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DR. NIKOLAY MINEV

EFSTRATIOS GRIVAS

Dr. Nikolay Minev

Dr. Nikolay Nikolaev Minev (Bulgarian: Николай Минев) born on November 8th, 1931 in Rousse, Bulgaria and passed away on March 10th, 2017 in Seattle, USA. He was an International Master (IM) and noted chess author.

Dr. Minev was awarded the IM title by FIDE in 1960. He was the champion of Bulgaria in 1953, 1965, and 1966. He played for Bulgaria in the Chess Olympiad six times (1954, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, and 1966).

Dr. Minev's best international results were: third at Varna in 1960, second at Warsaw in 1961, tie for first at Sombor in 1966, and second at Albena in 1975.

He contributed to early editions of the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings and the Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings. Dr. Minev and his wife immigrated to the United States in the mid-1980s.

He lived in Seattle and he was associated with Seattle Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan and his magazine 'Inside Chess' in the 1980s and 1990s.

Here is a very personal interview, which can be also found in <https://derricksblog.wordpress.com/2011/04/25/my-interview-wit>. This was published on April 25th, 2011.

An Interview with Dr. Nikolay Minev

I met Nikolay Minev at a chess tournament in Seattle in August, 1983. I was a spectator at that tournament, and in one round I found myself engaged in very pleasant conversation with Nikolay's wife Elena, who was there with her husband.

Sometime later, I began taking chess lessons from Nikolay, but before long, our time together became less formal and more friendly, and he refused to accept any further payment from me.

I was often first with the score of the most recent World Championship game, and as the two of us played through innumerable games together, I never ceased to marvel at how quickly Nikolay understood things that became clear to me only after his patient explanation.

Our friendship has continued for close to twenty-eight years now. I recently realized that I was uniquely positioned to share Nikolay's story and perspective on chess with a wider audience than they had known before.

First, he is my friend; and second, I have a blog! When I spoke with him about my blog, and suggested doing this interview, he agreed immediately. What follows is the conversation that took place in his study over the course of two afternoons.

My thanks to Nikolay for being so generous with his time, and to Elena also, both for the two pictures of her and Nikolay and for insuring that we always had plenty of mouth-watering pastries on hand, and strong Bulgarian coffee.

Derrick: Nikolay, there has been a lot of confusion about this point, so perhaps you will clear it up for us once and for all. Where and when were you born?

Nikolay: I was born in Bulgaria in the city of Russe, which is on the Danube across the Romanian border, and I was born on November 8, 1931. There was a lot of confusion about this because fifty years ago, FIDE published in their notes for one Olympiad that I was born in January, and from that time in many publications it was written that Minev was born on the 8th of January, 1931. It's not true, and now the correct date is shown on the internet.

Derrick: All right, I'm happy to publish the correct date here also. Tell me, how were you introduced to chess?

Nikolay: Very interesting! I was with my mom and my sister at the circus. One of our old friends was with my mom because my father had died many years before, and when we returned home, he said to my mom, 'Why haven't you put this young man in the chess club in Russe?'

This was very interesting to me, but at the time we didn't react very much. At this time I started to play soccer for the junior team. One day the soccer match was played in raining weather. When I returned home I didn't tell my mother that I had been playing

soccer, because my father had died from soccer. I began to be ill - three days with a very high temperature.

The doctor came and said, 'Okay, this guy probably was somewhere in very cold weather, and this is why he is sick'. My mother said, 'Where were you?' and I confessed that I had been playing soccer. She said, 'Now, you will stop playing soccer, and start playing chess', and she bought me a chess board. That was the start.

Derrick: Who was, or were, your most important teachers?

Nikolay: When I was sixteen or seventeen years old, a master from Russia came to Russe, a Bulgarian master named Kamen Piskov. This guy won the Bulgarian championship in 1947. I don't know why, but he started to play with me every evening when I met him at the chess club.

He beat me sometimes 12, 20 games, sometimes 15 games, sometimes 10 games. This went on for two or three months. After that I started to take some games from him. We played together in the 1947 championship; he won first place, I won last place.

Derrick: Was there a particular event that made you decide to become a chess master?

Nikolay: The particular event was when I placed last in the Bulgarian championship of 1947. I am a competitive person, and I said, 'No, no, no, I will go ahead!'

Two years after that, in the autumn of 1949, I went to Sofia to the university to study medicine, and there I began immediately to develop. In 1950 I participated in the semi-final, qualifying for the final, and took first through third place in the championship.

Derrick: Were there any books that you remember as especially important or helpful to you as a student?

Nikolay: First of all, when I learned chess, there were no books around. My friend Milev borrowed one book from the library, and took it home. It was Three Hundred Games by Tarrasch.

After that, I took the book for myself, and I copied by hand half of the book. We saw only this book; there was nothing else, not even magazines. This was in 1946, immedi-

ately after the Second World War. There was no information coming, not even from Russia at this time.

After that began to come Russian books, etc., but when I learned chess, there was no other information except for this book. It was incredible! After that, we changed this book for one other book: Five Hundred Games by Tartakower, and we also swallowed everything inside.

This is, by the way, a very good book. You will learn everything about every opening. I still have this, in English.

Derrick: Of which of your chess accomplishments are you the most proud?

Nikolay: I think my best individual result was in the tournament in Novi Sad, 1972. I finished in third through fifth place, but it was a very strong tournament. There were many other tournaments in which I placed well, but I had very little opportunity to play internationally because of my work.

Until 1973, I worked as a doctor, and it was possible to go to major tournaments only twice a year. This was why I participated mostly in team competition. My best team result was in the World Student Team Championship, Reykjavik 1957, where I finished in first place on second board ahead of Spassky.

Derrick: What has been your greatest disappointment in chess?

Nikolay: I don't know. I have no disappointments in chess.

Derrick: Do you have a favorite among your own games?

Nikolay: My favorite from my own games was my game with Lothar Zinn from the 1967 zonal tournament in Halle, Germany. The outcome of this game hung on just one move for probably twenty moves.

The other game was my first victory over a grandmaster, which happened against Szabo in the 1954 Olympiad. This was the first time a Bulgarian had ever defeated a grandmaster.

Derrick: You've already mentioned Three Hundred Games by Tarrasch and Tartakover's Five Hundred Games as having been important to you. Do you have any other favorite book or books?

Nikolay: I read many books, and every book I think has something to offer. You are able to learn from every book. Those two books made a special impression on me because they were the first chess books I ever read, but I have many other books and in every one I have found something interesting.

Derrick: When and why did you decide to move to the United States?

Nikolay: This was a special situation. In 1972, I was working as the chief of a toxicology laboratory in Sofia. I was offered the position of Deputy Editor of the Bulgarian chess magazine, with the expectation that after three or four years, I would be the Chief Editor.

The salary was even a little bit better than I was earning as a doctor; I would only have to work fifteen days per month, and I would have time for chess.

In 1977, I was still Deputy Editor, and I began to understand that as someone who was not a Communist Party member, it was very unlikely that I would ever become Chief Editor. At that time I began to work very closely with Chess Informant. One day I spoke with Matanovic, and I told him what my situation was in Bulgaria.

He told me that a friend of his by the name of Siaperas, who was the Secretary of the Greek Chess Federation, was looking for a coach for the Greek national team. I talked with Siaperas and confirmed my interest in the position, and in December 1979, accepted the position as coach of the Greek team.

In 1982, while we were living in Athens, our apartment in Sofia was taken from us, and it became clear to my wife Elena and me that we had fallen out of favor with the Bulgarian authorities. In December, we flew to Vienna, where we were given a choice of living in Austria, Australia, or the United States.

We chose the United States because Elena had friends living in Seattle. When we were interviewed by the U.S. immigration officials, they were not at all impressed with my credentials as a doctor or with Elena's as a chemical engineer, but they were very inter-

ested to hear that I had played chess with Reshevsky, Lombardy, and Fischer, and our visa application was granted immediately.

After that we moved to Seattle; Elena found a temporary job and I started to have some students. I won first prize in a tournament in Los Angeles and some other local tournaments, and continued my work for Chess Informant on the Encyclopedia of Chess Endings. Elena soon found a permanent job in a good laboratory; I began to have many more students, and we started to be okay.

Derrick: In the course of your career, you have faced no fewer than seven world champions, and four others who contended for the world championship. Would you share with us your personal impressions and recollections of these giants of the chessboard? Beginning with those who never became World Champion, what can you tell us about Paul Keres?

Nikolay: Keres beat me four times. Every time, what impressed me about Keres very much was his ability of calculation. He was already at the stage when he was very experienced, and every time somewhere in the game he out-calculated me.

Derrick: All right, let's move on: Sammy Reshevsky.

Nikolay: Sammy Reshevsky I played only one time. The game finished in a draw, and he respected me because he offered me a draw around move 20. He spoke many languages, including some Russian. I didn't know him very well.

Derrick: David Bronstein.

Nikolay: David Bronstein and I played twice, and both games finished in a draw. In both games, he tried to attack me, but he was not able to do that. I was proud that in one game, I rejected his offer of a draw. He was a very nice person. I did one interview with him. He spoke for about two hours, and after that, said, 'Write what you want'.

He had many ideas that chess should be quicker, not two and a half hours, but quicker because now we know so much theory. In his games, I am very impressed with his ideas about the game. He was the most original player who was not able to be

World Champion. He deserved it much more than many others who were World Champion, in my opinion.

Derrick: Viktor Korchnoi.

Nikolay: My record with Viktor Korchnoi is 1-2; he beat me twice, I beat him one time. He is a very - how to say - combative person. Everybody is a rival for him, probably because of chess.

I understood from Yasser Seirawan that it was not easy to work with him. He was very demanding all the time. But he played incredible chess, and I think that because of some circumstances, he was not able to be World Champion. He also deserved to be World Champion, in my opinion.

Derrick: With regard to the seven World Champions you faced, I think the first was Euwe. Tell us about Euwe and your encounter with him.

Nikolay: I played with Euwe only one time, in 1954, in my second international tournament. Euwe was playing in probably his 150th international tournament. Our encounter was annotated in a book about Euwe by Teschner, in which he showed how I could have made a draw.

What was incredible to me was that I saw this continuation, but I thought my position was so good that it wasn't necessary for me to make a draw. After that, my decisions were bad; my assessment was bad. This means that he beat me in one moment in the game. I am not able to say anything else about Euwe because I didn't know him.

Derrick: Mikhail Botvinnik

Nikolay: I played Botvinnik also only one time. It was I think one of the best endgames of Botvinnik, who showed the world for the first time that it was possible to win the endgame of queen and b-pawn vs. queen. Before that, endgame theory said that it was not possible to win.

He showed a new way to win. This game is annotated in many publications, including Botvinnik's book, in which he devotes probably six pages to it. It was an incredible game. Twice I was two pawns down, with big counterplay for that. In the end, history will say that I was on the losing side of this theoretically important endgame.

Derrick: Do you have any personal reflections about Botvinnik as an individual?

Nikolay: As an individual, Botvinnik didn't speak very much. We spoke after the game, but I spoke much more than he did. He was very polite - incredibly polite - and I was very impressed with him.

I was very young, and he was World Champion, and he made it a point to compliment my play. This means either that he respected me or that he was very polite, I don't know which.

Derrick: You also played with Botvinnik's successor, Smyslov.

Nikolay: I played with Smyslov twice. The first time he beat me, in 1955, we repeated my game against Botvinnik. I repeated the game against Botvinnik because I was young and a little bit crazy, to attempt such a thing against Smyslov, who had Botvinnik as a rival and knew all his games.

He played a big innovation against me that he had prepared after my game against Botvinnik. After this innovation, the position was a little bit better for him, and he slowly converted it to an endgame of queen, knight, and five pawns against queen, knight, and four pawns.

This was an interesting moment for me. After the game, he said, 'Why didn't you exchange the queens? The game after that would have been very difficult for me to win'. You see, I was twenty-four years old, and I said, 'Mr. Smyslov, I think that with the queen I had a better chance to resist'. He said, 'No way. With the queen, you are lost'.

This was the difference between Smyslov and me. He understood what was good and what was not.

Derrick: Mikhail Tal.

Nikolay: With Tal, I was very good friends. I played with him one time, in Sarajevo, 1963, where he was first. I had a very good success; I was 4th-5th in a very strong tournament. The game is in Informant. At one moment, I started to feel that he was beginning to take more chances.

I saw a pawn sacrifice, which was very nice, by the way, and I sacrificed the pawn. He thought for five minutes and offered a draw, which I rejected. After that, the game

finished in a draw, but it was not easy for him.

One time, the two of us even played a soccer match, Bulgaria vs. USSR, in Reykjavik, 1957 during the World Junior Team Championship. He was the goalkeeper of the Russian team which lost 5-0, but they reported in Shakmaty v SSR that they lost 3-0, two goals less! After the game, Tal said, 'You know what? I think that in your training camp before this tournament, you played more soccer than chess!'

Derrick: Tigran Petrosian.

Nikolay: Okay. One time. I lost against him one time: Havana, 1966. I lost in the endgame, which was two pawns against one pawn, with minor pieces on the board, knight and bishop.

This was an adjourned game. Nobody helped me, but for the Russian team, everybody helped him, and there was only one hour between the adjournment and resumption of the game.

What was the game? I tried to attack him all the time, and all the time I ran into a wall. I go h4, he stopped me. I go a4, he stopped me. I go e4, he stopped me. All the time, he stopped me before I could start something. This was his style. Finally, I reached a position in which I was lost. I was not very impressed, by the way, because my style is very different.

But this is chess; there are players here and there. Korchnoi also was not very impressed. He said that Petrosian sees the coming attack before you even think about attacking him.

Derrick: Next is Boris Spassky.

Nikolay: I played with him one time, Reykjavik, 1957, one of the biggest successes of my life because Spassky was second board and I was second board. Based on results, I took first place on second board. Based on percentage, he took first place. When we played together, the Bulgarian team had already lost on three boards, and ours was the last game.

He made an incredible sacrifice of a pawn, and gained the attack. I took the pawn, and after that returned it and achieved the better position. At that time, when I achieved the

better position - it was around move 30 or 35 - the captain of the Russian team, who I think was Kan, offered a draw to my captain. My captain came to me and said, 'The Russians offer a draw'. I said, 'I have a better position'. He said, 'You have a better position, but the score is 3-0. If you lose, it will be 4-0. I don't want to be 4-0!' he said, and I agreed.

Spassky was also very nice, but I was not very close to him. Another Bulgarian, Milev, was very close to him. Spassky has a practical style. I like his style because it is an active style, all the time seeking the initiative somewhere.

At the Olympiad in 1962, I was with Milev in our room, and Spassky and Tal came to our room, asking for something. They waited for us to get prepared to go out, and they started to play chess. I remember that Tal said when they started to play, 'You know, my result with Spassky is equal. Until now, I make three draws, and he won three games. Three, three!'

Derrick: That brings us to the final World Champion that you played against, Bobby Fischer.

Nikolay: Okay. Olympiad, 1966. I was in my best form. I played in the final against Petrosian, Gligoric, Szabo, Bobby Fischer, Najdorf, Larsen, Uhlmann, and Pomar. They gave me the day off against Johannessen of Norway, a weaker player.

Against all these guys, I drew 6, won one, and lost five. I lost almost all my games with the black pieces, and saved two, I think. One of these games was against Bobby Fischer.

I had prepared a rare continuation in the French Defense, and at the moment I played the characteristic move, I tried to see how Bobby would react to it. I was not able to see his reaction because he played immediately the best move available.

This meant that he had studied that variation. After that, it was a very interesting game. I missed one move. He had a bishop on g2 and a pawn on g3. I missed the move, pawn to g4. After g4, I was in bad shape. I was able to make an interesting move which held some chances for him to go wrong tactically.

Even Yasser when he saw the game said, 'Oh, you have this move now!' I said, 'I have this move; I made this move, but I lost immediately'.

Bobby thought a little bit, and found two or three moves in a row, very accurate moves which finished the game. It's possible that against anybody else, I would have had some success. Against Bobby, it was not possible.

My impression of him was that he was interested only in chess. Nothing else. One evening they took the American team, the Bulgarian team, and others to the Tropicana, which is the best nightclub in Havana.

On the stage were fifty women who were almost naked. Everybody was watching the show except Bobby Fischer, who had his pocket chess set out and was showing Benko some position from that day.

As a doctor, I will tell you that even at the Olympiad in Varna, in '62, I started to see that something was wrong with him. In the first round, there was a power failure for twenty minutes.

Everyone was talking, milling around, going here and there. Bobby took his chair, went to the corner, and with his back to the wall, stayed there for twenty minutes without moving. Clearly scared. This is the first symptom of schizophrenia.

Derrick: Larry Evans conducted an interview with Yuri Averbakh in *Chess Life* in December 1990. Yuri Averbakh said in that interview, 'I've seen two geniuses in my time. One was Tal. In short, the other was Fischer. Maybe Kasparov also'. What is your opinion about this?

Nikolay: This was his opinion. Different players have different styles, different approaches to chess. Many times you will say, 'This is genius, the other not' because their style doesn't suit you. It's a personal preference.

Derrick: In general, what course of study would you recommend for the serious student of chess?

Nikolay: No study! You should take information. Chess is information. There is no magic book. You should take information all the time. It's possible to take information

from articles; every article has something positive to put in your mind.

When you see many games, you put in your mind much information. This is until the end of your life. Much more information than you are able after that to use in practice. In short, try to absorb as much information as you can.

Let me give one example from my own life. When I was twenty years old and not even a Bulgarian master, in one game I had a bishop on b7 and a pawn on d5.

I remembered that I had seen two or three games in which the pawn was sacrificed on d4 only to open the diagonal for the bishop, but I was at that stage where I didn't have a great understanding of these guys, and I calculated, 'Why should I give away the pawn when it's not necessary at this moment'.

I thought about this for ten or fifteen minutes, and I decided, 'Everybody says that the bishop should play', and I sacrificed the pawn. Incredible to me, I won after five moves, and I understood that if you have information, you must use that information. And the information was right.

Tal made one very nice combination sometime in the seventies. The journalists asked him, 'How did you make this combination?' He said, 'No, no, I didn't make it. I saw this from Nona Gaprindashvili. She sacrificed in this way and won in this way against Servaty'.

You see, Tal, who was World Champion, took information about something which he used after that to his advantage. This is the way in which chess is going.

This is the reason why there exist good players who never read books, but only see games. Nakamura gave an interview recently in which he said, 'How did I learn chess? I saw games. I saw games of Miles and some others'.

Every time in some article there is something positive. The question is, will you understand it or not. In chess, if you have more information, you are better. The second part is to use this information over the board.

Derrick: What is your opinion about the future of chess? Will advances in opening theory and computer analysis make it neces-

sary to change the game in some fundamental way, such as by adding new pieces or by randomizing the starting position?

Nikolay: No, I don't think so. You are not able to play over the board like a computer. Your opponent is not able to play like a computer. If you study chess by computer, do you know what will happen? I played one guy like this.

Even Saïdy came to me and said, 'Be careful, because this guy has studied all the openings by computer. He knows everything and he's very dangerous'. We started to play, and we played some opening with which I was also familiar.

Somewhere around move twenty or twenty-five, I won a pawn, and he resigned immediately, and said, 'You know what, Mr. Minev? You played a novelty at move 15'. I said, 'What novelty?' He said, 'This move'. I said, 'This move is very logical on the board'. He said, 'It's not in the computer!'

This is the way. The human brain is limited. You are not able to learn everything. Even sometimes when I play something which I have known for many years, but haven't used for five years, I say, 'What's the best move here?'

Many times you make a decision in a position in which it's not possible to say which move is the best. You should take the direction according to your understanding of strategy. A computer here is useless. If there are tactics on the board, the computer will see. It has a target. If it has no target, it won't know what to do after the opening.

Probably chess will start to be a little bit quicker, as Bronstein said, not two hours for forty moves, but to be, let's say, one and a half hour or one hour. Many tournaments now are in this way.

Derrick: Nikolay, is there anything else you would like to say before we end this interview?

Nikolay: Let me tell you the most interesting moment in my life. In 1954, when I was 22 years old and about to be champion of Bulgaria for the first time, I lived with my mother and sister.

My mother had a group of friends who came one evening every week to play Ca-

nasta. One day, these three women came to our home with the husband of one of the women. He was about 65 years old, and they announced that he is the best chess player in his building and his region, and because he understood that I was the best player in Bulgaria, he wanted to see how he played chess against me.

Naturally he was a weak player, practically no theory. After two games in which I beat him, he started to be a little bit agitated. After I beat him five games, he started to think very much, every move.

We played probably three hours, and I beat him - I don't remember, but probably fifteen games or something like that. And now, everyone started to leave. All three women asked him, 'What happened in your match?' I didn't say anything. This guy looked at them and said, 'You know, this youngster made very good resistance!'

Derrick: Thank you, Nikolay. This has been very interesting and a lot of fun. I appreciate your making time for this interview very much.

Note: The interested reader will find a great deal more information about Nikolay Minev, including a biography, bibliography, and all his known games, at <http://www.thechesslibrary.com/minev.html>.

On his 75th Birthday

This article is translated from the Bulgarian newspaper 'Duma' (November 11, 2006).

The Unforgettable Lessons by the Master Dr. Nikolay Minev was first to show us how to win over titans - By Petko Petkov

An old Arabian proverb says that time flows faster than thought. It must be so, because I cannot accept the fact that the famous Bulgarian chess player, International Master Dr. Nikolay Minev is 75 years of age.

But it is reality. The Master celebrated his splendid anniversary in Seattle on December 8, 2006. And naturally, received a number of congratulations from all over the globe, his name being an exclamation point in the Bulgarian and world history of chess.

Unlike motion pictures, the movie of real life is never boring. You can rewind it

countless times in your mind, but no matter how many times you rewind the familiar faces and dramatic events, a new vision appears - the connection between the present and the past. And I have to mention the retrograde chess analysis which accumulates the past, the present and the future in one.

Even the most exciting biography has standard dates, digits and facts. Nikolay was born in Rousse, Bulgaria on November 8th, 1931. In 1947, at an age of 16 he is city champion, and a debutant at the Bulgarian national championship. In 1949 Nikolay begins his studies at the Medical University in Sofia, Bulgaria. He has 22 participations at the national chess finals, and becomes a national champion in 1953 for the first time. He also wins the title in 1965 and 1966.

Nikolay participates at the Olympics 6 times as a competitor and numerous times as an analyst and coach. He is an eminent Bulgarian chess journalist that has authored a great number of books. Still, as strange as it may sound, Nikolay has never been a paid professional chess player.

At this point an exclamation is appropriate: the chess school of Rousse is great - the idol Vesselin Topalov is its product, as well. Some other names to mention are Zdravko Milev, Atanas Kolarov, Kamen Piskov, Rusko Filchev. All of these people, contemporaries, friends and followers of Dr. Nikolay Minev, are the mason of chess in our city on the river Danube.

Every person has one first, unforgettable moment of top manifestation in life. This is the moment when you make your debut on a worldly stage; play at your best and as a reward, and get the audience to applaud you.

What would our lives be, without such a memory of this first success? Everyone has a memory to cherish and its place in one's heart. Of course, individual memories are different depending on the level and quality of execution.

Great creators only physically feel the burden of age. The spirit of a true innovator is always young.

I congratulate Dr. Nikolay Minev on his 75th anniversary, and wish him health, cheers and high spirits, and many new les-

sons for contemporary and future generations.

My Connection

Well, Nikolay Minev was my first regular trainer. He was the one responsible for my education and success over the board...

Back in 1980's Greece was the poor chess country in the Balkans, were super-powers as Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania were ruling.

Every year we used to play the Balkan games in Men, Juniors, Women and Girls teams. And that was a nightmare for the Greek teams - the fight was between Greece and Turkey (the other country Albania was strong as well) to avoid the last position...

Dr. Nikolay Minev came to live and train in Athens in 1979, the year I learned to move the pieces! He soon understood that he had to deal with youngsters, as the older generation could go well but not really improve in numbers.

So, after another last position in the juniors' section in 1981, he formed a junior squad, selecting ten juniors from all over Greece. We worked hard for approximately one year and guess what?

Greece won the Gold Medal in the 1982 Balkaniad, for first and last time in history! We killed them all - the motto was: no prisoners! Furthermore, this group produced two GMs, four IMs and four FMs, proving that there is no luck in this job!

Dr. Nikolay Minev was great; everybody loved him. He knew how to make things move and he knew what to do with some chess-wise miserable youngsters! He became our 'father' and in the end of the day we were also playing for him - we were proud to be his students!

In the late 1982, the Secretary of the Greek CF (T.Siaperas) informed me that Dr. Nikolay Minev left unexpectedly for the United States. I was angry because he didn't tell me anything and he neither goodbye me - Siaperas again told me that one day I will understand... I saw him again in 1990; during the Novi Sad Olympiad ad we kept mailing each other form time to time.

Rest in piece my chess father...

Analysis in Dr. Nikolay Minev Way!

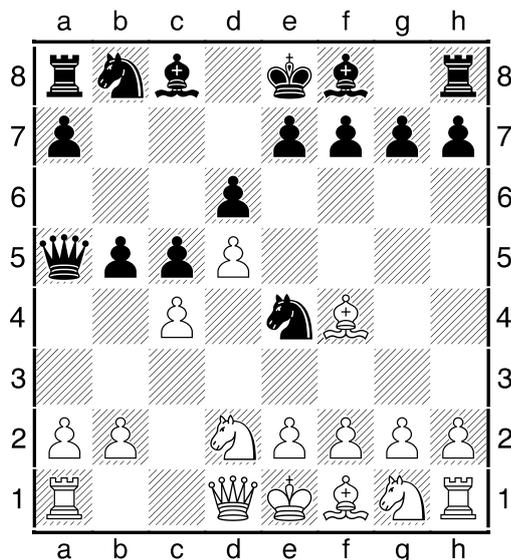
Let's see one of the various ways Dr. was training us!

□ Shashin Alexander

■ Dommes Vladimir

A57 Leningrad 1971

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.Bg5 Ne4 5.Bf4 Qa5+ 6.Nd2 d6 (D)



My memory travels more than 36 years in the past when I worked with the top trainer Dr. Nikolay Minev. A part of everyday homework was the analysis of various games (when mine were over!) like this one. Without chess engines, without books, without knowledge (different times!) - I felt panicked! But when I began analysing, I was stunned - what beautiful variations, how complex...

7.b4!

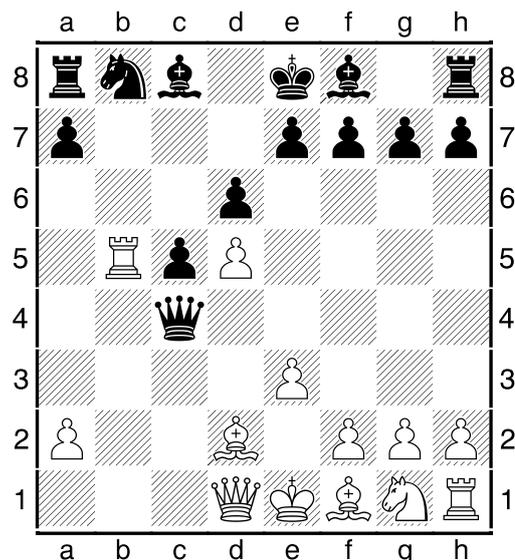
A very nice idea - White immediately seeks the initiative on the queenside.

7...Qxb4 8.Rb1 Qc3 9.Rxb5 Nxd2?!

9...Qf6 10.Nxe4 Qxf4 11.Qb1 Nd7 12.e3 would have been better, with a small advantage for White. The line 9...g5 10.Be3 Bf5 11.Rb3! Qa5 12.Qa1! would lead to complications, as in the game Grivas,E-Deze,A Patra 1983.

10.Bxd2 Qxc4 11.e3? (D)

White should have opted for 11.Qb1! Nd7 12.e4 Qa4 13.Ne2! (13.Nf3 a6 14.Ra5 Rb8 15.Qd3 c4 16.Rxa4 cxd3 17.Rb4, with a small advantage) 13...f5 14.f3, with a great advantage.



11...Qxa2?

Black loses the chance he had with 11...Qxd5! 12.Be2 Nd7 13.Bf3 Qc4 14.Rb3 Rb8 15.Ne2 Qa6, while now Black does not have enough compensation.

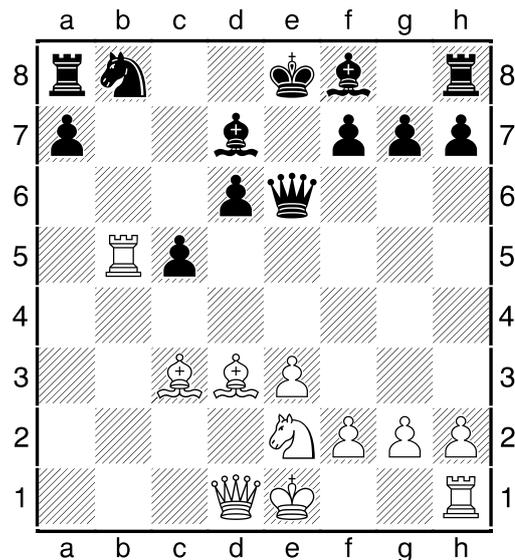
12.Bc3 e6 13.Bd3?

A return of mistakes! Here too 13.e4 c4 14.Nf3 would have been better, with a great advantage.

13...Bd7?

Black follows his series of mistakes! He should have continued with 13...Qxd5! 14.Nf3 Nd7 15.0-0 Ba6 16.e4 Qc6, getting the advantage.

14.dxe6 Qxe6 15.Ne2 (D)



White has sacrificed two pawns in exchange for the initiative and better development. He already has an advantage...

15...d5

Or 15...Bxb5 16.Bxb5+ Nd7 17.Qb1 Kd8 18.Nf4 and White dominates.

16.Nf4 Qd6 17.0-0 d4

The alternative 17...Nc6 18.g3! (18.Qf3 Ne5 19.Bxe5 Qxe5 20.Nxd5 Bd6 21.g3 0-0 22.Ra5, with equality) 18...Ne5 19.Rxc5 Qxc5 20.Bxe5, would also give White the advantage.

18.exd4! Qxf4 19.Re1+ Be7 20.Rxc5

Also good was 20.Qe2!? 0-0 21.Qxe7 Bxb5 22.Bxb5, with a great advantage.

20...Kf8?

The final mistake. Black should have fought with 20...a5 21.Rc4! (21.Qe2 Qd6 22.Rd5 Qf6 23.Bb5 0-0! 24.Bxd7 Nxd7 25.Qxe7 Qxe7 26.Rxe7 Nb8!) 21...Kf8 22.Qb1, where White would simply have a great advantage. Now White is winning:

21.Be4! Nc6 22.Bxc6 Bxc5 23.Bxa8 Be7 24.Qe2 Qd6 25.Rb1 f6 26.Qc4 g6 27.Bb4 Qe6 28.Bd5 Qf5 29.Bxe7+ Kxe7 30.Qc5+ Kd8 31.Rb8+ Be8 32.Qd6+ Qd7 33.Rxc8+
And Black saw 33...Kxc8 34.Be6, that is why he resigned.

1-0

Analysing the above game took me a long time and huge effort! For 4-5 weeks I took my analysis back to my trainer, who would look at it for 1-2 minutes and say: even more! At first I gave him half a page and in the end I had reached four pages!

When I finally finished, my trainer looked at my manuscripts for 3-4 minutes and told me: it is OK. When I asked why he does not examine my manuscript closely, he answered: it does not matter if you did everything totally correctly - what is important is that you tried enough and learned to analyse - that is your big profit...

And he was so right! Analysing my games and those of other players, gave me the opportunity to understand important elements and significantly improve.

Games

Dr. Nikolay Minev was 'just' an IM, but the older generation can easily understand the power of an IM in 1950's, 1960's and 1970's - he was equal with a good today GM.

The few games that are following are not his best and the opponents and the results are!

□ Minev Nikolay

■ Korchnoi Viktor

B22 Oslo 1954

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 Nc6 6.Nf3 e6 7.Nc3 Nxc3 8.bxc3 d6 9.exd6 Bxd6 10.Bd3 Be7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Qe2 Bf6 13.Re1 Qd5 14.Bf4 Rd8 15.Rad1 Bd7 16.Ne5 Be8 17.Qh5 g6 18.Ng4 Be7 19.Qh6 Qh5 20.Qxh5 gxh5 21.Ne5 Rac8 22.Nxc6 Bxc6 23.Re5 Ba4 24.Rc1 Ba3 25.Rb1 Rxc3 26.Re3! Rdc8 27.Rg3+ Kf8 28.Rxb7 Rc1+ 29.Bf1

1-0

□ Minev Nikolay

■ Tal Mihail

B22 Sarajevo 1966

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 exd5 5.d4 Nc6 6.Be3 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Nf6 8.Be2 Bd6 9.0-0 0-0 10.Nd2 Re8 11.Re1 a6 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.b4 a5 14.a3 Qc7 15.Nf1 Bd7 16.Bd4 Re6 17.Bf3 Ne4 18.c4 Ng5 19.Rxe6 Nxe6 20.Rc1 Nxd4 21.Qxd4 Be5 22.Qd3 dxc4 23.Qxc4 axb4 24.axb4 Rc8 25.Bg4 Bxg4 26.Qxg4 Rb8 27.Qc4

½-½

□ Minev Nikolay

■ Spassky Boris Vasilievich

B14 Reykjavik 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3 0-0 6.a3 cxd4 7.exd4 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 d5 9.Nf3 Qc7 10.Qb3 Nc6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.0-0 Bg4 13.Nh4 Na5 14.Qc2 Rac8 15.Bd2 Ne4 16.Bxe4 dxe4 17.Qxe4 Qd7 18.Qf4 f6 19.h3 Be6 20.Rfe1 Nc4 21.Re2 g5 22.Qg3 Nxd2 23.Rxd2 Kh8 24.Nf3 Rxc3 25.d5 Bf5 26.Re1 Re8 27.Rxe8+ Qxe8 28.Qd6 Kg7 29.Qb4

½-½

□ Minev Nikolay

■ Portisch Lajos

E19 Reykjavik 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Ne4 8.Qc2 Nxc3 9.Qxc3 Qc8 10.b3 d6 11.Bb2 Nd7 12.Rfd1 Be4 13.Ne1 Bxg2 14.Nxg2 Qb7 15.Rac1 Bg5 16.Rc2 f5 17.f3 Rae8 18.b4 Nf6

19.Qd3 Bh6 20.d5 Qc8 21.Bxf6 Rxf6 22.c5 dxc5 23.bxc5 exd5 24.Qxd5+ Qe6 25.Qb7 bxc5 26.Qxa7 Be3+ 27.Kh1 f4 28.Nxf4 Bxf4 29.gxf4 Rxf4 30.Qxc5 Ra4 31.Qd5 Qxd5 32.Rxd5 Rea8 33.Rdd2 R8a7 34.Kg2 Kf8 35.Rd7 Rxa2 36.Rdxc7 Rxc2 37.Rxc2 Ke7 38.Kg3 Ra4 39.e4 Ra6 40.Rc7+ Kf6 41.Kf4 g5+ 42.Kg4 h6 43.h4 gxh4 44.Kxh4 Ra1 45.Kg4 Rg1+ 46.Kf4 h5 47.e5+ Kg6 48.Rc6+ Kg7 49.Kf5 h4 50.Rc2 Rh1 51.f4 h3 52.Ke6 Ra1 53.Kf5 Rg1 54.e6 Rg2 55.Rc7+ Kh6 56.e7 Re2 57.Kf6 h2 58.Rc1 Kh5 59.Rh1
1-0

□ Minev Nikolay

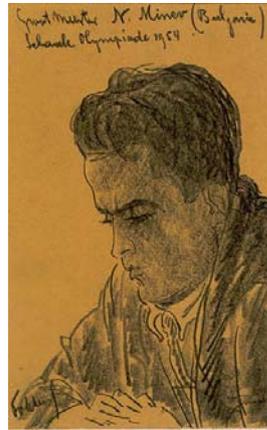
■ Larsen Bent

A87 Halle 1963

1.d4 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.d5 c5 8.Nc3 Nbd7 9.Qc2 Nb6 10.b3 e5 11.dxe6 d5 12.cxd5 Nfxd5 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.Bg5 Qb6 15.e7 Re8 16.Rad1 Be6 17.Bc1 Rxe7 18.Ng5 Nb4 19.Qb1 Kh8 20.Nxe6 Qxe6 21.Be3 Rc8 22.a3 Na6 23.Rd5 h5 24.Qd3 Kh7 25.Rd6 Qf7 26.Bg5 Rec7 27.Bd5 Qf8 28.Bxb7 Rxb7 29.Qxa6 Rcb8 30.Rxg6 Rxb3 31.Re6 R8b6 32.Rxb6 axb6 33.Rd1 Qf7 34.Qc8 Rxa3 35.Rd7 Qg6 36.Bf4 Qf6 37.Qc7 Kg8 38.Rd8+ Bf8 39.Bd6 Ra7 40.Qxb6 Rb7 41.Qxb7
1-0



Athens 1978



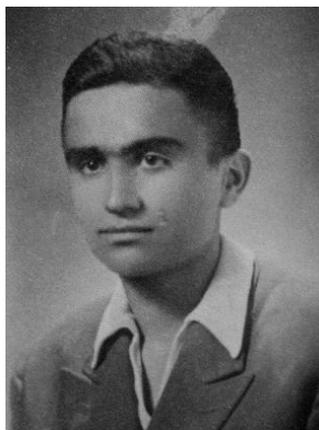
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Nikolay and Elena



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