

= Alexander Alekhine =

Alexander Aleksandrovich Alekhine ( Russian : ?????? ? ??? ?????? ? ??????? ???? ? ??? , pronounced [ ?l??k?sandr ?l??k?sandr?v??t? ??l?ex??n ] ; October 31 [ O.S. October 19 ] 1892 ? March 24 , 1946 ) was a Russian and French chess player and the fourth World Chess Champion . He is widely considered one of the greatest chess players ever .

By the age of 22 , Alekhine was already among the strongest chess players in the world . During the 1920s , he won most of the tournaments in which he played . In 1921 , Alekhine left Soviet Russia and emigrated to France , which he represented after 1925 . In 1927 , he became the fourth World Chess Champion by defeating José Raúl Capablanca .

In the early 1930s , Alekhine dominated tournament play and won two top @-@ class tournaments by large margins . He also played first board for France in five Chess Olympiads , winning individual prizes in each ( four medals and a brilliancy prize ) . Alekhine offered Capablanca a rematch on the same demanding terms that Capablanca had set for him , and negotiations dragged on for years without making much progress . Meanwhile , Alekhine defended his title with ease against Efim Bogoljubov in 1929 and 1934 . He was defeated by Max Euwe in 1935 , but regained his crown in the 1937 rematch . His tournament record , however , remained uneven , and rising young stars like Paul Keres , Reuben Fine , and Mikhail Botvinnik threatened his title . Negotiations for a title match with Keres or Botvinnik were halted by the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939 . Negotiations with Botvinnik for a world title match were proceeding in 1946 when Alekhine died in Portugal , in unclear circumstances . Alekhine is the only World Chess Champion to die while holding the title .

Alekhine is known for his fierce and imaginative attacking style , combined with great positional and endgame skill . He is highly regarded as a chess writer and theoretician , producing innovations in a wide range of chess openings and giving his name to Alekhine 's Defence and several other opening variations . He also composed some endgame studies .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Alekhine was born into a wealthy family in Moscow , Russia , on October 31 , 1892 . His father , Alexander Ivanovich Alekhin , was a landowner and Privy Councilor to the conservative legislative Fourth Duma . His mother , Anisya Ivanovna Alekhina ( born Prokhorova ) , was the daughter of a rich industrialist . Alekhine was first introduced to chess by his mother , an older brother , Alexei , and an older sister , Varvara ( Barbara ) .

= = = Early chess career ( 1902 ? 14 ) = = =

Alekhine 's first known game was from a correspondence chess tournament that began on December 3 , 1902 , when he was ten years old . He participated in several correspondence tournaments , sponsored by the chess magazine Shakhmatnoe Obozrenie ( " Chess Review " ) , in 1902 ? 11 . In 1907 , Alekhine played his first over @-@ the @-@ board tournament , the Moscow chess club 's Spring Tournament . Later that year , he tied for 11th ? 13th in the club 's Autumn Tournament ; his older brother , Alexei , tied for 4th ? 6th place . In 1908 , Alexander won the club 's Spring Tournament , at the age of 15 . In 1909 , he won the All @-@ Russian Amateur Tournament in Saint Petersburg . For the next few years , he played in increasingly stronger tournaments , some of them outside Russia . At first he had mixed results , but by the age of 16 he had established himself as one of Russia 's top players . He played first board in two friendly team matches : St. Petersburg Chess Club vs. Moscow Chess Club in 1911 and Moscow vs. St. Petersburg in 1912 ( both drew with Yevgeny Znosko @-@ Borovsky ) . By the end of 1911 , Alekhine moved to St. Petersburg , where he entered the Imperial Law School for Nobles . By 1912 , he was the strongest chess player in the St. Petersburg Chess Society . In March 1912 , he won the St. Petersburg

Chess Club Winter Tournament . In April 1912 , he won the 1st Category Tournament of the St. Petersburg Chess Club . In January 1914 , Alekhine won his first major Russian tournament , when he tied for first place with Aron Nimzowitsch in the All @-@ Russian Masters Tournament at St. Petersburg . Afterwards , they drew in a mini @-@ match for first prize ( each won a game ) . Alekhine also played several matches in this period , and his results showed the same pattern : mixed at first but later consistently good .

= = = Top @-@ level grandmaster ( 1914 ? 27 ) = = =

In April ? May 1914 , another major St. Petersburg 1914 chess tournament was held in the capital of the Russian Empire , in which Alekhine took third place behind Emanuel Lasker and José Raúl Capablanca . By some accounts , Tsar Nicholas II conferred the title of " Grandmaster of Chess " on each of the five finalists ( Lasker , Capablanca , Alekhine , Siegbert Tarrasch , and Frank Marshall ) . ( Chess historian Edward Winter has questioned this , stating that the earliest known sources supporting this story are an article by Robert Lewis Taylor in the June 15 , 1940 issue of The New Yorker and Marshall 's autobiography My 50 Years of Chess ( 1942 ) . ) Alekhine 's surprising success made him a serious contender for the World Chess Championship . Whether or not the title was formally awarded to him , " Thanks to this performance , Alekhine became a grandmaster in his own right and in the eyes of the audience . " In July 1914 , Alekhine tied for first with Marshall in Paris .

= = = = World War I and post @-@ revolutionary Russia = = = =

In July ? August 1914 , Alekhine was leading an international Mannheim tournament , the 19th DSB Congress ( German Chess Federation Congress ) in Mannheim , Germany , with nine wins , one draw and one loss , when World War I broke out . Alekhine 's prize was 1 @,@ 100 marks ( worth about 11 @,@ 000 euros in terms of purchasing power today ) . After the declaration of war against Russia , eleven " Russian " players ( Alekhine , Efim Bogoljubov , Fedor Bogatyrchuk , Alexander Flamberg , N. Koppelman , Boris Maliutin , Ilya Rabinovich , Peter Romanovsky , Pyotr Saburov , Alexey Selezniev , and Samuil Weinstein ) were interned in Rastatt , Germany . On September 14 , 17 , and 29 , 1914 , four of them ( Alekhine , Bogatyrchuk , Saburov , and Koppelman ) were freed and allowed to return home . Alekhine made his way back to Russia ( via Switzerland , Italy , London , Sweden , and Finland ) by the end of October 1914 . A fifth player , Romanovsky , was released in 1915 , and a sixth , Flamberg , was allowed to return to Warsaw in 1916 .

When Alekhine returned to Russia , he helped raise money to aid the Russian chess players who remained interned in Germany by giving simultaneous exhibitions . In December 1915 , he won the Moscow Chess Club Championship . In April 1916 , he won a mini @-@ match against Alexander Evensohn with two wins and one loss at Kiev , and in summer he served in the Union of Cities ( Red Cross ) on the Austrian front . In September , he played five people in a blindfold display at a Russian military hospital at Tarnopol . In 1918 , he won a " triangular tournament " in Moscow . In June of the following year , after the Russians forced the German army to retreat from Ukraine , Alekhine was charged with links with White counter @-@ intelligence and was briefly imprisoned in Odessa 's death cell by the Odessa Cheka . Rumors appeared in the West that he had been killed by the Bolsheviks .

= = = = 1920 ? 27 = = = =

When conditions in Russia became more settled , Alekhine proved he was among Russia 's strongest players . For example , in January 1920 , he swept the Moscow City Chess Championship ( 11 / 11 ) , but was not declared Moscow Champion because he was not a resident of the city . Also in October 1920 , he won the All @-@ Russian Championship in Moscow ( + 9 ? 0 = 6 ) ; this tournament was retroactively defined as the first USSR Championship . His brother Alexei took third place in the tournament for amateurs .

In March 1920 , Alekhine married Alexandra Batayeva . They divorced the next year . For a short time in 1920 ? 21 , he worked as an interpreter for the Communist International ( Comintern ) and was appointed secretary to the Education Department . In this capacity , he met a Swiss journalist and Comintern delegate , Anneliese Rüegg , who was thirteen years older than he was , and they married on March 15 , 1921 . Shortly after , Alekhine was given permission to leave Russia for a visit to the West with his wife , from which he never returned . In June 1921 , he abandoned his second wife in Paris and went to Berlin .

In 1921 ? 23 , Alekhine played seven mini @-@ matches . In 1921 , he won against Nikolay Grigoriev ( + 2 ? 0 = 5 ) in Moscow , drew with Richard Teichmann ( + 2 ? 2 = 2 ) and won against Friedrich Sämisch ( + 2 ? 0 = 0 ) , both in Berlin . In 1922 , he won against Ossip Bernstein ( + 1 ? 0 = 1 ) and Arnold Aurbach ( + 1 ? 0 = 1 ) , both in Paris , and Manuel Golmayo ( + 1 ? 0 = 1 ) in Madrid . In 1923 , he won against André Muffang ( + 2 ? 0 = 0 ) in Paris .

From 1921 to 1927 , Alekhine won or shared first prize in about two @-@ thirds of the many tournaments in which he played . His least successful efforts were a tie for third place at Vienna 1922 behind Akiba Rubinstein and Richard Réti , and third place at the New York 1924 chess tournament behind ex @-@ champion Emanuel Lasker and world champion José Raúl Capablanca ( but ahead of Frank Marshall , Richard Réti , Géza Maróczy , Efim Bogoljubov , Savielly Tartakower , Frederick Yates , Edward Lasker , and Dawid Janowski ) . Technically , Alekhine 's play was mostly better than his competitors ' ? even Capablanca 's ? but he lacked confidence when playing his major rivals .

Alekhine 's main goal throughout this period was to arrange a match with Capablanca . He thought the greatest obstacle was not Capablanca 's play , but the requirement under the 1922 " London rules " ( at Capablanca 's insistence ) that the challenger raise a purse of US \$ 10 @,@ 000 ( equivalent to about \$ 391 @,@ 000 in 2006 ) , of which the defending champion would receive over half even if defeated . Alekhine in November 1921 and Rubinstein and Nimzowitsch in 1923 challenged Capablanca , but were unable to raise the \$ 10 @,@ 000 . Raising the money was Alekhine 's preliminary objective ; he even went on tour , playing simultaneous exhibitions for modest fees day after day . In New York on April 27 , 1924 , he broke the world record for simultaneous blindfold play when he played twenty @-@ six opponents ( the previous record was twenty @-@ five , set by Gyula Breyer ) , winning sixteen games , losing five , and drawing five after twelve hours of play . He broke his own world record on February 1 , 1925 by playing twenty @-@ eight games blindfold simultaneously in Paris , winning twenty @-@ two , drawing three , and losing three .

In 1924 , he applied for the first time for a residence privilege in France and for French citizenship while pursuing his studies in the Sorbonne Faculty of Law to obtain a PhD . Although sources differ about whether he completed his studies there , he was known as " Dr. Alekhine " in the 1930s . His thesis was on the Chinese prison system . " He received a degree in law in Saint Petersburg in 1914 but never practiced . "

His French citizenship application was postponed because of his frequent travels abroad to play chess and because he was reported once in April 1922 , shortly after his arrival in France , as a " bolshevist charged by the Soviets of a special mission in France " . Later in 1927 , the French Chess Federation asked the Ministry of Justice to intervene in Alekhine 's favor to have him lead the French team in the first Nation tournament to be held in London in July 1927 . Nevertheless , Alekhine had to wait for a new law on naturalization which was published on 10 August 1927 . The decree granting him French citizenship ( among hundreds of other citizens ) was signed on 5 November 1927 and published in the Official Gazette of the French Republic on 14 ? 15 November 1927 , while Alekhine was playing Capablanca for the World title in Buenos Aires .

In October 1926 , Alekhine won in Buenos Aires . From December 1926 to January 1927 , he beat Max Euwe 5 ½ ? 4 ½ in a match . In 1927 , he married his third wife , Nadiezda Vasiliev ( née Fabritzky ) , another older woman , the widow of the Russian general V. Vasiliev .

= = World Chess Champion , first reign ( 1927 ? 35 ) = =

== 1927 title match ==

In 1927 , Alekhine 's challenge to Capablanca was backed by a group of Argentine businessmen and the president of Argentina , who guaranteed the funds , and organized by the Club Argentino de Ajedrez ( Argentine Chess Club ) in Buenos Aires . In the World Chess Championship match played from September to November 1927 at Buenos Aires , Alekhine won the title , scoring  $+6 \text{ ? } 3 = 25$  . This was the longest formal World Championship match until the contest in 1984 between Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov . Alekhine 's victory surprised almost the entire chess world , since he had never previously won a single game from Capablanca . After Capablanca 's death Alekhine expressed surprise at his own victory , since in 1927 he did not think he was superior to Capablanca , and he suggested that Capablanca had been overconfident . Capablanca entered the match with no technical or physical preparation , while Alekhine got himself into good physical condition and had thoroughly studied Capablanca 's play . According to Kasparov , Alekhine 's research uncovered many small inaccuracies , which occurred because Capablanca was unwilling to concentrate intensely . Vladimir Kramnik has commented that this was the first contest in which Capablanca had no easy wins .

== Rematch offered , never finalized ==

Immediately after winning the match , Alekhine announced that he was willing to give Capablanca a return match , on the same terms that Capablanca had required as champion : the challenger must provide a stake of US \$ 10 @, @ 000 , of which more than half would go to the defending champion even if he was defeated . Negotiations dragged on for several years , often breaking down when agreement seemed in sight . Their relationship became bitter , and Alekhine demanded much higher appearance fees for tournaments in which Capablanca also played . The rematch never took place . After Capablanca 's death in 1942 , Alekhine wrote that Capablanca 's demand for a \$ 10 @, @ 000 stake had been an attempt to avoid challenges .

Grandmaster Robert Byrne wrote that Alekhine consciously sought lesser opponents for his subsequent championship matches , rather than give Capablanca another chance .

== Defeats Bogolyubov twice in title matches ==

Although he never agreed terms for a rematch against Capablanca , Alekhine played two world title matches with Bogoljubov , an official " Challenger of FIDE " , in 1929 and 1934 , winning handily both times . The first was held at Wiesbaden , Heidelberg , Berlin , The Hague , and Amsterdam from September through November 1929 . Alekhine retained his title , scoring  $+11 \text{ ? } 5 = 9$  . From April to June 1934 , Alekhine faced Bogoljubov again in a title match held in twelve German cities , defeating him by five games (  $+8 \text{ ? } 3 = 15$  ) . In 1929 , Bogoljubov was forty years old and perhaps already past his peak .

== Anti @-@ Bolshevik statements , controversy ==

After the world championship match , Alekhine returned to Paris and spoke against Bolshevism . Afterwards , Nikolai Krylenko , president of the Soviet Chess Federation , published an official memorandum stating that Alekhine should be regarded as an enemy of the Soviets . The Soviet Chess Federation broke all contact with Alekhine until the end of the 1930s . His older brother Alexei , with whom Alexander Alekhine had had a very close relationship , publicly repudiated him and his anti @-@ Soviet utterances shortly after , but Alexei may have had little choice about this decision . In August 1939 , Alexei was murdered in Russia , probably due to his open support of the Nazis .

== Dominates rivals ==

Alexander Alekhine dominated chess into the mid 1930s . His most famous tournament victories were at the San Remo 1930 chess tournament ( + 13 = 2 , 3 ½ points ahead of Nimzowitsch ) and the Bled 1931 chess tournament ( + 15 = 11 , 5 ½ points ahead of Bogoljubov ) . He won most of his other tournaments outright , shared first place in two , and the first tournament in which he placed lower than first was Hastings 1933 ? 34 ( shared second place , ½ point behind Salo Flohr ) . In 1933 , Alekhine also swept an exhibition match against Rafael Cintron in San Juan ( + 4 ? 0 = 0 ) , but only managed to draw another match with Ossip Bernstein in Paris ( + 1 ? 1 = 2 ) .

From 1930 to 1935 , Alekhine played first board for France at four Chess Olympiads , winning the first brilliancy prize at Hamburg in 1930 , gold medals for board one at Prague in 1931 and Folkestone in 1933 , and the silver medal for board one at Warsaw in 1935 . His loss to Latvian master Hermanis Matisons at Prague in 1931 was his first loss in a serious chess event since winning the world championship .

In the early 1930s , Alekhine travelled the world giving simultaneous exhibitions , including Hawaii , Tokyo , Manila , Singapore , Shanghai , Hong Kong , and the Dutch East Indies . In July 1933 , he played thirty @-@ two people blindfold simultaneously ( a new world record ) in Chicago , winning nineteen , drawing nine and losing four games .

In 1934 Alekhine married his fourth wife , Grace Freeman ( née Wishaar ) , sixteen years his senior . She was the American @-@ born widow of a British tea @-@ planter in Ceylon , who retained her British citizenship to the end of her life and remained Alekhine 's wife until his death .

About 1933 Reuben Fine noticed that Alekhine was drinking increasing amounts of alcohol . Hans Kmoch wrote that Alekhine first drank heavily during the tournament at Bled in 1931 , and drank heavily through the 1934 match with Bogoljubov .

= = Loss of the World title ( 1935 ? 37 ) = =

In 1933 , Alekhine challenged Max Euwe to a championship match . Euwe , in the early 1930s , was regarded as one of three credible challengers ( the others were José Raúl Capablanca and Salo Flohr ) . Euwe accepted the challenge for October 1935 . Earlier that year , Dutch radio sports journalist Han Hollander asked Capablanca for his views on the forthcoming match . In the rare archival film footage where Capablanca and Euwe both speak , Capablanca replies : " Dr. Alekhine 's game is 20 % bluff . Dr. Euwe 's game is clear and straightforward . Dr. Euwe 's game ? not so strong as Alekhine 's in some respects ? is more evenly balanced . " Then Euwe gives his assessment in Dutch , explaining that his feelings alternated from optimism to pessimism , but in the previous ten years , their score had been evenly matched at 7 ? 7 .

On October 3 , 1935 the world championship match began in Zandvoort , the Netherlands . Although Alekhine took an early lead , from game thirteen onwards Euwe won twice as many games as Alekhine . The challenger became the new champion on December 15 , 1935 with nine wins , thirteen draws , and eight losses . This was the first world championship match that officially had seconds : Alekhine had the services of Salo Landau , and Euwe had Géza Maróczy . Euwe 's win was a major upset . Kmoch wrote that Alekhine drank no alcohol for the first half the match , but later took a glass before most games . However , Salo Flohr , who also assisted Euwe , thought overconfidence caused more problems than alcohol did for Alekhine in this match , and Alekhine himself had previously said he would win easily . Later World Champions Vasily Smyslov , Boris Spassky , Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov analyzed the match for their own benefit and concluded that Euwe deserved to win and that the standard of play was worthy of a world championship .

According to Kmoch , Alekhine abstained from alcohol altogether for five years after the 1935 match . In the eighteen months after losing the title , Alekhine played in ten tournaments , with uneven results : tied for first with Paul Keres at Bad Nauheim in May 1936 ; first place at Dresden in June 1936 ; second to Flohr at Pod?brady in July 1936 ; sixth , behind Capablanca , Mikhail Botvinnik , Reuben Fine , Samuel Reshevsky , and Euwe at Nottingham in August 1936 ; third , behind Euwe and Fine , at Amsterdam in October 1936 ; tied for first with Salo Landau at

Amsterdam ( Quadrangular ) , also in October 1936 ; in 1936 / 37 he won at the Hastings New Year tournament , ahead of Fine and Erich Eliskases ; first place at Nice ( Quadrangular ) in March 1937 ; third , behind Keres and Fine , at Margate in April 1937 ; tied for fourth with Keres , behind Flohr , Reshevsky and Vladimirs Petrovs , at Kemerli in June ? July 1937 ; tied for second with Bogoljubow , behind Euwe , at Bad Nauheim ( Quadrangular ) in July 1937 .

= = World Chess Champion , second reign ( 1937 ? 46 ) = =

= = = 1937 ? 39 = = =

Max Euwe was quick to arrange a return match with Alekhine , something José Raúl Capablanca had been unable to obtain after Alekhine won the world title in 1927 . Alekhine regained the title from Euwe in December 1937 by a large margin ( + 10 ? 4 = 11 ) . In this match , held in the Netherlands , Euwe was seconded by Fine , and Alekhine by Erich Eliskases . The match was a real contest initially , but Euwe collapsed near the end , losing four of the last five games . Fine attributed the collapse to nervous tension , possibly aggravated by Euwe 's attempts to maintain a calm appearance . Alekhine played no more title matches , and thus held the title until his death .

1938 began well for Alekhine , who won the Montevideo 1938 chess tournament at Carrasco ( in March ) and at Margate ( in April ) , and tied for first with Sir George Alan Thomas at Plymouth ( in September ) . In November , however , he only tied for 4th ? 6th with Euwe and Samuel Reshevsky , behind Paul Keres , Reuben Fine , and Mikhail Botvinnik , ahead of Capablanca and Flohr , at the AVRO tournament in the Netherlands . This tournament was played in each of several Dutch cities for a few days at a time ; it was therefore perhaps not surprising that rising stars took the first three places , as the older players found the travel very tiring .

Immediately after the AVRO tournament , Botvinnik , who had finished in third place , challenged Alekhine to a match for the world championship . They agreed on a prize fund of US \$ 10 @, @ 000 with two @-@ thirds going to the winner , and that if the match were to take place in Moscow , Alekhine would be invited at least three months in advance so that he could play in a tournament to get ready for the match . Other details had not been agreed when World War II interrupted negotiations , which the two players resumed after the war .

Keres , who had won the AVRO tournament on tiebreak over Fine , also challenged Alekhine to a world championship match . Negotiations were proceeding in 1939 when they were disrupted by World War II . During the war Keres ' home country , Estonia , was invaded first by the USSR , then by Germany , then again by the USSR . At the end of the war , the Soviet government prevented Keres from continuing the negotiations , on the grounds that he had collaborated with the Germans during their occupation of Estonia ( by Soviet standards ) .

Alekhine was representing France at first board in the 8th Chess Olympiad at Buenos Aires 1939 when World War II broke out in Europe . The assembly of all team captains , with leading roles played by Alekhine ( France ) , Savielly Tartakower ( Poland ) , and Albert Becker ( Germany ) , plus the president of the Argentine Chess Federation , Augusto de Muro , decided to go on with the Olympiad .

Alekhine won the individual silver medal ( nine wins , no losses , seven draws ) , behind Capablanca ( only results from finals A and B ? separately for both sections ? counted for best individual scores ) . Shortly after the Olympiad , Alekhine swept tournaments in Montevideo ( 7 / 7 ) and Caracas ( 10 / 10 ) .

At the end of August 1939 , both Alekhine and Capablanca wrote to Augusto de Muro regarding a possible world championship rematch . Whereas the former spoke of a rematch as a virtual certainty , even stating that the Cuban was remaining in Buenos Aires until it came about , the latter referred at length to the financial burden in the aftermath of the Olympiad . Supported by Latin @-@ American financial pledges , José R. Capablanca challenged Alexander Alekhine to a world title match in November . Tentative plans not , however , actually backed by a deposit of the required purse ( \$ 10 @, @ 000 in gold ) , led to a virtual agreement to play at Buenos Aires , Argentina

beginning April 14 , 1940 .

== = World War II ( 1939 ? 45 ) = = =

Unlike many participants in the 1939 Chess Olympiad , Alekhine returned to Europe in January 1940 . After a short stay in Portugal , he enlisted in the French army as a sanitation officer .

After the fall of France ( June 1940 ) , he fled to Marseille . Alekhine tried to go to America by traveling to Lisbon and applying for an American visa . In October 1940 , he sought permission to enter Cuba , promising to play a match with Capablanca . This request was denied . To protect his wife , Grace Alekhine and her French assets ( a castle at Saint Aubin @-@ le @-@ Cauf , near Dieppe , which the Nazis looted ) , he agreed to cooperate with the Nazis . Alekhine took part in chess tournaments in Munich , Salzburg , Kraków / Warsaw , and Prague , organised by Ehrhardt Post , the chief executive of the Nazi @-@ controlled Grossdeutscher Schachbund ( " Greater Germany Chess Federation " ) ? Keres , Bogoljubov , Gösta Stoltz , and several other strong masters in Nazi @-@ occupied Europe also played in such events . In 1941 , he tied for second @-@ third with Erik Lundin in the Munich 1941 chess tournament ( Europaturnier in September , won by Stoltz ) , shared first with Paul Felix Schmidt at Kraków / Warsaw ( the 2nd General Government @-@ ch , in October ) and won in Madrid ( in December ) . The following year he won in the Salzburg 1942 chess tournament ( June 1942 ) and in Munich ( September 1942 ; the Nazis named this the Europameisterschaft , which means " European Championship " ) . Later in 1942 he won at Warsaw / Lublin / Kraków ( the 3rd GG @-@ ch ; October 1942 ) and tied for first with Klaus Junge in Prague ( Duras Jubilé ; December 1942 ) . In 1943 , he drew a mini @-@ match ( + 1 ? 1 ) with Bogoljubov in Warsaw ( March 1943 ) , he won in Prague ( April 1943 ) and tied for first with Keres in Salzburg ( June 1943 ) .

By late 1943 , Alekhine was spending all his time in Spain and Portugal , as the German representative to chess events . This also allowed him to get away from the onrushing Soviet invasion into eastern Europe . In 1944 , he narrowly won a match against Ramón Rey Ardid in Zaragoza ( + 1 ? 0 = 3 ; April 1944 ) and won in Gijon ( July 1944 ) . The following year , he won at Madrid ( March 1945 ) , tied for second place with Antonio Medina at Gijón ( July 1945 ; the event was won by Antonio Rico ) , won at Sabadell ( August 1945 ) , he tied for first with F. López Núñez in Almeria ( August 1945 ) , won in Melilla ( September 1945 ) and took second in Caceres , behind Francisco Lupi ( Autumn 1945 ) . Alekhine 's last match was with Lupi at Estoril near Lisbon , Portugal , in January 1946 . Alekhine won two games , lost one , and drew one .

Alekhine took an interest in the development of the chess prodigy Arturo Pomar and devoted a section of his last book ( ; Legado ! 1946 ) to him . They played at Gijon 1944 , when Pomar , aged 12 , achieved a creditable draw with the champion .

== = Final year and death = = =

After World War II , Alekhine was not invited to chess tournaments outside the Iberian Peninsula , because of his alleged Nazi affiliation . His original invitation to the London 1946 tournament was withdrawn when the other competitors protested .

While planning for a World Championship match against Botvinnik , Alekhine died aged 53 in his hotel room in Estoril , Portugal on March 24 , 1946 . The circumstances of his death are still a matter of debate . It is usually attributed to a heart attack , but a letter in Chess Life magazine from a witness to the autopsy stated that choking on meat was the actual cause of death . At autopsy , a three @-@ inch @-@ long piece of unchewed meat was discovered blocking his windpipe . Some have speculated that he was murdered by a French " death squad " . A few years later , Alekhine 's son , Alexander Alekhine , Jr . , said that " the hand of Moscow reached his father " . Canadian Grandmaster Kevin Spraggett , who has lived in Portugal since the late 1980s , and who has thoroughly investigated Alekhine 's death , favors this possibility . Spraggett makes a case for the manipulation of the crime scene and the autopsy by the Portuguese secret police PIDE . He believes that Alekhine was murdered outside his hotel room , probably by the Soviets .

Alekhine 's burial was sponsored by FIDE , and the remains were transferred to the Cimetière du Montparnasse , Paris , France in 1956 .

= = Assessment = =

= = = Playing strength and style = = =

Statistical ranking systems differ sharply in their views of Alekhine . " Warriors of the Mind " rates him only the 18th strongest player of all time and comments that victories over players such as Bogoljubov and Euwe are not a strong basis for an " all time " ranking . But the website " Chessmetrics " ranks him between the fourth and eighth best of all time , depending on the lengths of the peak periods being compared , and concludes that at his absolute peak he was a little stronger than Emanuel Lasker and Capablanca , although a little weaker than Botvinnik . Jeff Sonas , the author of the website " Chessmetrics " , rates Alekhine as the sixth highest peak strength , relative to other players of the same era , of all @-@ time on the basis of comparable ratings . He also assesses Alekhine 's victory at the tournament of San Remo in 1930 as the sixth best performance ever in tournaments . In his 1978 book The Rating of Chessplayers , Past and Present , Arpad Elo gave retrospective ratings to players based on their performance over the best five @-@ year span of their career . He concluded that Alekhine was the joint fifth strongest player of those surveyed ( tied with Paul Morphy and Vasily Smyslov ) , behind Capablanca , Botvinnik , Emanuel Lasker and Mikhail Tal .

Alekhine 's peak period was in the early 1930s , when he won almost every tournament he played , sometimes by huge margins . Afterward , his play declined , and he never won a top @-@ class tournament after 1934 . After Alekhine regained his world title in 1937 , there were several new contenders , all of whom would have been serious challengers .

Alekhine was one of the greatest attacking players and could apparently produce combinations at will . What set him apart from most other attacking players was his ability to see the potential for an attack and prepare for it in positions where others saw nothing . Rudolf Spielmann , a master tactician who produced many brilliancies , said , " I can see the combinations as well as Alekhine , but I cannot get to the same positions . " Dr. Max Euwe said , " Alekhine is a poet who creates a work of art out of something that would hardly inspire another man to send home a picture post @-@ card . " An explanation offered by Réti was , " he beats his opponents by analysing simple and apparently harmless sequences of moves in order to see whether at some time or another at the end of it an original possibility , and therefore one difficult to see , might be hidden . " John Nunn commented that " Alekhine had a special ability to provoke complications without taking excessive risks " , and Edward Winter called him " the supreme genius of the complicated position . " Some of Alekhine 's combinations are so complex that even modern champions and contenders disagree in their analyses of them .

Nevertheless , Garry Kasparov said that Alekhine 's attacking play was based on solid positional foundations , and Harry Golombek went further , saying that " Alekhine was the most versatile of all chess geniuses , being equally at home in every style of play and in all phases of the game . " Reuben Fine , a serious contender for the world championship in the late 1930s , wrote in the 1950s that Alekhine 's collection of best games was one of the three most beautiful that he knew , and Golombek was equally impressed .

Alekhine 's games have a higher percentage of wins than those of any other World Champion , and his drawn games are on average among the longest of all champions ' . His desire to win extended beyond formal chess competition . When Fine beat him in some casual games in 1933 , Alekhine demanded a match for a small stake . And in table tennis , which Alekhine played enthusiastically but badly , he would often crush the ball when he lost .

Bobby Fischer , in a 1964 article , ranked Alekhine as one of the ten greatest players in history . Fischer , who was famous for the clarity of his play , wrote of Alekhine :

Alekhine has never been a hero of mine , and I 've never cared for his style of play . There 's



nothing light or breezy about it ; it worked for him , but it could scarcely work for anyone else . He played gigantic conceptions , full of outrageous and unprecedented ideas . ... [ H ] e had great imagination ; he could see more deeply into a situation than any other player in chess history . ... It was in the most complicated positions that Alekhine found his grandest concepts .

Alekhine 's style had a profound influence on Kasparov , who said : " Alexander Alekhine is the first luminary among the others who are still having the greatest influence on me . I like his universality , his approach to the game , his chess ideas . I am sure that the future belongs to Alekhine chess . " In 2012 , Levon Aronian said that he considers Alekhine the greatest chess player of all time .

= = = Influence on the game = = =

Several openings and opening variations are named after Alekhine . In addition to the well @-@ known Alekhine 's Defence ( 1.e4 Nf6 ) and the Albin @-@ Chatard @-@ Alekhine Attack in the " orthodox " Paulsen variation of the French Defense , there are Alekhine Variations in : the Budapest Gambit , the Vienna Game , the Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez , the Winawer Variation of the French Defense ; the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defense , the Queen 's Gambit Accepted , the Slav Defense , the Queen 's Pawn Game , the Catalan Opening and the Dutch Defense ( where three different lines bear his name ) . Irving Chernev commented , " The openings consist of Alekhine 's games , with a few variations . "

Alekhine also composed a few endgame studies , one of which is shown on the right , a miniature ( a study with a maximum of seven pieces ) .

Alekhine wrote over twenty books on chess , mostly annotated editions of the games in a major match or tournament , plus collections of his best games between 1908 and 1937 . Unlike Wilhelm Steinitz , Emanuel Lasker , Capablanca and Euwe , he wrote no books that explained his ideas about the game or showed beginners how to improve their play . His books appeal to expert players rather than beginners : they contain many long analyses of variations in critical positions , and " singularities and exceptions were his forte , not rules and simplifications " .

Although Alekhine was declared an enemy of the Soviet Union after his anti @-@ Bolshevik statement in 1928 , he was gradually rehabilitated by the Soviet chess elite following his death in 1946 . Alexander Kotov 's research on Alekhine 's games and career , culminating in a biography , led to a Soviet series of Alekhine Memorial tournaments . The first of these , at Moscow 1956 , was won jointly by Botvinnik and Vasily Smyslov . In their book The Soviet School of Chess Kotov and Yudovich devoted a chapter to Alekhine , called him " Russia 's greatest player " and praised his capacity for seizing the initiative by concrete tactical play in the opening . Botvinnik wrote that the Soviet School of chess learned from Alekhine 's fighting qualities , capacity for self @-@ criticism and combinative vision . Alekhine had written that success in chess required " Firstly , self @-@ knowledge ; secondly , a firm comprehension of my opponent 's strength and weakness ; thirdly , a higher aim ? ... artistic and scientific accomplishments which accord our chess equal rank with other arts . "

= = = Accusations of " improving " games = = =

Samuel Reshevsky wrote that Alekhine " allegedly made up games against fictitious opponents in which he came out the victor and had these games published in various chess magazines . " In a recent book Andy Soltis lists " Alekhine 's 15 Improvements " . The most famous example is his game with five queens in Moscow in 1915 . In the actual game , Alekhine , playing as Black , beat Grigoriev in the Moscow 1915 tournament ; but in one of his books he presented the " Five Queens " variation ( starting with a move he rejected as Black in the original game ) as an actual game won by the White player in Moscow in 1915 ( he did not say in the book who was who in this version , nor that it was in the tournament ) .

In the position of the diagram at right , which never arose in real play , Alekhine claimed that White wins by 24.Rh6 , as after some complicated play Black is mated or goes into an endgame a queen down . Some recent analyses suggest that this is not the case : if White plays 24.Rh6 , black can

play 24 ... Bg4 + ! and White has no mating attack . A later computer @-@ assisted analysis concludes that White can force a win , but only by diverging from Alekhine 's move sequence at move 20 , while there are only three queens .

Chess historian Edward Winter investigated a game Alekhine allegedly won in fifteen moves via a queen sacrifice at Sabadell in 1945 . Some photos of the game in progress were discovered that showed the players during the game and their chessboard . Based on the position that the chess pieces had taken on the chessboard in this photo , the game could never have taken the course that was stated in the published version . This raised suspicions that the published version was made up . Even if the published version is a fake , however , there is no doubt that Alekhine did defeat his opponent in the actual game , and there is no evidence that Alekhine was the source of the famous fifteen @-@ move win whose authenticity is doubted .

= = = Accusations of antisemitism = = =

During World War II , Alekhine played in several tournaments held in Germany or German @-@ occupied territory , as did many strong players in occupied and neutral countries . In March 1941 , a series of articles appeared under Alekhine 's name in the Pariser Zeitung , a German @-@ language newspaper published in Paris by the occupying German forces . Among other things , these articles said that Jews had a great talent for exploiting chess but showed no signs of chess artistry ; described the hypermodern theories of Nimzowitsch and Réti as " this cheap bluff , this shameless self @-@ publicity " , hyped by " the majority of Anglo @-@ Jewish pseudo @-@ intellectuals " ; and described his 1937 match with Euwe as " a triumph against the Jewish conspiracy " . Alekhine was reported as making further antisemitic statements in interviews for two Spanish newspapers in September 1941 ; in one of these it was said that " Aryan chess was aggressive chess ... on the other hand , the Semitic concept admitted the idea of pure defence . "

Almost immediately after the liberation of Paris , Alekhine publicly stated that " he had to write two chess articles for the Pariser Zeitung before the Germans granted him his exit visa ... Articles which Alekhine claims were purely scientific were rewritten by the Germans , published and made to treat chess from a racial viewpoint . " He wrote at least two further disavowals , in an open letter to the organizer of the 1946 London tournament ( W. Hatton @-@ Ward ) and in his posthumous book ; Legado ! . These three denials are phrased differently .

Extensive investigations by Ken Whyld have not yielded conclusive evidence of the authenticity of the articles . Chess writer Jacques Le Monnier claimed in a 1986 issue of Europe Échecs that in 1958 he saw some of Alekhine 's notebooks and found , in Alekhine 's own handwriting , the exact text of the first antisemitic article , which appeared in Pariser Zeitung on March 18 , 1941 . In his 1973 book 75 parties d 'Alekhine ( " 75 of Alekhine 's games " ) , however , Le Monnier had written " It will never be known whether Alekhine was behind these articles or whether they were manipulated by the editor of the Pariser Zeitung . "

British chess historian Edward G. Winter notes that the articles in the Pariser Zeitung misspelled the names of several famous chess masters , which could be interpreted as evidence of forgery or as attempts by Alekhine to signal that he was being forced to write things that he did not believe ; but these could simply have been typesetting errors , as Alekhine 's handwriting was not easy to read . The articles contained ( probably ) incorrect claims that Lionel Kieseritzky ( Kieseritsky in English , Kizieryski in Polish ) was a Polish Jew , although ( probably ) Kieseritzky was neither Polish nor Jewish . Winter concludes : " Although , as things stand , it is difficult to construct much of a defence for Alekhine , only the discovery of the articles in his own handwriting will settle the matter beyond all doubt . " Under current French copyright law , Alekhine 's notebooks will not enter the public domain until January 1 , 2017 .

There is evidence that Alekhine was not antisemitic in his personal or chess relationships with Jews . In June 1919 , he was arrested by the Cheka , imprisoned in Odessa and sentenced to death . Yakov Vilner , a Jewish master , saved him by sending a telegram to the chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People 's Commissars , who knew of Alekhine and ordered his release . Alekhine accepted and apparently used chess analysis from Charles Jaffe in his World Championship match

against Capablanca . Jaffe was a Jewish master who lived in New York , where Alekhine often visited , and upon his return to New York after defeating Capablanca , Alekhine played a short match as a favour to Jaffe , without financial remuneration . Alekhine 's second for the 1935 match with Max Euwe was the master Salo Landau , a Dutch Jew . The American Jewish grandmaster Arnold Denker wrote that he found Alekhine very friendly in chess settings , taking part in consultation games and productive analysis sessions . Denker also wrote that Alekhine treated the younger and ( at that time ) virtually unproven Denker to dinner on many occasions in New York during the 1930s , when the economy was very weak because of the Great Depression . Denker added that Alekhine , during the early 1930s , opined that the American Jewish grandmaster Isaac Kashdan might be his next challenger ( this did not in fact occur ) . He gave chess lessons to 14 @-@ year @-@ old prodigy Gerardo Budowski , a German Jew , in Paris in Spring 1940 . Alekhine also married an American woman who may have had Jewish ancestry , Grace Wishard , as his fourth wife . Mrs. Grace Alekhine was the women 's champion of Paris in 1944 .

= = Notable chess games = =

Alekhine vs Yates , London 1922 , Queen 's Gambit Declined : Orthodox Defense . Main Line ( D64 ) 1 ? 0 Alekhine conjures up an attack in the endgame , and his King joins the fray .

Efim Bogolyubov vs Alexander Alekhine , Hastings 1922 , Dutch Defence , Classical Variation ( A91 ) , 0 ? 1 This has been called one of the greatest games ever played , with some incredibly deep variations as Black prepares to queen a pawn .

Ernst Gruenfeld vs Alexander Alekhine , Karlsbad 1923 , Queen 's Gambit Declined : Orthodox Defense . Rubinstein Attack ( D64 ) , 0 ? 1 Gruenfeld makes no obvious mistakes but his slow build @-@ up lets Alekhine take the initiative and start squeezing him off the board . Gruenfeld desperately tries to free his position and is crushed by a series of sacrifices that forces the win of a piece or checkmate .

Richard Reti vs Alexander Alekhine , Baden Baden 1925 , Hungarian Opening : Reversed Alekhine ( A00 ) , 0 ? 1 A tactically complex game in which Alekhine unleashes a 12 @-@ move combination that wins a Knight .

Jose Raul Capablanca vs Alexander Alekhine , World Championship match , Buenos Aires 1927 , Queen 's Gambit Declined ( D52 ) , 0 ? 1 The game ends in a position with four queens on the board .

Alexander Alekhine vs Aron Nimzowitsch , San Remo 1930 , French Defence , Winawer Variation ( C17 ) , 1 ? 0 One of the shortest games ending in a zugzwang ? by the 26th move , Black is already strategically lost and has no good moves . This game also spawned the term ' Alekhine 's gun ' for the formation where the queen lines up behind the two rooks .

Gideon Stahlberg vs Alexander Alekhine , Hamburg 1930 , 3rd Olympiad , Nimzo @-@ Indian Defence , Spielmann Variation ( E23 ) , 0 ? 1 1st best game prize .

Alexander Alekhine vs Emanuel Lasker , Zurich 1934 , Queen 's Gambit Declined , Orthodox Defense , Bd3 line ( D67 ) , 1 ? 0 A short game ending with a queen sacrifice . After the tournament Lasker said : " Alekhine 's attacking genius has no equal in the history of the game " .

Max Euwe vs Alexander Alekhine , World Championship Match , game 4 , The Hague 1935 , Grunfeld Defence , Russian Variation ( D81 ) , 0 ? 1 Alekhine sacrifices two rooks , but traps Euwe 's King in the centre , wins the queen , then finishes elegantly .

= = Writings = =

Alekhine wrote over twenty books on chess . Some of the best @-@ known are :

Alekhine , Alexander ( 1985 ) . My Best Games of Chess 1908 ? 1937 . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 24941 @-@ 7 . Originally published in two volumes as My Best Games of Chess 1908 ? 1923 and My Best Games of Chess 1924 ? 1937 .

Alekhine , Alexander ( 1968 ) . The Book of the Hastings International Masters ' Chess Tournament 1922 . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 21960 @-@ 7 .

Alekhine , Alexander ( 1961 ) . The Book of the New York International Chess Tournament 1924 . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 20752 @-@ 8 .

Alekhine , Alexander ( 1962 ) . The Book of the Nottingham International Chess Tournament . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 20189 @-@ 9 .

Alekhine , Alexander ( 1973 ) . The World 's Chess Championship , 1937 . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 20455 @-@ 3 .

Games analysis published after 1938 were edited by Edward Winter and published in 1980 in the book :

Alekhine , Alexander ; Edward Winter ( 1992 ) . 107 Great Chess Battles 1939 ? 1945 . Dover . ISBN 0 @-@ 486 @-@ 27104 @-@ 8 .

= = Summary of results in competitions = =

= = = Tournament results = = =

Here are Alekhine 's placings and scores in tournaments :

Under score , + games won , ? games lost , = games drawn

= = = Match results = = =

Here are Alekhine 's results in matches :

Under score , + games won , ? games lost , = games drawn

= = = Chess Olympiad results = = =

Here are Alekhine 's results in Chess Olympiads . He played top board for France in all these events .

Under score , + games won , ? games lost , = games drawn

= = Other information = =

In the town of Cascais , Portugal , there is a street named after Alekhine : Rua Alexander Alekhine . Cascais is near Estoril , where Alekhine died .

His book My Best Games of Chess 1924 ? 1937 featured in the classic 1946 film A Matter of Life and Death .

The asteroid 1909 Alekhin was named in honor of Alexander Alekhine .