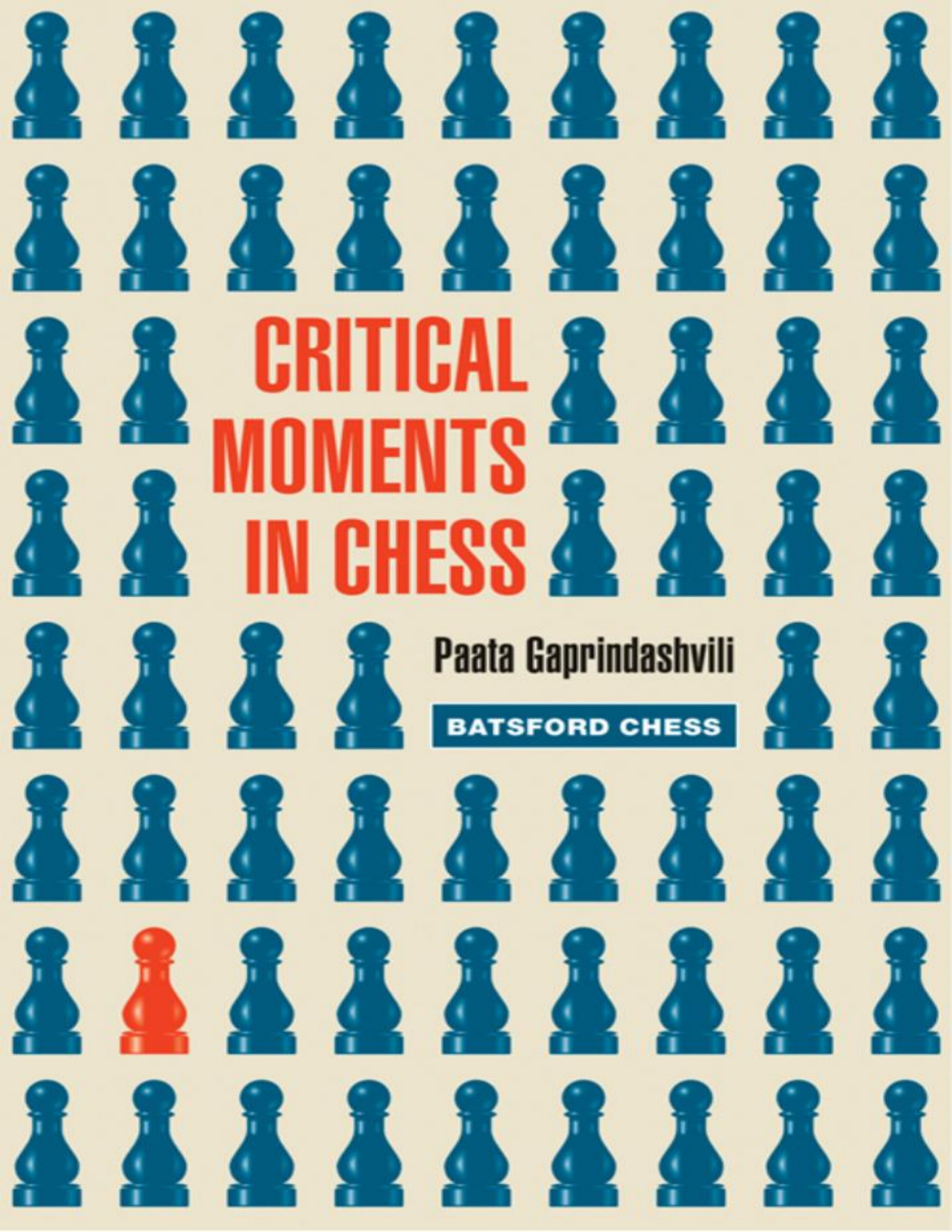
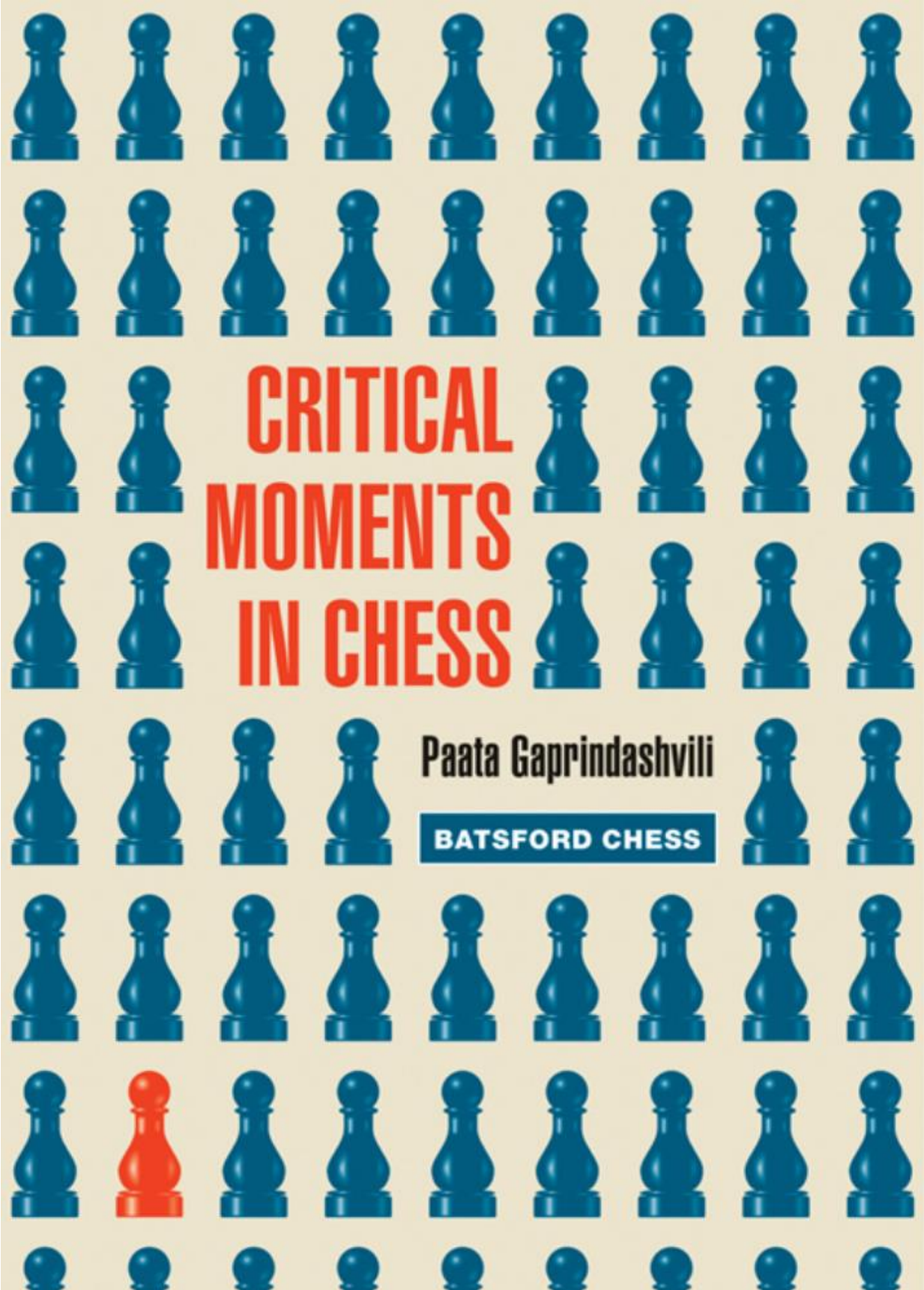


The background is a chessboard with a light beige color. It is populated with 79 blue pawns and 1 red pawn. The pawns are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some missing to create space for the text. The red pawn is located in the 7th row, 2nd column.

CRITICAL MOMENTS IN CHESS

Paata Gaprindashvili

BATSFORD CHESS



The background of the entire image is a chessboard with a light beige color. It is populated with blue pawns. In the first row, there are 9 blue pawns. In the second row, there are 9 blue pawns. In the third row, there are 8 blue pawns, with the title text centered between the 2nd and 3rd columns. In the fourth row, there are 8 blue pawns, with the author's name and publisher's name centered between the 4th and 5th columns. In the fifth row, there are 9 blue pawns. In the sixth row, there are 9 blue pawns. In the seventh row, there are 9 blue pawns, with the first pawn in the 2nd column being red. In the eighth row, there are 9 blue pawns.

CRITICAL MOMENTS IN CHESS

Paata Gaprindashvili

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Critical Moments in Chess

Paata Gaprindashvili

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From the Author

Dear Reader,

Before you is a book dedicated to a very important problem, but one that has hardly been looked at in chess literature – the problem of critical moments in the game.

The book consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 gives readers an idea of critical moments, the reasons for their occurrence, and acquaints them with their types. In the following Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 detailed analysis is given of critical moments, as well as a list of methods utilised by chess players at critical moments of the struggle. Each chapter contains a large number of exercises for independent solving. Many of these are not so easy, while some are rather difficult. But it is not so important how many positions you manage to solve, the importance of the work you do on the book lies in the process. You will have a better feel for critical moments. Your understanding of chess will rise to a higher level, also increasing your class of play. Apart from this, you will find quite a lot of advice and practical recommendations. For strong chess players as well, this is a good opportunity to practice, to hone your skills.

First, carefully review the introductory articles to all the chapters, then go back and start solving the puzzles. In this way, you will work your way through the first 152 exercises, after which you can go over to the ‘Exercises’ chapter. Here there will be no tips. You will not know to which chapter the theme of this or that position relates, you yourself will have to deal with that and

decide what to do. Run a pencil through the numbers of those exercises on which you have worked – this will help you not to miss a single position. All the examples are from practical play. Unless otherwise stated it is White to play. () indicates the degree of difficulty of the exercise.*

It is desirable to solve the positions on a chessboard (and not from the diagram), without moving the pieces and giving yourself a reasonable amount of time for reflection, i.e. to work in conditions as close as possible to practical play.

It is also necessary to mention that in the book we do not use such signs as (!?) – ‘interesting move’ and (?!) – ‘dubious move’. The author considers that a move can be either neutral, or accurate – (!), or strong – !, or very strong – !!, and, respectively, incorrect – (?), weak – ? and a blunder – ??

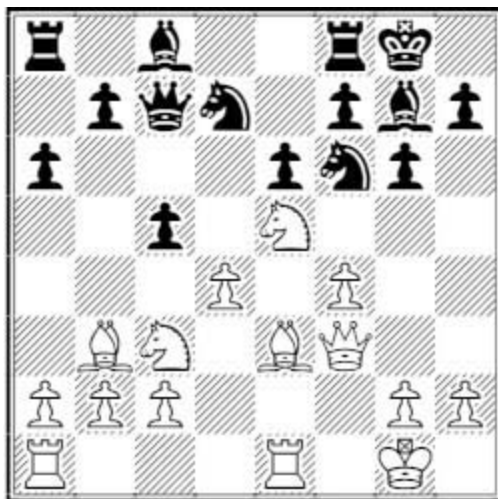
Here’s to your success!

1

Critical moments

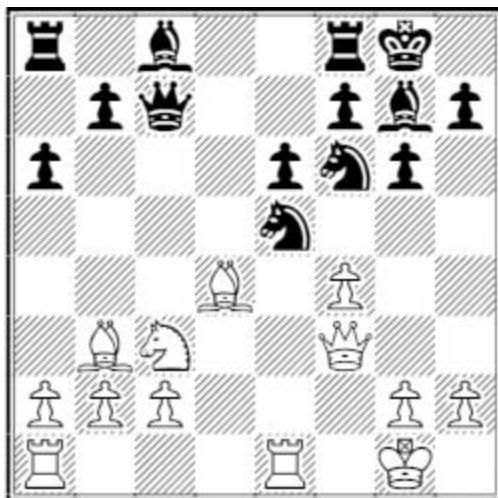
Almost every game has its own critical moments. Moments, where you have to decide questions about the initiative, advantage, where situations of conflict arise. Such moments have great significance, having an influence on the further course of the struggle. In games there will usually be 2-3 critical moments. They will arise in very different situations, but most frequently during 1) the struggle for the initiative; 2) development of the initiative, creation of the attack; 3) delivery of a decisive blow.

*Tal – Bilek
Miskolc, 1963*



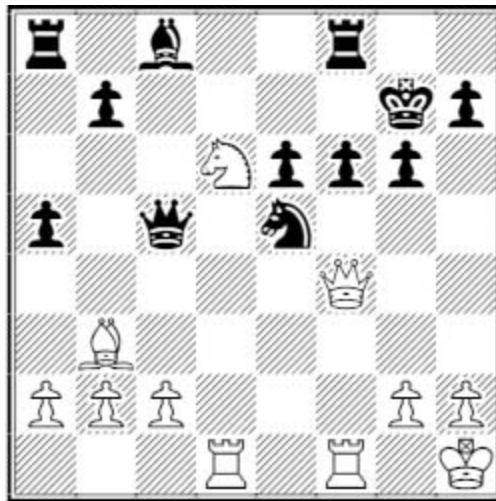
The opponents have come out of the opening. Black must solve the problem of his queenside development. 13 ... b5 is no good for

this purpose because of 14 dc! (after 14 ♔xa8? ♙b7 Black stands better) ♙b7 15 c6 ♘xe5 16 fe ♙xc6 17 ef ♙xf3 18 fg ♖fd8 19 gf with advantage for White – here three minor pieces are superior in strength to a queen. Therefore the strongest continuation was 13 ... b6! 13 ... cxd4? Essentially an incorrect decision, since with this exchange he enhances the activity of the opponent's pieces. 14 ♙xd4 ♘xe5



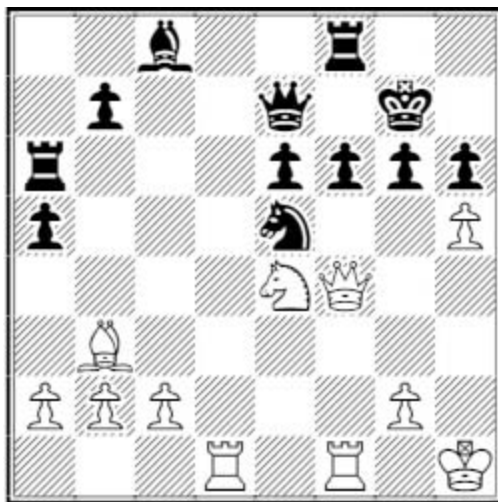
The first critical moment. How to capture? 15 fxe5! With this capture and the associated pawn sacrifice White gains: 1) space to activate his pieces (the knight obtains the central square e4, the rook – the e- and f-files); 2) time (Black has to spend some time in order to eliminate the important e5 pawn); 3) a weakening of the opponent's king's cover (a capture on e5 inevitably leads to the exchange of his dark-squared bishop). In short, the move in the game creates real prerequisites for the seizing of the initiative. The other capture – 15 ♙xe5, allows Black after 15 ... ♔b6+ 16 ♔h1 ♙d7 and 17 ... ♙c6 to complete his development comfortably and solve his opening problems. 15 ... ♘d7 16 ♘e4! Just in time! The opponent threatened with the move 16 ... ♘c5! to neutralise the white knight – an important attacking piece. 16 ... ♙xe5 Black cannot allow the invasion of the knight on f6. 17 ♙xe5 ♔xe5 We get the impression that I.Bilek, in going in for this position, assessed it as being quite pleasant for him. However, White, having

the initiative, has a way of increasing the pressure. 18 ♖ad1 Activating the rook with tempo (he threatens 19 ♖xd7). 18 ... ♔g7 19 ♞d6 ♛c5+ 20 ♔h1 ♞e5 20 ... ♞f6 was not possible because of 21 ♛xf6+. 21 ♛f4 He should pay attention to Tal's manner of play – with each move he improves the positions of his pieces. 21 ... f6 22 ♖f1 Identifying the weakest link in his opponent's defence – the f6 square. 22 ... a5 Played with the intention of driving away the white knight from its strong position by means of ♖a8-a6, and likewise, at a convenient moment, to advance the a-pawn even further.



The second critical moment. There is the striking move 23 ♞e8+, but after 23 ... ♖xe8 24 ♛xf6+ ♔g8 (24 ... ♔h6? 25 ♖f4) 25 ♖de1 (25 ♖d8 ♞d7? 26 ♞xe6+!; 25 ... ♖xd8 26 ♛xd8+ ♔g7 27 ♔f6+, draw) ♖f8 26 ♔xf8+ (26 ♞xe6+? ♞xe6 27 ♛xe6+ ♞f7) ♛xf8 27 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 28 ♖xe5 ♔e7 White has nothing concrete. So how does he generate an initiative? 23 h4! ♖a6 23 ... a4 makes no sense because of the simple 24 ♞xa4, while the slower 23 ... h5 allows the opponent to carry out the knight sacrifice idea – 24 ♞e8+ ♖xe8 25 ♛xf6+ ♔h6 (25 ... ♔h7 26 ♖de1; 25 ... ♔g8 26 ♖fe1) 26 ♛f4+ ♔g7 27 ♖de1 ♖f8 28 ♛xf8+ ♛xf8 29 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 30 ♖xe5 – the inclusion of the moves h4 and h5 makes Black's position difficult. 24 ♞e4 ♛e7 25 h5 h6 25 ... a4 would be bad because of 26 h6+ ♔h8 27 ♞xf6 ♞d7 28 ♖xd7

♖xd7 29 ♔e5 ♖xf6 30 ♖xf6 ♔g8 31 ♖g5 ♔e8 32 ♖f1 ♖a8 33 ♖f6 ♖f8 34 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 35 ♖xe6+; if 25 ... gh, then 26 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 27 ♖g3+, while on 25 ... g5 M.Tal intended to reply 26 ♖g3 with numerous threats.



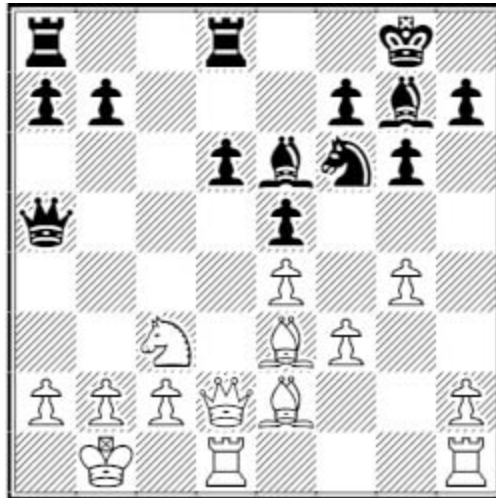
The third critical moment. You sense that the position is ripe for the decisive blow, but for the present the capture on f6 does not work. What to do? 26 ♖g3! Retreating still further strengthens the queen, rook and knight! 26 ... a4 At last Black carries out his threat, but already it is too late. If he were first to play 26 ... ♖c7, then would have followed 27 hg a4 28 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 (28 ... ab 29 ♘h5+ ♔g8 30 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 31 g7+) 29 ♖xf6 ♔xf6 30 g7! ♖xg7 31 ♖f1+, winning the queen. 27 ♖xf6! Freeing the f1 square for the other rook with tempo. 27 ... ♖xf6 28 ♖xe5 axb3 29 axb3! Black's rook and bishop cannot take part in the defence of the king, and this means that White has in this part of the board a great advantage in fire-power. It seems there is no satisfactory continuation: 29 ... ♔f7 30 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 31 ♖c7+; 29 ... gh 30 ♘xf6 (30 ♖f1? ♖a5!) ♖xf6 31 ♖g3+ (!) 29 ... b6 Preparing 30 ... ♖a5. 30 b4 Suppressing any attempts at activity. 1-0

Conditionally, critical moments can be divided into three groups:
 1) clear, when the object of conflict is present, and the conflict

obvious; 2) concealed, where the object of conflict and the conflict itself are, as it were, not present. Let's look at them.

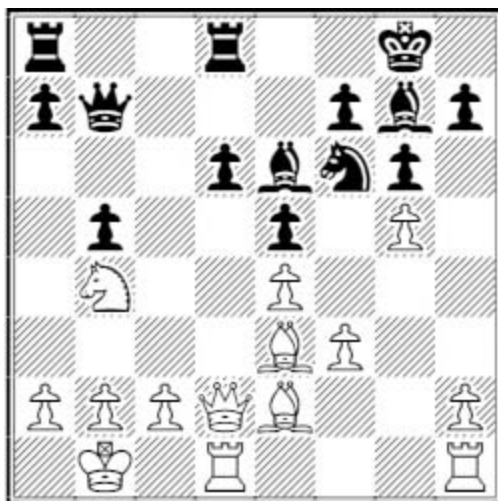
– clear critical moments

*Tokarev – Gufeld
Kiev, 1954*

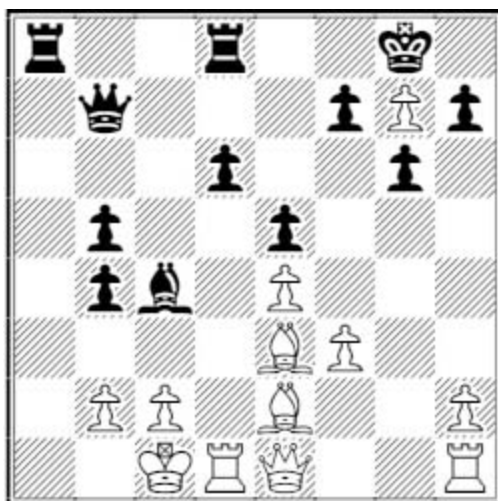


The struggle revolves around the d5 square (the object of the conflict). If White consolidates his pieces there – he will obtain a stable advantage whereas the liberating d6-d5 will lead to an overall improvement in the black pieces throughout his whole position. But 14 ... d5 for the present does not work because of the possibility of an intermediate check: 15 ♖xd5 ♖xd2 16 ♖xf6+. 14 ... b5 The aim of this move is clear – to drive the knight away from c3. 15 ♖d5 Taking the pawn (15 ♖xb5) would be risky – opening the b-file, while 15 g5 is no good because of the counterattack 15 ... b4! 15 ... ♔a6 After 15 ... ♔xd2 16 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 17 ♖xd2 a6 (17 ... d5? 18 ed ♖xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♖d1) 18 ♖hd1 ♖e7 White has the better endgame, he dictates the terms – and will have the possibility of increasing the pressure by means of ♖e3-b6-a5-b4 or f3-f4-f5. 16 ♖b4? White overdoes it – he wants at all costs to maintain the d5 square for his pieces. Meanwhile, by continuing 16 h4!, he would firmly seize the

initiative: 16 ... ♖xd5 17 ed h5 18 ♖g5 hg 19 fg with an attack. 16 ... ♔b7 17 g5

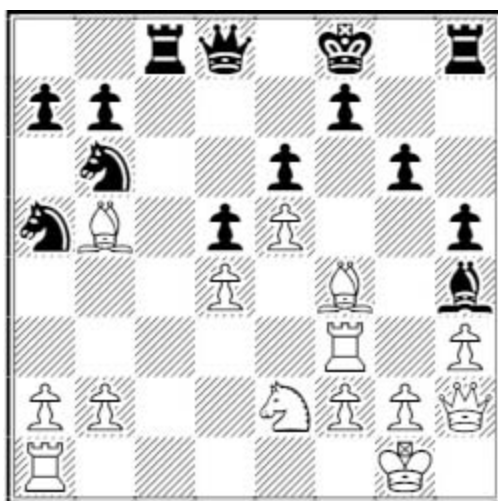


It seems as though the battle for the central squares is over – White has finally taken control of them, however ... 17 ... a5!! Blow for blow, and otherwise, counterattack! E.Gufeld plays on principle! 18 gxf6? And V.Tokarev does not want to retreat! He hopes to beat off the attack and retain his extra piece. In case of 18 ♖d5 ♖xd5 19 ed ♖f5 20 ♖d3! ♖xd3 21 ♔xd3 ♖dc8 or 18 ♖d3 ♖h5 (19 ♖c5? dc! 20 ♔xd8+ ♖xd8 21 ♖xd8+ ♖f8 22 ♖xc5 ♔c7 23 ♖xf8+ ♔g7) Black would have an excellent game. All the same the lesser evil was to recognise his opponent's success in this microduel and return the knight to d5. But even better would be, in general, not to have moved it away from there in the first place! 18 ... axb4 19 fxg7 ♖xa2+ 20 ♔c1 ♖c4 21 ♔e1 Preparing a refuge for the king on the opposite flank. 21 b3 loses – 21 ... ♔a6 22 ♖de1 ♖dc8 23 ♖d2 ♖xc2+ 24 ♖xc2 ♔a2+. The result of the microduel: White has gained a piece, Black – an attack.



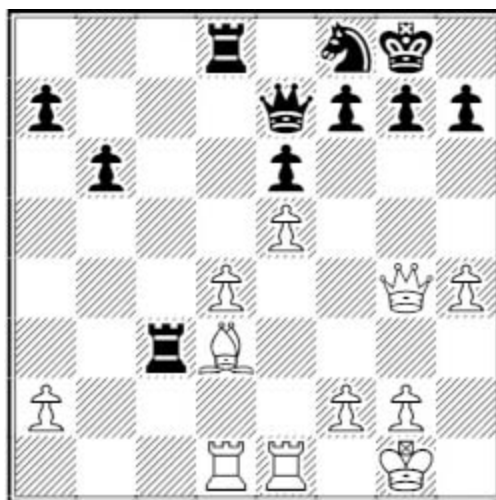
21 ... d5! Activating an inactive piece! Now all Black's pieces take part in the attack! 22 ♖d3 On 22 ♖xc4 would decide 22 ... ♜a1+ 23 ♔d2 dc+, while on 22 ed sufficient is 22 ... ♜a1+ 23 ♔d2 ♜xd5+ 24 ♖d3 ♜xd3+. 22 ... dxe4 23 fxe4 ♜xe4 24 ♜e2 b3! The power of coordination! The attack develops automatically – Black 'clicks' on the white 'keys'! 25 ♜he1 If 25 ♔b1, then 25 ... ♖xd3 26 cd ♜a4 27 ♔c1 ♜c8+. 25 ... ♜a1+ 26 ♔d2 ♖xd3 27 cxd3 ♜b4 mate.

*Sveshnikov – Palatnik
Kiev, 1973*

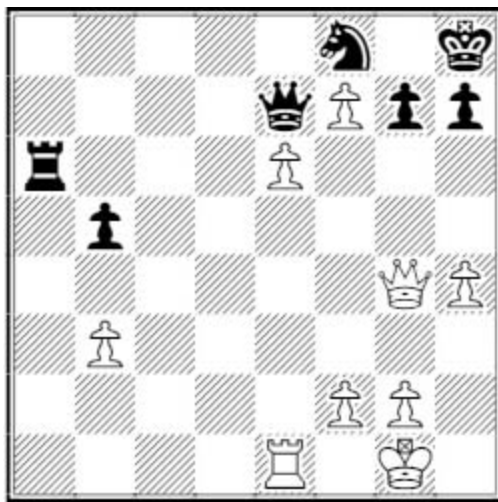


White intends to play ♖b5-d3, b2-b3 and obtain a clear advantage. 19 ... ♘ac4 Black decides to prevent this: to exchange the opponent's bishop and in addition, to have at his disposal the d5 square. Thus arises the situation of conflict, the object of which is the light-squared bishop. 20 b3! a6 21 bxc4 dxc4 Both partners go for the basic (principal) continuation, hoping to win this microbattle (microduel). After 21 ... ab 22 cb ♖c2 23 ♘c1 Black's activity is at an end. 22 d5! It seems that S.Palatnik missed this move. White's idea is concealed in the following variations: 22 ... ♙xd5 23 ♖e3! ♙xb5 24 ♖xb6 ♙xb6 25 ♙f4; 22 ... ed 23 e6. Therefore he has to take with the knight and let the bishop out of the 'cage'. 22 ... ♘xd5 23 ♖a4 The extra piece quickly decides the outcome of the game. 23 ... ♔g7 24 ♖d2 b5 25 ♖c2 ♜f8 26 ♘c3! ♘b4 27 ♙f4! ♘xc2 28 ♙h6+ ♔g8 29 ♘e4 ♘d4 30 ♜f6! ♘f5 31 ♜xf5 ef 32 ♘g5 ♖xg5 33 ♖xg5 ♙xg5 33 ... f6 34 ♙xg6+ ♔h8 35 ♙xh5+ ♔g8 36 ♙g6+ ♔h8 37 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 38 ef. 34 ♙xg5 ... 1-0

*Korchnoi – Najdorf
Wijk aan Zee, 1971*



23 ♖c4 allows him to advance his queenside pawns with tempo ...
 23 ♖c4! The microduel is approaching. Carrying out d4-d5 is the
 logical plan in such positions. 23 ... b5 24 ♖b3! a5 25 d5! a4?
 Here Black should really attend to studying the situation,
 acknowledging his failure in this microduel and go with the
 principal (main) path, i.e. make a concession and play 25 ... ed,
 reconciling himself to an inferior position: 26 ♖xd5 (26 ... ♖a4 27
 ♕f3 ♖xh4? 28 ♕xf7+!), but M.Najdorf, a great optimist by
 nature, has confidence in his calculations. 26 dxe6! On 26 d6?, 26
 ... ♕a7! was in store. 26 ... axb3 No good is 26 ... ♖xe6 – 27 ♖
 xe6 ♖xd1 28 ♖xf7+ ♕xf7 29 ♕f5+ ♕f6 30 ef ♖xe1+ 31 ♕h2,
 and White wins. 27 exf7 + ♕h8 He couldn't play 27 ... ♕xf7
 because of 28 ♖xd8 ♕xd8 29 e6+ ♕g8 30 e7 ♕e8 31 ♕b4 ♖a8
 32 ♕xb3+ ♕h8 33 ef♕+ ♕xf8 34 ♕xb5 winning. 28 ♖xd8 ♕
 xd8 29 axb3 ♕e7 If 29 ... ♖xb3, then 30 e6 ♕e7 (30 ... ♖g6 31
 e7) 31 ♕g5 ♕b4 32 ♕e5 ♕e7 (32 ... ♖g6 33 e7) 33 ♕b8
 (creating the threat 34 ♕xf8+) h6 34 ♕e8 ♕b4 35 ♖f1 ♖b1 36 ♖
 xb1 ♕xb1 37 ♕h2, and it's all over. 30 e6 ♖a6



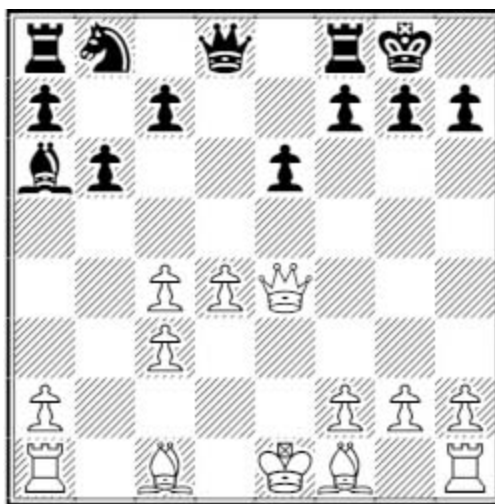
This is the position for which both players were aiming. Possibly,
 M.Najdorf thought that he would win the e6 pawn – and with it
 also the game. 31 f4!! A remarkable resource! It becomes obvious
 that V.Korchnoi has delved deeper into the position. 31 ... h6 Alas,
 the pawn is untouchable: 31 ... ♖xe6 32 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 (32 ... ♖xe6

33 ♖xe6) 33 ♖xe6 ♘xe6 34 f5 ♘f8 35 h5! g6 (or 35 ... h6 36 g4 g6 37 f6 gh 38 gh) 36 h6!, and the only thing left for Black is to resign. 32 f5 Now White's game is winning, but time trouble affects the play. 32 ... ♘h7 33 ♖c1 ♖a8 34 ♖f4 ♘f6 35 ♖c7 ♖b4 36 ♖c8+ The two opponents had consumed a lot of time calculating the variations. This could explain the following mutual errors. 36 ... ♔h7! 36 ... ♖xc8? 37 ♖xc8+ ♔h7 38 f8=♘+. 37 ♖xa8?? Missing the win. 37 ... ♖d4+ 38 ♔f1 ♖f4+?? 38 ... ♖d3+! would have made a draw. 39 ♔e2 ♖e5+ 40 ♔d1 1-0

As we can see, in positions of the first group, the conflict is pronounced and obviously (in the first case the object of the conflict was the d5 square, in the second – the light-squared bishop, in the third – the advance d4-d5), a situation of conflict is present here. We go over to examples of the second group.

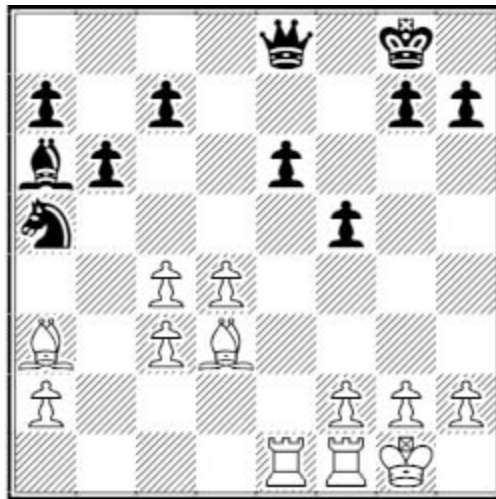
– hidden critical moments

*Portisch – Fischer
Santa Monica, 1966*



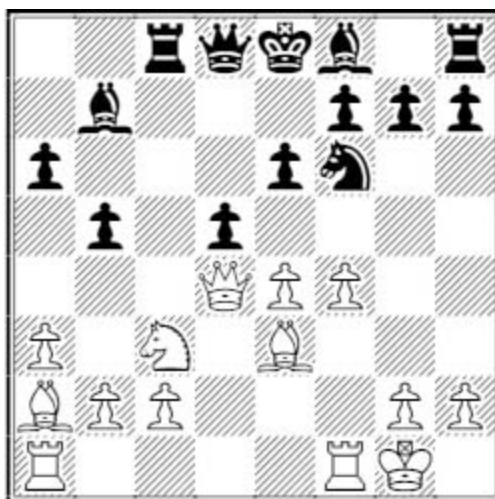
It seems that there is no object of conflict, hence no conflict itself. In actuality however, the object of conflict here is the initiative, and on the board now is a hidden critical moment. A

critical moment for Black. In the diagram position it is natural (and only!) to offer the continuation 11 ... ♖d7 12 ♙d3 ♘f6 13 ♚h4 with an initiative for White. But does this give Black any chances of a fight? In the opponent's camp there is a weak c4 pawn, and it is appropriate for his knight to be, not on f6, but on a5! 11 ... ♚d7!! Not an obvious idea! 12 ♙a3? As will be seen from the sequel – this does not gain time, but loses it. However even after 12 ♙d3 f5 13 ♚e2 ♘c6 Black has the advantage. 12 ... ♖e8 13 ♙d3 f5 14 ♚xa8 14 ♚e2 ♘c6 – is also not palatable. 14 ... ♘c6 15 ♚xe8+ ♚xe8 16 0-0 ♘a5 17 ♖ae1



17 ... ♙xc4(?) This time R.Fischer chooses the more obvious, but not the best continuation. After the strongest 17 ... ♚a4! 18 ♙b4 (18 ♙c1 ♙xc4 19 ♙xc4 ♚xc4) ♙xc4 19 ♙xc4 ♘xc4 20 ♖xe6 a5 21 ♙e7 ♘d2 22 ♖fe1 ♘e4 23 ♙h4 (23 f3? ♚xa2) h6 victory is not far off. 18 ♙xc4 18 ♙xf5? ♚a4. 18 ... ♘xc4 19 ♙c1 c5! 20 dxc5 bxc5 ... 0-1

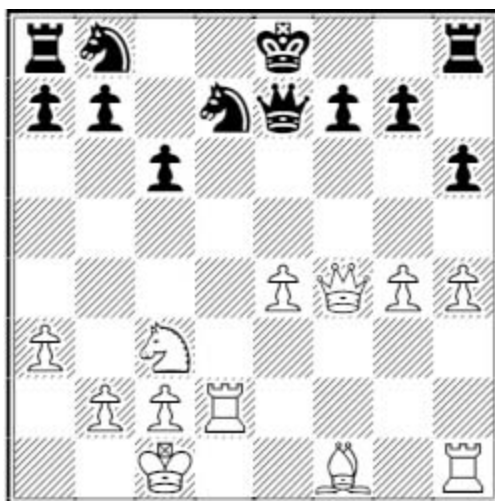
Lutikov – Nei
Parnu, 1971



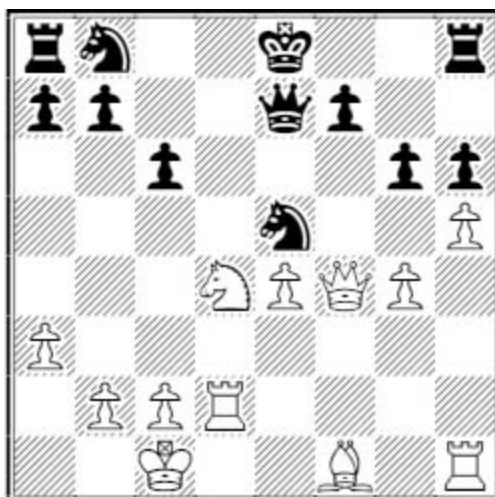
Notwithstanding his lag in development, Black has played d6-d5 and created a few threats (♙f8-c5, ♘f6-g4, d5xe4). A critical moment for White is approaching. The opponent has broken all the principles of opening strategy. How to refute his dubious play? 13 ed is unconvincing because of 13 ... ♙c5 14 ♚d2 ♙xe3+ 15 ♚xe3 ♙xd5 16 ♖ad1 0-0 17 ♙(♘)xd5 ed, etc. 13 ♚a7! ♚c7 14 exd5 Now this move gains in strength. 14 ... exd5 He couldn't play 14 ... ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 because of the loss of the a-pawn, and 14 ... ♖a8 – in view of the loss of the d-pawn: 15 ♚d4 ed (15 ... ♘xd5 16 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 17 ♙xd5 ♖d8 18 c4; 15 ... ♖d8 16 ♚b6) 16 ♚e5+ ♚xe5 17 fe ♘g4 18 ♙d4 ♖d8 19 h3 ♘h6 20 ♙b6 ♖d7 21 ♖ad1, etc. 15 ♖fe1 ♙e7 (the ending of the game is examined in the chapter 'Critical moments: delivering the decisive blow'.)

Suetin – Spiridonov
Brno, 1975

On the board we have a typical situation: one side (in the present case, White) has an advantage in time, development, the other – a positional advantage.



Time works for Black: now he will play ♞d7-e5, then ♞b8-d7, complete his development and the static defects in White's position will begin to tell – the isolated pawn, bad bishop, weakness of the dark square complex ... So White needs to do something, and to do it at once. Indeed, for him a critical moment is at hand. Much, if not everything, depends on whether White is able, by exploiting the pluses of his position, to seize the initiative. The position is complicated by the fact that his pieces (in particular, his minor pieces) are not very active. 17 ♞e2(?) A.Suetin activates his knight – he notices that also in his opponent's camp there are weaknesses – the f5 and d6 squares. However White has available another and more energetic way to seize the initiative, 17 e5! – a liberating sacrifice of a pawn, activating the knight. Now after 17 ... ♞xe5 18 ♞e4 0-0 19 g5 (19 ... h5 20 ♞f6+!) or 17 ... 0-0 18 g5 ♞xe5 19 ♞f3 White creates an attack on the king. 17 ... ♞e5 18 ♞d4 g6 He has to weaken his position – he cannot allow the knight to f5. Now White has a 'lever'. 19 h5



19 ... ♔g5? A decisive mistake! Black's very first task is to complete his development. Therefore N.Spiridonov should pay particular attention to making an appropriate move – the principled 19 ... ♞bd7! After 20 hg fg (20 ... ♞xg6? 21 ♔f2 0–0–0 22 ♞f5) 21 ♙e2 (21 ♖xh6?? ♜f8; 21 g5 ♜f8 22 ♔g3 hg 23 ♙h3 ♞c5) ♔f6 22 ♔e3 0–0–0! 23 ♖xh6 ♖xh6 24 ♔xh6 ♜f8 Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn. Now however his game goes off the rails. 20 ♔g3 ♔e7 A painful necessity: 20 ... ♞bd7 already does not work – 21 hg fg 22 ♞e6. 21 hxg6 fxg6 22 ♔b3! An ideal move, preventing the development of the opponent's pieces while contributing to the development of his attack The game is decided. 22 ... ♔f7 23 ♞e6 ♔e7 24 ♔b4+ ♔f6 25 ♖f2+ ♔xe6 26 ♙c4+ 1–0 So it was White who was able to complete his development.

It should be mentioned that the overwhelming majority of critical moments assume a closed character.

2

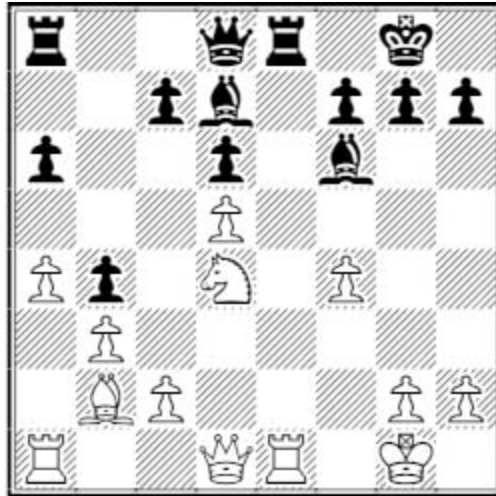
Critical moments: struggle and capture of the initiative

The first clash, the first critical moment, usually arises at the start of the game, while coming out of the opening and embarking on the struggle to take the initiative.

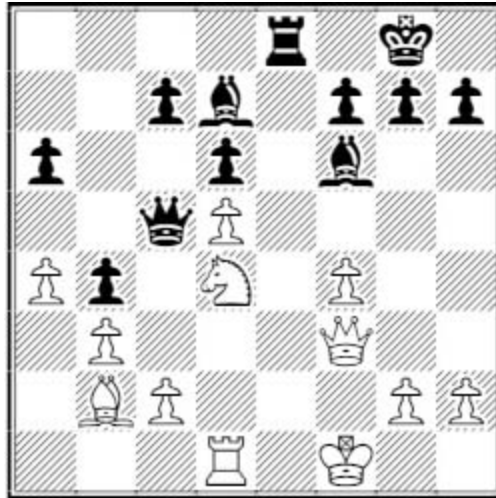
There are various means of struggling for the initiative: transferring pieces to strong (active) positions, changing the pawn structure, sacrificing pawns to gain time or free one's game, exchanging blow for blow, pursuing purposeful continuations and exchanges etc., but at the basis of all these lies the activation of pieces. Let's have a look at the most frequently met of these methods:

– Transferring pieces to strong (active) positions – the most common method – leads to a general improvement in the position and capture of the initiative. The downside of this method is that it is rather slow.

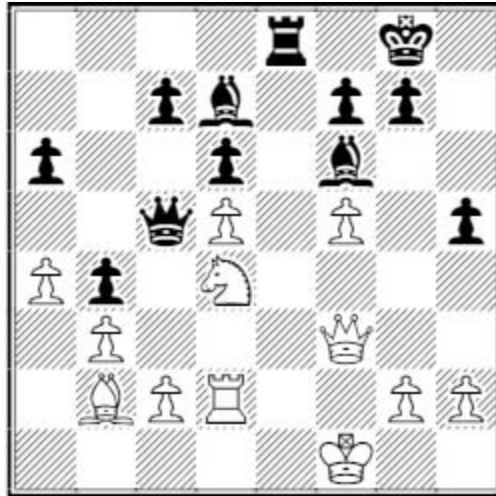
*Makarichev – Kholmov
Tallinn, 1983*



It might appear that the position is roughly equal, but this is a delusion. 19 ... ♖xe1+ 20 ♔xe1 ♕b8!! An excellent idea! With an activation of pieces, R.Kholmov underlines the defects of White's position (the pinned knight, the weakness of the d5 pawn) and he will seize the initiative. 21 ♕f2 White could give his opponent a choice with the move 21 c4: to reinforce the d5 pawn or open the c-file and expose the weakness on c7. However after the logical 21 ... bc! (opening the game, activating the pieces) 22 ♕xc3 ♕b6 23 ♖c1 (23 ♖e1 ♕c5! 24 ♔f(h)1 ♕xd5 25 ♕xc7 ♖h3!) ♖e8 White falls into a difficult position: 24 ♔f1 (24 ♕d3 ♖xa4; 24 a5 ♕a7) ♖e4 25 ♕xc7 ♖xd4 26 ♕xd7 ♖xf4+ 27 ♔e2 (27 ♔e1 ♖c3+!) h6 28 ♕c8+ ♔h7 29 ♕c2+ f5! 30 ♖f1 ♖e4+, etc. Therefore S.Makarichev decides not to open up the game. 21 ... ♕b7 22 ♕f3 ♖e8 23 ♖d1 ♕b6 24 ♔f1 ♕c5



Black has found excellent positions for his pieces – the rook occupies the only open file, the queen has taken up an ideal place on c5, where it exerts very strong pressure on White's position. 25 ♖d2 Defending the weak pawn on c2. He couldn't get rid of it: 25 c4 bc 26 ♗xc3 (26 ♕xc3 ♕xd5 27 ♕xc7 ♗g4 28 ♖d2 ♕e4; 28 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♑xe1 ♕e4+) ♗g4 27 ♕xc3 28 f5 ♕e3(!), and it's all over. 25 ... h5! Threatening to win a pawn by 26 ... ♗g4 and, incidentally, continuing to improve his position. 26 f5? Making his position worse. Since the h5 pawn is untouchable – 26 ♕xh5 ♖e4 27 ♕d1 ♖xf4+, etc., then the careful 26 h3 would be better, avoiding moves that weaken his position and adopting waiting tactics. In this case Black would still have to rack his brains in order to find a way to develop an initiative. Now, however, his task is simplified.



26 ... ♖e5! Immediately exploiting his opponent's error! 27 ♘e6 fxe6 28 fxe6? An oversight in the approaching time trouble. 28 ♙xe5 would be tougher, though after 28 ... d6 29 fe (29 de ♙e8 30 ♚a8 ♙f8 31 ♖d7 ♙e7; 31 ♚xa6 e4) ♙e8 30 d6 cd 31 ♚a8 (31 ♚d5 ♙e7) ♙f8 32 ♚xa6 ♙e7 33 ♚a8 ♙c6! 34 ♚g8 ♙e8! Black would win. 28 ... ♙xe6! 29 ♙xe5 ♙g4 Ending the struggle. 30 ♙d4 Or 30 ♚d3 (30 ♙xd6 ♚xd6) ♙xe5 31 h3 ♙d7 32 ♚xa6 ♙h2 33 ♚a8+ ♙h7 34 ♖f2 ♙d4 winning. 30 ... ♙xd4 31 ♚e4 31 ♚d3 ♙e3. 31 ... ♙e5 32 h3 ♙d7 33 ♚g6 h4 34 ♚h5 ♙e3 35 ♖f2 ♙c1+ 36 ♙e2 ♙xc2+ 0-1

– Changing the pawn structure – leads to the opening of files and diagonals, with a rapid activation of pieces.

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 Stary Smokovec, 1990

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