

# **The Creative Power of Bogoljubov**

Volume I: Pawn Play, Sacrifices,  
Restriction and More

Grigory Bogdanovich

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## Foreword

Chess history has not always been kind to the players who dared challenge the hegemony of Alexander Alekhine in the late 1920s and 1930s. Despite wresting the title from Alekhine in 1935, the Dutchman Max Euwe has more often than not been portrayed as an unworthy holder of the title. For Efim Bogoljubov who challenged Alekhine twice in 1929 and 1934, history has been even harsher as he has often been dismissed as even an unworthy challenger. However, at his peak – from about 1923-1929 – he twice won super-tournaments ahead of Capablanca (Moscow 1925 and Bad Kissingen 1928) and shared first with Alekhine and Maroczy at Carlsbad in 1923, and he was frequently named in the same breath as the great triumvirate Alekhine, Capablanca and Lasker by commentators such as Reti.

Why has Bogoljubov's reputation declined since? Perhaps his essentially practical chess style – balanced, versatile and optimistic – stood out less than that of his more colorful contemporaries such as Tartakower, Reti and Nimzowitsch? Perhaps his inconsistency – he sometimes seemed to lose focus and drift during games – robbed his play of some of its cleanness in comparison to that of the World Champions? Or perhaps his personal situation meant that there was no country to cheer for him (as Holland cheered for Max Euwe) – a Ukrainian born in the Kiev region, he was interned in Germany for the duration of the First World War, he renounced Soviet citizenship in 1926 and lived with his wife and daughters in Germany, but because of circumstances, his playing activities during the Second World War, he became associated with the Nazi regime.

Whatever the case, Bogoljubov played exceptionally interesting games against the top players of his era and his best games definitely deserve closer examination. A few years ago I spent some enjoyable months analyzing and learning from his games – some of this analysis is published on my blog – so I was understandably delighted to be asked to write a foreword to this new work. I was fascinated by the new biographical details the author has uncovered: for example, the letters relating to the renunciation of Bogoljubov's Soviet citizenship and his reasons for declining a match with Alekhine in 1925. I also greatly enjoyed the thematic arrangement of Bogoljubov's games, which clearly illustrates the breadth of Bogoljubov's chess skills. I hope you enjoy the book as much as I did and profit from this opportunity to (re)discover the life and games of one of the best players of the 1920s and 1930s.

**Matthew Sadler**



## Introduction

*To my friends from  
Bad Mergentheim chess club  
(Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany)*

In the 1920s, Efim Bogoljubov was one of the strongest chess players in the world, on a par with such titans as Emanuel Lasker, Jose Raul Capablanca and Alexander Alekhine. Bogoljubov never became world champion, if we don't count his FIDE championship matches (back then, FIDE didn't run the world championship). Yet his impressive successes in tournaments (his match performances were less stellar) allowed him to challenge the world champion, Alekhine. Their two matches, especially the first, are among the best in chess history. Bogoljubov, two-times USSR champion and the winner of the 1925 Moscow super-tournament, was forgotten in the Soviet Union until the 1990s for ideological reasons.

While working on Bogoljubov's games, I naturally referred to the books by both Bogoljubov himself and other researchers of his games. Before Charushin (a book in Russian published in 1995 entitled *One, But a Flaming Passion*<sup>1</sup>) and Soloviev (*Bogoljubow*<sup>2</sup>: *The Fate of a Chess Player*, Chess Stars 2004), only three "modest" monographs had been published dedicated to Bogoljubov's chess legacy according to Charushin: in German (A. Brinckmann), Spanish (J. Ganzo) and English (J. Spence). I can't say anything about the Spanish monograph because I haven't seen it. I looked through Jack Spence's book (*The Chess Career of E.D. Bogoljubow*, 1971), and, frankly, wasn't impressed – you really can't glean much from it. But I can't agree with the assessment of Alfred Brinckmann's book (*Grossmeister Bogoljubow*, Berlin 1953). What does "modest" mean? 107 pages isn't much, especially in comparison with Charushin's 190, and they are positively dwarfed by Soloviev's 280. But if we look at Bogoljubov and Brinckmann's histories, it's easy to notice that they lived their lives almost in parallel. Their chess playing levels were, of course, different, but they often crossed paths, and not only over the chess board, as I've learned from Brinckmann's book. Moreover, he was a strong player: he once won a round-robin tournament ahead of Bogoljubov, Nimzowitsch,

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<sup>1</sup> *Odna, no plamennaya strast*, Nizhny Novgorod Publishing House. Charushin also published a CD on Bogoljubov in English and German

<sup>2</sup> An alternative spelling also found, especially in Germanic sources (publisher's note)

Saemisch and Mieses. He played against almost every great chess player of the era. Indeed, he even defeated Bogoljubov once. And, of course, his annotations to 50 games together with his memories of Bogoljubov are very useful for those interested in his career.

I read a lot of chess literature while writing this book. I picked up one chess text book – not a single example from Bogoljubov’s games. I got another – no mention of his name at all. The same happened with the third one. Why do modern writers not notice this great player? Perhaps because Bogoljubov played almost a century ago? No, there are many examples from that era – just not from Bogoljubov’s games. This “boycott” started with Aron Nimzowitsch. Take his famous book, *My System*. It has games by pretty much every notable player of the era, but Bogoljubov was only represented with three games he’d lost. And this is despite 1921–1926 being the period of Bogoljubov’s greatest successes. His tournament results were brilliant, and his games of the time are beyond doubt useful for learning chess. But not a single win! Bogoljubov’s games were so diverse that you can find an example on every single topic of chess theory in his games.

During his career, Bogoljubov played, by Charushin’s count, about 1,700 games. Bogoljubov’s games are both very interesting and instructive. When I was selecting games for this book, my first choices were those annotated by Bogoljubov himself and his leading contemporaries – Alekhine, Lasker, Nimzowitsch, Tartakower, Reti and others. Games annotated both by the author and other great players are especially interesting. Sometimes, their evaluations of what was going on both on and off the chessboard were completely different from each other’s. Their annotations are good learning material for players of all levels.

The annotations in their games, even those by the greatest players of the era, were not mistake-free, especially in tactics. Computer analysis has allowed me to correct some faulty variations and refine the evaluations: in today’s environment, there’s no sense in looking through tactics on your own when you have master tacticians such as Houdini and Stockfish available. Why dig with a shovel if you have an excavator to hand? Sometimes, however, you have to gently “push” the machines so that they start up and dig the right way. So, when I state “according to modern analysis”, this means that the position was analyzed in detail by the aforementioned engines.

Note, however, I think that there’s no point in showing absolutely every line. So, dear reader, if you have a powerful chess program handy, you are welcome to examine every instance of “according to modern analysis” by yourself. Nor have I tried to correct the human annotations in every possible case – only if the improvement was much stronger than the original move. I didn’t have to

correct the strategic part of the commentary in any way, because the classics are immortal, and modern chess players are still learning from the books of great players from the past. Of course, modern chess has more dynamics, and opening theory has advanced far since that time, but from the strategic point of view annotations by the great players of the past still hold. And we still have much to learn from them with regard to writing style. The goal of this book is to immerse the reader in Bogoljubov's diverse legacy, and to do it with vivid human speech instead of dry chess symbols.

Bogoljubov's career games are a treasure trove of chess ideas and techniques. In many of them, we see the steady hand of an experienced "diamond cutter" searching for the exact idea. So, to truly appreciate the depth of his plans, it's not enough to pepper the game texts with exclamation and question marks. We need "warm human words"!

The main sources for the games were the ChessBase and Chess Assistant bases, the aforementioned books about Bogoljubov, and printed media of the time – Grekov's *Shakhmaty* magazine, *Wiener Schachzeitung*, etc.

Despite the outward success, Bogoljubov's path in life wasn't exactly dotted with roses; moreover, his destiny was rife with dramatic events. Bogoljubov became a hostage to life circumstances. He was not an executioner or overseer, and he wasn't deluded by Nazi ideology.

International Master Grigory Bogdanovich,  
17 June 2020



*Manheim, 1914. Standing (at the back left to right): Ahues, Hirsch, Kruger, John, Przepiorka, Flamberg, Malyutin. Standing, 2nd row: Janowski, Fahrni, Duras (behind), Vidmar, Carls, Bogoljubov, Marshall, Hild, Robinow, Post, Tartakower, Schellenberg, Alekhine, Breyer, Reti, Sosnitsky. Sitting: Rommig, Gudehus, Gebhardt, Tarrasch, Spielmann.*

18. Play Like Bogoljubov, in the second volume of this book). In February 1914, Bogoljubov returned to Kiev and got an opportunity to test his strength against Jose Raul Capablanca, who was touring the Russian Empire. Bogoljubov, Bogatyrchuk and Evenson managed to draw a consultation game against Capablanca, but he lost the one-on-one encounter against the great Cuban.

The Mannheim tournament in summer 1914 was a true watershed in Bogoljubov's destiny. The tournament stopped after the 11<sup>th</sup> round because of the outbreak of the First World War, and the Russian chess players were interned in a small German town, Triberg im Schwarzwald, in the middle of the huge German nature reserve, the Black Forest.

The Russian chess players held about 8 tournaments during their



internment. Bogoljubov won five of them and finished second in two more. He also played several matches, winning all of them.

In 1918, the Russian players were freed, and they all left, except one – Bogoljubov, who was “captured for eternity” by Frau Frieda Kaltenbach, the daughter of the local schoolmaster. They got married in 1920 and later had two daughters, Sonja and Tamara. Savielly Tartakower remembered that period in Bogoljubov’s life: “Bogoljubov didn’t ‘learn’ his art, but rather ‘felt’ it. Of course, the years of internment in Triberg were critical for his life – he had much time on his hands, and he used it to improve his skills, training with his friends and fellow internees...” Now, family was everything for Bogoljubov, and it became the reason for his life-changing decision in 1926, yet right after his wedding the most successful period of his chess career began.

After the World War, Bogoljubov was completely immersed in the restless life of a chess professional, which entailed constant travels between cities and countries. In 1919–1921, Bogoljubov successfully competed in several tournaments and played some matches, with more sketchy results. In late 1919, a Swedish chess patron invited many famous chess players, Bogoljubov included, to his home country. He played matches and tournaments in Sweden for almost a year, and it could be considered a successful period. Still, these tournaments weren’t truly groundbreaking for him.



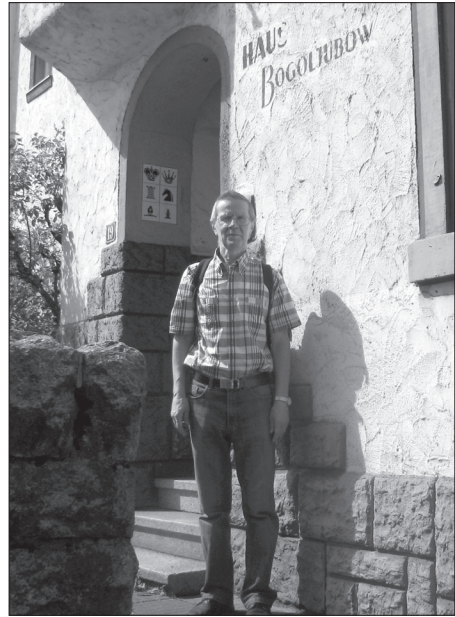


Photo of the author



<b>Piestany 1922</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	<b>Points</b>	
1 Bogoljubov	♦	½	½	1	½	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	15
2 Spielmann	½	♦	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	14½
3 Alekhine	½	½	♦	1	½	1	1	0	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14½
4 Grunfeld	0	0	0	♦	0	½	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	1	11
5 Reti	½	½	½	1	♦	½	0	½	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	10½
6 Saemisch	0	½	0	½	½	♦	½	½	½	1	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	0	½	1	9½
7 Wolf	0	0	0	0	1	½	♦	0	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	9½
8 Tartakower	1	0	1	0	½	½	1	♦	0	½	0	0	½	1	½	1	1	0	½	1	9
9 Tarrasch	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	1	♦	0	1	1	½	1	0	0	½	½	1	1	8½
10 Euwe	0	0	½	0	1	0	½	½	1	♦	½	½	0	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	8½
11 Johner	0	0	0	½	0	1	½	1	0	½	♦	1	1	½	0	1	0	½	1	1	8½
12 von Balla	0	0	½	0	1	0	0	1	0	½	0	♦	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	8
13 Treybal	0	0	0	0	1	½	0	½	½	1	0	½	♦	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	8
14 Selezniev	½	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	½	½	♦	½	½	½	1	½	1	7
15 Hromadka	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	½	♦	0	½	1	0	1	7
16 Prokes	0	½	0	0	½	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	½	½	1	♦	½	1	½	1	6
17 Przepiorka	0	0	0	½	0	0	0	0	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	♦	½	½	1	6
18 Marco	0	0	0	½	½	1	½	1	½	0	½	0	0	0	0	0	½	♦	½	1	5½
19 Opocensky	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	0	0	½	1	½	½	½	♦	1	4½

And then came 1922. Bogoljubov won a super-tournament in Piestany (Bad Pistyan), ahead of Alekhine, Spielmann and other well-known players. The big money prize allowed his family to purchase a three-story mansion in Triberg, which later came to be known as Bogoljubov House; it's located just several hundred meters from the highest seven-step waterfall in Germany (163 meters). Bogoljubov's chess room was preserved in the Triberg Kurhaus (spa house), however, it is now used as an entertainment center.

The next year, he recorded another success: he shared 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> place with Alekhine and Maroczy at the Carlsbad super-tournament, ahead of many famous players. Bogoljubov was thus fully accepted in the “family” of the world's leading players and got invited to many tournaments. However, his results in 1923–1924, after Carlsbad, weren't particularly impressive, with the exception of winning the third Soviet Chess Championship in 1924. He would often visit Russia, staying for up to half a year at a time. 1925 was the year of his peak successes.

I'll quote the description of Bogoljubov's behavior during the games, made by a chess fan in the mid-1920s:

*Such immense work, such almost physical strain is needed to convert this infinitely small advantage... and to get that advantage, even grandmaster*

Carlsbad 1923	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Points
1 Alekhine	◆	1	1	½	1	½	0	0	½	½	1	1	1	1	½	1	0	1	11½
2 Bogoljubov	0	◆	½	0	½	1	1	½	½	1	1	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	11½
3 Maroczy	0	½	◆	½	1	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	1	11½
4 Reti	½	1	½	◆	½	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	1	0	½	1	0	0	10½
5 Grunfeld	0	½	0	½	◆	1	1	½	½	1	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	10½
6 Nimzowitsch	½	0	½	½	0	◆	0	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	10
7 Treybal	1	0	½	½	0	1	◆	0	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	1	1	10
8 Yates	1	½	0	0	½	0	1	◆	½	½	1	½	0	1	1	½	1	½	9½
9 Teichmann	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	◆	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	9
10 Tartakower	½	0	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	◆	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	8½
11 Tarrasch	0	0	½	½	½	0	½	0	1	½	◆	0	1	1	½	1	0	1	8
12 Rubinstein	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	◆	0	0	1	1	1	½	7½
13 Bernstein	0	1	½	0	0	0	0	1	½	½	0	1	◆	½	0	1	0	1	7
14 Wolf	0	½	0	1	½	0	½	0	½	½	0	1	½	◆	0	½	1	0	6½
15 Saemisch	½	0	0	½	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	1	◆	0	0	1	6
16 Thomas	0	0	0	0	½	1	0	½	0	0	0	0	0	½	1	◆	1	1	5½
17 Spielmann	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	◆	0	5
18 Chajes	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	½	0	0	0	½	0	1	0	0	1	◆	5

*Bogoljubov has to lean onto the table with his entire body, eyeing the board for ten or fifteen minutes, looking at every piece, almost diving into the crease that divides the board into two halves; he squints at the clock face, flickering alarmingly near his elbow, then looks at all the pieces again, finds a cigarette in his pocket without taking his eyes off the board, puts it into his mouth the wrong way, winces, turns it around, smokes it in two puffs, stubs the butt into the ashtray, and then suddenly moves a piece with a short motion, pushes the clock and writes down his move. But still, even after recording his move and walking several steps away from the table, he puts his hands deep into his pockets and looks at the diagram of his game through the cigarette smoke (a sleepy boy, as soon*



*3rd All-Union Chess Congress in Moscow. Golubev, Vainstein, Nenarokov, I. Rabinovich, Bogoljubov, Selezniev, Neishtadt*



## Chapter 9

### Conversion of an Advantage

To achieve success in the game, it is not enough to gain some advantage, it is still necessary to convert it. It's for a reason that chess players say that the hardest positions are won positions. The conversion technique depends on many factors: from purely technical (the knowledge of techniques) to psychological ones. If Bogoljubov was quite good at the technique of conversion of an advantage, then his psychology often failed him. When reviewing Bogoljubov's play, we note that in initiative positions, devoid of tactical skirmishes, he acted confidently. It was worse in games in which his rivals had counter opportunities, and he sometimes overlooked them. When converting an advantage, Bogoljubov was often let down by excessive optimism, steadfastness in carrying out his plans – which in principle, in itself, is not bad, but from a distance it's easy to miss a nuance that requires a change of plan.

This Chapter provides examples of Bogoljubov's successful conversion of different types of advantage, yet in other chapters you can see games in which he was frustrated due to the above shortcomings in the conversion of an advantage technique.

#### 1. Queenside pawn majority

The main strategic plan when converting a queenside pawn majority is to create a passed pawn and advance it with the support of pieces. A classic example of this method is the following game of Bogoljubov against the German grandmaster Tarrasch, a follower of Steinitz, who, according to Reti, “was the first to give chess theory a scientific form”. Although Bogoljubov was often considered a hypermodernist, and he considered himself as such in the early stages of his chess career, in this game he acts in a classic manner that is quite consistent with the theoretical

framework of his opponent: the conversion of a pawn advantage on the queenside with a combination of threats on the kingside. Play is all over the chessboard!

*No. 125. Spanish Opening*

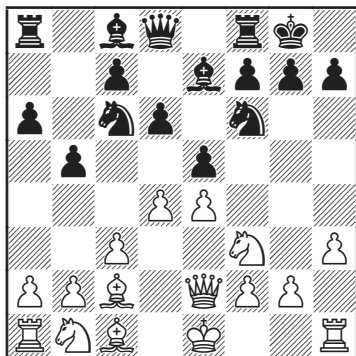
**TARRASCH – BOGOLJUBOV**

Bad Kissingen 1928

*Commentary by Savielly Tartakower*

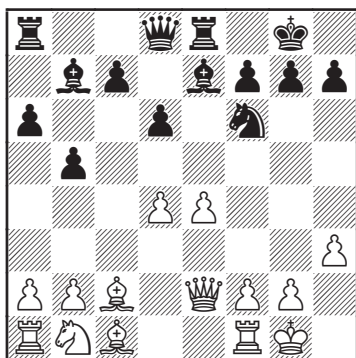
**1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 ♗f6 5. ♚e2 ♙e7 6. c3 b5 7. ♙c2 0-0 8. d4 d6 9. h3. 9. 0-0 ♙g4 10. ♖d1**  
would have been more natural. In fact, in the “closed” variation of the Spanish Opening, black is no longer afraid of various blocking means (such

as h2-h3 or d4-d5), still finding ways to achieve counter-play, and therefore it is more sensible for white to play not for theoretical, but for tactical advantages!



9...ed! 10. ♖xd4. It is inconvenient to play 10. cd right away due to 10... ♘b4.

10... ♘xd4 11. cd ♙b7! 12. 0-0 ♖e8



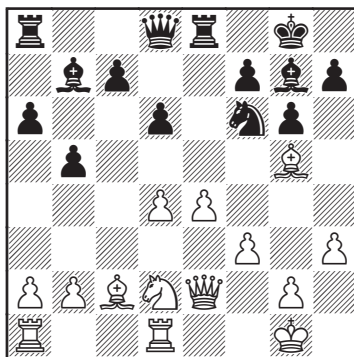
Let's take a closer look at the position. Black's pieces are greatly positioned (in strategic terms)! According to Tarrasch, he already felt out of place here and cursed both the move 5. ♙e2 (instead of the more common 5. 0-0), which left his

queen feeling x-ray radiation from the enemy rook, as well as the c3 and d4 construction (instead of the more solid d3), which left his center "hanging", something that players, especially from the old school, cannot stand!

13. ♖d1. In order to then play 14. f3, without fear of the threat of ♘f6-h5-g3. However, white's rook on the d-file can't develop any special energy now, and that is why it was probably more appropriate to play 13. ♖e1 with the continuation ♘b1-d2-f1 or even 13. ♘c3 b4 14. ♘d1 right away.

13... ♙f8! *The principled 13... ♘xe4!? deserved consideration, and then 14. ♙xe4 ♙h4 15. ♘c3 ♙xe4 16. ♘xe4 d5 17. f3 de 18. fe ♙d5 19. e5 c5 with an obvious positional advantage for black: he has the initiative, and white's bishop is restricted in its actions by the central pawns, which must be protected from a "raid" by black's major pieces – GB.*

14. f3 g6 15. ♙g5 ♙g7 16. ♘d2



16...c5!?. Black is the first to complete development and begin counter-play in the center.

17. **dc ♖c7!** Not 17...dc right away due to 18. **♞c4! ♚c7** 19. **♞d6**.

18. **♞b3**. A crisis caused by the struggle. With the move in the text white only diverts his forces from the main tasks, without hindering the enemy's plans. The move 18. c6 deserved more consideration here...

*The move in the text allows black to create a pawn majority on the queenside – GB.*

18...dc 19. **♚f2**. Trying as soon as possible (and even with tempo, thanks to the attack on the c5 pawn) to get away from an unpleasant confrontation with the rook. But on the next move, white's queen's rook will have to assume the passive role of protecting the b2 pawn.

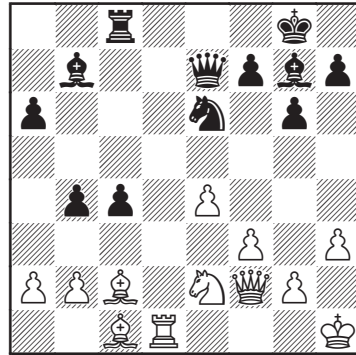
19...♞d7. Both protecting (the c5 pawn) and attacking (the b2 pawn).

20. **♖ab1 ♖ac8** 21. **♙e3 ♖e7** 22. **♞c1 ♖e6** 23. **♞e2 ♖d6** 24. **♖xd6 ♚xd6** 25. **♖d1 ♚e7** 26. **♙c1 ♞f8** 27. **♚h1 ♞e6** 28. **♙b3**. With this pawn structure, black's main plan is to convert his pawn advantage on the queenside.

*And how should white react to the black pawns' attack on the queenside? This is neither an idle nor an easy question. There are two main alternatives: to play on other parts of the board (for example, to carry out a counterattack on the kingside) or to start fighting the opponent's pawn majority. Tarrasch chooses the latter, but it seems that white's last move is just a waste of time. In provoking his opponent to advance the c5 pawn,*

*Tarrasch probably wanted to deprive black of the strong supporting d4 square – GB.*

28...c4 29. **♙c2 b4**

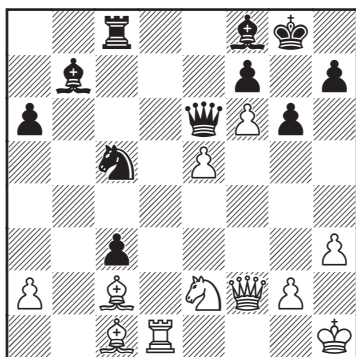


Finally, black's pawn forest is set in motion.

30. **♙b1 ♚c7** 31. **f4 c3** 32. **bc bc**. Black already has a significant advantage: he has completed one of the intermediate tasks – creating a passed pawn. White's pieces are pinned to the first rank and have to watch the c3 pawn, which is actively supported by black's pieces – GB.

33. **♙c2 ♚c4!** 34. **f5 ♞c5** 35. **f6 ♙f8** 36. **e5 ♚e6!** Attacking three pawns at once: e5, a2, and h3.

*Tartakower is delighted with this move, but analysis shows that the continuation 36...♞e4! was more consistent. If the "mercantile" move in the text is aimed at material gains, then the knight's move would free up the path for the passed c3 pawn, since white is forced to part with the light-squared bishop in view of the threat of 37... ♚xe2! and 38...♞g3+ – GB.*



37. ♖f4 ♜xh3+ 38. ♔g1 ♜g4.

After a long struggle, black's pressure has paid off in the form of a pawn. The rest is a matter of technique.

*The last remark could make a player relax. Yet the end of the game confirms the danger of such an approach – GB.*

39. ♗e3. Black's pride is the passed c3 pawn, which is constantly watched by his pieces. For example, now 39. ♘xc3 is bad for white due to 39... ♘e6! – GB.

39... ♜c4. This misses the win. The correct continuation was 39... ♘e6!?, and black should win – GB.

40. ♔h2. White's reciprocal mistake. After 40. ♘f4! black cannot win anymore – GB.

40... ♘e6 41. ♘c1 ♜g4 42. ♔g1 h5. Knight leaps were also winning: 42... ♘f4 or 42... ♘g5. However, Bogoljubov uses the distracting power of the passed c-pawn to create a decisive attack on the opponent's king, for which he cold-bloodedly pushes forward his rook's pawn – GB.

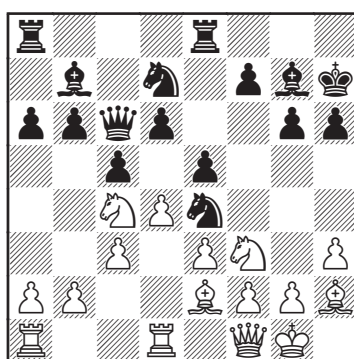
43. ♗e2 h4 44. ♔h2 ♜h5 45. ♖f4 ♖c5 46. ♜f1 ♘xf4 47. ♘xf4 ♜xe5. White resigned.

In the next game, the attack of the queenside pawns allowed Bogoljubov to get one of the most nightmarish types of a passed pawn for the enemy: the protected a-pawn, which reached the 6th rank.

No. 126.

NAEGELI – BOGOLJUBOV

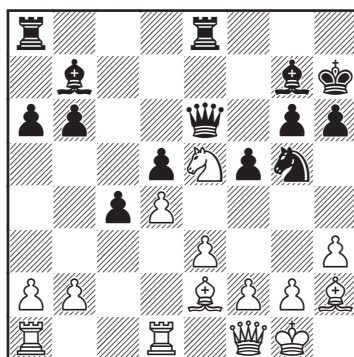
Zurich 1934



20...ed!? 21. cd. It was better to try 21. ed!?, preventing black from creating a pawn majority on the queenside.

21...d5 22. ♘ce5 ♘xe5 23. ♘xe5 ♜e6. The hanging position of the e5 knight allows black to push the c-pawn.

24. ♖f3 ♘g5 25. ♖g4 f5 26. ♖e2 c4!?



Black has a clear strategic plan, which involves the advance of the queenside pawns.

27. ♖ac1 b5 28. h4 ♘f7 29. ♘xf7.

White tries to keep the h2-b8 diagonal open. Meanwhile, the maneuver aimed at improving the dark-squared bishop's position 29. f4 h5 30. ♙g3 a5 31. ♙e1, deserved consideration. In this case, the bishop on e1 participates in repelling black's aggression on the queenside.

29... ♗xf7 30. ♙f3 ♙f6!? 31. g3.

There's no choice but to agree to further boxing in of the h2 bishop in order not to lose the h-pawn.

31... ♗e6 32. ♗g2 h5! 33. ♙h1 a5.

Having stabilized the situation on the kingside, black returns to the attack on the queenside.

34. ♙g1 a4 35. ♗f1. If 35. a3 then 35... ♖eb8 followed by ... ♙c6 and ...b4. The movement of the b-pawn can be supported by playing ... ♙e7.

35... ♖ec8 36. ♗e2 b4 37. ♙g2 a3!? 38. b3?! This is tantamount to resigning.

38...cb 39. ab. Now the protected passed a3 pawn should quickly decide the outcome of the fight.

39... ♖xc1 40. ♖xc1 ♖c8 41. ♖a1.

White allocates an entire rook to fight the a3 pawn. In the case of 41. ♖xc8 black continues by playing 41... ♗xc8 followed by ♗c8-c3-b2, and the path for the a-pawn is open.

41... ♙xd4 42. ♖a2 ♙a6 43. ♗d1 ♙b2. White resigned. And he did the right thing: with such offside pieces as the rook and the g1 bishop, there

cannot be any other solution. To confirm this, here are some short variations by Alekhine:

44. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 45. ♙xd5 ♙d3 or

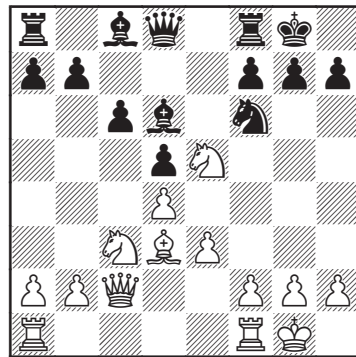
44. ♙xd5 ♖d8.

Sometimes, a pawn majority on the queenside allows a player to capture space, trapping the enemy's forces with the threat of creating a passed pawn.

No. 127.

### STAHLBERG – BOGOLJUBOV

Gothenburg 1930



As in the previous game, Bogoljubov, by exploiting the unstable position of the e5 knight, forms a pawn majority on the queenside.

13...c5!? 14. ♖ad1 ♗e8 15. f4 c4 16. ♙f5 b5. The plans of the sides have been determined: white, while being covered by the Pillsbury formation (the d4, e3, f4 pawns and the e5 knight), carries out an attack on the kingside, which is based on the transfer of the rook via the route ♖f1-f3-h3 with the possible involvement of

the g-pawn (g2-g4-g5). Black's plan is to advance the queenside pawns combined with preventive defensive measures on the kingside.

Bogoljubov is too straightforward in carrying out his plan to convert a pawn majority on the queenside. Pillsbury's attacking formation is very dangerous. A more reliable continuation was 16...♙xf5!? 17. ♖xf5 ♙b4 18. ♘e2 ♖c8 19. ♖c2 ♘e4, exchanging white's dangerous bishop and excluding the white queen from attacking the black king's castling position. After the move in the text, white had the opportunity to sharpen the game.

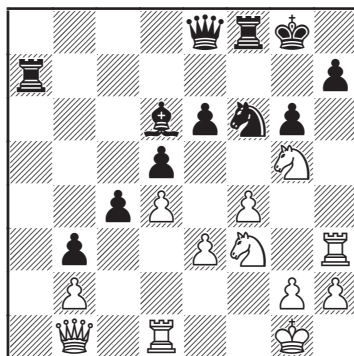
17. ♖f3!? The move 17. g4!? was stronger, and now if 17...b4?! then 18. ♘xd5! It was better to try 17...♙xf5 18. ♖xf5 b4 19. g5 ♖c8, preventing white's attack.

17...♙e6. The continuation 17...♙xf5!? 18. ♖xf5 b4 was better, and, having secured himself on the kingside, black retains the advantages of his position on the queenside.

18. ♖h3 g6. Bogoljubov prefers the move in the text, rather than 18...h6, in order to force a bishop exchange, in which the 7th rank will be freed of the f7 pawn. That will allow black's major pieces to participate in the defense of their monarch. In addition, the pawn on h6 would become a "hook" white could quickly attack via 19. g4 and g4-g5.

19. ♙xe6 fe 20. ♘f3 b4 21. ♘b1 a5 22. ♘g5 ♖a7. The queen's rook joins the king's defense.

23. ♘d2 a4 24. ♘df3 b3 25. ab ab (25...cb!?) 26. ♖b1



Black has heavily restricted his opponent on the queenside, while white does not have any real threats as yet.

26...♖e7. Freeing the queen from the humiliating role of defending an ordinary soldier (the e6 pawn) and planning ♖a8-a2. Following his plan, Bogoljubov misses 26...c3! with an overwhelming position.

27. ♘e5 ♙xe5 28. fe ♘g4. The continuation 28...♘e4!? 29. ♘xe4 de 30. ♖xe4 c3 31. bc ♖b5 would have been in Bogoljubov's playing style, and the threat of black's major pieces invading the enemy's camp, combined with the desire of the b3 pawn to move to the conversion square would have put white in a difficult position.

29. ♖f1? (29. ♖g3!?) 29...♖f5. On this day Bogoljubov was obviously not in a good mood, otherwise he would have played 29...c3!?

30. ♖xf5 gf 31. e4 de 32. ♖c3 ♖d7 33. ♖xc4 ♘xe5 34. ♘xe4. If 34. de, then 34...♖d8.

34...♖d8 35. ♘f6+ ♗xf6 36. de ♗d8 37. ♖c1 ♗d2. The rook on the 2nd rank, the weakness of the 1st rank, the far advanced b-pawn – these positional gains of black should provide him with an easy win, but he needs to act with some accuracy – his king is slightly exposed.

38. ♖a1 ♔f7 39. ♖a7+ ♔g6 40. h4. White's attempt to confuse the enemy is coolly parried by Bogoljubov.

40...♗xh4 41. ♖a8 ♗d4+ 42. ♔h1 ♖xe5 43. ♗g8+ ♔h6 44. ♖g1 ♗f6 45. ♗g3 ♗g5. White resigned.

## 2. The initiative

Initiative is a serious and dangerous weapon. But it is a temporary factor, which means that the owner of the initiative should be extremely responsible when spending tempi.

What allows chess players to capture and develop the initiative? An unfavorable position of the opponent's queen may be one of the factors. This piece is valuable, and by attacking it, you can win time or take the reins of power into your own hands, as happened in the next game.

### *No. 128. Nimzo-Indian Defense*

#### **KIENINGER – BOGOLJUBOV**

Schwelm 1950

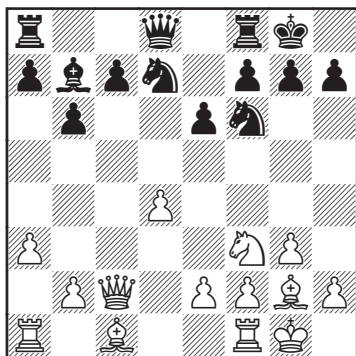
1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. ♖c2 d5 5. a3 ♙xc3+ 6. ♖xc3 dc 7. ♗xc4 0-0 8. ♘f3 b6 9. g3. Bogoljubov

willingly defended Nimzowitsch, whose theoretical ideas were his biggest contribution to the game. Bogoljubov was the “father” of black's maneuver here, aimed at capturing the initiative by chasing the white queen (...dc, ...b6, ...♙a6). This had happened in the game Rubinstein – Bogoljubov (Carlsbad 1929): 9. ♙f4 ♘d5 (today the immediate 9...♙a6 is preferred) 10. ♙g3 ♙a6 11. ♖a4 ♗d7!? (by offering a queen exchange, Bogoljubov wins another tempo for development) 12. ♖xd7 ♘xd7 13. ♘e5 (if 13. e4, then 13...♙xf1 14. ♖xf1 ♘5f6) 13...♘xe5 14. ♙xe5 ♖ac8 15. ♖c1 f6 16. ♙g3 ♗fd8, and black has finished developing, when white has yet to do so.

9...♙a6 10. ♖c2 ♙b7. The beginning of a maneuver to improve the position of the light-squared bishop, the purpose of which is to transfer the bishop to the e4 square, from where it will resist its opponent – the g2 bishop – at its maximum power. If Bogoljubov's plan includes the logical c7-c5 after the preliminary improvement of the position of his pieces, then in modern practice the plan with the immediate c7-c5 is met more often: 10...♘bd7 11. ♙g2 c5 (after 11...♙b7 the game may continue in a similar fashion to Bogoljubov's play) 12. b4!? ♖c8 13. ♖a4 ♙b7 (it is not favorable for white to take the a7 pawn now due to 14...♙d5 or 14...♙xf3, and black takes white's central d4 pawn) 14. dc bc 15. 0-0

with an equal game (Aronian – Topalov, Bilbao 2008).

11. ♖g2 ♞bd7 12. 0-0



Bogoljubov starts play based on the unfortunate position of the white queen.

12... ♗e4. A well-known technique – in order to avoid pinning along the long diagonal, first the bishop comes through to e4, and then other pieces can occupy the long diagonal h1-a8. It should also be noted that the bishop occupied the e4 square with tempo.

13. ♖c3 ♞d5. With small moves, attacking the enemy queen, black captures the center.

14. ♖c4 ♖c8 15. ♗d2 ♖b7 16. ♖ac1 ♖fc8. *The perennial question: with which rook? – the answer to which is often found intuitively – Tartakower.*

Here Bogoljubov had his own idea (perhaps to withdraw the rook from the a3-f8 diagonal?), but usually in such positions rooks are positioned on c8 and d8 and, as the further course of the game showed, black could have saved a tempo at this point. That's

why 16... ♖ac8!? would have made sense.

17. ♞e1. Sometimes white does not want to exchange bishops for some reason. So he withdraws the g2 bishop from the long diagonal, and only after that lets the f3 knight have its say. But, firstly, it's necessary to take into account the capture via ... ♗xf3, destroying the pawn structure; secondly, white is already lagging in development, and he just does not have time for such long maneuvers.

17... ♗xg2 18. ♞xg2 c5. Again, there is a potential threat to the white queen.

19. ♖d3 ♖d8. See the note to black's 16th move.

20. ♖fd1 cd 21. ♖xd4 ♞c5 22. ♗c3 f6 23. ♖c4 ♖ac8 24. ♗e1 ♗f7 25. ♖a2 ♖a6. Bogoljubov does not attempt to provide the d5 knight with a station in the center by playing ...f5, since the e5 square becomes available for the opponent's minor pieces. Without touching his "advanced center" (according to Tartakower, these are pawns on the 3rd and 6th rank; here, however, the semi-expanded center consists of the e- and f-pawns), Bogoljubov denies the enemy the opportunity to create outposts in the center.

26. b4 ♞e4 27. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 28. ♖b3 b5!? This is a play on restricting the dark-squared bishop – now it bangs against its own queenside pawns; in addition, in anticipation of a possible future endgame (the black



knight against white's bishop), black places pawns on the white squares so that the bishop will not be able to attack them.

**29. f3** ♖d6 **30. e4** ♖b6. White has managed to chase the black knights away from the center, but now the black cavalry have gained the excellent c4 and a4 outposts at their disposal.

**31. ♕f2** ♖dc4 **32. ♖xd8** ♖xd8

**33. ♖e1**. Further simplification of the position is not safe for white: **33. ♕xb6** ♖xb6+ **34. ♖h1** ♖d4, and the weakness of the first rank will tie white's hands and feet.

**33...a6**. Finally solving the problem of the queenside pawns positioned on the dark squares.

**34. ♖c3** ♖a4 **35. ♖c1** ♖ab2 **36. ♖c3** e5 **37. ♖c2** ♖d7 **38. ♖c3** h5. After black deprives white of freedom of maneuvering in the center and on the queenside, he proceeds to press the opponent on the opposite side of the board.

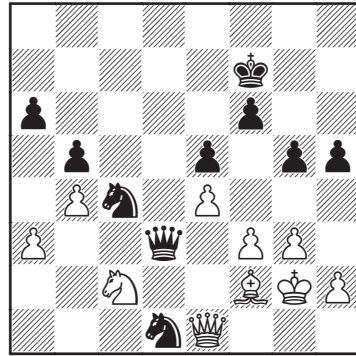
**39. ♖g2** g5. *The diagnosis is: white has breathing problems – Tartakower.*

**40. ♖c2?** *Bad moves are made due to a lack of good ones; this is an old truth – Tarrasch.*

And then, as Savielly Tartakower put it about hopeless positions that do not require explanation: "The rest is the gnashing of teeth on white's part."

**40...♖d1!** **41. ♖e1**. If **41. ♖a1**, then **41...♖d2**.

**41...♖d3**. White resigned. The final position deserves a diagram.



This is a complete triumph of the black pieces. With material equality, white has no acceptable moves. For example, if **42. ♖a1**, black can either continue by playing **42...♖b1** winning the knight, or by playing for zugzwang: **42...g4!?** **43. fg** hg. Bogoljubov's play in this game impresses with its stealthy moves: quietly and slowly, the black pieces compressed into a ring around the opponent's position. Brinkman, commenting on the game, was delighted with Bogoljubov's inconspicuous moves, forcing his opponent to constantly retreat, and gave the title: "The Quiet Initiative" to this game. This game could even be nominated for the "immortal zugzwang game" category.

In the next game, Bogoljubov sacrificed a pawn to capture the initiative.

### No. 129. Italian Opening GROB – BOGOLJUBOV

Zurich 1934

**1. e4** e5 **2. ♖f3** ♖c6 **3. ♕c4** ♕e7  
**4. c3** ♖f6 **5. d4** ♖xe4 **6. de** 0-0 **7. b4?**