

**Alexander Alekhine**

**CHESS DUELS  
1893 – 1920**

**260 Games Annotated by  
Alexander Alekhine**

Researched by Vlastimil Fiala  
Translated and Edited by Ken Neat

Olomouc 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

The fourth world champion, Alexander Alekhine, was not only one of the strongest and most imaginative chess players of all time – he was also a fine and prolific writer on the game. In the years before he left Russia he developed this skill by annotating numerous games, not just his own, for newspapers, magazines and tournament books. This book presents a compilation of these annotations, together with games from the period up to 1920 which Alekhine annotated later in his career.

Initially Alekhine wrote brief comments on his own games in a notebook. The first published game with his own analysis, against A. Favorsky, appeared in the 25 January 1909 issue of *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Russian Gazette), the chess editor of which was P. P. Bobrov, a prominent Moscow player and publicist who was also chess editor for other publications, including *Rech* (Speech).

Later in 1909 Alekhine annotated a large number of games from the All-Russian Amateur Tournament in St. Petersburg (which he won), many of which were published alongside the master tournament games in the official Tournament Book, and others in *Shakhmatnoe Obozrenie* (Chess Review).

In 1911 Alekhine began sending game annotations to *Novoe Vremya* (New Times), and in February 1912 he became the official chess editor of this newspaper. The last column under his direct editorship was published in May of the same year, but he continued regularly sending annotated games until 1917.

*Shakhmatny Vestnik* (Chess News) was published by Alekhine's older brother Alexey from 1913-1916. Alekhine was not a member of the editorial board, but he collaborated with his brother as the most important game analyst. Later game annotations from this period appeared in publications such as *K Novoy Armii* (To the New Army), which contained the first Soviet chess column, edited by Alexander Ilyin-Genevsky, and then in 1921, after Alekhine had left Russia, in his first booklet *Das Schachle' en in Sowjet-Russland* (Chess Life in Soviet Russia).

In this book we have also included translations of games up to 1920 which Alekhine later annotated for *l'Echiquier*, as well as those which were originally annotated in contemporary publications and then subsequently

included, with revised notes, in his best games collection *Moi Luchshie Partii 1908-1920*.

It should not be forgotten, of course, that all this occurred during the stormy times of civil unrest, the First World War, the October Revolution and the Civil War in Russia, during the course of which Alekhine was interned in Germany after the 1914 Mannheim tournament, was wounded in 1916 while serving with the Red Cross on the front line, lost what remained of his parents' fortune, and was then arrested and imprisoned in Odessa in 1919, before eventually being allowed to leave for the West in 1921.

But details of Alekhine's tempestuous life can be found in other publications. Here the aim has been to provide a unique and comprehensive collection of his early game annotations, many of which have previously been inaccessible to the English reader.

The games are arranged chronologically, and in each case the source of the annotations is indicated. Translator's notes have been included where it was felt appropriate; to avoid encumbering the text these have been inserted, with suitable cross-references, at the end of the book.

## PART ONE GAMES PLAYED IN RUSSIA (1893-1909)

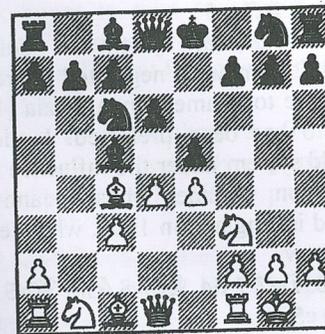
### Early Games (1893-1909)

**Game 1**  
N. Urusov\* – N. N.  
Kiev 1893  
*Evans Gambit C51*

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♖c4 ♗c5 4 b4

In recent times the Evans Gambit has no longer been employed in serious tournaments. Too many defences have been found in which, avoiding sharp variations, Black can achieve a quiet, good game...

4...♗xb4 5 c3 ♗c5 6 0-0 d6 7 d4

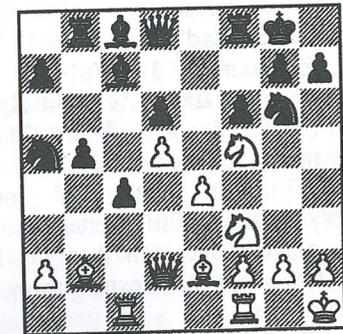


7...exd4

The last three moves make up the formerly popular, so-called 'normal' defence to the Evans Gambit, the name of which, however, is unjustified, since it can hardly be considered normal in chess to strive at all costs in the opening

to retain an extra pawn, neglecting both your development and the defence of your own king. In fact, Black's superiority on the queenside can be exploited only in the endgame, and White usually achieves his goal far sooner.

8 cxd4 ♗b6 9 d5 ♗a5 10 ♗b2 ♗e7 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 ♗c3 ♗g6 13 ♗e2 c5 14 ♗d2 f6 15 ♗h1 ♗c7 16 ♗a1 ♗b8 17 ♗g3 b5 18 ♗f5 c4 19 ♗e2



19...b4

Up to here Black has played perfectly consistently and in the spirit of the opening, but the following exchange sacrifice, obviously devised well in advance, discloses at one stroke just how dangerous his position is.

20 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 21 ♗xc4 ♗a6 22 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 23 ♗c1 ♗d7 24 ♗3d4 ♗b6 25 ♗e6 ♗f7 26 ♗d4 ♗b8 27 ♗c6