

TOGETHER WITH MOROZEVICH

Calculation training tools
and practical decision making

by

Alexey Kuzmin



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Managing Editor
Romain Edouard

Translation
Yulia Kryukova

Proofreading
Daniël Vanheirzeele

Graphic Artist
Philippe Tonnard

Cover design
Mieke Mertens

Typesetting
i-Press <www.i-press.pl>

Photos
Boris Dolmatovsky and Maria Fominykh

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e-mail: info@thinkerspublishing.com
website: www.thinkerspublishing.com

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KEY TO SYMBOLS

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
=	equality
∞	unclear position
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
△	with the idea of
▷	better is
≤	worse is
N	novelty
+	check
#	mate

FOREWORD

BY ALEXANDER MOROZEVICH

I met the author of this book for the first time at the Chess Olympiad in Turin 2006 and very soon our brief acquaintance transformed into intensive teamwork. Kuzmin worked as my coach for almost 10 years and after my professional career came to an end we remained good friends.

When Alexey told me of his plans to write a book based on my games, I was a little puzzled. It was not a matter of doubt either in the precise choice of examples or in the quality of the analysis: during the years of our joint work my coach had been studying either my games, or my views on fighting, intensively. But based on our work together I knew Kuzmin as a chess player with a classical, fundamental approach to chess; it was no coincidence that he had formerly worked with Anatoly Karpov over the years. Many of the openings that I used, as well as many of my ideas, seemed much too risky to Alexey. Sometimes it required huge effort to convince him of my plans' correctness. Nevertheless, he had often asked me after a game: "Could you somehow play calmly for "a small plus" instead of getting into almost uncontrollable complications?" That's why, when Alexey told me about "a manual", the thought of "a positional play manual" had firstly popped into my mind. Of course, I have my own views on leading the strategic fight and I have always tried to show my notion's viability in my games. However, the future author quickly calmed me down, telling me his book was to be a collection of tests from my games...

In his book, the author has managed to place all the collected material in a logical system, and his playful comments directed at the reader give the format of dialogue for checking the solutions. Quite often many tactics manuals don't provide feedback for a reader, but in this case the given book is a pleasant exception: the interesting format for presenting the learning material makes this book more original. For example, the first chapter concerns only my game against Vachier-Lagrave — a game which I finally lost. We had been together, Alexey and I, at that tournament in Biel. I remember that after the game we were walking for a long time on the rather narrow streets of the Swiss town and talking a lot. It was my fourth tournament in Biel. I had managed to win the first three tournaments and wanted to repeat my success, but it didn't work out — that time Vachier-Lagrave lifted the trophy...

I have to say that not all of my coach's conclusions offered in this book seem to me to be indisputable. For example, to my point of view the similarity of my playing style to that of Mikhail Tal looks a bit exaggerated. Actually, throughout my career I have often and easily broken material balance: I have sacrificed pawns, pieces and sometimes all these together. However creating imbalance on the board and provoking complications and chaos aimed to confuse an opponent haven't been my main goal. In the overwhelming majority of cases, having undertaken intuitive sacrifices, I frankly considered those continuations to be the strongest. And if later on some of them turned out to be not correct enough, they were the mistakes of my intuitive assessment of the arising complications. However, the author has the right to his own opinions and assessments, and as one says — 'bystanders see more than players'...

In my childhood, having started to study chess seriously, I solved hundreds of diverse combinations and etudes. Through lack of both choice and internet capacity, I solved anything and everything which came to hand. As my skills improved, so too my notion of how to develop calculating abilities more effectively began to differ from those of the 'recognized authorities'. I experimented a lot, looked for my own ways, so I could be fully satisfied with the result — as a rule I out-calculated my famous colleagues in my best games.

Later on, having already become a grandmaster, during my preparation for tournaments I often solved tests and exercises chosen especially for coping with a concrete problem. It allowed me to bring my brain to the level of readiness needed for a serious fight and to develop my calculating abilities in a new spiral of advancement. However, at that time I didn't put the pieces on the board, but rather solved positions from diagrams or blindfold as a rule. This method of preparation seriously helped me, especially when I had a long period without playing practice before a tournament.

I believe this book by Alexey Kuzmin to be useful for chessplayers aspiring to increase their calculating abilities and seeking to learn how to make optimal decisions faster. It will also be a pleasure for me if readers are interested in examining the fragments of my games with detailed comments by Alexey. Throughout my entire career I have been trying to play interesting fighting chess; complicated battles on the chessboard have always given me real pleasure.

Alexander Morozevich, Moscow, April 2017

FROM THE AUTHOR

Two special circumstances brought about my writing of this book. The first one comes from the year 2006. One day at the Turin Chess Olympiad, where I had been working as a coach for the team from Qatar, a famous grandmaster from the Russian team came up to me. We weren't closely acquainted, although both of us were born in Moscow and lived there. Up to this moment, our relationship had been mainly limited to some short greetings when occasionally meeting at different tournaments.

“I like your articles about openings,” he said, “and I know you worked with Anatoly Karpov before. If your interest in such kind of work is still burning we could meet on the rest-day and speak about it?” So began my collaboration with Alexander Morozevich — which lasted more than eight years up to the termination of his active professional chess career.

The second impulse to write this book was...another book. It was written by two outstanding Czech Grandmasters, Vlastimil Hort and Vlastimil Jansa, and published in the USSR in the late 70s. This book contained 230 test positions from the authors' games, as well as their precise and sometimes rather ironic comments. In my childhood, like many other young chess players in the Soviet Union, I worked with this book — and it impressed me enormously. The title was ‘Together With Grandmasters’... later also issued in English under the title ‘The Best Move’.

The book ‘Together With Morozevich’ is neither a selection of his best games nor an ordinary collection of test positions. It rather presents some special kind of synthesis.

Two treatments, or it could be said two views, of this book's content are available:

- a) These are test positions with the solutions commented in detail;
- b) These are fragments from the games, with the entire games commented in detail — with separately grouped (for working convenience) test-positions to be solved.

So, the book consists of separately grouped test-positions and their solutions. All of them were taken from the games of Morozevich, some of them positions from variations which might have occurred but were not realized in the games.

Every chapter in the first part of the book differs. If the first is dedicated to only one, but perhaps the most famous game of Morozevich, the entire second chapter presents the analysis of only one position — unique in its complexity. I hope your attention will be attracted by the third chapter, containing his eight best miniatures. The fourth chapter is based on a dramatic battle — one of Morozevich's games against Kasparov.

These chapters contain the entire games, however the last one is supplemented with several fragments from other games.

The second part of the book contains four chapters too.

There are tests grouped by subject and by complexity levels in these chapters. Solutions are given in the format of game fragments commented on in detail.

The tests offered in this book are intended for training:

- a) calculation of variations;
- b) tactical vision;
- c) strategic decision-making;
- d) non-standard, original decision-making.

Working on the book 'Together With Morozevich' I followed two objectives: to help chess players' self-perfect, and to closer acquaint readers with the creativity of one of the most original and brilliant grandmasters.

The book is designed for a wide circle of readers. First of all, for players of club-level and for young players with aspiration to self-perfection. But I hope my book will also be of interest to chess players of a higher qualification. I think it can also be useful in coaching work.

I propose for you that when solving these tests, to try to reproduce the train of thought of one of the most creative grandmasters of our times. Imagine you are in his place, looking at the chessboard through his eyes. Think over the positions together with Morozevich.

Perhaps some tests might seem to you to be too complicated for individual solving but I am sure that to examine the solutions — as well as the games of Alexander Morozevich — will be a truly aesthetic pleasure for you!

Alexey Kuzmin, Doha/Moscow, May 2017

*The author expresses his appreciation
to Boris Dolmatovsky and Maria Fominykh
for having kindly provided him
the interesting photos for the book.*

HOW TO CALCULATE VARIATIONS

I would not be ‘discovering America’ by saying the ability to calculate variations deeply and precisely is a very important component of a chess-player’s skills. Obviously the technique of calculating variations is closely intertwined with all other constituents; tactical vision, precisely assessing positions, intuition etc... So, when training the technique of calculating variations, we develop the entire complex of necessary skills.

The main method of training ‘variation calculation’ had been proposed by Alexander A. Kotov, the well-known Soviet grandmaster, coach and chess writer, more than half a century ago.

He wrote about his experience: “Having chosen the sharpest games with combinational complications from tournament books, I worked on them in a special way. Having reached the culmination point of the fighting, where very diverse variations were possible, I stopped reading comments. My task was to analyze all possible arising variations. I covered the book page with a sheet of paper and then deep thought began...”

The working method hasn’t changed too much since then. Of course a book can be partly replaced by a computer, and checking variations using analysis programs is easier and more precise. However, one can’t manage without “deep thoughts” anyway...

Alexander Kotov marked out three main practical factors for finding the correct move:

- a) finding the best candidate-moves,
- b) a precise analysis of all calculable variations,
- c) strict control and saving of time.

By the way, today’s well-known notions of ‘the candidate-move’ and ‘the tree of variation calculations’ were introduced exactly by Alexander Kotov.

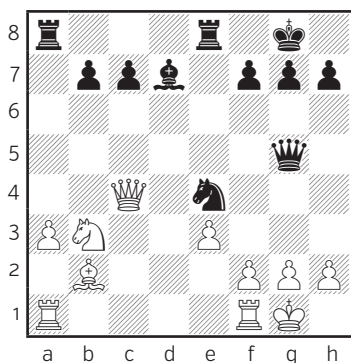
As an illustration I offer you two examples from the battling games of Kotov himself, against Mikhail Botvinnik, the patriarch of Soviet chess.

Laying a bridge from Kotov’s methods to my own book, I would note that both of these examples could successfully complete the chapter “When the opponent advances”.

Kotov – Botvinnik

URS-CH LENINGRAD, 1939

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. ♖c2
 ♘c6 5. ♗f3 d5 6. e3 o-o 7. a3 ♙xc3+
 8. ♖xc3 ♙d7 9. b3 a5 10. ♙d3 a4
 11. ♗d2 ♖e8 12. o-o e5 13. dxe5 ♗xe5
 14. ♙b2 axb3 15. ♗xb3 ♘e4 16. ♖c2
 ♗xc4 17. ♙xc4 dxc4 18. ♖xc4 ♖g5



Having exploited Kotov's passive play in the opening, Botvinnik has fully seized the initiative.

The white position is very dangerous; almost all of Black's pieces are ready to take part in the attack, as even the queen's rook can be quickly transferred from a8 to the kingside via the 6th rank. Now Black threatens 19... ♙h3.

Let's list the possible defensive resources and the corresponding candidate-moves:

1) 19. ♖xc7 — The attempt at an exchange sacrifice for a pawn.

2) 19. ♖fd1 and 3) 19. ♖fe1 — Removing the rook to have the possibility of defending the g2-pawn with the queen.

4) 19. f4 — Clearing the 2nd rank to allow protection of the weak point g2.

There is one more possibility: an attempt at disorganizing the opponent's attacking forces by a pawn sacrifice — 5) 19. h4.

Now let's examine the arising variations.

1) 19. ♖xc7? The idea of organizing a defence, having sacrificed an exchange, doesn't work out: 19... ♙h3 20. g3 ♖d5! 21. ♗d4 ♗d2 and Black wins.

2) Another possibility, meeting the threat ... ♙h3 by removing the rook from f1, doesn't help either: 19. ♖fd1! ♙h3 20. ♖f1 ♖a6 All of Black's pieces are engaged in the attack! 21. ♗d2 (or 21. f4 ♖h6! 22. gxh3 ♖g6+ 23. ♖h1 ♖xh3!! with checkmate) 22... ♖g6 22. ♗xe4 ♖xe4 23. f4 ♖xg2+ 24. ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 25. ♖h1 f6 26. ♙d4 b6 and White's position is hopeless.

3) 19. ♖fe1?! ♙h3 20. ♖f1 ♖a6 21. ♖e2 ♖g6 22. f4 ♖h5! And the black attack is irresistible.

4) In the game Kotov chose **19. f4!**

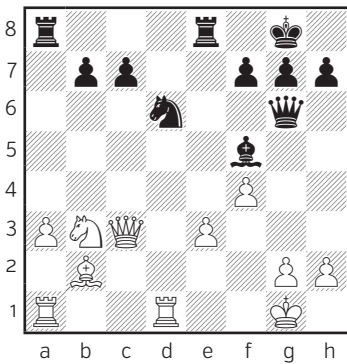
Clearing the second rank with tempo is likely to be the first thing which comes to everybody's mind.

19... ♖g6 20. ♔fd1?

This is a mistake.

20. ♖xc7 ♕h3 21. ♖c2 was better but it wouldn't solve all the problems either: 21... ♖ac8 22. ♖e2 ♖d6 23. ♖ac1 (23. ♖f2?! ♕g4 24. ♖f1 ♖e4 with a big advantage) 23... ♖xe3! 24. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 25. ♖d2 ♖d6 and Black maintains the initiative.

20... ♖d6! 21. ♖d3 ♕f5 22. ♖c3



22... ♕e4?!

This move retained the advantage for Black and later on Botvinnik managed to realize it.

However 22... ♕h3! was considerably stronger.

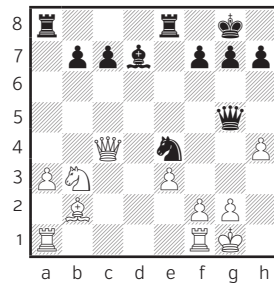
Now it is impossible to play either 23. ♖d2 (because of 23... ♖c4) or 23. ♖d2 (because of 23... ♖e4) both winning for Black. And the tactical idea 23. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 24. ♕xg7 doesn't work out either because of 24... ♕e6.

Only the move 23.g3 remains, but after 23... ♖e4 24. ♖c2 ♖g4 White can't form a sufficient defence to the sacrifice on the g3-square — either immediately or after the preliminary ... ♖a6.

Meanwhile White did indeed have a possibility to escape from this difficult situation.

5) 19.h4!

The best move, allowing White to maintain equality.



a) 19... ♖g6 Now White can take the pawn! 20. ♖xc7 ♕h3 21. ♖h2! and here White profits from the vacated h2-square!

b) 19... ♖h5 20. ♖xc7 ♕b5 21. ♖fc1 Now after 21... ♖a6?! 22.f3 ♖g6 23. ♖f4 ♖g3 24. ♖d4 White has time to organize his defences, keeping an extra pawn, and in case of 21... ♖xh4 22. ♖f4 the position is equal.

c) 19... ♖xh4 After this the play takes on a forced character. 20. ♖d4 ♖f6 21. ♖xe4! ♖xb2 22. ♖xb7 ♖xa3 23. ♖xa3 ♖xa3 24. ♖xc7 ♕b5 25. ♖b1

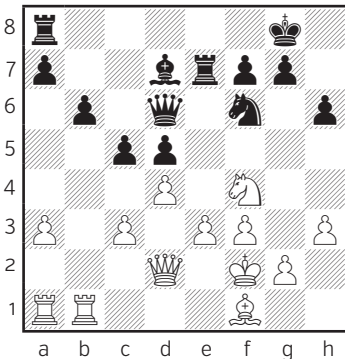
♔a2 26. ♔c1 and the position is equalized again.

In this example Kotov didn't manage to find the best defensive resource. As we can see, to formulate principles correctly and to apply them successfully are very different things! However let's be fair: he wrote his famous method books much later...

In the next game Mikhail Botvinnik fell into a difficult situation.

Botvinnik – Kotov

GRONINGEN, 1946



White's problems consist of an unreliable king position and the poor placement of his minor pieces. His position would become quite acceptable, however, if he manages to realize g2-g4 and transfer the knight to g3.

Let's try to determine the possible candidate-moves:

1) 19.a4 — White ignores his opponent's threats and continues to develop an initiative on the queenside.

2) 19.♖e1 — White protects a weak pawn beforehand.

3) 19.♙b5 — An attempt to simplify the defence by exchanging bishops.

4) 19.♘d3 — An attempt to block the e-file.

5) 19.dxc5 — The attempt at counterplay connected with opening the center.

After having noted all the possible candidate-moves, let's examine them and assess their consequences.

1) 19.a4?

Botvinnik made this move in the game. The world champion evidently underestimated his opponent's threats.

19...♔ae8?!

The immediate 19...c4! is more precise. 20. ♖e1 g5 21. ♘e2 ♗h2 22. ♘g1 ♘h5 23. e4 ♘g3 with a decisive threat: ...♘g3-h1+!

20. ♖e1 c4!

Black could also continue immediately with 20...g5! 21. ♘d3 ♗h2. The threat ...g7-g5 is likely to fall out of

Mikhail Botvinnik's field of vision. White's position is hopeless.

21.g4 g5! 22.♘e2

After 22.♘g2, the move 22...♙h2 wins — though not so quickly.

22...♖xe3 23.♘g3 ♜xg3+ 24.♙xg3 ♘e4+

White resigned.

2) 19.♖e1? White protects the weak point beforehand but he simply doesn't have enough time to organize a defence. After 19...g5! 20.♘d3 ♜h2 he can't withstand Black's threats.

3) 19.♙b5 The attempt at simplifying the position with a bishop exchange doesn't solve the problems either. 19...♙xb5 20.♖xb5 ♖ae8 21.dxc5 (after 21.♖e1 g5! 22.♘d3 cxd4 23.cxd4 ♜xa3 Black wins a pawn) 21...bxc5 22.♖e1 a6 23.♖b2 g5 24.♘d3 ♘h5 and Black obtains a very dangerous initiative.

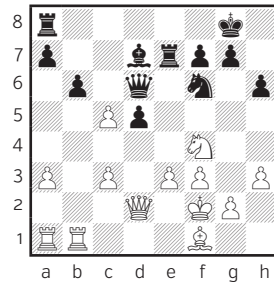
4) 19.♘d3 In this case White hopes to neutralize the pressure on the e-file by transferring the knight onto e5. However this maneuver allows an immediate invasion by the black queen: 19...♜h2! 20.dxc5

Now Black has a pleasant choice:

a) 20...bxc5 21.♖b7 (or 21.♘xc5 ♙xh3) 21...♜d6 22.♙g1 ♖ae8 with advantage.

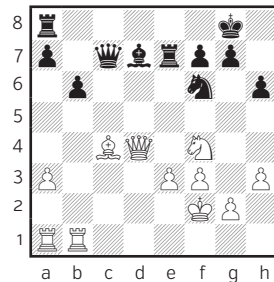
b) 20...♖ae8 21.cxb6 axb6 22.♖xb6! ♖xe3 23.♖xf6! gxf6 24.♜xe3 ♖xe3 25.♙xe3 ♜b8. In the arising position Black has fully gained the initiative and by combining threats he will manage to win the a-pawn — but to break White's fortress will be very difficult.

5) 19.dxc5! This is a non-typical decision and... the best move!



At first sight opening the center is not to White's benefit as his king's position is unreliable. But in fact, only this maneuver allows him to organize counterplay and maintain equality.

19...♜xc5 (After 19...bxc5 either 20.e4 ♖xe4 21.♘xd5! or 20.c4 are enough to hold the balance.) 20.♜d4 ♜c7 (20...♖c8 21.♖c1 ♙a5 22.♜b4 doesn't change the assessment — the position is equal.) 21.c4 dxc4 22.♙xc4



White needs to transfer his rooks to d1 and c1, after which all his pieces will be nicely mobilized. Added to this, the white king feels quite safe now — so chances are approximately equal.

Everybody makes mistakes — sometimes even the world champions do...

Perhaps more experienced chess players will say that not all of the listed candidate-moves in the above examples deserve detailed analysis. And they will be right.

Certainly determining the best candidate-moves to analyze in detail depends on a player's level, on his understanding of the position, on his combinational vision and on his intuition.

Alexander Kotov recommended firstly to determine candidate-moves — and to list them exactly — and only after to start calculating variations deeply.

“You must not do this work in parts: to examine firstly one move and then to find out other ones,” — he wrote. “Without knowing how many candidates you have, you can devote too much time to one of them and find out later that you simply do not have time for others.”

But it is only the primary determining of candidate-moves. “A chess player must find them during the entire process of calculating variations,

and not only for himself but also for his opponent,” he added.

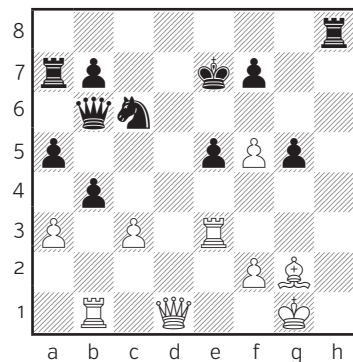
Kotov mentioned that the work on determining candidate-moves was very individual and depended on the personal style of a chess player, as well as on his own approach to solving problems. However, in any case this work must be done without haste and very conscientiously.

Actually one can't help agreeing with all these recommendations and tips from this famous grandmaster and methodologist of the last century!

To conclude my introductory chapter, let's examine an example from a game of this book's main character...

Morozevich – Akopian

RUSSIA VS THE WORLD, MOSCOW 2002



The black king is in danger. White has a lot of attractive possibilities

and it causes a serious problem of 'choice' — finding the best attacking continuation is very difficult.

Let's list again all the possible candidate-moves:

- 1) 29. ♖d5 — Centralization of the queen;
- 2) 29. f6+ — A pawn sacrifice, partly opening the f-file for attack;
- 3) 29. cxb4 — This simple capture deserves attention too;
- 4) 29. ♜d3 — Preparing an invasion on the d-file;
- 5) 29. ♖g4 — A wing maneuver activating the queen.

* * *

- 1) In case of 29. ♖d5 Black has the strong defensive maneuver 29... ♜h6!.
- 2) 29. f6+ ♔xf6 30. ♖g4 looks attractive, but after 30... ♘e7! 31. ♜xe5 ♘g6 32. ♜xg5 ♔g7± Black manages to build a defence.
- 3) After 29. cxb4 ♜h4 30. ♜c1 ♜a8 31. ♙xc6 bxc6 32. ♜xe5+ ♔f8 33. ♖d6+ ♔g7 34. f6+ ♔h6 35. ♜xc6 ♖d4 Black has real chances to escape.
- 4) Perhaps 29. ♜d3 ♜d8 30. ♙d5 is stronger, but after 30... ♘b8 31. cxb4

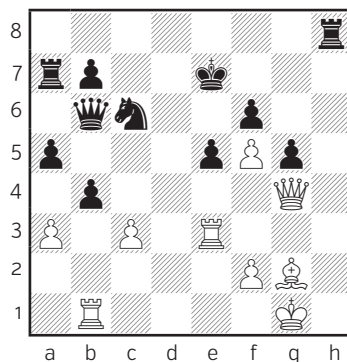
♖f6 32. bxa5 ♖xf5 White is still too far from a decisive advantage.

5) 29. ♖g4!

Morozevich played this in the game and it is the strongest continuation.

29...f6

29... ♔f6? loses because of 30. ♜g3 ♜g8 31. ♜h3 with an irresistible attack.



30. ♖c4!

This is a decisive maneuver — together with the previous white move it is deadly dangerous! Black cannot protect all the weaknesses around his king.

30... ♘d8 31. ♜d3! ♜h4

31... ♘f7 also loses after 32. cxb4 ♜aa8 33. ♜c1.

32. ♖g8 ♜f4 33. ♜b2 ♘f7 34. ♜bd2 Black resigned.

* * *

Alexander Morozevich was at his peak in this game! As we shall see later on, however, he could not always solve the problem of choosing

the best move, even in his most striking games! So, if in solving some tests you don't achieve success — don't be upset!



At the beginning of the chess path...