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**KASPAROV:
HOW HIS
PREDECESSORS
MISLED HIM
ABOUT CHESS**

Tibor Károlyi and Nick Aplin

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Kasparov: How His Predecessors Misled Him About Chess

Tibor Károlyi and Nick Aplin



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Authors' Preface

This book is a unique reaction to a unique collection of creative work.

When Garry Kasparov, the most successful world champion, retired, he published a series of books under the title *My Great Predecessors* and it was the stimulation from reading his excellent series that prompted the present work.

After writing two books on Kasparov's astonishing career, covering his final period of active play from 1993 to 2005, we realised that there were similarities between Garry's games and some of his predecessors – and this has opened the door for a little bit of friendly leg-pulling!

Our original idea to write an article for the satirical chess magazine *Kingpin* took on greater proportions as we found more and more games resembling those of past champions.

The increasing number of examples changed the single article into a series of articles. We had originally intended to look only at the post-World War II champions but then discovered so many comparable games from earlier times that we were encouraged to write a whole book!

There was a stage during the writing of *Kasparov's Fighting Chess 1 & 2* that we briefly considered the title *The Great Successor* would be appropriate.

This present book now provides us with an obvious opportunity to introduce some humour, particularly as Kasparov – we think – subconsciously favoured some teasing of the great players and former champions more so than

others. By doing so he invited others to have a joke at his expense too. Humour in chess – sometimes a rare commodity – needs to take its rightful place.

The Hungarian half of our co-authorship played in tournaments with Garry and even faced him across the board in 1980 and 1981. The 1980 World Junior Championship was particularly memorable for Tibor, because of the leisure hours he spent with Garry himself – during which time the future world champion revealed his keen sense of humour.

This characteristic is something that has not been reflected in his interviews in recent times, although there were glimpses of it when he came to write his *My Great Predecessors* books.

It goes without saying that games played by world champions can be especially interesting, entertaining and instructive. But it is also well worth looking at them from a new angle – and with a lighter touch.

The temptation is also there to look at some of Kasparov's losses – which are in fact well worth analysing. Anyone who manages to force resignation from the most successful chess player ever, clearly deserves due recognition for their triumph.

In no way does the present book try to erode the tremendous respect Kasparov has rightfully earned with his stunning and breathtaking performances. It just reminds everyone emphatically what a great game chess is and that even the greatest players make mistakes – and do lose sometimes! The royal game is just so complicated...

Also we consider that the *My Great Predecessors* books represent a superb contribution to chess culture and warmly

recommend that both nonprofessionals and serious players read the whole series, as Garry's chess genius shines brightly through his deep analysis.

One of the intentions of the present book is to take a look at some lesserknown masterpieces of the champions, as well as presenting the better-known examples, with short explanations. We hope you enjoy and learn from these games.

It is great that Garry wrote his series, but if I were him I would have produced another version for reading on New Year's Eve!

Our book is designed to be lighthearted. So before we allow Garry to speak, let us emphasise that we did not contact him at all and the words are ours!! We just put our ideas into his mouth in the following way.

* * * *

My series on the world champions is entering its final phase. In these books, I have covered the development of chess culture. Thank God they sold like hot cakes. I wrote nice things about all the 12 champions, which is what they justly deserved, but I only showed the rosier side of their chess.

By now most of the books have been sold, so it is time to tell the rest of the story. My career has been the best a chessplayer has ever had and, all things considered, I am satisfied with how things went. On the other hand, I am convinced I did not achieve everything that I could have done: for example, I lost more games than was necessary. And in the present work I reveal for the first time how I came to lose quite a few important games simply because I

copied the world champions. It's a pity that I didn't gain a fuller appreciation of their methods.

Almost all chessplayers read books on the world champions. I did so as well and in my childhood I even went through their games in great detail. In fact I frequently tried to memorise their games, but it is more likely that they planted themselves in the subconscious part of my brain. Their games were praised so many times and in so many places that I came to trust them implicitly.

Of course, I must also take some responsibility for my losses, but you will see that for the particular defeats shown here the world champions are mostly to blame because they misled me - sometimes seriously. After all, it was they who demonstrated the ideas in the first place.

Can you imagine how hard it has been for me to hold back my true opinions for so long? But now I cannot remain silent any longer and must show how the champions *really* played. Though I have to admit that their games are very entertaining, that can only soften, but not erase, the negative effect they had on me.

So as to underline the fact that this is not a totally serious book, I do not lay out the material in the conventional way. Instead of starting from the distant past and working my way towards the present day, I adopt a different plan based on the fact that the closer a champion was to me in time, the more energy I spent on examining his play.

So I look at the champions in reverse order, starting with Anatoly Karpov, who was crowned before me as the 12th world champion.

Anatoly Karpov the 12th

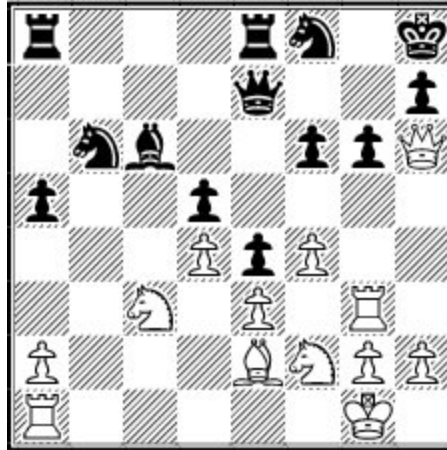
Anatoly Karpov was my immediate predecessor. He held the title from 1975 until 1985 and certainly had an immense effect on my chess. I played him 23 times in regular tournaments. There is nothing special about that but the 144 games in the five world championship matches we contested *is* unique in the history of chess.

Despite this large number of games, you might think they had little negative effect on my style. Of course I learned to play simple positions – there were many of them – and I improved my technique in this area.

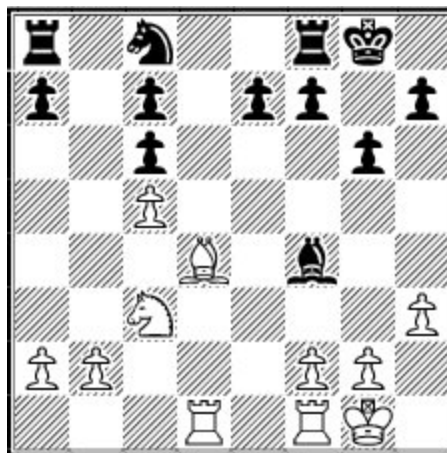
In this book I would like to concentrate on the negative effects that I experienced from the world champions – effects which prevented me from becoming even more devastating in my play.

One idea I picked up from Karpov was to push the a- or h-pawns all the way – and win. Below are positions from Karpov's games illustrating this theme and then positions from my own games where I followed his plan.

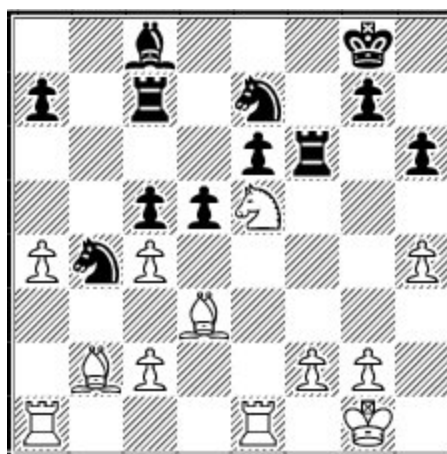
S.Sazontiev – A.Karpov



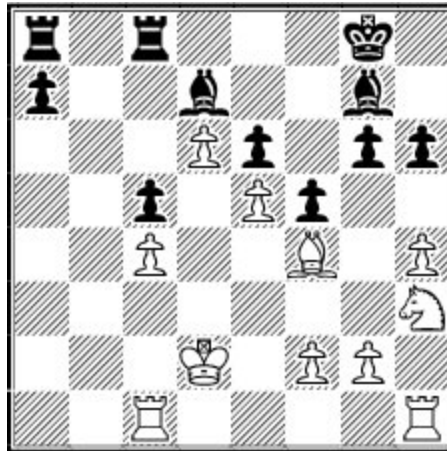
A.Karpov - G.Kasparov



A.Karpov - P.Markland



A.Karpov - G.Kasparov



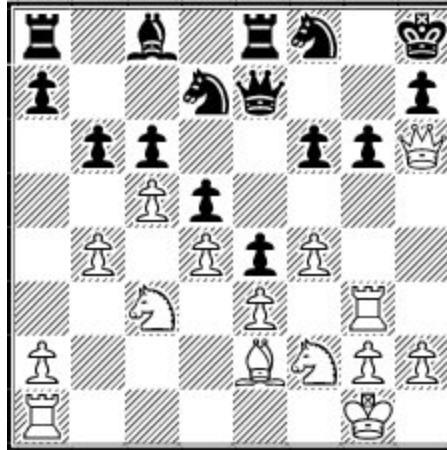
Readers note: throughout the text you will read the words *see diagram*. It's the diagrams in the *frames* to which we refer.

First let me show you some games where Karpov employed one of his favourite concepts.

S.Sazontiev - A.Karpov

Vladimir 1964

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♙g5 d5 4 c4 ♙e7 5 ♘c3 0-0 6 e3
 ♘bd7 7 ♙d3 ♖e8 8 0-0 ♘f8 9 ♘e5 c6 10 f4 ♘6d7 11 ♙
 xe7 ♚xe7 12 ♖f3 f6 13 ♘g4 ♘b6 14 c5 ♘bd7 15 ♖g3 ♙
 h8 16 ♘f2 e5 17 ♚h5 e4 18 ♙e2 g6 19 ♚h6 b6 20 b4



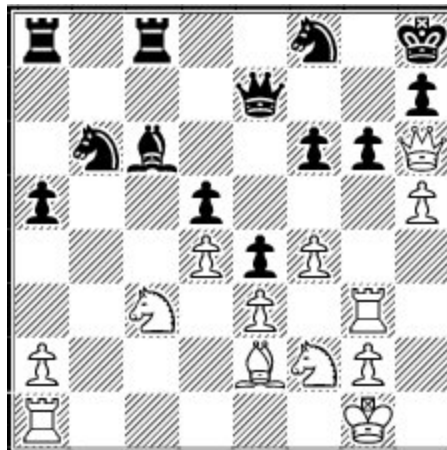
20...a5!

Karpov starts pushing his a-pawn. It looks like it merely undermines White's pawn chain but in fact this move represents its debut performance in a very important role.

21 b5 ♖b7 22 cxb6 ♜xb6 23 bxc6 ♙xc6

[See diagram here.](#)

24 h4 ♖ec8 25 h5



25...♙g7!

To exchange the most dangerous white piece in the attack.

26 ♙xg7+ ♔xg7 27 hxg6 hxg6 28 ♖b1 ♖ab8!

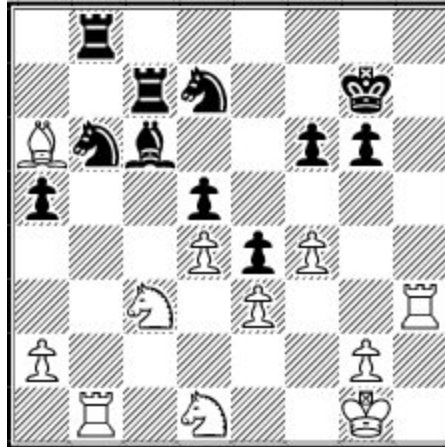
Now Black turns his attention to the side where he is stronger.

29 ♙a6 ♖c7 30 ♜fd1 ♜fd7

31 ♖h3?!

White wants to transfer the rook to the queenside.

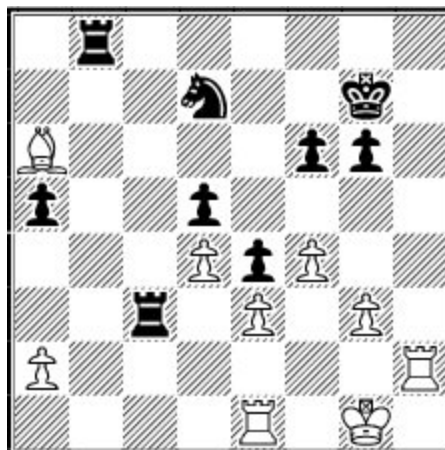
On the other hand 31 ♙e2! would have kept Black rather busy on the kingside and he would not then have had such a free hand for his queenside operations.



31... ♙a4!

Karpov starts exchanging on the queenside so as to prepare an invasion. He follows up this plan with his customary and distinctive purposefulness.

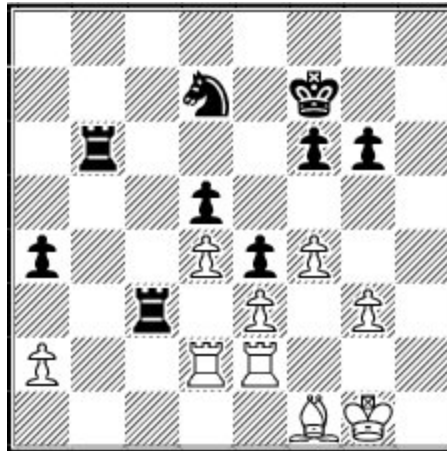
32 ♖h2 ♙xd1 33 ♘xd1 ♙a4! 34 ♖a1 ♘c3! 35 g3 ♘xd1 36 ♖xd1 ♖c3 37 ♖e1



37... ♙a4!

The pawn is becoming increasingly powerful.

38 ♖d2 ♜b6 39 ♙f1 ♚f7 40 ♜ee2



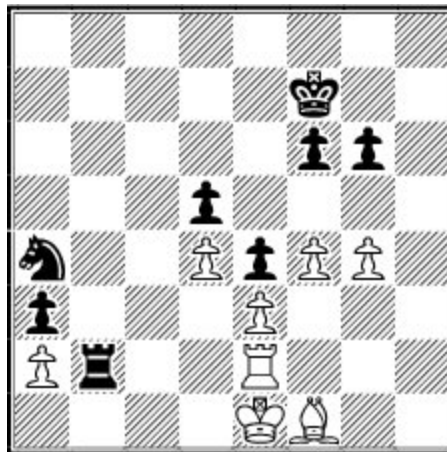
40...a3!

The pawn makes its final stride of a glorious march. It gets closer to promotion and takes control of the b2-square.

41 ♚f2 ♜b4 42 g4 ♞b6 43 ♜c2 ♜xc2 44 ♜xc2 ♜b2!

This is a poignant demonstration of the strength of the a3-pawn.

45 ♜e2 ♞a4 46 ♚e1



46...♞c3 47 ♜d2 ♞xa2 0-1

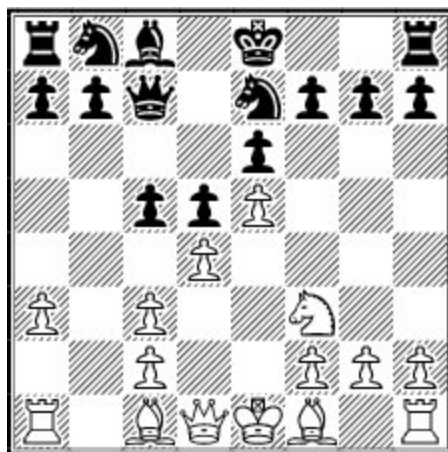
Finally the fixed a-pawn falls, and Black wins easily. Karpov engineered this game beautifully, yet strangely he did not include it in any books of his selected games. Maybe he did not want to alert his rivals to such an effective pawn-

pushing device. Naturally, the game did not escape my attention.

A.Karpov - P.Markland

Hastings 1971/1972

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♚c7 7 ♘f3 ♘e7



8 a4

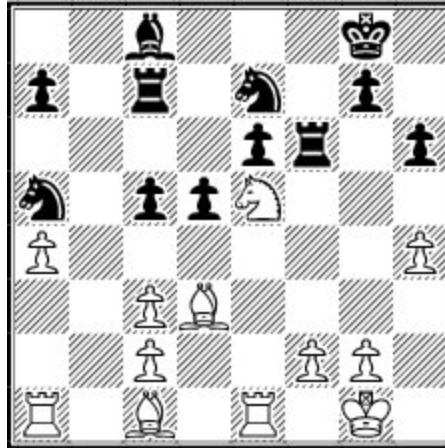
I wouldn't mind betting that Karpov had not yet seen the final role this a-pawn had to play. Of course it is a well-known variation. Since that time 7 ♚g4 has taken over as the main line.

8...b6 9 ♙b5+ ♙d7 10 ♙d3 ♘bc6 11 0-0 h6 12 ♚e1 ♘a5 13 ♚d2 ♚c8 14 h4

Karpov uses his flank pawns well. Here he gains space and makes sure that ...g7-g5 is prevented.

14...0-0 15 ♚f4 f5 16 exf6 ♚xf6 17 ♚xc7 ♚xc7 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 ♘e5 ♙c8

Here 19...c4 looks better. It restricts the light-squared bishop even though that in turn grants more freedom to his dark-squared brother.



20 c4!

Karpov gets rid of the doubled pawns and opens the position for his bishops.

20...♘ac6 21 ♖b2 ♘b4

See diagram here.

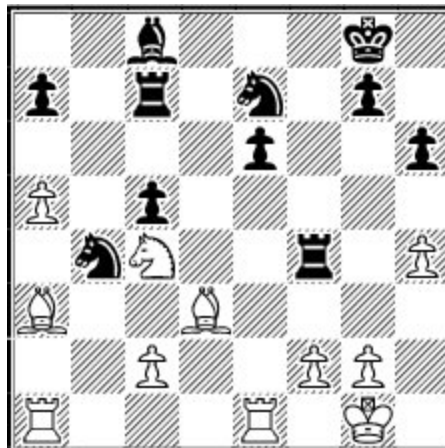
22 a5!?

This is a hard move to come up with. Perhaps it had been planned earlier. Had he already anticipated the role of this pawn or did he just want to prevent Black from playing a5 – a move which fixes White's a-pawn on the colour of the c8-bishop?

22...♖f8 23 ♖a3

23 h5, playing extravagantly with the other edge pawn, was also possible.

23...dxc4 24 ♘xc4 ♖f4



25 ♞d6

Karpov sacrifices a pawn to keep his opponent's rook out of the game. Here 25 ♞e4 holds on to the pawn by stopping ...♞xc4.

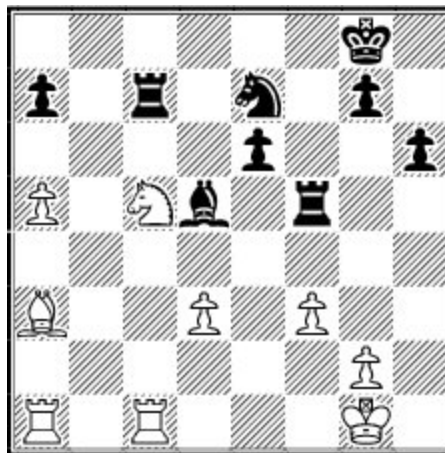
25...♞xd3 26 cxd3 ♜xh4 27 ♞e4 ♜h5 28 ♜ec1 ♞b7?!

After 28...♞d5 29 ♜c3 a6 Black can live with his position.

29 ♞xc5 ♞d5 30 f3 ♜f5

Black could improve his knight with 30...♞c6!?. Then 31 a6 ♞d4.

Not to be sidetracked, Karpov now plays according to a well-formulated plan. Firstly he fixes Black's a7-pawn.



31 a6! ♜f7 32 ♞e4

The a7-pawn is fixed. Karpov now brings up his bishop to place it under closer surveillance.

32...♞f5 33 ♞c5! ♜c8 34 ♞f2 ♜fc7 35 ♜xc7

Now Karpov starts to exchange pieces around the weak a7-pawn. All part of the plan.

35...♜xc7 36 ♜b1 ♞e7 37 ♜b8+ ♔h7 38 ♔h2!

This is a typical Karpovian king move. It prevents Black from delivering a check on c1, which would be followed by an attack on the a6-pawn with ♜a1.

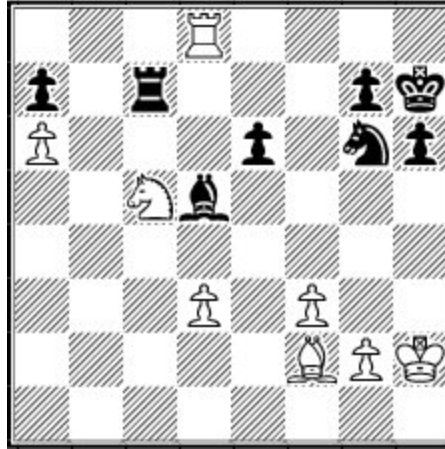
38...♞g6?

This only helps White. He moves away a valuable piece from the area where the battle will take place.

39 ♘c5 ♖c6?

Returning the knight was better.

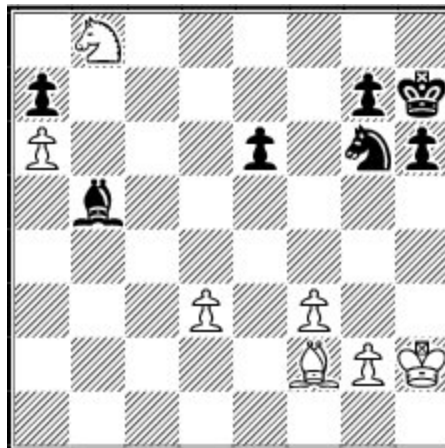
40 ♖d8 ♖c7



41 ♖d7!

Karpov continues to play with great purpose. He will exchange the defending rook as well.

41...♖xd7 42 ♘xd7 ♙c6 43 ♘b8 ♙b5



44 ♙xa7

Finally the ripened fruit drops quietly from the tree. White wins the pawn and so the rest is simple.

44...♘e7 45 ♙b6 ♘c8 46 ♙c5 ♔g6 47 a7 ♘xa7 48 ♙xa7 e5 49 d4 exd4 50 ♙xd4 ♔f7 51 f4 g5 52 fxg5 hxg5 53 ♔g3 ♔g6 54 ♔f3 ♔f5 55 g3 1-0

Karpov won this game in impressive style. This plan was implanted in my brain and I was just waiting for an opportune moment to carry it out in one of my own games. Quite incredibly I had my chance against Karpov himself.

A.Karpov - G.Kasparov

Game 17, World Championship London/Leningrad 1986

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♙g7 5 ♚b3 dxc4 6 ♚xc4 0-0 7 e4 ♙g4 8 ♙e3 ♘fd7 9 ♖d1 ♘c6 10 ♙e2 ♘b6 11 ♚c5 ♚d6 12 e5

This was my third match against Karpov and he had prepared most diligently for it. Here he sacrifices a pawn – something he had rarely done before in this kind of situation. I think our matches forced him to increase his standard of play in the openings.

12...♚xc5 13 dxc5 ♘c8

The variation has continued to develop ever since our game. The knight can also be retreated to d7.

14 h3 ♙xf3 15 ♙xf3 ♙xe5 16 ♙xc6 bxc6 17 ♙d4

White achieves domination along the d-file – which provides compensation for the pawn deficit.

17...♙f4 18 0-0

[See diagram here](#)

18...a5?

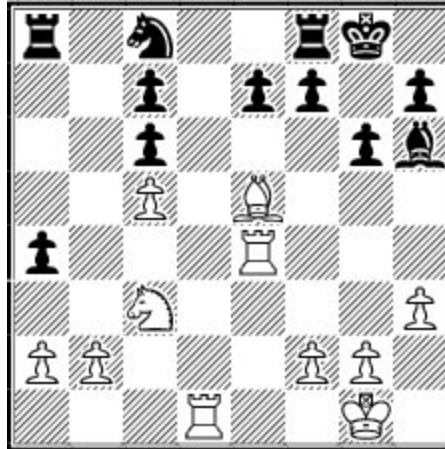
At this moment I adopted Karpov's plan of pushing the a-pawn as far down the file as possible. And I really paid the price for this misguided decision.

A few months later Timman improved on this game with 18...e5!. Maybe he never bothered to investigate Karpov's earlier games. After 19 ♙e3 ♙xe3 20 fxe3 ♘e7 21 ♖d7 ♘f5 Timman achieved a draw against Karpov in Tilburg 1986. Black has done well in this position ever since.

19 ♖fe1 a4?!

I stuck to the plan that I had learned from Anatoly Evgenievich.

20 ♖e4 ♗h6 21 ♗e5



21...a3?

I was still playing in the spirit of Karpov, in the hope that somehow I would be able to get down to the a2-pawn. However it proves to be an illusion.

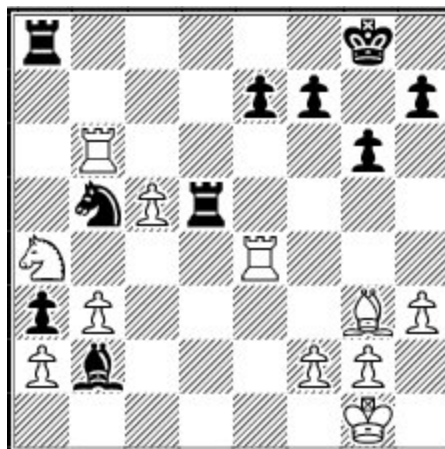
22 b3 ♘a7

This was not my day, I was unable to push either of my rook's pawns, but putting the knight on the edge was also unfortunate. 22...♗g7 was probably better.

23 ♖d7! ♗c1 24 ♖xc7 ♗b2 25 ♘a4 ♗b5 26 ♖xc6

Now White is already a pawn up.

26...♖fd8 27 ♖b6 ♖d5 28 ♗g3



28...♗c3

This is the closest I got to attacking that a2-pawn.

29 ♖xc3 ♙xc3 30 c6

The c-pawn simply kills Black.

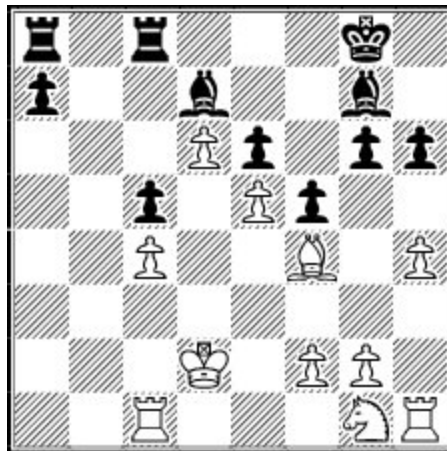
30...♙d4 31 ♖b7 1-0

To end the misery I resigned.

A.Karpov - G.Kasparov

Game 5, World Championship, London/Leningrad 1986

**1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 d5 4 ♙f4 ♙g7 5 e3 c5 6 dxc5
♚a5 7 ♖c1 ♟e4 8 cxd5 ♟xc3 9 ♚d2 ♚xa2 10 bxc3 ♚xd2+
11 ♙xd2 ♟d7 12 ♙b5 0-0 13 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 14 e4 f5 15 e5
e6 16 c4 ♖fc8 17 c6 bxc6 18 d6 c5 19 h4 h6**



20 ♟h3!

A strong move that my team and I missed during preparation. I hoped the g7-bishop would become a powerhouse on the long diagonal, but it stayed buried all the way to the end.

20...a5?

[See diagram here](#)

Again I push the rook's pawn just like Karpov.

21 f3 a4

The plan must be pursued.

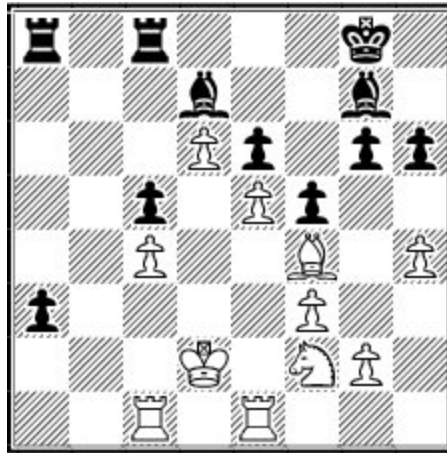
22 ♖he1!

Another strong move as it preserves the e5 pawn and makes sure the g7-bishop remains bottled up. I should have copied this aspect of Karpov's style!

22...a3

Nothing will divert me from pushing the a-pawn.

23 ♞f2



23...a2

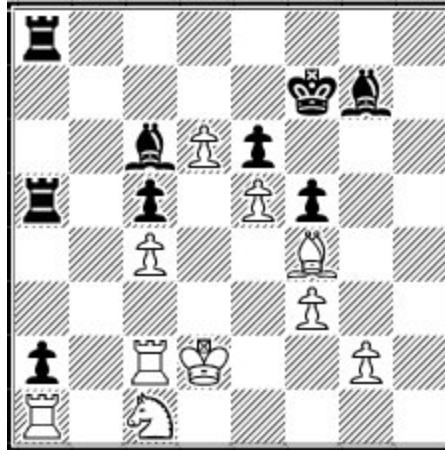
The pawn has got this far yet it is to no avail. I was so happy to see the open road ahead but should have checked more carefully where that road would lead.

24 ♞d3 ♖a3 25 ♖a1 g5

A desperate attempt to stir things up.

26 hxg5 hxg5 27 ♙xg5 ♔f7 28 ♙f4 ♖b8 29 ♖ec1 ♙c6 30 ♖c3 ♖a5 31 ♖c2 ♖ba8 32 ♞c1 1-0

Finally White wins the a-pawn. Black spent four tempi advancing the pawn to its doom.

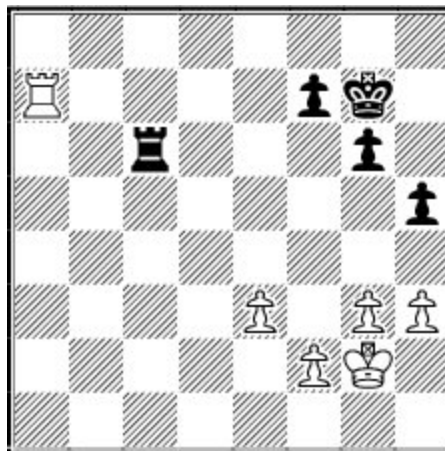


Here I resigned and decided that in the future I would be far more cautious about following Karpov's method of play.

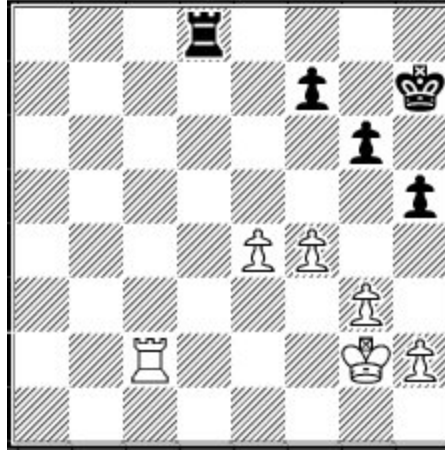
Karpov contributed to one of my losses in the final of a knockout tournament I played on the internet. From the first position below he taught me that in a rook ending, with 3 pawns versus 4 on one side of the board, the game can be saved.

The second diagram shows the very similar position that I reached.

V.Korchnoi - A.Karpov



J.Piket - G.Kasparov



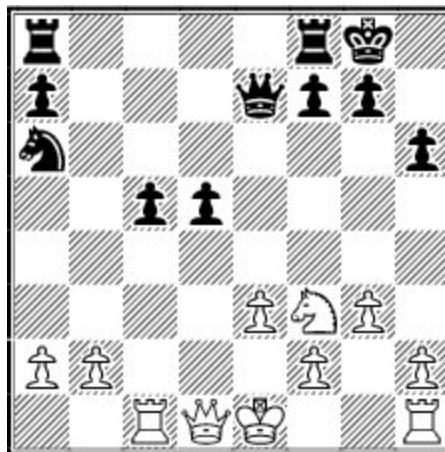
V.Korchnoi - A.Karpov

Game 5, World Championship, Merano 1981

1 c4 e6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 d4 ♙e7 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♙g5 h6 6 ♙h4 0-0 7 ♖c1 b6 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♙xe7 ♔xe7 11 g3 ♙a6 12 e3 c5 13 dxc5 bxc5

Two games later in the match Karpov played 13...♙b7 and drew.

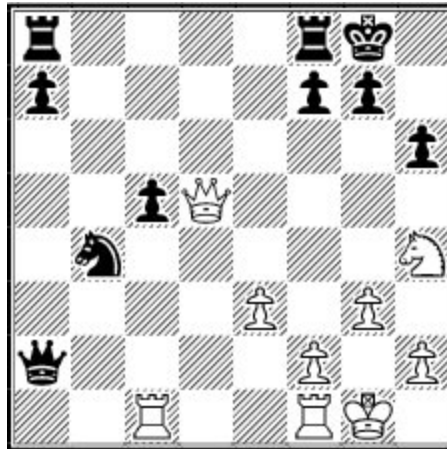
14 ♙xa6 ♘xa6



15 ♔xd5

Petrosian, the specialist of this line where White delays e2-e3, did not take the pawn and went on to beat Portisch this way.

15...♞b4 16 ♜c4 ♜f6 17 ♞h4 ♜xb2 18 0-0 ♜xa2

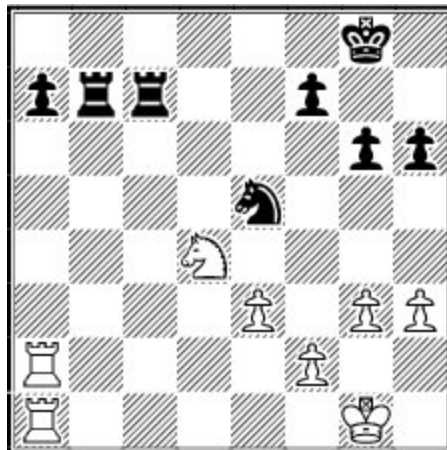


Taking the last white queenside pawn is an achievement, yet there is no guarantee of a draw as the knights are still on the board.

19 ♜xa2 ♞xa2 20 ♜xc5 ♜fc8 21 ♜a5 ♞c1 22 ♞f5 ♜c7 23 ♞d4 ♜b8 24 ♜a1 ♞d3

Karpov is not yet ready to enter the 4 pawns against 3 rook ending. If 24...♞b3 25 ♜fb1 ♜cb7 26 ♜xb3 ♜xb3 27 ♞xb3 ♜xb3 28 ♜xa7.

25 ♜fd1 ♞e5 26 ♜a2 g6 27 ♜da1 ♜bb7 28 h3



28...h5!

This is a very useful refinement in the ensuing rook ending.

29 ♔g2 ♔g7 30 ♖a5 ♘c6

He finally agrees to defend the 4 against 3 ending. But Black was not forced to give up the pawn as 30...♔f6 was an option. This misled me and gave me the impression this it is an easy draw.

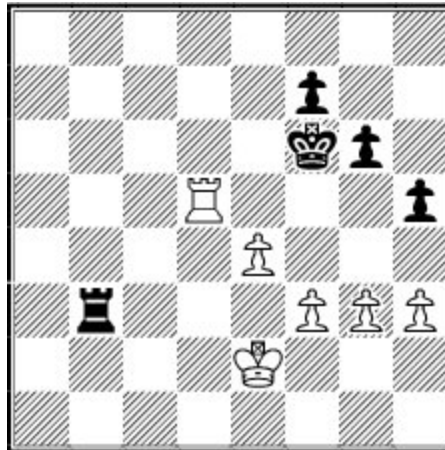
31 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 32 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 33 ♖xa7

[See diagram here](#)

33...♖c2

Karpov often pins pieces. With White's king on f2 the pawn can't go much further. I used to think it requires some effort to draw this type of position but the ease with which Karpov held this one made me think Black can't lose at all. I was wrong.

34 e4 ♖c3 35 ♖a2 ♔f6 36 f3 ♖b3 37 ♔f2 ♖c3 38 ♔e2 ♖b3 39 ♖a6+ ♔e7 40 ♖a5 ♔f6 41 ♖d5

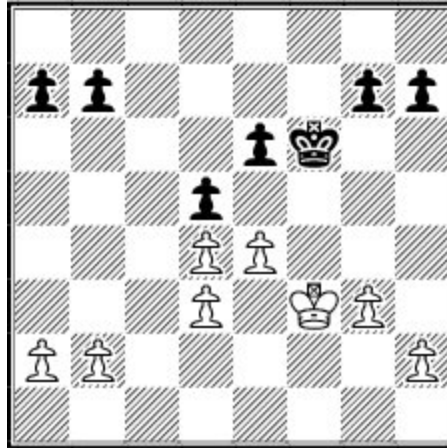


41...♖a3 42 ♖d6+ ♔g7 43 h4 ♖b3 44 ♖d3 ♖b5 45 ♔e3
 1/2-1/2 Karpov effortlessly held this position.

J.Piket - G.Kasparov

KasparovChess Grand Prix 60 minute game, Internet 2000

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 g3 ♘c6 6 ♔g2 ♘c7 7 d3 e5 8 0-0 ♔e7 9 ♘d2 ♔d7 10 ♘c4 0-0 11 ♔xc6 ♔xc6



27 h4??

27 ♔g4 wins after 27...g6 (27...h6 28 ♔h5; 27...♔g6 28 ♔f4 ♔f6 29 h4 h5 30 g4 hxg4 31 ♔xg4 ♔g6 32 ♔f4 ♔f6 33 h5 wins.) 28 h3! (28 h4? h6=) 28...h6 (28...h5+ 29 ♔h4) 29 h4 as Krnic pointed out.

27...g6??

A blunder in reply. 27...h6! draws, since if 28 ♔g4 then 28...g6.

28 b4 b5 29 ♔f4 h6 30 ♔g4 1-0

I resigned here. Topalov was a point behind me before this last round game, therefore I had to share the first prize. Once I finished the game I somehow sensed that Veselin would win the next World Championship.

I suddenly understood that I could trust nobody - not even the champions. Then who could I follow? How was I to carry on playing chess? My successors Kramnik and Topalov beat me when I used Steinitz's idea. It made me realise that somehow they were able to use the champion's legacy better than myself. At this stage, writing the Great Predecessors books was well under way. After this game I made the dramatic announcement of my retirement from professional chess.

You may joke that I retired to become an amateur in politics. But let me remind you I gained the chess crown in my second match against Karpov. Maybe I will become president after entering the race for a second time and will then rule for 15 years just as I did in chess?

Some may think I'd rather fight Putin than the new generation of chessplayers on the chessboard.

But now I'll make a sensational confession... I stopped playing chess not because of any particular interest in Russian politics, but because my last game made me lose all faith in my Predecessors.

* * * *

Now at last we take back the commentary from Garry and speak with our own voice!

Maybe these losses were hard to take, but they were a necessary part of Kasparov's career. His losses and the champions' wins were instructive and one can learn and profit considerably from studying them. Just as Kasparov himself did.

What did these losses help him to achieve? He completed a fabulous career, the best a chessplayer has ever produced. He was the dominating force in world chess for approximately two decades. He was world champion for 15 years. He was a world-class player for 25 years.

He produced the greatest number of superb creations by anyone who ever played our game. Kasparov himself estimated 250 of his games were of top quality and we are inclined to agree with him. In fact if one counts the great games he lost or drew maybe he played even more than

three hundred superlative games. Furthermore no other player faced such strong opposition as him.

Very few won as many individual tournaments as him - and he must be one of the players who gained the most material rewards from chess. He also had a plus score against all his close rivals, except Kramnik - and against some of them very convincing plusses.

His contribution to the development of chess is immense, although we need still more time to form a comprehensive judgement.

He left the game in a different state from when he found it. Partly because of computers, chess culture would have developed anyway, but his unique artistry has been a telling factor.

This time we dared to joke around with his games, but we never trivialised them, nor for a single moment forgot that they will continue to bring joy to new generations of chess fans.

Kasparov's impact on chess will be felt for as long as it is played.

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