26.cxc5 bxc5 27.d4 the knight becomes a powerhouse.

26.d4 c3??

Black has been outplayed, but this move only deepens his troubles. The best chance was: 26...e8! 27.a2 (After 27.dxd6 c5 28.cxb6 exd5 29.d8 d8 30.cg1 White is a pawn up, but he will have to work for the full point.) 27...c5 28.cxb6 exd5 29.c6 c5 30.cxd6 fe8 Black still has problems, but he has more chances than in the game.



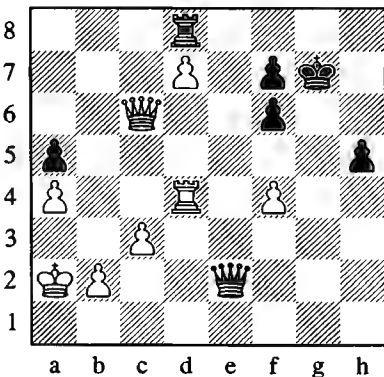
27. ♖xd6

The game is virtually over, as the d-pawn is a killer.

27... ♜ad8 28. ♖c4 ♜h7 29. d6 ♜h3 30. ♜d1 ♜d7 31. ♜a2

Karpov remains true to his style and makes a prophylactic move.

31... ♜fd8 32. ♜c6 h5 33. ♖xb6 ♜f3 34. ♖xd7 ♜xd1 35. ♖xf6 † gxf6 36. ♜d4 ♜e2 37. d7 ♜g7



38. f5

Maybe Kavalek was in time trouble and had no time to resign.

38... h4 39. ♜c7 ♜e7 40. ♜g4 † ♜f8 41. ♜xh4 ♜xd7 42. ♜xd8 †!

1-0

Karpov went on to beat Gligoric in the last round, thus ending the tournament on a four game winning streak. His final total of 8/11, with five wins and six draws, was enough to take sole first place, half a point ahead of Larsen.

Karpov's next event was the Amsterdam IBM, a double round robin tournament. He began with a long endgame win over Van der Wiel. Then he made three quick draws, two of which

did not even last twenty moves. Karpov was not averse to taking a few quick draws in long tournaments, unlike Fischer and Kasparov, both of whom played to win almost every game. It should be remembered that over his career Karpov played many more tournament games than both his predecessor and his successor, which goes some way towards explaining this tendency to recharge his batteries on some days.

In round five he faced a rising star in Sergei Dolmatov, a young Russian who had won the World Junior Championship in 1978. This was their first encounter. Altogether they met three times over the board, with Karpov scoring two wins and one draw. Dolmatov played twenty games against the world champions from Smyslov to Topalov, missing only Fischer. He scored a respectable four wins with ten draws and six losses.

Game 57

Anatoly Karpov – Sergei Dolmatov

Amsterdam 1980

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 e5 6. ♖db5 d6

Dolmatov and Yusupov were among the pioneers of the Sveshnikov variation. Interestingly, over his entire tournament career Karpov reached the present position in only five games (a few of them occurred via the 2...e6 move order.) Perhaps the formidable reputation of a World Champion discourages opponents from trying certain openings against him. For example, Kasparov went for a period of eighteen years without a single opponent venturing the Grünfeld against him.

7. ♗g5 a6 8. ♖a3 b5

In Game 64 we will see John Nunn trying a different approach against Karpov.

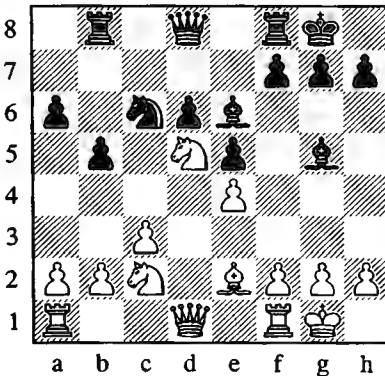
9. ♖d5 ♗e7 10. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11. c3

Karpov unsurprisingly opts for this positional variation.

11...0-0 12. ♖c2 ♗b8

Dolmatov deviates from two of Karpov's previous games against Sveshnikov in 1973 and Yurtaev in 1979, both of which continued with 12...♗g5. Karpov was pressing in both games; he eventually drew the former and won the latter.

13. ♗e2 ♗g5 14. 0-0 ♗e6



15. ♖d3 ♖d7?!

According to the database this move was a novelty, but it looks dubious. 15...a5 was and still is the main line here.

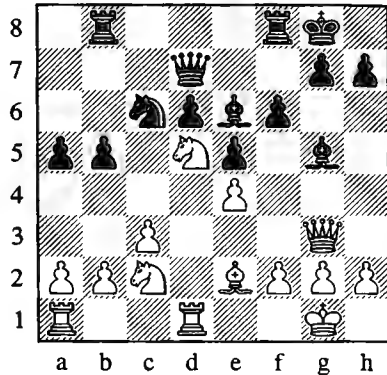
16. ♗g3 f6?!

This weakens the light squares and blocks the route of the bishop back to d8, which can sometimes be useful for Black. 16...h6 was preferable.

17. ♗fd1 a5

Dolmatov stops ♖cb4 but gives a new target. It was worth considering playing an improving move on the kingside first. 17...g6!? is one idea, while Black can also consider 17...♗h8! 18. ♖cb4 (or 18. ♗d3 ♗fd8)

18...a5 19. ♖xc6 ♗xc6 20. ♗g4 ♗f7 when Black's position remains playable.



18. ♖a3!

Returning to the edge of the board is a splendid idea. Karpov does not want to put the knight on the more conventional e3-square, as this would give Black the opportunity to exchange his bad bishop.

18...♖a7

On 18...b4 Kasparov recommends 19. ♖c4 with an advantage, while 19. ♖b5 looks promising as well.

18...♖d8!? deserved attention, and could have worked quite well against the plan chosen by Karpov in the game: 19. h3 ♗h8 20. ♗g4 (With the knight on d8 White might be tempted to try 20. ♗ab1!? intending b4.) 20...♗c6!? 21. ♗xe6 (21. ♗d3 b4) 21...♖xe6 Black's position looks reliable enough as the a3-knight is passive. The second player can look to generate some activity with the plan of ...♗b7, ...♗h6, ...g6 and ...f5.

19. h3!

Karpov wants to exchange the light-squared bishops.

19...♗h8

Dolmatov wants to use the f8-rook, so the king steps off the g-file.

20. ♖g4 ♜fc8?!

Transferring the rook to c5 costs time and does not improve Black's chances. Instead after 20...f5 21.exf5 ♖xf5 22.♘c2 ♖xg4 (22...♘c6!?) 23.♝xg4 ♜xg4 24.hxg4 ♘c6 the limited material on the board gives Black reasonable chances to fight for a draw according to Kasparov.

21. ♖xe6 ♝xe6 22.♝d3 ♜c5?!

This only helps White to open files on the queenside. Kasparov suggested 22...g6, improving Black's position on the kingside. In the event of 23.♘c2 ♔g7 24.b4, the position of Black's rook gives him the option of 24...a4 to keep the queenside closed.

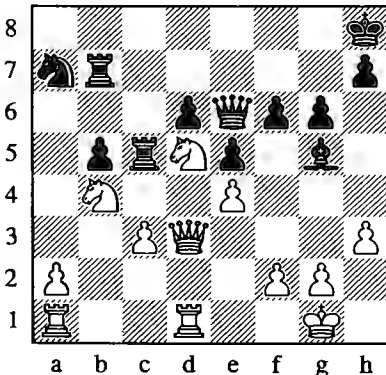
23. ♘c2!

Again Karpov changes the target by switching back with the knight.

23...g6 24.b4!

This strong move enables White to invade on the queenside.

24...axb4 25.♘cb4 ♖b7



26.a4!

Karpov opens the a-file for the rook.

26...bxa4 27.♜xa4 f5 28.♖a6!

This is an awkward move to meet. It prevents ...♘c6 while also menacing the d6-pawn.

28...♘c8

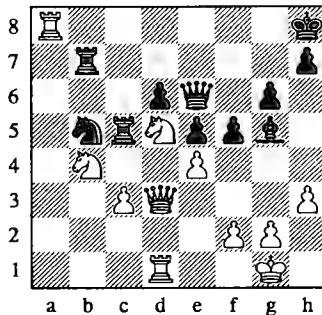
Dolmatov correctly chooses the more passive but safer square for the knight.

28...♘b5?!

This attempt to play actively leaves the knight unstable. In the following line Black must work hard to keep his queenside together, which ultimately costs him on the kingside.

29.♖a8?!

A good alternative is 29.c4 fxe4 (29...♘d4 30.f4!) 30.♝xe4 ♘c7 31.♘xc7 ♖bxc7 32.♘d5 ♜c8 33.♘b6 ♜c6 34.♖d1 and White is a bit better. The text move is even stronger though.



29...♔g7

After 29...♜c8 30.♖d1 ♝e8 31.♖a6 White has some pressure.

30.♘a6! ♜c6

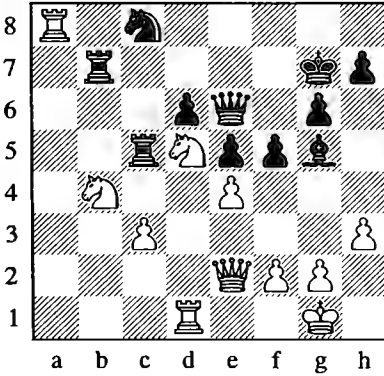
Or 30...♜c8 31.exf5 gxf5 32.♜xc8 ♝xc8 33.♖b1 ♖a7 34.♝xb5 ♝xa6 35.♝b8 and White is better according to Kasparov.

31.♖b8 ♝d7 32.♖xb7 ♝xb7 33.♘ab4 fxe4 34.♝g3 ♖f4 35.♝h4 g5 36.♝g4 ♜c5 37.g3

Black must lose a piece. He will get some pawns for it, but not enough.

29. ♖a8 ♗g7 30. ♖e2

According to Karpov's successor 30. ♖a6! was even stronger, for instance 30... ♖d7 31. exf5 gxf5 32. ♖d3 followed by ♖da1 when Black is under pressure.



30... ♗xe4?!

Giving White the use of the e4-square is unattractive, although the alternatives were also less than appealing. Waiting with 30... ♖f7 was possible, but Dolmatov may have been put off by 31. exf5 gxf5 32. c4, after which White will swing a rook along the third rank to attack Black's king.

Another idea was 30... ♗e7 31. ♗xc7 ♗xc7 32. ♗d5 ♗g5 when Black's position remains unpleasant, but perhaps with better defensive chances than in the game.

31. ♖xe4 ♖f5 32. ♖e2!

Karpov keeps the queens on the board as Black's king may come under fire.

32... ♖f7

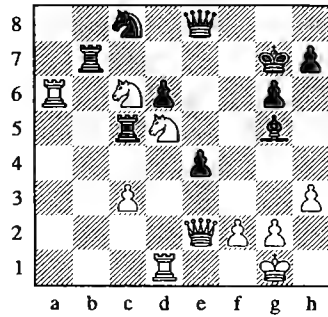
32... c4!?

With this active move Black frees the e5-square for the use of his queen. White has to play precisely to keep the advantage.

33. ♖a6!

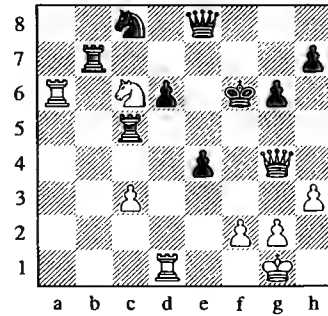
33. c4 ♖e5 looks okay for Black.

33... ♖e5 34. ♗c6! ♖e8



35. f4!?

35. ♖g4 also leads to some spectacular tactics: 35... ♗f6 (35... e3? 36. ♖xg5 exf2† 37. ♗f1! ♖xc6 38. ♖f6† ♗g8 39. ♖d4 ♖f7 40. ♗f6† ♖xf6 41. ♖xc6+-) 36. ♗xf6 ♗xf6

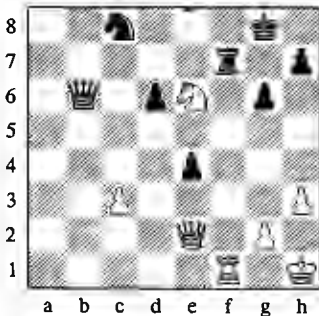


37. ♖e1!! White can sacrifice the knight. 37... ♖xc6 38. ♖xe4 ♖e7 39. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 (39... ♖xe4 40. ♖xc8 ♖xg4 41. ♖xe8 ♖c4 42. ♖e3 d5 43. ♖d3 ♗e5 Black has chances to hold the ending a pawn down, but it will be tough.) 40. ♖c4 ♖d7 41. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 42. ♖xc8 d5 43. ♗f1 d4 44. c4 d3 45. ♗e1 ♗e5 The ending is not easy to assess, but I suspect Black should be able to hold it.

35... ♗xf4

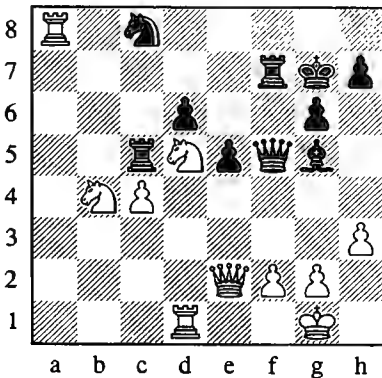
After 35... ♖xd5!? 36. ♖xd5 ♗xf4 37. ♖d1 e3 it is not easy for White to convert his extra exchange, but still Black is a long way from a draw.

36. ♖xf4 ♜xc6 37. ♘e6†! ♘g8 38. ♜xc6 ♝xc6
39. ♙f1! ♞b6† 40. ♘h1 ♙f7



41. ♝c4!! ♘e7 42. ♜a1! ♞b7 43. ♘d8
White wins an exchange.

33. c4



33... ♗h4 34. ♙f1

The rook is temporarily passive here, but it's best not to commit to any weakening pawn moves at this stage.

34... ♘e7?!

Black's position was already tough, and this move does little to ease the suffering. Dvoretzky calls it a clear positional mistake, pointing out that White's knight on b4 is surplus to requirements. I would add that when one's position contains a weakness, it is often the

case that exchanges will only serve to magnify the problem.

What should Black do instead? One idea is 34... e4, but this is well met by a strong idea of Yakovich: 35. ♜a3! with the idea of 35... ♗g5 36. f4! and White is much better.

34... ♗g5!

This looks like the best chance. White has a number of tries.

a) 35. ♙f1

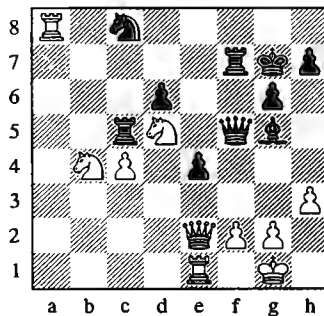
This natural move leads to some remarkable tactics.

34... e4

35... ♗h4 36. g3 ♗d8 37. h4 is evaluated as difficult for Black by Kasparov.

36. ♜e1

Another line is 36. ♘c2 ♝e5 37. ♜b1 ♘e7 38. ♜e8 ♜a5 39. ♜b7 ♜a2 40. g3 e3 41. ♘dx3 ♜xc2 42. ♝xc2 ♗xe3 and Black is safe.



36... ♜xc4!!

Commentators missed this fantastic tactical shot.

After 36... ♗h4 37. g3 ♗d8 38. ♘c2 White is in control.

37. ♝xc4 ♝xf2† 38. ♘h2 ♝xe1 39. ♜xc8

39. ♞d4† ♘h6 40. ♘c2 (40. ♜xc8?? ♙f1) 40... ♙f1 41. ♜xc8 ♗f4† 42. ♘xf4 ♝xf4† leads to a perpetual.

After the text move Black's situation

looks desperate, as he is a piece down and threatened with a queen exchange on c3.



39...xf3!!

This provides the justification for Black's 36th move. It resembles the Kramnik – Kasparov draw in the 1999 Linares tournament.

40.♖c7†

After 40.♖d4† ♕f6! 41.♜xf6 ♖g3† 42.♜g1 ♗e1† White cannot escape the checks.

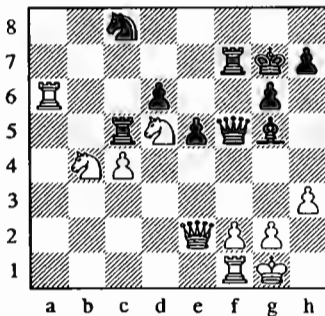
40...♜h6 41.gxf3 ♖f2†

41...exf3 draws as well.

42.♜h1 exf3 43.♖g4 ♖e1†

The game ends in perpetual check.

b) 35.♖a6



This time White keeps the f2-pawn securely defended. The critical line runs as follows:

35...e4 36.♜c6 ♕h4 37.♜h1

White should avoid moving his kingside pawns without good reason. For instance,

after 37.g3 ♕f6 38.h4 ♖b7 White's advantage is minor, if it exists at all.

37.g4!? is more purposeful, but still after 37...♗e6 38.f4 ♖xd5 39.cxd5 ♗xd5 40.♗c3 ♕f6 White's exposed king makes it hard for him to exploit his extra exchange.

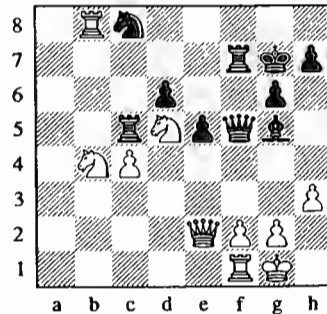
37...♗f8 38.♗b2† ♕f6 39.♗a2 ♗d7 40.♜cb4 ♗f5 41.♗e2

41.♖a3 can be met by 41...♜e7.

41...♕g5 42.♜c2

With his last move White improves the superfluous knight, maintaining some advantage. It also looks interesting to change tack with 42.♖a3!? preparing f4.

c) 35.♖b8!?



The point of this subtle rook move is to solve the problem of the b4-knight, by preparing ♜c3 without allowing the reply ...♜b6.

35...♜e7

Alternatives such as 35...h5 can be met by 36.♜c3.

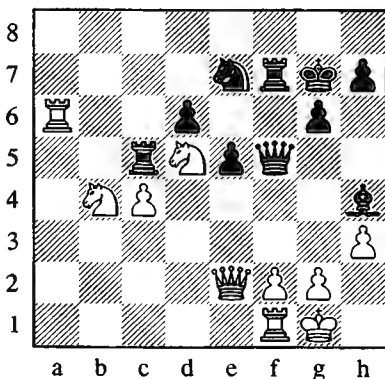
36.♜xe7

White can also consider 36.♜c3! ♜c6 37.♜xc6 ♖xc6 38.♖a1 with some advantage.

36...♖xe7 37.♖b6 ♖d7 38.♜d5

38.♖a1?! would be weaker on account of 38...♗f4. After the text move White retains a stable advantage, but the game goes on.

35.♖a6



35...♖d7?!

Earlier Dolmatov played more actively than he should have, but now he plays too passively. He could have obtained good drawing chances by means of:

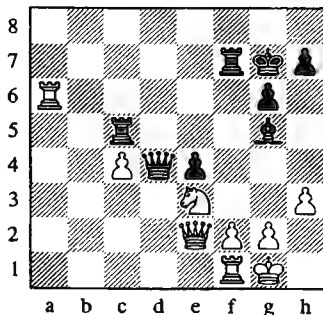
35...♜xd5 36.♜xd5 e4!

This is an excellent idea from Kasparov. Black is aiming to reduce the pawns to just one flank.

37.♞xd6

37.g3 ♕f6 38.♞xd6 ♕e5 39.♞a6 (39.♞d8 ♖xh3) 39...♖xh3 40.♖xe4 ♜xg3 Black forces the draw.

37...♗e5 38.♞a6 ♖d4 39.♜e3 ♜g5



40.♞d1

40.♞a4 ♞xf2! This lovely tactical shot equalizes: 41.♜xf2 (41.♞xf2 ♕xe3; 41.♞a7+ ♜h8) 41...♞f5+ 42.♜g1 ♖xe3+ 43.♞f2 ♖d4 Black's problems are behind him.

40...♖c3 41.♜g4

After 41.♞a4 ♕xe3 42.♖xe3 ♞xc4 Black should be all right.

41...♞f7

Also after 41...e3!? 42.♜xe3 (42.fxe3 h5) 42...♕xe3 43.fxe3 ♞xc4 Black has decent drawing chances.

42.♖xe4 ♖xc4

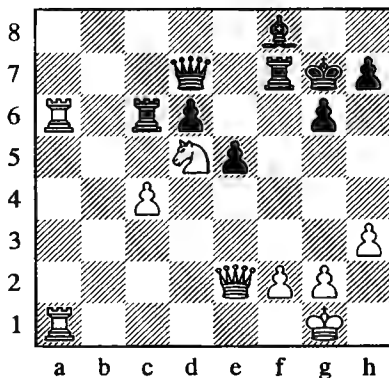
White can play on for a long time with no risk, but objectively Black must be able to hold this ending.

36.♖e4 ♜xd5

Black could not avoid the exchange with 36...♜f5 due to some lovely tactics: 37.♜d3 ♞c6 (37...♞c8 38.♞fa1) 38.♜f6! ♞xc4 39.♜h5+! gxh5 40.♖xc4 And White's advantage should suffice for victory.

37.♜xd5 ♕e7 38.♞fa1 ♕f8 39.♖e2 ♞c6

Dolmatov attempts to simplify. The attempt to attack the c4-pawn allows White to invade on the seventh rank: 39...♖c8 40.♞a7! ♞xc4? (Better is 40...♖f5, although after 41.♖b2 White remains in control.) 41.♞xf7+ ♜xf7 42.♞a7+ ♜e6 43.♖f3 And White wins.



40.♞6a3!

Karpov avoids exchanging a pair of rooks in order to... exchange a pair of rooks! It may sound odd, but it is absolutely true. The point

is that it is more favourable for him to exchange the rook on f7, which defends the black king.

40...♞c5

40...♞e6 41.♞f3 ♞xf3 42.♞xf3 ♞xc4? allows the crushing 43.♞a7†.

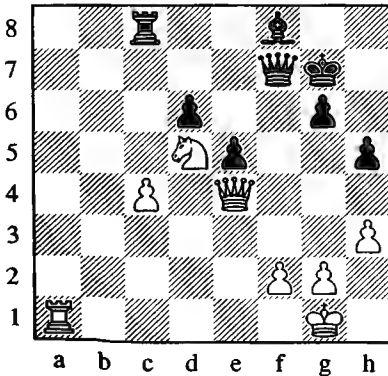
Perhaps the most resilient defence would have been 40...♞b7!?, discouraging 41.♞f3?! for the time being in view of 41...♞xf3 42.♞xf3 ♞xc4 when Black survives with his extra pawn. Obviously White should play more patiently on move 41, in which case his position would remain clearly superior but not yet winning by force.

41.♞f3!

Karpov exchanges the key defensive piece in Black's camp.

41...♞xf3 42.♞xf3 ♞f7 43.♞g4 h5 44.♞e4 ♞c8

On 44...♔h7 Kasparov superbly demonstrated how the attack should be conducted: 45.♞a3! ♔g7 46.g4 ♞d7 47.♞f3 And White wins.



45.♞a3!

Black faces an unpleasant dilemma: will he allow the rook to hurt him on the f-file or on the seventh rank?

45...♞f5

Black chooses the latter. If 45...♞b8 46.♞f3 ♞b7 (46...♞e6 47.g4!?) 47.♔h2! ♞b1 48.♞h4 White will invade with decisive effect.

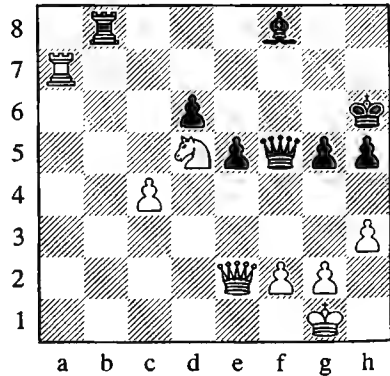
46.♞a7† ♔h6 47.♞e3†

Forcing a further weakening on the kingside.

47...g5 48.♞e2

48.♞b3 was also good enough: 48...g4 (48...♞e8 49.♔e3 ♞g6 50.g4) 49.h4 ♞c5 50.♔e3 ♞g6 51.♞b8 And White wins.

48...♞b8



49.g4!

After this further opening of the kingside, Black's defences will be stretched to their breaking point.

49...hxg4 50.hxg4 ♞b1† 51.♔g2 ♞b7

After 51...e4 White has a few routes to victory, of which the most convincing is: 52.c5! ♞b2 (52...dxc5 53.♞a6†; 52...♞d3 53.♞xd3 exd3 54.c6 d2 55.♞a1+→) 53.♞e3 ♞b7 (53...♞d3 54.c6 ♞xe3 55.♔xe3 wins) 54.♞a8 ♞b8 55.♞c3 ♞xa8 56.♞f6† ♔h7 57.♞f7† ♔h6 58.♔f6 Black cannot avoid checkmate.

52.♞xb7 ♞xb7 53.♞f3!

The struggle is over, as Black is unable to defend his king.

53...♖c8 54.♖f6† ♘h7 55.♖f7†
1-0

Kasparov found it staggering how well Karpov used the whole board in this game. This is quite a compliment as the former has a fantastic ability for combining actions on both flanks.

In the next round Karpov was beaten by Ribli, who played very much in Karpov's style. He bounced back by beating Larsen, and then completed a 2-0 score over Van der Wiel in the double round robin event. In the next four rounds he drew with Timman and Sosonko, defeated Hort then took a quick draw with Dolmatov.

In round 13 Karpov met Ribli with the white pieces, and was obviously keen to avenge his earlier loss. Interestingly, at the start of the present game Karpov had a negative score against Ribli, having won one game, drawn four and lost two. He never lost to the Hungarian grandmaster again, and their lifetime score stands at four wins to Karpov, with twelve draws and two losses.

Ribli faced the world champions seventy eight times. He won seven of those encounters, drew fifty eight and lost thirteen.

Game 58

Anatoly Karpov – Zoltan Ribli

Amsterdam 1980

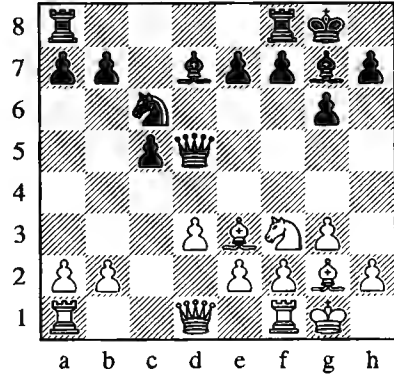
1.c4

Ribli was a renowned Najdorf specialist, and Karpov only entered that territory against him in one out of nine games with the white pieces.

1...c5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.♟c3 ♟c6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5
♟xd5 6.♟g2 g6

This is the only time that Karpov faced this particular response to the English Opening.

7.0-0 ♟g7 8.♟xd5 ♖xd5 9.d3 0-0 10.♟e3
♟d7



11.♟d4

Karpov simplifies the position, hoping to make use of his slight advantage in development.

In 1983 he played the black side of the same variation against Geller. The older Russian grandmaster deviated with 11.♖d2 and a draw ensued.

11...♖d6 12.♟xc6 ♟xc6 13.♟xc6 ♖xc6
14.♟c1 ♖e6

After 14...♟xb2 15.♟xc5 ♖e6 16.d4 White has a small edge.

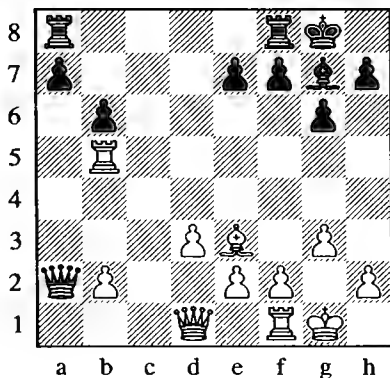
15.♟xc5 ♖xa2 16.♖b5

This was a novelty at the time, which Karpov claims to have found over the board.

16...b6

In his next tournament Ribli gave this variation a try from the opposite side against Timman, who held him to a draw: 16...♖a6

17. ♖b4 b6 18. ♗b3 ♜fb8 19. ♟a4 ♖b7 20. ♟fa1 a6 21. ♟a2 a5 22. ♜c1 ♙e5 23. ♜e4 ½–½ Ribli – Timman, Tilburg 1980. Timman later drew with this variation against Andersson in 1997.



17. ♖a1! ♗xa1?

Black should have retreated with 17... ♗e6, when his disadvantage is not too severe. The long time Hungarian number two has a well attuned positional sense, which unfortunately deserted him when making the decision to exchange queens. In the resulting endgame White has a clear plus, and can exert pressure for a long time without taking any risks.

18. ♟xa1 ♜fb8 19. ♟a6 ♙f8?

Ribli underestimates the danger. His best chance may well have been Ostojic's recommendation of 19... ♜b7!? with the idea of giving up a pawn in order to eliminate all the queenside pawns. After 20. ♜xb6 ♜xb6 21. ♙xb6 ♙xb2 22. ♟xa7 Black has some chances to grovel for a draw, although it will not be much fun for him.

I should add that, at the end of the above line, instead of the immediate capture on a7, Kasparov mentioned the possibility of 22.d4! e5 23.d5, evaluating the position as extremely unpleasant for Black. But perhaps White is being too clever for his own good here, as the subtle 22... ♜b8! might just rescue

Black: 23. ♙c5 (23. ♙xa7 ♟a8) 23... ♜d8! 24.e3 (or 24. ♟a4 e5) 24... e5 Black simplifies to a position with four pawns versus three on the kingside, which should provide good drawing chances.

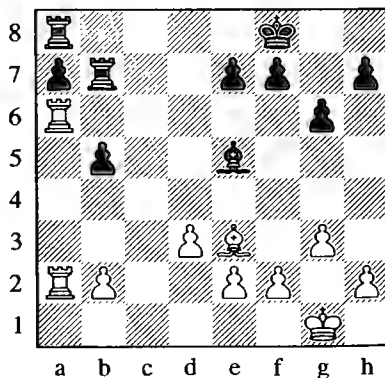
20. ♜b4 ♙e5 21. ♟ba4!

21.b3?! would give Black time to organize his defences: 21... ♙c7 22. ♟ba4 ♜b7 23. ♙g2 White's advantage is smaller than in the game.

21... b5?

Black should take the opportunity to destroy the enemy b-pawn: 21... ♙xb2 22. ♙xb6 ♙e8 23. ♙xa7 ♜c8 24. ♙e3 White is a clear pawn up, but plenty of work remains.

22. ♟a2 ♜b7



23. b3!

Keeping the queenside pawn makes Black's life even harder. 23. ♙xa7 ♙xb2 24. ♜xb2 ♟axa7 25. ♟xa7 ♟xa7 26. ♜xb5 the rook ending with five pawns versus four offers good winning chances, but even that would be too generous to Black at this stage.

23... ♙b8 24. ♙c5 ♙e8 25. d4

Karpov starts gaining space.

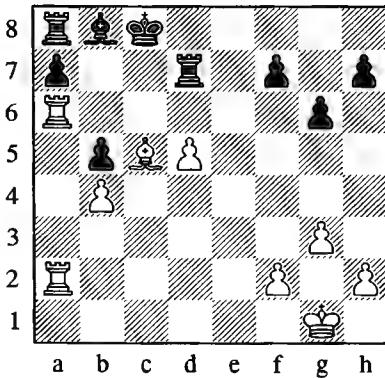
25... ♙d7 26. e4 e6 27. b4 ♙c8

Ribli played this game uncharacteristically passively. By this stage there was not much else he can do.

28.d5

Karpov feels his advantage is so large he does not even need to use his king.

28...exd5 29.exd5 ♖d7



30.d6!

With a single pawn move Karpov paralyzes a rook and a bishop.

30...♖d8 31.♔g2

Having virtually shut down his opponent's entire position, Karpov begins to advance his king.

31...♔d7

Ostojic mentions the line 31...♔b7 32.♔f3 ♖e8 33.♔f4 h6 34.h4 when White forces a weakness on the kingside.

Also after 31...♖e8 32.♔f3 ♖e6 33.♖a5 ♔b7 34.♔f4 h6 35.h4 White wins according to Kasparov.

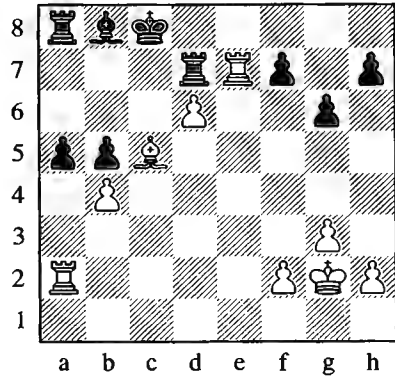
32.♖e2! ♔c8

32...♖e8 is met by 33.♖xe8 ♔xe8 34.♔f3 f5 35.♔f4 and the invasion is decisive.

33.♖e7 ♖d7 34.♖a2!

Once again Karpov proves how well he spots his chances against the opponent's king in endgames.

34...a5



35.♖c2!

1-0

Karpov catches his opponent's king once again. This game was a one-sided affair; Ribli was a shadow of his usual self, nevertheless Karpov's endgame display was flawless. He also beat Larsen in the final round, for a total of 10/14, with seven wins, six draws and one loss. Timman finished in second place, a full point behind.

Karpov's next event was Tilburg, also in the Netherlands. Once again he finished in sole first place ahead of a tough field, with a final score of 7½/11. He lost one game against Larsen, but scored several good wins over Ribli (again!), Timman, Hübner, Andersson and Spassky.

His next tournament in Buenos Aires was not so successful: he only won four out of the thirteen games, and suffered losses to both Timman and Olafsson. His final score of 7½/13 was only good enough to share fourth and fifth places.

Karpov was able to put this bad result behind him at his final event of the year, the Malta Olympiad. Incidentally, Karpov was not present at the 1978 Olympiad as he needed a break after his gruelling match with Korchnoi (although it should be mentioned that Korchnoi himself not only played in the Olympiad, but performed extremely well). His absence proved costly to the Soviets, who lost out to Hungary in the race for the gold medal. In 1980 the competition was once again fierce. After winning in round one, Karpov fell ill and rested for the next two matches. His absence was clearly felt by the Soviet team, who dropped points and fell behind the leaders. By round four Karpov was ready to return to action, and he played the final eleven games without taking a single day off. He drew five in a row, but then started winning and only dropped a single draw in his final six rounds. His final total of 9/12 helped the Soviet team to claw their way back to the top, and they eventually took the gold medal on tie break ahead of Hungary.

1980 Summary

Soviet Team Championship: $1\frac{1}{2}/3$ (+0 =3 -0)

Bad Kissingen (1st prize): $4\frac{1}{2}/6$ (+3 =3 -0)

European Team Championship, Skara (Board one): $2/5$ (+0 =4 -1)

Bugojno (1st prize): $8/11$ (+5 =6 -0)

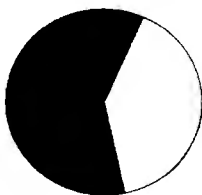
Amsterdam (1st prize): $10/14$ (+7 =6 -1)

Tilburg (1st prize): $7\frac{1}{2}/11$ (+5 =5 -1)

Buenos Aires (4th-5th place): $7\frac{1}{2}/13$ (+4 =7 -2)

Malta Olympiad (Board one): $9/12$ (+6 =6 -0)

Total 66.7% (+30 =40 -5)



☐ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1981

Rating 2690 (1 in the World)

The world championship candidates cycle had drawn to a close, and 1981 was Karpov's title defence year. Once again his challenger was Korchnoi, although he also found time to play in a few tournaments beforehand.

The first was in Linares, and was the 'very first 'super tournament' to be held in the southern Spanish town, although other grandmaster tournaments had taken place there over the previous few years. Karpov got off to a flying start, winning a nice ending against Quinteros and beating Portisch in a sharp struggle. (The latter game is mentioned in the note to White's seventh move in Game 76, Afifi – Karpov.) He followed with draws against Larsen and Ribli, then beat Ljubojevic in another powerful endgame display. In round six he used the Austrian Attack against the Pirc to defeat Christiansen, which turned out to be a vital result in the battle for overall first place.

In the next round Karpov faced Guillermo Garcia Gonzales. The Cuban grandmaster played the world champions fifteen times, drawing seven games and losing eight. Against Karpov he lost once at the 1977 October Revolution tournament, and this game was their last.

Game 59

Guillermo Garcia Gonzales – Anatoly Karpov

Linares 1981

1. ♖f3 ♗f6 2. c4 c5 3. g3 b6 4. ♗g2 ♗b7 5. 0-0 e6

Karpov seldom played this way, and usually preferred to develop the bishop to g7.

6. d4 cxd4 7. ♖xd4 d6 8. ♖c3 ♗e7 9. ♗d1

One of Karpov's previous games continued: 9. ♗g5 a6 10. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11. ♖d3 ♗e7 12. ♗fd1 ♗a7 13. ♖e4 0-0 14. ♗ac1 ♗a8 15. ♖e3 ♖c6 16. ♖c3 ♖b8 17. ♖d4 ♖e5 18. b3 ♗c8 Black equalized and went on to win in a nice endgame in Grigorian – Karpov, Riga 1975.

9...a6 10. b3 ♖bd7 11. ♗b2

Karpov encountered this variation a number of times with the white pieces. One such encounter ended in an early draw: 11. e4 ♖b8 12. ♗b2 0-0 13. ♖e3 ♗e8 14. ♖d4 ♗f8 15. ♖d2 ♖a7 16. ♗e1 ♗ac8 17. ♗e2 ♖a8 18. ♗ae1 ♗ed8 19. h3 ♖c5 20. ♖e3 ♗e8 21. ♖d2 ½-½ Karpov – Ljubojevic, Manila 1976.

11...0-0 12.e4 ♖c7 13.♗e3 ♜fe8 14.♟d4

In 1986 Karpov reached a similar though not quite identical position against Ribli, and opted for an interesting plan involving ♟d2, a3, b4 and ♟b3. See Game 3 of the second volume.

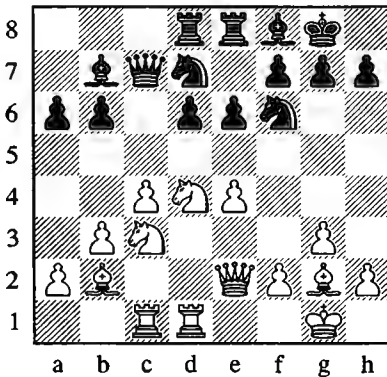
14...♙f8 15.♞ac1

The Cuban grandmaster plays all the usual moves for this variation.

15...♞ad8

In 1977 Karpov won a game with White against Gheorghiu who preferred 15...♞ac8. The text move was used by Ribli to draw with Karpov in the fourth round at Linares.

16.♗e2



16...♗b8

Now that the queen has vacated the c-file, Black can think about playing ...d5.

17.♞e1

White prepares to meet ...d5 with e5.

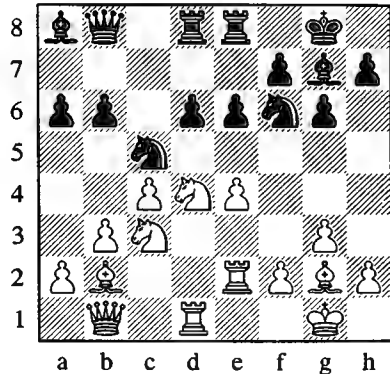
17...g6

Karpov transfers the bishop to g7 and creates another quill of the hedgehog. The d6-pawn has enough protection and is not easy to attack.

18.♞cd1 ♙g7 19.♗c2 ♙a8

By vacating the b-file, the bishop makes way for the queen to support a future ...b5 break. White will now be reluctant to move either of his knights.

20.♗b1 ♟c5 21.♞e2



21...♟g4!?

Karpov wants to provoke a pawn move on the kingside.

22.h3 ♟f6 23.♙h2

Garcia Gonzales just waits.

23...h5!

Karpov wants to soften his opponent on the kingside. Suddenly the alignment of the queen on b8 and king on h2 is uncomfortable for White.

24.h4

It may have been safer not to make any more pawn moves on the kingside, but Karpov has already succeeded in making the position double-edged. After 24.♙g1 h4 25.g4 e5 26.♟c2 ♟e6 27.♟b4 ♟f4 the position is complex with mutual chances.

24...♞c8 25.♙g1 ♟g4

Karpov hopes to provoke another pawn move.

26.f3 ♖e5

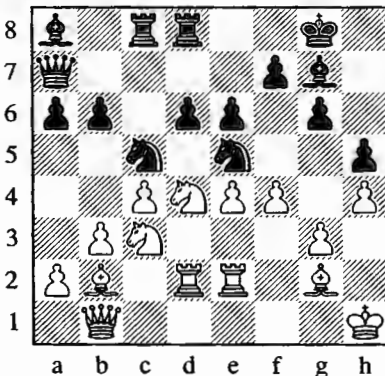
Karpov got what he wanted, and now he decides to return to a different square with the knight. 26...♖f6 was also possible.

27.♟dd2 ♞a7

Karpov continues to prod his opponent from a safe distance.

28.♞h1 ♜ed8 29.f4?

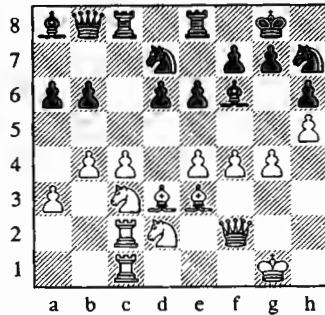
Karpov's waiting strategy prevails, as with this move White weakens his position considerably. It was better to wait with a move like 29.♞h2!?, when Black must decide what to do. Perhaps the most natural idea would be to play for ...b5, for instance: 29...♞b8 30.♟d1 ♞d7 31.♟e2 ♜h6 (after 31...b5?! 32.cxb5 axb5 33.♖dxb5 ♞xb5 34.♖xb5 ♞xb5 35.♞xd6 White is better) 32.♟f2 ♟f8!? Black can also look to play on the f-file, nevertheless White's position remains sound and the first player should be able to maintain equality.

**29...♖g4**

This is a perfect outpost for the knight. White can hardly consider exchanging it with his bishop, as this would weaken his light squares too much.

Here is a previous game in which Karpov's opponent got too carried away advancing his

pawns. (The opening was actually a Sicilian Paulsen rather than a Hedgehog, but the resemblance is obvious.)



26.e5? In an equal position White sacrifices material to open up Black's king, but it is unjustified. 26...dxe5 27.g5 exf4 28.♟xf4 ♟e5! (28...♖xg5! was winning as well) 29.g6 fxg6 30.hxg6 ♟xf4 31.gxh7+ ♞h8 32.♟f1 ♟f8 33.♟e4 ♖e5 34.♞g2 ♖xc4 0–1 Torre – Karpov, Bad Lauterberg 1977.

Interestingly this was another tournament in which Karpov got the appetite to play the black side of a hedgehog set-up after having faced it with White.

30.♖d1!?

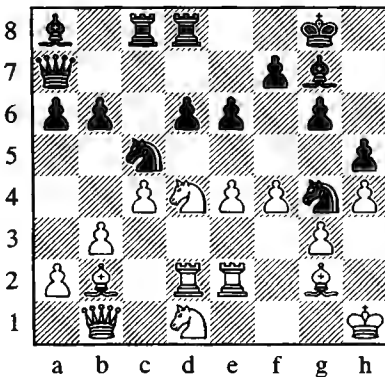
White has occupied too much space with his pawns without proper consolidation. Now he commits a further inaccuracy, but it was already surprisingly hard for him to stay alive. Here are some possibilities:

30.♖f3 is well met by 30...b5!, for instance 31.cxb5? ♟xc3 32.♟xc3 ♖xe4 and Black wins.

30.♞d1 e5! (30...♞c7 31.♟f3 ♞h7 32.♞g2 White has strengthened his defences) 31.fxg5 dxe5 (after 31...♟xe5 32.♞e1 White is worse but he is still in the game) 32.♖c2 (or 32.♖f3 ♟xd2 33.♞xd2 b5 and Black takes over) 32...♟xd2 33.♞xd2 (33.♟xd2?? loses

to 33...d3!) White has avoided an instant collapse, nevertheless Black has the initiative and can choose between several promising continuations including 33...d6, 33...b5 and 33...h6.

30.♙f3! looks like the best chance: 30...e5 (30...♖c7 31.♔g2) 31.fxe5 dxe5 32.d2 ♗xd2 (32...f5 33.d4 ♖f7 34.dbd5) 33.♗xd2 f5 34.d4 b4 fxe4 35.♗xg4 hxg4 36.dbd5 ♖f7 37.♖g1 White is living dangerously, but he is still in the game.



30...e5!

With this powerful pawn move Karpov breaks up White's pawn chain and gains space in the centre.

31.d3

White has no adequate defence. 31.fxe5? is even worse: 31...♗e5! The knight on d1 now blocks the queen from defending the g3-pawn. 32.b4 This allows the queen to come to the aid of the g-pawn, but loosens White's position on the queenside. 32...d4! 33.♖d3 dxb2 34.dxb2 b5! 35.cxb5 d5! 36.exd5 ♗xd5 White's position has fallen apart.

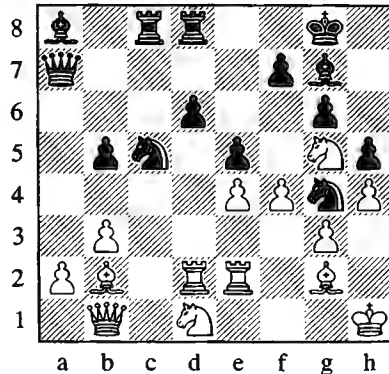
31...b5!?

Karpov keeps the position complex. 31...exf4!? was an alternative route to a large

advantage: 32.gxf4 d6 33.♗xg7 ♖xg7 34.f5 gxf5 (34...d4) 35.exf5 d4 White's position is too open.

32.cxb5 axb5 33.d5

If 33.f5 gxf5! 34.exf5 ♗h6 wins.



33...b4!

With this move Karpov secures the position of the knight on c5 while also opening a new angle of attack along the a6-f1 diagonal.

34.d2 ♗b7 35.dxg4

35.dgh3 was also unsatisfactory: 35...♗a6 36.♗e1 dxf2† 37.dxf2 exf4 38.♗xg7 (38.gxf4 ♗c3 wins.) 38...♖xg7 39.gxf4 ♖e7 And White loses the h4-pawn.

35.♗h3 also ends in failure: 35...dxf2† 36.♗xf2 f5! (36...f6 37.♗e6† dxe6 38.dxe6 ♖e3 39.♖h2 is not as convincing) 37.♗g2 dxe4 38.dxe4 fxe4 39.♗xe4 exf4 40.gxf4 ♗xb2 41.♗xb2 ♖e3 And Black wins.

35...hxg4

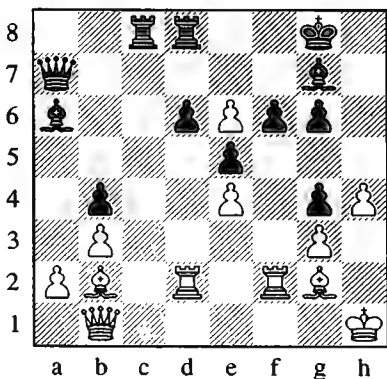
Suddenly White faces a new problem: the knight on g5 is in danger of being trapped.

36.f5

Garcia Gonzales closes the position and saves the knight, which allows him to survive for a

little longer. 36.fxe5 was no better: 36...dxe5 37.♗xd8† ♖xd8 38.♗c2 ♘d3 39.♖g1 (39.♗h2 ♗a6) 39...♗xg1† (or 39...♗xa2 40.♗c7 ♖f8 41.♗xb7 ♗xb2 and Black wins) 40.♗xg1 ♘xb2 41.♗xb2 ♖d1† 42.♗f2 ♗a6 43.♗c2 ♖d6 And Black traps the knight.

36...f6! 37.♘e6 ♘xe6 38.fxe6 ♗a6 39.♗f2



39...♗e7

White loses the e6-pawn for no compensation, while his numerous pawn weaknesses remain.

40.♗f1 ♗xf1 41.♗xf1 ♗xe6 42.♗b5 ♖b8 43.♗c6 ♗f8 44.♗c2 ♖dc8 0-1

White resigned as he is set to lose the a2-pawn as well.

Interestingly in the very next round, against Bellon Lopez, Karpov had to play against the Hedgehog formation, though it arose through a Sicilian this time. He was unable to achieve any advantage and was even a bit worse in the ending, although he managed to draw without any great difficulty. He drew his final three games as well, against Spassky, Kavalek and Gligoric. His final score of 8/11, with five wins and six draws, would usually have been enough to win such a tournament outright.

But at this event the American grandmaster Larry Christiansen, who had lost to Karpov in round six, scored an incredible 8/10 against the rest of the field, and the two combatants tied for first.

Karpov's next event was the Moscow super tournament. He started well, beating Balashov and Geller before drawing with Polugaevsky. His next opponent was another Soviet player, Alexander Beliavsky. The grandmaster from Lvov was also a former World Junior Champion. He played a total of 134 games against the world champions, achieving twenty victories, fifty eight draws and fifty six losses. Beliavsky lost fifteen games to Karpov, beat him thrice and drew nine times. At this point of their career they had only met three times, with one win apiece and one draw.

Game 60

Anatoly Karpov – Alexander Beliavsky

Moscow 1981

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♗e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5 ♘c6?!

This sideline is less reliable than 7...♗xc5, but Beliavsky had used it a few times previously so he must have felt comfortable with it.

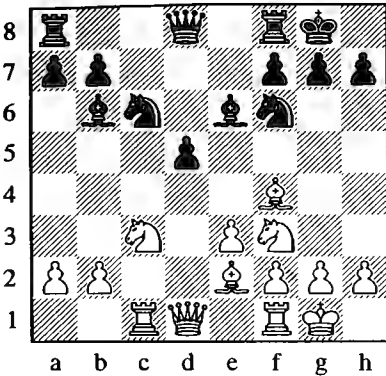
8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗e2 ♗xc5 10.0-0 ♗e6

Black cannot exchange his isolated pawn, as 10...d4? 11.♘a4! wins the pawn.

11.♗c1

Mikhalchishin used 11.♘e5 to beat Beliavsky earlier in the same year, but the latter must have studied the game and felt confident enough to repeat it.

11...♗b6



12. ♙a4

The queen vacates the d1-square to make way for a rook. A year earlier Beliavsky held a draw with little difficulty after 12. ♘e5 ♘e7 13. ♙a4 d4 14. exd4 ♗xd4 15. ♖f3 ♗xa4 16. ♘xa4 ♙xa2 17. ♙d6 ♗fe8 18. ♗a1 ♘f5 19. ♙b5 ♙c4 20. ♙xe8 ♗xe8 21. ♗fd1 ♙b3 22. ♘xb6 ♙xd1 23. ♗xd1 ½-½ Vaganian – Beliavsky, Vienna 1980.

12... ♙d7

The grandmaster from Lvov wants to exchange the e2-bishop. Another game from the same year continued: 12... ♗e7 13. ♗fd1 ♗fd8 14. ♙g5 h6 15. ♙h4 ♗ac8 16. ♘b5 Black was under some pressure but he eventually managed to hold a tough endgame, Scirawan – Byrne, South Bend 1981.

13. ♗fd1 ♘d4 14. ♗b4 ♘xc2†

Up to this point the players had been following an earlier meeting between Vaganian and Beliavsky from 1977. That game continued 14... a5 15. ♗a3 ♘xc2† 16. ♘xe2 ♙g4 17. ♗d6 ♗a6 18. ♗xd8 ♙xd8 Black succeeded in holding a draw, although at this stage the queenless position is a bit unpleasant for him.

Later White deviated with 17. ♘e4, which led to an advantage and an eventual victory for him in Gheorghiu – Soylu, Athens 1981. The position is similar to the main game, although the lunge with the a-pawn could easily end

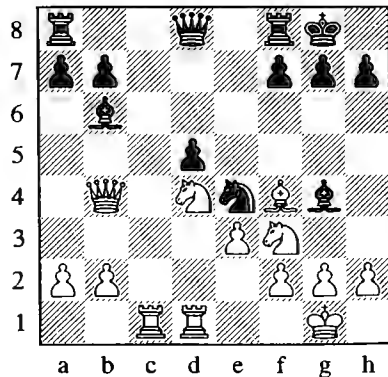
up leading to a serious weakening of Black's queenside.

15. ♘xc2 ♙g4 16. ♘e4

Even without the bishop, White maintains some pressure in the centre.

16... ♘e4

Compromising the opponent's kingside structure would not solve Black's problems: 16... ♙xd4 17. ♗xd4 ♙xf3 18. gxf3 ♗c8 19. ♗cd1 The d5-pawn is vulnerable.



17.h3!

This clever move not only creates a potentially useful escape square for the white king, but more importantly forces the enemy bishop to choose between two diagonals.

17... ♙e6

It is safer to protect the isolated pawn.

18. ♗c2!

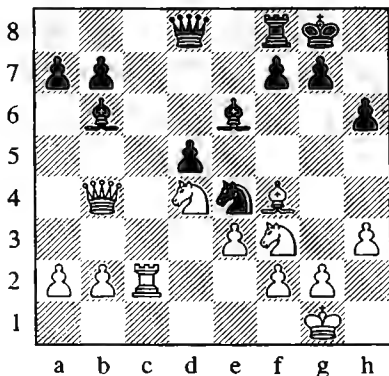
Karpov fights for control over the c-file.

18... ♗c8 19. ♗cd1 ♗xc2 20. ♗xc2 h6?!

This innocent looking move has far reaching consequences. This game was the subject of enormous publicity in the USSR, where it was said that weakening one square is enough to causes one's downfall against Karpov.

White is a bit better whatever Black does. For instance, 20...g6 is met by 21.♙e5 and the bishop heads for d4.

Another interesting line is 20...♞e8 21.a4!? a5 22.♟b3 ♘c5 23.♘e6 ♘xb3 24.♘xd8 ♞xd8 25.♙f1 f6 26.♞c3 ♘c5 27.♙c7! when White keeps his advantage.



21.a4 ♞e8 22.♘e6 fxe6

After 22...♞xe6? 23.a5 ♙xa5 24.♟xb7 ♞e7 25.♟a6 White is clearly better.

23.a5 ♙xa5 24.♟xb7 ♙b6

24...♟e7! was better, for instance 25.♟b5 (25.♟c6 ♙b6) 25...♙b6 26.♙e5 (or 26.♘e5 ♞d8) 26...♞f8! and it is not easy for White to increase the pressure.

25.♘e5 ♘d6?!

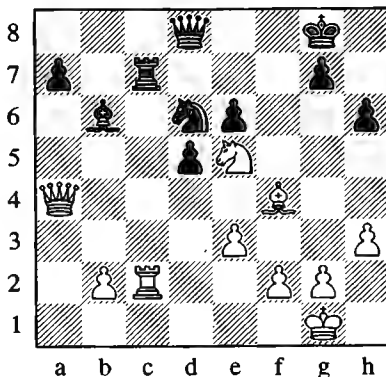
The knight is unstable here. 25...♟e7 was once again preferable.

26.♟c6 ♞e7 27.♟a4!

Karpov clears the c6-square.

27...♞c7

Other moves are not any better. For instance, 27...♟e8 28.♟a6!? is unpleasant, while after 27...♟b7 28.♟a3! ♘e4 29.♟a6 leaves Black in trouble.

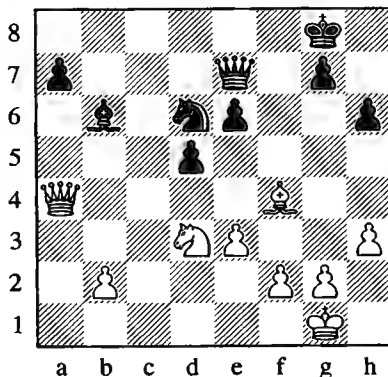


28.♞xc7 ♟xc7 29.♘d3 ♟e7

Black understandably wants to get out of the pin, but it does not save the game.

29...♟c4 releases the pin, but still loses after 30.♟d7! ♟xd3 31.♟xe6† ♙h7 32.♙xd6 d4 33.e4 ♟d2 34.♟f5† and Black's king is caught.

29...♙f8!? avoids the fate suffered by Black in the game, but after 30.♟a3 Black is stuck in a double pin. The continuation might be 30...♙e7 31.h4 ♟c6 32.b3 (32.h5!?) 32...a5 33.♘e5 ♟c5 34.♟a4 and Black can hardly move.



30.♙xd6!

Karpov once again demonstrates his deadliness at king-hunting in endgames.

30...♞xd6 31.♞e8† ♖h7

Interestingly the earlier ...h7-h6 move can be judged in two different ways. Beginning with the positive, it created an escape square for the king.

32.♠f4

On the other hand, the chronic weakness of the g6-square puts Black in serious trouble.

32...e5?

Belivsky covers the g6-square, but misses an even more powerful threat.

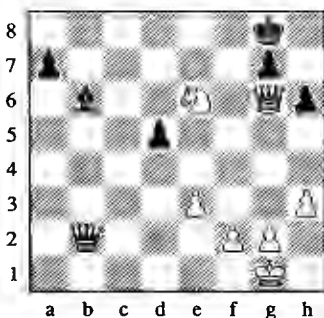
32...d4!?

This was the best chance, although it is not enough to save the game.

32...♙d4? 33.♞g6† ♖h8 34.b3 ♙f6 35.♞e8† wins.

32...♞e5 allows White to win in fine style:

33.♞g6† ♖h8 34.♞xe6 ♞xb2



35.g4!! Black has no good defence against g5 with mating threats.

33.♞g6† ♖g8 34.♞xe6 ♞e7 35.♞xd4

35.exd4 ♙xd4 is not so clear.

35...♙xd4 36.♞d3!

And White wins, as pointed out by Belov.

33.♞e6 ♙c5 34.♞f7

1-0

Black resigned in view of 34...♞e7 35.♞f5† ♖g8 36.♞xe5 when White is about to collect a second pawn and will win easily.

After a flying start with three wins from the first four rounds, Karpov slowed down and drew most of his remaining games, although he did register two more wins, against Timman in round eight and Smyslov in round ten. He finished with five wins and nine draws, for a total of 9½/13, thus winning the tournament decisively, a point and a half clear of Polugaevsky, Kasparov and the sixty year old Smyslov.

Karpov's next tournament, the last before his title defence, took place in Amsterdam. He started with a shocking defeat at the hands of Hort, but then bounced back to defeat Ljubojevic. In the third round he had his one and only clash with Jan Donner. The Dutch grandmaster played forty four games against the world champions. He won three of those games; interestingly all three victories came with the black pieces. He lost to them thirty three times and drew the other eight. Donner had a dismal score against Soviet players and according to the database he only won four games against them, although two of those were against world champions.

Game 61

Jan Donner – Anatoly Karpov

Amsterdam 1981

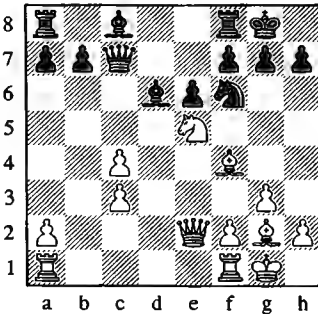
1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♙b4 4.♞c2

Karpov faced this line numerous times with the black pieces, but he also played it with White from time to time.

4...c5

Amazingly, up until 1994 Karpov did not lose a single game in the 4.♘c2 Nimzo-Indian. The text move was an unusual one for him, 4...0-0 being his usual choice. Let me show you two of his games against the German grandmaster Gerald Hertneck. 5.♖f3 (5.a3 is the main line and the most critical, and 5.e4!? is also interesting.) 5...c5 6.dxc5 ♖a6 Here Hertneck tried two different approaches:

a) 7.g3 ♖xc5 8.♗g2 ♖ce4 9.0-0 White undertakes a structural weakening, hoping that his active piece play will compensate. 9...♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.e4 d6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♖xe5 ♘c7 14.♙e2 ♗d6 15.♗f4



15...♖e8! This is a fine positional move, Karpov gets rid of the strong e5 knight. 16.♙ab1 f6 17.♖d3 ♙xc4 18.♗xd6 ♖xd6 19.♙b4 ♙c7 20.♖f4 ♗e8 21.♗d1 a5 22.♙bd4 ♙a6! 23.♙h5 ♗f8 24.g4 a4 25.c4 ♖f7 26.h4 ♙a5 27.g5 ♗f5 28.♖h3 g6 29.♙e2 fxg5 Black went on to win in Hertneck – Karpov, Baden-Baden 1992.

b) In the second game Hertneck played a bit too passively: 7.e3 ♖xc5 8.♗d2 b6 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 ♗b7 11.♗e2 d6 12.b3 e5! Karpov plays against White's dark-squared bishop. 13.0-0 ♗c8 14.♙f1 ♙e7 15.b4 ♖ce4 16.♗e1?! ♙c7 17.♙b2 ♙c6 18.a4 ♗a6! 19.b5 ♗b7 20.a5 b6 21.♗d1 ♙f8 22.h3 ♖d7 23.♖d2 ♖ce5 24.axb6 axb6 25.f3 e4 26.fx4 ♖xe4 27.♖xe4

♗xe4 28.♗g3 ♙g6 29.♖h2 d5 30.♙a1 ♖f6 31.♗f1 ♙c5 Karpov soon won the b5-pawn and went on to win this game as well, Hertneck – Karpov, Germany 1994.

5.dxc5 0-0 6.♗f4

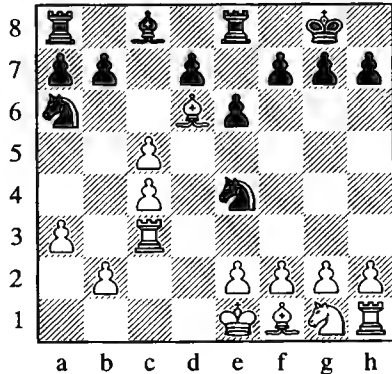
This line was already known to be harmless. 6.a3 ♗xc5 7.♖f3 is critical.

6...♖a6 7.♗d6

The bishop comes to a nice square, but the manoeuvre costs valuable time.

7...♙e8 8.a3 ♙a5 9.♙c1 ♗xc3† 10.♙xc3 ♙xc3† 11.♙xc3 ♖e4

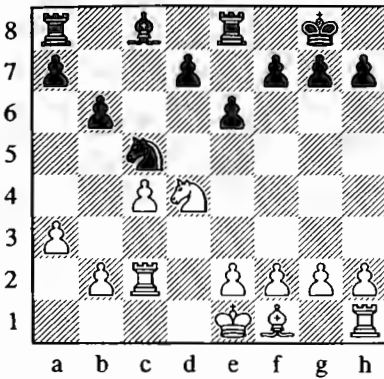
Black easily regains his pawn while maintaining a lead in development. It is already White who has to be more careful.



12.♙c2 ♖xc5 13.♗xc5 ♖xc5 14.♖f3 b6 15.♖d4

The three-time Dutch champion moves the knight again before developing his other pieces. The text move is not the ultimate cause of his demise, but it is the first step towards his decline.

Safer was 15.b4 ♖e4 (15...♖a4 16.e3 ♗b7 17.♗d3) 16.e3 a5 17.♗d3 when the position is so equal that even a magician like Karpov would have had a hard time conjuring something.



15...a5!

Black may be glad for the opportunity to fix the queenside later.

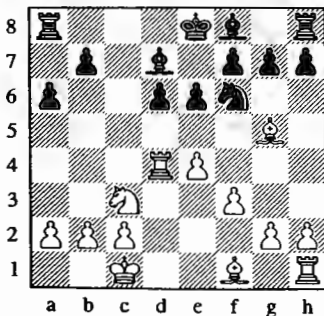
16.♖b5!? ♜d8 17.♖d6

It would be easy to criticize White for making so many knight moves, but objectively the idea is not bad.

17...♗b7 18.♖xb7?

But this is a serious mistake. Having spent so many tempos with this piece, he should not have exchanged it so cheaply. Instead after 18.f3 a4 19.e4 White's position remains quite playable.

When playing through this game I was reminded of a game of Kasparov:

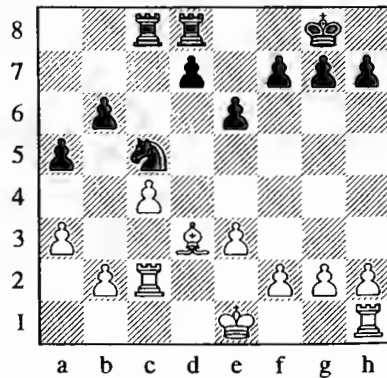


12.♖a4! ♗c6 13.♖b6 ♜d8 14.♖c4! ♗e7

15.♖a5! ♜c8 16.♖b4 d5 17.♖xc6! bxc6 18.♖b7 Kasparov – Mchedlishvili, Bled (ol) 2002. Thanks to his extraordinary use of his knight, Kasparov obtained a clear advantage and went on to win. It was a magical idea, even if, as I suspect, it was home preparation all the way.

Donner and Kasparov both invested numerous tempos in order to exchange a knight for an enemy bishop. The difference is in the context: Kasparov was able to create weaknesses and invade with his rook, while Donner has merely lost time without achieving anything special, and he will suffer the consequences.

18...♖xb7 19.e3 ♜ac8 20.♗d3 ♖c5



21.♗e2?

Donner makes one more unnecessary move, this time with the bishop. He should have preferred:

21.♖e2! a4

21...♖xd3?! 22.♖xd3 d5 23.♖hc1! Donner may have overlooked this important resource. White can hold the position with a pawn sacrifice as his king is well placed in the centre. 23...♜xc4 (23...dxc4† 24.♖e2 b5 25.b3 White holds.) 24.b3 ♜xc2 25.♜xc2 ♖f8 26.♜c6 ♖b8 27.♜c7 White has enough activity to draw the position a pawn down.

22.♜c3

Also after 22.♜d1 f5 23.♜cc1 ♖f7 24.♗c2

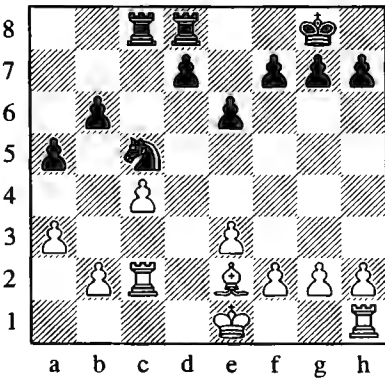
♔e7 25.h4 Black is in control, but his position is not as dominant as the one he obtains in the game.

22...f5 23.♗c2

White could also consider 23.h4!?, anticipating the opponent's kingside expansion.

23...♗f7 24.♖b1 g5 25.b4!? axb3 26.♗xb3

Nobody would enjoy playing White's position against Karpov, but it is better than the one he reaches in the game. At least the first player has a target on b6.



21...a4!

This ensures that the knight will have a stable base on c5 for the rest of the game.

22.f3 ♖b3 23.♗d3 ♖c5 24.♔e2

White has no time to lose – a sloppy move such as 24.h4? would run into 24...d5!.

24...♗dc8 25.♖c3!

Donner finds the only move to remain in the game.

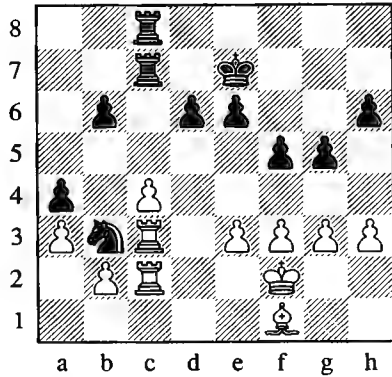
25...♖a5 26.♖hc1 ♗f8 27.♗f2

White is desperately passive, but he might have considered 27.h4! in anticipation of Black's kingside advance.

27...♔e7 28.♔e2 h6

Karpov is in no hurry, and merely inches his way forwards on the kingside.

29.♔e1 ♖h5 30.h3 ♖hc5 31.♗f2 ♖b3 32.♖1c2 d6 33.♔e1 g5 34.g3 ♖5c7 35.♗f1 f5 36.♗f2



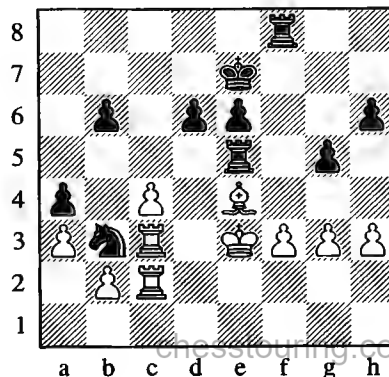
36...♖f8!

Preparing to open a second front. White cannot easily transfer his pieces to the kingside as he is short of space.

37.♗g2 f4 38.♗f1

It is hard to recommend anything for White, for instance after 38.exf4 gxf4 39.g4 e5 Black also dominates.

38...♖c5 39.♗d3 fxc3† 40.♔xe3 ♖c5† 41.♗c4



41...♖c5!

Karpov keeps torturing his opponent. In practical terms this was the safest way to ensure victory, although Black could also have won by more direct means:

41...b5!?

41...d5? would be too hasty, and after 42.cxd5 exd5 43.♖c7† ♕f6 44.♖2c6† White survives.

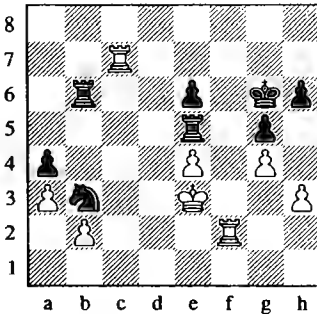
42.cxb5

After 42.♕d3 Black can even sacrifice an exchange in the style of Petrosian: 42...♞xe4! (There is also 42...bxc4† 43.♞xc4 d5 44.♞c7† ♕f6 45.♕h7 ♞e1 46.♞a7 ♕e5 and Black should win.) 43.♕xe4 bxc4 44.♕e3 d5 With a decisive advantage.

42...d5 43.♞c7† ♕f6 44.b6

White seems to have dangerous counterplay, but it is not quite enough.

44...dxe4 45.fxe4 ♞b8 46.♞f2† ♔g6 47.g4 ♞xb6



48.♞f7

48.♞cf7? ♞f5!! is a nice touch.

48...♞c5 49.♞c7 ♖a5 50.♞g7† ♕f6 51.♞gf7† ♕e5 52.♞f5† ♕d6

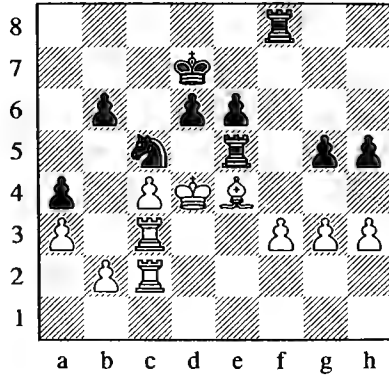
And Black wins. Still, it was hardly worth playing in such a risky fashion over the board. After the game continuation I doubt that White can hold the position, and even if a narrow path to survival does exist, it would be almost impossible to withstand the pressure over the board.

42.♕d4 ♖b3† 43.♕d3 ♕d7 44.♕e3 ♖c5

Karpov continues to wear down his opponent.

45.♕d4 ♞c8 46.♞f2 ♖b3† 47.♕d3 ♞f8 48.♞fc2 h5! 49.♕e3 ♖c5 50.♕d4

Finally the time has come for direct action.



50...g4!

Removing the defender of the bishop.

51.♞c3

If 51.hxg4 hxg4 52.♞h2 gxh3 wins.

51...gxh3 52.♕f3 ♖b3† 53.♕d3?

This blunders a piece, although White was lost anyway.

53...♞xc3†

0-1

Over the remainder of the tournament Karpov achieved two more wins and six draws. His overall score of 7/11 was slightly below par for his high standards, and was only good enough to share second place with Portisch, behind the victorious Timman. After Amsterdam it was time for the main event of Karpov's year: defending his title against Korchnoi.

Second match with Korchnoi for the World Championship

The match began at the start of October, and took place in the town of Merano in northern Italy. Since his narrow defeat in the 1978 match, Viktor the Terrible had maintained a busy tournament schedule, although he was unable to participate in the very best events in the world due to the ongoing boycott from the Soviets. Some of Korchnoi's tournament triumphs were deeply impressive, while on other occasions he performed disappointingly. Still, in 1980 he defeated his old enemy Petrosian in the candidates quarter-final match, scoring two wins with seven draws and no defeats. He followed that by finishing joint first in the strong Phillips and Drew tournament in London. Then in the semi-final of the candidates matches he narrowly defeated Polugaevsky by a score of 7½–6½, with three wins, two losses and nine draws. In the final he met Hübner and once again won by three wins to two, although this time there were just three draws as the German grandmaster resigned the match with two adjournments left to play.

Even after securing the right to challenge Karpov for the second time, Korchnoi took part in a number of tournaments in 1981. Despite the fact that he had passed the age of fifty, his results were impressive, especially at Lone Pine where he won a very strong open tournament. By the time he met Karpov his rating had risen to an impressive 2695, just five points short of the champion.

Despite Korchnoi's undoubted status as a worthy contender, the match was strikingly one-sided. Karpov won the first two games, drew the third, then won again in Game Four. Already he was halfway to victory. Korchnoi steadied his ship and drew Game Five, before striking back in Game Six and drawing the next two. But in Game Nine he was out of

form, and Karpov punished him instructively. The next three games were drawn. In Game Thirteen Korchnoi beat Karpov nicely in an Orthodox Queen's Gambit, but Karpov struck right back in the next game after Korchnoi misplayed an Open Spanish.

Just as in the first match, the score line stood at 5–2, but this time Karpov had the benefit of experience and did not let his rival back into the match. After three more draws, he killed off the challenger. Here is the decisive game.

Game 62

Anatoly Karpov – Viktor Korchnoi

World Championship, Merano (18) 1981

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6

Karpov won Game Two, his first white game of the match, in the slightly offbeat line 3...♘f6 4.0–0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♗e7. In Game Four Korchnoi switched to a Petroff but lost there too. In Game Six he returned to his tried and tested Open Spanish and won. This led Karpov to avoid the Ruy Lopez by switching to the Italian for two games, and 1.c4 in another. He did not return to the Ruy Lopez until Game Fourteen, after he and his team had prepared some new ideas.

4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♘xe4

Over the course of the two world championship matches between these two rivals, the Open Spanish featured in twelve games. Karpov won four games to Korchnoi's two, and the other six were drawn. Karpov also won one game in their 1972 training match in this opening.

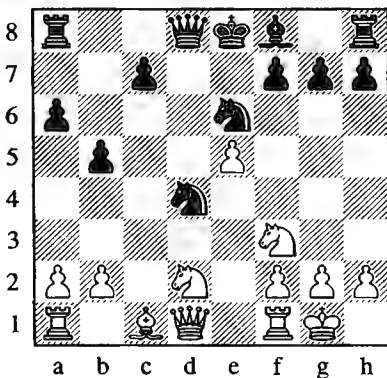
6.d4 b5 7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗e6 9.♘bd2

With three wins, three draws and no losses, Karpov scored much better with this move than with 9.c3.

9...♖c5 10.c3 d4 11.♗xc6

Karpov no longer uses 11.♖g5!?, the revelation of Baguio.

11...♖xc6 12.cxd4 ♖cxd4



13.a4!?

Karpov and his team prepared for the match very hard, and this was another new idea. It has stood the test of time, and nearly three decades later it is still regarded as one of White's main tries for an advantage.

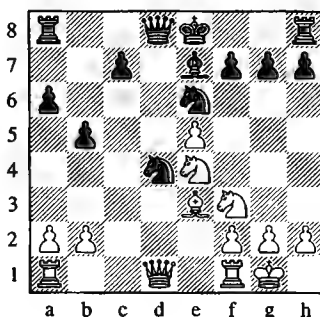
The main idea is, unsurprisingly, to capture on b5 at an opportune moment. If Black takes back with the knight then his queenside pawns will be isolated and vulnerable. If he takes with the pawn the queen will be diverted to a8, away from the centre. Black could move his rook to b8, but then White gets the a-file.

13.♖e4

Karpov certainly anticipated the Open Spanish, and this was another new idea which he prepared earlier in the match. In Game Fourteen it worked very well, but in the sixteenth Korchnoi neutralized it.

13...♗e7 14.♗e3

Now Black must make the right choice with the knight.



14...♖f5!

14...♖xf3? The challenger's initial reaction to the novelty was not the best. 15.♖xf3 0-0 16.♗fd1 ♖e8 17.♖f6† ♗xf6 18.exf6 ♖c8 19.fxg7 ♗d8 20.h4 c5 21.♗a1 ♖c7 22.h5 ♖e5 23.h6 ♖xb2 24.♗d7! The champion already had a winning position, Karpov – Korchnoi, Merano (14) 1981.

Two games later, Korchnoi was prepared with a better answer.

15.♖c2 0-0 16.♖eg5 ♗xg5 17.♖xg5 g6 18.♖xe6 fxe6 19.♗a1 ♖d5

Black was close to equal. Although he later allowed Karpov to develop a bit of pressure, he was able to hold the draw in Karpov – Korchnoi, Merano (16) 1981.

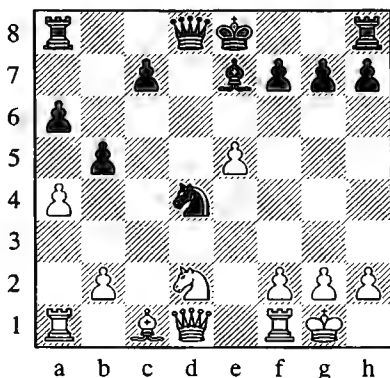
13...♗e7

With so much at stake, Korchnoi makes the safest move. 13...♗c5 is riskier after 14.♖e4, for instance: 14...0-0?! (It looks as though Anand simply blundered when he played this move. 14...♗b6 was better.) 15.♖xc5 ♖xf3† 16.♖xf3 ♖xc5 17.axb5 axb5 18.♗g5! ♗xa1 19.♗xd8 ♗xf1† 20.♖xf1 ♗xd8 Fortunately for Black, his fortress is not easy to penetrate. 21.g3 (21.♖c6 ♖e6 22.♖xb5?? ♗d1† 23.♗e2 ♖d4†→) 21...♖e6 22.♖b7 g6 23.♖xb5 c5 24.h4?! h5 25.b4? After exchanging the last queenside pawn Black held easily in Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996. It is surprising that such a great player as Topalov was unable to create any serious winning chances with an

extra queen. Despite the final result, Black's opening was not a success.

14. ♖xd4 ♖xd4

14... ♖xd4 was Korchnoi's choice when he repeated the same line fifteen years later: 15. axb5 ♖xe5 16. bxa6 0–0 17. ♖a4!? ♖c5 18. ♖c4 ♖fb8 19. ♖a5 (According to Kasparov 19. f3 ♖e6 20. ♖xe6 fxe6 21. a7 gives a tangible advantage.) 19... ♖d6 20. ♖e4 ♖xe4 21. ♖xe4 ♖b4 22. ♖xb4 ♖xb4 Black was unable to hold this inferior endgame in Topalov – Korchnoi, Madrid 1996.



15. ♖e4

Karpov could have inflicted a slight weakening on the black queenside with 15. axb5 ♖xb5, but he wants more. The game might continue 16. ♖g4 (or 16. ♖c2 0–0 17. ♖a4!?) 16... 0–0 17. ♖f3 ♖c8 when Black is a bit worse, but should be able to live with his disadvantage.

15... ♖e6

Yusupov played 15... 0–0 three times in 1989. 16. axb5 ♖xb5 17. ♖e3 ♖c8 18. ♖d5!? (In the first two games the Russian held the somewhat worse position after 18. ♖c2 against both Adams and Ivanchuk.) 18... ♖d8 19. ♖c6 ♖f5 20. f4 h5 21. h3 ♖ab8 22. ♖fd1 Once again Black had an inferior position and this time

he was unable to hold in Chandler – Yusupov, Hastings 1989.

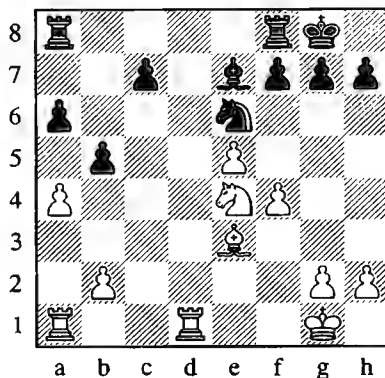
16. ♖e3 0–0 17. f4!

Karpov wants to gain space and drive away the well placed knight.

17... ♖xd1

17...g6? would be asking for trouble on the kingside: 18. ♖f3 (18.g4!? is also promising, but hardly necessary) 18... ♖d4 (18... bxa4? 19. ♖ad1 ♖e8 20. f5 White's attack is too strong) 19. ♖f2 ♖f5 20. ♖fd1 ♖c8 21. ♖c5 Black has too many weak points in his position without achieving anything in return.

18. ♖fxd1



18... ♖fb8?

Korchnoi is willing to give up material in order to eliminate White's queenside pawns. The idea is sensible enough, except for the fact that there is no time to execute it. In a few subsequent games Black attempted to improve with:

18... ♖ad8

Two other moves have been suggested by commentators:

18... f5 Black hopes to obtain some breathing space on the kingside. 19. exf6 gxf6 (19... ♖xf6?! 20. f5 ♖xb2 21. fxe6 is tough for

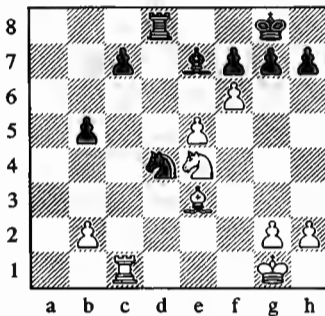
Black) 20.f5 ♘g7 21.g4 Black is cramped and he is certainly worse, although his position still looks preferable to the game.

18...♖fd8!? 19.axb5 axb5 20.♖xa8 ♖xa8 21.f5 ♖d8 22.♗xd8† ♘xd8 According to Kasparov Black has chances to survive because of the limited material.

19.axb5 axb5 20.f5!

After 20.♖dc1 g6 21.♖a5 ♖d3 22.♗f2 ♖b3 23.♖c2 ♖d8 24.♘d2 ♖b4 25.g3 c5 Black had solved all his problems in Kaiumov – Safin, Tashkent 1992.

20...♗xd1† 21.♗xd1 ♖d8 22.♖c1 ♘d4 23.f6



23...♘e2†

Also after 23...♗xf6 24.exf6 ♘e2† 25.♗f2 ♘xc1 26.♗xc1 gxf6 27.♘xf6† Black would face a long and unpleasant defence.

24.♗f2 ♘xc1 25.fxe7 ♖e8 26.♗xc1 ♖xe7 27.♗f4 f6 28.♗e3 fxe5 29.♗g3

Adams – Unzicker, Germany 1996. Despite his slight material deficit, White is in control and the English grandmaster eventually squeezed the full point out of the position. I wonder if the German grandmaster would have managed to hold the ending when he was younger and in his prime.

19.♖d7!

Moving the rook to the seventh rank is both natural and powerful.

19...♗f8



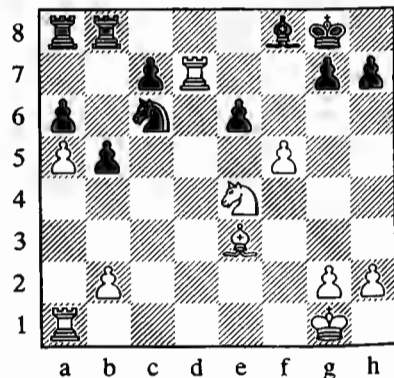
20.f5!

Karpov gains even more space and pushes the enemy knight back. Korchnoi is a great defender, but the position with all five of his pieces on the eighth rank is too much even for him.

20...♘d8 21.a5!

Karpov retains his queenside pawns and prevents the black rooks from becoming active.

21...♘c6 22.e6! fxe6



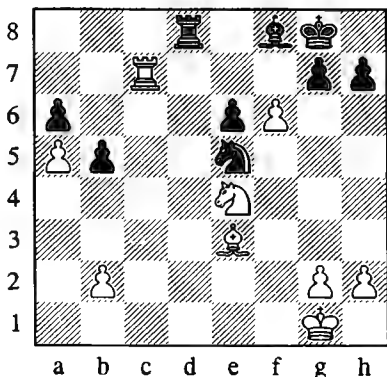
23.f6!

A rook on the seventh rank can often hurt the enemy king, and so it proves here.

23...♖e5!

Korchnoi fights to relieve the pressure around his king. Black has no time to defend the c-pawn with 23...♖c8? as after 24.♖c1 ♜xa5 25.♙d4! White's pieces simply murder Black's king: 25...♞d8 26.♖xc7 ♞xd7 27.♞xd7 ♜c6 28.fxg7 Black can resign.

24.♖xc7 ♖c8 25.♖ac1 ♖xc7 26.♖xc7 ♞d8

**27.h3?**

Karpov commits an inaccuracy in the endgame, which is rare for him. He must have sensed that he was clearly better, and the pressure of winning the match may have affected him.

The correct continuation was 27.♙f4!, driving the knight away and thus preventing Black from contesting the seventh rank. Play may continue 27...♜f7 28.♖c6 ♞d4 29.♖xe6 ♜d8 30.♞e7! ♙xe7? 31.fxe7 and White wins.

27...h6

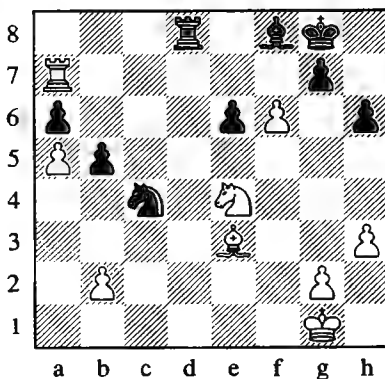
Korchnoi misses his opportunity for 27...♞d7!, taking the seventh rank away from Karpov's rook: 28.♖c8 ♞d1† 29.♜f2 gxf6 30.♜xf6† ♜f7 31.♜xh7 ♙e7 32.♖c7 ♖b1 33.♙g5 ♖xb2† 34.♜g3 ♖b3† 35.♜h2 ♜g6 Black is still worse but he has chances to draw.

28.♞a7

28.♜f2! would have prevented the idea in the next note.

28...♜c4?

28...♞d1†! was Black's last chance to make a fight of the game. 29.♜f2 ♖b1 Targeting the b2-pawn gives Black reasonable chances to survive. 30.fxg7 (After 30.♖xa6 ♖xb2† 31.♜g3 ♖b3 Black is active enough to hold.) 30...♖xb2† 31.♜f1 ♙xg7 32.♖xa6 ♜c4 Black has decent counterplay.

**29.♙b6!**

By forcing the rook to vacate the open file, Karpov prevents any counterplay for a long time. From now on Korchnoi never gets a chance to obtain any active play.

29...♖b8

29...♞d1† leaves the f8-bishop too vulnerable, and 30.♜f2 ♖b1 31.f7† wins easily.

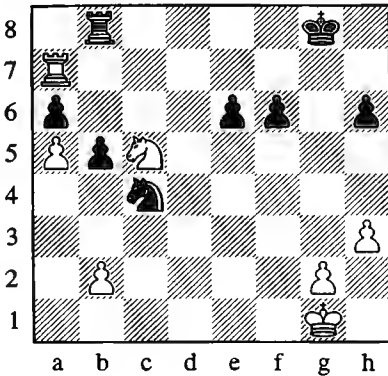
30.♙c5!

Karpov exchanges the bishop which holds together the defence of the black king.

30...♙xc5†

After 30...♜xa5 31.f7† ♜h7 32.♙xf8 ♖xf8 33.♜c5 ♜g6 34.♜d7! White wins.

31. ♖xc5 gx6



32. b4!

Other moves also win, but preserving the queenside pawns is the safest path for White.

32... ♖d8 33. ♖xa6 ♖f7 34. ♖a7† ♖g6
35. ♖d7!

By taking away the d-file from Black's rook, Karpov eliminates any risk of counterplay.

35... ♖e8 36. a6 ♖a8 37. ♖b7 ♖f5 38. ♖xb5

Facing two connected passed pawns, Korchnoi has no chance to survive.

39... ♖e5 39. ♖b7 ♖d5 40. ♖f7 f5 41. ♖f6
1-0

Korchnoi sealed his 41st move, but resigned his hopeless position without resuming. Thus Karpov won the match by the emphatic score of six wins to two, with ten draws. At thirty years of age, he had not even reached the height of his powers. It became clear that the fifty year old Korchnoi was unlikely to pose a serious threat to Karpov's crown ever again.

1981 Summary

Linares (1st place): 8/11 (+5 =6 -0)

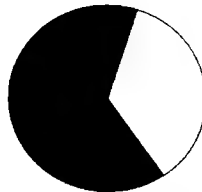
Four Teams, Moscow (Board one): 3½/6 (+1 =5 -0)

Moscow (1st place): 9/13 (+5 =8 -0)

Amsterdam (2nd-3rd place): 7/11 (+4 =6 -1)

World Championship match versus Korchnoi: Won 11-7 (+6 =10 -2)

Total 65.3% (+21 =35 -3)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1982

Rating 2720 (1 in the World)

Karpov's first tournament of the year was in Mar del Plata, on the coast of northern Argentina. Up to this point he had not achieved much success in Latin America, and the present event was also not one of the high points of his career. He started well enough, with a win over Larsen and three draws, but then he suffered a defeat against Timman. He picked up a win and two draws from the next three, but then lost to Garcia Palermo. After two more draws, Karpov faced Franco Ocampos in round twelve. The Spanish grandmaster faced the world champions eight times, losing three games and drawing five. This was his first encounter with Karpov. They met once more in 1995 and drew.

Game 63

Anatoly Karpov – Zenon Franco Ocampos

Mar del Plata 1982

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♙g5 e6 7.♞d2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6

The Spaniard had not played this particular move before. Karpov had faced it just once, against Van der Wiel in 1980.

9.♙e3

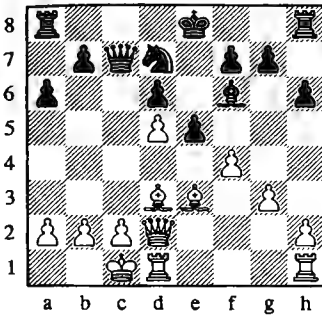
Karpov tried 9.♙f4 in some later games.

9...♘xd4

Karpov faced a couple of other moves here as well:

9...♙d7 10.f3 ♞c7 11.g4 ♘e5 12.h4 b5 13.♖g1 h5 14.g5 ♘g8 15.♙e2 ♜b8 16.f4 b4 17.♘b1 ♘g4 18.♙xa6 g6 19.♖g1 ♘xe3 20.♞xe3 Karpov – Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1980. Black is in trouble due to his undeveloped kingside, and he went on to lose. This game shows how difficult it can be to understand openings. The Dutch grandmaster is a very fine player, yet in the early days of the variation he was unable to find the right plan.

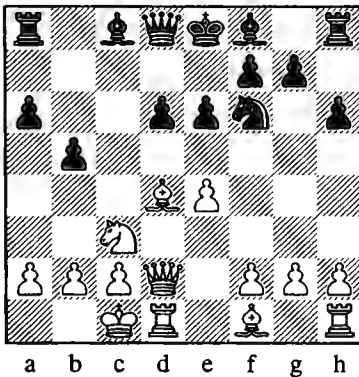
In the next year Timman played the line differently: 9...♙e7 10.f3 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 e5 12.♙e3 ♙e6 13.♘d5 ♙xd5 14.exd5 ♘d7 15.g3! ♙g5 16.f4 ♙f6 17.♙d3 ♞c7



18. ♖b4! Karpov finds a novel queen manoeuvre; the lady is heading for the e4-square. 18...b5 19. ♗he1 ♖b8 20. h4 a5 21. ♗e4 ♜d8 Karpov – Timman, Linares 1983. The fact that Black felt the need to make such an ugly king move indicates that he has real problems, although to Timman’s credit, he managed to survive and draw.

10. ♗xd4 b5

10...e5 11. ♗e3 ♗e6 is also possible.



11. ♣3

During his world championship reign, Karpov had two disappointing losses in the Rauzer when his opponent played ...a6. In both of those games he put his pawn on f4, but he subsequently switched to a set-up with ♣3, as we saw in his games against Van der Wiel and Timman in the note to Black’s

ninth move above. In those days players knew much less about attacking with ♣3 against the Scheveningen pawn structure. The English Attack only became popular in the second half of the eighties.

11...♗c7

11...♗a5 is a reasonable alternative which has been tested by Anand a few times.

12. h4

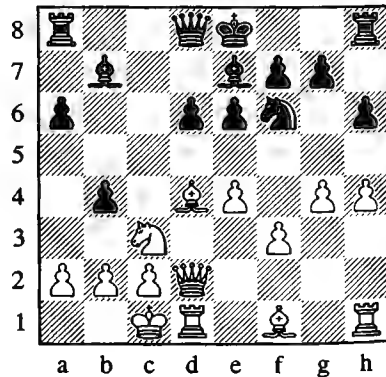
Karpov starts his pawn storm at once. Later 12. ♖b1 became the main line.

12...♗b7?!

This is a bit too slow, although it looks natural enough, and the most precise plans had not been worked out at the time. Nowadays the main line is 12...♗a5! 13. ♗f2 ♖b8 14. ♖b1 b4 15. ♗e2 e5 16. ♗a7 ♖b7 17. ♗c1 ♗e6 with complex play.

13. g4 b4

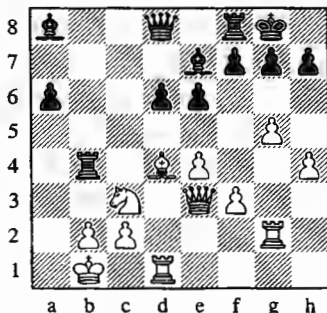
Black continues with his thematic queenside play, but a surprise awaits.



14. ♗a4!

Karpov switches his attention to the queenside, having picked out the c4-square as an inviting home for his knight.

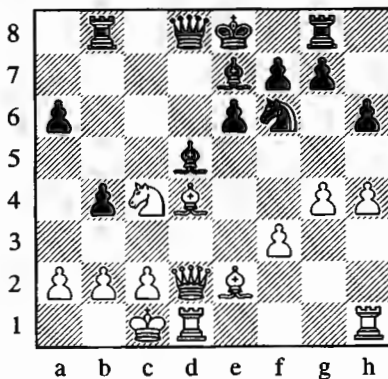
More than a decade later, even Kasparov, the greatest Scheveningen expert of all time, could also have been threatened by White's strategy of fighting on the queenside. The following position arose in Topalov – Kasparov, Novgorod 1995. At this point White could have obtained an advantage by switching his focus to the d6-pawn and queenside:



14. ♙c6 15. ♜b6 ♚b8 16. ♜c4
 16... ♜f2 is also strong.
 16... d5
 The Spaniard exchanges the vulnerable d6-pawn, although opening the centre might prove risky for his king.
 17. exd5 ♙xd5 18. ♙c2 ♚g8

Black technically forfeits the right to castle, although realistically this decision was made several moves back.

Black technically forfeits the right to castle, although realistically this decision was made several moves back.



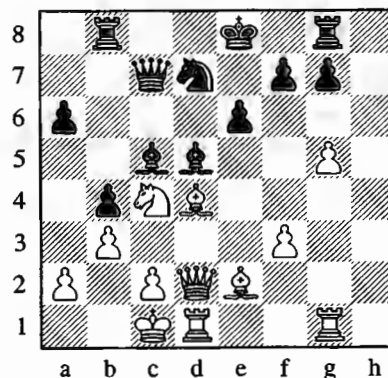
19.g5!

White could have obtained an edge with 19. ♜f4 ♚c8 (19... ♜d7 20. $\text{♜d6}\dagger$) 20. ♙e5 ♚c6 21. ♜e3 intending to eliminate one of Black's valuable bishops, but Karpov is more ambitious.

19... hxg5 20. hxg5 ♜d7 21. ♚hg1

Karpov makes a semi-waiting move.

21... ♜c7 22. b3 ♙c5



23. ♚g4 !

Now if Black wants to exchange bishops, he will have to allow the rook to take up a fine position in the centre.

23... ♜e7 24. ♜e3 ♙a8 25. ♜b1 a5 26. ♚h4

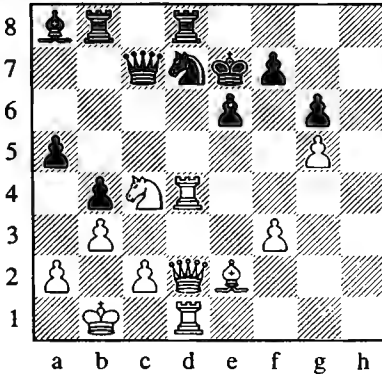
Planning to put the rook on h7.

26...♙xd4

To stop it Black finally exchanges the bishop, but allows the rook to come closer to his king.

27.♙xd4 ♜g8 28.♖c4 g6

If 28...♙d5 29.♞e3 ♗f8 30.g6 (or 30.♞h1 g6 31.♞f4) 30...fxg6 31.♞g1 Black's king lacks protection.

**29.♖xa5!**

Black had to focus so much on the safety of his king that he was unable to keep his queenside together.

29...e5 30.♙d6?!

So far Karpov has outplayed his opponent beautifully, but here in the direct confrontation he commits a slight inaccuracy.

Taking the pawn with 30.♙xb4! would have won comfortably, as the a5-knight is poisoned due to some simple tactics.

There was a second convincing route to victory in 30.♙d3! ♖f8 31.♖c4! ♖e6 32.♙xd8 ♞xd8 33.♞e3 when White wins a second pawn.

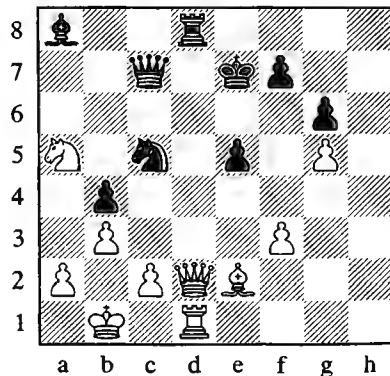
30...♖c5?

After this mistake Black drops the b-pawn. Instead he could have exploited the less than secure placement of the white rook with

30...♖f8! when he can hang onto the b-pawn: 31.♙xd8 (31.♖c4? ♙xd6) 31...♞xd8 32.♖c4 (another option is 32.a4 ♞xd2 33.♙xd2 ♖h7 34.♖c4 ♖xg5 35.♖xe5 ♗e6 36.♖d7 ♙h8 37.♖c5† ♗e5 with reasonable winning chances) 32...♞xd2 33.♙xd2 ♙b5 34.♙d6 White has good winning chances, but some work remains.

31.♙xd8 ♙xd8

If 31...♞xd8 32.♞e3 ♞c7 White wins with the lovely tactical shot 33.♖c6†!!.

**32.♞xb4**

Karpov now has three connected passed pawns on the queenside. The win is virtually guaranteed, even though it may take some time to advance the pawns.

32...♙xd1† 33.♙xd1 ♞d6 34.♙e2 ♞d4 35.♖c4 e4 36.fxe4 ♙xe4 37.♞d2 ♖e6 38.♞b4† ♖c5 39.♞d2 ♖e6 40.a4

Black has no chance to stop the a-pawn without giving up a piece.

40...♞g1† 41.♗b2 ♞xg5 42.♞d6† ♗f6 43.a5 ♞c5 44.♞xc5 ♖xc5
1-0

In the last round he also beat Braga to salvage his tournament with a below-par but still somewhat respectable score of 7½/13, with

four wins, two losses and seven draws. This was enough to share second place with Seirawan and Polugaevsky, a point behind Timman who finished first.

Karpov was not in his best form in Buenos Aires. Timman said that he felt that Karpov had not recovered from the Korchnoi match. The match from the outside looked one sided, but as the Dutch grandmaster remarked, a world championship match is never easy.

Karpov's next event was the Phillips and Drew tournament in London. He started with a string of four draws, before picking up his first win in a Dragon against Mestel. Three more draws followed. His tournament then took on an unexpected shift: after drawing in seven of the first eight rounds, Karpov did not draw a single one of his remaining five games. In round nine he defeated Miles in another Dragon, then met John Nunn in round ten.

This was Karpov's first meeting with the strong English grandmaster. Nunn faced all the world champions from Smyslov to Anand, with the exceptions of Fischer and Topalov. He scored six wins, twenty one draws and fourteen losses. His lifetime score against Karpov is one win, four draws and five losses.

Game 64

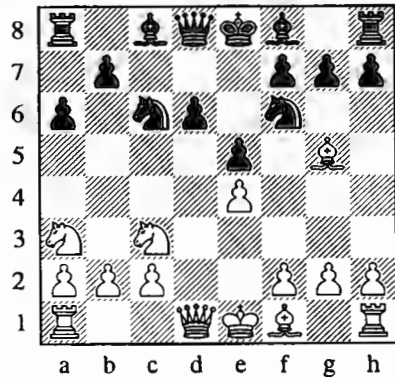
Anatoly Karpov – John Nunn

London 1982

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖f6
5.♗c3 ♗c6

The English grandmaster's main opening was the Najdorf, yet he made a quick draw in the present line against Karpov's second Balashov earlier in the same year.

6.♗db5 d6 7.♗f4 e5 8.♗g5 a6 9.♗a3



9...♗c6?!

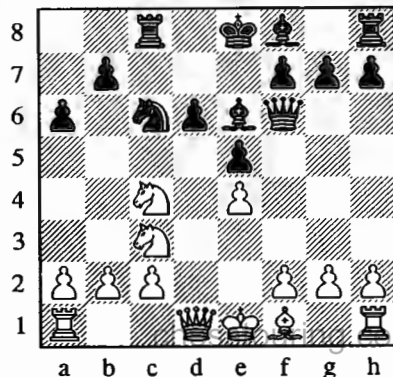
The variation has a reputation for being more passive than the Sveshnikov with 9...b5. The main problem is that White has an easier time improving the offside knight on a3 and solidifying his control over the d5-square.

10.♗c4 ♗c8 11.♗xf6

In the aforementioned Balashov – Nunn game, White played the less critical 11.♗d3 and a draw was agreed a few moves later.

11...♗xf6

11...gxf6 12.♗e3 ♗b6 has been played more frequently. According to the database the text move was first introduced by Soltis. It has not become as fundamental as his 12...h5 line in the Dragon, but still it has been played in a few hundred games.



12. ♖b6

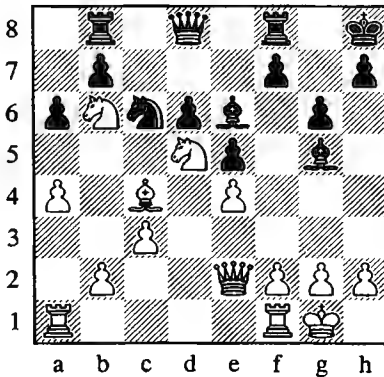
It is not in Karpov's style to grab a hot pawn with 12. ♖xd6† ♕xd6 13. ♖xd6. Generally speaking, such pawns should not be taken without the benefit of detailed home preparation.

12... ♖b8 13. ♖cd5 ♖d8 14. c3 ♕e7

Developing the bishop to the other diagonal with 14...g6 is risky in view of 15. ♖a4! ♕h6 16. ♕xa6 when Black does not have enough compensation for the pawn.

15. ♕c4

This game was one of the earliest for the variation. It says something for Karpov's fine touch that his moves are still regarded as the main line.

15... 0-0 16. 0-0 ♕g5 17. a4 ♖h8 18. ♖c2 g6**19. ♖h1!**

Karpov is anticipating Black's counterplay with ...f5.

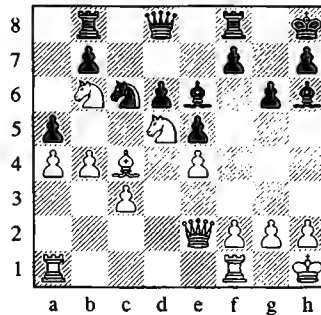
19... ♕h6 20. b4

It is interesting that Karpov refrains from placing a rook on the d-file, playing against the d6-pawn. It should be mentioned that after 20. ♖ad1! f5 21. ♕a2 we have transposed to a position from which Van den Doel scored two victories from White's side in the mid-1990s.

Karpov mentions another interesting possibility in 20. ♖a1!?. Play might continue 20...f5 (Perhaps Black should avoid opening the e-file with 20...♖e7!?) 21. exf5 ♕xf5 22. ♕d3 ♕e6 23. ♕e4 and White is somewhat better.

20...f5?!

This thematic move is misguided, as Black's central pawn mass will be more of a weakness than a strength. Karpov has been looking towards both sides of the board, and Nunn should have adopted the same policy by means of:

20...a5!**21. b5**

Closing the queenside leads to some interesting possibilities, but ultimately it turns out that Black is doing fine.

Allowing the knight to d4 is dangerous: 21. ♖b2 axb4 22. cxb4 ♖d4 Black is rather active.

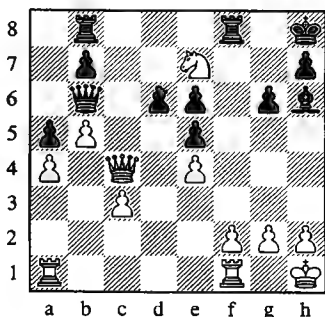
21. bxa5 may be best: 21...♖xa5 22. ♕a2 f5 23. exf5 ♕xf5 24. ♖ad1 With a complex position, Salai – Kernazhitsky, Olomouc 1999.

21... ♖e7 22. ♖xe7 ♖xb6 23. ♕xe6

23. ♖a2 ♖be8 not an improvement for White.

23...fxe6 24. ♖c4

The position resembles the game Groszpeter – Cifuentes, Andorra 1995, except that here White has played ♖h1 instead of ♖ad1.



24...Bf6!

In the aforementioned game this idea was unplayable due to the reply 25. Qc8! winning the d6-pawn.

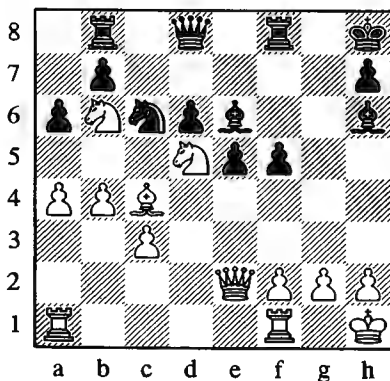
Black can also borrow an idea from Cifuentes with 24...Bbe8!? 25. Bxe6 Bb8 26. Bh3 Bxe7 27. Bxh6 Bf4 28. f3 Bc8 with decent compensation for the pawn.

25. Qc8 Bb8 26. Qa7 d5

Black takes over the initiative.

21. exf5 gxf5

21...exf5 also fails to equalize: 22. Qd3 (22.a5!?) 22...Qe6 (Closing the queenside does not solve Black's problems: 22...a5 23. Qxf5 Bxf5 24.b5 Qe7 25. Bb1 Black has no active plan.) 23.a5 Qe7 24. Qe4 White has consolidated in the centre can start playing against the d6-pawn.



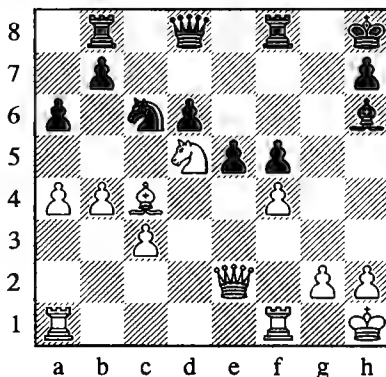
22.f4!

Karpov starts to put pressure on Black's central pawn chain.

22...Qxd5

Nunn steers the game towards an opposite-coloured bishop position. Had he postponed this exchange, White would have had good chances to exchange his light-squared bishop for its counterpart, for instance: 22...Bg7 23.a5! Now that the b6-knight is protected, White will be able to recapture on d5 with the bishop. 23...e4 24. Bxe3 Qe7 25. Bb1 Qxd5 26. Qxd5 Qxd5 27. Bxd5 White has an obvious positional advantage.

23. Qxd5



23...e4

Nunn keeps the position closed, which makes attacking Black's central pawn chain harder.

23...Qe7!?

Black could also have kept his pawns fluid, although he has to walk a narrow path and one can understand Nunn's reluctance to head for a situation in which one mistake could have caused his position to collapse.

24.fxe5

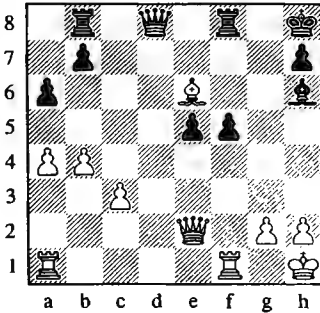
White is not winning a pawn after this, but he can still exert pressure.

24. ♖h5?! is not good due to 24... ♟xd5
25. ♙xd5 ♙xf4 26. g3 ♖g5! and Black gets
away.

24. ♖ad1 was a decent alternative though:
24... ♟xd5 25. ♙xd5 ♙xf4 26. g3 ♙h6
27. ♙fd1 ♙g7 28. ♙xd6 ♖c7 29. a5! Black's
queenside weaknesses are fixed, which makes
the position rather unpleasant for him.

24... ♟xd5 25. ♙xd5 dxe5 26. ♙e6

The trick is 26. ♖xe5†?? ♙g7 27. ♖e6 ♙f6
when White loses material.



26... ♙f4

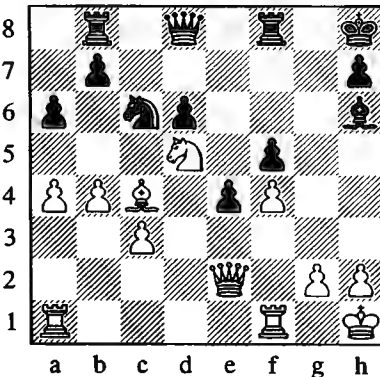
26... ♖d2 Karpov mentions this move with
no further analysis or evaluation. 27. ♖c4!
looks like a good reply, when Black is under
pressure.

27. g3 ♖d6 28. gxf4

28. ♖c4 b5! keeps Black in the game.

28... ♖c6† 29. ♖g2 ♖xe6 30. fxe5 ♖xe5 31. c4

White keeps some advantage, thanks
primarily to his safer king.



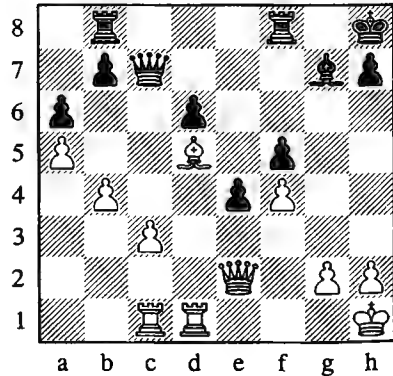
24.a5

Karpov fixes Black's queenside pawns. He
could have considered undermining Black's
pawn structure immediately with: 24.g4!
Karpov probably wanted to strengthen the
rest of his position before opting for such a
committal move, but the idea is promising
nevertheless. 24... fxg4 (24... ♖d7 25. gxf5
♖xf5 26. ♖ad1 ♖bd8 27. ♖g2 ♖g6 [27... ♙g8?
28. ♟e3] 28. ♖h3 White will take over on the
g-file, which gives him a significant advantage.)
25. ♖xg4 ♖c8 (25... ♖e8 26. ♖ae1) 26. ♖h4
♙g7 27. ♙g1 ♖e6 28. ♖ae1 Black is living
dangerously.

24... ♙g7 25. ♖ae1

Karpov defends the c3-pawn in advance,
before turning his attention to the d-file.

25... ♟e7 26. ♙fd1 ♟xd5 27. ♙xd5 ♖c7



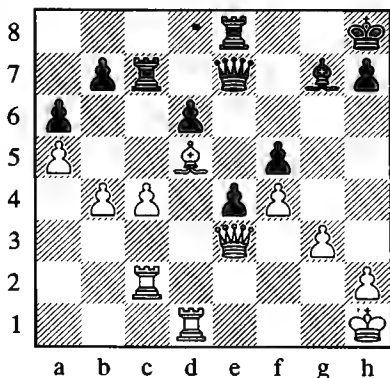
28. ♖c2!

Thanks to Karpov's fine prophylactic play,
Nunn has virtually no active plan. Over the
next few moves Karpov continues to improve
his position, step by step, in a manner that is
so characteristic of him.

28... ♖e7 29. ♖e3 ♖bc8 30. c4 ♖c7 31. g3!

Karpov very subtly starts to undermine
Black's pawn chain in the centre.

31...♖e8



32.♖g2!

After making a few moves on the queenside, Karpov turns his attention to the kingside and prepares g4.

32...♖f6!

Nunn anticipates his opponent's plan, and prepares to activate his queen to create some counterplay.

33.g4?!

One of Karpov's remarkable qualities is that once he decides on a plan he almost always follows it through. In the present case he is correct to judge the resulting position as being in his favour, nevertheless there was an even stronger continuation available.

33.♖b1 was mentioned by Karpov as an interesting alternative, but after 33...♖c3! Black's position looks playable, for instance 34.♖b6 ♖ce7 35.b5 e3! and Black becomes very active.

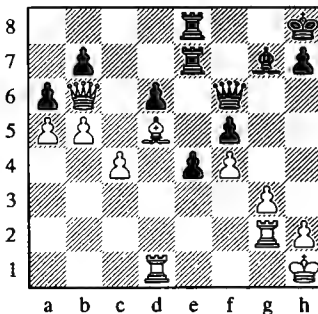
White could have taken advantage of the absence of the enemy queen from e7 by playing:

33.♖b6!

Speeding up the queenside breakthrough.

33...♖ce7 34.b5

There is also 34.♖c2 ♖g6 (34...♖c8 35.b5 axb5 36.♖xb7 wins.) 35.b5 ♖g4 36.♖f1 ♖h3 37.♖g1 and White's play on the queenside is faster.



34...e3

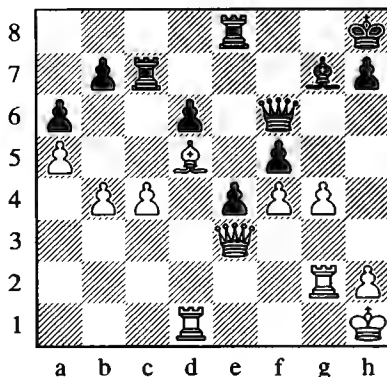
Both 34...axb5 35.cxb5 and 34...♖c3 35.♖xb7 ♖f3 36.♖b1 lead to positions where White's passed pawns are too strong.

35.♖e2 ♖c3 36.bxa6

Or 36.♖xb7 ♖xc4 37.♖f3 and White has a nice advantage.

36...bxa6 37.♖xd6 ♖xa5 38.♖c6

Black is in trouble.



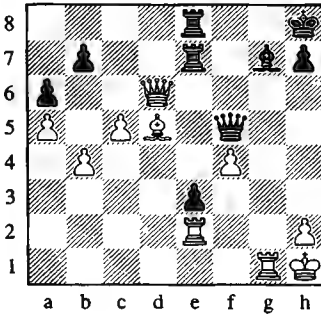
33...fxg4

Taking the pawn is better than trying to exchange queens:

33...♖c3?! 34.♖b6!?

34. ♖xc3 ♗xc3 35.gxf5 e3! (35...♗xb4? 36.f6 wins according to Karpov.) 36.♗e2 (36.♗dg1!? ♗g7 37.♗e6) 36...♔g7 37.♗e6 ♗d2 38.♔g2 White has some advantage but it is hard to tell whether he will be able to convert his extra pawn.

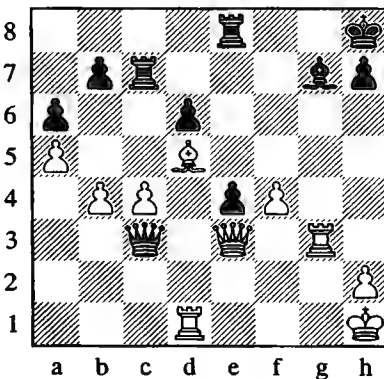
34...♗ce7 35.gxf5 e3 36.♗c2 ♖b3 37.♗g1 37.♗de1 can be met by 37...♗d3.
37...♗d3 38.♗xd6 ♖xf5 39.c5



White's chances are somewhat better in this complex position. It is worth pointing out the following cute line:

39...♗d7?? 40.♗xe3! ♗xe3
40...♗xd6 41.♗xe8† leads to mate.
41.♖b8†
And White wins.

34.♗xg4 ♖c3 35.♗g3



35...♖xb4!

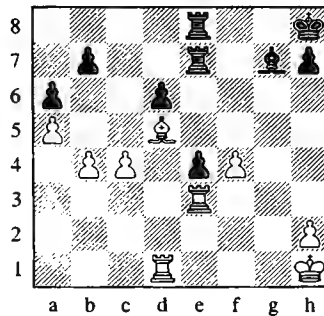
Nunn avoids some pitfalls. He bravely takes a pawn and gets ready to endure Karpov's initiative on the kingside.

35...♗xc4? is refuted by 36.♖e2! when Black can simply resign.

35...♖xe3?!

Getting rid of the queens leads to a difficult endgame.

36.♗e3 ♗ce7



37.b5!

In opposite-coloured bishop endings one often has to play purposefully.

37.♗de1? Winning the pawn at once only leads to a draw: 37...♗d4 38.♗xe4 ♗xe4 39.♗xe4 ♗xe4 40.♗xe4 ♗c3 41.b5 ♗xa5 42.♗xb7 axb5 43.cxb5 White has distant passed pawns, but still Black can hold. 43...♗d2 44.f5 ♔g7 45.♔g2 ♔f6 46.♗e4 d5 47.♗d3 ♗a5 48.♔f3 ♔e5 49.♔g4 ♗b6 50.♔h5 ♗e3 And Black holds, as pointed out by Karpov.

37...♗h6 38.♗f1 ♗f8

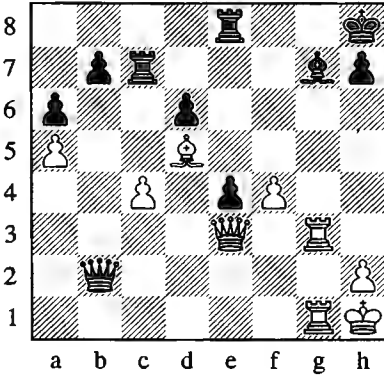
38...♗c8 39.♗xe4 ♗xe4 40.♗xe4 ♗xc4 41.♗xb7 axb5 (41...♗xf4 42.♗a1) 42.f5 White wins.

39.♗xe4 ♗xe4 40.♗xe4 ♗xf4 41.♗xf4 ♗xf4 42.♗xb7

This ending is a win, as pointed out by Karpov.

36. ♠g1

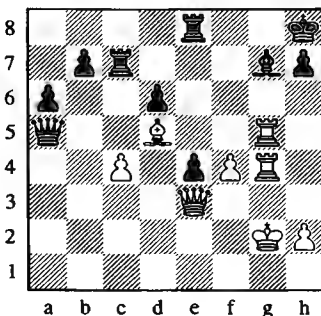
White has huge pressure on the g-file. Most of Black's pieces are tied up with defensive duties; it is especially important that his bishop cannot move due to the mate on g8.

36... ♣b2**37. ♠g5!**

Karpov prepares to transfer the rook to the h-file.

37... ♣f6 38. ♠g4 ♣a1† 39. ♔g2 ♣b2†

Nunn correctly resists the temptation to grab a pawn with 39... ♣xa5?:



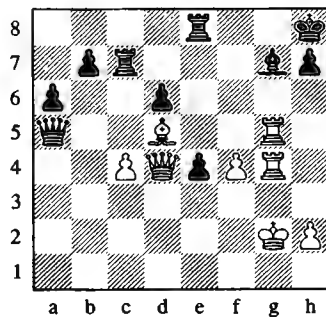
From this position it is worth considering a few different attacking ideas for White, before moving on to the beautiful and instructive refutation.

a) Attacking the bishop with 40. ♠g3? is not effective due to 40... ♣a2† 41. ♔h3 ♣a1 when Black defends.

b) 40. ♠xg7?! This sacrifice is enough for a draw only: 40... ♠xg7 41. ♠xg7 ♔xg7 42. ♣d4† ♔g6 43. ♠f5† ♔xf5 44. ♣f2† ♔e5 45. ♣b2† White has a perpetual but nothing more.

c) 40. f5 is somewhat more dangerous, but still not quite incisive enough: 40... ♣a1 (40... ♠f8? 41. f6 ♠xf6 42. ♠e4 wins) 41. ♠xe4 (41. ♠g6 ♣d1 [Or 41... ♣b2† 42. ♔h3 ♣e5 43. ♠g5 when Black is living dangerously but I do not see a way to break through.] 42. f6 ♣f3† 43. ♣xf3 exf3† 44. ♔xf3 ♠f8 45. ♠f4 hxg6 46. ♠h4† ♔h6 47. ♠xh6† ♠h7 48. ♠xg6 This endgame should be a draw.) 41... ♠xe4 42. ♣xe4 ♠c8 Black should be able to hold this position.

d) 40. ♣d4!! This beautiful move provides the answer.

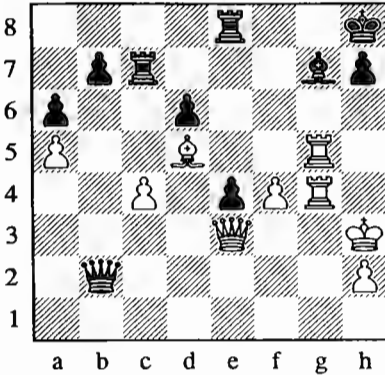


40... ♣a2† (40... ♠e7 41. ♣f6! ♣a2† 42. ♔h3 ♣b3† 43. ♠g3 wins.) 41. ♔h3! (41. ♔h1 ♣b1† 42. ♠g1?? ♔xd4) 41... ♣b3† 42. ♔h4 ♣a2 (42... ♣c2 43. h3+–) 43. h3 ♠g8 44. ♠xg7! ♠gxg7 (44... ♠cxg7 45. ♔xg8+–) 45. ♣f6 White checkmates in a few moves.

40. ♔h3!

Karpov is not only moving away from the

checks, but also creates the possibility of utilizing his king to support his attack.



40...♖c7 41.f5 ♖f6?!

Nunn decides to bring the queen back to help the defence but probably missed that Karpov can bring a new piece into the attack. The opposite-coloured bishops make the position so hard to play. Nevertheless there were two ways in which Black could have obtained chances to resist.

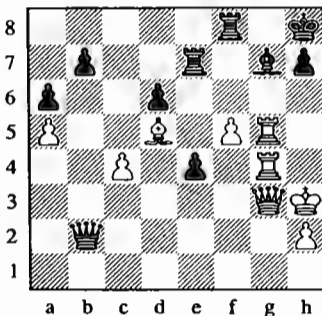
41...♖f8?!

This move is playable, although Black will have to follow up correctly.

42.♖g3!

42.♖h5 ♗e5 defends.

42.♖xe4 ♖xe4 43.♗xe4 ♗e5 44.♖g2 ♖c3†
Black gets active.



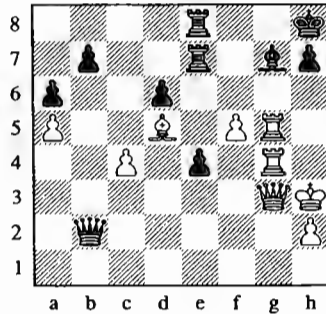
The text move is the most challenging at White's disposal, and forces Black to defend with great precision. We will consider two responses in detail.

a) 42...♖fe8?!

It is worth noting briefly that 42...e3? 43.♖h5 ♖f6 44.♖g6 wins.

Defending the d-pawn with 42...♗d8? also loses after 43.♖g6! ♖f8 44.♖xd6 ♖ec8 45.♖h4 with decisive threats.

The text move is more resilient than either of the above two, but ultimately comes unstuck.



43.♗xd6!

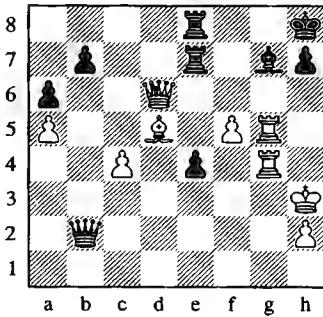
This simple capture is the strongest move. Others fail to crack Black's defences:

43.♖g6 ♖c1 44.f6 hxg6 Black holds.

43.♖h5 ♖c1 44.♗xe4 ♖xe4 45.♖xh7† (45.♖xg7 ♖f1†) 45...♗xh7 46.♖xg7† ♗h8 47.♖h7† White forces a perpetual.

43.♖f4 ♖f8 44.c5 ♖c7! (44...dxc5? 45.f6! wins.) 45.♖h4 ♖c1 46.♖hg4 ♖xc5 47.♖xg7 ♖h6† 48.♗g2 ♖c2† 49.♗h1 ♖c1† This time it is Black who forces a perpetual.

43.♖h4 ♖f6 44.♖gh5 ♗h6!! Black has this beautiful defence based on his passed e-pawn. (44...h6 45.♖g4 wins.) 45.♖xh6 ♖xf5† 46.♖g4 ♖g7! 47.♖f4 ♖xg4† 48.♖xg4 ♖xg4 49.♗xg4 e3 White must settle for a draw.



43...♖c3†

43...♗e2 44.♗f4! defends the checks while threatening f6.

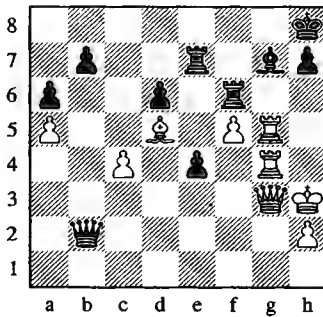
44.♟g3 ♖c1

44...♗a1 45.♟g1 ♖c3† 46.♟5g3 ♖d4 47.f6 wins.

45.♟g1 ♖e3† 46.♟5g3 ♖f2 47.♙e6

White has decent winning chances.

b) 42...♟f6! This cleverly combines attack and defence. Black should be able to exchange at least one attacking piece, thus easing the danger.

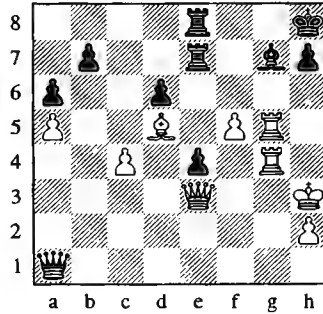


43.♟h5 ♖d2! 44.♟xe4 (44.♟f4 should be met by 44...♖c1!; but not 44...e3?? 45.♟xh7†! ♟xh7 46.♟h4† ♟h6 47.♟xh6† ♙xh6 48.♖g8#) 44...♟xe4 45.♙e4 ♖xa5 Black has eased his position and should be able to survive.

There was a second and perhaps more straightforward defensive idea:

41...♗a1!

This reminds White that his own king is not entirely safe. The checking threats provide enough of a distraction to prevent White from carrying out his main attacking plan of doubling his rooks on the h-file.



42.♟g2

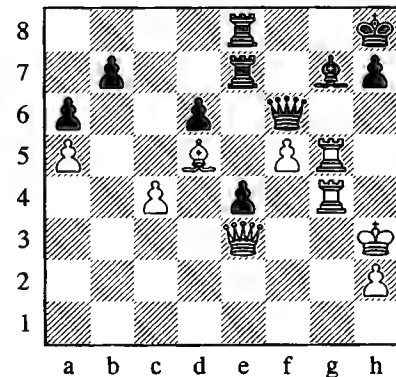
42.♟g6?? ♖f1† is embarrassing for White.

42.♟h5 is adequately met by 42...♖f1†

43.♟g2 and now either 43...♟f8 or 43...♖d3.

42...♟f8 43.♟g1 ♖f6 44.♟lg4 ♖a1

I do not see a way for White to inject more power into his attack.



42.♟h5!

Karpov doubles his rooks in order to entice Black's h-pawn forwards.

42...♖f8

42...♖a1? 43.♖xh7† leads to mate.

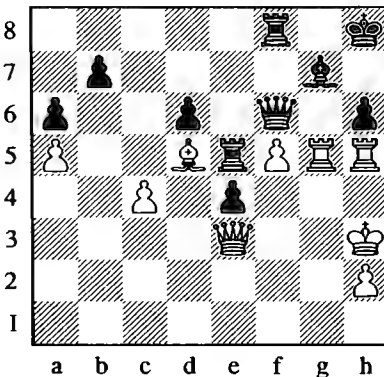
Also insufficient is 42...♖c7 43.♖gh4! (Simplest, although 43.♖g3 should also be good enough: 43...♖d7 [43...♖ce7 44.♖g6 ♖c3 45.♖xc3 ♗xc3 46.f6+–] 44.♖gh4! [44.♖g6 ♖c3] 44...h6 [44...♗h6 45.♖xe4] 45.♖g4 ♖f8 46.♖g6 And White wins.) 43...h6 44.♗g3! Stepping off the h-file is decisive. (44.♖g4 ♖e5!) 44...♗h7 45.♖g4 White is winning as the rook is coming to g6.

43.♖gh4! h6 44.♖g4 ♖e5

44...♖a1 is insufficient, as Black's kingside has already been weakened by the forcing of ...h7-h6: 45.♖xe4 (There is also 45.♗g2 ♖b2† 46.♗h1 ♗h7 47.♖g1 ♖f6 [47...♖ce8? 48.♗xe4] 48.♖h4 ♖f8 49.♖xe4 ♖xe4 50.♖xe4 and Black has little chance to survive.) 45...♖f1† (45...♖d1 46.♖hh4 ♖c7 47.♗g2+–) 46.♗g3 ♖g8 47.f6 ♖xe4 48.♖xe4 ♖g1† 49.♖g2 ♖e3† 50.♖f3 ♖xf3† 51.♗xf3 ♖f8 52.f7 And White wins.

45.♖gg5

Karpov defends the f5-pawn. Despite optical appearances, the rook is absolutely stable on g5 as Black will never be able to unpin the h-pawn.

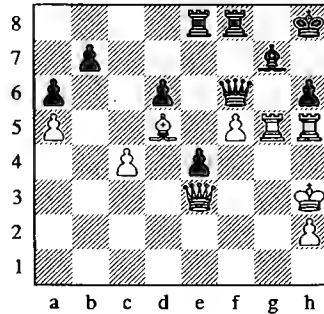


45...♖c8?

Nunn wants to take on d5, but the idea meets with a beautiful refutation. Black should have tried opening the long diagonal for his queen. There are two ways of doing so:

45...♖e7!? This is an improvement over the game continuation, but it is still not the best. 46.♖g3 (46.♗g4? ♖a1) 46...♖e5 (46...♖e5? 47.♖xh6†!) 47.♗g2 ♖e7 48.♖g6 ♖b2† 49.♗h3 ♖c1 50.♖hxh6† ♖xh6† 51.♖xh6† ♗xh6 52.♖xd6 ♖h7 53.♖e6 Black's king is rather exposed, but he still has some chances to survive.

45...♖ee8!



This is a better way to open the diagonal for the queen. The difference lies in the fact that the rook on e8 guards against a mate on g8 in certain lines.

46.♗g2

White has several ways to try and crack his opponent's position, but I found nothing decisive:

46.♗xb7 ♖e5 47.♗d5 ♖b8 Black has lost a pawn, but gained an open file for his rook. 48.♗g3 ♖xd5 49.cxd5 ♖b2 Black is rather active.

46.♖g6 ♖xg6 47.fxg6 ♖f3† 48.♖xf3 exf3 Black has excellent drawing chances, despite being a pawn down. 49.♖f5 (49.♗xf3 ♖e3 50.♗g2 ♖e5 holds) 49...♖e5 50.♖xf3 ♖h5†

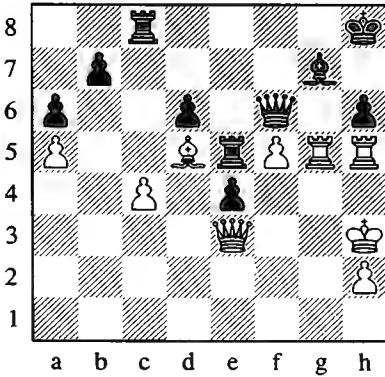
51.♔g2 ♖g5† White's advantage is too small.

46...♖b2† 47.♔h1 ♖f6 48.♖g1 ♗e5

White is better but it is hard to break through.

49.♗xb7 ♗xa5 50.♗c6 ♖e7 51.♗d5

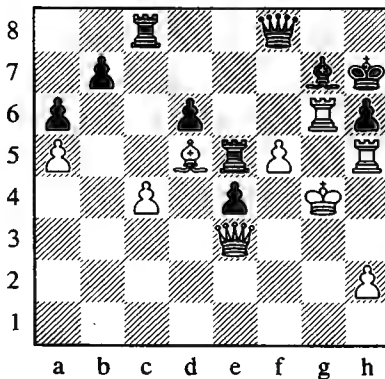
Black is under some pressure, but he has reasonable chances to hold.



46.♔g4!!

Karpov uses every last one of his pieces to carry out his assault. The immediate 46.♖g6? would have been met by 46...♗xg6, so Karpov defends the rook on h5 first.

46...♔h7 47.♖g6 ♗f8

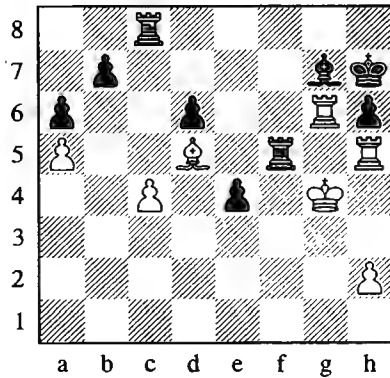


48.♗g5!

The situation on the kingside is absolutely picturesque! The threat of 49.♖gxh6† ♗xh6 50.♗g6† forces Black to shed material. It is a typical story for Karpov: he slowly and patiently brought his pieces closer to the opponent's king, then brutally murdered him.

48...♗xf5†? 49.♗xf5 ♖xf5

Nunn finds a witty saving attempt, but Karpov has everything under control.



50.♖xg7†! ♔xg7 51.♖xf5

1-0

This game once again underlines how difficult opposite-coloured bishop positions can be to handle; even Karpov's play was not flawless. Nevertheless for the great majority of the game he played superbly, showing great precision as well as imagination when it was needed.

In round eleven Karpov suffered a setback, losing to Seirawan. His next opponent was Portisch. Since their 1975 match they had played twelve times, with Karpov winning three games and drawing nine. Interestingly all three of Karpov's wins had come with the black pieces.

Game 65

Anatoly Karpov – Lajos Portisch

London 1982

1.e4

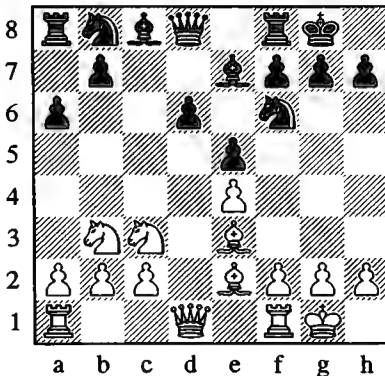
Karpov switches back to his most frequent starting move. Since their Milan match Karpov had always played 1.d4 or 1.c4 against the Hungarian number one, but never achieved much in the opening and all four games were drawn.

1...e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6
5.♗c3 a6

Previously we saw Portisch playing 1...e5, but now he reverts to one of his other main openings, the Najdorf.

6.♙e2 e5 7.♗b3 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙e3

This was the first time Karpov employed the text move. He went on to use it four more times, dropping only half a point in total.



9...♙e6

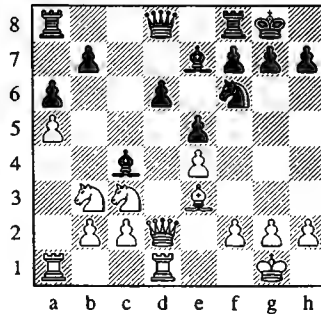
Giorgadze tried 9...♙c7 here, as we will see in the notes to Game 74.

10.♙d2 ♗bd7

After 10...b5 11.a4 b4 12.♗d5 ♗xe4 13.♗xe7† ♙xe7 14.♙xb4 f5 White has scored well from this complicated position.

11.a4 ♙c8

Portisch plays the most natural move, the main line. 11...b6 and 11...♙c7 are also played, but the main alternative is 11...♗b6, which was first introduced by Psakhis against Geller in 1980. Play continues: 12.a5 ♗c4 13.♙xc4 ♙xc4 14.♙fd1



Karpov reached this position twice:

a) His first opponent, Quinteros, continued 14...h6 15.♗c1 ♙c8 16.♗d3 ♙e6 17.♙b6 ♙e8 18.f3 ♗d7 19.♙e3 f5 20.exf5 ♙xf5 21.♗b4 ♗f6 22.♗bd5 ♗xd5 23.♗xd5 ♙f8 24.b3 ♙f7 25.♗b6 ♙c6 26.c4 ♙e7 27.♙e2 ♙d8 28.♗d5 ♙xd5 29.♙xd5 b5 30.axb6 ♙xb6 31.♙h1! White had a small advantage and went on to win an endgame masterpiece in Karpov – Quinteros, Lucerne (ol) 1982. I analysed the final phase extensively in my *Endgame Virtuoso* book.

b) The following year Ostermeyer deviated by means of: 14...♙c8 15.♗c1 ♙c7 16.♙b6 ♙c6 17.f3 h6 18.♗d3 ♙xd3 19.♙xd3 ♙c4 20.♙e3 ♙c6 21.♙xc4 ♙xc4 22.♙f1 Karpov had a small edge, but his West German opponent showed great determination and eventually managed to hold the draw after a long endgame in Karpov – Ostermeyer, Hannover 1983.

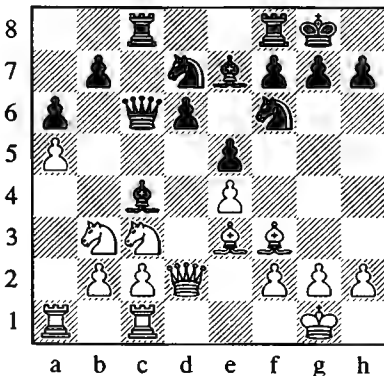
12.a5 ♖c7 13.♞fc1!?

This move is one of Karpov's best novelties. I do know whether the idea came from him or one of his trainers. The rook defends the c2-pawn in order to liberate the knight on c3.

13.♞fd1 was the usual continuation and has remained the most popular choice for White. Interestingly Karpov himself switched to this move against Nunn in 1985, as we will see in Game 74.

13...♞c6

Portisch embarks on a plan to free his position with ...d5. The Hungarian grandmaster is a positional player, yet he almost always strives to go forward. Since the early games in the 1980s the whole variation has grown in popularity. Nowadays 13...♘c5! is regarded as one of the most reliable routes to a safe position for Black. See for instance the game Ivanchuk – Kramnik, Monte Carlo (rapid) 2004.

14.♗f3 ♖c4**15.♞a4!**

Karpov utilizes his rook to paralyse Black's queenside in an unusual fashion.

15...♞fd8?!

Portisch continues with his plan, but it

turns out that he is unable to force through his intended ...d5, and in the resulting position his rook will be misplaced on d8. It shows just how difficult chess can be, when a world class player is unable to react to a subtle change in the position which renders an otherwise promising plan ineffective.

Once the present game became known, most players preferred 15...♞fe8, and after 16.♞b4 ♖c7 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 f5 Black has done all right. Unlike in the game, 18...♘f6! is also possible.

16.♞b4!

This is an unusual but highly effective post for the rook. It stops ...b5 and defends the b3-knight, which could prove important after ♘d5 is played.

16...♖c7 17.♘d5

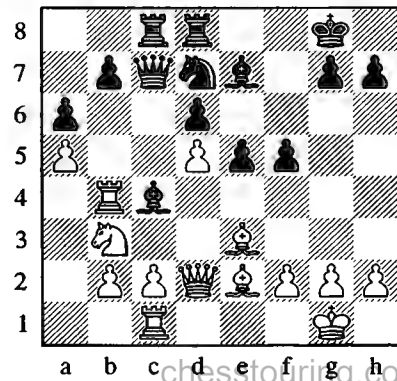
Since the rook came to c1, it took Karpov four more moves before his knight made its intended jump to d5.

17...♘xd5 18.exd5 f5

18...♘f6 is unplayable as 19.♗b6 wins an exchange.

19.♗e2

Karpov gets rid of the bishop on c4.



19...♙xb3?!

Portisch heads for an inferior position with opposite-coloured bishops. It seems like an odd choice, as the Hungarian grandmaster already suffered a nasty defeat after being outplayed by Karpov in a close to equal opposite-coloured bishop position (see Game 42). Now he chooses to steer the game towards another opposite-coloured bishop position in which he stands clearly worse.

A better choice would have been 19...♙xe2 20.♖xe2 ♘c5 (or 20...♗e8 21.c4 ♙f6) 21.c4 (21.♗c4 ♖d7 22.f3 is possible, but Black should not be in much trouble here either.) 21...♘xb3 (Or 21...♘d7?! 22.f3 ♘c5 23.♘xc5 dxc5 24.♗b6 White has a small edge; he can put his queen on the d-file and play for b4.) 22.♗xb3 ♗e8 23.♗a3 ♖d7 White is only a little better, if at all.

20.♗xb3 f4?

I have already mentioned that Portisch liked to move forwards. And since he is a true master with the two bishops, he is wary of giving Karpov time to harness the power of the bishop pair against him. Nevertheless the text move is a significant positional concession, and one of the following alternatives should have been preferred.

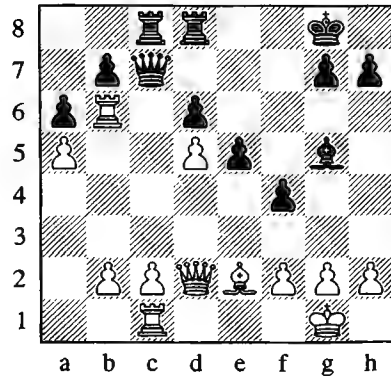
20...♘c5 would have given Black a better version of the game: 21.♗a3! (Black does all right after 21.♗b6 ♘a4 or 21.♙xc5 dxc5 22.♙c4 ♙d6.) 21...f4 (After 21...♙f6 22.b4 ♘d7 23.c4 White is clearly better.) 22.♙xc5 ♖xc5 There is no doubt that White stands better, but it is equally clear that his rook is less active on a3 than b6.

Black's best chance overall would have been to leave his pawns where they were and settle for a slight disadvantage. For instance: 20...♗e8?! 21.g3 ♘f6 22.c4 ♗b8 23.♙b6 (White also

exert pressure on the queenside by 23.♖b4!?) 23...♖d7 (23...♖c8 24.c5) 24.♗a3 ♙d8 25.♙e3 ♗c8 26.b4 White has some initiative on the queenside, but a tough fight lies ahead.

21.♙b6 ♘xb6 22.♗xb6

White has two significant advantages: his bishop is considerably more active than its counterpart, and his pawn majority is more mobile.

22...♙g5**23.♙g4!**

The bishop immediately makes its presence felt. Even if Portisch missed the subtle rook manoeuvre starting on White's next move, it seems strange that he viewed this position as his best chance for survival.

23...♗b8 24.♗e1!

Before advancing his pawns Karpov prevents his opponent from doing the same. If 24.c4? e4 Black obtains some chances for counterplay.

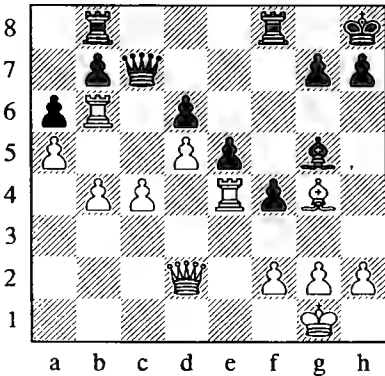
24...♖c5 25.♗e4!

Karpov not only prepares c4 but prevents ...♖d4 as well.

25...♗f8

Black is obliged to sit and await his fate, reacting to threats as they appear. From hereon it is difficult to suggest anything constructive for him.

26.b4 ♖c7 27.c4 ♔h8



28.c5!

Karpov has carried out all the necessary preparations, and there is no need to delay the breakthrough.

28...dxc5

28...♙fd8 was no more than a temporary blockade, and after 29.♖d3 g6 30.♗c4 Black's position falls apart.

29.d6 ♖d8 30.bxc5 f3

Black creates a bit of play on the kingside, but hardly compensates for his queenside troubles.

31.♖d5 fxg2 32.♗xe5 ♖f6 33.♗f5 ♖a1†
34.♔xg2 ♗f6 35.d7

I suspect that Portisch was in time trouble and had no time to resign.

35...♖xa5 36.♗xb7 ♗xb7 37.♖xb7 ♖d8
38.c6 a5 39.c7 ♖xd7 40.♗f4
1-0

Karpov finished the event strongly with a

fine win over Spassky. His total of five wins, seven draws and one defeat was enough to tie for first prize with Andersson.

Karpov's next tournament was a seven player, double round robin event in Turin. Just as in London, he started slowly and even lost to Ljubojevic in round two, although he got back to an even score with a win over Portisch in round six, and avenged his defeat to Ljubojevic in round nine. His only other 'win' came by default in the final round, as Hübner had withdrawn after the first half of the tournament (he was on a plus one score at the time).

Karpov's total of 7/12 was good enough to share first place with Andersson. It was a decent result by most standards, but it was nothing like as dominant as some of his results from the seventies. It is not clear whether he merely suffered a dip in form, or if there was some other cause. Botvinnik once remarked that a world championship match takes a year off one's life. Perhaps Karpov had not fully recovered his energy, or maybe something happened in his private life.

His next event was an unusual one: a televised tournament in Hamburg, with a semi-rapid time limit of one hour per game. It began with two double round robin qualifying groups. Karpov drew his mini-match with Nunn, and beat Seirawan by 2-0 and Afifi by 1½-½ to win his group with a total of 4½/6. Spassky won the other group, dropping just a single draw.

We will look at Karpov's first game from the final match with Spassky. The overall level of the game betrays the fact that it was conducted under a faster time control. Nevertheless Karpov's play in the middlegame was outstanding. Since their 1979 meeting in Montreal, Karpov had defeated Spassky twice with seven draws.

Game 66

Anatoly Karpov – Boris Spassky

Hamburg (1) 1982

1.e4 d6

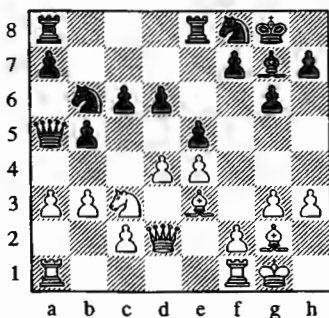
The Pirc was not one of Spassky's main openings, but in 1981 and 1982 he employed it a few times, so Karpov may have anticipated it.

2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘g6 4.♗f3 ♙g7 5.♙e2 0-0 6.0-0

Karpov stays faithful to his usual set-up.

6...♙g4 7.♙e3 ♘c6

At Karpov's next tournament Nunn deviated with 7...♘bd7. Play continued: 8.h3 ♙xf3 9.♙xf3 e5 10.g3 c6 11.♙g2 ♖a5 12.♗d2 ♗fe8 13.♗ad1 b5 14.a3 ♘b6 (14...exd4!? 15.♙xd4 ♗ad8 Black is only a bit worse) 15.b3 ♘fd7 16.♗a1 ♘f8? (16...♗ad8 was better)



17.d5! ♗ac8 18.♗fd1 c5 19.♙f1 c4 20.a4! cxb3 21.♘xb5 ♗xd2 22.♗xd2 White had a decisive advantage and went on to win the ending, Karpov – Nunn, Tilburg 1982.

8.♗d2

This has been Karpov's most frequent choice. Twice he experimented with 8.♗d3, but only drew both games.

8...♗e8

Spassky repeats a somewhat offbeat line which he employed against Geller a few months earlier in London. Karpov was also at that tournament, so he may well have prepared for it.

9.♗fe1 a6

Karpov's last move was directed against 9...♙xf3 10.♙xf3 e5, which runs into 11.d5 ♘d4? 12.♙xd4 exd4 13.♘b5 when the e-pawn is securely defended and the d4-pawn falls.

10.♗ad1

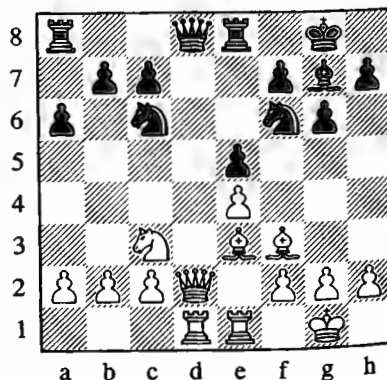
Karpov plays the opening classically, and develops all his pieces.

10...♙xf3

Spassky tries something new. In the Geller game he preferred 10...e5 and drew in 45 moves. He probably feared Karpov's preparation, although in subsequent games Black scored all right with the pawn move.

11.♙xf3 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5?!

12...♘xe5 was preferable. Spassky played this against Mokry at Reggio Emilia 1983 and a draw was agreed immediately, although it is safe to assume that Karpov would have played on.



13. ♖a4!

In a similar position which can arise after 8...e5 instead of 8...♞e8, White usually plays ♖b5, which is not possible here, so Karpov chooses a different path for the knight.

13. ♘d5 is not dangerous for Black after 13...♘xd5 14. exd5 ♘d4.

13... ♞e7

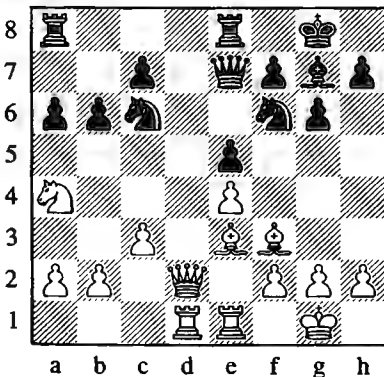
Spassky prefers not to defend a slightly worse endgame after 13... ♞xd2 14. ♞xd2 ♙f8 15. c3! (after 15. ♘c5 ♘d4 16. ♙xd4 exd4 Black equalizes). The former champion was considered a universal player, but he was at his best when he had the initiative.

14. c3

Karpov takes away the d4-square from the enemy knight.

14... b6

After 14... ♞ed8 15. ♞e2 ♞xd1 16. ♞xd1 ♞d8 17. ♘c5 ♞xd1† 18. ♞xd1 ♘d8 19. b4 White can improve his position with ♞d3 and h3 followed by ♙d1 and ♙b3.

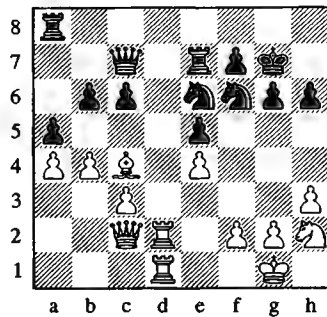
**15. ♞e2 ♘d8**

Spassky chooses to improve his knight. The following alternatives also deserved attention.

15... ♞f8!? Black intends to exchange the dark-squared bishops. It is a common idea in such positions, and it is slightly surprising that Spassky never tried to do it in the game. 16. h4!? (16. ♞c4 ♞e6; 16. g4 h6 17. b3 ♘d8 18. ♘b2 ♘e6 Black obtains some counterplay.) 16... ♘d8 (after 16... ♙h6 17. ♙g5 White keeps an edge) 17. b3 ♘e6 18. ♘b2 ♙h6 19. ♘d3 ♙xe3 20. ♞xe3 ♘g7 White only has a small advantage.

15... ♞e6!? Black can also improve the queen first. 16. b3 h5 (Another line is 16... ♙f8 17. h3 ♞ed8 18. ♘b2 ♞xd1 19. ♞xd1 h5 20. ♙g5 ♙e7 21. ♘c4 ♞d8 when Black should be able to live with his small disadvantage.) 17. h3 ♘h7 18. ♘b2 ♙h6 19. ♘c4 ♙xe3 20. ♘xe3 ♘e7 21. ♞d3 a5 22. ♞ed1 ♘g7 White dominates the d-file, but is not easy for him to achieve anything tangible as Black controls all the entry squares.

By contrast, let me show you an example of a previous game in which Karpov was able to make use of the d-file.

**26. ♙xe6!**

Karpov exchanges some minor pieces in order to facilitate his invasion.

26... ♞xe6 27. ♘g4! ♘xg4?!

Black should have taken the opportunity to exchange some pawns on the queenside with 27... b5! 28. ♘xf6 ♞xf6 29. ♞d7 ♞b6 when he can hold the position.

28.hxg4

After 28.♞d7 ♜c8 29.hxg4 ♜e8 Black will follow up with ...♞e7.

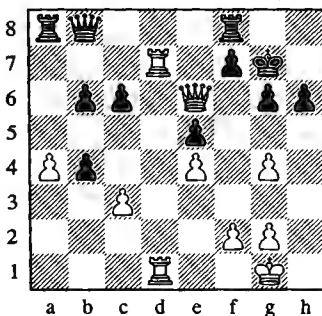
28...♞e8?

After 28...♞e7! Black is worse but still has chances to survive.

29.♞d7!

The invasion is decisive.

29...♜b8 30.♜b3 ♞f8 31.♜e6 axb4



32.♞1d6!

Karpov catches Black's king.

32...♜g8 33.♜xe5 ♔h7

33...♜xc3 34.♞xg6† leads to mate.

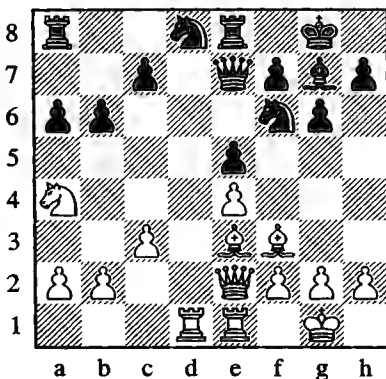
34.♜f6 ♔g8

34...♜e8 35.♜xg6† is the end.

35.cxb4 ♞xa4 36.e5

1-0 Karpov – Kirilov, Daugavpils 1971.

Back to the game.



16.b3

Karpov clears the b2-square for the knight.

16...♞e6!?

The knight will not stay long here thanks to Karpov's strong yet predictable play. Better was 16...♞b7 17.♞b2 ♞d6 (17...♜e6!?) although White keeps an edge with 18.♞c4!?, exchanging a pair of knights in order to get closer to Black's queenside.

17.g3

Karpov prevents ...♞f4 and prepares to transfer his bishop to h3.

17...h5 18.♞b2 b5?

Spassky stops ♞c4, but will pay the price for loosening his queenside.

In his *Chess Informant* analysis Karpov mentions 18...♞d7 as an improvement. Against this White should probably leave his knight on b2 for the time being in order to guard against ...a5-a4, and instead improve his position on the kingside with 19.h4 or 19.♞g2.

Another idea was 18...♔h7 to prepare the thematic bishop exchange: 19.♞d3 (After 19.♞c4 ♞c5 20.b4 ♞a4 21.♜c2 b5 22.♞b2 ♞xb2 23.♜xb2 ♞h6 24.♞c5 ♜e6 Black is close to equality.) 19...♞d8 20.♞b4 (20.♞g5 ♞h6 21.♞xh6 ♔xh6 22.♞b4 a5 23.♞d5 ♞xd5 and now after 24.exd5 ♜d6 or 24.♞xd5 ♜f6 Black is about to equalize.) 20...a5 21.♞d5 ♞xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞b7 23.♜d2 ♞e8 24.♞d1 ♜e6 White controls the d-file, but Black is still not much worse.

19.♞d3

Karpov attacks the e5-pawn while aiming at the queenside weaknesses.

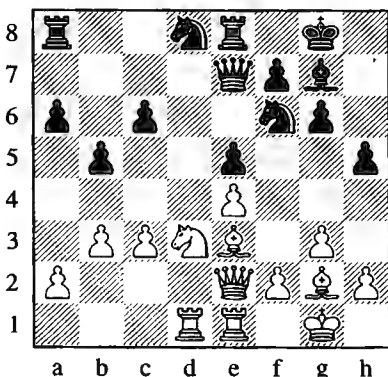
19...♞d8

It is too late to transfer the other knight:

19...d7 20.d4 b8 (20...c5? 21.d6) 21.d5 White has a huge advantage.

20. g2 c6

The tenth World Champion strengthens the pawn structure but weakens the b6-square. The alternative was 20...b7 21.f3 h7 (after 21...e8 22.b4 e6 23.c4 White opens the queenside) 22.c2 h6 23.f2 e8 24.c4 and White softens the enemy pawns.



21.f3!

Karpov defends the e4-pawn in order to prepare h3.

21...b7 22.h3

The bishop exerts a great influence from this square.

22...a5

Spassky wants to open the a-file and get some active play.

23.a4!

Karpov separates his opponent's pawns on the queenside.

23...bxa4

After 23...h7 24.axb5 cxb5 25.b2 b4 26.c4 White also has the advantage.

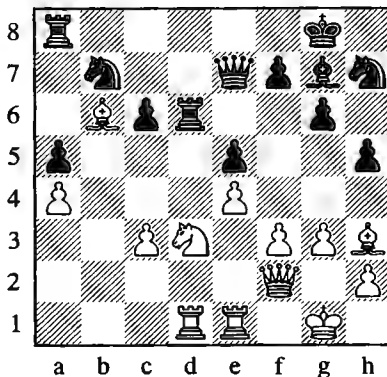
24.bxa4 h7 25.f2

25.b1 or 25.b2 also give White better prospects, but Karpov wants to exchange the b7-knight. This piece does not stand especially well, but it does a good job of covering some important invasion squares.

25...e8

Had Spassky covered the c5-square with 25...f8, Karpov may have turned his attention to the open b-file with 26.b1!, threatening to take the e5-pawn. After 26...d6 27.d5 c4 28.b7 d8 29.a2 White keeps a slight plus.

26.h6 e6



27.d5?

Up to this point Karpov's play has been exemplary, but the text move is a mistake which risks squandering most of his advantage. He should have preferred one of the alternatives:

27.b2! d5 28.g2 e6 29.f1 White is somewhat better.

27.f4!? forces Black to defend resolutely: 27...c5! (27...f6?! 28.a2+ h8 29.c4 is very strong; 27...exf4 28.e5 fxg3 29.xg3 e5 30.g2 Black loses the exchange and gets little in return.) 28.xc5 xc5 29.xc5

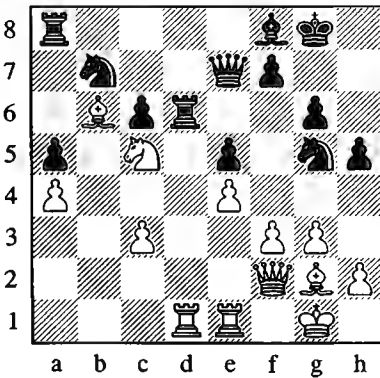
♖a7 (29...♗d8 30.♘f2 White is just a pawn up) 30.♗xa7 ♠xa7 31.♘xe5 ♙xe5 32.fxe5 ♠xd1 33.♠xd1 ♘g5 34.♙g2 ♠c7 Black's active pieces give him reasonable chances to hold the endgame a pawn down.

27...♘g5 28.♙g2 ♙f8?

This is a serious mistake, which leads to big troubles as Black will not be able to exchange any piece. Spassky could have reduced his troubles in one of two ways:

28...♘e6 29.♘xe6 ♠xd1 30.♠xd1 ♗xe6 31.♠b1 White still has an edge thanks to his bishop pair, but Black's troubles are much less severe than in the game.

Even better would have been 28...♠xd1! 29.♠xd1 ♘xc5 30.♙xc5 ♗b7 when the two exchanges have eased Black's position considerably. White's advantage is small, if it exists at all.



29.♠b1!

Karpov avoids exchanges and ensures that Black's pieces will remain tangled.

29...♘d8?

In a difficult position, Spassky commits a further error. The knight blocks a square which was needed by the d6-rook.

29...♘e6 was better, although White has a pleasant choice. 30.♘xb7 (There is also 30.♘xe6 ♠xe6 31.♙e3 ♘c5 32.♗a2 when White's bishops provide him with a lasting initiative.) 30...♗xb7 31.f4 (31.♙c5?! ♗xb1 32.♠xb1 ♠d1†) 31...c5 32.♙xc5 ♗xb1 33.♠xb1 ♠d1† 34.♠xd1 ♙xc5 Despite being a pawn down, Black has chances to hold.

30.f4!

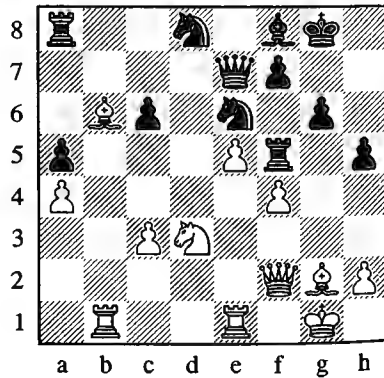
Karpov exploits the fact that the d6-rook has no escape route.

30...♠f6

30...♘ge6? 31.fxe5 wins, and 30...exf4 31.gxf4 ♘ge6? 32.e5 is no better.

30...♘h7 was not losing immediately, but after 31.♘b3 ♠d7 32.f5 Black can hardly move.

31.♘d3 exf4 32.gxf4 ♘ge6 33.e5 ♠f5



34.♙e4

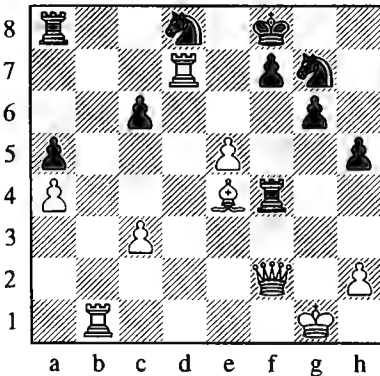
White wins an exchange for no compensation whatsoever.

34...♘g7 35.♙c5

Karpov exchanges the bishops, bringing himself one step closer to a winning endgame.

35...♗e6 36.♙xf8 ♗xf8 37.♘c5 ♗c7

38.♖ed1 ♜xf4 39.♘d7† ♞xd7 40.♞xd7



Spassky could have resigned here, and probably only played on because of the faster time control.

40...♞xf2 41.♘xf2 ♘ge6 42.♞d6 ♞c8 43.♞b6 c5 44.♞b5 ♘e7 45.♞xa5 ♞c7 46.♞da6 f5 47.exf6† ♘xf6 48.♞a7 ♞c8 49.♞a8 ♞c7 50.♞5a7 ♞xa7 51.♞xa7 g5 52.♘d5 ♘e5 53.♘xe6 ♘xe6 54.a5 ♘d5 55.♞e7 ♘f4 56.a6
1-0

In the second game Karpov suffered a disaster, first blundering a rook away in an easily winning ending, and then failing to hold a drawn position with a queen versus Spassky's queen and knight. The fast time limit must have taken its toll. In the third game Spassky experimented with what is now known as the Hippo formation, but misplayed the position and was crushed. In the final game Karpov managed to hold a draw from the worse side of a Petroff to secure a 2½–1½ victory.

Karpov's next tournament was in Tilburg. He won a sharp game against Hübner and then scored what must have been an especially satisfying victory over Petrosian; it was the first and only time he was able to beat the great Armenian. They only played once more, and

drew. Altogether Petrosian scored one win and one loss against Karpov, with thirteen draws. There were not many players of that era who were able to boast an even score against Karpov. Sadly the former champion passed away in 1984.

Karpov continued his fine form with a nice win over Torre in round three, but then blundered and lost against Portisch. Out of his remaining seven games he drew five and won the other two against Nunn and Larsen. His final score of 7½/11 was enough to take sole first place, half a point ahead of Timman.

Karpov's last event of the year was the Olympiad in Lucerne, Switzerland. Unlike some of his previous Olympiads, he was rested for a number of matches. It seems he took full advantage of his days off, as he dropped only three draws out of the eight games he played. His list of victims included Hort, Porrish, Quinteros and Gheorghiu.

1982 Summary

Mar del Plata (3rd-5th place): $7\frac{1}{2}/13$ (+4 =7 -2)

London (1st-2nd place): $8\frac{1}{2}/13$ (+5 =7 -1)

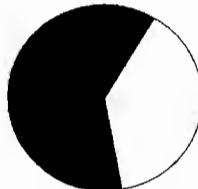
Turin (1st-2nd place): $7/12$ (+3 =8 -1)

(Hamburg TV games not included)

Tilburg (1st place): $7\frac{1}{2}/11$ (+5 =5 -1)

Lucerne Olympiad (Board one): $6\frac{1}{2}/8$ (+5 =3 -0)

Total 64.9% (+22 =30 -5)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1983

Rating 2710 (1 in the World)

Karpov's first event of the new year was Linares, where he started with a draw against Andersson after missing a probable win in a knight ending. He drew his next three, then beat Larsen and Sax. But then he lost his momentum and drew his next three, which left him trailing Spassky by half a point. As fate would have it, the two rivals met in the last round. Karpov rolled the dice with a Sicilian but Spassky played solidly with the Closed, and after some simplifications they agreed a draw on move eighteen.

Next was the Soviet Championship. Karpov had missed this tournament a few times in recent years, but he was present for this, the jubilee 50th event. He beat Yusupov in round three, but two rounds later a cold shower was waiting for him as, despite having the white pieces, he was outplayed and beaten by Azmaiparashvili. After a few more draws, he was able to pick up some much needed wins over Romanishin and Geller in rounds eight and nine, and later Lerner and Beliavsky in rounds eleven and thirteen. Karpov's final score of $9\frac{1}{2}/15$ was not the most dominant result of his career, but it was enough to take the gold medal ahead of Tukmakov who finished half a point behind.

Karpov then played for the Soviet Union at the European Team Championship in Plovdiv. He played four games, beating Mortensen and drawing with Timman, Ljubojevic and Miles.

Karpov followed with another team event, the USSR Spartakiad. He was rested for the first game, then faced Mark Taimanov in round two. Taimanov was a strong and experienced grandmaster who had twice qualified for the world championship candidates cycle. He tied for first place at the Soviet Championship on two occasions. In 1952 he lost the tiebreak to Borvinnik, but in 1956 he prevailed over Spassky and Averbakh. Interestingly, in addition to his accomplishments over the chessboard, Taimanov is also an outstanding pianist.

Taimanov played all the world champions from Euwe to Karpov, defeating six of them – an impressive achievement. His overall score against the champions stands at fourteen wins, sixty three draws and forty four losses. The present game was his last against Karpov. Up to this point they had scored one win apiece, with four draws.

Game 67

Anatoly Karpov – Mark Taimanov

USSR Sparrakiad 1983

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6

Taimanov plays the variation that bears his name. According to the database he employed it for the first time in 1960, and continued to do so for more than forty years afterwards. It is interesting that he only made his most famous contribution to opening theory after passing his peak, which occurred between 1946 and 1956, during which he was ranked among the top ten players in the world.

5.♘c3

This was the first time Karpov played the text move. The two protagonists had debated the 5.♘b5 variation three times previously. In their first meeting Karpov won a remarkable ending in which he caught Taimanov's king superbly, but the other two games resulted in draws. Against most opponents Karpov was successful with the 5.c4 variation, so it is testament to the strength of Taimanov that he felt the need to use a different approach in this game.

5...a6 6.♗e2 ♘ge7 7.0-0

Karpov chooses a solid line.

7...♘xd4 8.♞xd4 ♘c6 9.♞d3

This was not a new move – it was first played by Klovans in 1978 against none other than Taimanov himself – but still, there was not much in the way of established theory on it. Nowadays things are different; it is the main line in the position and has been tested in over a hundred games.

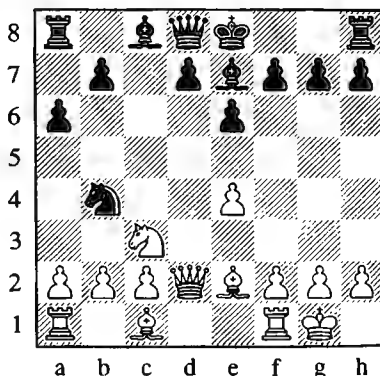
9...♘b4?!

Taimanov repeats the continuation of his previous game, but Karpov is ready for it. Nowadays 9...♞c7 10.♗g5 ♗d6 has become firmly established as the main line.

10.♞d2!

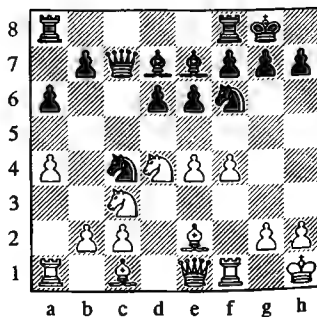
Karpov improves over the play of Klovans, who retreated to d1.

10...♗e7



11.b3!

The bishop will stand well on the long diagonal, where it menaces the g7-pawn. It is unusual for White to employ a queenside fianchetto in the Open Sicilian, although Karpov had previously used the same idea to defeat Tukmakov in a Scheveningen position:



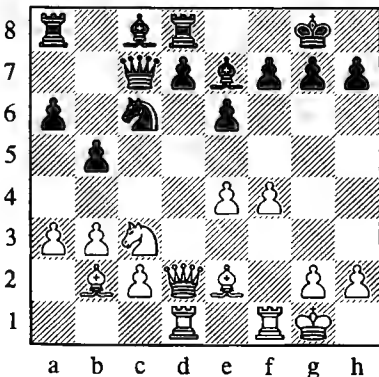
14.b3 ♘a5 15.♗d3 ♘c6 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6

17. ♖b2 e5 18. ♗e2 ♜ad8 19. b4 a5 20. b5 ♗d7
21. f5 Karpov – Tukmakov, Leningrad 1971.
Tukmakov later sacrificed a pawn to loosen
Karpov's grip, but failed to get enough play
and eventually succumbed.

11...0-0 12. ♖b2 ♗c7 13. ♜ad1 ♜d8

Taimanov was persistent, and he later tried to
improve with 13...b5 14. a3 ♘c6. In Plovdiv in
1984, Kiril Georgiev played 15. ♗e3 and beat
him. A year later, Taimanov reached the same
position and was able to draw after 15. ♘b1,
although his opponent, the Portuguese
FM Jorge Guimaraes, was a somewhat less
formidable adversary than the previous two.
Overall, this sequence of results is not a great
advertisement for Black's opening, and it is
hardly surprising that 9... ♘b4?! failed to catch
on.

14. a3 ♘c6 15. f4 b5



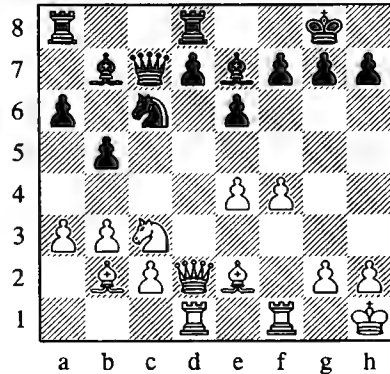
16. ♖h1!

With this strong precautionary move White
prepares to transfer his queen to g3, thus
enhancing the power of his bishop on the long
diagonal.

Transferring the rook to g3 is less effective:
16. ♜f3 ♘d4! (16... ♖b7 17. ♜g3 f6 is also
playable) 17. ♜g3 ♘xe2† (Also after 17... f6

18. ♗g4 ♖b7 Black's pieces are active, and
White's attack does not look too dangerous.)
18. ♘xe2 f6 White is unlikely to be able to hurt
his opponent, and Black's light-squared bishop
is a powerful asset.

16... ♖b7



17. ♗e3!

Continuing the plan.

17... b4

Taimanov is an active player and he remains
true to his style. It would be interesting to see
how Karpov would have continued his play
against the enemy king after 17...d6 18. ♗g3
♗f8. The most natural continuation looks to
be 19. ♗d3.

18. ♘b1

After 18. axb4?! ♘xb4 19. ♜d2 d5 Karpov
evaluates the position as clearly better for Black.
This seems rather excessive, although Black has
certainly solved his problems. It is important
to note that the positionally desirable 20. e5?
(White should settle for approximate equality
with 20. exd5.) loses material after 20...d4!.

18... bxa3

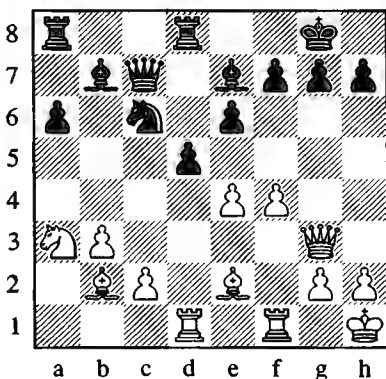
18...d5 and 18...a5 are also reasonable
moves.

19. ♖xa3 d5 20. ♖g3

20.e5 d4 is unclear.

Karpov mentions the line 20.f5 d4 21. ♖h3 exf5 22. ♖xf5 ♖f6 with balanced play.

20.exd5!? exd5 21. ♖h3 was enough for a small edge. It is possible that Karpov considered the game continuation to be more ambitious; on the other hand he may simply have wanted to keep the position closed against a player with an active style who had beaten him once before by tactical means.

**20... ♖f8**

Playing against the b2-bishop by means of 20...d4!? 21. ♖c4 ♖c5 was interesting.

21.e5 ♖e7 22. ♖d3 ♖ac8

Black could also have tried the same plan as in the game without this rook move.

23. ♖h3 ♖f5

Karpov mentions the possibility of 23...g6!?, which may well have transposed to the game after 24. ♖b1 ♖f5.

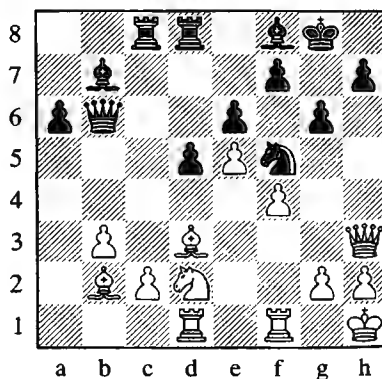
24. ♖b1!

The knight has no future on a3, so Karpov improves it.

It is not simple to build the attack without weakening White's king as well. For instance, 24.g4 can be safely met by 24...♖h6, while after 24.♖xf5 exf5 25.♖xf5 ♖xa3 26.♖xa3 ♖xc2 Karpov prefers Black's position.

24...g6

On 24...a5?! the champion planned 25. ♖c3! intending ♖b5 or ♖e2 when the knight is heading for its ideal home on d4.

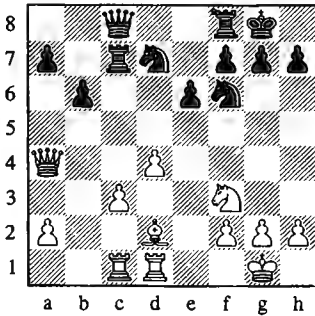
25. ♖d2 ♖b6**26. ♖xf5!!**

Bringing the knight at once is weaker: 26. ♖f3?! d4! (not 26...♖e3?? 27. ♖d4+-) 27. ♖xf5 ♖xf3 28. ♖xf3 exf5 Black is not worse, and in fact Karpov evaluated the position as slightly better for him.

By exchanging his strong bishop for the enemy knight, Karpov embarks on a risky but farsighted venture. His motivation is to weaken Black's king. What makes this move so difficult to judge is that it is effectively a double pawn sacrifice: the c2-pawn will not last long, and sooner or later White will have to give up the e5-pawn in order to activate his remaining bishop.

The idea of giving up material for positional gains was far from a new concept for Karpov. In

fact, he had utilized just such a device to good effect in his previous win over Taimanov:



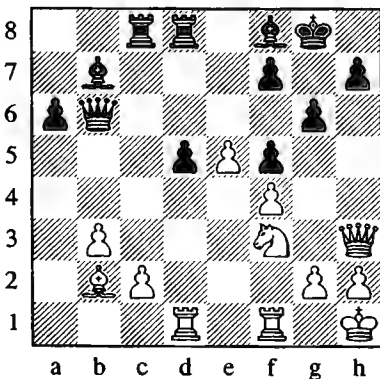
17...♖c4! 18.♞xa7 ♞c6 Taimanov – Karpov, Moscow 1973. At the cost of a pawn Black has secured a lasting blockade and a perfect knight outpost on d5. Taimanov ran short on time and went on to lose.

26...exf5

26...gxf5? is too dangerous: 27.♟f3 ♖h8 (27...♟xc2? 28.♟g3† ♖h8 29.♞h5 wins as ♟g5 is coming) 28.♞h5 Black is in trouble on the kingside.

27.♖f3!

Karpov does not even bother defending the c2-pawn; the initiative is what counts.



27...♟xc2

Taimanov bags a pawn and hopes to obtain active play for his rook on the second rank. He had some other choices as well:

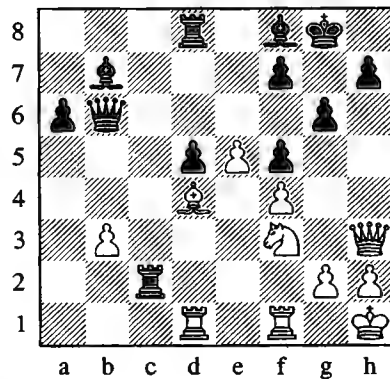
27...♟c5 28.♟d4! White's knight will come to d4 and dominate the b7-bishop.

27...a5 28.♟d4 (28.♖d4 a4♞) 28...♞a6 29.c3 White has a slight plus.

Black could have considered 27...d4!?, sacrificing a pawn to free his bishop. After 28.♟xd4 ♞c6 it will not be easy for White to exploit his extra pawn.

28.♟d4!

Karpov ensures that the long diagonal will remain closed.



28...♞c6

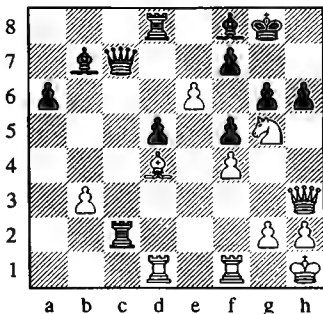
Taimanov decides to control the sixth rank, which looks logical, although it is not clear if it was best.

The greedy 28...♞xb3? neglects the kingside: 29.e6! (29.♞h4! is also strong) 29...f6 (29...fxc6? 30.♞h4+–) 30.♞h4 ♟c7 31.♞b1 ♞c4 32.♟xf6 And White wins.

However, it was worth considering the following alternative:

28...♞c7!? 29.♘g5 h6 30.e6!

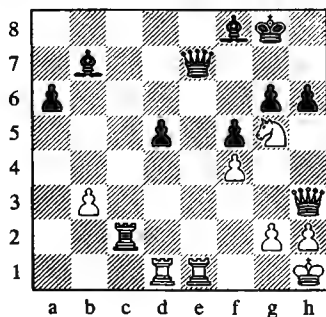
Karpov stops here, evaluating the position as winning for White. Black's position is certainly precarious, but the fight is far from over.



30...f6! 31.♙xf6

31.♘f7 ♜e8 32.♘xh6† (32.♞de1 ♙c8)
32...♙xh6 33.♞xh6 ♞xe6 34.♞xg6†
(34.♞fe1 ♞e4 35.♙xf6 ♞h7) 34...♞g7 Black is alive.

31...♞e8 32.e7 ♞xe7! 33.♙xe7 ♞xe7 34.♞fe1



34...♞e2

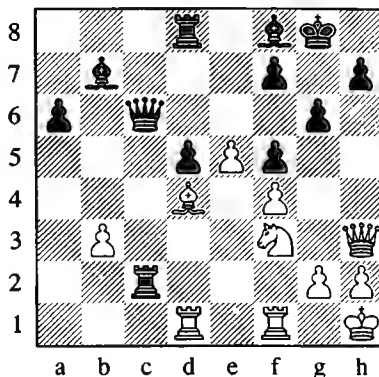
34...♞d2 35.♘f3 is clearly better for White.

34...♞f6!? is possible: 35.♞e6 (35.♘e6 d4)

35...♞g7 36.♘f3 d4 Black has some activity for the exchange.

35.♘f3 ♞e4 36.♘e5

White has chances to convert his extra exchange, but Black's position is certainly not hopeless.



29.♞h4!

Having obtained some positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Karpov switches to tactics. The text move wins an important tempo by attacking the d8-rook.

The tempting 29.e6 is less strong: 29...fxe6 30.♞h4 (After 30.♘e5? ♞e8 White has nothing on the kingside.) 30...♞d7 31.♞f6 ♙g7 32.♞xg7† ♞xg7 33.♙xg7 ♘xg7 34.♘d4 ♞c6 35.♘xc6 ♙xc6 With two pawns for the exchange Black is doing all right, and White has no open files available for his rooks.

29...♞e8

Black has other defensive ideas as well.

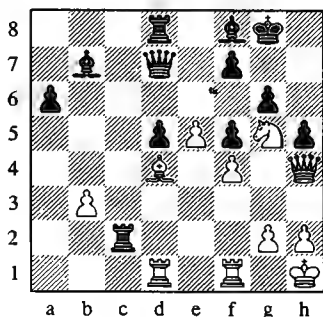
29...♞d7 30.e6 fxe6 (30...♞xe6?? 31.♘g5+)
31.♘e5 ♞c7 32.♘xd7 ♞xd7 33.♞c1 ♙e7
34.♞e1 ♞xc1 35.♞xc1 Black has serious problems, despite having two pawns for the exchange.

The best chance may well have been:

29...♞d7!?

Interestingly Karpov does not mention **this** move, which defends both the rook and the seventh rank.

30.♘g5 h5



31. ♖xf7!

31.g4!? is beautiful but not yet decisive: 31...♙c5 (31...fxg4? 32.f5 is crushing) 32.gxh5 (32.e6 fxe6 33.gxh5 ♙xd4 34.♙xd4 ♙dc8 Black is likely to escape) 32...♙xd4 33.♙xd4 ♙dc8 34.♙g1 ♙c1 Black stays in the game.

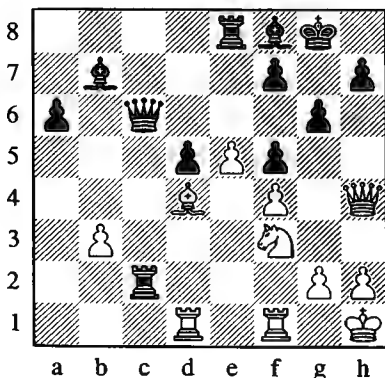
31...♙e8!

31...♙xf7? 32.e6†! wins.

31...♙c7 32.♖g5 ♙e8 33.g4 ♙b5 34.♙fe1 Black is in big trouble.

32.♖g5 ♙e7 33.♙g3 ♙h6 34.♖f3 ♙h7

Black is still worse, but he has consolidated his position and is not about to lose by force.



30.e6!

This second pawn sacrifice was built into Karpov's superb strategic plan which began with the minor piece exchange on f5. Karpov improves his bishop and vacates the e5-square

for his knight. It would be easy for Black to miss such a move, especially in conjunction with the follow-up on move 32.

30...fxe6!

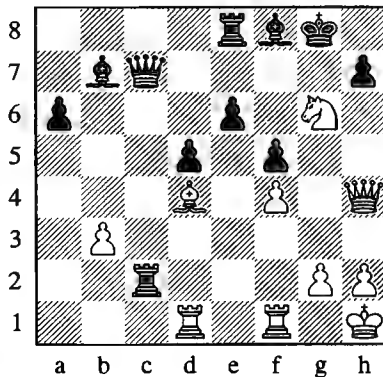
30...♙e6 is worse: 31.♖g5 h6 32.♖xe6 ♙xe6 33.♙d1 ♙e2 34.♙xe2 (34.♙g1 ♙e4! Black blocks the e-file and can continue to resist) 34...♙xe2 35.♙g1 Black is forced to enter a losing endgame.

31.♖e5!

White must avoid 31.♙f6?? when 31...e5! turns the tables.

31...♙c7 32.♖xg6!

White regains a pawn and, more importantly, weakens the enemy kingside severely.



32...♙g7?

Taimanov brings the bishop to a natural defensive position, but it does not solve his problems.

32...♙c5!

The bishop on d4 is White's most potent attacking piece, and Black had to exchange it. Once the bishop has been removed, he may also have chances to obtain counterplay with ...d4. The resulting play is extremely sharp, but Black seems to be able to survive.

33. ♖e5

Other moves also lead to interesting play:

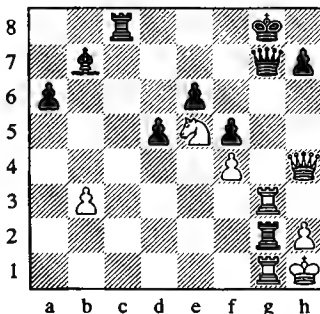
33. ♖xc5 d4! 34. ♖e7† (34. ♖g1 ♖g7)
34... ♗xe7 (34... ♗xe7 35. ♗xe7 ♗xe7
36. ♖xe7 ♖xg2) 35. ♖xe7 ♖xg2 Black will
obtain a perpetual check.

33. ♖e5 d4 34. ♖f2 ♖xf2 35. ♗f6 (35. ♗xf2
♗f7 defends) 35... ♗xe5! 36. ♖xe5 ♖e7
37. ♗g5† ♖f8! (37... ♖g7 38. ♗d8† ♖f8
39. ♖d7 ♖f7 40. h4! [40. ♖g1 ♖xd7 41. ♗xd7
♖d5 Black's activity compensates for his
material deficit.] 40... ♖xg2 41. ♖g1 ♖g4†
42. ♖h2 ♖xg1 43. ♖xg1 Black is tied up.)
38. ♖g1 ♖c2 the position is unclear.

33... ♖xd4 34. ♖xd4 ♗g7 35. ♖g1

After 35. ♗h3 ♖e7 36. ♖d3 ♗f8 Black is
safe.

35... ♖cc8 36. ♖d3 ♖xg2 37. ♖g3



37... d4!! 38. ♖c6!!

White answers his opponent's brilliant move
with one of his own. Alas, it is still not
enough to win the game.

38... ♗xg3

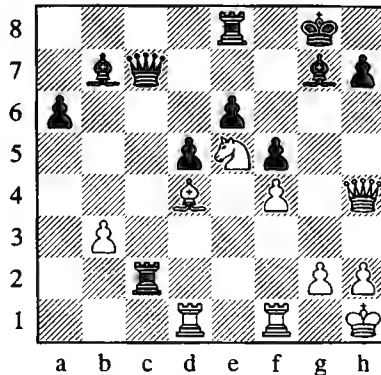
There is also 38... ♖xg3 39. ♖xg3 ♖xc6†
40. ♖g1 ♖d5 41. ♖xg7† ♖xg7 42. ♗e7† ♖g8
when White has to take a perpetual because
of the strong d-pawn.

39. ♖xg3 ♖e2 40. ♗g5† ♖h8 41. ♖d1 ♖xc6†
42. ♖g1 ♖d5

The position is equal, as both kings are
exposed to checks.

33. ♖e5!

Karpov keeps both of his strong minor
pieces, as well as his blockade over the central
dark squares.



33... ♗e7!

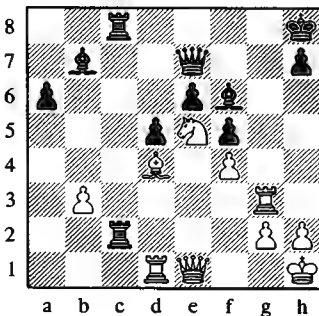
Taimanov defends well. Karpov made a brief
mention of 33... a5, which gives some chances
to free the bishop. Unfortunately it gives White
a valuable tempo with which to build his
attack: 34. ♖f3! (better than 34. ♖fe1, as given
by Karpov) 34... ♖c1 (34... ♖xg2? 35. ♗h5!!
wins as the queens attacks e8 and defends d1
at the same time. Also after 34... ♖a6 35. ♗h3!
h6 36. ♖g3 Black faces an overwhelming
attack.) 35. ♖xc1 ♗xc1† 36. ♖g1 ♗c7 37. ♖g3
White has a lot of firepower close to Black's
king.

34. ♗g3

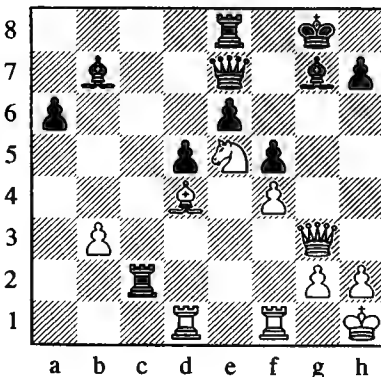
Karpov analysed two alternatives:

34. ♗h5 intends a rook lift along the third rank.
34... ♖xe5! (Black can also consider 34... ♖cc8
35. ♖d3 ♖c1 with counterplay.) 35. ♖xe5 ♗f7!
This is the correct move order. (35... d4??
Karpov attaches an exclamation mark to **this**
move, but it is actually a losing mistake. If
36. ♖g1? ♗f7 Black is doing well, but 36. ♖f3!!
wins for White.) 36. ♗h3 d4 Now this move
brings Black decent play.

34.♚e1! Karpov suggested this as the best move, without any further analysis. The idea is indeed very strong and instructive. White prepares ♜f3-g3, meanwhile the queen defends the first rank and prepares to recapture on e5 should Black exchange there. 34...♞ec8?! This natural move meets with a beautiful refutation. (34...a5 is objectively better, although after 35.♜f3 ♚b4 [or 35...♙f6 36.♞g3† ♜f8 37.♜f3] 36.♚e3 ♞c7 37.♞g3 White has a strong attack.) 35.♜f3 ♙f6 36.♞g3† ♜h8 (36...♜f8 37.♜d7† should be winning)



37.♚b4!! White wins. Interestingly, there was even a second beautiful solution in 37.♞g6!!.



34...♞ec8?!

Taimanov switches his rook to a defensive post on c7, but this leaves the e-pawn weak. A better try would have been: 34...a5 35.♜fe1

♚c7 (35...♙a6 36.♞a1) Now after 36.♞a1 or 36.♜f3 White has excellent compensation, nevertheless Black has more chances than in the game.

35.♞fe1 ♞8c7

Black has no time to double his rooks on the second rank: 35...♞a2 36.♜f3! ♚c7 (36...♞c6 37.♞c1; 36...♞cc2 37.♞xe6+→) 37.♞c1 ♚d7 38.♞c3 Black's problems persist.

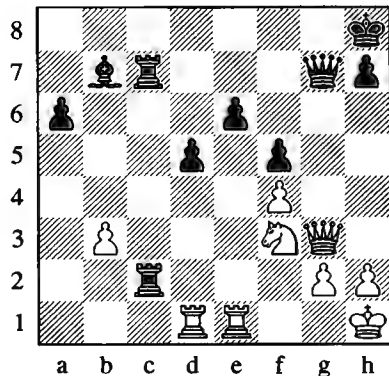
36.♜f3 ♜h8

Weaker is 36...♙c8?! 37.♙e5 ♚b7 38.♜d4 ♞a2 (38...♞c5 39.♞e3) 39.♞c1 ♙d7 40.♜c6 and according to Karpov White is winning.

37.♙xg7†

In his *Chess Informant* analysis Karpov suggests the small refinement 37.♚xg7†! ♚xg7 38.♞xe6 which also leads to a considerable endgame advantage: 38...♚xd4 (38...♜g8 39.♙xg7) 39.♜xd4 ♚d2 40.♞e1 White's knight is dominating on d4.

37...♚xg7



38.♜d4

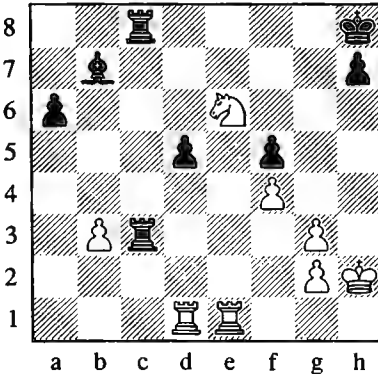
Karpov is happy to steer the position into a favourable endgame. It may or may not be objectively winning, but over the board the chances for success are high.

38.♖xe6!? ♖xg3 39.hxg3 d4 40.♘h4 was a promising alternative.

38...♖xg3 39.hxg3 ♖2c3 40.♘xe6

Karpov gives his opponent no time to defend the f5-pawn. If 40.♗h2?! ♙c8! 41.♘xe6 ♖e7! 42.♘d4 ♖e4 it is not easy for White to achieve anything.

40...♙c8 41.♗h2



41...♙xb3

Taking a pawn looks natural, but Black will not get a chance to promote his passed a-pawn as his king is too vulnerable.

A better practical chance would have been 41...d4!, giving up the pawn in order to activate the dormant bishop. 42.♘xd4! From this square the knight defends b3, attacks f5 and guards against an invasion on c2. (42.♖xd4? is weaker because of 42...♖c2) 42...♙e4 43.g4! ♖g8 44.♘xf5!? Karpov does not mention taking this pawn. (After 44.g5 h6 45.♖h1! ♖g6! 46.♗g1 ♗g7 Black is reasonably active.) 44...♙xf5 45.gxf5 ♖xb3 46.♖d2 White will look to double his rooks on the seventh rank, with excellent winning chances.

42.♘d4 ♖b6

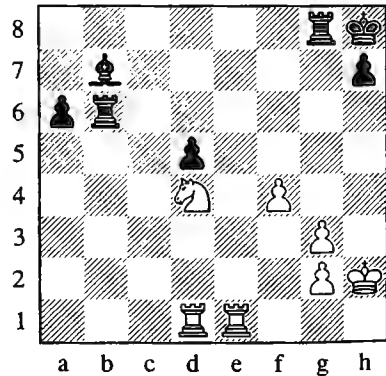
Another line is 42...♖b4 43.♘xf5 ♖f8

44.♘d6 (44.♘d4!?) 44...♙c6 45.♙c1 ♖b6 46.♖e7 ♖f6 47.♘f7† ♗g8 48.♘e5 when Black's king is vulnerable on the back rank.

43.♘xf5 ♖f8 44.♘d4 ♖g8

If 44...♙c8 45.♖e5 ♖d6 46.♙c1 White's rooks are dominating.

44...♖f7 runs into 45.♖e8† ♗g7 46.♖de1! when White constructs a mating net. This was pointed out by Karpov who, as we have seen many times, has a knack for checkmating his opponents in endgames. A possible finish is 46...a5 47.♘e6† ♗f6 48.g4! h6 (48...a4 49.g5†) 49.♖h8 and White wins.



45.♖e7! ♖g7

After 45...♙c8 46.♙c1 ♖b7 47.♖e5 Black remains very passive.

46.♖de1 ♖h6†

Pushing the a-pawn was also not enough to save the game: 46...a5 47.f5 a4 48.♖7e6 ♖xe6 49.fxe6 ♖g8! (49...♖e7 50.♘f5) 50.e7 ♖e8 51.♘b5 ♙c6 52.♘c7 ♖g8 53.e8=♖ ♙xe8 54.♘e8 White's extra piece should decide the game.

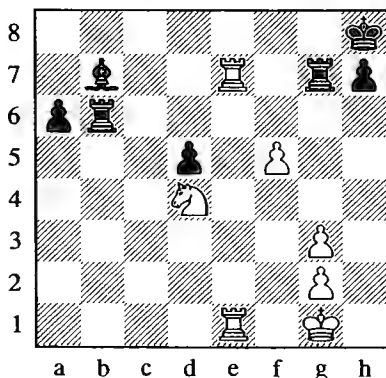
47.♗g1 ♖hg6 48.f5!

Karpov's f-pawn now grows into a powerhouse.

48...♖b6

Other moves were no better, for instance 48...♖xg3 49.f6 ♖xg2† 50.♗h1 ♖g8 51.f7 wins.

In the event of 48...♖f6 the clever 49.g4! decides the game. Karpov points out that White must avoid 49.♖xg7? ♗xg7 50.♖e7† ♖f7 51.♖e6† ♗f6 52.♖xf7† ♗xf7 53.♖d8† ♗f6 54.♖xb7 ♗xf5 when it is doubtful that he can win.

**49.♖7e6!**

Karpov simplifies with enviable precision.

49...♖xc6

If 49...♖b4 50.f6 wins.

50.fxex6!

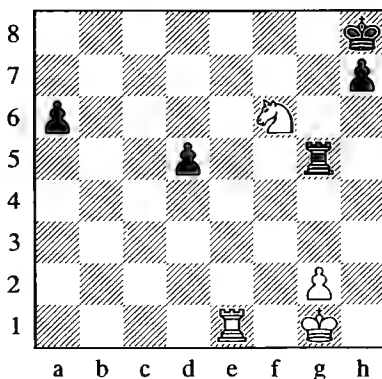
This pawn will cost Black his bishop.

50...♖g8 51.e7 ♖e8 52.♖f5 ♗c6 53.♖d6 ♖g8

Giving up only the exchange by 53...♗g7 would have been hopeless as well: 54.♖xe8† ♗xe8 55.♖f1 ♗f7 56.♖f4 a5 57.♗f2 a4 58.♗e3 a3 59.♗d4 a2 60.♖f1 And White wins, as Karpov pointed out.

54.e8=♖ ♗xe8 55.♖xe8 ♖xg3 56.♖f6 ♖g5

56...♖g6 would last longer, although of course after 57.♖xd5 White is winning easily.

**57.♖e7!**

In their first meeting Karpov also checkmated Taimanov's king with a knight and the rook; now he does it a second time.

57...♖g7 58.♖e8†

1-0

Karpov played a total of five games in the present Spartakiad. He scored one more win against Giorgadze, and drew the other three.

Karpov's next tournament was in Hannover. In the first round he suffered an incredible upset as he was comprehensively outplayed by a German player named Hartmann who was rated just 2290. Karpov even had the white pieces. In round two he made a quick draw with Kavalek, but then he moved into top gear and only dropped one draw from his next six games. A draw in round nine was followed by a win and two more draws.

In round thirteen Karpov faced Qi Jingxuan of China, who represented his country a few times. This was their first meeting. They played again in 1985; Karpov won that game too. The Chinese player competed regularly until 1987, but according to my database he only played two more tournaments after that year.

Game 68

Qi Jingxuan – Anatoly Karpov

Hannover 1983

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 a6

Karpov only played the Najdorf five times during his long career. He scored three wins and two draws with it.

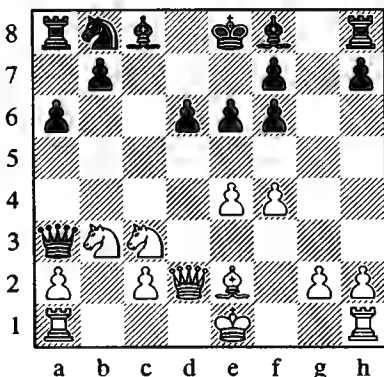
6.♗g5

This was the first and only time Karpov faced this move. In the first round of the tournament the Chinese player tried 6.♗e3 against Giorgadze and lost.

6...e6 7.f4 ♖b6 8.♗d2 ♗xb2 9.♘b3 ♗a3!

Objectively this may not be stronger than 9...♘c6 or 9...♘bd7, but practically it was the best choice as it is less likely to lead to a forced drawing line.

10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♗e2



11...h5!

It was Korchnoi who first introduced this move against Robatsch in 1972, and a few months later Fischer also used it against

Spassky in their world championship match. Black effectively forgoes the option of castling short, but he no longer has to deal with the irritating possibility of ♗h5.

In the following famous game Black refrained from the pawn move and instead walked his king to the queenside: 11...♘c6 12.0-0 ♗d7 13.f5 (13.♗h5 and 13.♗h1 are the main moves here.) 13...♘e5 14.fxe6 fxe6 15.♗h5† ♘d8 16.♗ab1 ♗c8 17.♘e2 ♗e7 18.♘f4 ♗c7 19.♗e2 ♗b8 20.♘a5 b5 Tal – Portisch, Biel 1976. The great attacking magician from Riga was unable to hurt his opponent's king on this occasion. Black preserved his extra pawn and later won with an attack of his own.

12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♗h1 ♗d7 14.♘b1

This move was first unveiled by Spassky against Fischer. Its main purpose is to prepare c4, which will shield the c3-knight and make it harder for Black to gain space with either the b- or d-pawn.

White has scored better with 14.♘d1, the most famous example of which came in the 1993 World Championship final: 14...♗c8 15.♘e3 (15.c4 and 15.♗f3 ♖b4 16.♗e3 are possible improvements) 15...♖b4 16.c3 ♗xe4 (16...♖b6!?) 17.♗d3 ♗a4 18.♘c4 ♗c7 19.♘b6 ♗a3 Short – Kasparov, London (4) 1993. At this point Short avoided the repetition but went on to lose.

Interestingly, when the two players met again in 1995, Kasparov decided to develop the knight to d7. That game ended in a draw after a complex fight.

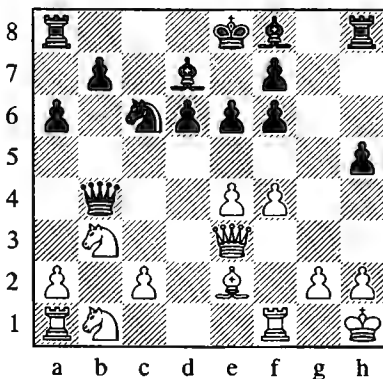
14...♖b4

After 14...♖b2 15.♘c3 several games have resulted in quick draws, but Karpov is playing for more. It is worth adding that attempting to trap the black queen does not lead anywhere

for White: 15.a4 (15.a3? ♖c8 16.♟f3 e5+ Lamarche Rodriguez – Wimmer, e-mail 1999) 15...d5! 16.exd5 ♖b4 17.dxe6 ♟xe6 Black was on top in Converset – Gueth, e-mail 2002.

Interestingly, in the very first game in which 14.♖b1 was played, Fischer also spurned the repetition. It would be interesting to know if the decision was due to his incredible fighting spirit (he was leading the match by the score of 6½–3½ at the time, so in terms of match tactics a draw would have been more than okay), or if he feared getting his queen trapped on b2 (the knight retreat was a new move at the time, and it would not have been easy to calculate and assess all the important lines over the board).

15.♞e3



15...♖e7!

Karpov improves on Fischer's play. The knight clears a safe path of retreat for the queen, while also blocking the e-file in order to prevent any ♖c3-d5 ideas.

The stem game soon ended in a disaster for Black: 15...d5? 16.exd5 ♖e7 17.c4 ♖f5 18.♞d3! h4? 19.♟g4 ♖d6 20.♖1d2 f5? 21.a3 ♞b6 22.c5 ♞b5 23.♞c3+– Spassky – Fischer, Reykjavik (11) 1972.

16.c4

16.f5?! is well met by 16...♟h6.

16.a3 ♞a4 17.c4 (17.♖c3 ♞c6 18.♞ad1 ♞c7 19.f5 h4 20.♞h3 0–0–0 Black has found a safe shelter for his king) 17...f5 (17...h4!? 18.♖c3 ♞c6) 18.♖c3 ♞c6 19.♞ad1 (19.♖d4 ♞c5; 19.♞fd1 ♟g7) 19...♟g7 20.♟f3 ♟g8 White does not have much to show for the pawn, and Black's bishops are strong.

16...f5!?

It may look risky to open the game, but Black's position is resilient enough to withstand it, and the activation of the dark-squared bishop will help him considerably.

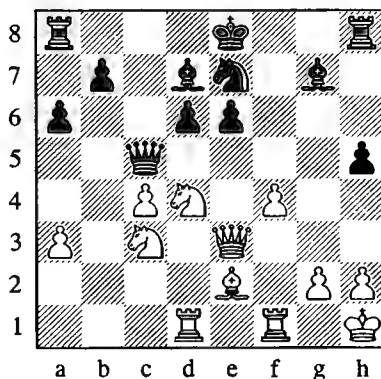
17.a3 ♞a4 18.♖c3 ♞c6 19.♖d4 ♞c5

White has won a few tempos, nevertheless Black is strong enough in the centre to repel any direct assault.

20.exf5 ♟g7!

After 20...♖xf5? 21.♖xf5 ♞xf5 22.♖d5 Black loses material. Instead Karpov concentrates on developing and coordinating his forces.

21.fxc6 fxc6 22.♞ad1



22...♟xd4!

Simplifying to an endgame.

Karpov is not interested in winning a piece as his exposed king would offer White promising compensation: 22...♖c6?! 23.♗e4! ♕xd4 24.♖g3 ♖b6 25.♗xd6† ♗e7 26.♗e4 ♜hg8 27.♖h4† ♗f8 28.♗g5 Black is in some danger.

23.♖xd4 ♖xd4 24.♞xd4

In the resulting endgame both sides have some weaknesses, and the position should be about equal.

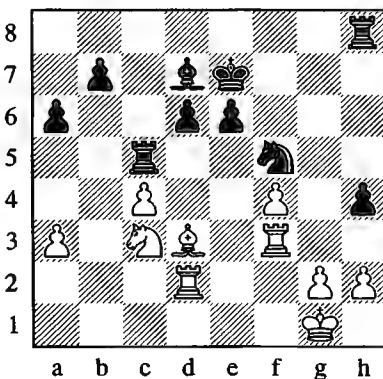
24...♗f5 25.♞d2 ♞c8 26.♞f3

A move like 26.g3? would have allowed 26...b5, so White wisely defends his knight.

It was also worth considering 26.♗d3!? ♞h6 (26...b5?! 27.♗xf5 exf5 28.♞xd6) 27.♞e1 when the position is balanced.

26...♗e7 27.♗g1 h4 28.♗d3 ♞c5

Karpov has made three of his characteristic little improving moves.



29.♗xf5!?

It is dangerous to give up this bishop when the g2-pawn may still come under pressure. 29.♗f2 was safer, and after 29...♗c6 30.♗e4 ♞a5 31.♗c2 the position is equal.

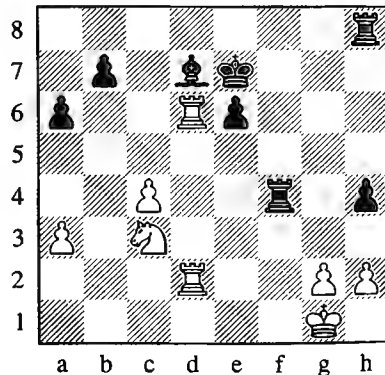
29...♞xf5 30.♞fd3?

The further opening of the position only helps Black.

A better way to simplify the position was: 30.♗e4! d5 (30...♗c6 31.♗xd6 ♗xf3 [or 31...♞c5 32.♞e3 ♞d8 33.♞ed3] 32.♗xf5† will result in a draw) 31.cxd5 ♞xd5 (31...exd5 32.♗c5 ♗c6 33.♗b3 is a double-edged endgame) 32.♞e3 ♞xd2 33.♗xd2 ♗c6 With such a limited amount of material remaining, the most likely result is a draw.

30...♞xf4 31.♞xd6

Also after 31.c5 d5 32.♞xd5 ♗c6 Black's bishop dominates.



31...♗c6

The bishop stands superbly here.

32.c5

It was worth considering 32.♞d4 to exchange a pair of rooks, although Black is still on top after 32...♞hf8.

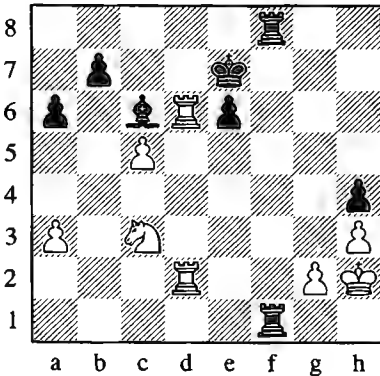
32...♞hf8

Checkmate in one is not a trivial matter, but that is not the only problem White has to face.

33.h3

33.♞d1 ♞c4 34.♞d3 ♞xc5 wins.

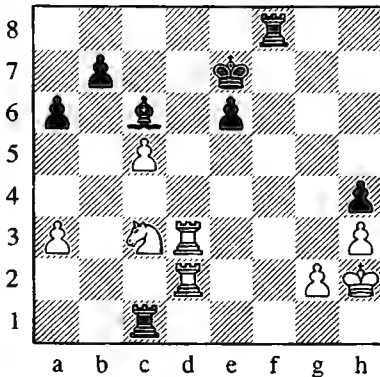
33...♙f1† 34.♘h2



34...♞c1!

Six moves ago it was not easy to tell which king was more vulnerable, but by now White is on the verge of being mated.

35.♞b3



36...♞f1!

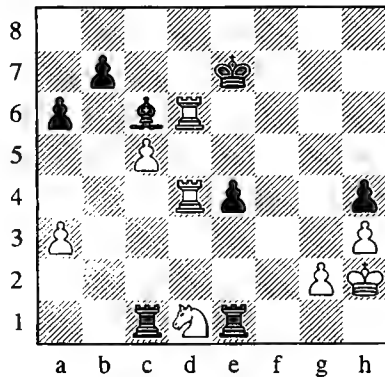
It is not uncommon for a pair of rooks on the first or eighth rank to deliver these kinds of mating threats. As I recall, it was a strong Hungarian IM named Navarovszky who first showed me this motif. Later I saw him win what should have been a lost position with this very idea. I will always remember the slight

smile on his face. His opponent was not so happy with the lesson he received.

36.♘d1 e5!

White is paralysed by the need to defend the knight, so Karpov simply advances his passed pawn.

37.♘f2 ♞g1 38.♘d1 ♞c1 39.♞d6 e4
40.♞2d4



40...a5

Did Karpov want to push the pawn closer to the promotion square, or was he merely setting up a zugzwang? Either way, he must have enjoyed inflicting such severe paralysis over his opponent's position; even world champions do not manage to achieve this level of domination very often.

41.♘f2 e3 42.♞xh4

White did not even have a chance to sacrifice his knight for the e-pawn in view of the mating threats.

42...exf2 43.♞h7† ♘e8 44.♞h8† ♘f7
0-1

Finally White relieved himself of the torture. Yet again Karpov caught his opponent's king in the endgame.

In the penultimate round Karpov faced the Georgian grandmaster Tamaz Giorgadze, who was half a point ahead of him at the time. Giorgadze played sixteen games against the world champions, starting with Tal and finishing with Kasparov. He won one game, drew seven and lost the other eight. He had met Karpov twice before this game, drawing the first and losing the second (at the Spartakiad, the event before the present one). This was their final encounter.

Game 69

Anatoly Karpov – Tamaz Giorgadze

Hannover 1983

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♙e7
5.♙g5 0-0 6.e3 h6 7.♙xf6

This was the first time Karpov exchanged in this position. He went on to score highly with both the text move and 7.♙h4.

7...♙xf6 8.♞d2

Korchnoi introduced this move, which prepares long castling. Later Karpov beat Kasparov twice with 8.♞c2 in their first world championship match, before subsequently turning to 8.♞c1.

8...♘c6

8...dxc4!? 9.♙xc4 ♘d7 10.0-0 c5 11.♞fd1 ♘b6 12.♙e2 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♙d7 14.♙f3 ♞b8 15.♘e4 ♙xd4 16.♞xd4 ♙a4 Black had equalized and a draw was agreed eleven moves later, Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (6) 1985.

9.♞c1

9.0-0-0 has been played with some success by Korchnoi amongst others, but this is not Karpov's style. In Hungarian chess circles it is said that when Soviet grandmasters analysed a Karpov game and someone suggested a

sharp and unclear move, he would always follow it by saying, "But Tolya doesn't play like this".

9...a6 10.♙e2

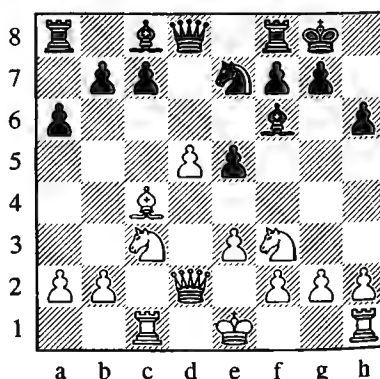
10.h3 may be a little more accurate, as White can save a tempo with his bishop while the pawn move should be of some use. Nevertheless White did not achieve much in the following encounter: 10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 e5 12.d5 ♘a7 13.0-0 (13.♞c2!?) 13...♘b5 14.♘xb5 axb5 15.♙b3 e4 16.♘d4 ♙e5 17.♞c2 ♞c8 18.f4 ♙d6 19.♞e2 ½-½ Timman – Olafsson, Reykjavik 1987.

10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 e5

Black wants to liberate the c8-bishop, but must pay the price in terms of the slight weakening of the c7-pawn.

12.d5 ♘e7

12...♘a7 has been played more frequently, but White has scored well after 13.♞c2.



13.♘e4!

Karpov begins to clear the c-file in order to get closer to the c7-pawn.

13...♘f5

After 13...♘g6 the knight is in danger of being sidelined. 14.d6 cxd6 15.♞xd6

♞xd6 16.♟xd6 The strong knight makes Black's life unpleasant. 16...e4 17.♞d4 ♙xd4 18.exd4 ♜f4 19.g3 ♞e6 20.d5 ♞d4 21.♞d2 ♜f5 22.♞xe4 Black improved his knight but lost a pawn and was unable to hold the endgame in Groszpetér – Boensch, Sochi 1984.

13...♙f5!? is interesting; so far nobody has dared to accept the doubled f-pawns. 14.♞xf6† gxf6 Black's kingside is ugly, but he might be able to get some play against the d5-pawn.

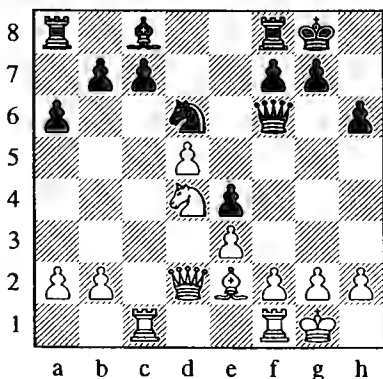
14.♙e2!

Karpov continues to focus on the c-file. He may already have sensed that he would need to defend his king.

14...♞d6 15.♞xf6† ♞xf6 16.0-0!

Taking the pawn at once was weaker as Black regains the d5 pawn: 16.♞xc7 e4 17.♞d4 ♞g5 18.g3 ♞xd5 White has no significant advantage.

16...e4 17.♞d4

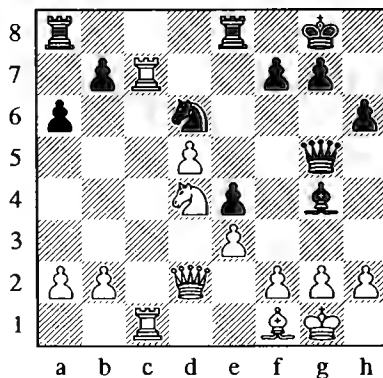


17...♞e8?

The Georgian grandmaster sacrifices a pawn in the hope of generating an attack against the white king. He gets some chances, but not enough.

Correct was 17...♞g5! 18.♙d1 (after 18.f3 ♞xd5 19.♞xc7 ♞g5 20.♞h1 White is just a little better) 18...♞xd5 19.♙b3 ♞e5 20.♞xc7 ♞e8 and White only has a small plus.

18.♞xc7 ♞g5 19.♞f1 ♙h3 20.♙f1 ♙g4



21.♞b4!

Karpov correctly judges that he can afford to move his queen away from the kingside, as Black does not have enough firepower to damage him there. One of the keys to the position is the black knight, which is singlehandedly holding the black queenside together while blocking White's extra pawn. Karpov has found a nice way to undermine this important piece.

21...♞ad8 22.♞b6!

From this outpost the queen menaces both the rook on d8 and the knight on d6, thus tying up the black pieces.

22...h5

If 22...♞xd5?? 23.♞7c5 traps the queen.

23.a4 h4

23...♞xd5 was still inadvisable, even though it no longer loses the queen: 24.♙1c5 ♞a2 25.h3 ♙c8 26.♞xh5 White restores his material advantage while remaining in full control of the position.

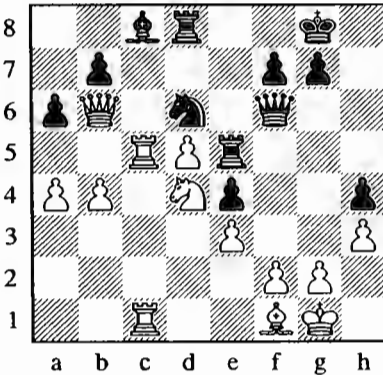
24.♠7c5

Now Karpov consolidates the pawn advantage. He has assessed the position accurately and judged that Black is too tied up to attack successfully.

24...♞f6

24...h3 was worth considering, as such a pawn can often cause trouble, although in the present position the black rooks have no way of getting to the first rank. 25.g3 ♞f6 26.b4 ♠e5 27.b5 White will soon remove the blocking knight, after which he should press home his advantage.

25.b4 ♠e5 26.h3 ♙c8



27.b5!

Karpov continues his plan of undermining the enemy knight. The way in which he carried out his plan was beautiful to watch.

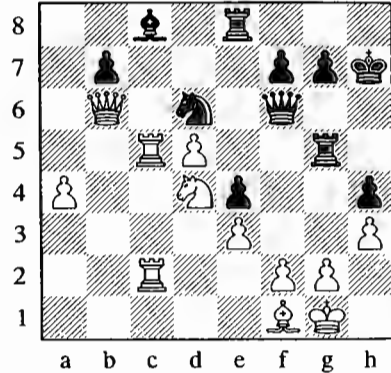
27...axb5 28.♘xb5 ♕h7 29.♘d4

This move in conjunction with White's 31st suggests that Karpov was probably in time trouble. He could have crowned his previous fine play in one of two ways:

29.♠1c2! This eliminates all counterplay. 29...♠g5 30.♕h2 (30.♕h1!?) 30...♞e5† 31.♕h1 Black is in big trouble.

There was also a sharp tactical solution: 29.♘xd6! ♠xd6 30.♞b1! ♙f5 31.♞xb7 ♙xh3 32.♠c6 And White is winning.

29...♠de8 30.♠1c2! ♠g5

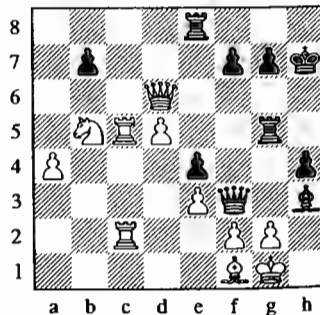


31.♘e6?

After playing a great game Karpov commits a serious tactical error. Once again, there was more than one route to victory:

31.♕h1 ♙d7 32.a5 ♠e5 33.♞c7 and White invades. This would have been the sensible choice if White was short of time.

The sharper 31.♘b5! was also good enough, although accurate calculation was required: 31...♙xh3 32.♞xd6 ♞f3



33.♞f4! ♠xg2† 34.♕h1! And White wins.

31...♙xe6 32.dxe6

32.♞xd6 can be met by 32...♞d8!. Maybe this strong intermediate move is what Karpov missed. 33.♞b6 ♙xd5 34.♞xf6 gxf6 Black should be able to live with the doubled pawns.

32...♞xe6 33.♞xg5

Once the rooks are exchanged Black has virtually no chance to hurt White's king.

33...♞xg5 34.♞b4

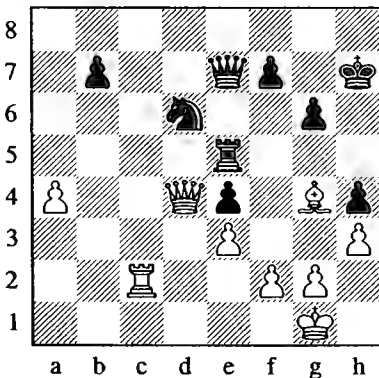
Due to his recent mistakes, Karpov virtually has to win the game all over again. Fortunately for him, he is still somewhat better as the b7- and e4-pawns are vulnerable, while the knight on d6 is unstable and requires constant protection.

Let us not forget the tournament situation: Karpov was trailing Giorgadze by half a point with just one game remaining after this one, so he desperately needed to win.

34...g6 35.♙e2 ♞e7 36.♙g4 ♖f5

After 36...♖e8 37.♞b3 ♞a6 38.♙e2 ♞a5 39.♙b5 Black's position has worsened.

37.♞b5 ♖d6 38.♞b6 ♖f5 39.♞b5 ♖d6 40.♞d5 ♞e5 41.♞d4



41...♖e8

41...♞a5 42.♞d2 ♖f5

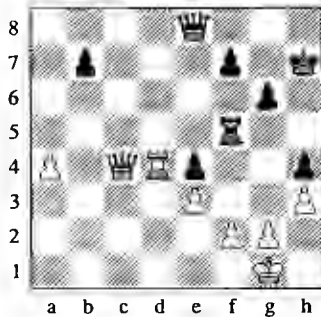
42...♞a6 43.a5 ♞c7 44.♙e2 ♞c6 45.♞d5

White keeps up the pressure.

43.♞c4 ♞e8 44.♙xf5 ♞xf5

44...gxf5? 45.♞c7! Black is in trouble.

45.♞d4



45...♞b5

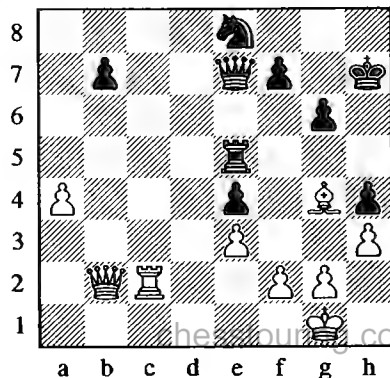
Black can reduce the pawns to one side, but this does not guarantee a draw. If 45...♞e5 46.♞c7 ♞e7 47.♞f4 White wins a pawn.

46.♞c2 bxa4 47.♞xe4 ♞d8 48.♞xa4 g5

We have reached an unusual ending with four versus three on the kingside. Such a scenario would normally offer excellent drawing chances, but in the present position the black king is rather exposed, which will complicate his defensive task.

42.♞b2

After its sixth consecutive move, the queen settles on a good square.



42...f5?!

This move is not the direct cause of Black's demise, but it was a step in the wrong direction as the seventh rank is weakened.

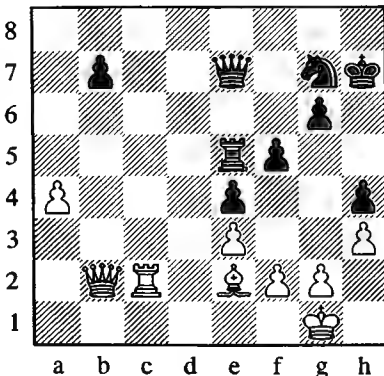
A better option was 42...d6, for instance: 43.♖c8?! (White's position has not ripened enough for him to go for a direct win. Karpov would probably have played more patiently with 43.♗e2! with a small but persistent advantage.) 43...♖a5 44.♖c4 ♗d8 45.♗b1 ♖d5 46.♖c1 b6 47.♗b7 ♖d3 Black has improved his position considerably.

Black could also have considered waiting with 42...d6!? or 42...♖d5!?. In both cases he maintains reasonable defensive chances.

43.♗e2 ♖g7?

Black probably wanted to transfer the knight to c5, but he never even gets close to fulfilling this objective.

A better idea was 43...♖d5! to improve the rook. 44.♖c1 (Also after 44.♖c8 ♗d7 45.♖a8 [45.♖b8 ♖d1†!]) 45...♗g7 Black must be careful but his position looks defensible.) 44...d6 45.♖b1 ♖d7 46.♗c4 White keeps a slight advantage, but Black should be able to hold with careful defence.



44.♖c8!

This move paralyses the knight completely. Maybe Giorgadze missed the trouble brewing on h8 as the diagonal is presently being covered by two pieces, yet they are not enough.

44...♗d7?

This loses by force. 44...♖c5 was better, although after 45.♖b8 ♖c7 46.a5 Black can hardly move.

45.♗xe5

45.♖b8!? ♖e7 46.♗f6 was also convincing.

45...♗xc8 46.♗e7

Winning the h-pawn.

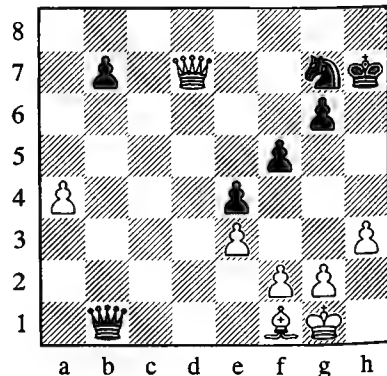
46...♗c1† 47.♗f1 ♗a1 48.♗xh4† ♖g8 49.♗d8†

Karpov quickly and efficiently improves his pieces, but his task is no longer difficult.

49...♖h7 50.♗d7

The pin ensures that the knight will not move.

50...♗b1



51.g3!

After releasing the opponent's pin, White will easily free his bishop and catch the enemy king. The rest is easy.

51...b6 52.♘g2 ♖b4 53.♙b5 ♗c5 54.♙c6
♘h8 55.♗d8† ♘h7 56.♙d5

1-0

In the last round Karpov drew against Bouaziz to finish on 11/15, with a total of eight wins, six draws and one loss. This was enough to win the tournament outright, half a point ahead of Giorgadze who also drew his final game. Interestingly, Karpov elected to play the Scheveningen Sicilian with the black pieces in the final round. The likely explanation is that he already viewed Kasparov as the leading challenger to his title, and wanted to take the opportunity to get a better feel for the positions resulting from Kasparov's pet line.

Karpov's next tournament was in Tilburg. The competition was tight, and Karpov drew eight of his eleven games. Fortunately his three wins over Polugaevsky, Van der Wiel and Seirawan were still enough to secure first place, half a point ahead of Ljubojevic and Portisch.

For the second year in a row Karpov took part in a televised event, this time in Bath, England. The database entries do not show the time control, but an online search indicates that it was something close to normal tournament conditions, with two hour for forty moves and then one hour to finish. Karpov performed well in the four-player, double round robin preliminary event, beating both Rogers and Browne by the score of 1½-½ (his excellent win over Browne is shown in the notes to Game 3 in the second volume) and Chandler by 2-0. We will now look at one of his wins over the last of them.

The New Zealand born English grandmaster faced all the world champions from Smyslov to Anand, with the exceptions of Fischer and Topalov. From a total of twenty eight games he scored four wins, sixteen draws and eight losses. Aside from the two wins in the present event, Karpov scored one more win and two draws against Chandler.

Game 70

Murray Chandler – Anatoly Karpov

Bath TV (preliminary) 1983

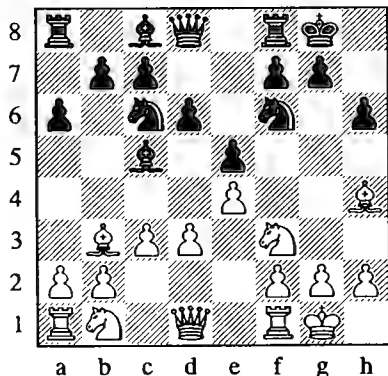
1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5

Karpov never played 3...♖f6 in a regular game. Altogether he scored only 50% from eight games in the Italian.

4.0-0 ♖f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.♙g5 a6 8.♙b3 h6

A year earlier – coincidentally, at the Hamburg TV event – Karpov preferred 8...♙a7 and equalized against Nunn: 9.♖bd2 ♖e7 10.♖c4 ♖g6 11.♖h4 ♙g4 12.♙xf6 ♗xf6 13.♗xg4 ♗xh4 14.♗xh4 ♖xh4 15.♞ad1 ♖g6 16.g3 ♘h8 17.♖e3 ♖e7 18.♖d5 ♖xd5 19.♙xd5 c6 Nunn – Karpov, Hamburg TV 1982. The players fought for a long time, but neither of them obtained any winning chances and they eventually split the point.

9.♙h4

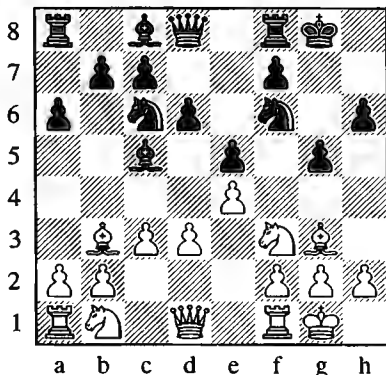


9...g5!?

Karpov breaks the pin and hopes to isolate the enemy bishop.

10.♙g3

So far nobody seems to have ventured the knight sacrifice, and indeed after 10.♖xg5?! hxg5 11.♗xg5 ♕e6 White's compensation is in doubt: 12.♗h1 (Or 12.♗d5 ♖g7 13.♞f3 ♖g6 14.h4 [14.♗h4 ♜h8] 14...♗g4 15.♗xf6 ♞d7 and Black is safe.) 12...♖g7 13.♞f3 (13.f4 ♗e3!) 13...♞e7 Black will soon escape the pin.



10...♗a7

The bishop retreats out of harm's way. 10...♗g4 is a valid alternative, which could transpose to the game.

11.♖bd2 ♗g4

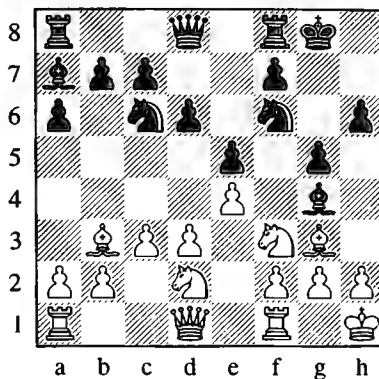
This was a novelty at the time, although it has since been repeated several times. A year earlier Donner preferred 11...♖g7 and drew with Kuijf.

12.♗h1?

Chandler probably expected ...♖h5 soon, and may have wanted to meet ...♖xg3 with fxg3.

12.h3 was more purposeful, when Black has to decide where to put his bishop. 12...♗h5 (12...♗e6 13.♞e2 ♞e7 is also reasonable) 13.♖c4 ♗g6 (there is also 13...♖d7 14.♖e3 ♖c5 15.♗c2 ♖e6 16.♞e2 ♖e7 17.♗h2 ♖f4 with complex play) 14.♖e3 ♖g7 (14...♖h5!?

15.♗h2 ♖f4) 15.♞d2 ♖h5 16.♗h2 ♖f4 17.♗c2 ♞f6 With complex play and mutual chances.



12...♗h5!

Karpov anticipates a knight manoeuvre to e3 and retreats his bishop to a more secure location where it also helps to safeguard his kingside. The g5-pawn will not be a weakness, but rather a healthy pawn which secures space and provides attacking possibilities on the kingside.

13.♞e1?!

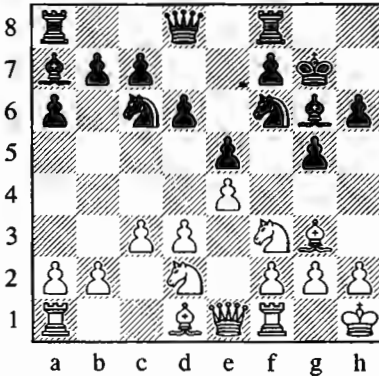
Chandler probably overestimated the pin – there was no need to escape it just yet. A more logical continuation was 13.♖c4 ♖g7 14.♖e3 ♗g6 15.h3 ♞d7 16.♗h2 when Black can choose between 16...♞ae8 and 16...♖d8, with a decent position in both cases.

13...♖g7

Karpov improves his king a bit and hints that he may play on the kingside.

14.♗d1 ♗g6

A bishop exchange would not be in Black's interests. Instead Karpov vacates the h5-square and turns his attention to the centre. If Black can arrange to play ...d5 then the bishop could become powerful.

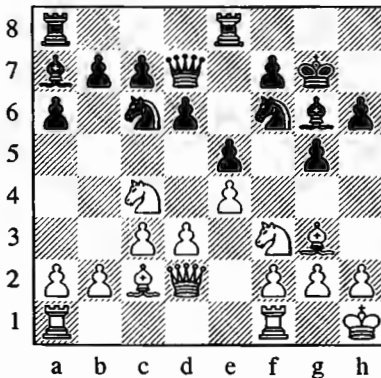
**15.♖c4 ♜e8**

Karpov brings another piece into play while continuing to strengthen his centre.

16.♙c2 ♜d7 17.♜d2

Attacking the g5-pawn was dangerous for White: 17.h4?! ♖h5 (17...g4 is also strong: 18.♖h2 d5 19.♖d2 dxe4 20.dxe4 ♖h5 Black's position is preferable.) 18.♙h2 (18.hxg5?! ♖xg3† 19.fxg3 hxg5 20.♖e3 gives Black a pleasant choice between 20...d5 and 20...♙h8† 21.♙g1 ♙h5, with an obvious advantage in both cases.) 18...g4 19.♖fd2 f5 20.exf5 ♙xf5 21.♖e3 ♙e6 Black has some advantage.

White should have preferred 17.♖e3! in order to keep an eye on the d5-square. 17...♖d8!? (Or 17...d5 18.♙d1 ♙ad8 19.♜e2 b5 [19...♜e7!]? 20.♙b3 and the position is balanced.) 18.♙d1 ♖e6 19.h3 ♖f4 Black is just a bit better in this complex position.

**17...♙ad8!**

Karpov mentions the possibility of 17...b5 intending immediate action in the centre, but why take the risk when it is possible to continue strengthening the position slowly and smoothly? Play continues 18.♖e3 d5 19.♖xd5 ♖xd5 20.exd5 ♜xd5 21.a4 ♙ad8 22.axb5 axb5 23.♖xe5 (23.♙fd1 f6) 23...♙xe5 24.♙xe5† ♜xe5 25.d4 ♜d6 26.f4 and the position is rather unclear.

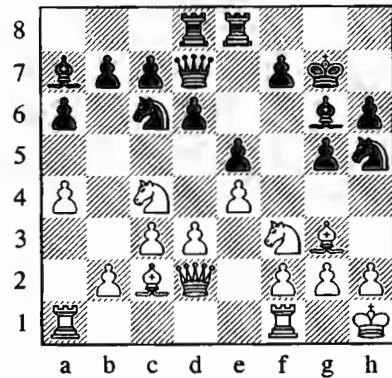
18.a4

This move is directed against ...b5. It may not prevent it outright, but it certainly renders the conditions less favourable for Black.

If 18.♖e3 d5 Black is better.

18...♖h5!

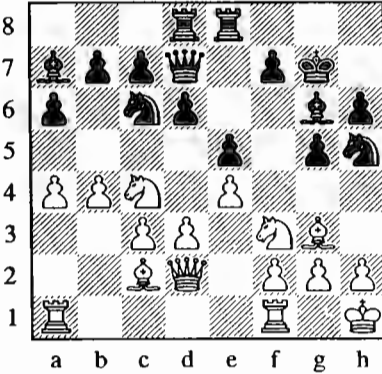
Karpov improves the knight and makes ...f5 a real possibility.

**19.b4?**

It is hard to work out why Chandler played this move. Maybe he thought that he had time to push Black back on the queenside, but he must have miscalculated something. It was essential to turn his attention to the centre with one of the following ideas:

19.♙fe1 ♖xg3† 20.hxg3 d5! 21.exd5 ♜xd5 22.♖e3 ♜e6 White's centre is under pressure.

19.♠e3 was the best chance. 19...♙xe3 (After 19...♗e7 20.d4 ♖g8 21.dxe5 ♗xg3† 22.hxg3 dxe5 23.♙e2 ♖f6 24.♙ad1 White is not worse.) 20.♙xe3 d5! (Also after 20...f5!† 21.exf5 ♙xf5 Black has a freer position.) 21.♙fe1 f6 22.♙ad1 ♗f4 23.♙c5 ♙e7 Black's advantage is beyond doubt, but White still has good chances to resist.



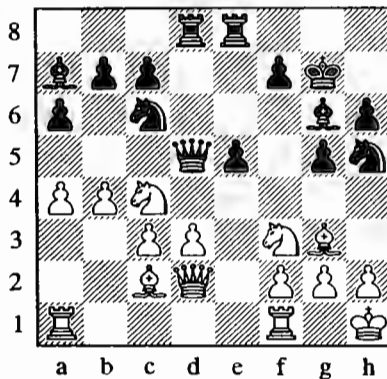
19...d5!

Karpov executes the obvious strike in the centre, and White's position quickly collapses.

20.exd5

Maybe Chandler had been planning 20.♙xe5†?, but only now realized that 20...f6! would cost him a piece after 21.exd5 ♗xe5.

20...♙xd5



21.b5?

Chandler tries to stir up complications, but this approach is doomed to fail. 21.♗e3? was also hopeless due to 21...♙xe3 22.♙xe3 when Black has a winning advantage after 22...f5 or 22...♙xd3.

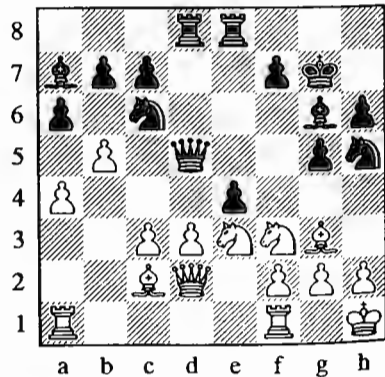
21.♙xe5†! was the best chance. White gives up two pieces for a rook and a pawn, but manages to exchange some pieces and achieve some stability in the centre. 21...♗xe5 22.♗cxe5 ♙xe5 23.♗xe5 ♙xe5 24.d4 ♙xc2 25.♙xc2 ♙d5 26.♙fe1 Black still has to work for the full point, nevertheless he should be able to achieve it.

21...e4!

Karpov opens up the centre, where he has two extra rooks in play. White's situation is already hopeless.

22.♗e3

Alternatives also fall flat: 22.dxe4 ♙xc4+; 22.♙xc7 exf3 23.g4 ♙xc4+; or 22.bxc6 exf3 23.gxf3 ♙xf3† 24.♗g1 ♗xg3 25.hxg3 ♙xg3† and White is toast.

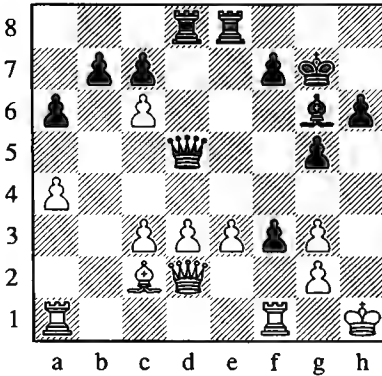


22...♙xe3!

Usually one would be reluctant to exchange such a bishop, but Karpov has seen that he is winning by force.

23. fxe3 ♖xg3† 24. hxg3 exf3
24...exd3 was winning as well.

25. bxc6



25...♞xe3!

This puts an end to White's resistance.

26. ♞xe3

If 26. ♞f2 fxg2† 27. ♞xg2 ♞xg3 Black wins.

26...fxg2† 27. ♖h2 gxf1=♖†

Chess players rarely get a chance to underpromote, and Karpov does not pass up the opportunity. It looks like he did it for amusement, as the normal promotion to a queen would have led to the same result.

28. ♞xf1 ♞xc6

Black has emerged from the fireworks with two extra pawns and a completely winning position.

29. ♞e5† ♖g8 30. ♞f2 ♞e8

0-1

It was not one of Chandler's better games, but the way Karpov carried out his central strategy was exemplary.

Karpov suffered a setback in the final and lost to Miles. Only one game appears on the

database, a 5...gxf6 Caro Kann in which Black eventually prevailed after a highly complex struggle. It would be surprising if they only played a single game (Karpov and Spassky played four games in the final of the Hamburg TV event) but I was unable to track down any others.

1983 Summary

Linares (2nd-3rd place): 6/10 (+2 =8 -0)

USSR Championship, Moscow (1st place): 9½/15 (+5 =9 -1)

European Team Championship, Plovdiv (Board one): 2½/4 (+1 =3 -0)

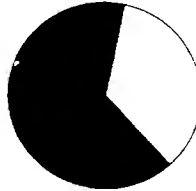
Spartakiad USSR, Moscow (Board one) 3½/5 (+2 =3 -0)

Hannover (1st place) 11/15 (+8 =6 -1)

Tilburg (1st place): 7/11 (+3 =8 -0)

(Bath TV games not included)

Total 65.8% (+21 =37 -2)



Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1984

Rating 2700 (2 in the World)

This was the third year since Karpov's last title defence against Korchnoi, which meant that the time had come for him to battle the next challenger for his crown: Garry Kasparov. The match did not start until September, so there was time for him to fit in a few other events.

In April, Karpov took part in the strong Phillips and Drew tournament in London. He ripped through the field, scoring four wins and two draws from his first six games. After one more draw he met his old rival Korchnoi in round eight. This was their first encounter since the 1981 World Championship final. Korchnoi had already been defeated by Kasparov in the semi-final of the latest candidates cycle, so it was clear that he would not be challenging for the crown again. This may have reduced the tension slightly, but there was still a huge amount of pride at stake.

Game 71

Anatoly Karpov – Viktor Korchnoi

London 1984

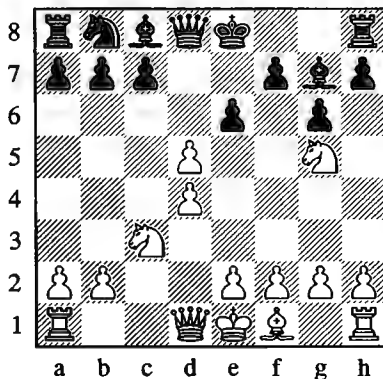
1. f3 f6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4. d4 g7

Korchnoi regularly played the Grünfeld, and he only lost a few games with it. This was the first and only time he ever played it against Karpov.

5. g5

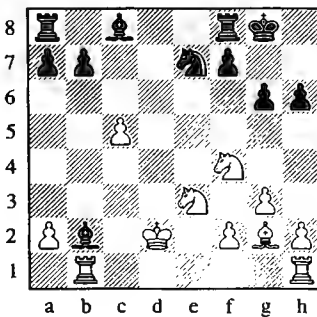
At this stage in his career Karpov had hardly ever faced the Grünfeld, although he once beat Adorjan with this variation.

5... e4 6. cxd5 dxc3 7. dxc3 e6



8.d3

Karpov deviates from the aforementioned game, which continued as follows: 8.♖d2 h6 9.♘h3 exd5 10.♘f4 0-0 11.g3 ♘c6 12.e3 ♘e7 13.♙g2 c5!? Black bases his play on dynamism. (13...c6 was more solid.) 14.dxc5 d4 15.♘d1 (After 15.0-0-0!? ♙g4 16.exd4 ♙xd1 17.♙xd1 White has two pawns and decent play for the exchange.) 15...dxe3 16.♘xe3 ♖xd2+ 17.♗xd2 ♙xb2 18.♙ab1



18...♙a3? (18...♙d4 would have been equal.)
19.♘d3 ♖d8 20.♗c3 a5 21.♙hd1 Karpov took over on the queenside and went on to win, Karpov – Adorjan, Budapest 1973.

8...exd5 9.e3

Karpov handles the position in the natural way. Two years later Seirawan tried the radical 9.b4!? but did not achieve much: 9...♖d6 10.a3 0-0 11.e3 c6 12.♙e2 ♙f5 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♘a4 a5 15.♖b3 b5 16.♘c5 a4 17.♖c3 ♘b6 18.♘d2 ♙ae8 19.♙fe1 ♙e7 20.♙f3 ♙fe8 Black was in control although he later went wrong and lost in Seirawan – Kasparov, Dubai (ol) 1986.

9...0-0

Korchnoi plays the main line. Some players have experimented with moves like 9...♖d6!? and 9...a5, both of which aim to restrain White's pawn advance on the queenside.

10.b4

Karpov starts the well known minority attack, with the aim of creating a pawn weakness on c6 or d5.

10...♙e6 11.♙e2!

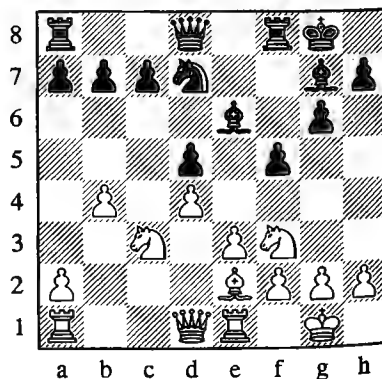
This is the best square for the bishop. Karpov was probably already visualizing a scenario in which b4-b5 could be met by ...c6-c5, in which case White will want to keep the d-file clear for his heavy pieces.

11...♘d7 12.0-0 f5

Korchnoi decides to postpone the move ...c7-c6, which would give White a target for his minority attack. It is an interesting idea, which had not been seen before according to the database. By the way, if I had to guess which player in all of chess history introduced the greatest number of new moves in the opening, I would say Korchnoi.

13.♙e1

With this move Karpov anticipates the further advance of the black f-pawn.

**13...g5**

Korchnoi has a tendency to get into time trouble, and I wonder how long he spent considering the consequences of advancing the f-pawn.

13...f4!?

This could lead to some long and extremely complex variations.

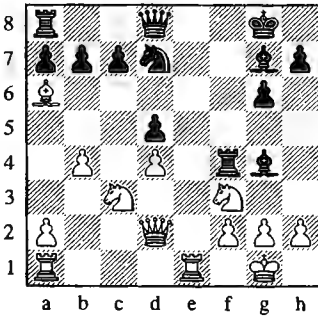
14.exf4!?

In his *Chess Informant* notes Karpov only mentioned 14.e4 with a slight plus for White, so this would probably have been his choice had Korchnoi played 13...f4 in the game. The text move is much more fun to analyse though!

14...xf4 15.♖a6!

It is not difficult to see this far ahead, but the fun is only just beginning.

15...♔g4! 16.♖d2

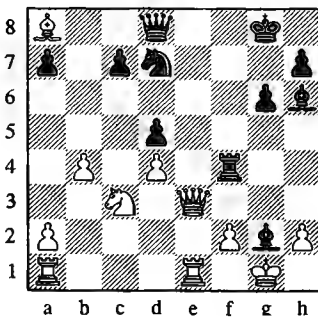


16...♔h6!

16...♔xf3 17.♔xb7 ♖f7 (17...♖xc3 18.♔xa8 ♖a3 19.♔xd5† ♔h8 20.♔b3 White is better.) 18.♔xa8 ♖xa8 19.f3 ♔f5 20.g4 Black will have some compensation for his material deficit, but still White's chances are higher.

17.♔xb7 ♔xf3 18.♔xa8 ♔xg2! 19.♖e3!

From this square the queen combines attack and defence. It would have been hard to calculate this far in advance, and there are still many more difficult moves ahead.



19...♔e4!

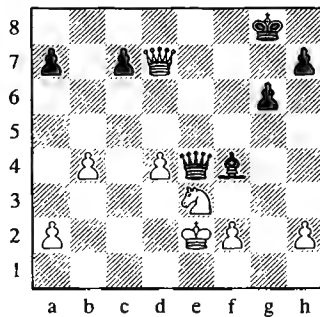
This nice move closes the e-file and threatens a deadly rook check.

The feeble 19...♖xa8? loses after 20.♖e6† ♖f7 21.♔xg2.

After 19...♖g5 20.♖g3 ♖g4 21.♔xg2 White's rooks will be stronger than Black's queen. 20.♖h3! ♖g5† 21.♔f1 ♖g4 22.♔xd5†!

After 22.♖ad1 ♔f6 White has problems.

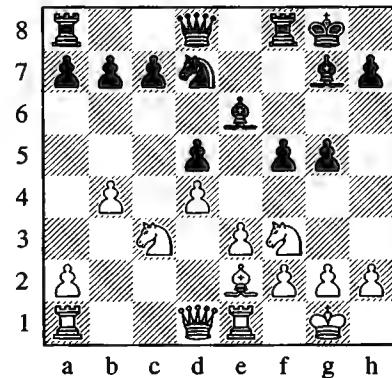
22...♔xd5 23.♔xd5 ♖g1† 24.♔e2 ♖d2† 25.♔f3 ♖xe1 26.♖xe1 ♖xe1 27.♖xd7 ♖h1† 28.♔e2 ♖e4† 29.♔e3 ♔f4



Black has good chances to hold this endgame.

30.♖d5† ♖xd5 31.♔xd5 ♔xh2 32.♔e7† ♔f7 33.♔c6 ♔e6 34.a4 ♔d5

Black should be able to draw thanks to his active king.



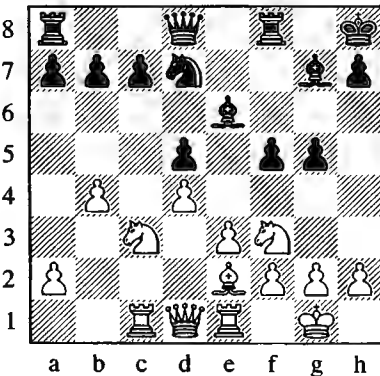
14.♖c1 ♗h8

This is partly a waiting move, although it does have the specific purpose of creating a retreat square on g8 for the bishop. Several other moves also deserved consideration.

14...♞e7 15.♘b5 g4 16.♙d2 c6 17.♙c7 ♖ac8 18.♙xe6 ♞xe6 White is just fractionally better.

14...a5 seems a little overambitious: 15.b5 g4 16.♙d2 ♖e8 17.♞c2 ♙f8 (17...f4 18.♙d3) 18.♙d3 ♞g5 (18...♞f6 19.♙e2) 19.♙e2 ♙d6 20.♙b3 White's play on the queenside is more powerful than Black's on the kingside.

In a couple of subsequent games Black opted for queenside prophylaxis with 14...a6. Here is one example: 15.♙a4 c6 16.♙c5 ♙xc5 17.bxc5 ♞e7 18.♙d3 ♖ae8 19.♞b1 ♙c8 20.♞c2 ♞f6 The position is double-edged, but in Meyer – Doncevic, Germany 1986, White self-destructed with 21.g4? and lost in another six moves.



15.♙d3 c6

Korchnoi finally plays the move he had been postponing. He was probably right to avoid 15...g4, as after 16.♙d2 ♙f6 White can play 17.♙e2 to take advantage of the outpost on f4.

15...a6?

It would have been interesting to see how Karpov would have responded to this move. Here is a plausible line:

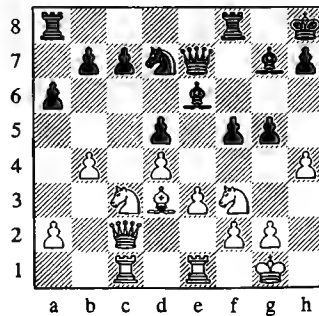
16.♞c2!?

White could consider improving the c3-knight at once by means of 16.♙a4 or 16.♙e2, but it looks logical to avoid revealing his intentions for a bit longer.

16...♞e7 17.h4!?

This interesting pawn sacrifice enables White to fight for the initiative. Black has been quick to seize space on the kingside, but his pieces are not ideally placed to back up the pawns.

17.♙e2 c6 18.♙g3 is a more sedate alternative.



17...g4

17...g4 18.♙g5 is good for White.

17...h6 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.g3! White will take over the initiative on the kingside after ♗g2 and ♞h1.

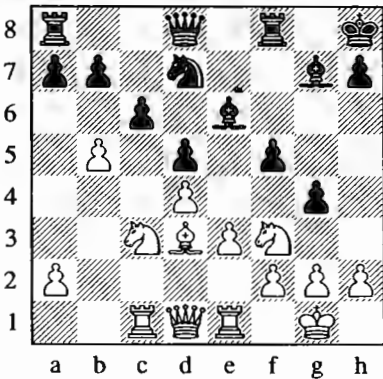
18.♙e2 c6 19.♙f4

White has lovely positional compensation for the pawn.

16.b5

Karpov wastes no time in chipping away at Black's pawn structure.

16...g4



17. d2

Karpov decides not to insert the exchange on c6, preferring to play the IQP position with the b-pawns on the board.

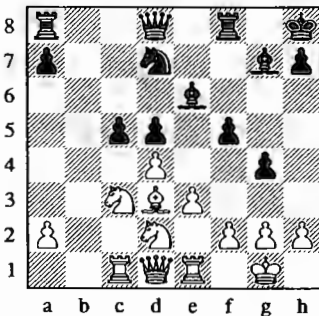
17. bxc6

Objectively this is probably no better or worse than the game continuation.

17... bxc6

17... gxf3?! does not equalize: 18. cxd7 fxe2 19. ♖f3! The g2-pawn shields the king, so White should not be in a hurry to take it. Instead he stabilizes his position on the kingside first. 19... ♗xd7 20. ♖e2 ♗h6 21. ♖f4 White has a nice positional advantage thanks to his strong knight and Black's passive light-squared bishop.

18. ♖d2 c5



19. ♗b5

19. dxc5 ♖xc5 20. ♖b3 ♖xb3 21. axb3 ♗e5

22. ♖e2 ♗b6 Black has good chances to eliminate the b3-pawn, after which it will be tough for White to prove anything.

19... ♗c8

19... ♗g8 20. dxc5 ♖xc5 21. ♖b3 ♗c8 is also reasonable.

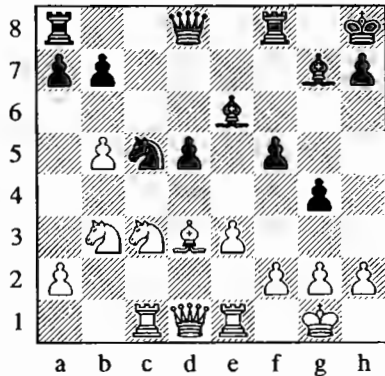
20. ♗xd7

20. ♗a4 is met by 20... ♗c7.

20... ♗xd7 21. ♖b3 c4 22. ♖c5 ♗c6

In this somewhat unusual position Black should not be worse.

17... c5 18. dxc5 ♖xc5 19. ♖b3



19... ♖xb3

It is interesting that Korchnoi decided to exchange minor pieces, which goes against the conventional wisdom when one has an isolated pawn. He did something similar in Baguio when playing the black side of a French Tarrasch.

If 19... ♗c8 20. ♖xc5 ♗xc5 21. ♖e2 White does not have a huge advantage, but his position is easy to play and his knight has a couple of attractive squares available.

19... ♖e4!

This looks like the most natural move. By avoiding the knight exchange, Black makes his weaknesses harder to attack. (Obviously

White could exchange the knight on e4, but that would improve Black's pawn structure considerably.)

20. ♖d4 ♔d6 21. ♗b3 ♕xd4

There is also 21... ♕g8 22. ♖ce2 ♕e5 when Black has a decent grip on the centre.

22. exd4 ♔ac8

Black's pieces have achieved a reasonable level of harmony.

23. ♖e2

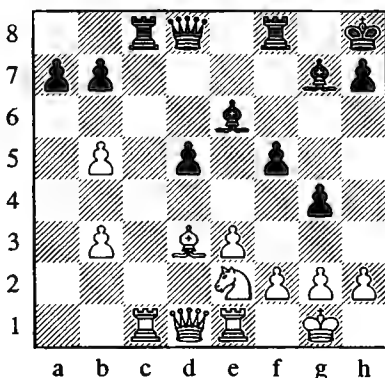
23.g3? loses material after 23... ♖d2.

After 23. ♔c2 ♖g7 24. ♔ec1 b6 Black's position is solid enough.

23... ♔xc1 24. ♔xc1 f4

Black has counterplay.

20. axb3 ♔c8 21. ♖e2



21... ♔xc1

Black can also try: 21... ♔d6 22. ♗d2 ♕e5 23.g3 ♖g7 (23... ♔xc1 24. ♔xc1 ♔c8 25. ♔xc8† ♕xc8 With no rooks the f5 pawn is more vulnerable, while the passivity of Black's light-squared bishop is also harder to live with. 26. ♖d4 ♕xd4 27. exd4 Black has chances to hold, but it will not be much fun for him.) 24. ♖f4 ♕xf4 25. exf4 ♔xc1 26. ♔xc1 White keeps the upper hand.

22. ♗xc1 ♗b6

With this natural move Korchnoi prepares to advance and exchange his isolani.

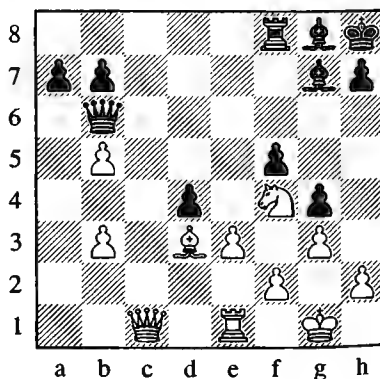
22... ♗a5!? This interesting move aims to disrupt White's coordination. 23. ♔d1! (After 23. ♔f1 ♗b6 Black has a better version of the game, as after ...d4 the white rook will be passively placed. Another possibility is 23. ♖f4 ♕g8 24. ♔e2 ♔c8 25. ♗b1 ♗b4 26. ♕xf5 ♔c3 when Black has counterchances.) 23... ♗b4 24. ♗c2 ♕e5 25.g3 and Black should be all right, although he still has to be careful.

23. ♖f4 ♕g8 24.g3 d4!?

Korchnoi decides to take action before Karpov can start attacking his vulnerable pawns.

24...a6 is a bit slow, and after 25. ♖h5 ♕e5 26. ♗a3 ♔f7 27. bxa6 bxa6 28. ♔c1 Black is in danger.

If 24... ♗d6 25. ♗c2 ♗d7 26. ♔d1 White begins to target the d5-pawn, and Black faces a long squeeze.



25. ♕c4!

After the light-squared bishops are exchanged, Black's king will become noticeably more vulnerable.

Undermining the g4-pawn with 25.e4!? was also attractive: 25... ♔xe4 26. ♔xe4 ♕xb3 (26... ♗d6 27. ♗d1; 26... ♗a5 27. ♗d1 ♗c3 28. ♖e6 ♕xc6

29.♖xe6 White has excellent winning chances in this opposite-coloured bishop position. In Game 75 we will see Karpov beating Kasparov from a not dissimilar situation.) 27.♞e7 ♖g8 28.♞d1! ♖f6 29.♞d7 ♞d8 30.♞xg4 Black's problems persist.

25...♞c8

It is worth considering a couple of alternatives.

25...dxe3 26.♞xe3!

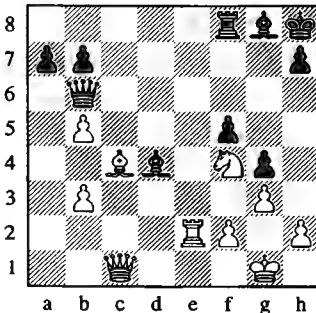
Karpov correctly gave this move in his *Chess Informant* analysis. White should keep the queens on the board as Black's king is vulnerable.

26.♞xe3 sets some problems as well, but Black should be able to hold the ending: 26...♞xc3 27.♞xe3 ♖h6 (27...♖f6!? Passive defence also gives Black good drawing chances.) 28.♞e7 ♖xf4 29.gxf4 ♖xc4 30.bxc4 ♞c8 31.♞xb7 ♞xc4 32.♞xa7 ♞b4! Black escapes to a drawn rook ending.

26...♖d4

After 26...♞c5 27.♞d2 ♖xc4 28.bxc4 ♞xc4 29.♖e6 ♞c8 30.♞d7 Black is caught.

27.♞e2



Karpov ends his analysis here, saying that White will continue with ♞e1 with a big advantage. He is correct, but it is worth taking the analysis a bit further:

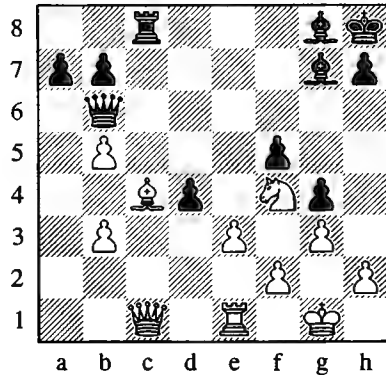
27...♞c5

After 27...♞c8 28.♞e1 a6 29.bxa6 bxa6 30.♖e6 ♖f6 31.♞d2 Black faces huge problems.

28.♞e1 ♖xc4 29.bxc4 ♞xc4 30.♞e7

The rook is tremendously powerful on the seventh rank, and it is doubtful that Black will survive.

Black's best option was probably 25...a6!?, as in certain endings it can be useful to have exchanged a pair of queenside pawns. Nevertheless after 26.bxa6 bxa6 27.♖xg8 ♞xg8 28.exd4 ♞xd4 (28...♖xd4 29.♞c2) 29.♞b1 ♞c3 30.♞e7 ♞a1 31.♞xa1 ♖xa1 32.♞a7 White bags a pawn, and has good winning chances.



26.♞b1!

Karpov escapes the pin and targets the vulnerable f5-pawn.

26...dxe3?!

Korchnoi opens the position voluntarily, which only helps his opponent. He should have tried:

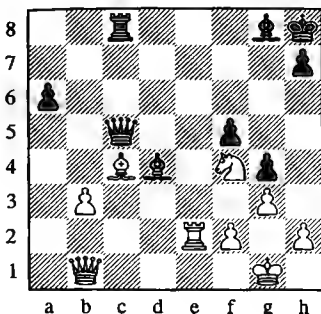
26...♞c5 27.exd4

27.e4! may be even stronger.

27...♖xd4 28.♞e2 a6 29.bxa6

29.♖e6 ♖xe6 30.♖xe6 ♞xb5 is not so convincing.

29...bxa6



30. ♖e1!

If 30. ♘e6 ♙xe6 31. ♙xe6 ♜f8 Black is still alive.

30... ♙xc4 31. bxc4 ♜xc4 32. ♜e8† ♜xe8 33. ♙xe8† ♜g8

33... ♔g7? 34. ♘e6† ♔f6 35. ♜h8† wins.

34. ♗d7 ♙e5 35. ♘d3!

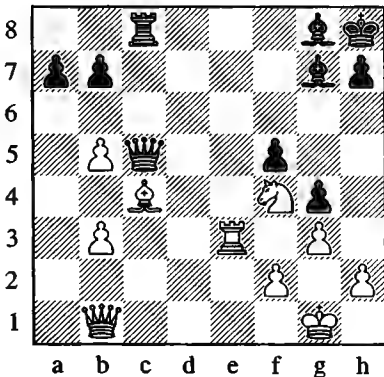
After 35. ♜xf5 ♙xf4 36. ♜f6† ♜g7 37. ♜xf4 h5 Black is likely to hold.

35... ♙g7 36. ♜xf5

Despite having the theoretically superior minor piece, Black faces a tough defence due to his vulnerable king.

27. ♜xe3 ♜c5

After 27... ♜f6 28. ♙xg8 ♙xg8 29. ♜c2! White avoids the queen exchange and his knight will soon dominate the game from e6.



28. ♜e1!

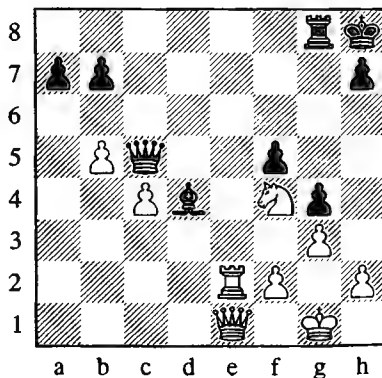
This is a tremendously strong move; it may not seem dazzling, but it ensures that White will be able to invade on the e-file.

28... ♙d4 29. ♜e2

Now White is ready to follow with ♙xg8 and ♘e6.

29... ♙xc4 30. bxc4 ♜g8

Taking the c-pawn results in a losing endgame: 30... ♙xc4 31. ♜e8† ♜xe8 32. ♙xe8† ♜g8 33. ♗d7 ♙e5 34. ♘d3 ♙g7 35. ♙xb7 h6 (35... ♗d8 36. ♙xa7+–) 36. ♗d7! White does not take the hanging pawn, but instead goes after the king and wins. (36. ♙xa7? would ruin everything, as after 36... ♗d5! Black's powerful queen saves him.)



31. ♜c1

Karpov plays pragmatically. He wants to attack the f5-pawn, but does so in a way that also defends his c-pawn.

31... ♜c8 32. ♜c2 ♙g7 33. ♜d3!

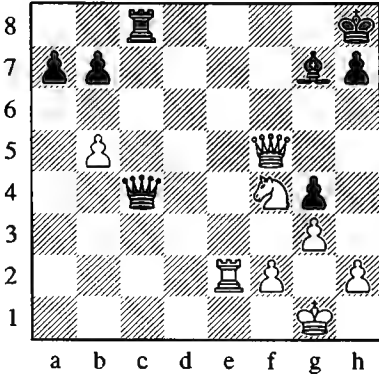
Now the queen aims for the seventh rank.

33... ♗d4

Korchnoi prevents the immediate queen invasion, but it costs him the f5-pawn. Other moves were losing as well, for instance 33... a5 34. ♗d7 ♙f8 (34... b6 35. ♘e6)

35. ♖xb7 a4 36. ♘e6 ♗xc4 37. ♘xf8 ♜xf8
38. ♜e7 and White wins.

34. ♖xf5 ♗xc4



35. ♜e7

The rook on the seventh rank is simply a killer.

35... ♜d8 36. ♔g2 ♗b3 37. ♖xg4 ♜g8

This allows a cute finish, but 37... ♗g8 was also hopeless due to 38. ♜xg7 ♖xg7 39. ♖xg7† ♗xg7 40. ♘e6† winning a piece.

38. ♘g6!

1–0

This was a subtle game; it is hard to pinpoint exactly where Black's position went from worse to losing. Karpov maintained the pressure with great skill, and showed good judgement in opening the position despite the fact that Korchnoi had the two bishops.

In round nine Karpov drew with Seirawan. His next opponent was Jonathan Mestel. The English grandmaster played twelve games against world champions. He drew four and lost the other eight. Karpov had beaten him once before, and this was the last time they played.

Game 72

Anatoly Karpov – Jonathan Mestel

London 1984

1. e4 e6

According to the database this was the first time Mestel ever played the French. In their previous meeting Karpov won a good positional game against Mestel's favourite Dragon, so the Englishman tries something different.

2. d4 d5 3. ♘d2

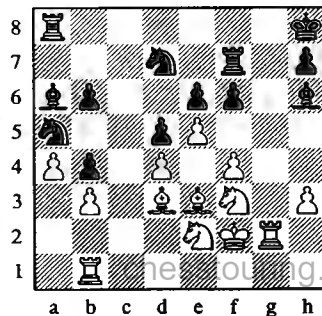
During the eighties Karpov played 3. ♘c3 more often, but since he has no idea which variation his opponent is likely to play, he returns to the line he knows best.

3... ♘f6

As has been mentioned previously, Karpov incredibly won all seven of his games against this move.

4. e5 ♘fd7 5. c3 c5 6. ♘d3

In the next and last occasion when Karpov reached this position, he switched to 6. f4 and won in nice style: 6... ♘c6 7. ♘df3 ♗b6 8. g3 a5 9. a4 cxd4 10. cxd4 ♘b4† 11. ♗f2 g5 12. h3 f6 Ljubojevic exerts considerable pressure on White's centre, but Karpov manages to hold it together. 13. ♘e3 0–0 14. ♜c1 ♜f7 15. ♜h2 ♘f8 16. ♗d2 ♗b4 17. ♖xb4 axb4 18. b3 ♘a5 19. ♖b1 gxf4 20. gxf4 ♘h6 21. ♘d3 b6 22. ♜g2† ♗h8 23. ♘e2 ♘a6? A mistake in a difficult position.



24.♙xa6 ♖xa6 25.f5! White went on to win convincingly, Karpov – Ljubojevic, Brussels 1986.

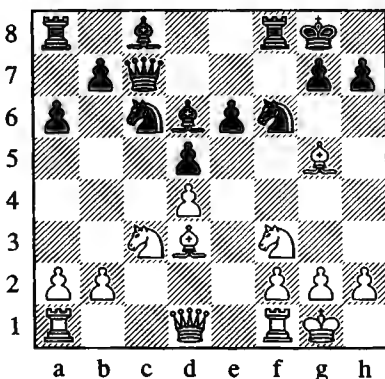
6...♖c6

Karpov once faced the sideline 6...b6 towards the end of his junior years. 7.♞e2 a5 8.♙b5 ♙a6 9.a4 ♞c8 10.f4 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖c6 12.♖g3 ♙xb5 13.axb5 It is interesting that he accepted the same kind of doubled pawns as Ljubojevic. One might joke that Karpov wins from whichever side of the board he chooses. As with many jokes, it contains more than a grain of truth. 13...♖b4 14.0–0 ♙e7 15.♞f2 ♞a7 16.♖f1 0–0 17.♙d2 ♞c7 18.♙xb4 ♙xb4 19.f5 f6? 20.fxe6 ♖b8 21.♖e3 White obtained a dominating position and went on to win, Karpov – Shestakov, Kuibyshev 1970.

7.♖e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 ♖xf6 10.0–0 ♙d6 11.♖f3 ♞c7

Both players are happy to follow the main line. It is slightly surprising that Mestel opted for a defensive set-up which involved a bad light-squared bishop, a backward e-pawn and a potential outpost for White on e5. Although Black's position is objectively sound, Karpov was a master at exploiting those kinds of positional factors.

12.♖c3 a6 13.♙g5 0–0



14.♙h4

Exchanging the dark-squared bishops was a favourite plan of Karpov – he had won two previous games from the same position.

14...♖h5

Mestel plays the most common move in the position. Karpov's previous victims opted for different paths:

14...♙d7 15.♞e1 ♞ae8 16.♞c1 ♞b8 17.♙b1 ♖h8 (Black scores better with 17...♞e7) 18.a3 Karpov postpones the bishop exchange in order to make another slight improvement. 18...♙f4 19.♞c2 ♖g4 20.h3 ♖h6 21.♙g5 Karpov exchanges in order to occupy the e5-square. He follows through his plan with remarkable purposefulness. 21...♖f5 22.♙xf4 ♞xf4 23.♖e2 ♞d6 24.♞d2 ♞f6 25.♖c3 ♞ef8 26.♖e5 ♙e8 27.♖xc6 ♙xc6 28.♞e2 ♞f4 29.♙f5 Now Karpov has a classic good knight versus a bad bishop. 29...♞xf5 30.♞e3 ♞h4 31.♞g3 ♞f6 32.♖d1 ♞f4 33.♞e5 h6 34.♖e3 ♙d7 35.♖g4 ♞d8 36.♞e3 ♞a5 37.♞c3 ♙e8 38.♖e5 White achieved his desired positional domination and went on to convert his advantage, Karpov – Ostos, Malta (ol) 1980.

When Karpov encountered this line for the second time his opponent offered less resistance: 14...♙f4 15.♞e1 ♖h8 16.♙g3 ♖h5 17.♖e2 ♖xg3 18.♖xf4 ♖e4 19.g3 ♞xf4 The exchange sacrifice does not work because Black's queenside is underdeveloped. 20.gxf4 ♞xf4 21.♙xe4 dxe4 22.♖e5 Black did not last much longer, Karpov – Chen De, Hannover 1983.

15.♞e1 g6 16.♞c1 ♞g7 17.♙f1!

With a pawn on g6 there is no point in leaving the bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, so Karpov prepares a new home for it.

17...♙d7

In view of what follows, it was worth considering 17...h6!? in order to prevent White's plan.

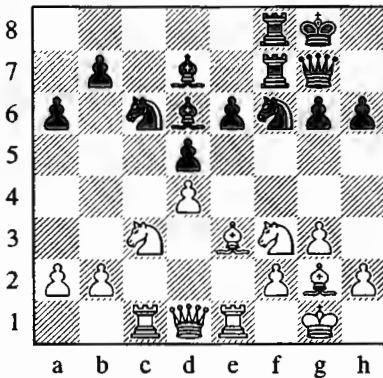
18. ♖g5!

Karpov's mind is flexible enough for him to re-route his other bishop to the c1-h6 diagonal. Now he can safely play g3 as the bishop will not get trapped.

18...h6

After 18...♖f5!? 19.g3 ♖af8 the pressure on the f-file restricts White's pieces to some extent. Nevertheless after 20.♖g2 ♗f7 21.♖h6 ♖g7 22.♖e3 ♖h5 23.♖xg7 ♗xg7 White keeps a small edge, and may turn his attention to the queenside with 24.♖a4 next.

19. ♖e3 ♖f7 20.g3 ♖af8 21. ♖g2 ♖f6



22.h3!

Thanks to some clever prophylactic moves, Karpov has taken most of the good squares away from Mestel's pieces.

22...g5

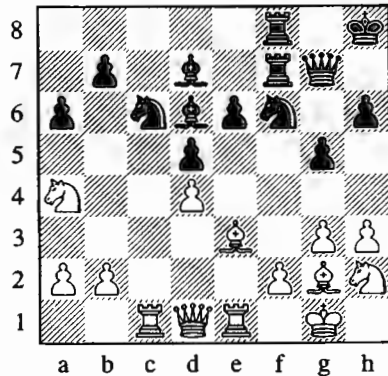
Black's pieces cannot be improved, so Mestel advances a pawn. If Black just waits with a move like 22...♗h7 then White can slowly advance, one possible plan being 23.a3 followed by b4, ♗d3 and b5.

23. ♖h2 ♗h8?!

This is a waste of a tempo. There was no reason to delay the plan which he carries out in the game: 23...♖e8 24.♖a4 ♖e7 25.♖c5 ♖xc5 26.♖xc5 ♖g6 Black's disadvantage is not too severe.

24. ♖a4!?

Karpov has stabilized the kingside, so now he turns his attention to the queenside. The text move relies on a tactical justification.



24...♖e7

Mestel decides to try to improve the "French bishop". There were two critical alternatives:

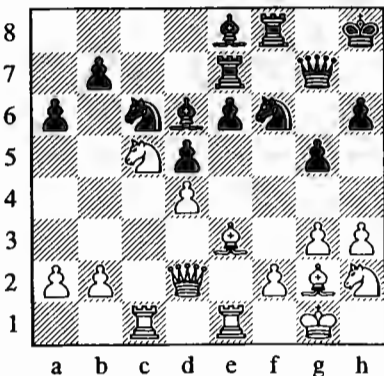
24...♖b4!? 25.♖c5 ♖xc5 (If 25...♖xa2 26.♖a1 ♖b4 27.♖xb7 White regains the pawn with advantage.) 26.dxc5 (Also after 26.♖xc5 ♖e4 27.♖xe4 dxe4 28.♖g4 ♖d3 29.♖e5 ♖xe1 30.♖xf7+ ♗xf7 31.♗xe1 White has a slight plus.) 26...♗h7 (26...♖xa2 27.♖a1 ♖b4 28.♗b3 White wins back the pawn and keeps the advantage.) 27.♖d4 ♖d3 28.♖g4 ♖xe1 29.♗xe1 White wins back the exchange, and in the resulting position his better pawn structure offers him a slight edge.

The best option may well have been: 24...♖e4!? 25.♖xe4 (After 25.♖e2 ♖e7 or 25.♖g4 h5 the

position is complicated.) 25...dxe4 26.♖c3 ♖g6 27.♗c2 ♗h5 28.♙xe4 ♘b4 29.♗e2 ♗xh3 30.♗ed1 If White has any advantage, it is very small.

25.♙c5 ♗e8 26.♗d2

26.♙g4 also offers White a slight plus.



26...♙d7

Mestel decides to get rid of the strong knight by exchanging it.

26...b6?

This pawn sacrifice is playable, albeit somewhat risky.

27.♙xa6!

I would guess that Karpov would have snatched this pawn. His strategic play was always backed up by precise calculation, and he was not afraid of entering complications when the situation at the board demanded it. Retreating the knight would be less ambitious:

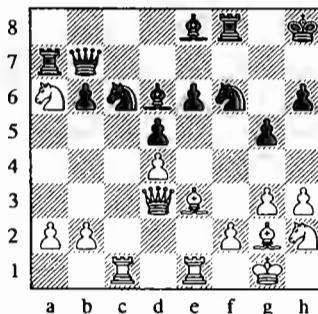
27.♙d3 ♙e4 28.♗e2 ♙xd4 29.♙xd4 ♗xd4 30.♙xe4 dxe4 31.♗xe4 ♗xe4 32.♗xc4 e5 33.♙g4 Black's active pieces give him an equal game.

27.♙a4!? ♙b4 28.♙c3 (28.♙xb6 ♙xa2 29.♗c5 ♗b7 is highly unclear) 28...♙g6 29.h4 (29.♙f1 ♗h7 Black has a good grip on the position) 29...♙d3 30.hxg5

31.♙xg5 White certainly has compensation for the exchange, but it is hard to tell how dangerous it really is.

27...♗a7 28.♗d3 ♗b7!?

If 28...♙d7 29.a3 ♗fa8 30.♙b4 ♙xb4 31.axb4 ♙xb4 32.♙d2 Black has regained his pawn, but the minor piece exchanges have served White's interests.



29.b4!

It is a nice way to rescue the knight.

29...♗h7

If 29...♗xa6?! 30.b5 ♗xa2 31.bxc6 ♙xc6 32.♗g6 White's attack is very dangerous. Another idea is 29...♙g7!? 30.b5 ♙b4 31.♙xb4 ♙xb4 32.♗e2 ♗a3 33.♗b1 when White keeps his extra pawn, but Black has some compensation.

30.♗xh7 ♙xh7 31.b5 ♙b4 32.♙xb4

32.♙f1!? is also possible.

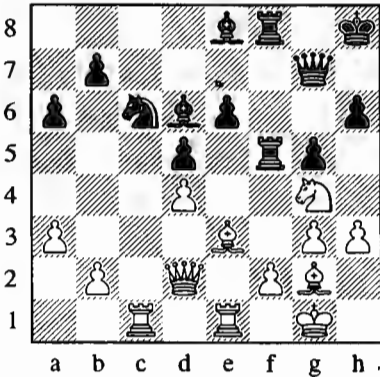
32...♙xb4 33.♗e2

Black may be able to live with the pawn deficit, but it would be tough to defend the position against a technical wizard like Karpov.

27.♙xd7

The disappearance of a pair of minor pieces means that White is a step closer to conquering the e5-square.

27...♗xd7 28.a3 ♗df7 29.♙g4 ♗f5

**30.b4!**

Karpov continued to make small improvements on both sides of the board.

30...♔b8?!

The English grandmaster probably overlooked Karpov's next move. A couple of other ideas deserved attention.

30...♙g6 31.♙f1!?

If 31.♖e5 ♘xe5 32.dxe5 ♙xe5 33.♙c5 ♜c8 White has some compensation, but Black should be all right.

After the text move the critical line is:

31...h5 32.♖e5! h4

If 32...♖xe5 33.dxe5 ♙xe5 34.♙c5 ♜e8 35.♜xe5 White wins.

And after 32...♙xe5 33.dxe5 ♖xe5 34.♙e2 the combination of White's bishop pair and Black's airy kingside gives the first player promising compensation for the pawn.

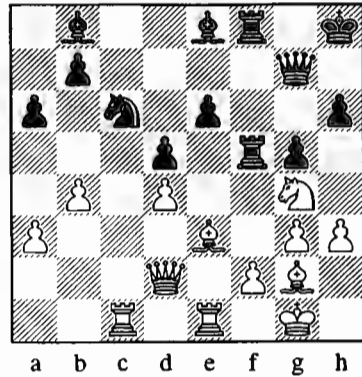
33.♖xg6†

33.g4 ♜xe5 34.dxe5 ♜xe5 35.f4 gxf4 36.♙f2 ♜f6 37.♙xa6 ♖e5 The position is double-edged.

33...♜xg6 34.g4 ♜f3 35.♙g2

White maintains a small edge.

It was worth considering stepping aside from the diagonal with 30...♙g8!?, and if 31.♙f1 then 31...h5 can be played.

**31.♖e5!**

Karpov exploits some tactical motifs to occupy the main outpost in the enemy position.

31...♖xe5!

Mestel was probably relieved to open the path for his light-squared bishop, and underestimated the strength of the pawn on e5. The most resilient defence was:

31...♙a7!

Black wishes to tie his opponent to the defence of the d4-pawn. It also sets up a nasty threat of ...♜xe5! followed by ...d4 winning material.

32.♖xc6

32.♖d3 ♙xd4 is a safe pawn grab. If 32.f4 gxf4 33.gxf4 ♜g3 Black has active play.

32...♙xc6 33.♜c3

33.♙f1 e5! liberates Black's position.

33...♙b5 34.♙f1

Or 34.♜ec1 ♙c4.

34...♙xf1 35.♜xf1 ♜5f7

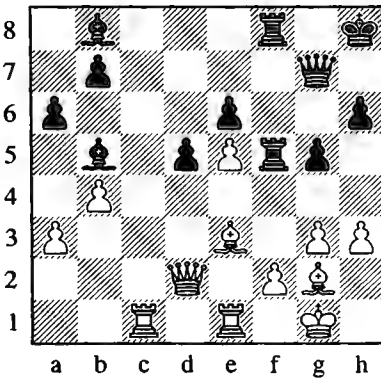
White is a fraction better, but to squeeze a win from his position would have been a great challenge, even for such a positional wizard as the twelfth World Champion.

32.dxe5 ♙b5

If 32...♙xe5?! 33.♙c5 ♜8f7? 34.♜xe5! White wins.

In the event of 32...♗g6 the black queenside would have been short of defenders, and after 33.♙d4 ♗g8 (33...h5? 34.♙xd5!) 34.a4 h5 35.b5 White has the initiative.

32...♗g8 With this move Black decides to wait and see where to put his bishop, but his problems persist here as well: 33.♙c5 ♖8f7 34.g4 ♖f4 (34...♖xe5 35.♙d4) 35.♙e3 Black has to sacrifice an exchange with 35...♙c6 as if 35...♙xe5 36.♙xd5! is strong.



33.♙c5!

The bishop is heading for d4, but Karpov takes the opportunity to win a tempo first.

33...♖8f7 34.♙d4 ♖f8 35.♙c3

Karpov intends to improve his light-squared bishop.

There was a decent alternative in the form of 35.♙xd5!? ♗d7 36.♙e4 ♖xf2 37.♗xf2 (37.♗c3 ♖a2) 37...♖xf2 38.♙xf2 ♗g7 White's two rooks should be somewhat better than Black's queen, but this did not satisfy the champion.

35...♗g8

Mestel sensibly removes his king from the enemy bishop's line of fire. Now the ♙xd5 trick is unlikely to happen.

36.♗d1 ♗f7

36...♙xe5?? 37.♖xe5 ♖xe5 38.♙e3 ♖ff5 39.♗a1 wins.

36...♙c4

This allows White to transfer his bishop to the b1–h7 diagonal.

37.♙e4!

37.♙f3 Improving the bishop in this way allows Black to take the e5-pawn: 37...♙xe5 38.♖xe5 ♖xe5 39.♙g4 (39.♙e3 ♖xe3) 39...♗c7 Black is in the game.

37...dxe4

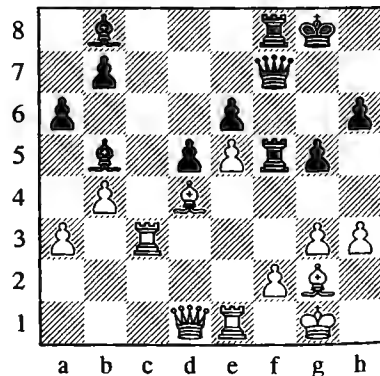
37...♖xe5?! is too risky: 38.♙e3 b5 39.♙c2! It is important to keep the first rank open. 39...♙d6 40.♗a1 Black is in trouble. If 37...♖5f7 38.♙b1 ♖c7 39.♗g4 ♖c6 40.a4 Black's position is loose.

38.♖xc4 ♙xe5 39.♙c5

Another idea is 39.♙xe5 ♖xe5 40.♖xc4 ♖xe4 41.♖xe4 ♗f6 42.♗e2.

39...♗c7 40.♗h5

White will soon take both of Black's e-pawns.



37.♗c2 ♙c4

Black's task is not easy. His pieces do not stand badly, but it is hard to improve any of them without leaving a weakness somewhere. His main problem is his slightly weakened kingside.

37...♖g7

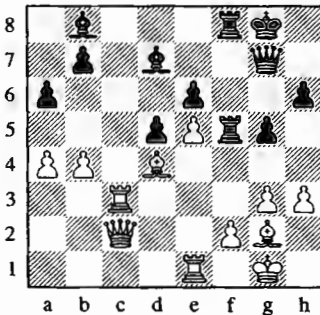
Black can try to direct his forces against the e5-pawn. It ties White up, yet he still has enough available strength to improve his position. I have no doubt that Karpov would have found the right way to do it.

38.a4!

In the event of 38.♖c8!?, trying to exchange in order to invade, Black can keep his position together with 38...♗d7!. (Instead 38...♗c4 allows the promising sacrifice 39.♞xc4! dxc4 40.♞xc4 when Black faces an unpleasant defence, although he should still be able to survive.)

38...♗d7

After 38...♗c4 39.♗e4! ♞5f7 40.♗c5 (40.♞xc4!?) 40...♞c8 41.♗g6 Black is pushed back.



39.♗f1!

White returns the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal, where it will be at its most effective.

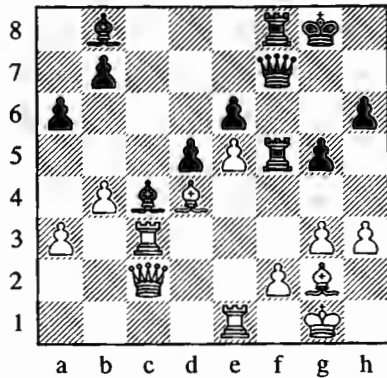
39.♞d1 ♞f7 is okay for Black.

39...g4

39...♗xe5?? 40.♞xe5 wins.

40.h4 h5

Now White can choose between 41.b5 and 41.♗d3. In both cases he has improved his position considerably. Note that Black is still unable to take the e-pawn, as after 41...♗xe5? 42.♞xe5 ♞xe5 43.♗g2 the pin is unbearable.



38.♗f3?

Karpov sacrifices the bishop for several passed pawns.

Interestingly, there was also a second strong bishop move: 38.♗e4! dxe4 39.♞xc4 ♗xe5 40.♗c5 (Stronger than 40.♗xe5 ♞xe5 41.♞c7 [41.♞xc4 ♞f5] 41...♞f5 42.g4 ♞f4 43.♞xb7 ♞d5 when Black is worse but he is still alive.) 40...e3 41.♗xe3 ♗d6 And White is clearly better. Karpov's move is even more ambitious, although we will see that it may give Black a narrow path to survival.

38...♞xf3

If 38...h5 39.♗e4! White obtains an improved version of the previous note, as Black's kingside will be weaker.

39.♞xf3 ♞xf3 40.♞g6† ♗h8 41.♞xh6† ♗g8 42.♞g6† ♗h8 43.♞xe6 ♗h7!

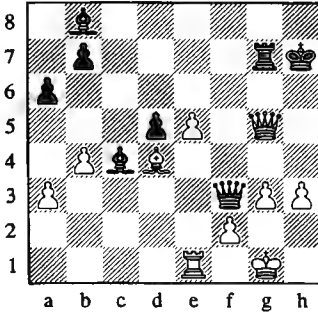
Black has no time for anything else. If White was able to move his queen and unleash his bishop with e6†, the game would be over.

44.♞e7†

White will soon pick up the g5-pawn to restore approximate material parity. Black faces a difficult defensive task; not only is his king vulnerable, but many endgames will also be losing thanks to White's four connected passed pawns.

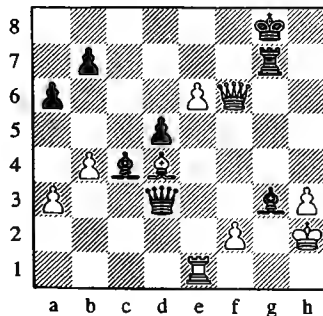
44...♖f7!

44...♖f7! was a stronger defence, although in order to play it Black would have had to find some tricky tactics in advance. 45.♗xg5 ♖g7



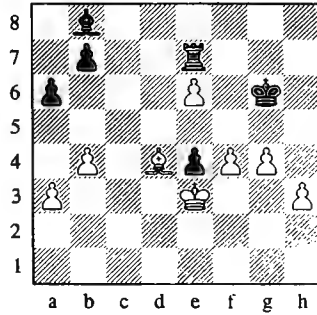
In this position White must decide how best to utilize his advantage.

a) 46.♗h4† ♔g8 47.♕h2 Black seems to be facing a deadly attack, but his resources are far from exhausted: 47...♗c7! 48.♗f6 (White can change tack and play for an ending with 48.♗h6!); Alternatively 48.e6 looks dangerous, but Black can save himself by means of 48...♗f1! 49.♖xf1 ♗xg3† 50.fxg3 ♗xf1 followed by a perpetual.) 48...♗d3! This leads to a spectacular drawing sequence: 49.e6 ♗xg3†!

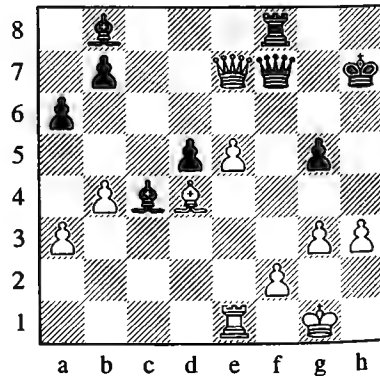


50.♕h1! ♗e5!! After this brilliant move White has no choice but to take a perpetual with 51.♗d8† ♕h7 52.♗h4†.

b) 46.♗e3 White heads for an endgame, relying on his armada of pawns. 46...♖f7 (46...♗xe3 47.♖xe3 only helps White) 47.e6 (47.♗xf3 ♖xf3 48.e6 ♖f8 49.♔g2 ♗d3!) 47...♗xe3 48.♖xe3 ♖e7 49.f4 ♔g6 50.♕f2 ♗a2! The transfer of this bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal is a key resource for Black. 51.♕f3 ♗b1! 52.g4 ♗e4† Now White will have to make another sacrifice: 53.♖xe4! dxe4† 54.♕e3



White's pawns appear devastating, but Black can sacrifice his bishop for two of them: 54...♗xf4†! 55.♕xf4 ♖xe6 Black can probably hold this ending.



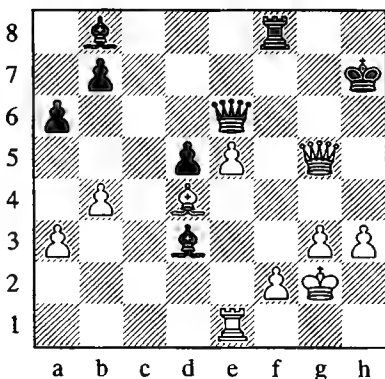
45.♗xg5 ♗e6 46.♔g2

This kind of small improving move was typical for Karpov, but on this occasion he could have won more convincingly using the direct approach: 46.g4! ♗h6 (46...♗d3 47.f4

♖h6 [or 47...♗e4 48.f5] 48.♞xh6† ♘xh6 49.f5 White's pawns are killers.) 47.♞xh6† ♘xh6 48.♔g2 ♗d3 49.♔g3 ♖c8 50.♗c5 White's passed pawns will soon start rolling like an avalanche.

46...♗d3!

Mestel reroutes his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal, where it will help to restrain the kingside pawns.



47.f3!

Karpov takes away the e4-square from the bishop and slowly starts pushing his kingside pawns.

47...♗g6

If 47...♖c8 48.♖c1 ♖c4 49.♞e3 White is ready to push the g-pawn.

48.g4! ♗c7 49.♞h4†!

It was better to bring the queen to the centre at once with 49.♞e3!

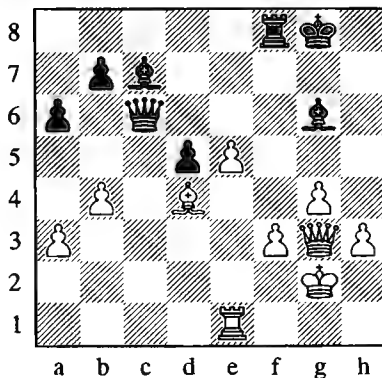
49...♔g8 50.♞g3?!

Once again the queen should have been centralized with 50.♞f2.

50...♞c6

Maybe Black would have done better to open a queenside file: 50...a5!? 51.h4

axb4 52.axb4 ♗d3 (52...♖a8 53.♖a1) 53.f4 (53.h5!?) 53...♗e4† 54.♔h3 ♞h6 55.♖f1 ♖a8 56.h5 White continues to press, but the win is still some way off.



51.♞f2 ♗e4 52.♖c3 ♞e6?

This is too passive. A better chance would have been:

52...♞h6!

The combined power of Black's queen, rook and bishops will make it hard for White to advance his kingside pawns. Even if there is some way to it, it will require considerable skill and a lot of preparation.

53.♞e2

White does not achieve much with 53.♖c3 ♗b8 54.♞e2 ♗b1.

53...♗h7 54.♖c3 ♗b8

After 54...♞f4?! 55.♞e3 ♞xe3 56.♖xe3 ♔f7 57.♔g3 ♔e6 58.f4 the pawns start to move.

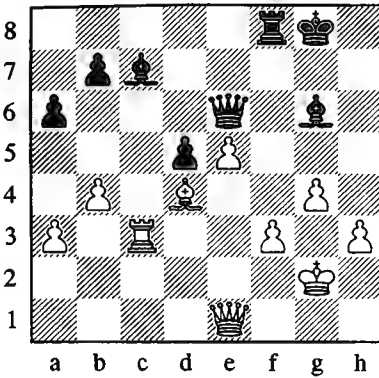
55.♞e3 ♞xe3 56.♖xe3 ♖c8 57.♖c3

57.♗c5 ♖c6 58.♔g3 b6! This pawn sacrifice creates counterplay. 59.♗d4 ♖c4 60.♗xb6 d4 Black is kicking as well.

57...♖xc3 58.♗xc3 ♗a7 59.♗d2 ♔f7 60.f4 ♗e4† 61.♔g3 ♔e6 62.h4 d4

White is of course better with his four connected passed pawns, nevertheless it is not at all clear if he can win this endgame.

53.♞e1 ♗g6 54.♖c3



54...♙f4??

Close to the time control, Mestel commits a fatal error.

54...♙b8 was one improvement, although after 55.♙e3 ♖h7 56.♙g5 White probably still has enough to win.

54...♙d8!

This would have been much more resilient. The bishop helps to fight against the kingside pawns, and it is not clear if White can achieve anything substantial.

55.♙c1

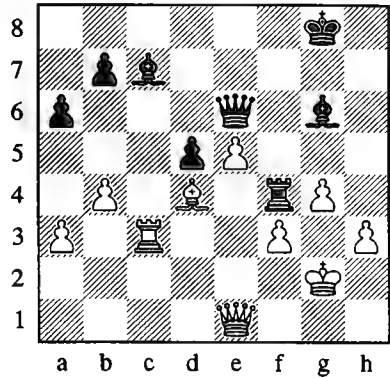
The queen helps the rook to get to the c8-square. If 55.h4 ♙h7 56.h5 ♙g5 Black stabilizes the kingside.

Also after 55.♙e3 ♙f7 56.♖g3 (56.♖h2 ♙h7) 56...♙g7 57.f4 ♙e4 Black is very much in the game.

55...a5!?

After 55...♖h7 56.f4 ♙g8 57.♖h2 ♙e4 White can enter an opposite-coloured bishop endgame, should he wish it: 58.f5 ♙xf5 59.♙c7† ♙xc7 60.♙xc7† ♙g7 61.♙xg7† ♖xg7 62.gxf5 ♙xf5 White has some winning chances connected with a king march to b6. 56.b5 ♖h7 57.f4 ♙e4† 58.♖h2 ♙g8 59.♙e3 ♙g6 60.♙c8

White is pressing but Black still has chances to hold.



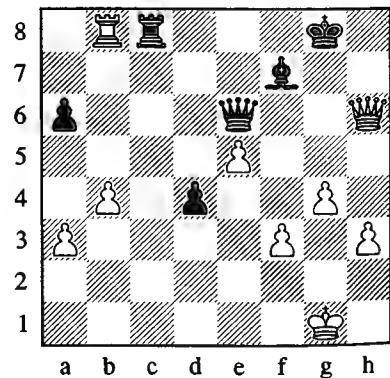
55...♙xc7

Once again, Karpov's rook will play a decisive role on the seventh rank.

55...♙xd4 56.♙e3!

The queen joins the attack, which spells big trouble for Black.

56...♙c4 57.♙xb7 d4 58.♙h6 ♙c2† 59.♖g1 ♙f7 60.♙b8† ♙c8



61.♙xc6

1-0

Black resigned, as White has too many pawns for the bishop to cope with. This win took Karpov to a remarkable score of plus six after ten rounds. His play in this tournament,

and the year 1984 in general, took on a sharper character than normal. He probably decided to change his style in order to prepare for the tense and complex situations that were certain to occur in his championship match with Kasparov.

In the next round Karpov's ambitious play with the black pieces backfired, and Torre got the better of him. In the last two rounds he toned down his aggressiveness, and coasted in with two draws to finish in first place with a score of 9/13 ahead of Polugaevsky and Chandler.

Karpov only played in one other tournament in 1984, in Oslo. He drew six of his nine games, but wins over Hort, Miles and the young Agdestein were enough to secure first place ahead of Miles and Makarychev.

Karpov took part in one other event before his world title defence: a USSR – Rest of the World contest in London. Karpov's opponent was the solid Swedish grandmaster Ulf Andersson. Their four-game match was not hugely eventful; Karpov managed to grind out an endgame win in the first game, and the other three were fairly quick draws.

World Championship match versus Kasparov

It goes without saying that this match was the chess highlight of the year. Any world championship match generates great interest amongst chess players and fans around the world. The present match, featuring two outstanding players with contrasting styles and personalities, was one of the most hotly anticipated clashes in chess history. The only way it could have been more exciting is if one of the players had been American!

Kasparov seemed destined for greatness from an early age. When he was just eleven years old,

Borvinnik famously remarked that "The future of chess lies in the hands of this young man." He first won the Soviet Junior Championship in 1976 at the age of thirteen. Two years later he became the youngest player ever to qualify for the Soviet Championship, and also won the prestigious Sokolsky Memorial in Minsk. In 1979 he won his first international tournament by an astonishing three point margin ahead of Smejkal, Andersson and Petrosian. Amazingly, he only participated thanks to an error on the part of the Russian Chess Federation, as it was believed the tournament was for juniors. As it turned out, it was the young Kasparov who made his opponents look like juniors.

In 1980 Kasparov won the World Junior Championship, and in both 1981 and 1982 he tied for first at the Soviet Championship. His first victory at an elite tournament came in 1982 at Bugojno, where he finished a point and a half clear of the field.

Kasparov's journey to the championship final was just as impressive as his previous achievements. After a relatively slow start he won the Moscow Interzonal tournament by one and a half points. In the candidates quarter-final match he defeated Beliavsky by four wins to one, with four draws. He won the 1983 Niksic super-tournament by two points, then defeated Korchnoi in the candidates semi-final by four wins to one, with six draws. In the final Garry faced the sixty three year old Smyslov, and won by an equally impressive margin with four wins, nine draws and no defeats. By the start of the championship match, Kasparov had even overtaken Karpov on the rating list by a few points.

Karpov and Kasparov had played each other three times before the match. All three games were drawn, although in two of them Karpov was in trouble but managed to save himself in the middlegame. Since 1981 they had avoided playing each other; it was as though they

already sensed the bitter rivalry that would ensue.

The match took place in Moscow. Karpov's official seconds were Igor Zaitsev and Yuri Balashov, although Geller, Polugaevsky, Makarychev, Giorgadze, Mikhalchishin, Vaganian, Ubilava and Podgaets also helped the champion. Kasparov's main helpers were Alexander Nikitin, Alexander Shkarov and Gennady Timoschenko, and he was also assisted by Adorjan and Dorfman. This list shows how much the Soviets cared about chess; no western player could ever have dreamed of receiving so much support.

Just as in Karpov's previous two championship matches with Korchnoi, the first player to score six wins would be declared the World Champion. Due to the controversial way in which the present match ended (more on this later), it was the last time this scoring system was ever used in a major chess event.

The first game took place on 10 September 1984. Karpov was White, and the game was drawn without major incident. Game 2 was also drawn, but it was a violent affair in which Karpov missed a win. The deadlock was broken in Game 3; Kasparov played a somewhat dubious novelty and then failed to defend his inferior position. In Game 4 Kasparov got some advantage in an opposite-coloured bishop middlegame, but was unable to do anything with it. One gets the impression that Karpov was the better middlegame player at this point in time. In Game 5 Karpov was unable to achieve anything against his opponent's Scheveningen and a draw ensued.

Here is the sixth game.

Game 73

Garry Kasparov – Anatoly Karpov

Moscow (6) 1984

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♕a6!?

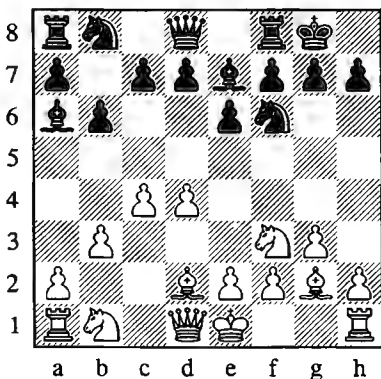
Karpov first started playing this variation of his favourite Queen's Indian in 1980. It gradually became his first choice.

In the second game of the match he played his old favourite 4...♕b7, when play continued: 5.♕g2 ♕e7 6.0–0 0–0 7.d5!?. True to his style, Kasparov opts for a dynamic pawn sacrifice. The idea was fashionable in the early eighties, but nowadays it is not considered dangerous as the best defensive methods have been worked out. 7...exd5 8.♗h4 c6 9.cxd5 ♗xd5 10.♗f5 ♗c7 11.♗c3 d5 (Karpov was not interested in finding out how Kasparov would play against 11...♗e8, which he had used against Timman at the previous year's Tilburg tournament.) 12.e4 ♕f6 13.♕f4 ♕c8!?. Kasparov did not consider this move in his home analysis. 14.g4! ♗ba6 15.♞c1 With double-edged play, Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (2) 1984. The game was eventually drawn after huge complications. Interestingly, after this game Karpov never repeated 4...♕b7 against Kasparov.

5.b3 ♕b4† 6.♕d2 ♕e7 7.♕g2 0–0

Karpov deviates from the fourth game of the match, which continued: 7...♕b7 8.♗c3 d5 9.cxd5 exd5 (Later the players repeated this line from both sides of the board; Games 14 and 15 both resulted in draws after 9...♗xd5.) 10.0–0 0–0 11.♕f4 ♗a6 12.♞c2 c5 13.♞fd1 ♞c8 14.♕e5 ♞d8 15.♞ac1 ♗e4 16.♞b2 ♞e6?! 17.♗b5 ♕f8 18.♕f4 ♞e8 19.a4 White obtained a slight plus but Black held the draw, Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (4) 1984.

Later 7...c6 became the main line and Karpov's number one choice.



8.0-0 d5 9.♘e5

In this game Kasparov decides not to play against hanging pawns.

9...c6 10.♙c3 ♘fd7

Karpov opts for the most solid approach. In Gheorghiu – Karpov, Lucerne (ol) 1982, he preferred 10...♙b7 and eventually squeezed a win out of almost nothing. I analysed the endgame in depth in my *Endgame Virtuoso* book.

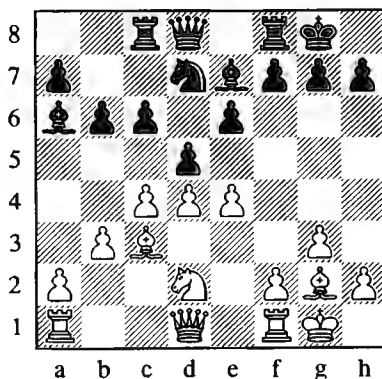
11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.♘d2 ♞c8

This was the first time Karpov had reached the present position. He repeated it several times, and occasionally played 12...♘f6 as well.

Black can also change the character of the game with 12...f5, but most of the time Karpov avoided stonewall structures.

13.e4

More ambitious than 13.♞e1 c5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.e4 cxd4 16.♙xd4 dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♘f6 18.h4 ½-½ Vyzhmanavin – Karpov, Tilburg 1993.



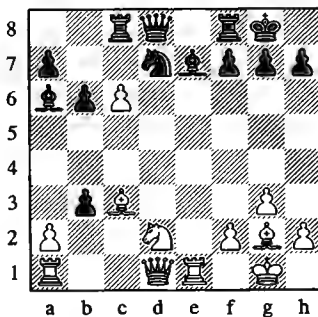
13...b5

This game was played in the early days of the variation; according to the database, the present position had only occurred three times prior to the present encounter. By undermining White's centre, Karpov shows that he is not merely looking to equalize, but is willing to take risks and fight for the win, which he rarely did with the black pieces.

13...c5

This is the other main move. Recently, in Bacrot – Karpov, Ajaccio (blitz) 2007, Black preferred 13...dxe4 but went on to lose.

14.exd5 exd5 15.dxc5 dxc4 16.c6 cxb3 17.♞e1



Karpov played this position with both colours. Black has two serious options available:

a) 17...♙b5 18.♙xb3 ♖xc6 19.♙xc6 ♖xc6
20.♖xa7

White keeps a slight initiative in the simplified position.

20...♙f6 21.♘c4 ♘c5

After 21...♙xc3 22.♖xd7 ♗f6 23.♖e4 Black was under pressure and did not manage to hold the position in Kamsky – Karpov, Elista (16) 1996.

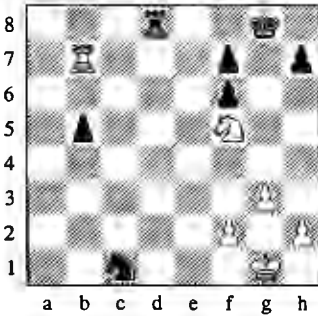
22.♗xd8 ♖xd8 23.♙xf6

Even this far into the game, Karpov could still be found on either side of the board!

23...gxh6!

Worse is 23...♖xf6 24.b4 ♘e6 25.♘xb6 ♘g5 26.♖d7 ♘f3† 27.♗f1 ♖b8 28.♖ed1 ♗f8 29.♘d5 and White successfully converted his advantage in Karpov – Beliavsky, Linares 1993.

24.♘e3 ♘xb3 25.♘f5 ♖c1 26.♖xc1 ♘xc1
27.♖b7 b5



28.♗g2!

White avoids the simplifications which would have occurred after 28.♖xb5 ♘e2† 29.♗g2 ♘d4.

28...h5 29.♖xb5 ♘d3 30.♖b6 ♘c5 31.♖xf6 ♘e4 32.♘h6† ♗g7 33.♘xf7 ♖d5!

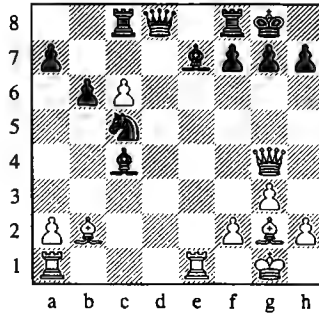
Karpov carried out an ingenious defensive strategy by trapping White's knight. He went on to draw the game Van Wely – Karpov, Cap d'Agde 1996.

b) 17...b2 18.♙xb2 ♘c5 19.♘c4

The other main moves are 19.♘b3 and 19.♙a3.

19.♗g4 is not dangerous: 19...♙f6 20.♙xf6 ♗xf6 21.♘e4?! ♗xc6 22.♘xc5 ♗xc5 23.♗a4 ♙b5 24.♗xa7?? ♖c7 The queen is trapped, and if White saves her he succumbs to a mating attack: 25.♙b7 ♖xb7! 26.♗xb7 ♙c6 0–1 Van der Sterren – Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

19...♙xc4 20.♗g4



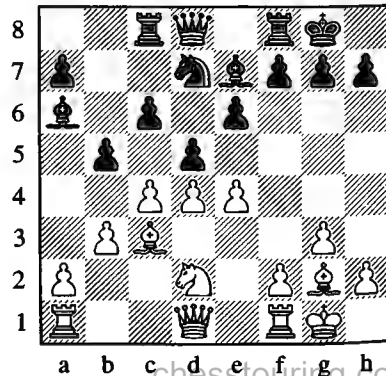
20...♙f6!:

Karpov comes up with a new idea, but the choice is an unfortunate one.

The main line is 20...♙g5 21.♗xc4 ♘d3.

21.♙xf6 ♗xf6 22.♗xc4 ♖fd8 23.♖ad1 ♖xd1
24.♖xd1

Black faced a difficult defence and eventually went down in Leko – Karpov, Miskolc (rapid) (3) 2006.



14. ♖e1

Karpov reached this position in several subsequent games, but always from the opposite side of the board.

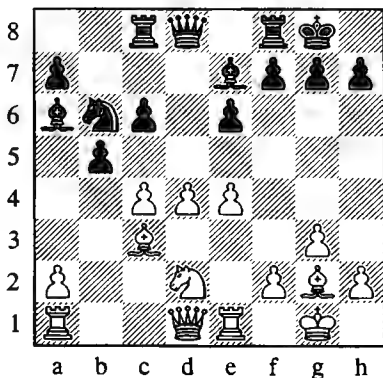
14... dxc4

The other two available pawn captures have also been tested extensively.

15. bxc4 ♘b6!?

Karpov wants to battle. Kasparov wrote that the move came as a surprise for him, and that he was unable to work out what was wrong with it.

The main line is 15... bxc4 16. ♖a4 ♘b5 17. ♖c2 ♗e8 18. a4 ♘a6 19. ♘f1 with complex play. Black has scored all right from here.

**16. cxb5?**

This increases the scope of Black's queenside pieces, but Kasparov is seduced by the prospect of a d4-d5 breakthrough. He had utilized the same motif to score some brilliant wins before this game. One can imagine Karpov anticipating that his rival would play like this.

16. c5! was stronger, when the positioning of both the rook on c8 and the bishop on a6 is called into question. 16... ♘a4 (After 16... b4 17. ♘b2 ♘c4 18. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 19. ♖c2

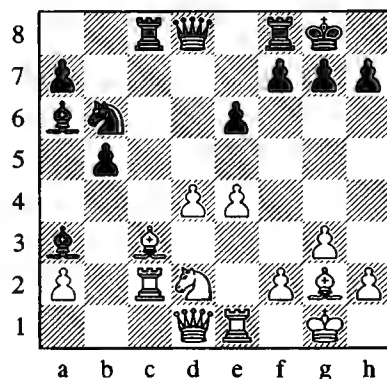
♘b5 20. a3 bxa3 21. ♗xa3 Black's position is passive.) 17. ♖c2 e5 (17... ♖d7 is met by 18. e5! when the knight is heading for d6.) 18. ♘b3 (Kasparov's suggestion of 18. ♘f3! exd4 19. ♘xd4 is more convincing.) 18... b4 19. ♘xb4 exd4 20. ♘h3 d3 21. ♖c1 ♗a8 22. ♖d2 White went on to win this complicated position in Kasparov – Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1987.

16... cxb5

Now the c8-rook has come alive.

17. ♗c1 ♘a3

Karpov begins a remarkable build-up on the a-file. A reasonable alternative was 17... b4 18. ♘a1 ♖d7 followed by ... ♘a4 or ... ♖a4 with good play for Black.

18. ♗c2**18... ♘a4!?**

Karpov continues to line up his pieces on the edge of the board, just as he sometimes did in his childhood (see for instance Game 10, Kasparov – Moles). It is an interesting strategy, albeit one that carries a good deal of risk.

A safer continuation would have been 18... ♖c7, exploiting the pin on the c-file. Play might continue 19. d5 ♘b4! This subtle move stops the sacrifice on g7. 20. ♘xb4 (If 20. ♗e3

21. ♖xg7? ♜xc2 22. ♜g4 f5 23. ♜g5 ♜d1+ 24. ♘f1 ♜g4 Black wins.) 20... ♜xc2 21. ♖xf8 ♜xd1 22. ♜xd1 ♘xf8 Black has the more comfortable endgame, although Kasparov suggests that after 23. ♘b3 White should be able to hold.

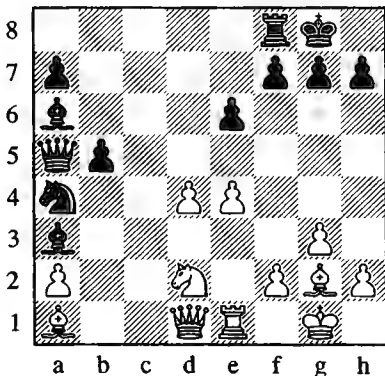
19. ♖a1 ♜xc2 20. ♜xc2 ♜a5!?

Karpov puts yet another piece on the a-file in order to accelerate his queenside play. It is risky, though not objectively bad.

20... ♜e7 21. ♜d3 also results in a roughly balanced position.

21. ♜d1!

With this excellent move Kasparov prepares to transfer his queen to the kingside. In the meantime she also helps to support the d5 break.



21... ♜c8?!

Karpov plays consistently; indeed, his tendency to choose a plan and pursue it relentlessly has been noted several times throughout the book. On this occasion, however, he does not pay enough attention to White's possibilities.

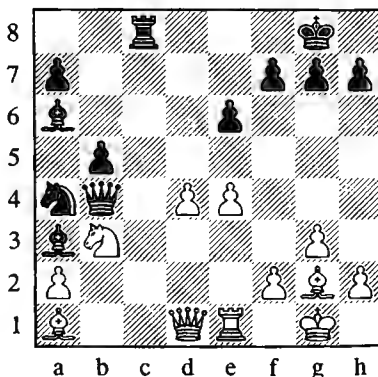
Kasparov pointed out that after 21... ♘c3 22. ♖xc3 ♜xc3 23. ♘b1 ♜a5 24. ♘xa3 ♜xa3

25. ♜d2 White has an edge thanks to his strong d-pawn.

The safest continuation looks to be 21... ♖b2! to neutralize the powerful bishop. After 22. ♘b3 ♜c3 23. ♜e3 ♜c7 24. ♖xb2 ♘xb2 25. ♜e1 ♘c4 the position is roughly balanced.

22. ♘b3 ♜b4?!

22... ♜c7 would have enabled Black to retain some stability in the centre: 23. d5 e5 24. ♖h3 ♜d8 25. ♜e2 ♘b6 26. ♜c2 ♘c4 And according to Kasparov, Black holds.



23. d5!

This strong move is a natural choice, especially for a super-dynamic player like Kasparov. Now the bishop on a1 gains a lot of power.

23... ♜xd5?

Karpov does not want to live with a weakness on e6, but after his chosen move White's rook and light-squared bishop suddenly enjoy a far better view of the board than before.

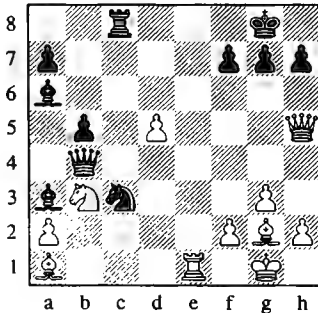
Blocking the long diagonal was objectively better. After 23... ♘c3 24. ♖xc3 ♜xc3 (24... ♜xc3 25. dxe6 fxe6 26. ♜e2) 25. dxe6 fxe6 26. ♖h3 ♜e8 Black is surviving, although he will be on the defensive for some time to come.

Black could also use the bishop for the same function: 23...♙b2 24.♙xb2 ♘xb2 25.♙a1 ♘c4 26.dxe6 fxe6 27.♙h3 ♞e8 28.♞d1 Once again Black is under some pressure.

24.exd5 ♘c3 25.♙d4?

Unusually for him, Kasparov misses a golden opportunity to decide the game with a kingside attack.

25.♙h5!



If followed up correctly, this strong move would have punished Karpov for neglecting his kingside.

25...♘xa2

Taking the a-pawn is critical. Kasparov must have been reluctant to sacrifice it without having a definite follow-up in mind. Other moves fail to halt White's initiative:

25...♘xd5? 26.♞e4 wins.

25...♙f8 26.♙h3 ♞c7 27.♞e3 ♘xa2 (27...b4 28.d6) 28.♙xg7! ♙xg7 29.♞e8† ♙f8 30.d6 White wins, as Kasparov pointed out.

26.♙e5 ♙f8

26...♘c3 27.♙h3! is crushing.

26...f6 27.♙e6† ♙h8 28.♙xf6 demolishes Black's kingside.

27.♙e4!

This is the detail that I suspect both players missed. Suddenly ♙f5 becomes a huge threat.

27...♙h8 28.♙h5! ♙g8 29.♙f5 ♞d8 30.♙g5! ♞f8 31.♙d2!+-

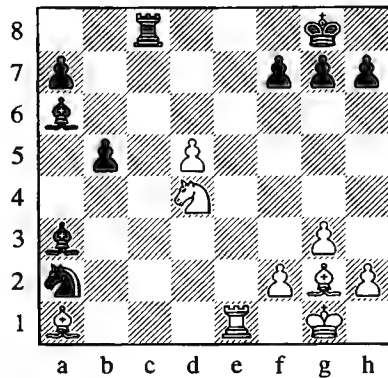
With Black's queen and rook huddled in the

corner, White wins material on the opposite flank.

25...♙xd4 26.♘xd4 ♘xa2

Taking a pawn is useful; besides, it is good to relieve the black rook from the burden of defending the knight. Despite White's previous inaccuracy, his pieces are extremely active and his d-pawn is dangerous.

If 26...♙f8 27.d6! ♙xd6 28.♙h3 ♞c4 29.♞e8† ♙f8 30.♘e6! ♞c8 31.♞xf8† ♞xf8 32.♘xf8 White wins.



27.♘d6?

Kasparov chooses the wrong square for the knight.

27.♘f5!

This is not only a stronger move, it is also more consistent with Kasparov's style. The main differences are that the knight attacks the g7-pawn and, even more importantly, helps White to play d6.

27...♙b4!

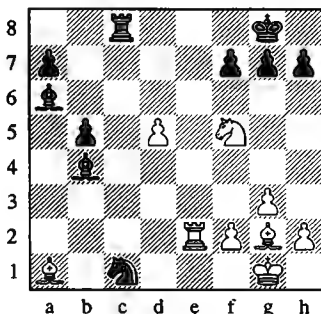
This intermediate move is the one that forces White to play most precisely.

Instead after 27...♞c1 28.♞xc1 ♙xc1 29.d6 ♙g5 30.h4 ♙c8 31.♙c6 ♙xf5 32.hxg5 White wins a piece.

28.♞e2!

It is vital that White wins a tempo by attacking the knight.

28...♖c1



29.♞e4!

This second tempo-gaining move enables White to push his d-pawn with deadly effect.

29...♘d3

29...♘b3 30.♙b2! wins, as the d-pawn is too strong.

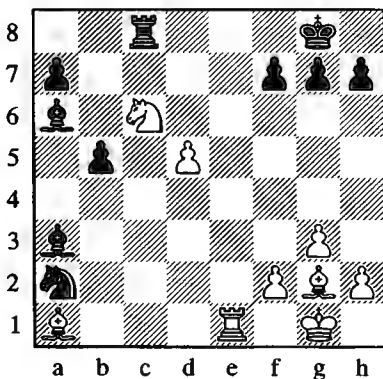
30.♙xg7

Yusupov's 30.♙f1 is also good enough.

30...♙f8 31.d6 ♙xg7 32.d7 ♞f8 33.♗e7† ♔h8

34.♗g6† hxg6 35.♞e8

White wins, as Kasparov pointed out.



27...♙c5!

With little time remaining, Karpov finds an important move. The bishop defends the a7-

pawn while maintaining its control over the d6- and e7-squares.

28.♙h3?!

Kasparov is playing too optimistically. After 28.♗e7† ♙xe7 29.♞xe7 Black would still have had to work for a draw. He can achieve it by means of 29...b4 30.h4 (30.♙b2 ♘c3 31.♞xa7 ♙c4 32.d6 ♘b5) 30...♗c3 31.d6 ♞d8 32.♞xa7 ♙d3 33.♞b7 f6 34.♞xb4 ♗e2† 35.♔h2 ♞xd6.

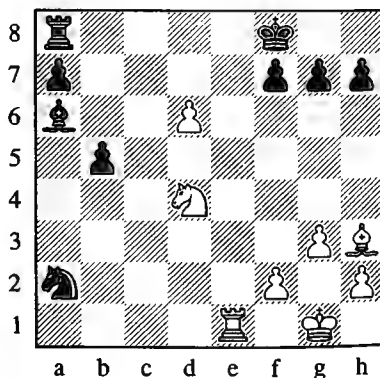
28...♞a8!

There was only one other square available to the rook, but Karpov knows he needs f8 for his king.

29.♙d4 ♙xd4 30.♗xd4 ♔f8

The king approaches the strong passed pawn.

31.d6



31...♗c3!?

Karpov wants to battle it out. The safe approach was 31...♞d8 32.d7 ♙b7 33.♗xb5 ♙c6 34.♗xa7 ♙xd7 when the disappearance of the queenside pawns ensures that the game will end in a draw.

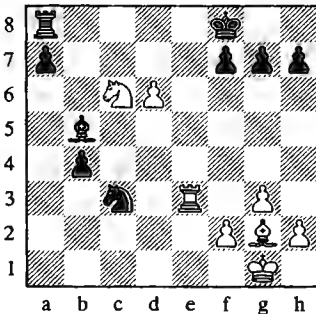
32.♗c6?

Karpov's gamble pays off – the text move loses an important tempo. White should have preferred one of the following alternatives:

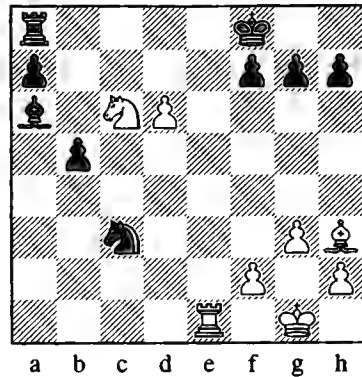
The simplest route to a draw is 32.♘g2, which wins the b5-pawn: 32...♞d8 33.♙c6 ♘c8 34.♜xb5 With equality.

32.d7 wins a piece for two pawns, but Black should not be worse in the resulting position: 32...♙b7 33.♜f5 ♞d8 34.♞e8† ♞xe8 35.dxe8=♞† ♜xe8 36.♜d6† ♜d8 37.♜xb7† ♜c7 Black's king will support the passed pawns, and if anything it is White who will have to be careful.

32.♞e3!? As far as I am aware, other commentators have not mentioned this interesting zwischenzug. 32...b4 33.♜c6 ♙b5 (33...♜d5? 34.♞e5 ♜f6 [34...♜b6 35.d7] 35.d7 Black drops a piece without obtaining sufficient compensation.) 34.♘g2 (After 34.♜xb4 ♜a4 Black is okay.) It looks like Black is in big trouble, but he can rescue himself with a tactical sequence:



34...♜e2† 35.♜h1 b3! 36.♞xb3 ♙xc6 37.♙xc6 ♜d4 and Black is safe. In fact, after 38.♞c3 ♜xc6 39.♙xc6 a5 (39...♜e8 40.♞a6=) Black is just one tempo away from reaching a winning ending, but after 40.d7 he has to give up his a-pawn for White's d-pawn, leading to a dead draw.



32...♙b7!

After remaining stationary for twenty eight moves, the bishop finally vacates its rather uninspiring post on the edge of the board.

32...b4 only leads to a draw after 33.d7 b3 34.d8=♞† ♞xd8 35.♜xd8 ♙d3 when Black's b-pawn will enable him to win back the rook.

33.♘g2 ♞e8!

It is important to challenge White's well placed rook.

Although Black has the advantage, the position was still double-edged. For instance, after 33...b4? Averbakh found a study-like win for White: 34.d7 b3 35.♜b8!! ♞xb8 36.♙xb7 and White wins after 36...b2 37.♙c8 or 36...♞d8 37.♙c6.

34.♜e5

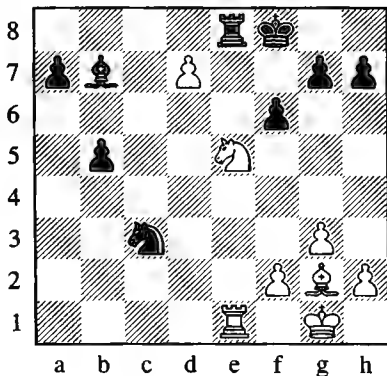
According to Yusupov 34.♞a1 would have given better chance to survive, but after 34...♙xc6 35.♙xc6 ♞e6 36.♞xa7 ♞xd6 Black is a clear pawn up, and his knight dominates the enemy bishop.

34...f6!

This is an only move but it wins.

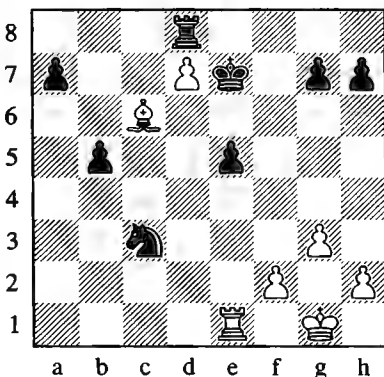
35.d7

Kasparov offered a draw here, but his position is lost. Yusupov mentions the line 35.♖d7† ♕f7 36.♞a1 ♙xg2 37.♜xg2 ♕e6 and Black wins, while 35.♙xb7 ♞xe5 36.♞a1 b4 37.♞xa7 b3 also leads to the same result.



35...♞d8 36.♙xb7 fx5 37.♙c6 ♕e7?

Karpov blunders in time trouble. After the correct 37...e4! 38.♞a1 ♕e7! 39.♞xa7 ♕d6 40.♞a6 ♕c7 Black wins by pushing his b-pawn.



38.♙xb5! ♖xb5

With little time remaining, Karpov understandably goes for the simplest continuation.

In view of the drawing continuation given in the note to White's 41st move below, it

may well have been objectively better to play 38...♕d6! 39.♙d3 ♞xd7! 40.♙xh7 a5 with a clear advantage, as suggested by Yusupov.

39.♞xe5† ♕xd7 40.♞xb5 ♕c6

This is the last move before the time control. Black cannot justify giving up both kingside pawns with 40...♞a8?, as after 41.♞b7† ♕c6 42.♞xg7 a5 43.♞xh7 a4 44.♞e7 a3 45.♞e1 a2 46.♞a1 ♕d5 47.h4 ♕c4 48.♕g2 ♕b3 49.g4 ♕b2 50.♞e1 White holds without difficulty.

41.♞h5?

This move makes little sense – White simply forces one of the enemy pawns onto a less vulnerable square. Perhaps Kasparov was hoping to capture the h6-pawn with check, but it is hard to find a concrete variation in which this is of any benefit.

41.♞e5!

This obvious improvement enables the rook to target Black's kingside pawns in the most efficient way possible. It has been suggested by several commentators, including Timman and Yusupov.

41...♞a8 42.♞e6†

42.♕f1 a5 43.♕e2 a4 44.♕d3 a3 45.♞e1 a2 46.♞a1 ♕d5 wins.

42...♕c5 43.♞e7 a5 44.♞xg7

Yusupov ends his analysis here, evaluating the position as slightly better for Black. Since the plans for both sides are clear, we can analyse further.

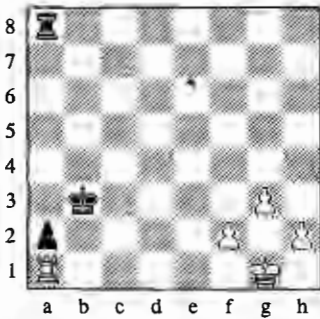
44...a4 45.♞xh7

If 45.♞c7† ♕b4 46.♕g2 (46.♞b7† ♕a5 47.♞xh7 a3 48.♞e7 a2 49.♞e1 ♞b8 wins.) 46...a3 47.♞c1 a2 48.♞a1 ♕c3 49.f4 ♕b2 Black wins.

45...a3 46.♞c7† ♕b4 47.♞b7†

47.♞c1 a2 48.♞a1 ♕b3 49.♕g2 transposes to the main line.

47...♕a4 48.♞b1 a2 49.♞a1 ♕b3



50. ♔g2!!

When I analysed this endgame I overlooked this great move. It is a superb example of shouldering with the king.

50.h4? ♔b2 51.♞e1 (51.♞xa2† ♞xa2 52.h5 ♔c3 53.g4 ♔d4 54.♔g2 ♔e5 55.♔g3 ♞a3† 56.♔h4 ♔f6→) 51...a1=♚ 52.♞xa1 ♞xa1† 53.♔g2 ♔c3 With the help of modern tools one can prove that the position is winning for Black, by just one tempo.

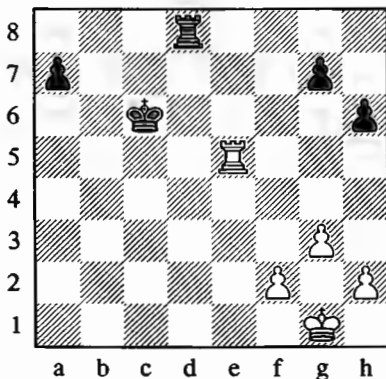
50...♔b2 51.♞e1 a1=♚ 52.♞xa1 ♞xa1 53.♔f3! ♔c3 54.♔e4!

The white king successfully blocks his counterpart from reaching the scene of the action. This instructive drawing line was pointed out by Kasparov.

41...h6

Black must keep his h-pawn.

42.♞e5



42...♞a8!

This was the sealed move.

42...♞d5!?

This was mentioned by Yusupov, who offers no further analysis but evaluates the position as winning for Black. According to my analysis this is correct, although the race is incredibly close.

43.♞e7

43.♞e6†? ♔b5 (43...♞d6 44.♞e5 ♔b6 45.♞e7 g6 should also win according to Kasparov.) 44.♞e7 a5 45.♞xg7 a4 46.♞a7 ♔b4 White is a tempo down on the main line below.

43...a5 44.♞xg7 a4



45.♞a7

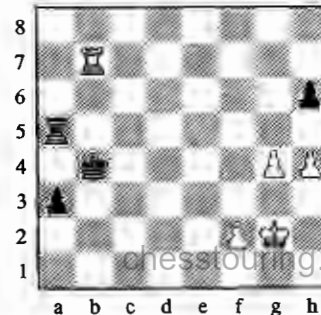
45.♞g6† ♔b5 46.♞xh6 a3 47.♞h8 ♔a4 wins.

45...♔b5 46.♔g2 ♔b4

46...♞d6 47.h4 is not an improvement for Black.

47.h4 a3 48.g4 ♞a5 49.♞b7†

Here Black must choose the right path for the king.



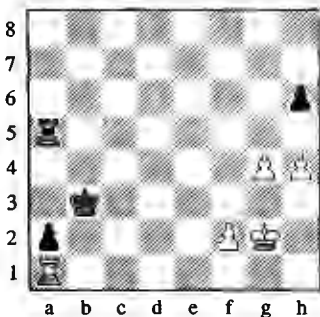
49...♔a4!

After this move Black will soon win the rook, after which it looks as though he is just quick enough in the race.

49...♘c3? is the wrong direction. 50.♞c7† (50.♞b1? is not good enough; the main line runs as follows: 50...a2 51.♞a1 ♔b2 52.♞e1 a1=♚ 53.♞xa1 ♞xa1 [53...♔xa1 should also win]) 54.♔f3 ♞a4! And Black is winning.)

50...♔d3? (Black should correct his mistake and head back towards the a4-square, hoping to transpose to the main line below.) 51.♞c1 a2 52.♞a1 ♔e4 53.g5! hxg5 54.hxg5 ♞xg5† 55.♔f1 ♞a5 56.♔e2 White holds.

50.♞b1 a2 51.♞a1 ♔b3



52.♔f3

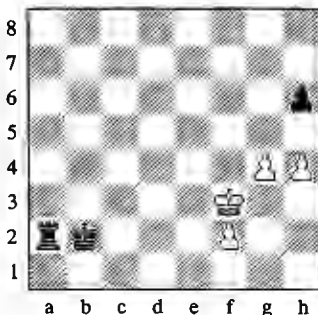
52.g5?! hxg5 53.hxg5 ♞xg5† is winning for Black.

52.h5 is a better try, but ultimately this is also insufficient: 52...♔b2 53.♞e1 a1=♚ 54.♞xa1 ♞xa1 55.♔f3 (55.♔g3 ♔c3 56.f4 ♔d4 57.g5 hxg5 58.fxg5 ♔e5→) 55...♔c3 56.♔e4 ♞a5 (56...♞a4† should also be good enough) 57.f4 ♔c4 58.f5 (58.g5 hxg5→) 58...♔c5 59.♔e5 ♞a1 60.♔e6 (60.f6 ♞e1† 61.♔f5 ♔d6 62.♔g6 ♔e6 63.f7 ♞f1→) 60...♔c6 61.f6 ♞e1† 62.♔f7 ♔d7 63.♔g7 ♞g1 64.f7 ♞xg4† And Black wins.

52...♔b2 53.♞xa2†

Or 53.♞e1 a1=♚ 54.♞xa1 ♞xa1 55.♔f4 ♔c3 56.g5 ♞a4† 57.♔f5 ♞xh4 and Black wins.

53...♞xa2



54.♔e4

54.♔f4 ♔c3 55.g5 (55.f3 ♔d4 56.g5 hxg5† 57.hxg5 ♞f2 wins.) 55...♞xf2† wins (but note that 55...hxg5†? 56.♔xg5! is a draw).

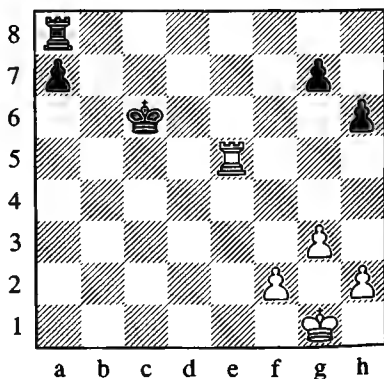
54...♔c3 55.f4 ♞a4†

55...♞a5 should also work.

56.♔e5 ♔d3 57.g5 ♞a5† 58.♔f6 h5 59.g6 ♔e4 60.g7 ♞a8 61.f5 ♞g8 62.♔f7 ♞xg7† 63.♔xg7 ♔xf5

Black wins the pawn ending by one tempo.

Regardless of the final evaluation, it would have been impractical for Karpov to commit to such a narrow path on his sealed move.

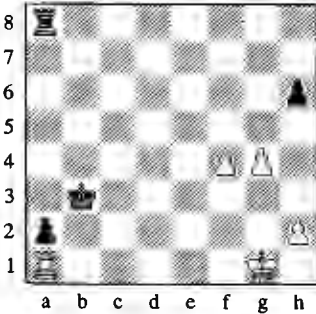


43.♞a5

The rook adopts a passive role, but White had no choice. With the black pawn on h6 instead of h7, there was no time for him to collect both of the kingside pawns:

43.♖e6† ♘c5 44.♞g6 a5 45.♞xg7 a4 46.♞c7†
 ♘b4 47.♞b7† ♘a5 48.g4 a3 49.♞b1 a2 50.♞a1
 ♘b4 51.f4 ♘b3

The surviving h6-pawn makes all the difference, but the race is still tight.



52.g5!?

After 52.♘f2 ♘b2 White is losing the race:
 53.♞xa2† (if 53.♞e1 a1=♞ 54.♞xa1 ♞xa1
 55.♘e3 ♘c3 56.h4 ♞h1 57.g5 h5 Black
 wins – Timman) 53...♞xa2 54.♘e3 ♘c3
 55.h4 ♞h2 56.h5 ♞h4 57.g5 ♞xh5 58.g6
 ♞h4! 59.f5 (59.♘f3 h5) 59...♞g4 Black wins,
 as pointed out by Yusupov.

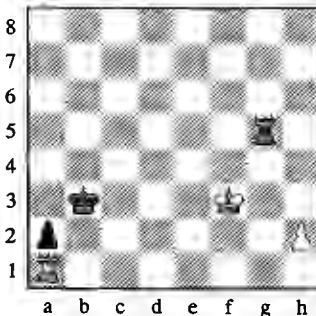
52...hxg5 53.fxg5 ♞a5! 54.♘f2!

This is the best practical chance.

Yusupov only mentions 54.h4 ♞a4 55.♘g2
 ♞xh4 when Black wins without difficulty.

54...♞xg5 55.♘f3

55.h4? ♞g4 wins instantly.



55...♞h5!

This is the only move to win.

56.♘g3 ♘b2 57.♞xa2† ♘xa2

The black king will just get to the kingside in time to seal the win.

58.h4 ♘b3 59.♘g4 ♞h8 60.h5 ♘c4 61.♘g5
 ♘d5 62.♘g6 ♘e6 63.h6 ♞g8† 64.♘h7

64.♘h5 ♘f5 65.h7 ♞h8 (But not 65...♞g1??

66.♘h6=) 66.♘h6 ♘f6→

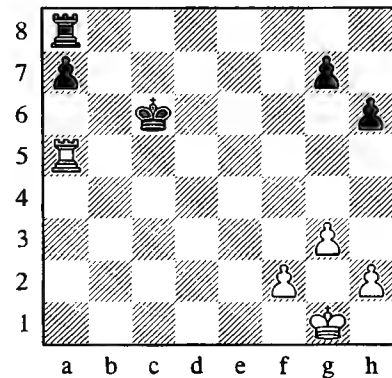
64...♞g5 65.♘h8 ♘f6

Black forces mate in a few more moves.

66.♘h7

66.h7 ♞e5 67.♘g8 ♞e8#

66...♘f7 67.♘h8 ♞e5 68.♘h7 ♞h5 69.♘h8
 ♞xh6#



43...♘b6

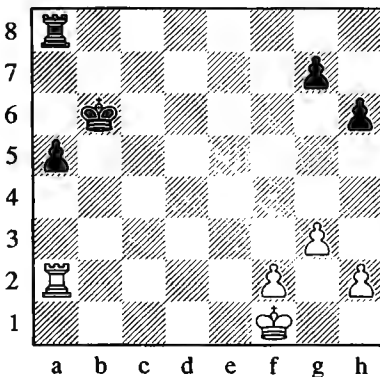
The rook endgame is reminiscent of that which occurred in the very last game of the Capablanca – Alekhine match of 1927 in Buenos Aires. On that occasion Alekhine, playing with the white pieces, had an extra passed a-pawn, with three pawns versus three on the kingside, but the black king was able to blockade it from a6. White was able to utilize the a-pawn as a distraction to force a breakthrough on the kingside, winning the game and the match.

44.♞a2!

The best chance. Kasparov plans to use his king to block the a-pawn so that the rook can defend the kingside.

44.♖a1 offered less resistance: 44...a5 45.♔f1 a4 46.♗e2 a3 47.♗d3 ♗c5 48.♗c3 (48.♗c2 ♗c4!) 48...♗d5! It is essential that the black king heads towards the kingside pawns as quickly as possible. (After 48...a2? 49.♗b2 ♗b4 50.f4! h5 51.♗xa2! ♖xa2† 52.♗xa2 ♗c3 53.f5! ♗d3 54.♗b3 ♗e4 55.♗c4 ♗xf5 56.♗d4 ♗g4 57.♗e5 the White king has arrived in time.) 49.♗b3 a2 50.♗b2 ♗e4 51.♞e1† ♗f3 And Black wins, as shown by Yusupov.

44...a5 45.♔f1



45...a4

45...♞e8!?

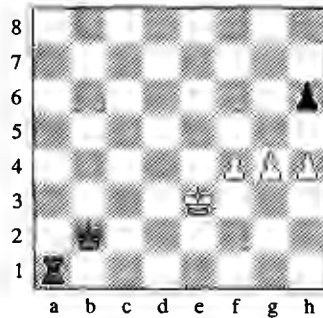
Cutting off the king is a common tactic in rook endings. This move was mentioned by Yusupov, without any further analysis. Having analysed it in detail, I have concluded that it is indeed winning, although the game continuation seems simpler overall.

46.f4

Worse is 46.♖a1?! ♗b5 47.♖b1† ♗c4 48.♖a1 ♖a8 when the mutual rook dances have resulted in White losing time. After 49.♗e2 a4 50.♗d2 a3 51.♗c2 a2 52.♗b2 ♗d3 Black is winning.

46...♗b5 47.♖b2† ♗c4 48.♖b7 ♖a8 49.♖xg7 a4 50.♞c7† ♗b5 51.♖b7† ♗a5 52.g4 a3 53.♖b1 ♗a4 54.♗f2 a2 55.♖a1 ♗b3 56.♗e3 ♗b2 57.♖d1 a1=♚ 58.♖xa1 ♖xa1 59.h4

From here Black must demonstrate great precision to secure the victory.

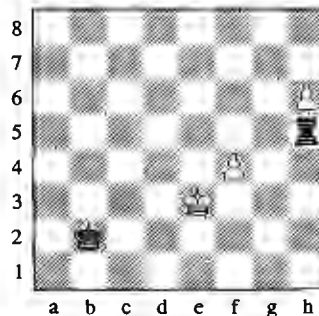


59...♖h1!

59...♖a4? is not good enough: 60.g5 (Simplest, although 60.h5 should also hold.) 60...♖a3† (After 60...h5?? 61.f5! Black even loses!) 61.♗e4 ♖h3 62.gxh6 White is safe.

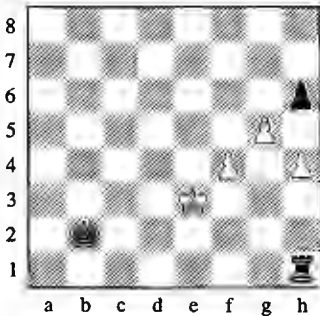
60.g5

60.h5 also leads to an instructive finish: 60...♖h4! (If 60...♗c3 61.♗e4 ♖h4 62.♗f5 ♗d4 63.g5 ♖xh5 64.♗g6 hxg5 65.fxg5 ♖h1 66.♗f6 White holds.) 61.g5 ♖xh5 (61...hxg5 62.fxg5 ♖xh5 63.♗f4 ♗c3 64.g6 draws.) 62.gxh6 (62.g6 ♖h4+)



62...♗c3! Black's top priority must be to improve his king. He should postpone the capture on h6 until the last possible moment. (62...♖xh6 allows White to draw with 63.♗d4! or 63.♗e4!.) 63.♗e4 ♗c4! 64.f5 ♗c5! 65.♗e5 ♗c6! 66.♗e6 ♗c7! 67.f6 (After

67.♟f6 ♖xh6† both 68.♟e7 and 68.♟g7 are met by 68...♖h1→) 67...♟d8 68.♟f7 ♖xh6 69.♟g7 ♖h1 White can resign.



60...h5!

Black must keep his h-pawn.

After 60...♖xh4? 61.gxh6 Black only draws. Compared with the previous note, the position of the rook on h4 instead of h5 makes all the difference, as the white king can move to the fifth rank unhindered.

61.f5 ♖h3†!

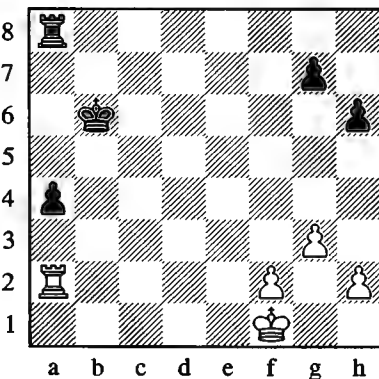
This intermediate check wins a vital tempo.

62.♟e2

Or 62.♟e4 ♖xh4† 63.♟e5 ♖g4 64.g6 h4 65.♟f6 (65.f6 ♖g5†!) 65...h3 66.g7 h2 67.♟f7 h1=♚ winning.

62...♖xh4 63.f6 ♖f4 64.♟e3 ♖f1! 65.♟e4 h4 66.♟e5 h3 67.g6 h2 68.g7 ♖g1

And Black wins.



46.♟e2 ♟c5 47.♟d2 a3 48.♟c1

After 48.♟c3 ♟d5 49.♟b3 ♟e4 Black wins according to Kasparov.

48...♟d4 49.f4

49.♟b1 ♖b8† 50.♟a1 ♖b2 51.♖xa3 ♖xf2 52.♖a6 ♖f6! 53.♖a7 g5 wins.

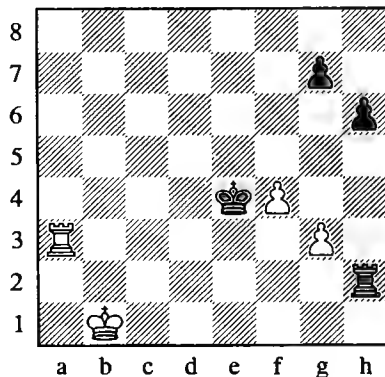
49.h4 ♟e4 50.♟b1 ♟f3 51.♖c2 a2† 52.♟a1 ♖a7 is equally hopeless.

49...♟e4 50.♟b1 ♖b8†! 51.♟a1 ♖b2!

Black's a-pawn has been neutralized, so Karpov finds a way to exchange it for one of White's kingside pawns.

52.♖xa3 ♖xh2 53.♟b1

White's king needs to rejoin the action. The rook cannot achieve anything by itself, as seen after 53.♖a7 g6 54.♖a6 g5 55.♖g6 (55.♟b1 ♟f3 56.fxg5 hxg5 wins.) 55...♟f5 56.♖g8 ♖g2 and wins.



53...♖d2!

With this strong move Black threatens ...♖d3.

After 53...g5 54.♟c1 gxf4 55.gxf4 ♟xf4 56.♟d1 White draws comfortably.

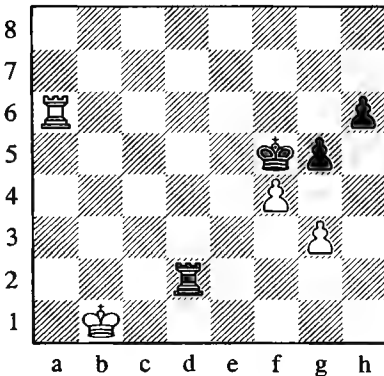
53...♟f5 also fails to achieve anything after

54.♖a7 g5 55.♖a4 ♜g2 56.♖a3 ♘g4 57.♔c1
when the white king is close enough.

54.♖a6

Here is an interesting point: if Kasparov had not forced the move ...h6 earlier, he would still have been able to survive by means of 54.♖a7. In the present position this move does not help him, thanks to 54...g5! 55.♖h7 (55.fxg5 hxg5→) 55...g4 56.♖xh6 ♜g2 57.♖e6† ♔f3 58.f5 ♔xg3 and Black wins.

54...♔f3 55.♖a7 g5 56.♖a6



56...g4!

Karpov plays subtly, even sacrificing a pawn temporarily, in order to advance his g-pawn closer to the promotion square.

Nevertheless the prosaic 56...♖h2!? was also good enough: 57.♔c1 (57.fxg5 hxg5→) 57...♔g4 58.♖g6! ♖h3! 59.♔d2 (59.fxg5 hxg5→) 59...♖xg3 60.♖xh6 ♔xf4! Commentators at the time thought this position was drawn, but tablebases reveal that Black is winning after 61.♔e2 ♖a3 or 61.♖f6† ♔g4 62.♔e2 ♔h3!.

57.♖xh6

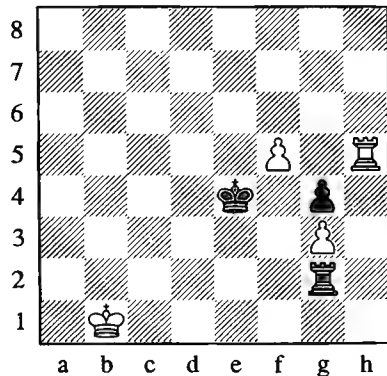
On 57.♖a5† Kasparov demonstrates a nice win: 57...♔e4 58.♖a4† ♔f3 59.♖a3† ♔e2 60.♖a2 (60.♖a5 ♖d3 61.♖h5 ♖xg3 62.♖xh6

♖f3→) 60...h5 61.f5 h4 62.♖xd2† ♔xd2 63.f6 hxg3 64.f7 g2 65.f8=♖ g1=♖† The queen ending is winning, as the white king is badly placed.

57...♖g2 58.♖h5†

58.♔c1 ♖xg3 59.♔d2 ♖f3 60.♔e2 ♔xf4! 61.♖f6† ♔g3 wins.

58...♔e4 59.f5



59...♖f2!?

Black could also have won with the more direct 59...♖xg3 60.f6 ♖f3 61.♖h4 ♔f4 62.f7 (62.♔c2 ♔g5) 62...♔g3→.

60.♔c1 ♔f3 61.♔d1

61.f6!?

This would have posed more problems, although I have no doubt that Karpov would have handled the position properly. It is not impossible that he was still following his adjournment analysis, as both sides have played logically since that time.

61...♔xg3 62.♖h6 ♔g2!

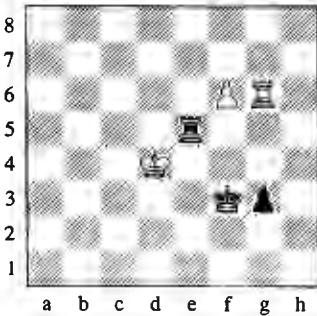
The only move to win.

Yusupov mentions the line 62...♖f3? 63.♔d2 ♔f2 64.♖h2† ♔g1 65.♖h6 drawing, and his assessment has withstood the scrutiny of modern computers.

63.♔d1 g3 64.♖g6

64.♔e1 ♕g1 Remarkably, it was Black to move in this position, only ...♕g2 would win. 65.♖g6 g2 This is a mutual zugzwang position. 66.♞h6 ♜f5 67.♕e2 ♞e5† 68.♕f3 ♕f1 69.♞g6 ♞e6! And Black wins.

64...♜f5 65.♕e2 ♞e5†! 66.♕d3 ♕f3! 67.♕d4 67.f7 ♜f5 68.♞g7 ♜f4! wins in a similar manner to the main line.



67...♞h5!! 68.f7 ♜f5 69.♞g7 g2

We have reached another mutual zugzwang. 70.♕d3

70.♕c4 ♕f2-+

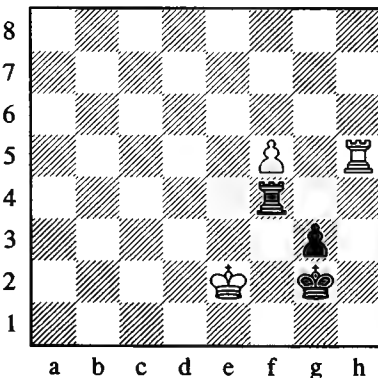
70...♜f4

And Black wins. Yusupov credits this lovely piece of analysis to Sergey Dolmatov.

61...♔xg3 62.♔e1 ♕g2

This is the only winning move, but it is not difficult to find.

63.♞g5 g3 64.♞h5 ♜f4 65.♕e2



65...♞e4†!

Another only move.

66.♕d3 ♕f3 67.♞h1 g2 68.♞h3† ♕g4 69.♞h8 ♜f4 70.♕e2 ♜xf5

0-1

Kasparov resigned, as he has ended up on the losing side of the well known Lucena position, which will be recognized as a trivial finish by any player who has picked up a book on rook endings.

One might argue that this game was not especially strategic, but of the five wins achieved by Karpov in the present match, this was the one that best suited the theme of the present book. Had the game taken place at a normal tournament, it would probably not have made the final cut. But a world championship match is such a monumental event, it would have been a greater crime not to include any game from it. In strategic terms, Karpov's decision to place four out of his five remaining pieces on the a-file, followed by the rook on the c-file, was incredibly bold, even if it was not entirely correct. And following the mutual errors before the time control, his endgame technique was once again sublime.

After the above game Kasparov's troubles continued. Karpov switched to 1.d4 and scored another victory after Kasparov misplayed a reasonable position he obtained through a Tarrasch Defence. After a quick draw in Game Eight, Karpov scored another win over Kasparov's Tarrasch. (It became one of the most heavily analysed endgames in chess history.) Thus Karpov assumed a commanding 4-0 lead after only nine games – a remarkable feat considering the unquestionable brilliance of his challenger.

Around that time, the English grandmaster Jonathan Speelman commented that the world

had not yet understood just how strong a player Karpov really was. Even his most optimistic fan could scarcely have dreamed that he would open up such a lead over Kasparov. Although the challenger had dominated his opponents on his way to challenging for the title, Karpov was by far the most formidable adversary he had ever faced, and it seems as though it took some time for him to raise his game to the level of the champion.

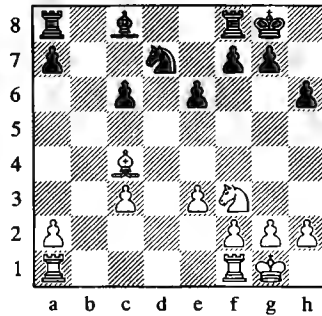
By the end of Game Nine Kasparov was, not surprisingly, visibly shaken. To his great credit, he kept his composure and altered his match strategy. From this point on, for a long time to come, he played safely and solidly in order to draw as many games as possible and thus prolong the match.

A long series of draws ensued. In Game Fifteen Karpov was pressing for a long time, but was unable to convert his advantage. In the very next game it was Kasparov who missed a golden opportunity to score his first win. After his narrow escape Karpov became more cautious, and the next eleven games were all drawn without much drama. Although the majority of those games lasted between twenty and twenty five moves, they still contributed a lot to opening theory.

Game twenty seven looked to be heading for another quick draw, but Karpov had other ideas. We will review the game briefly.

1. $\text{d}1\text{f}3$ $\text{d}5$ 2. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}1\text{f}6$ 3. $\text{c}4$ $\text{e}6$ 4. $\text{d}1\text{c}3$ $\text{d}1\text{e}7$ 5. $\text{d}1\text{g}5$ $\text{h}6$ 6. $\text{d}1\text{xf}6$ $\text{d}1\text{xf}6$ 7. $\text{e}3$ 0-0 8. $\text{c}2$ $\text{c}5$ 9. $\text{d}1\text{xc}5$ $\text{d}1\text{xc}4$ 10. $\text{d}1\text{xc}4$ $\text{a}5$ 11. 0-0 $\text{d}1\text{xc}3$ 12. $\text{c}2\text{xc}3$ $\text{c}3\text{xc}3$ 13. $\text{b}1\text{xc}3$ $\text{d}1\text{d}7$ 14. $\text{c}6$ $\text{b}1\text{xc}6$

White's advantage appears insignificant, but over the next ten or so moves Karpov totally outplays Kasparov. It was a remarkable achievement from such an innocent-looking position.



15. $\text{a}1$ $\text{d}1\text{b}6$ 16. $\text{d}1\text{e}2$ $\text{c}5$ 17. $\text{f}1\text{c}1$!

With this farsighted move Karpov avoids exchanges on the d-file and defends the c-pawn in advance.

17... $\text{d}1\text{b}7$?

17... $\text{d}1\text{d}7$! was better.

18. $\text{d}1\text{f}1$ $\text{d}1\text{d}5$?

18... $\text{d}1\text{c}6$! would have prevented White's next.

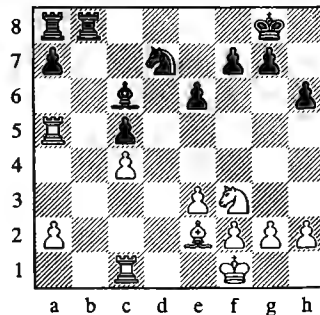
19. $\text{f}1\text{b}5$!

Karpov deploys his rook on a square where it attacks both of Black's weak pawns.

19... $\text{d}1\text{d}7$ 20. $\text{a}5$ $\text{f}1\text{b}8$?

20... $\text{f}1\text{c}8$! was necessary to bolster the c-pawn.

21. $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}1\text{c}6$



22. $\text{d}1\text{e}1$!

Karpov brings the knight closer to the weak c5-pawn.

22... $\text{f}1\text{b}4$ 23. $\text{d}1\text{d}1$!

Preventing the exchange of his strong rook.

23...♖b7 24.f3! ♔d8 25.♘d3 g5 26.♖b3! ♕f8
27.♘xc5 ♘xc5 28.♞xc5

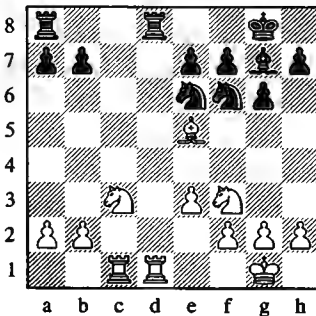
After some truly brilliant play White has won a pawn. At this level it should have been enough to win comfortably, but Karpov became tense and allowed Black to develop counterplay. At one point Kasparov had a very difficult draw, but he was unable to find it and Karpov went on to win.

28...♞d6 29.♕e2 ♕e7 30.♞d1 ♞xd1 31.♕xd1
♕d6 32.♞a5 f5 33.♕e2 h5 34.e4 fxe4 35.fxe4
♖xe4 36.♞xg5 ♖f5 37.♕e3 h4 38.♕d4 e5†
39.♕c3 ♖b1 40.a3 ♞e7 41.♞g4 h3 42.g3 ♞e8
43.♞g7 ♞f8 44.♞xa7 ♞f2 45.♕b4 ♞xh2 46.c5†
♕c6 47.♖a4† ♕d5 48.♞d7† ♕e4 49.c6 ♞b2†
50.♕a5 ♞b8 51.c7 ♞c8 52.♕b6 ♕e3 53.♖c6
h2 54.g4 ♞h8 55.♞d1 ♖a2 56.♞e1† ♕f4
57.♞e4† ♕g3 58.♞xe5 ♕xg4 59.♞c2

1–0 Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (27)
1984.

Kasparov seemed to learn an important lesson from this game, and he seldom lost in this fashion for the rest of his career. Interestingly, Karpov managed to inflict a similar defeat on him in a rapid match almost twenty years later:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♖g7 5.♖f4
dxc4 6.♞c1 0–0 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♖xc4 c5 9.dxc5
♘xc5 10.0–0 ♖e6 11.♖xe6 ♘xe6 12.♖e5
♞xd1 13.♞fxd1 ♞fd8 Once again White has
no more than a tiny advantage, but Karpov
makes it count.



14.♕f1 ♘d7 15.♖xg7 ♕xg7 16.♘d5 ♘b6
17.♘xb6 axb6 18.a3 ♞xd1† 19.♞xd1 ♞c8
20.♕e2 ♕f6 21.♘e1 ♞c4 22.♞d7 ♘c5 23.♞c7
b5 24.f3 e5 25.b4 ♘a4 26.♞xb7 ♞c6 27.e4
♕e6 28.h4 h5 29.♘d3 ♞c2† 30.♕e3 f5 31.g3
fxe4 32.fxe4 ♞g2 33.♞xb5 ♞xg3† 34.♕d2 ♞g2†
35.♕e1 ♘c3 36.♞b6† ♕e7 37.♘xe5 ♞e2†
38.♕f1 ♞xe4 39.♘xg6† ♕f7 40.♕f2 ♘d5
41.♞c6 ♘xb4 42.axb4 ♞xb4 43.♘e5† ♕g7
44.♞c4 ♞b5 45.♘d3 ♕f6 46.♞c5 1–0 Karpov
– Kasparov, New York (rapid) (3) 2002.

There is no doubt that, at his peak, Kasparov's overall chess ability was at a higher level than Karpov's ever was. But despite Kasparov's genius, he never reached Karpov's level in endgames and simplified positions such as the above.

Let us return to the subject of the match. With a 5–0 lead, it seemed to be only a matter of time before Karpov would close out the match. The next four games were drawn, but then in Game 32 Kasparov scored his first win after utilizing his middlegame initiative to secure an extra pawn, which decided the game. It was his first ever victory over Karpov. Not surprisingly, Karpov still holds the record amongst world champions for holding the longest undefeated streak against his successor. The next four games were drawn, although in the last of them Karpov was under pressure and did well to survive. That game, the 36th of the match, took place on 28 December and was the last one Karpov played in the year 1984. The match continued on 2 January 1985, and we will rejoin it shortly.

1984 was Karpov's last year as the dominant force in the chess world. He won two tournaments and took a 5–1 lead against a super-strong challenger. He benefitted from the rub of the green in the early part of the match, and the 5–0 lead was not a true

reflection of the relative strength of the combatants. Nevertheless the result left no doubt as to who was the stronger player at the time – especially when it came to endgames and simplified positions. Karpov deservedly won the Chess Oscar, although the margin was surprisingly narrow: he got 1390 votes to Kasparov's 1360. In any event, 1984 was a great year for Karpov: his last as the world champion and the strongest player in the world.

1984 Summary

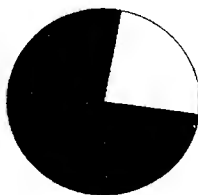
London (1st place): 9/13 (+6 =6 -1)

Oslo (1st place): 6/9 (+3 =6 -0)

USSR – Rest of the World match, London (Board one versus Andersson): 2½/4 (+1 =3 -0)

World Championship match versus Kasparov, Moscow: 20/36 (+5 =30 -1)

Total 60.5% (+15 =45 -2)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

1985

Rating 2705 (2 in the World)

Karpov had little time to celebrate the New Year, as its second day saw the continuation of the marathon match. Although on paper Karpov held what looked like a commanding lead, Kasparov had managed to stabilize his play and had won the last decided game, and in the last few drawn games he was also closer to winning than Karpov.

The first three games of the new year were drawn. Then in Game 40 Kasparov won a pawn and was very close to winning, but Karpov narrowly managed to survive in 70 moves. Game 41 was Karpov's last serious chance to end the match in his favour. Kasparov tried the Petroff and Karpov won a pawn, but he missed a forced win in the endgame and eventually had to settle for a draw.

The next five games were also drawn, although in the last of them Karpov played well below his usual level and Kasparov should have done better.

In Game 47 Karpov's play really went downhill. Playing with the white pieces, he turned down a draw in the early stages of a queenless middlegame, but played poorly and Kasparov punished him in impressive style. In Game 48 Kasparov scored his third win after his energetic attacking play forced the win of a pawn, which he successfully converted in a rook ending. In the space of two games, the score had shifted from 5-1 to 5-3. Karpov was still leading, but he had lost ten kilos in weight, he was mentally and physically exhausted, and the momentum was firmly with the challenger.

At this point the FIDE President, Florencio Campomanes, intervened and announced that the match would be terminated. He proposed that the title be settled by means of a new match later in the year, with a fixed limit of twenty four games. It was a hugely controversial move, and Kasparov was furious, but nevertheless the decision stood.

* * *

After taking a much needed break to regain his strength, Karpov took the opportunity to compete in a double round robin tournament in Amsterdam. It must have come as a relief to sit across the board from someone other than Kasparov. His opponent in the first round was John Nunn. Since their 1982 London game Karpov had scored one win and one draw against the Englishman.

Game 74

Anatoly Karpov – John Nunn

Amsterdam 1985

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6

Having lost to Karpov with both the Sveshnikov and the Pirc, Nunn reverts to his main defence to 1.e4.

3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 a6 6.♗e2

Karpov employs his favourite variation. Obviously he had to think carefully about revealing his ideas before the match with Kasparov, who also plays the Najdorf.

6...e5

Nunn had also played 6...♘bd7, but on this occasion he sticks to the main line.

7.♘b3 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 9.♗e3 ♗e6

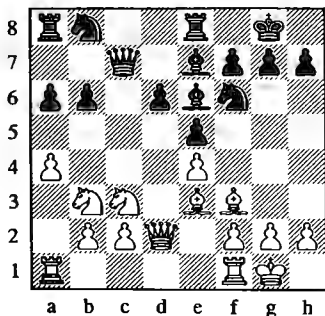
Two years previously, Karpov faced a different set-up. It is worth giving the whole game, as Karpov played brilliantly.

9...♖c7 10.♗d2 ♗e8 11.a4 b6

Black guards against the possible fixing of his queenside with a4-a5.

12.♗f3 ♗e6

Black has handled the position in a somewhat unorthodox fashion, making no attempt to free himself with ...d5.



13.♘c1!

Since ...d5 is not on the agenda, White does not need to play ♖fd1, so Karpov immediately sets about improving his knight.

13...♘c6

This prevents the knight from coming to b4, so Karpov alters his plan.

14.♘d5 ♗xd5 15.exd5 ♘a5 16.b3 ♗ec8 17.♗a2!

The rook defends the c2-pawn securely, and later it will develop along the second rank.

17...♘b7

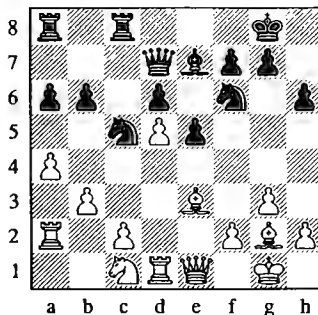
17...♗ab8 18.c4 is good for White.

18.♗d1 ♘c5 19.♖e1 ♗b7 20.g3 ♗d7

Black seems content to wait and see what happens. If he tries to embark on an active plan, he may risk opening the position for White's bishop pair.

21.♗g2 h6?!

21...♘g4!?! was a better idea.



22.a5!

With this subtle move Karpov plans to install his knight on the c6-square.

22...b5

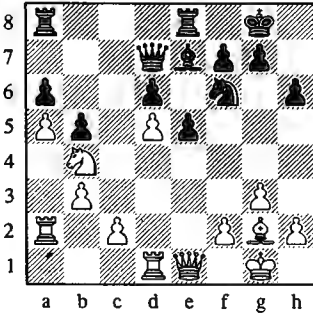
Perhaps Black could have considered 22...♗d8!?

23.♗xc5!

Karpov shows great strategic vision. It is worth 'sacrificing' the bishop for a knight in order to help the knight along its journey.

23...♗xc5 24.♘d3 ♗cc8 25.♘b4 ♗e8

The alternative was 25...♞c5 26.♘c6 ♞e8 27.c4! (It is stronger to open the queenside than to win an exchange: 27.b4 ♞c4 28.c3 e4 29.♙f1 ♞xc6 30.dxc6 White is only a bit better.) 27...bxc4 28.b4 ♞b5 29.♞c2 and White has obtained the initiative on the queenside.



26.♘c6

The knight is not attacking anything, yet it is highly effective as takes away several important squares from the enemy pieces.

26...♙f8

After 26...♞c7 27.b4 White will soon open the c-file, thus embarrassing the black queen.

27.♞e2 e4 28.c4! bxc4 29.♞xc4 ♞f5?

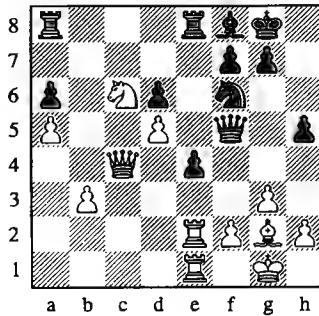
The best chance was 29...e3! 30.fxe3 ♞xe3 31.♞e2 when White's advantage is smaller than in the game.

30.♞e2

Thirteen moves after it came to the second rank, the rook makes its long awaited jump to the centre.

30...h5 31.♞d1

Black's centre falls apart. The whole scenario is typical of Karpov's games: after building an initiative on one side of the board, the opponent lunges forward in another part of the board in an effort to obtain counterplay, only for Karpov to switch his attention back and hurt the opponent in the area where he is trying to become more active.



31...♞xd5 32.♞xd5 ♘xd5 33.♙x4 ♘c7 34.♘e7!

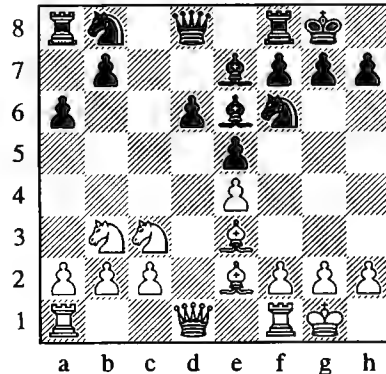
A cute way to seal the victory.

34...♞xe7 35.♙xa8 ♞xe2 36.♞xe2 ♘xa8

Black is temporarily up on material, but his knight finds itself rather unfortunately placed.

37.♞c2

1-0 Karpov – Giorgadze, Moscow 1983.



10.♞d2 ♘bd7 11.a4 ♞c8

Nunn follows in Portisch's footsteps. He had previously played 11...♘b6 and drawn in Liang Jinrong – Nunn, Lucerne (ol) 1982. Karpov had also faced that move twice, beating Quinteros in 1982 and drawing with Ostermeyer in 1983.

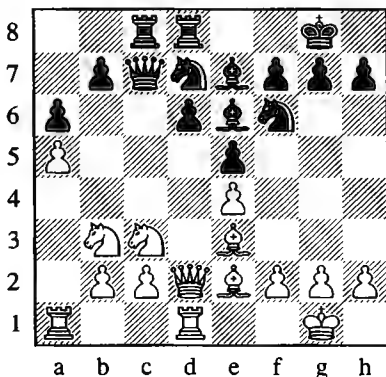
12.a5 ♞c7 13.♞fd1

Karpov deviates from his own novelty of

13. Efc1 , which brought him a fine victory over Portisch as we saw in Game 65. The reason is obvious: Nunn had surely prepared an improvement over that game.

13... Efd8

This move later grew to become the established main line, although at the time of the game there was not much theory on the present position.



14. $\text{Wc1!?$

According to Igor Zaitsev this was a novelty. It is possible that Karpov and his team prepared it for use against Kasparov. It is generally helpful for White to remove his queen from the watchful gaze of the black rook, while in certain cases White may wish to double his own rooks on the d-file.

14... Wc6

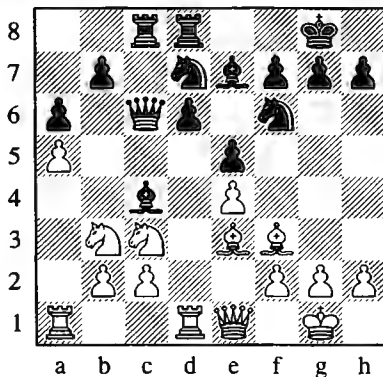
The other main lines are 14... $\text{Dc5!?$ 15. Dxc5 dxc5 and 14... h6 15. Eg2 .

15. Eg3 Eg4

In the light of this and other games, Black came up with new ways to handle the position.

15... h6 is the main move, and Black scores highly with it. Apart from being a useful waiting move, Black also prepares ... Dh7-g5 .

There is also 15... $\text{Wc7!?$, an interesting idea of Huzman. White cannot easily carry out the knight manoeuvre to b4, as Dc1-a2 would drop the a5-pawn while Dc1-d3 allows ... d5 .



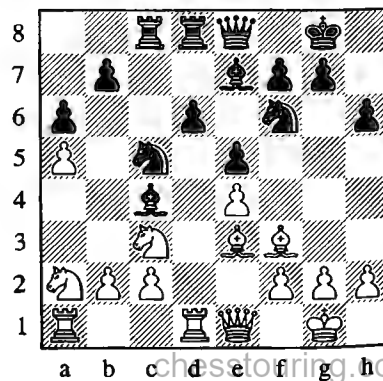
16. Dc1!

Karpov starts improving the knight.

16... h6

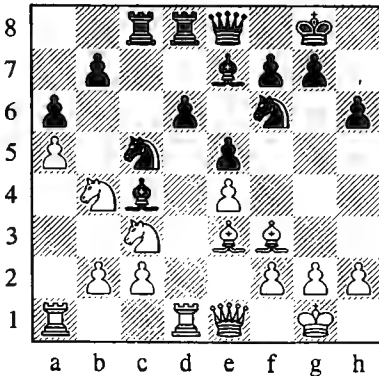
16... b5 does not equalize either: 17. axb6 (There is also 17. $\text{D1a2!?$ Exa2 18. Dxa2 Wb7 19. Db4 and Black is somewhat passive, Womacka – Goehler, East Berlin 1986.) 17... Wb7 18. b3 Ee6 19. Ee2 Ea8 20. f3 (20. $\text{Wf1!?$) 20... Dxb6 21. Dd3 Black's pawn structure on the queenside is a bit vulnerable.

17. D1a2 Dc5



18. ♖b4

Karpov completed his manoeuvre and now enjoys solid control over the d5-square. Black can still cover it, but the fact that he is forced to pay attention to this weak square hampers his ability to generate any active play of his own.

18... ♜e8**19.g3!**

Karpov makes room around his king, but more importantly he prepares to deploy his bishop on the more secure g2-square. Later this piece might switch to h3.

19... ♜c7 20. ♗g2 ♜dc8 21. b3 ♗e6 22. ♖cd5

Karpov can find no further improving moves, so finally he occupies the key outpost.

22... ♖xd5 23. ♖xd5

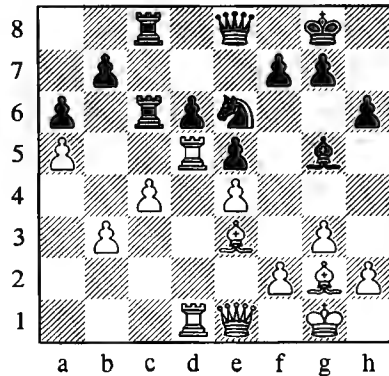
This poses a dilemma for Black. The knight on d5 is tough to live with, but if he eliminates it then his light squares will become weaker.

23... ♗xd5

After 23... ♜c6 White can begin tightening the screw with 24. ♖b6 (24. ♜b4 is also good) 24... ♜b8 25. ♜e2 with a comfortable advantage.

24. ♜xd5 ♜c6 25. ♜ad1

Zaitsev recommends 25.h4! to take away the g5-square from the black bishop. This would have prevented the pawn sacrifice which shortly occurs in the game; on the other hand, that did not ease Black's suffering so it is probably just a matter of taste.

25... ♖e6 26. c4 ♗g5!?**27. ♗a7!?**

27. ♜xd6 would also have given White a nice advantage, but Karpov prefers not to allow the exchange of Black's bad bishop.

27... ♜a8

Karpov's last move had the effect of drawing the black rook onto a passive square.

28. ♗b6 ♗d8 29. ♗e3 ♗c7

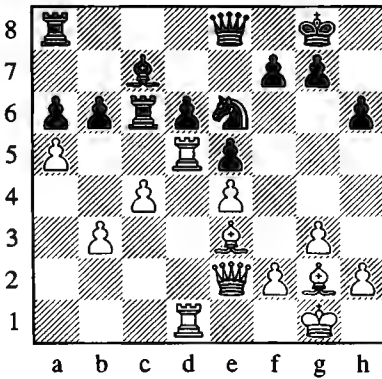
Now if 29... ♗g5, Karpov presumably intended to take the pawn with 30. ♜d6. Nunn obviously found this prospect less appealing with his rook on a8 instead of c8, so he elects to defend the pawn instead.

30. ♜e2!

Karpov makes another small improving move, defending the c4-pawn and thus preparing b4.

30...b6

The liberation of Black's queenside is a good idea, but it has arrived too late.

**31.b4! bxa5 32.b5!**

Karpov sacrifices a pawn in order to create a mighty passed pawn.

32...axb5 33.cxb5 ♖c5?

This exchange sacrifice fails to generate enough counterplay.

33...♖c3 was necessary. Black is under pressure here as well, but at least he avoids a quick collapse. 34.b6 ♔d8 (34...♙b8? 35.b7 wins the rook) 35.♗xd6 (If 35.♗b2 ♖xe3 36.fxe3 ♗b8 37.♗xd6 ♙e7 White will have a hard time winning.) 35...♙g5 36.♙h3 ♙xe3 37.fxe3 ♔g5 38.♙d7 White is clearly better but the game goes on.

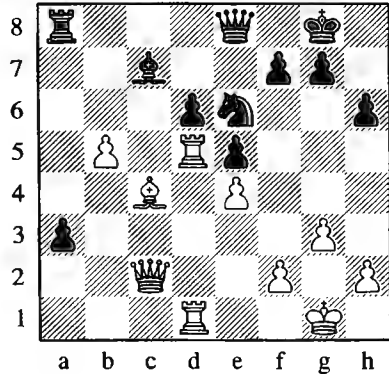
34.♙xc5 ♔xc5 35.♙f1!

The bishop is heading for c4, where it will restrain the a-pawn as well as targeting the f7-pawn.

35...a4 36.♗c2 a3 37.♙c4 ♔e6?

With little time remaining, Nunn mistakenly tries to improve his knight. He could have offered sterner resistance by waiting, although White should be able to win eventually.

For instance: 37...♗c7 38.♙g2 (After the inaccurate 38.♗a1?! ♙b6 39.♙g2 Black can only now play 39...♔e6! with some chances.) 38...♙f8 39.♗5d2 ♗a7 40.f3 ♗a8 41.♗a1 After some further prophylactic moves White can eliminate the a3-pawn to reach a winning position.

**38.♗5d3!**

Karpov makes full use of a square that had previously been controlled by the enemy knight. Now the a3-pawn's days are numbered.

38...♔d4 39.♗a2 ♙b6

After 39...♔xb5 40.♗f3! the rook on the third rank demonstrates its attacking prowess.

40.♗xa3**1-0**

In this hopeless position Black overstepped the time limit.

In the next game Karpov outplayed and beat Sunye Neto of Brazil, but round three did not go as smoothly. His opponent, Slobodan Martinovic of Yugoslavia, employed the Scheveningen and obtained a solid position which later became a superior endgame. Karpov eventually managed to draw, but he had to work hard for it. The course of this game may have influenced Kasparov's decision

to continue using the Scheveningen in their return match later in the year.

In round four Karpov got back on track, defeating Miles in a nice endgame which I analysed in the *Endgame Virtuoso* book. Next he drew with Timman in a long and complicated Scotch, then beat Nunn from the black side of an Anti-Marshall Ruy Lopez. In round seven Karpov played for a win but was unable to make any headway against Sunye Neto, and in the final three games he coasted home with three short draws. His final score of 7/10 was enough to secure first place, half a point ahead of Timman, with whom he drew in the final round.

Second World Championship match versus Kasparov

The second “K – K” match was held in Moscow, just like the first. The rules had been changed in order to prevent the match from dragging on for an inordinate amount of time: this time there was a fixed duration of twenty four games, with Karpov retaining his title in the event of a 12–12 tie. The first game took place on 3 September, so the players had about half a year to prepare. During this time Karpov played just the one tournament, as we have seen, while Kasparov won two short training matches, against Andersson by a score of 4–2 and Hübner by 4½–1½.

Once again both players were assisted by formidable teams of analysts. Karpov’s seconds included Sergei Makarychev, Igor Zaitsev, Efim Geller and Evgeni Vasiukov, while Kasparov was supported by Alexander Nikitin, Gennady Timoschenko, Alexander Shakarov, Josif Dorfman, Yuri Razuvaev and Evgeny Vladimirov.

In the first game Kasparov showed that he had been hard at work preparing a new opening variation: 4.♘f3 against the Nimzo-Indian.

After 4...c5 5.g3 Karpov did not manage to equalize, and after a few subsequent inaccuracies he found himself in a lost endgame which Kasparov easily converted. Considering that his three prior losses to Kasparov all came in the later stages of their marathon match, when Karpov was clearly fatigued, one could make the slightly exaggerated argument that this was the first time Kasparov had defeated him under normal conditions. It was the first time Karpov had trailed in a match since losing the first game of his 1974 candidates semi-final match against Spassky.

In Game Two Karpov could have obtained an advantage against Kasparov’s Scheveningen, but failed to make the most of his position. Soon afterwards Kasparov took over the initiative and had excellent chances to win, but made an error on the sealed move and Karpov eventually managed to draw. Game Three was drawn quickly, but then in Game Four Karpov produced a masterful display in an opposite-coloured bishop middlegame.

Game 75

Anatoly Karpov – Garry Kasparov

World Championship, Moscow (4) 1985

1.d4

In his first white game Karpov struggled against his opponent’s favourite Scheveningen, so this time he goes for something different. Later in the match he switched back to 1.e4, but without much success.

1...d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7

It is interesting that against 1.e4 Kasparov opted for a dynamic counterattacking opening, but against 1.d4 he strived for solidity.

4.♘f3

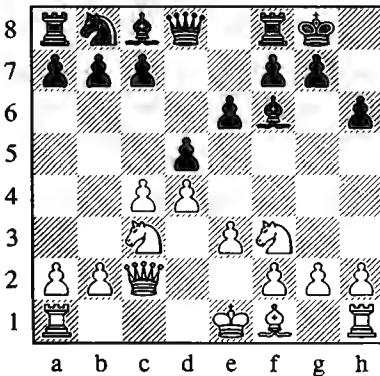
Karpov repeated this line twice more in the match, but only drew. Later he switched to 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙f4, drawing one game and winning the second.

4...♖f6 5.♙g5 h6 6.♙xf6

Karpov chooses the variation that brought him a win and two draws against Kasparov in their first world championship match.

6...♙xf6 7.e3 0-0 8.♖c2

Karpov repeats the move that brought him his last win in the first match. Prior to that, he had drawn two games with Kasparov after 8.♗d2. Later he switched to 8.♖c1 and defeated both Spassky and Short.



8...♖a6

This was not technically a novelty, but it had hardly ever been tried, and was obviously prepared by Kasparov especially for this match.

8...c5 is the main line, but Kasparov probably still had bad memories after Game 27 of their previous match, which was featured on page 415.

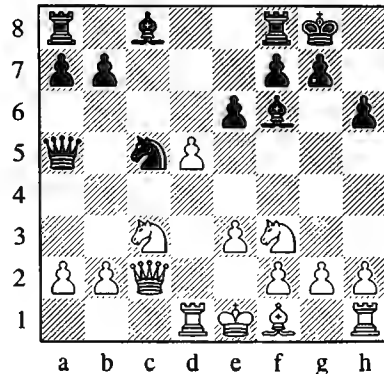
9.♖d1

It unlikely that Karpov had paid much attention to Kasparov's chosen move in his

preparation, and his response is safe and sensible.

Ribli later used 9.a3 to score a win and a draw against Beliavsky, but generally speaking the whole variation does not pose many problems to Black.

9...c5 10.dxc5 ♖a5 11.cxd5 ♖xc5



12.♗d2

Karpov ensures that he slows down Kasparov's dynamic play.

In a few subsequent games White tried the block Black's play in the centre with 12.♖d4, but this did not turn out to be dangerous either.

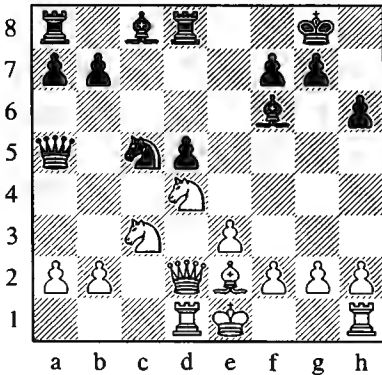
Taking the pawn is possible, although it is doubtful that Karpov considered it for long, as he knew Kasparov would have prepared for it in detail. Nevertheless after 12.dxc6 ♙xe6 13.♖d4 ♖ac8 (13...♙d5 14.♖d2) 14.♙e2 ♙d5 15.0-0 ♖e4 16.♖d3 Black is not guaranteed a draw according to Kasparov.

12...♖d8 13.♖d4 exd5

Kasparov settles for an IQP position in which his active pieces should give him decent play.

14. ♖e2

Karpov must finish his development before undertaking anything else. The position is objectively equal, although the playing styles of the players should also be taken into consideration. So far, Kasparov had not enjoyed much success when defending IQP positions against Karpov.

**14... ♖b6 15.0-0 ♖e4**

Later Kasparov recommended 15... ♖e6 16. ♖c2 (16. ♖xe6 fxe6 is harmless here) 16... ♖ac8 17. ♖b1 ♖xd4 18. ♖xd4 ♖e4 with equality.

16. ♖c2 ♖xc3 17. ♖xc3 ♖e6

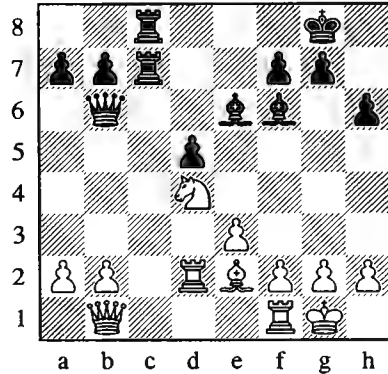
After 17... ♖f5!? 18. ♖d2 ♖e4 a draw was agreed in Vaganian – Tal, Naestved 1985. The database does not give an exact date for this encounter, but it is safe to assume that it took place after the main game. Kasparov later revealed that he rejected this continuation as he did not like the look of 19. ♖g4 a5 20. ♖c1 a4 21. ♖c3 ♖a5, but upon closer inspection he concluded that Black should be okay.

18. ♖c2 ♖ac8 19. ♖b1 ♖c7!

The d-pawn is not too vulnerable, so Black can afford to deploy his rooks actively on the c-file.

20. ♖d2 ♖dc8!?

Later Kasparov recommended the apparently anti-positional 20... ♖xd4!? 21. ♖xd4 ♖dc8 22. ♖d3 ♖c5 when Black should be able to defend. It will be hard for White to organize a successful attack on the d-pawn, as he also has to keep the c2-square defended.

**21. ♖xe6!**

Karpov realizes that he will not be able to mount a significant attack on the d-pawn without making some other concession such as allowing the black rooks to invade on c2. Therefore he puts his faith in the somewhat advantageous opposite-coloured bishop position.

21... fxe6

Kasparov makes the natural decision to support the d5 pawn.

21... ♖xe6!? was worth considering too. In the resulting position, the worst case scenario for Black would involve sacrificing his d-pawn with ...d4, after which he would still have reasonable chances of blocking on d6.

22. ♖g4

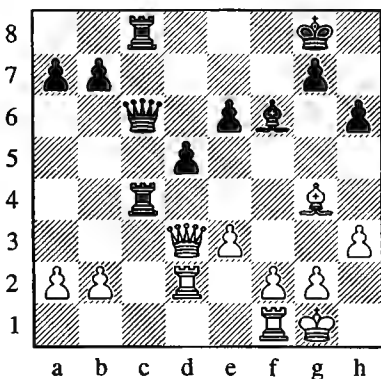
Karpov ensures that the enemy queen will be tied to the defence of the e6-pawn. Here is a bit of advice: whenever you reach an opposite-

coloured bishop middlegame, be sure to give it your full concentration as these types of position are often difficult to assess properly. Typically the player with the initiative will look to dominate the game by focusing their attack on whichever colour of squares their bishop controls. If your opponent's position contains a weakness, then you should play against it with purpose and conviction.

That being said, one must also keep an eye on the opponent's active possibilities. For instance, the premature attempt to set up a queen and bishop battery with 22...♖g6? allows 22...♗b4! 23.♟f1 ♟c1 when Black takes over the initiative on the queenside.

22...♟c4 23.h3 ♗c6 24.♗d3

It is hard to anticipate what Karpov is doing. One can hardly blame Kasparov for the subtle errors which start to creep into his play during the following phase of the game.



24...♟h8?!

This is unnecessary. Kasparov recommends 24...a5! with the idea of pushing the pawn as far as possible without delay.

25.♟f1 a5 26.b3 ♟c3

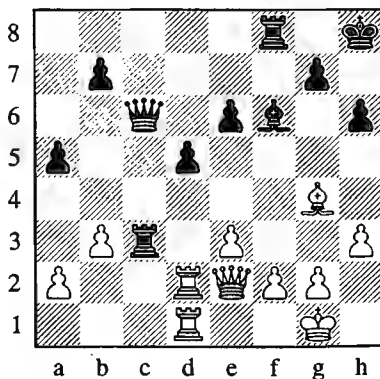
26...♟b4!? was worth considering, as the rook can help to support Black's queenside

play. If White plays 27.♗g6 then both 27...a4 and 27...♗e8 appear satisfactory.

27.♗e2 ♟f8

Kasparov decides he does not have much use for a second rook on the c-file, so he transfers it to the f-file instead.

One interesting alternative involved bringing the king to the centre with 27...♗d6 28.♟h5 ♟g8, when play might continue 29.♗g4 ♟f8 30.♗g6 ♟3c7. Objectively Black should be okay here, although it would still not be easy to defend the position against Karpov.



28.♟h5!

Over the last six moves Karpov has made some small improvements to his position, but his intention all along has been to build an attack along the b1-h7 diagonal. With this move he prepares to put his bishop on the key diagonal.

28...b5

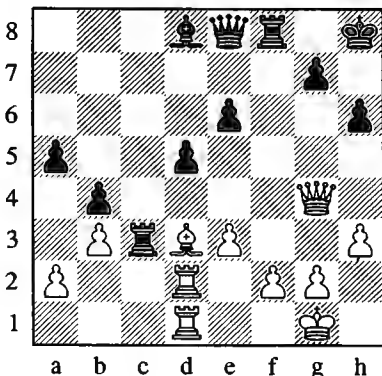
28...♟d8!? was another idea, intending to put the queen on d6 and bishop on c7.

29.♟g6 ♟d8 30.♟d3 b4 31.♗g4!

White's attacking chances are becoming more and more real.

31...♞e8

Black cannot allow the queen to come to g6 unhindered.



32.e4!

This is a great move. The subsequent pawn exchange will give White more available squares on the long diagonal, which will increase his chances of posting his queen there. Furthermore, one or more of his rooks might make use of the e-file.

32...♙g5

Another idea was:

32...♙b6

Black hopes to exploit the absence of a white pawn on e3.

33.exd5 exd5 34.♙f5

Kasparov mentioned that this was the move which scared him.

Another possibility is 34.♞h1 ♙xf2 35.♙g6 ♞c6 36.♙xd5 ♙g3 37.♞f5 ♙c5 38.♙f7 and at the end of this sharp line the position is balanced.

34...♞c3!

Another line is 34...♙f6 35.♙xd5 g6 36.♙d3 ♙xf2 37.♞h1 ♞c6 when Black is okay.

35.fxe3

If 35.♙xd5? ♞e1† 36.♞h1 ♙xf2 White's king is in danger.

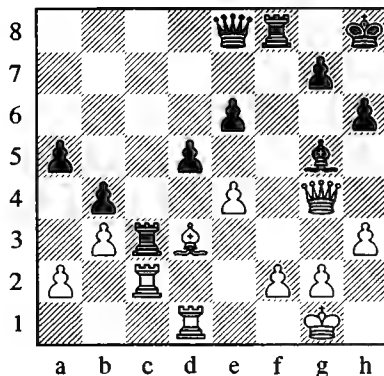
35...♙xe3† 36.♞h1 ♙xd2 37.♙e6 ♙g5

38.♙xd5 ♙f4

Black is not worse.

33.♞c2!

Karpov avoids the trap of 33.♞e2?? ♙f4 when his queen is lost.



33...♞xc2?

This move is hard to understand. Black gives up his outpost and also relinquishes control over the c2- and d3-squares, thus increasing White's chances of getting his queen to the long diagonal. It seems that even world champions are not immune from the desire to exchange pieces when playing for a draw.

Kasparov later proposed 33...d4 34.e5 ♙f4 35.♞e2 ♞c6 with a playable position.

33...♞f7 34.♞e2 ♙d8 would also have been acceptable for Black.

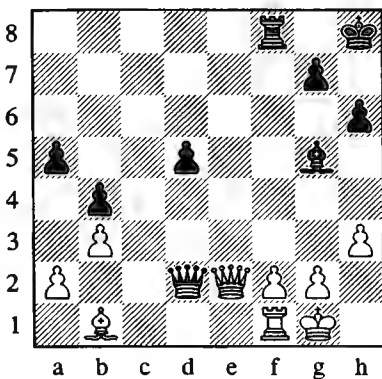
34.♙xc2 ♞c6 35.♞e2 ♞c5 36.♙f1

The rook temporarily takes up a passive position in order to free the queen.

36...♞c3

Kasparov prevents the enemy queen from occupying the long diagonal, but only temporarily.

37. exd5 exd5 38. ♖b1 ♗d2



39. ♗e5!?

Amazingly, Karpov's last eighteen moves all took place on light squares. Ashot Nadanian told me that Taimanov, who was a world class pianist as well as a top chess player, referred to this game as the "Light Square Symphony".

Karpov should have continued playing his "symphony" for even longer with 39. ♗e6! He may have been concerned about the counterattack with 39... ♗h4?!, but this turns out to be too slow. (Objectively Black should prefer 39... ♗f6, but after 40. ♖h1 he faces an unpleasant defensive task.) 40. ♗g6 White can safely ignore the attack on the f-pawn. 40... ♗x2† 41. ♖h1 ♖g8 42. ♗h7† ♖f7 43. ♗g6† ♖f6 44. ♗h5 White's attack breaks through. It is fitting that all of White's moves in this variation took place on light squares as well.

39... ♗d8?

By releasing the pressure on the f-file, Kasparov opens the door for the white rook to join in the attack. 39... ♗f6 40. ♗f5 ♖g8 was more stubborn, although Black's position is still difficult.

40. ♗f5!

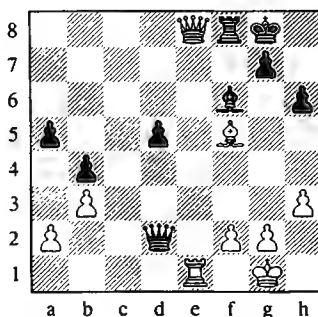
Almost twenty moves after entering the opposite-coloured bishop position, Karpov finally achieves the desired alignment of queen and bishop on the key diagonal.

40... ♖g8 41. ♗e6† ♖h8 42. ♗g6 ♖g8 43. ♗e6† ♖h8 44. ♗f5!

The bishop prepares for the next phrase of the attack, by aiming for e6.

44... ♗c3

44... ♗f6 allows a nice finish: 45. ♗e1 ♗f8 46. ♗e8! ♖g8

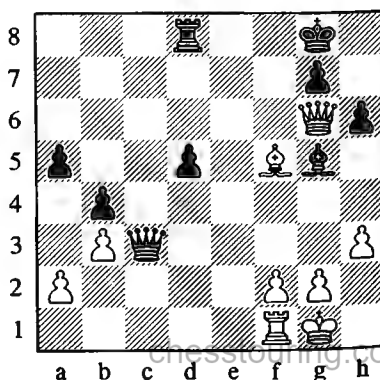


47. ♗g6! And White wins.

45. ♗g6

White could also have considered freeing his rook first with 45. ♗e1 ♗f8 46. ♗d1.

45... ♖g8 46. ♗e6† ♖h8 47. ♗f5 ♖g8



48.g3!

Finally another move on a dark square, and this time it is a good one. Typically for Karpov, he tidies up his king position and drives the black bishop away.

48...♖f8 49.♖g2 ♖f6 50.♖h7 ♖f7 51.h4 ♗d2

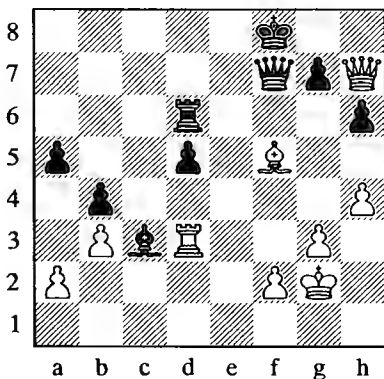
Having obtained the ideal kingside formation, the time has come for White to improve his rook.

52.♗d1! ♗c3 53.♗d3

The inclusion of the rook in the attack spells the end for Black.

53...♗d6

After 53...♗f6 54.♗e3 ♖g8 55.♖g6 ♖f7 56.♖g4 d4 57.♗f3 White will soon break in.



54.♗f3!

Karpov finishes the attack with precision. 54.♗e3?! would have allowed Black to continue fighting: 54...g5! 55.♗xc3 bxc3 56.♖h8† ♖e7 57.♖e5† ♖e6 58.♗xe6 ♖xe6 59.♖xc3 White is a pawn up but the game continues.

54...♖e7

54...♗f6 55.♗e3 wins, as the black rook blocks the long diagonal, thus preventing the defence seen in the previous note.

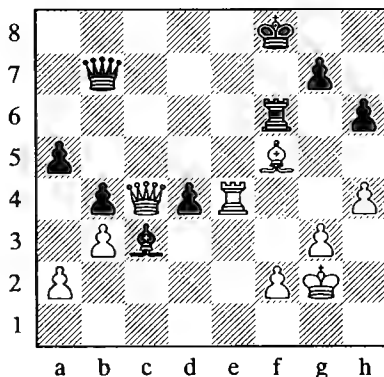
55.♖h8 d4 56.♖c8

The black king is being attacked from all sides. Note the uselessness of his bishop, which contributes nothing to the defence.

56...♗f6 57.♖c5† ♖e8 58.♗f4 ♖b7† 59.♗e4† ♖f7

The cheeky 59...♗e6!? allows a neat finish in 60.♖c4! ♗xe4 61.♖g8† winning the queen. Kasparov probably saw this and decided he did not want this game to appear in puzzle books as well.

60.♖c4† ♖f8



61.♗h7! ♗f7 62.♖e6 ♖d7 63.♖e5 1-0

It is slightly ironic that the move which caused Black's resignation occurred on a dark square. The finish might have been 63...♖d8 64.♖c5† ♗e7 65.♗f4† ♖e8 66.♖c6† ♖d7 67.♖a8† with mate to follow. Karpov is one of the best players of all time in positions with opposite-coloured bishops, and this was one of his finest performances.

In Game 5 Karpov's success continued, as he outplayed Kasparov on the black side of a main line Ruy Lopez to take the lead in the match. The next five games were drawn, although they were all fighting encounters and both players

missed chances along the way. Then in Game 11 Karpov made a terrible blunder as early as move 22, and had to resign just three moves later. The score was even.

In Game 12 Kasparov uncorked a surprise pawn sacrifice in the Taimanov Sicilian, known as the Dely Gambit. Karpov opted for safety and a short draw ensued. In the next two games both players came under some pressure with the black pieces, but both managed to defend. In Game 15 Karpov used the Petroff for the first time in the match, and drew quickly.

Game 16 was one of the defining moments of the match. Kasparov risked the Dely Gambit again. Having analysed it with his team, Karpov came up with a more ambitious counter than before, but it was still not the right medicine. Kasparov remained a pawn down but installed a monstrous knight on d3, and went on to win brilliantly. The game was voted the best of all time by the readers of *Chess Informant*.

After two more draws, Kasparov then doubled his lead after Karpov mishandled what should have been a playable position against the Fianchetto Nimzo-Indian. The champion had just five games in which to claw back a two point deficit. In Game 20 Karpov made a good attempt to press for a win from an equal endgame, but eventually had to settle for a draw on move 85. In the next game he was on the defensive, but managed to draw after Kasparov failed to find the most incisive continuation. Just three games remained, but Karpov had White in two of them.

Game 22 was a must-win for Karpov, and he managed to do just that, driving his kingside pawns up the board in a queenless semi-endgame position. Kasparov did not find the best defensive moves, and Karpov kept his hopes alive. In Kasparov's final game with the white pieces he went for the win, but Karpov defended well.

The situation heading into the final game was a spectator's dream: Kasparov was leading

by one point, but Karpov had the white pieces, and needed to win to tie the match 12–12, in which case the rules stipulated that he would retain his title. He opened with 1.e4, and Kasparov responded with his trusty Scheveningen. It was probably the most famous game of all time featuring that particular opening. Karpov introduced a novelty on move 17 and proceeded to mass his pieces on the kingside in the hope of executing a deadly attack, but Kasparov played some excellent prophylactic moves and later began counterattacking. Karpov lost his way in the complications and resigned on move 42 after blundering in time trouble.

The End of an Era

It took Kasparov seventy two world championship games to fulfil his dream. He struggled in the early stages of the first match, but succeeded in raising his game and adjusting to Karpov's play. He became more adept at holding slightly worse endgames and simplified middlegame positions.

Karpov's biggest problem was the opening. In the second match he only achieved an even score with the white pieces, winning two games, drawing eight and losing two (although the final loss can partially be attributed to playing riskily when he needed to win at all costs). His score of minus two against the Sicilian was catastrophic. With the black pieces Karpov scored one win, eight draws and three losses. The defeats all occurred in the Nimzo-Indian. On more than one occasion he overestimated Kasparov's novelties and played too passively.

Kasparov is widely regarded as the greatest opening player of all time. His opening prowess can be attributed to a number of factors, including his exceptional chess talent, tireless

work ethic and his methods of organizing and motivating his team.

Karpov was obviously not a slouch in the opening, but he was nowhere near Kasparov's level. His opening difficulties in the second match may be partially attributable to the level of exhaustion he suffered during their first match: he may have taken months to recover, which would have meant less time to prepare for the next match. Nevertheless, I believe that the root cause of his opening difficulties lay much deeper.

When Karpov became World Champion, he was head and shoulders above his nearest rivals. In the great majority of his tournaments, all he needed to do was reach playable positions in each of his games, after which his tremendous middlegame and endgame skill would ensure that he would win enough games to finish at the top. It was a successful formula, as evidenced by his unparalleled record of tournament victories, which exceeds even that of Kasparov. But for nine years, Karpov lacked a serious rival who would push him towards the limits of his potential. Had the Fischer – Karpov match taken place, there is no question that Karpov would have become a stronger player, both in the openings and his overall game.

One can only speculate about how the hypothetical Fischer – Karpov match(es) would have affected the outcome of the various “K – K” matches. Kasparov possessed such phenomenal talent and skill that he would surely have won the title eventually, but I estimate that it would have taken him until approximately 1990 to accomplish it.

Before the end of the year Karpov took part in one more event, representing the USSR in the first World Team Championship in Lucerne, Switzerland. Kasparov chose not to participate, so Karpov played on the top board. He was

clearly impressed with Kasparov's handling of the g3 Nimzo-Indian, as he played it himself in rounds one and five, but only managed to draw against Suba and Portisch respectively. In between those games he defeated Xi Jingxuan and Spassky, before resting in round four.

In round six Karpov faced Assem Afifi. The Egyptian IM once drew against Spassky, which was his only other encounter with a world champion.

Game 76

Assem Afifi – Anatoly Karpov

World Team Championship, Lucerne 1985

1.c4 e5

Out of the 128 games in which he faced 1.c4, Karpov only responded with 1...e5 twenty eight times. It is surprising that he did not play it more often, as he made a huge score with it. From his first twelve games, he only drew two and won the other ten! His victims included Ribli, Olafsson, Portisch and Kasparov (in a subsequent world championship match); only a few of the wins occurred in junior events.

Altogether after 1.c4 e5 Karpov won seventeen games, drew nine and lost only two; a remarkable score, even for a player at Karpov's level. Sometimes he began with 1...♘f6 and played ...e5 on the second move; he did excellently with that move order as well, defeating Timman and Korchnoi amongst others.

2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5

Interestingly, Karpov employed the reversed Sicilian only twice. Of course he also faced the Dragon many times with White, and usually did well against it.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♙g2 ♘b6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0

Afifi was probably familiar with Karpov's

previous game in the variation and deviates from Portisch's play.

7.d3

The Hungarian grandmaster held back castling in favour of gaining space on the queenside.

7...♙e7 8.a3 ♙c6 9.b4 a6 10.♙b2?!

It is more usual for this bishop to develop on the other diagonal; indeed, in the present game it fails to make much of an impact.

Not long after this game, Portisch deviated with 10.0-0 against Groszpeter at the 1981 Hungarian Championship.

10...♞d7!?

In reaction to his opponent's last move, Karpov changes his mind and decides to castle long.

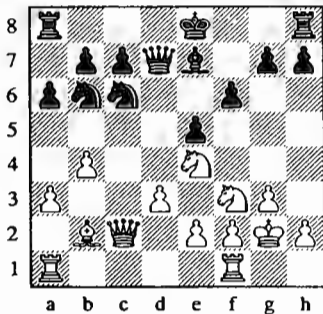
11.♗e4 f6 12.♞c2

12.d4?! does not work due to 12...♗c4!

12...♙h3

Karpov weakens the white kingside.

13.0-0 ♙xg2 14.♙xg2



14...g5!

Karpov does not stop d4, but instead allows it under his own terms.

If 14...0-0-0 15.d4! exd4 16.♞fd1 White wins back the pawn and reaches a decent position.

15.d4

Possibly better was 15.♞fd1!? g4 (15...0-0-0?! 16.d4) 16.♗h4 ♗d4 (After 16...♗d5?! 17.d4 0-0-0 18.♗f5 White has the upper

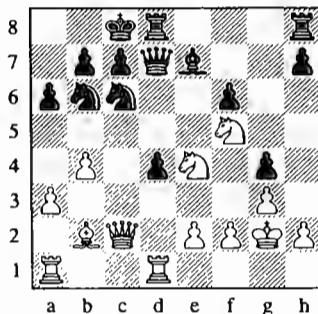
hand.) 17.♙xd4 exd4 18.♞ac1 f5 with a complicated position.

15...g4 16.♗h4 exd4 17.♗f5?!

This tempting but incorrect move will soon allow Black to exchange his weakest piece.

Better was 17.♞fd1! 0-0-0 18.♞ac1 ♙b8 19.♗c5 ♙xc5 20.bxc5 ♗d5 with unclear play.

17...0-0-0 18.♞fd1

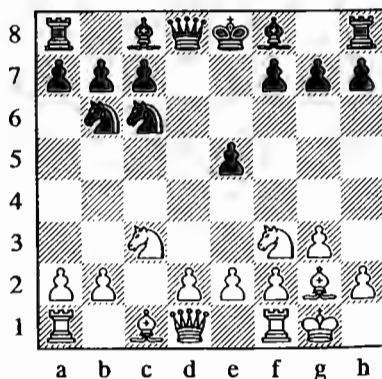


18...♗c4!

Karpov not only gets rid of his problem piece, but also keeps his extra pawn.

19.♗xc7+ ♞xc7 20.♗c5 ♗xb2 21.♞xb2 h5!

Having outplayed his opponent in the centre, Karpov starts an attack which eventually led to victory in Portisch – Karpov, Linares 1981.



7...♙e7 8.a3 ♙c6 9.b4 a6

This was not essential, as after 9...0-0 10.b5

♖d4 White cannot take on e5. Generally speaking, in this line Black either plays ...a5 or does not move the a-pawn at all.

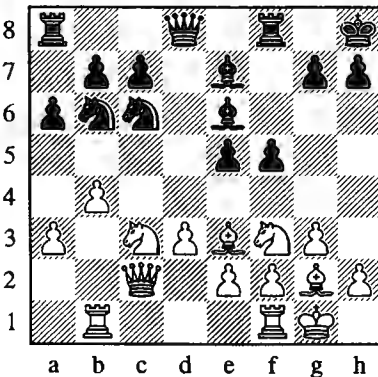
10.d3 0-0 11.♞b1 f5

Karpov gains space and stops ♜e4.

12.♙c3 ♜h8 13.♞c2?!

This rather invites Black's next move.

13.♞c1 was better; Black often plays such a move in the Classical Dragon with reversed colours. 13...♙f6 (After 13...h6 14.♞d1 ♙f6 15.♙c5 ♞e8 16.e4 the position is unclear.) 14.♜g5!? (White can also consider 14.♙g5 when the bishop exchange helps to relieve any congestion in his position.) 14...♙g8 15.♙xc6!? bxc6 16.♜f3 The position holds chances for both sides.



13...♜d4!

Karpov gains space and gets rid of the slight weakness on e5.

14.♙xd4 exd4 15.♜a4 ♜xa4

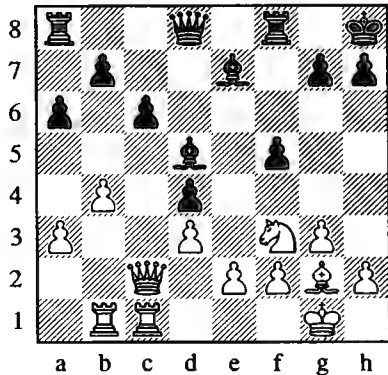
Black does not want the knight to arrive on c5.

16.♞xa4 ♙d5

White is not yet objectively worse, nevertheless Karpov has made some achievements

and has plenty of scope to improve his position further.

17.♙f1 c6 18.♞c2



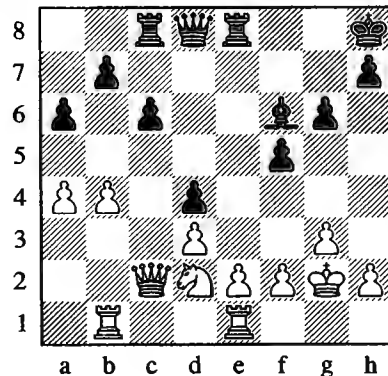
18...♙e8!

With this simple and strong move, Karpov prepares to build up on the e-file.

19.♞e1 ♙f6 20.♜d2 ♙xg2 21.♜xg2 ♞c8

In the next phase of the game Karpov improves his position a bit with each move. He also makes it harder for White to play b5.

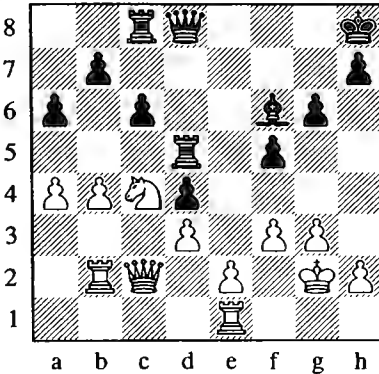
22.a4 g6



23.f3?

This is a completely unnecessary weakening of White's position, which also takes away the f3-square from his knight. The position would have been more or less equal after 23.♘f3 or 23.♙c4.

23...♙e5 24.♘c4 ♘d5 25.♙b2



25...♙e7

Over the last few moves Karpov switches his attention to the queenside. Now White must take into consideration the ideas of ...b5, fixing his b-pawn on the same colour square as Black's bishop.

26.♙b1 ♘g7

Karpov improves his king a bit.

27.b5

White has had enough of waiting, and he elects to do something.

Closing the queenside with 27.a5 would have been rather passive, and after 27...♙b5 28.♘b6 ♙c7 29.♙c4 ♙d6 Black can build his position by means of ...♙d8, ...♙e7 and ...♙c7.

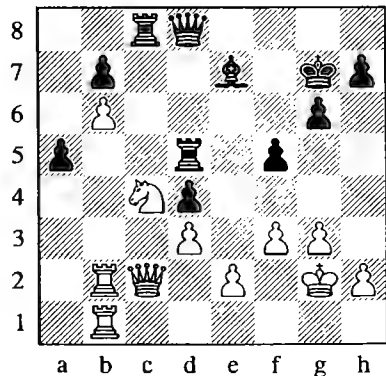
27...♙b5 28.♙b5 a5!

White's b-pawn is a long-term weakness, so Karpov wisely leaves it on the board. By keeping the queenside files closed, he also restricts the enemy rooks.

29.b6

In almost thirty moves Afifi will lose this pawn. Still, leaving it on the b5-square would also have been problematic for White.

After 29.♙b3 ♙c5 Black can improve his position with ...b6 followed by a bishop transfer to d8 and c7. There is also a second strong plan available in 29...♙dc5 30.♙a2 b6. Now after 31.♙c2 Black can switch his attention to the kingside with 31...f4 or 31...h5. And if White plays 31.f4, Black keeps an edge with 31...♙d5† 32.♘f2 ♙e6.



29...♙b4!

With this move Karpov defends the a5-pawn, cuts off White's heavy pieces from the defence of the b6-pawn, and clears the e-file.

30.♙a2 ♙f6 31.f4 h6 32.h4 ♙e7 33.♙d1 ♙c6 34.♙f1 ♙e6!

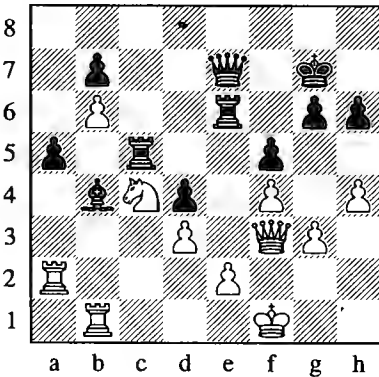
From this ideal square the rook exerts pressure against both of White's weak pawns.

35.♙f3 ♙c5

Karpov was probably already planning an eventual exchange sacrifice, although there is no need to rush into it yet as White is not threatening to do anything.

36.♘f1

36. ♖f2 could be met by 36... ♙c3.



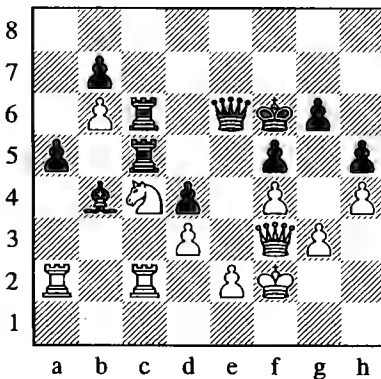
36... ♙f6!?

The position is closed, so Black can afford to advance his king like this. Perhaps Karpov was hoping to provoke his opponent into an unsound attacking attempt.

37. ♖b3 ♜ec6 38. ♖bb2 ♖e6 39. ♜c2 h5
40. ♙f2 ♙g7

I would guess that Karpov was short of time and wanted to get past move 40 before having a proper think about how to improve his position further.

41. ♜cb2 ♙f6 42. ♜c2



42... ♖d5!

Karpov cannot improve any of his pieces, so he exchanges one of his opponent's best ones. With no queens on the board Black will be much freer to use his king.

43. ♖xd5

White could also have considered waiting for Black to exchange on f3 with a view to recapturing with the e-pawn. This would have enabled his king to utilize the e2-square to get to the queenside. On the other hand his pawn structure would be compromised, and in the event of a future exchange sacrifice on c4, Black will benefit from having a passed d-pawn.

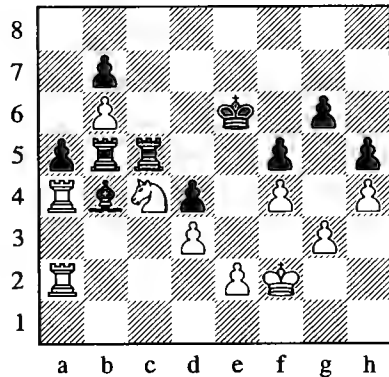
43... ♜xd5 44. ♜a4

The rook is passive here, but at least it prevents the black a-pawn from advancing. It is hard to suggest anything else for it to do in this position.

44... ♜b5 45. ♜ca2

If 45. ♜aa2 ♙c3 46. ♙f3 ♜cc5 47. e4 ♜b1 the rook invades and Black continues to press.

45... ♜cc5 46. ♙f3 ♜d5 47. ♙f2 ♙e6 48. ♙f3
♜dc5 49. ♙f2



49... ♙d5

Karpov centralizes his king, and the exchange sacrifice becomes more and more tempting.

50.♖c2 ♜c6! 51.♔f3 ♜bc5!

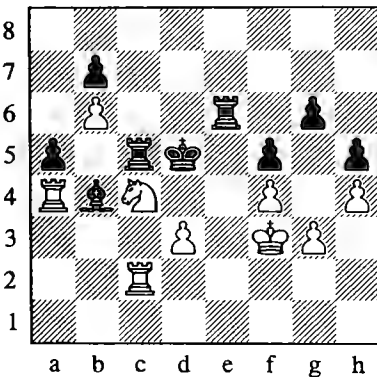
Now Black really is ready to take on c4.

52.e3?

White tries to take measures against the coming sacrifice, but in doing so he worsens his position as the black pieces now have additional lines along which to invade.

The best chance was: 52.♜ca2 ♜xc4 53.dxc4† ♔c5! By keeping his remaining rook on the board, Black obtains excellent winning chances. (Instead after 53...♔xc4?! 54.♜c2† ♔b5 55.♜xc6 ♔xc6 56.e4 dxe3 57.♔xe3 ♔xb6 Black is better but White should be able to hold.) 54.♜xa5† ♔xa5 55.♜xa5† ♔xc4 56.♜e5 ♜xb6 57.♜e7 ♜b3† 58.♔f2 ♜b2 White is in trouble.

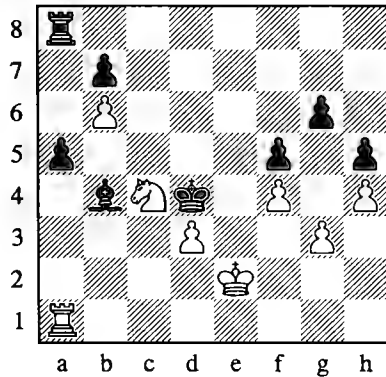
52...dxe3 53.♔xe3 ♜e6† 54.♔f3



54...♔d4!

The king has become the most dominant piece on the board.

55.♜e2 ♜xc2 56.♔xe2 ♔c3 57.♜a1 ♜c8 58.♜c1† ♔d4 59.♜a1 ♜e8† 60.♔f3 ♜a8 61.♔c2



61...a4!

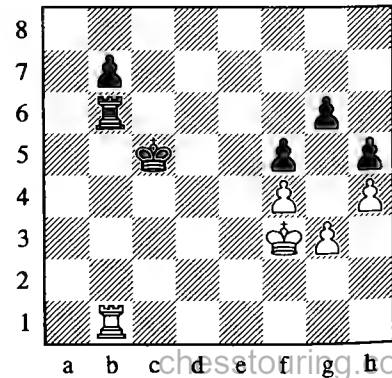
White was able to stop the enemy king from becoming too powerful, but the addition of the advancing a-pawn is too much for the defence to bear.

62.♔e3 ♜e8

Karpov simplifies to a winning rook ending. Another route to victory was 62...♔c3 63.♔c2† ♔c5 64.♜a2 ♔xb6 winning.

62...♔c3 was also good enough: 63.♔d1† (63.♜c1† ♔b3) 63...♔c2 64.♜a2† ♔b3 65.♜b2† ♔a3 66.♜c2 (66.d4 ♔c3) 66...♜a6 And Black wins easily.

63.♜xa4 ♜xe3† 64.♔f2 ♜xd3 65.♜xb4† ♔c5 66.♜b1 ♜d6 67.♔e3 ♜e6† 68.♔f3 ♜xb6



Such rook endings with a spare queenside pawn can sometimes prove difficult to win, but in this one Black's task is simple. All he has to do is put his rook on d6, where it cuts off the white king while also guarding the g6-pawn, and then advance his b-pawn.

69.♖c1† ♜d6 70.♞d1† ♜c7

0–1

Afifi obviously understood what was coming and saw no reason to prolong his suffering. Karpov drew his final two games to finish on 5/7; a good result, if not a spectacular one.

Despite losing his title, the quality of Karpov's play in 1985 was as high as ever. The only problem was that Kasparov had risen to a whole new level. They played a total of thirty six games in 1985, including the final twelve of their first match. In total Karpov only scored three wins to Kasparov's seven, so it is hard to argue with the fact that the latter had taken over as the strongest player in the world.

1985 Summary

First World Championship match versus Kasparov, Moscow (part 2): 5/12 (+0 =10 -2)

Amsterdam (1st place): 7/10 (+4 =6 -0)

Second World Championship match versus Kasparov, Moscow: lost 11-13 (+3 =16 -5)

World Team Championship, Lucerne (Board one): 5/7 (+3 =4 -0)

Total 52.8% (+10 =36 -7)



□ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

Epilogue

Although Karpov had lost his title and was no longer the best player in the world, in a sense his career was only just beginning, as he finally had a rival who would push him beyond his limits. Fortunately for the game of chess, and ultimately for Kasparov himself, Karpov had no intention of letting the new king rest on his throne. Karpov could easily have stopped working on his game, enjoyed the life of a millionaire and still continued to achieve better tournament results than most professionals could ever dream of. Instead he worked harder than ever before and made it his mission to reclaim his title from Kasparov. The battle was over, but the war was just beginning...

Classification

There are many themes that can influence the course of a chess game. In the following list you can find the game numbers in which each element can be found. A bolded number indicates that the theme was especially relevant in that game.

Attacking the king **12, 14, 15, 17, 29, 45, 50, 57, 64, 67, 71, 75**

Attacking on the a- or h-file **13, 22, 24, 25, 29**

Back rank **11, 40**

Bishop on the long diagonal **15, 22, 33, 67**

Bishop pair **5, 15, 30, 32, 34, 66**

Blockade **21, 36, 37**

Breakthrough **30, 51**

Checkmating in the endgame **14, 25, 51, 54, 58, 60, 68, 71**

Connected passed pawns **15, 30, 72**

Delaying castling **68**

Dominating bishop versus knight **33, 45, 68, 69, 76**

Dominating knight versus bishop **3, 22, 46, 56, 57, 60, 61, 71**

Doubled pawns **6, 13, 18, 23, 36**

Exchanging a key defensive piece **2, 17, 21, 23, 28, 37, 61, 71**

Fixing a weakness **12, 52, 59**

Fortress **41, 43**

Good knight **17, 20, 46, 47, 48, 51, 60**

Isolated pawn **16, 27, 31, 32, 41, 47, 53, 60, 71, 75**

King activation **14, 16, 25, 26, 38, 43, 64, 73, 76**

Kingside play **14, 15, 31, 49**

Manoeuvre (king) **14, 29, 31, 36**

Manoeuvre (knight) **1, 2, 6, 17, 35, 49, 51, 59, 60, 68, 74**

Manoeuvre (rook) **11, 17, 27, 34, 56, 63, 65, 75**

Material advantage **10, 11, 16, 23, 24, 31, 39, 41, 47**

Material imbalance **34, 41**

Minority attack **71**

Open file **2, 3, 21, 22, 31, 35, 37, 63, 64**

Opposite-coloured bishops **12, 25, 28, 38, 42, 43, 64, 65, 75**

Paralysing one of the opponent's pieces 11, 36
Passed pawn (central) 15, 40, 55, **56**, 58, 68, **69**
Passed pawn (distant) **8**, 9, **19**, **20**, **33**, **41**, **43**, **63**, **73**, **76**
Pawns versus pieces **72**
Playing on both flanks **4**, 15, 26, 28, **29**, 35, **37**, 42, 44, 47, 57, 59, 64, 72
Pin **2**, 4, 8, **53**
Positional sacrifice (pawn) **8**, 45, 63, **67**, **74**
Positional sacrifice (exchange) **40**, **54**

Queenside play 1, 7, 8, **9**, 10, **23**, 24, 26, 33, 52, 58, **73**, 74, 76

Rook(s) on seventh or second rank' **4**, 7, 21, **31**, 32, 44, **62**, **71**

Space gaining **4**, **9**, **29**, **37**, 40, 42, 49, 52, 53, 55, 62, 65
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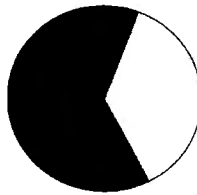
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Statistics

Karpov's results as World Champion are as follows.

1975: 66.3% (+15 =27 -1)
1976: 72.0% (+28 =29 -2)
1977: 77.0% (+36 =25 -2)
1978: 56.4% (+12 =29 -6)
1979: 69.1% (+20 =25 -2)
1980: 66.7% (+30 =40 -5)
1981: 65.3% (+21 =35 -3)
1982: 64.9% (+22 =30 -5)
1983: 65.8% (+21 =37 -2)
1984: 60.5% (+15 =45 -2)
1985: 50.0% (+7 =32 -7)

Total 65.4% (+227 =354 -37)



☐ Wins ■ Draws ■ Losses

Total score with White: 71.9% (+156 =144 -17)

Total score with Black: 58.5% (+71 =210 -20)

Karpov's championship matches took place in the years 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984 and 1985. It is natural that these events would have pulled his percentage down, as can be most clearly seen in 1985 when 37 of his 46 games came against Kasparov. Even so, there were only two years in which his score dipped below 60%.

Scores against Individual Opponents

Karpov's results as World Champion are as follows.

Kasparov (75 games):	50% (+8 =59 -8)
Korchnoi (51 games):	54.9% (+12 =32 -7)
Timman (28 games):	57.1% (+7 =18 -3)
Portisch (26 games):	63.5% (+8 =17 -1)
Andersson (20 games):	57.5% (+4 =15 -1)
Ljubojevic (20 games):	70% (+9 =10 -1)
Hort (18 games):	66.7% (+7 =10 -1)
Kavalek (15 games):	60% (+3 =12 -0)
Larsen (15 games):	63.3% (+6 =7 -2)
Spassky (15 games):	66.7% (+5 =10 -0)
Hübner (14 games):	67.9% (+5 =9 -0)
Miles (14 games):	78.6% (+9 =4 -1)
Petrosian (13 games):	53.8% (+1 =12 -0)
Tal (12 games):	54.2% (+1 =11 -0)
Sosonko (11 games):	68.2% (+4 =7 -0)
Smyslov (10 games):	60% (+2 =8 -0)
Balashov (9 games):	72.2% (+4 =5 -0)
Romanishin (9 games):	72.2% (+4 =5 -0)
Browne (8 games):	62.5% (+2 =6 -0)
Torre (7 games):	50% (+2 =3 -2)
Ribli (7 games):	57.1% (+2 =4 -1)
Vaganian (7 games):	64.3% (+2 =5 -0)
Seirawan (6 games):	50% (+1 =4 -1)
Glisic (6 games):	66.7% (+2 =4 -0)
Olafsson (6 games):	66.7% (+3 =2 -1)
Quinteros (6 games):	83.3% (+4 =2 -0)
Beliavsky (5 games):	60% (+2 =2 -1)
Geller (5 games):	60% (+2 =2 -1)
Gheorghiu (5 games):	80% (+3 =2 -0)
Nunn (5 games):	90% (+4 =1 -0)

Tournament Record

While World Champion, Karpov won outright first place in twenty five tournaments:

1975 Ljubljana/Portoroz, Milan
1976 Škopje, Amsterdam, Montilla, USSR Championship
1977 Bad Lauterberg, Las Palmas, Tilburg
1979 Waddinxveen, Tilburg
1980 Bad Kissingen, Bugojno, Amsterdam, Tilburg, Buenos Aires
1981 Linares, Moscow
1982 Tilburg
1983 USSR Championship, Hannover, Tilburg
1984 London, Oslo
1985 Amsterdam

In addition, he shared first place with a single rival in four other events:

1978 Bugojno
1979 Montreal
1982 London, Turin

He finished second in Manila 1976, equal second in Amsterdam 1981 and Linares 1983, equal third in Mar del Plata 1982, and equal fourth in Leningrad 1977.

Tournament Summary

During his reign as World Champion, Karpov won 85.3% of his tournaments (29/34). No other world champion won as many individual tournaments during his title reign, both in terms of the outright number and as a percentage. Kasparov tended to win tournaments by wider margins, but slightly less often.