



Mastering

THE
French

with the read
and play method

NEIL McDONALD
& ANDREW HARLEY

Mastering the French

Neil McDonald and Andrew Harley

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Symbols

+	Check
++	Double Check
#	Mate
!	Good move
!!	Excellent move
?	Bad move
??	Blunder
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move
+—	Winning advantage for White
±	Clear advantage for White
±	Slight advantage for White
=	Level position
∞	Unclear position
∓	Slight advantage for Black
∓	Clear advantage for Black
—+	Winning advantage for Black
1-0	White wins
0-1	Black wins
1/2-1/2	Draw
Ch	Championship
tt	Team tournament
OL	Olympiad
Z	Zonal
IZ	Interzonal
Ct	Candidates event
Cht	Team championship
Echt	European team championship
Wcht	World team championship
jr	Junior event
wom	Women's event
rpd	Rapid game
corr.	Postal game
(<i>n</i>)	<i>n</i> th match game
(<i>D</i>)	Diagram follows

Preface

To master a chess opening, it is essential to grasp the underlying strategic and tactical ideas. Questions of a strategic nature range from the general ‘On which side should I castle?’ or ‘Where should I attack?’ to more specific problems such as ‘Should I exchange the dark-squared bishops here?’ or ‘Do I meet the threat to the kingside with g3 or h3?’

We believe that tactical ideas are best understood in the context of the overall strategic plans. Thus in the final strategic question mentioned above, whether the correct decision is to play g3 or h3 can depend on the tactical ideas that thereby result. The highest quality in a chess player is his overall ‘sight’ of the board. A master with his instant judgement of a position doesn’t sift out tactical and strategic themes. Therefore, we have not sought to do so either.

It is also vital to have a detailed knowledge of some concrete opening variations. Players with considerable natural talent are frequently beaten by opponents armed to the teeth with detailed opening preparation. Unless the deluge of theory is stemmed by Fischer’s suggestion that pieces be shuffled at the start of a game, it will always be necessary for the serious player to combine his

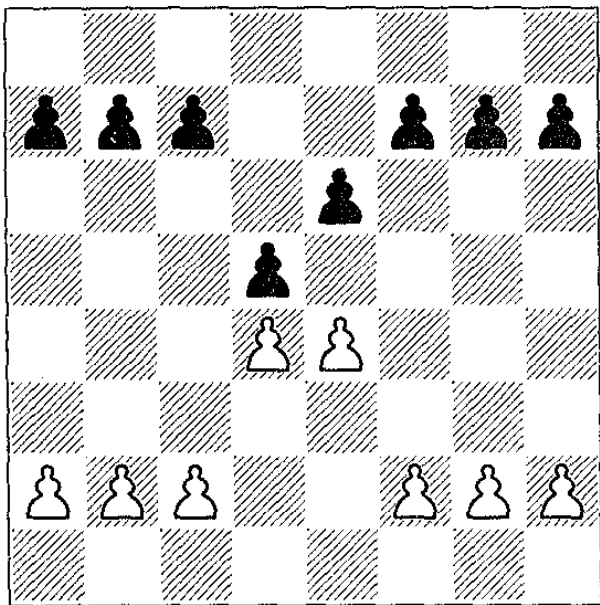
knowledge of strategic and tactical themes with some memorising of opening variations.

As far as is possible within the nature of this work, we have attempted to give the latest theoretical verdicts. However, we do not expect the theory of the French Defence to come to an abrupt end with the publication of *Mastering the French*. Our opening will continue to be played in tournaments. New ideas will be introduced, moves which at the moment seem promising will be discarded as ‘unsound’ and old and rejected variations may be brought back to life. No one can predict how theory will develop. We hope to be able to reveal the basic principles behind the French Defence and describe the state of theory at the time of writing, but we are not gifted with prescience! Therefore, we advise you to keep up to date with theory as revealed in publications such as *Informator*. But we do hope that when you meet an unexpected move, be it a theoretical novelty or just a move that is a novelty to you, your study of this book will help you to work out a good reply.

Neil McDonald
Andrew Harley

Introduction

The material in this book is not classified according to the traditional subdivision of variations but on the basis of central pawn structures. After the defining initial moves of the French Defence, 1 e4 e6, play normally continues 2 d4 d5 (other possibilities are briefly considered in Chapter 10).

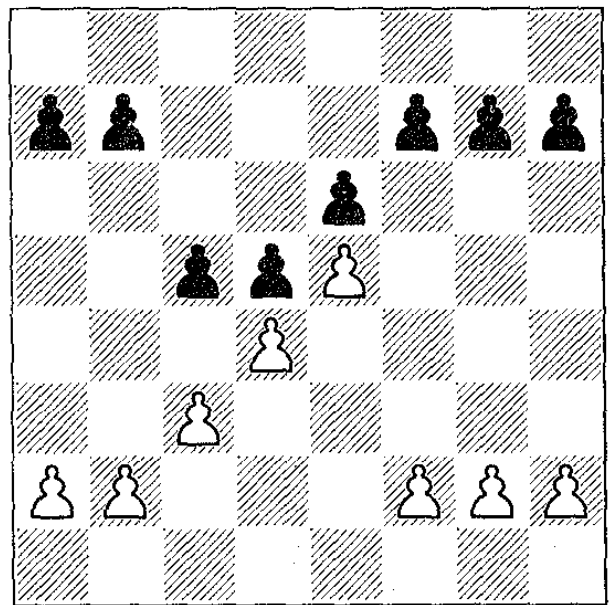


Three main types of centre can then arise. Firstly, White can advance with e4-e5, when Black usually responds with ...c7-c5. This type of centre is analysed in the first six chapters, while lines where Black defers ...c7-c5 are looked at in Chapter 10. Secondly, White can preserve the tension and allow Black to play ...d5xe4. The type of centre reached after this exchange is looked at in Chapter 7. Finally, White can exchange pawns on d5. This type of

centre is analysed in Chapters 8 and 9. In more detail, the chapters are divided as follows:

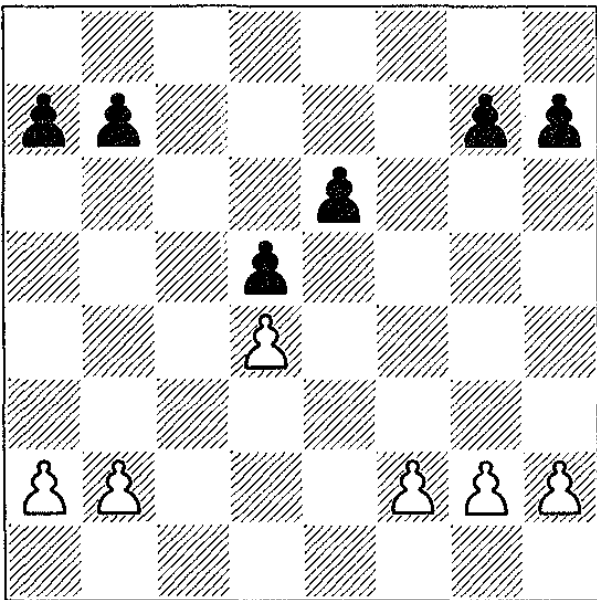
Chapter 1

White plays e4-e5. Black responds with ...c7-c5 and White then secures his d-pawn with c2-c3. We term this the 'Advance centre'.



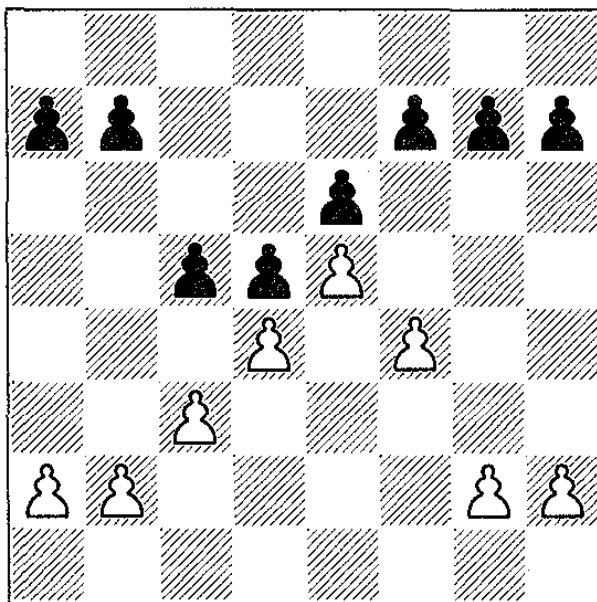
Chapter 2

A refinement of Chapter 1, looking in detail at the positions that arise after Black exchanges pawns on d4 and then attacks the central pawn chain with ...f6, and after exf6, recaptures on f6 with a piece (*see diagram overleaf*). We then reach a situation where White has a weakness on d4 and Black a weakness on e6.



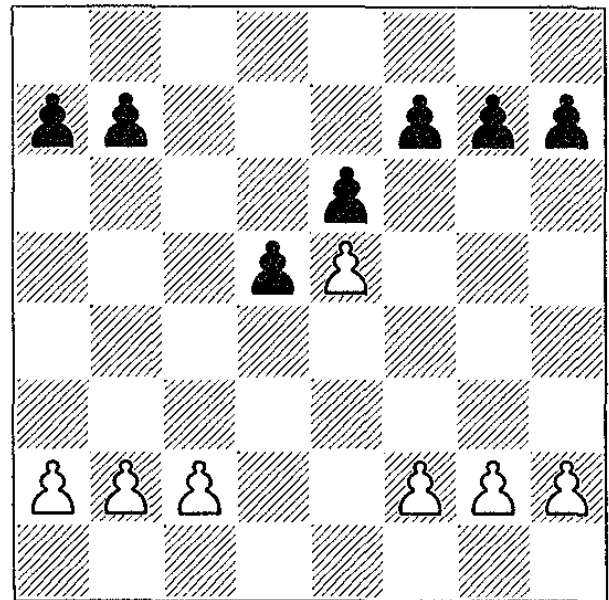
Chapter 3

Another refinement of Chapter 1, looking in detail at positions that arise after White plays an early f2-f4, securing his central pawn chain:



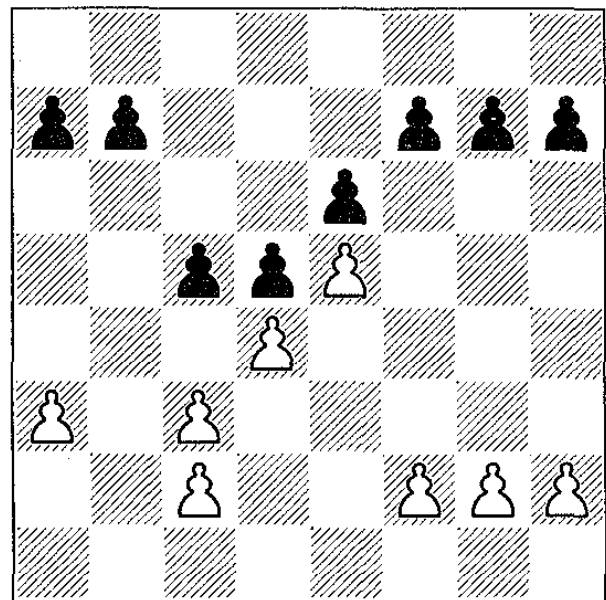
Chapter 4

After e4-e5 and ...c7-c5, White may choose not to (or may be unable to) support the d4-pawn with c2-c3, and either exchanges on c5 or allows an exchange on d4. We term the resultant structure the 'Classical centre' (see following diagram).



Chapter 5

After 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 c4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 b4 6 bxc3+, the distinctive 'Winawer centre' is reached, characterised by White's doubled c-pawns:

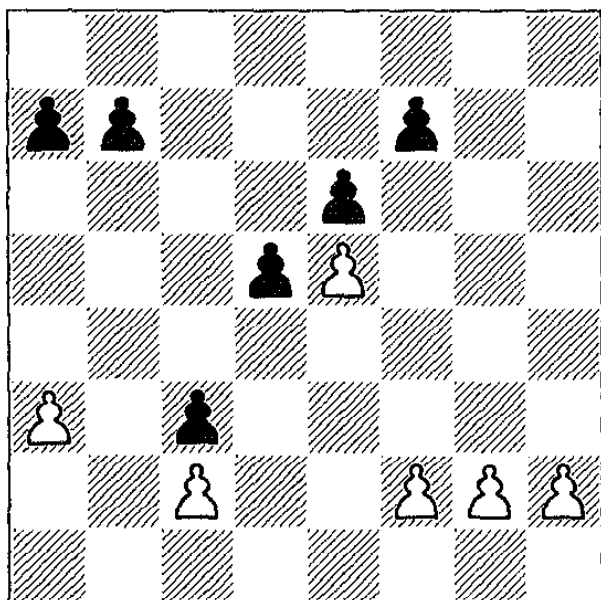


Chapter 6

Following on from Chapter 5, exchanging the dark-squared bishop weakens the kingside and can enable White to play Bg4, Bxg7 and (after ...Rh8-g8) Bxh7. Black in turn normally gets to play ...c5xd4 and

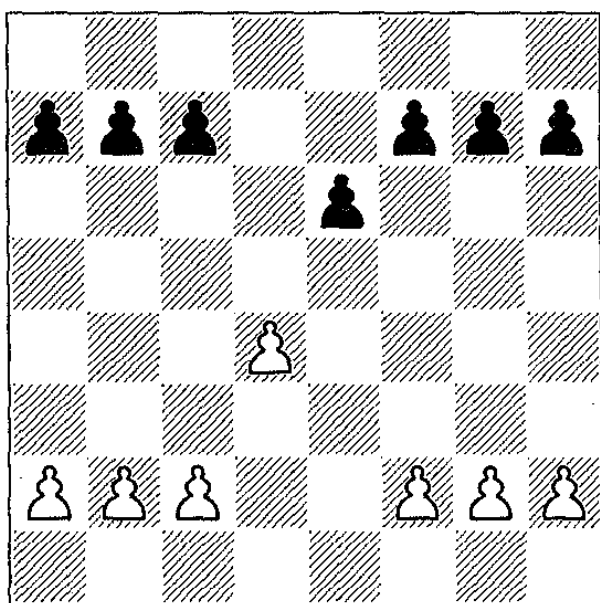
8 Introduction

...d4xc3, reaching the following typical structure, which we term the 'Poisoned pawn centre':



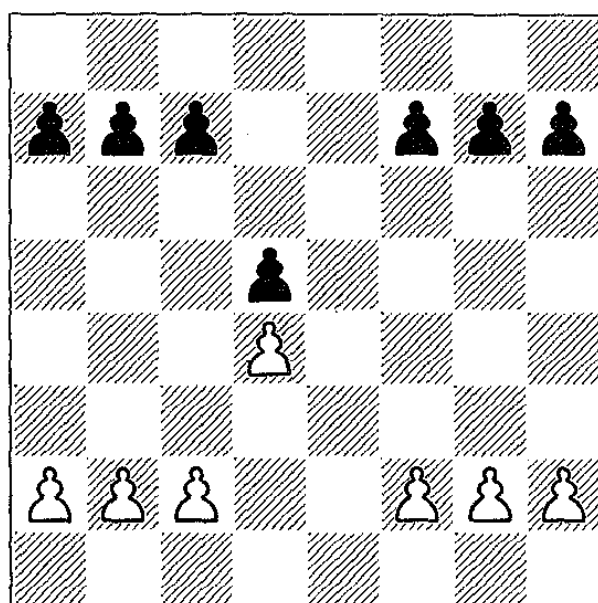
Chapter 7

White allows Black to play ...d5xe4 (or alternatively plays e4xd5 and Black recaptures with a piece). We term this the 'Rubinstein centre'.



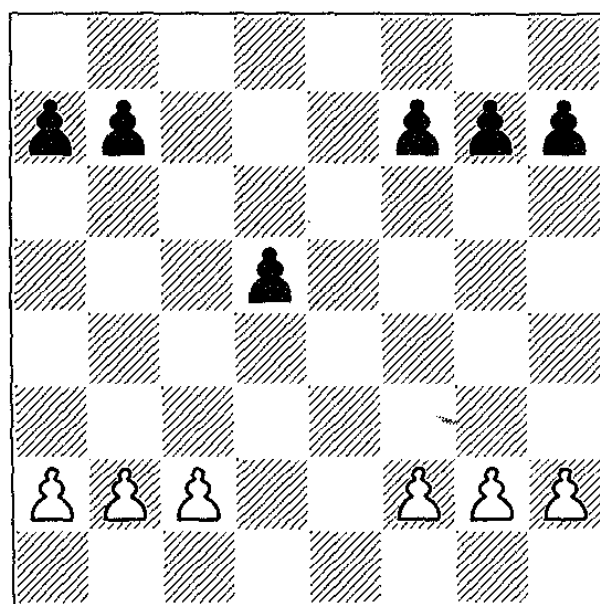
Chapter 8

White plays e4xd5 and Black responds ...e6xd5. We term this the 'Exchange centre'.



Chapter 9

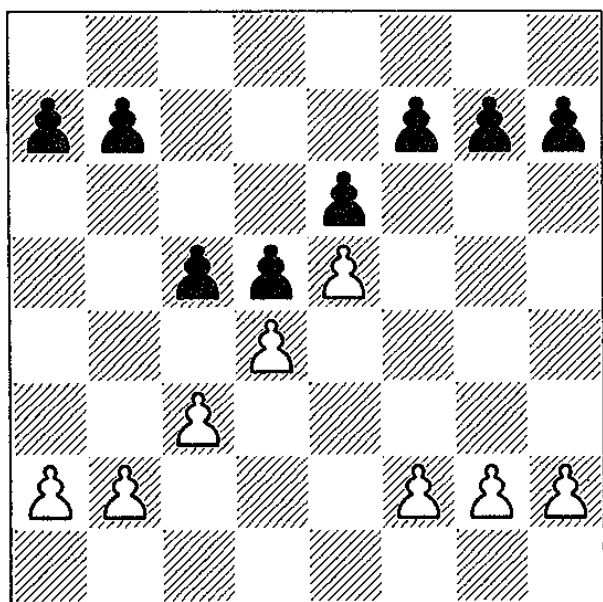
A refinement of Chapter 8, looking in detail at the positions that arise after Black plays ...c5 and exchanges the c5-pawn for the d4-pawn, leaving an isolated queen's pawn on d5. We term this the 'IQP centre'.



Chapter 10

An assortment of centres that don't fit elsewhere, especially those lines where Black does not respond to e4-e5 with an immediate ...c7-c5, and those lines without an early d2-d4.

1 Advance Centre



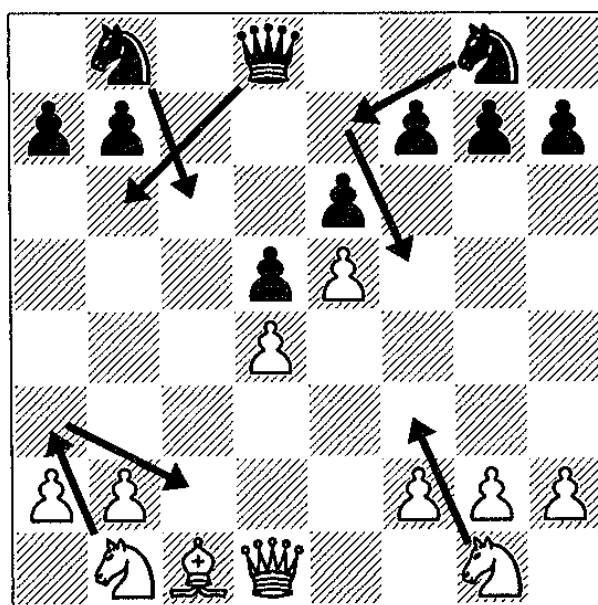
General observations

After the moves 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 White can immediately establish a cramping pawn chain with 3 e5. This is the Advance Variation. The pawns on d4 and e5 give White a substantial space advantage, which basically means his pieces have more freedom of action than Black's. Therefore, if White succeeds in developing his pieces to good squares then he will have most of the dynamic chances in the coming middlegame. For example, he could begin an attack on the black kingside with a well-planned pawn advance.

So Black seeks to put maximum pressure on White's centre, trying in the first instance to dismantle it with blows from the flanks. (In this chapter we examine the positions after Black's 'blow' ...c5 and White's reply

c3.) If he proves successful and White's centre is demolished, then Black's pieces will spring to life with tremendous force. However, against a good player Black doesn't really expect his plan to enjoy such complete success. Instead he is satisfied if in order to maintain his pawn centre White is obliged to contort his queenside pieces in an unnatural manner and perhaps even give up castling. A rather tortuous development of the white queenside pieces will negate the benefits of a space advantage. Or so Black hopes! Let's look at what normally happens in practice. Here is a run-down of typical attacking and defensive moves.

The battle for d4



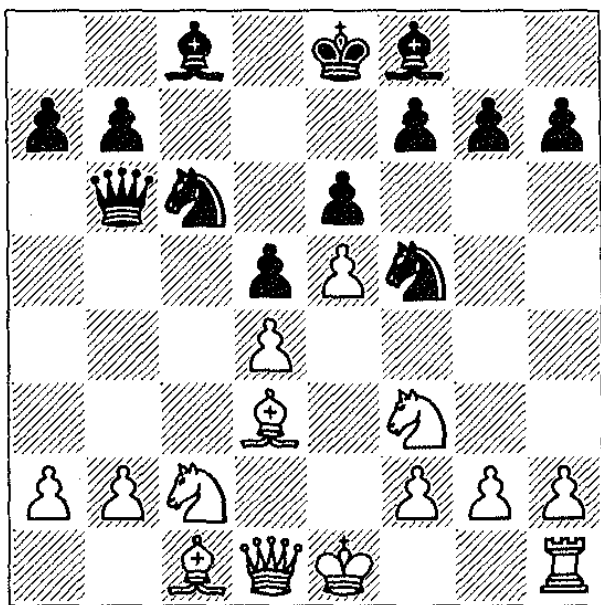
Black can attack d4 directly by bringing his knights to c6 and f5 and

his queen to b6. White can defend d4 directly in a number of ways. The queen, on d1, and king's knight on f3, always figure in the defence. Then White can play $\text{N}a3-c2$ and/or bring the queen's bishop to the defence by $\text{B}e3$, $\text{B}d2-c3$ or (after b3 or a3 and b4) $\text{B}b2$.

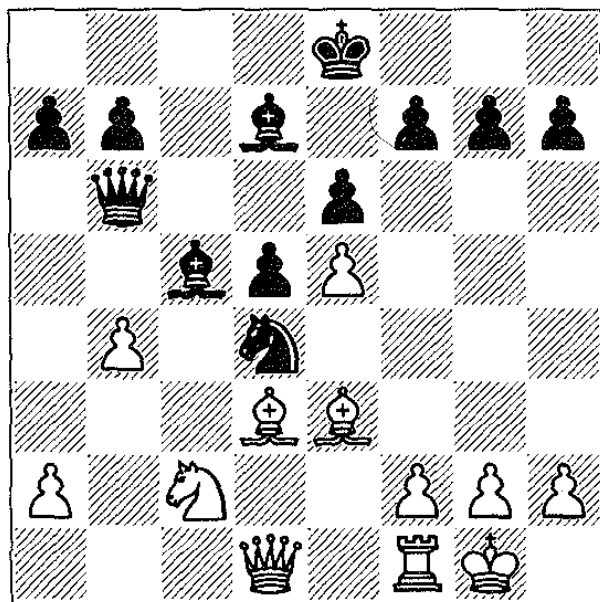
A few comments about $\text{B}e3$. It is of course only possible if Black cannot play $\text{N}b6xb2$, and either has to be preceded by a3 and b4 or quickly followed by $\text{N}d2$. It would be inconsistent to play b3 and $\text{B}e3$ as the a5-e1 and a3-c1 diagonals would then be weak. White does not especially fear $\text{N}xe3$ as after fxe3, the d4-pawn is secure and the f-file open.

$\text{N}c3-e2$ makes sense in similar positions (in other chapters), but in the Advance Variation, White rarely has time for such a manoeuvre, as Black gets to attack d4 so quickly. White would first have to play $\text{B}d3$ to develop his bishop, and this leaves d4 unprotected by the queen.

White can defend d4 by tactical means, for example:



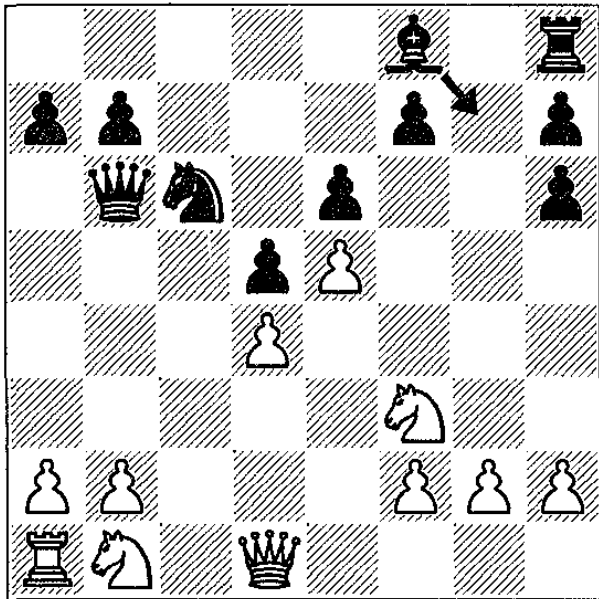
Here White does not fear $\text{N}fxd4$ due to $\text{N}fxd4 \text{ N}xd4$, $\text{N}xd4 \text{ Q}xd4$, $\text{B}b5+$ winning the queen – a standard beginner's trap. But after $\text{B}d7$, defending against that tactic, White could try the more subtle 0-0 (or $\text{Q}f1!$?). Then if $\text{N}fxd4$ White responds $\text{N}fxd4 \text{ N}xd4$, $\text{B}e3 \text{ B}c5$, b4! winning a piece.



White can also defend d4 indirectly by eliminating attackers or potential attackers, in particular the knight on (or coming to) f5:

White plays $\text{B}xh6$

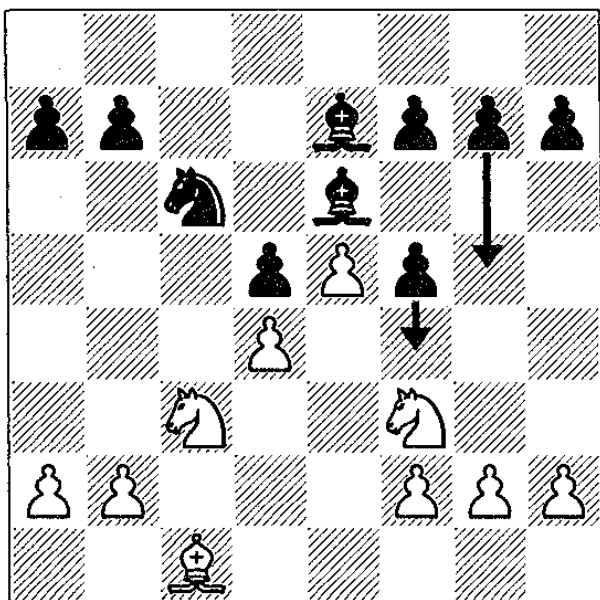
By playing bishop takes h6-knight, White weakens Black's kingside and only at the cost of his 'bad' bishop. What could be wrong with that? Well, first, White has to be sure that Black cannot get away with the *zwischenzug* $\text{N}b6xb2$; in some variations, White can retreat the bishop and trap the black queen on a1, but in others, White just finds himself an exchange and a pawn down for nothing.



Secondly, Black's kingside is not all that weak and ...gxh6 even frees the g7-square for his bishop to exert more pressure on d4 after a later ...f6. The manoeuvre ...♖g8-g4 is also possible for the brave-hearted.

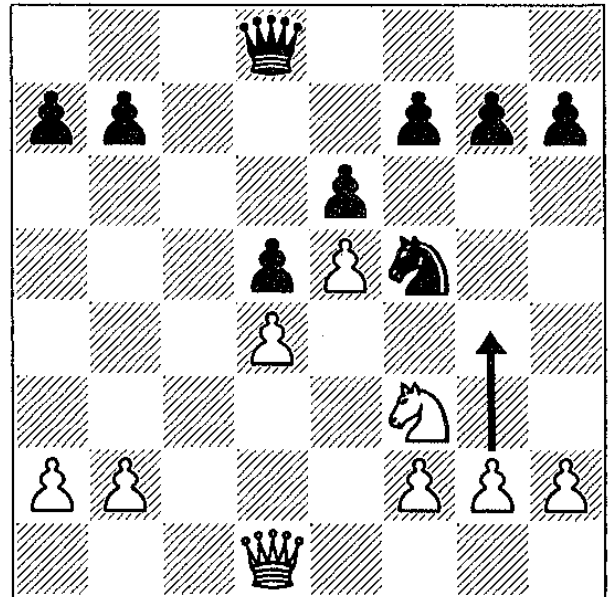
White plays ♙xf5

White can also capture the f5-knight, usually with a bishop on d3. After ♙xf5 exf5, ♘c3 ♙e6, a blocked position is reached in which White probably has a slight advantage, as Black's e6-bishop is acting as little more than a giant pawn:



However, White has to watch out for the freeing pawn sacrifice ...f4 or a sudden black attack with ...♙e7 and ...g5, utilising his kingside pawn majority.

White plays g4

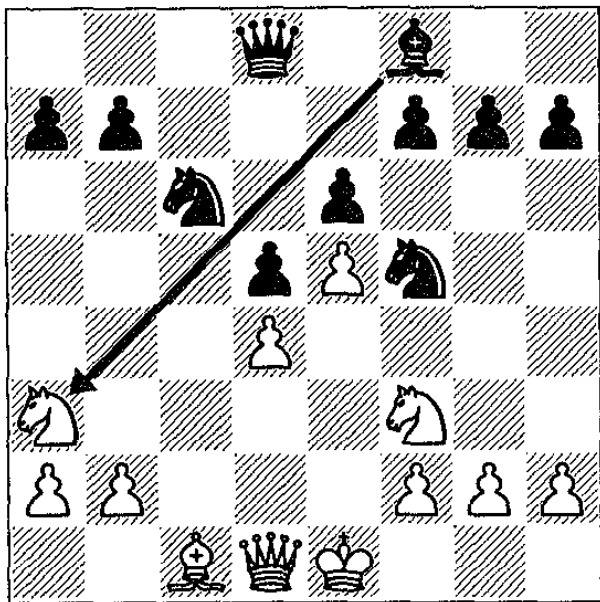


When is a pawn advance such as g4 space gaining and attacking, and when weakening? That is up to the judgement of the player. White is happiest when he can quickly follow up with f4 (after ♘e1 or ♘h4). Black can respond to g4 with ...♘fe7 (satisfied at creating a weakness and maybe later to continue with ...h5!?), ...♘h4 (exchanging a defender of d4) or ...♘h6 (immediately confronting the rogue pawn).

Black plays ...♙xa3

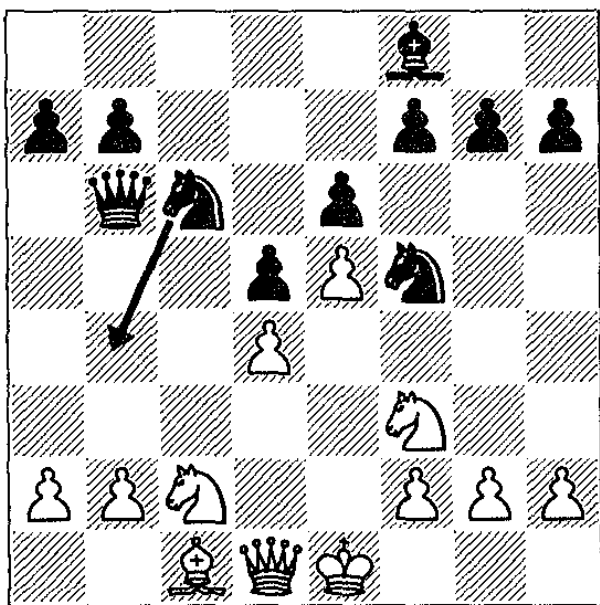
Similarly, Black can attack d4 indirectly by eliminating defenders or potential defenders, for example by ...♙xa3 (D):

Black weakens White's pawn structure (and if White had already played



♔e3, could win a pawn immediately by ...♚a5+) but at the cost of his good dark-squared bishop.

Black plays ...♞b4

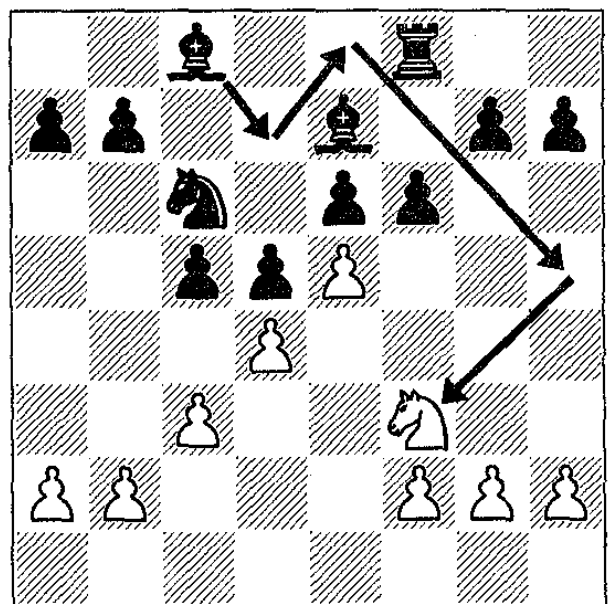


Black plays ...♞b4 threatening by ...♞xc2 to remove two crucial defenders of d4. White can choose to play ♞e3 ♞xe3, fxe3 but not ♔xe3 as Black can respond with ...♞c6 (threatening ...♚xb2) followed by ...♔b4(+). If White responds ♞xb4 then ...♔xb4+ forces White to play ♚f1 as ♔d2 loses the d-pawn. White need not worry too much about this

as he can manually castle by playing g3 (or g4) and ♔g2. White gains some tactical benefits from having his king on a square where it can't be checked by a knight on d4 (as seen above under 'the battle for d4'), but has to beware of a lightning attack down the f-file.

Black plays ...f6

The reader should note the value of ...f6 for Black in (almost every variation.

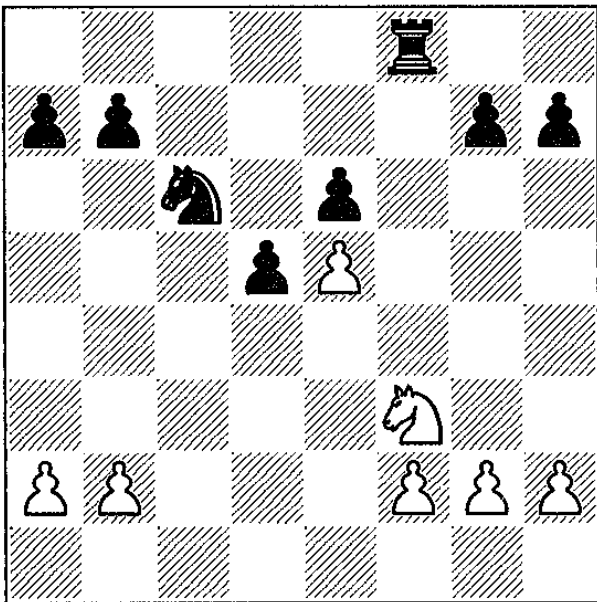
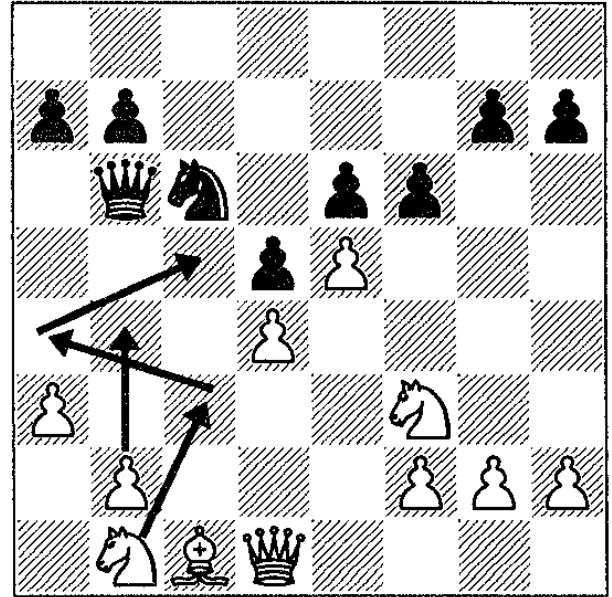


After playing ...f6, Black can seek to eliminate the f3-knight either with his queenside bishop (after ...♔d7-e8-h5) or by sacrificing the exchange after exf6 ♞xf6 and ...♞xf3.

Should White answer ...f6 with exf6, then Black has succeeded in reducing White's space advantage. Normally Black will choose to recapture with a piece, thus opening the way for further pressure down the f-file (e.g. after exf6 ♞xf6) and on White's d-pawn (e.g. after exf6 ♔xf6). This type of pawn structure

(after the exchange of pawns on d4) is looked at in detail in the next chapter.

However, in an endgame (or in the middlegame when the centre is blocked, and especially when the c-file is closed, so that Black can safely castle queenside), it may be possible for Black to recapture ...gxf6 and, under favourable circumstances, continue with ...e5, conquering the centre with his pawns.



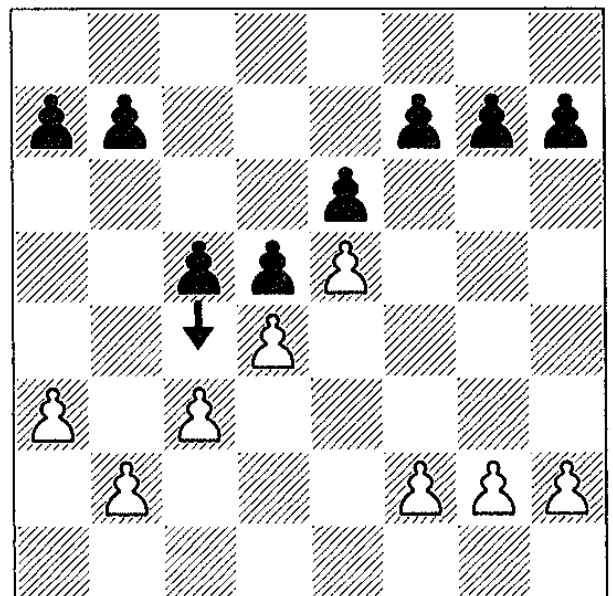
Finally, instead of playing exf6, White can allow Black to play ...fxe5. If pawns have already been exchanged on d4, then White's recapture dxe5 eliminates the weak d-pawn and gains the important d4-square (e.g. after b4-b5 and ♖f3-d4). In return, Black can concentrate pressure on the not so weak pawn on e5, and hope to make use of the half-open f-file and the passed d5-pawn.

White plays a3

White sometimes plays a3 with the intention of a later b4. This clears b2

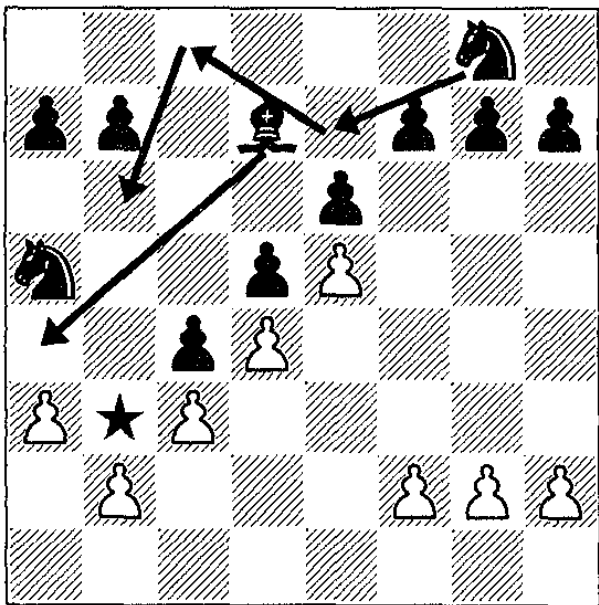
so that ♔b2 is possible, adding a defender to d4. Moreover, it also rules out ...♔b4+ and ...♘a5. Thus Black is deprived of space on the queenside.

White usually combines a3 and b4 with the manoeuvre ♘b1-c3-a4-c5 (on the way often chasing away an attacker of d4, the black queen on b6). A white knight at c5 can be very intimidating for Black, especially if Black has played ...a6 (e.g. to stop b4-b5) when ...b6 is not a serious option, and especially after ...f6 when the e6-pawn is vulnerable.



14 Advance Centre

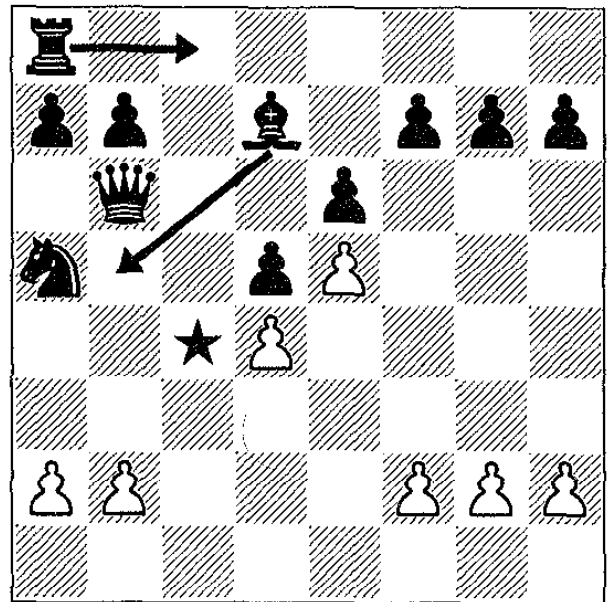
So if there has not yet been an exchange of pawns on d4, Black often replies to a3 with ...c4. This gives up all pressure on d4, but on the other hand it stops b4. Black's plan is to keep the position blocked. In particular he wants to prevent or make ineffective any white breakthrough on the queenside with b3. For example he puts his queen's knight on a5 and plays his king's knight from g8 via c8 to b6 and then plays ...♗a4.



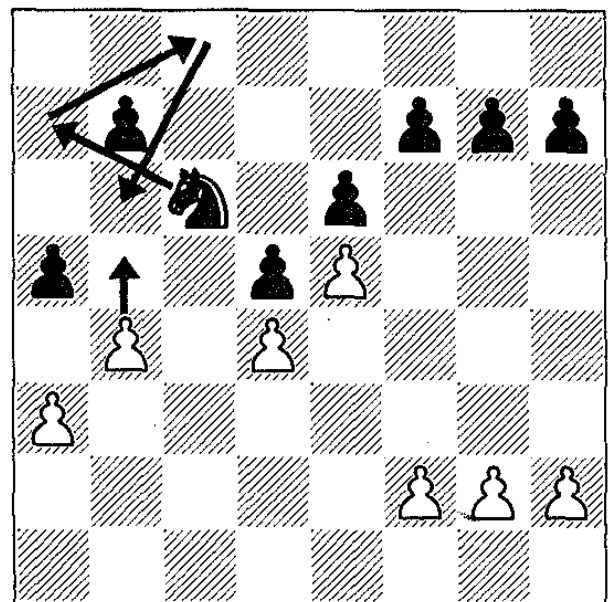
Alternatively the black queen can go to c6 and then a4 or even to h7 via g8, to act in combination with a bishop on a4. Typically, Black castles queenside in this line. White's plan is to try to force through b3, or else to stage a breakthrough on the kingside while Black's pieces are pre-occupied with preventing this move.

Black's queenside play

Black generally has more pieces on the queenside and forces White to defend b2 and d4 in particular. Black often uses that pressure to try to



swap his 'bad' light-squared bishop for White's 'good' one by playing ...♘a5 and then ...♗b5 supported, of course, by a queen on b6. The a5-knight is also ready to leap to c4 with support from a rook on c8.



White of course doesn't make things so easy, but even if he has succeeded in gaining space with a3 and b4, Black can still aim for the c4-square by the more convoluted manoeuvre ...a5, b5 ♖a7, a4 ♘c8, and then ...♘b6 and ...♘c4. Note that Black has to free the squares c8 and b6 to make this manoeuvre effective.

White's a4 also leaves the b4-square free for Black's bishop.

The move ...a5 can be useful even if White hasn't moved any queenside pawns, as it enables Black to play a piece to b4 and plan to recapture with the a-pawn opening the a-file onto the a2-pawn; if White responds a3 or b3, then ...a4 could be good.

Illustrative games

Game 1

Sieiro-Gonzalez – M.Gurevich

Havana 1986

Advance Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	e5	c5
4	c3	♘c6
5	♗f3	

Kupreichik's move 5 ♗e3!? need not cause Black too many worries, e.g. 5...♗h6! 6 ♗d3 ♖b6 7 ♗d2 ♗g4 8 ♗f3 ♗xe3 9 fxe3 ♗d7 10 0-0 c4 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♖h1 f6 13 exf6 ♗xf6 = Shaked-J.Watson, USA 1996.

5 ... ♗ge7

The most fashionable move-order. The 'main line' 5...♗d7 and the classical 5...♖b6 will be examined in later games. Note that an immediate 5...f6 is well answered by 6 ♗b5! taking control of the e5-square. Finally, Sveshnikov has shown that 5...♗h6!?, aiming to force White to play 6 ♗d3 rather than 6 ♗a3, can be well met by 6 dxc5.

6 ♗a3

Against this move-order, White can choose to play 6 ♗d3 cxd4 7

cx d4 ♗f5 8 ♗xf5 exf5 reaching a blocked position that is not particularly pleasant for Black. Two possible continuations are 9 ♗c3 ♗b4!? 10 ♗d2 ♗xc3 11 ♗xc3 ♗e6 12 ♗d2 a5! = Sveshnikov-Chernin, Sochi 1986, and 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♗c3 ♗e6 11 ♗e1 (11 ♗e2 g5!) 11...♖b6 12 ♗e2 0-0 13 ♖h1 ♖h8 14 ♗d3 ± Thipsay-Gdanski, Manila OL 1992.

6 ... cxd4

7 cxd4 ♗f5

8 ♗c2 ♗d7

9 ♗e2 ♗b4

9...♖b6 and 9...♖a5+ will be discussed in Games 2 and 3.

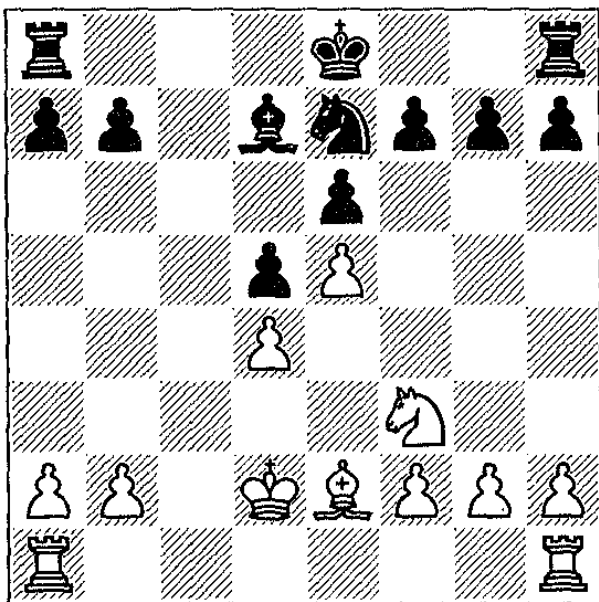
10 ♗xb4

In the game Sveshnikov-Dreev, St Petersburg 1993, White tried 10 0-0 and gained a crushing advantage after some eccentric play by Black: 10...♗xc2 11 ♖xc2 h5?! (played with the idea of solidifying the knight on f5 by ruling out g4; however, this move is rarely good in the French Advance because it seriously weakens the kingside, particularly the g5-square, which means Black's king won't find a safe haven; at Biel 1995 against Campora, Dreev played the improvement 11...♖b6 12 ♗d3 ♖c8 13 ♖d1 h6!? 14 h4 a6 15 a4 ♗b4 and went on to win) 12 ♗d2 ♗e7 (12...♖b6 13 ♗c3 ♗b5 is only ±) 13 ♗d3! ♖b6?! (13...♖c8 is better; a bizarre possibility is 13...g5!? when 14 ♗xf5 exf5 15 ♖fc1 is claimed as ± by Sveshnikov, but the barbaric 15...f4!? 16 h4 gxh4 17 ♗xf4 h3 is obscure) 14 ♗xf5 exf5 15 ♗g5! (carrying out a favourable exchange of dark-squared bishops) 15...♗xg5

16 Advance Centre

16 ♖xg5 ♜xd4 17 ♜fd1 ♜h4 18 ♜d2! ♜c4 (18...♙e6? 19 f4! and the black queen is trapped) 19 ♜ac1 ♜b5 20 a4! ♜b3 21 ♜c3 ♜b6 22 ♜xd5 0-0 23 a5! (23 ♜xd7?? ♜fd8) 23...♜xb2 24 ♜f3! (the weakness on h5 finally destroys Black, the threat of 25 ♜xh5 giving him no time to save his bishop) 24...g6 25 ♜xd7 and White won easily.

10 ...	♙xb4+
11 ♙d2	♜a5
12 ♙xb4	♜xb4+
13 ♜d2	♜xd2+
14 ♙xd2	♞e7 (D)



W

15 ♜hc1

More natural was 15 ♜ac1 since the king's rook could prove useful in the centre.

15 ... f6!

Black begins a thematic attack on the white centre.

16 ♜c5

A shot in the dark. Of course, if 16 ♜c7? then 16...♙c6 traps the rook. However, it was better to use the queenside pawns to constrict Black:

16 b4! would give White the option of answering a later ...♞c6 with b5. This will prove very important, as we shall see.

16 ... ♙d8!

This covers c7 and prepares to bring the bishop from d7 to e8 and h5.

17 ♙d3

A good move which ties the rook to h8 by attacking the h7-pawn; and 17...♞f5 can be answered by 18 ♙xf5 exf5 19 ♜xd5.

17 ... ♜c8

18 ♜ac1

Better was 18 ♜xc8+ since in the game White is left with a misplaced rook on c5. Then after 18...♙xc8 19 b4! White can answer 19...♙e8 with 20 ♜e1! when the threat of 21 exf6 is difficult to meet (unless of course Black retracts his 19th move with 20...♙d7). For example, 21...♙d7 22 ♙b5+ ♞c6 23 ♙xc6+ bxc6 (forced) 24 ♜e3! ♙h5 25 ♜a3 with a good endgame for White. Alternatively, if 19...♞c6 then 20 b5! ♞a5 21 ♙c3 followed by 22 ♙b4 (21...a6 22 a4) and the knight is out of play on a5.

18 ... ♜xc5

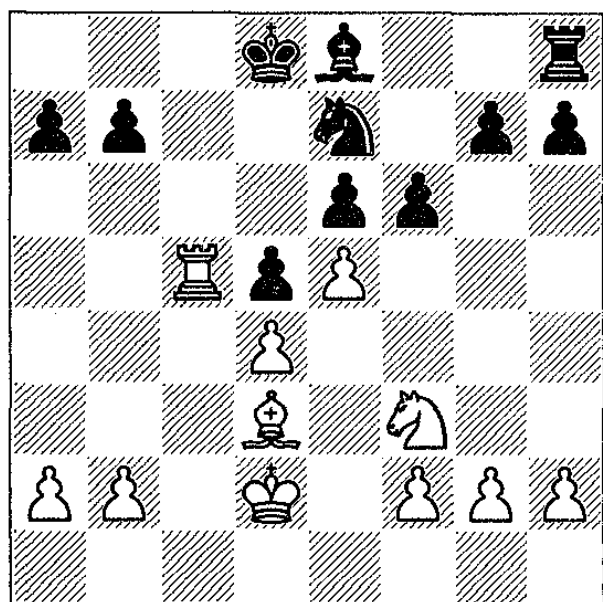
19 ♜xc5

If 19 dxc5 then 19...♞c6 20 ♜e1 (he doesn't want to play 20 exf6 gxf6 when after 21...e5 Black will have a strong centre) 20...♙e7 followed by ...♙e8-h5 attacking f3 and forcing White to give up control of e5.

19 ... ♙e8! (D)

20 ♞e1

This allows Black to break the white bind on the centre, but it was too late for 20 b4: 20...♙h5 21 ♙e3



W

♙xf3 22 ♚xf3 fxe5 23 dxe5 ♘c6 wins a pawn. This variation shows that the white rook is misplaced on c5 (it cannot defend e5). It also reveals how crucial it was for White to advance b4 when he had the chance, so as to give himself the option of b5 to stop the black knight pressurising his centre from c6.

20 ... ♘c6
21 exf6 gxf6

So Black has achieved the desired pawn centre. He doesn't yet have a significant advantage, but all danger is certainly past.

22 ♚e3 ♚e7
23 f4

It is a good idea to prevent ...e5.

23 ... ♚d6
24 ♖c1 ♖g8
25 ♙xh7?

This bad mistake lets Black's rook penetrate into White's position. After 25 g3! Gurevich intended 25...♖g7 26 ♘f3 ♖e7 27 ♘h4 ♙d7 according to his analysis in *Informator 41*. Black is slightly better as he has the chance to prepare ...e5 while White

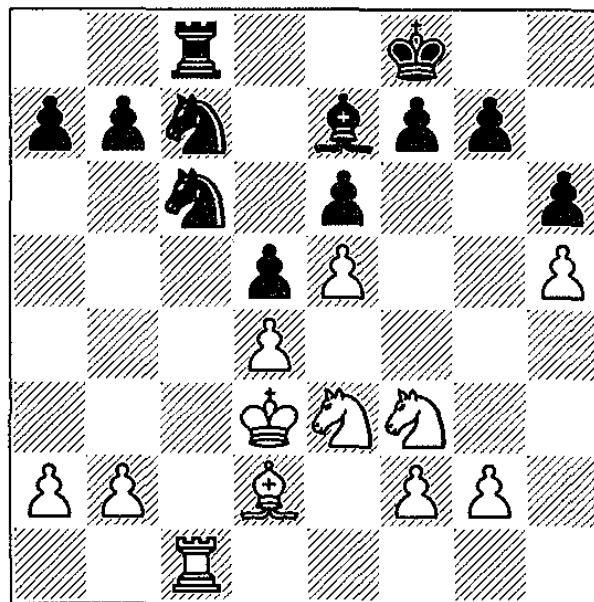
can only wait, but a draw would be the natural result.

25 ... ♖h8
26 ♙c2 ♖xh2

Now Black has a very powerful rook to add to his advantage in pawn structure. Soon he gets his bishop to a dominant square on e4 and it all proves too much for White:

27 ♙a4 ♙g6 28 ♙xc6 bxc6 29 ♚f2 ♖h4 30 ♚e3 ♙e4 31 ♖c3 ♖g4 32 ♖a3 ♖g3+ 33 ♘f3 ♖xg2 34 ♘d2 ♖g3+ 35 ♚e2 ♖xa3 36 bxa3 c5 0-1

The Advance centre can actually arise from a number of openings. The next example, which illustrates well how White can contain ...f6 in an endgame like the above, actually started as a Sicilian with 3 ♙b5+.



W

Short - Miles

Master Game 1981

It is White's move. Black is threatening 24...f6! when, as we saw in the example above, he escapes from his constricted position if White is forced into the capture exf6 (but note that exf6 would have to be answered

by ...♙xf6 rather than ...gxf6; the latter move is positionally more desirable, but unfortunately it loses a pawn to ♖g4!). So the sixteen-year-old Short played the unlikely retreat:

24 ♖g1!

This allows the centre to be supported with f4 should Black play ...f6. Hence Black is kept in a bind. White's general plan is now to advance his kingside pawns and prepare a breakthrough with f5 or g5, depending upon circumstances. The g1-knight will be re-deployed to e2 to help defend the centre.

24 ... ♖a8

Black also hopes to improve his chances with an unusual retreat, but there are no white targets on the queenside.

25	♖e2	♖b6
26	f4	♙e8
27	g4	♙d7
28	♖g1	♖a4
29	♖d1	♖h8

Dissuading 30 g5, which would either have given White a potential passed h-pawn after 30...hxg5 31 fxc5 or allowed the rook to penetrate by 31 gxh6 gxh6 32 ♖g7. But White has another pawn advance.

30 f5!

The thematic move in this variation. White opens the f-file, and his superior minor pieces (whose superiority, of course, is due to the extra mobility given by the space advantage) will ensure that his rook gains control of it.

30	...	♖b6
31	♖f4	♖f8
32	♖e3	♖c8

33	fxc6+	fxc6
34	♖g6	♙e8
35	♖f1	♖d7
36	♖g2	

Intending 37 ♖2f4, when Black will be completely tied up.

36	...	♙g5
37	♖2f4	♙xf4
38	♖xf4	a5
39	♖h8!	

Another fine manoeuvre by Short. The knight is heading for d6.

39	...	b6
40	♖f7	♙e7
41	g5	hxg5
42	♖f1	

Threatening 42 ♙xg5+ ♙e8 43 ♖d6 mate. However, 42 ♖f2! was better, as will be seen.

42	...	♖b4+
43	♙e2	♖c2
44	♙d1	♖xb2

If White had played 42 ♖f2 then this counterplay would have been impossible because of 45 ♙xg5+ winning a rook. Black would have been totally lost.

45	♙xg5+	♙f8
46	♖d8+	♙g8
47	♖f7	♖f8?

48...♖g2! was necessary, though White has winning chances after 48 ♖xd7 ♖xg5 49 ♖xe6.

48 h6!

Winning a piece. This time there were no slip-ups and White won:

48...gxc6 49 ♙xc6 ♖g2 50 ♖xf8+ ♙h7 51 ♙d2 ♖d3 52 ♖xe6 ♖b2+ 53 ♙c1 ♖c4 54 ♙c3 ♖g1+ 55 ♙c2 ♖g2+ 56 ♙b3 b5 57 ♖f4 ♖f2 58 e6 b4 59 e7 ♖d6 60 ♖xd5 ♖e2 61 e8 ♙a4+ 62 ♙xa4 1-0

Game 2
Guido – Foisor
Montecatini 1994
 Advance Variation

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |
| 3 | e5 | c5 |
| 4 | c3 | ♘c6 |
| 5 | ♗f3 | ♙d7 |
| 6 | ♙e2 | |

White can choose not to bother about the d-pawn, with either 6 dxc5 (analysed in Game 16) or Milner-Barry's 6 ♙d3, gambiting the pawn after 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♖b6 8 0-0!?. White plays in carefree style, giving up a pawn in order to gain a lead in development and attacking chances, and hoping to land a knockout blow before Black can develop. However, the closed nature of the position makes it hard for White to achieve more than dynamic equality. Such a direct approach has never been very popular at the highest echelons of chess, but there are lots of club players and some internationals who favour the Milner-Barry. So beware!

After 8...♗xd4 9 ♗xd4 ♖xd4, best play seems to be 10 ♗c3 (10 ♖e2 f6! ♖ Keres, or 10 ♙e1 ♗e7 11 ♗c3 a6 ♖ Estrin) 10...♖xe5 11 ♙e1 ♖b8 12 ♗xd5 ♙d6 13 ♖g4 ♗f8 14 ♙d2 h5 15 ♖h3 and in Pyhälä-McDonald, Oslo 1990, Black got the advantage after 15...♗h6!? 16 ♗e3 ♗g8 17 ♗c4 ♙c7 18 ♖xh5 ♗f5 19 ♖g5 ♙xh2+ 20 ♗f1 ♙b5! 21 b3 ♖d8 22 ♙xf5 exf5 23 ♖xd8+ ♙xd8 24 ♙c3 ♙a6! 25 a4 ♙c7 26 ♗e2 ♙h4 –+.

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 6 | ... | ♗ge7 |
|---|-----|------|

Also possible is 6...f6, e.g. 7 0-0 fxe5 8 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 9 dxe5 ♖c7 10 c4! 0-0-0! 11 cxd5 ♖xe5 12 ♙f3 exd5! 13 ♙e1 ♖d6 ∞ Sveshnikov-Vaiser, Sochi 1984.

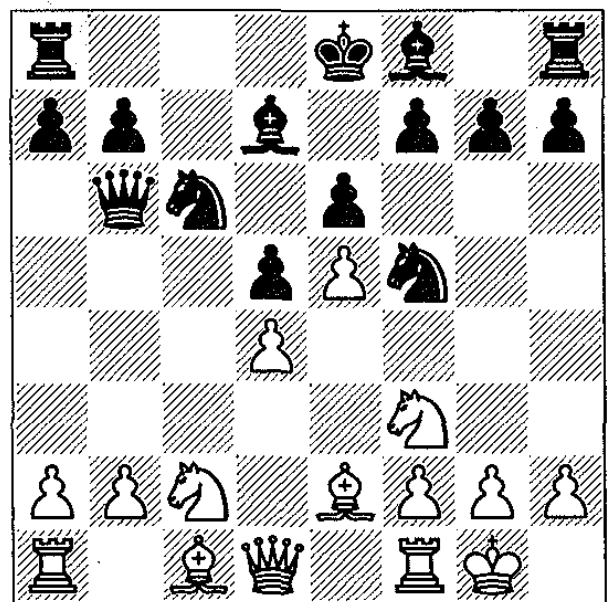
- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 7 | ♗a3 | |
|---|-----|--|

The main alternative is 7 0-0 ♗f5 (7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗f5 allows 9 ♗c3) 8 ♙d3 ♗h4! 9 ♗xh4 ♖xh4 10 ♙e3 ♖d8! = Vasiukov-Levitt, Græsted 1990.

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 7 | ... | cxd4 |
| 8 | cxd4 | ♗f5 |

Transposing to Game 1. A different plan is 8...♗g6, e.g. 9 h4 ♙e7 10 g3 0-0 11 h5 ♗h8 12 ♗c2 f6 13 exf6 ♙xf6 14 b3 ♗f7 = de la Villa-Korchnoi, Pamplona 1990.

- | | | |
|----|---------|-----|
| 9 | ♗c2 | ♖b6 |
| 10 | 0-0 (D) | |



B

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 10 | ... | ♗c8 |
|----|-----|-----|

Black's idea is to delay ...♙e7, so that if White stabs at the f5-knight with g4, it doesn't have to retreat into exile on h6: it can return to e7, from where it can be re-deployed to the g6-square and maintain influence

on the centre. Black in effect says to White “I have played a good developing move in 10...♖c8. Do you have an equally useful move while you wait for me to play ...♙e7 (when I agree g4 will be more effective)?”

Another attempt to profit from delaying ...♙e7 was seen in the game Sveshnikov-Dolmatov, USSR 1988, where Black tried 10...♘a5!?. After 11 g4 ♘e7 12 ♘fe1 ♙b5 13 ♘d3 h5! (the standard idea to break up White’s pawns and win control of f5) 14 gxh5 ♘f5 15 ♙e3 ♘c4 there was a very sharp battle. 10...♘a5 has the added virtue of ruling out 11 ♙d3, since it can be answered advantageously by 11...♙b5.

11 ♙d3

It turns out that all Black’s pressure on d4 doesn’t prevent this move. In an earlier game Black scored a lovely victory because White could not find a plan: 11 ♖d3?! a6! (intending ...♘b4 and then ...♙b5) 12 g4 ♘fe7 13 a4 ♘a5! 14 b4 ♘c4 (one by one Black’s pieces find their best squares) 15 ♖b3 ♘c6 16 ♖b1 ♙e7 17 ♖d1 0-0 18 ♙e3 ♖d8! (a regrouping move, planning to reinforce the c4-knight) 19 h3 b5 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖a1 f6! (now begins the thematic dissolution of White’s centre) 22 exf6 ♖xf6 23 ♘fe1 ♘e3 24 fxe3 (24 ♘e3 or 24 ♖xe3 drops the b4-pawn) 24...♖c7 25 e4 ♖f2!! (and here is the tactical finish) 26 ♘xf2 ♖h2+ 27 ♙e3 ♙g5+ 28 ♙d3 ♘xb4+! and White resigned since 29 ♖xb4 dxe4+ 30 ♘xe4 ♖xe2+ will lead to mate (Yanovsky-Kindermann, Biel 1991).

Of course we cannot ignore the possibility of 11 g4 here. Although it misses its mark in driving the black knight to a bad square, it is nevertheless still a space-gaining move and one of White’s fundamental ideas in the variation. Play could go 11 g4 ♘fe7 12 ♘fe1 (planning to bring the knight to e3 via g2 and then power through with f4 and f5; an alternative way to clear the path of the f-pawn is 12 ♘h4, when Black does well to avoid 12...♘g6 13 ♘g2! – a key idea – 13...f6 14 f4 ♙e7 15 ♙e3, and White has a big space advantage; therefore in the game Sveshnikov-Ulybin, Russia 1992, Black continued 12...♘b4 when after 13 ♘xb4 ♖xb4 14 f4 ♘c6 15 ♙e3 ♙e7 16 ♘g2 Sveshnikov thinks Black should have played 16...f5, blocking the white pawn expansion on the kingside) 12...h5 (12...♘a5!?) 13 gxh5 ♘f5 14 ♙e3 and now rather than 14...♘b4 (as in Sveshnikov-Skalkotas, Athens 1983) Black should try 14...♘a5 15 b3 ♙b5, with obscure play, or even 14...♖xb2!?

11 ... a5!?

Not 11...♘fxd4? 12 ♘fxd4 ♘xd4 13 ♙e3 ♙c5 14 b4! winning a piece. Here 11...♙e7 is inconsistent with the spirit of Black’s opening: 12 g4! ♘h6 (of course the d-pawn is still immune because of ♙e3, while 12...♘h4 13 ♘xh4 ♙xh4 is risky because 14 g5 cuts off the bishop’s retreat and threatens to win a piece with 15 ♖g4 or 15 ♖h5) 13 h3! and the h6-knight is a problem piece. Playable alternatives are 11...♘b4 and 11...♘a5.

12 a3

Reintroducing the idea of b4! should Black now capture the d-pawn.

12 ... a4!

Aiming to take advantage of the weakened light squares on his opponent's queenside, especially b3. The idea is ...♘a5, followed by ...♘b3 or ...♙b5, ...♙xd3 and ...♘c4, when the knight is a formidable piece.

13 ♙xf5

The exchange of this bishop will considerably weaken White's influence on the light squares. It will therefore be necessary to strike a brave, violent blow upon Black before he manages to complete his development, in which case he will naturally have the better chances.

13 ... exf5

14 ♘e3 ♙b5

An unnatural move, but if instead 14...♙e6 then 15 ♙xa4. Now, if he is given time, Black will consolidate with ...♙e7, ...♙e6 and ...0-0, when he is ready to play ...♘a5 and ...♘c4 with good chances. So White has to act quickly.

15 b3!

Exploiting the awkward position of the black queen. Now 15...♙xb3 16 ♙xb3 axb3 17 ♘xd5 is disastrous for Black, because his centre is smashed.

15 ... axb3

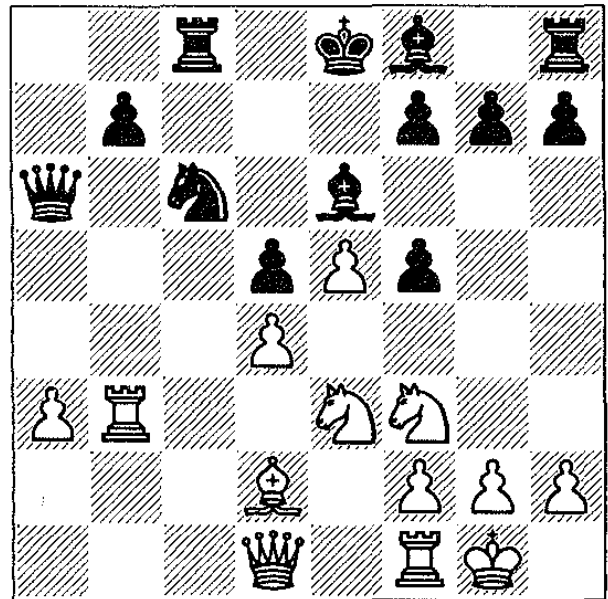
16 ♙b1 ♙e6

Black could try to hold onto his extra pawn (or rather hold on to it long enough to buy time to finish his development): 16...♘a5 17 ♘d2?! ♙e7 18 ♘xb3 0-0. However, 17

♙d2! looks strong, e.g. 17...♙xa3 18 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 19 ♙xb3 threatening the d5-pawn.

17 ♙xb3 ♙a6

18 ♙d2 (D)



B

18 ... g5??

A catastrophic plan. Black should prepare a thematic pawn sacrifice: 18...f4! 19 ♘c2 when the e6-bishop has tremendously increased scope. Black can play soundly with 19...♙e7 20 ♙xf4 0-0 intending 21...♘a5 and 22...♘c4 or, if 21 ♘e3, then 21...♙xa3. Otherwise he can play actively with 19...♙f5! 20 ♙xf4? ♘a5 21 ♙b2 ♘c4. In both cases his firm grip of the light squares would fully compensate for the missing pawn (though probably no more).

The move in the game seeks to counterattack with ...g4, but the centre becomes open and Black lack of development proves fatal.

19 ♘xg5 ♘xd4

So Black has achieved one of his principal aims, as expounded in the introduction to this chapter: he has

22 Advance Centre

won control of d4. However, it is important not to forget more mundane matters such as the virtues of development, king safety and pawn structure, since Black clearly forgot them in this case.

20 ♖xe6 fxe6

Guido gives a nice variation in *Informator 61* to show that Black is demolished after 20...♖xb3: 21 ♖xd5! (threatening 22 ♖c7+ winning the queen) 21...♗xe6 22 ♔g5! when, besides other things, White intends 23 ♖c7+! and mate on d8.

21 ♗h5+ ♔d7
 22 ♗f7+ ♔e7
 23 ♖xd5! ♖e2+
 24 ♔h1 exd5

If 24...♖g3+, then 25 hxg3 ♗xf1+ 26 ♔h2 exd5 27 ♖xb7+ is carnage.

25 ♔g5 ♖ce8
 26 ♖fb1 1-0

The b7-pawn drops and then it is all over.

Game 3
 Cifuentes – I.Sokolov
 Dutch Ch 1994
 Advance Variation

1 e4 c5
 2 c3 e6
 3 d4 d5
 4 e5 ♖c6
 5 ♖f3 ♔d7
 6 ♔e2 ♖ge7
 7 ♖a3 cxd4
 8 cxd4 ♖f5
 9 ♖c2 ♗a5+

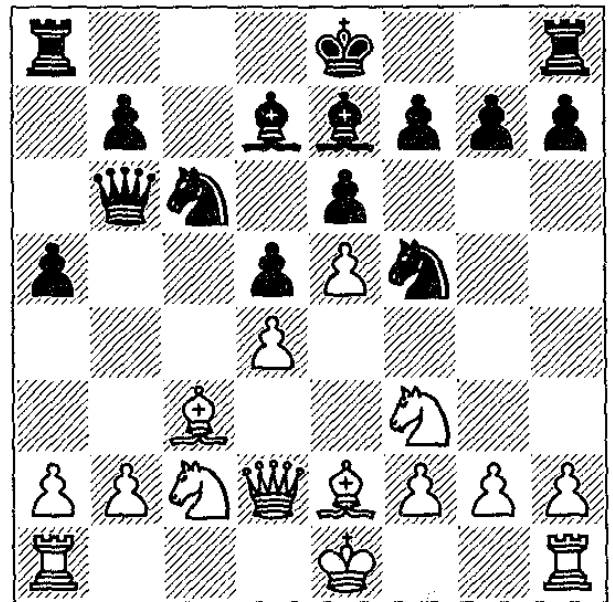
The purpose of 9...♗a5+ is to entice the white queen's bishop from the c1-h6 diagonal and leave it on the

slightly clumsy square c3. Additionally, after White's g4-pawn push has chased the black knight from f5, it can retreat to h6 without fearing ♔xh6.

10 ♔d2 ♗b6
 11 ♔c3 ♔e7
 12 ♗d2

In the game Marković-I.Sokolov, Yugoslavia 1987, 12 0-0 a5 13 g4 ♖h6 14 ♖fe1 was played, and now Sokolov suggests 14...f5 15 h3 0-0 16 f4 fxg4 17 hxg4 g5! 'with complex play'. This looks rather good for Black.

12 ... a5 (D)



W

The idea of this move is to play ...♔b4 at an appropriate moment, when if ♔xb4 in reply then ...axb4 and the white a2-pawn is weak. Such an exchange would also give Black more chances of gaining counterplay along the c-file by removing the obstacle on c3.

13 0-0 0-0

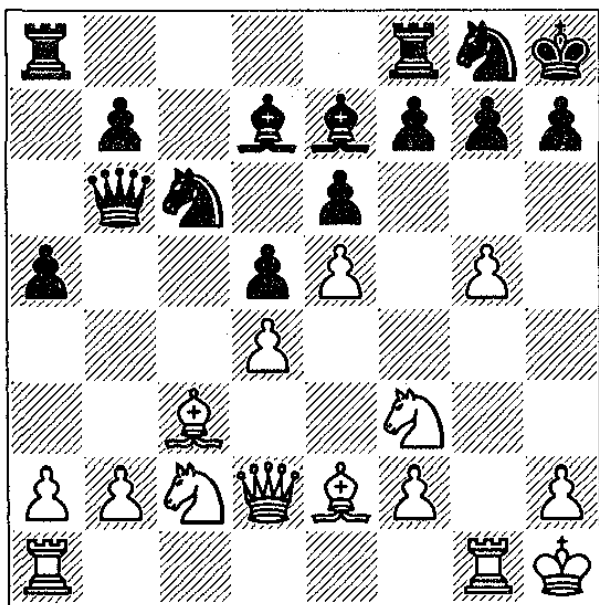
Sokolov suggests 13...♔b4 immediately. This would clear e7 for

the f5-knight should it be attacked by g4.

14 ♔h1 ♔h8
 15 g4! ♘h6
 16 ♖g1 ♘g8

Preparing ...f6. Naturally not 16...f6? 17 exf6 when White wins material whichever way Black recaptures.

17 g5! (D)



B

This effectively rules out ...f6 as, after the subsequent gxf6, the open g-file would give White very dangerous attacking chances. White's move is excellent and is an important part of his kingside attacking scheme.

17 ... ♙b4!

At last. The g8-knight will get to e7 after all, and then f5 – the chink in White's armour, a key square which cannot be defended by a pawn.

18 ♙d3

Anticipating the fight for f5.

18 ... ♘ge7
 19 ♖g4?

In a double-edged position, a single inaccuracy can have a decisive

effect. We shall soon see why White should have played 19 ♖g3 here.

19 ... ♖ac8
 20 ♖ag1

Cifuentes continues his massive build-up. He plans h4 and h5 or ♖g1-g3-h3.

20 ... ♘f5!

The black knight reaches its ideal square. It has to be eliminated as otherwise it will paralyse White's attack.

21 ♙xf5 exf5
 22 ♖h4

If this rook were on g3 here rather than g4 (i.e. if he had played 19 ♖g3), White could play 22 ♘e3! (22...f4? 23 ♘xd5), and then after 22...♘e7 23 ♘g2! ♙xc3 24 bxc3 White would be ready to play ♘f4 followed by an all-out attack with h4 and h5. His piece deployment would be almost ideal, for example if Black played 24...♖c6 25 ♘f4 ♖fc8? then 26 e6! ♙xe6 27 ♘e5 would be very strong. (This analysis is based on Sokolov's commentary in *Informator 61*.) Therefore Black would have to play 25...♙e6 first, keeping the e-pawn blocked, and only then ...♖fc8. White could always counter the pressure against c3 with ♘e2.

In conclusion, a very sharp game would have resulted from 22 ♘e3 if White's rook had gone to g3 at move 19. However, with the rook at g4 as in the game, 22 ♘e3? would of course simply lose a rook to 22...fxg4.

22 ... ♙xc3
 23 bxc3 ♘e7

The fact that the white knight is on c2 rather than on g2 heading for

f4 (as in the analysis above) makes an enormous difference to the balance of the game. White has grave problems. 24...♖b2 is one threat, as is 24...♘g6 followed by ...f4, opening up the diagonal of the d7-bishop and leaving the white rook precariously placed on the h-file.

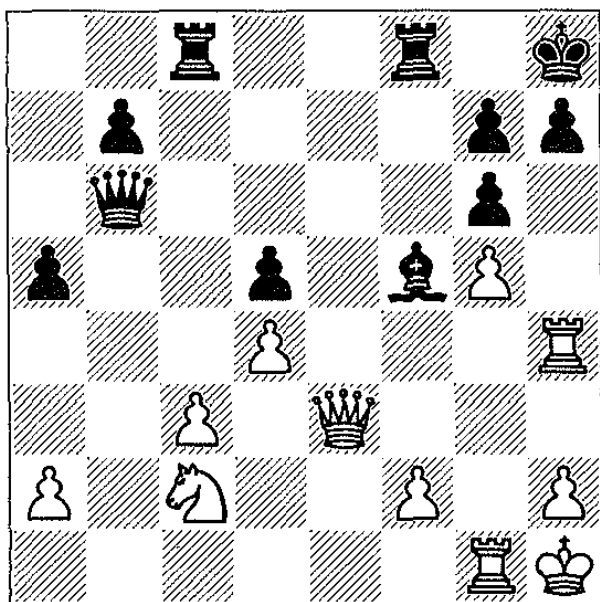
24 e6!?

This desperate try proves futile against Black's accurate defence.

24 ... ♙xe6
25 ♘e5 f4!

Temporarily returning the pawn to free his position.

26 ♖xf4 ♘g6
27 ♘xg6+ fxg6
28 ♖e3 ♙f5 (D)



W

An incredible transformation has taken place. White's pawns are hopelessly weak and his pieces scattered, while all Black's pieces are on excellent squares, including the bishop, which until now has played no active role in the game. Yet ten moves ago, the game was 'unclear' with White apparently well co-ordinated and

ready to start a promising attack on Black's king! Such is the effect of a good strategy – and a bad one – in turning around a game.

29 ♘e1 ♖b2
30 ♘g2 ♗xc3

The positional collapse is rapidly followed by the material collapse. Black won after 31 ♖e7 ♗cc8 32 ♗f4 ♗ce8 33 ♖c7 ♖d2 34 ♖xb7 ♙e4 35 ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 36 ♖e7 ♖xf2 37 h3 ♗g8 38 ♖a3 ♗c8 0-1.

Game 4

Sveshnikov – Casper

Moscow 1987

Advance Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 e5 c5
4 c3 ♘c6
5 ♘f3 ♖b6
6 a3

6 ♙e2 has proved relatively harmless against this move-order. After 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♘h6! (7...♘ge7 8 ♘a3! transposes to the same system as the previous games), White can play neither 8 ♙xh6 ♖xb2! nor 8 ♘a3 ♙xa3! and has not achieved much after the following moves either:

a) 8 b3 ♘f5 9 ♙b2 ♙e7! (after 9...♙b4+ 10 ♖f1 0-0, the placing of White's king enables him to play 11 ♘c3) 10 0-0 ♙d7 11 g4 ♘h4 12 ♘xh4 ♙xh4 13 ♘a3 0-0 14 f4 f6 15 ♖g2 fxe5 16 dxe5 ♗f7 17 ♖d2 ♗af8 18 ♘c2? g5! gave Black a decisive advantage in Kupreichik-Hertneck, Debrecen Echt 1992.

b) 8 ♖c3 ♗f5 9 ♗a4 ♖a5+ 10 ♕d2 ♕b4 11 ♕c3 b5! 12 a3 ♕xc3+ 13 ♗xc3 b4 14 axb4 ♖xb4 15 ♕b5 ♕d7 =.

6 ... c4

Black doesn't have to close the position in this way. An important alternative is 6...♗h6, when play usually continues 7 b4 (though 7 ♕d3!? deserves more attention) 7...cxd4 and White then has three options of how to use his queen's bishop:

a) 8 ♕xh6 gxh6 9 cxd4, when Fressinet-Korchnoi, Cannes 1996 continued 9...♕d7 (9...♖g8!?) 10 ♕e2 ♖c8 11 0-0 ♕g7 12 ♖d2 0-0 13 ♗c3? ♗xd4! 14 ♗xd4 ♕xe5 demolishing White's centre. However, Black already had a comfortable position, despite his fractured pawn structure: his kingside was very secure and he was ready to play ...f6 breaking up White's centre when the g7-bishop would exert considerable pressure on d4.

b) 8 cxd4 ♗f5 and then:

b1) 9 ♕b2 ♕e7 10 ♖d2 (10 ♕d3 a5! 11 ♕xf5 exf5 12 ♗c3 ♕e6 13 b5 a4! was unclear in Sveshnikov-Moskalenko, Norilsk 1987) 10...0-0 11 ♕d3 (11 ♕e2 f6!? 12 g4 ♗h6 13 exf6 ♖xf6 14 g5 ♖xf3 15 ♕xf3 ♗f5 ∞) 11...♗h4 12 ♗xh4 ♕xh4 13 ♖f4 ♕e7 14 b5 ♗a5 15 ♗c3 (15 ♗d2 ♕d7 16 a4 a6 17 h4 f6! ♖) 15...♗c4! 16 ♕xc4 dxc4 17 d5 f6 18 ♖xc4 fxe5 19 0-0 ♖f4! ♖.

b2) 9 ♕e3 ♕e7 10 ♕d3 ♗xe3 11 fxe3 0-0 (11...f5 12 exf6 ♕xf6 13 ♗g5!) 12 0-0 f5 13 ♗c3, and here John Watson gives 13...♖d8! with the idea of 14 ♗a4 b6 or 14 ♗e2 a5

15 b5 ♗a7 16 a4 ♕d7 followed by ...♗a7, ...♗c8 and ...♗b6.

It is worth noting that ...♖b6 is particularly inappropriate against 6 a3 as Black often has to retreat the queen to d8 or c7; correspondingly 6 a3 is not so dangerous against other systems. For example, after 5...♕d7 6 a3, Adams-Epishin, Ter Apel 1992 continued 6...f6! (6...♗ge7 is also good, e.g. 7 b4 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗f5 9 ♗c3?! ♖c8 10 ♕b2 ♗h4! ♖ Illescas-Speelman, Linares 1992) 7 ♕d3 ♖c7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♕f4 c4 10 ♕c2 h6 11 h4 ♕e8! 12 b3 cxb3 13 ♕xb3 ♕h5! 14 ♗bd2 fxe5 15 dxe5 ♕c5 16 ♖b1 ♗ge7 17 c4 ♖hf8 18 ♕h2 ♕xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♖xf3! 20 gxf3 ♗d4 21 ♖g2 ♗ef5 22 ♕g3 ♖f7 23 f4 g5! 24 cxd5 gxf4 25 dxe6 ♖h5 26 e7 ♗xh4+ 0-1.

7 ♗bd2

Beginning the thematic battle for b3.

7 ... ♗a5

Uhlmann's favoured 7...f6 is well met by 8 ♕e2! fxe5 9 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♕c5 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 b4! axb3 13 ♗xb3 0-0 14 a4 ±.

8 ♕e2

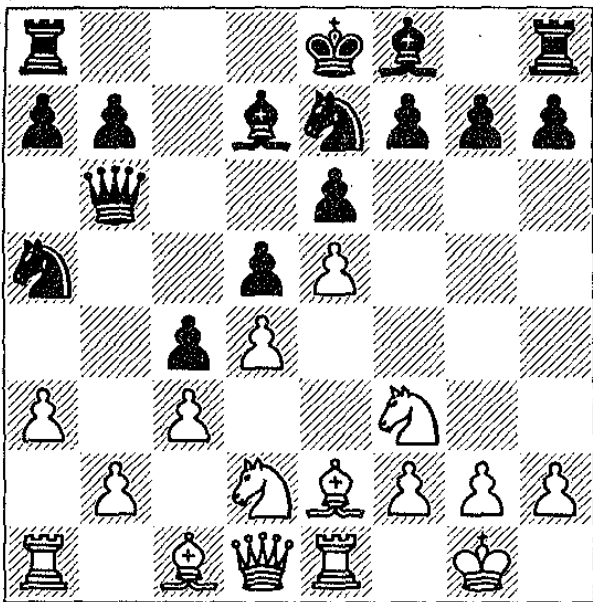
Another plan is g3 with the idea of h4 and ♕h3 immediately seizing space on the kingside. The game Hodgson-Arkell, Surrey 1996 continued 8 h4 ♕d7 9 h5 0-0-0 10 g3 f5! 11 exf6 gxf6 12 ♕h3 ♕d6 13 0-0 e5 with a fine position for Black.

8 ... ♕d7

9 0-0 ♗e7

10 ♖e1 (D)

Now White plans, after due preparation, ♗f3-g5-h3-f4-h5. The idea behind this manoeuvre is to tie the



B

black bishop on f8 to the defence of the g7-pawn, unless Black plays ...g6, whereupon the knight enters on f6. Such a repositioning of the knight would be the prelude, after considerable preparation, to a general pawn advance on the kingside by g4, f4 and f5.

10 ... h6

Black rules out this plan. However, the other white knight can set off for the h5-square via f1 and g3. We shall see the highly subtle alternative 10...♖c6! in the next game.

11 ♖b1!

The rook side-steps a potential attack by ...♘b3. This is a necessary precaution before the manoeuvre ♘f1-g3-h5. If 11 ♘f1 immediately then 11...♘b3 12 ♖b1 ♙a4 gives Black a stranglehold on the square b3 and leaves White's queen precariously placed on d1 – the b3-knight may suddenly move with a devastating discovered attack. 12...♘xc1 would also be a good trade for Black. Although the position is blocked, if White ever wants to win he will have

to open lines sometime, and then he would prefer still to have his queen's bishop rather than a knight.

11 ... 0-0-0

12 ♔c2! ♙b8

13 ♙d1!

The bishop is brought into the fight for control of a4 and b3, and the e2-square is cleared for the queen, so that she has a secure retreat square. This will prove to be important at move 17.

13 ... ♖c8

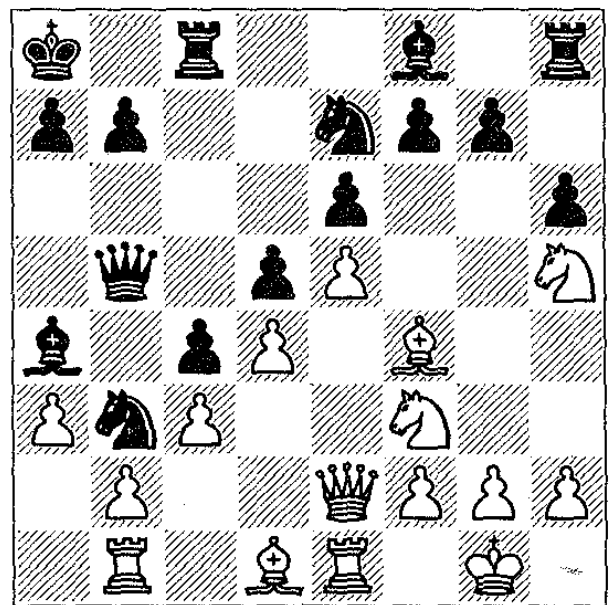
14 ♘f1 ♘b3

15 ♙f4 ♙a8

16 ♘g3 ♙a4

17 ♔e2 ♖b5

18 ♘h5 (D)



B

Accomplishing the first stage of his plan of attack on the kingside. Now if 18...g6, 19 ♘f6 when the knight is a thorn in Black's side.

18 ... ♙a5

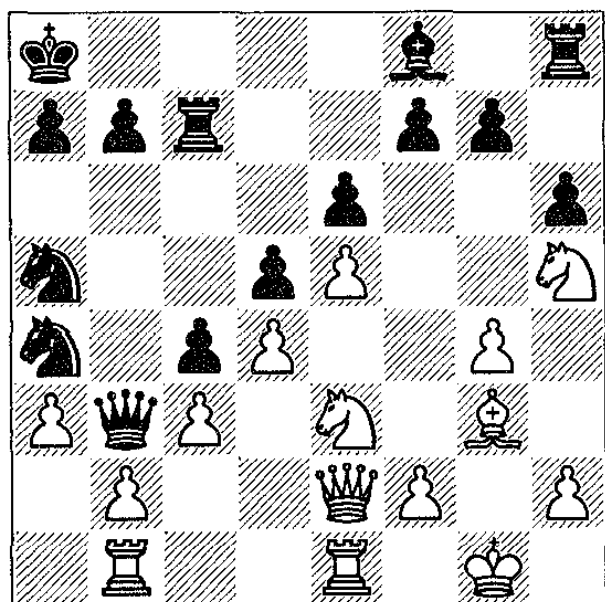
19 ♘d2 ♖c7

20 g4!

The second stage begins. White intends to put his queen's knight on

e3, play ♔g3 and f4, and then engineer an f5 breakthrough. Black can stop this with ...g6 – then White's plan would be ♔g3, ♕g2, h4 and h5, answering ...g5 with ♖f1 and f4. Eventually, he would pressurise and hope to win the f7-pawn.

- | | | |
|----|------|----------|
| 20 | ... | ♘c8 |
| 21 | ♔xa4 | ♚xa4 |
| 22 | ♘f1 | ♘b6 |
| 23 | ♔g3 | ♚b3 |
| 24 | ♘e3 | ♘a4? (D) |



W

This is completely pointless because no breakthrough is possible on the queenside. Black has placed his queen and both knights on such impotent squares that White is able to switch from his methodical plan to a violent tactical onslaught.

- | | | |
|----|-------|------|
| 25 | ♘xd5! | exd5 |
| 26 | e6 | ♚e7 |
| 27 | ♘f4! | ♘b6 |
| 28 | ♚f3 | |

28 exf7!? would have been spectacular but risky, e.g. 28...♚xe2 29 ♖xe2 a6 30 ♘g6 ♘d7 31 ♘xh8 ♔xa3 32 ♖ee1! ♔f8 33 ♘g6 ♘c6 34

♘xf8 ♘xf8 35 ♔d6 with a clear advantage.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 28 | ... | ♚b5 |
|----|-----|-----|

If 28...fxe6, then 29 ♘g6 wins for White.

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 29 | exf7 | ♖xf7 |
|----|------|------|

Now White has a forced winning sequence:

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 30 | ♘xd5! | ♖xf3 |
| 31 | ♘c7+ ♔b8 | 32 ♘xb5+ ♔c8 33 |
| ♘xa7+ ♔d7 | 34 ♖e5 ♘c6 35 ♖b5 | |
| ♘xa7 36 ♖xb6 ♔c8 | 37 ♖e1 ♘c6 38 | |
| d5 | 1-0 | |

The black rook on h8 and bishop on f8 never moved! Sveshnikov's play in the game above illustrates White's chances very well, mainly because his opponent played from move to move with no guiding plan and let White do almost as he pleased. Now we will see how Black can undertake some concerted action to resist his opponent's strategy:

Game 5

Sveshnikov – Eingorn

Palma de Mallorca 1989

Advance Variation

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|---------|----|---------|
| 1 | e4 c5 | 2 | c3 e6 | 3 | d4 d5 | 4 | e5 ♚b6 | 5 | ♘f3 ♘c6 |
| 6 | a3 c4 | 7 | ♘bd2 ♘a5 | 8 | ♔e2 ♔d7 | 9 | 0-0 ♘e7 | 10 | ♖e1 |

Here Casper played 10...h6. Eingorn played much more purposefully:

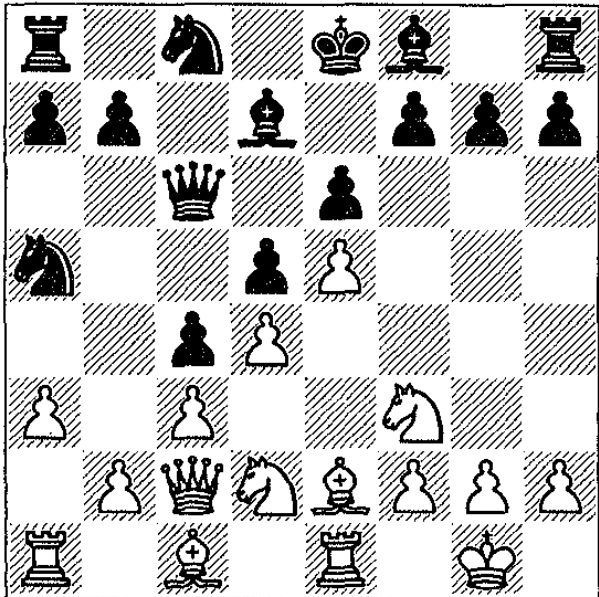
- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 10 | ... | ♚c6! |
|----|-----|------|

A very clever move, as will soon be revealed.

- | | | |
|----|-----|----------|
| 11 | ♚c2 | ♘c8! (D) |
|----|-----|----------|

Rather than the 'sensible', 'developing' 11...0-0-0, which is both insipid and planless, Black continues

with his well-thought-out strategy, which involves bringing his knight to b6 straight away.



W

12 ♘g5

Why should White deviate from the plan that brought him such success in the game above? Let's see: if 12 ♙d1 ♘b6 13 ♚b1 (not 13 ♘f1 ♘b3 14 ♚b1 ♘xc1!), White is ready for 14 ♘f1 when 14... ♘b3 can be met by 15 ♙f4. However, Black has prepared 13... ♗a4! when the white queen has no retreat. After 14 ♘f1 ♗xc2 15 ♙xc2 ♙a4! 16 ♙xa4 ♘xa4, the exchange of queens and bishops has greatly eased Black's game, and 14 ♗xa4 ♙xa4 15 ♙e2? is no better for White since the black bishop is very strong after 15... ♙c2.

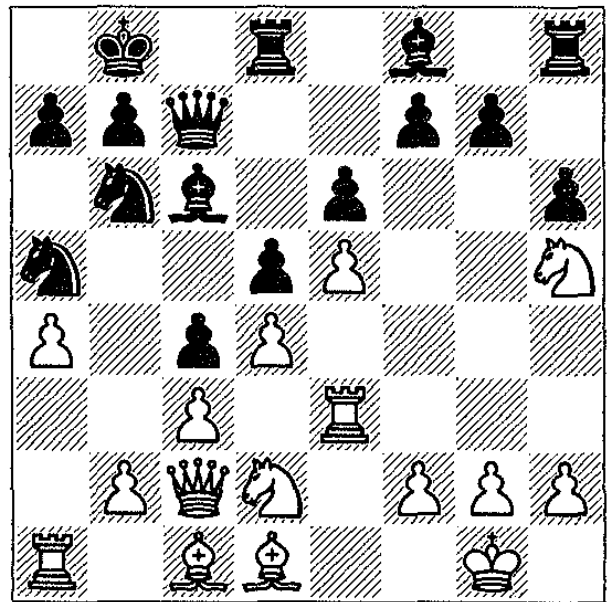
12 ... h6
 13 ♘h3 ♘b6
 14 ♘f4 0-0-0

Only now does he castle, having improved his piece deployment considerably.

15 ♘h5 ♗c7
 16 a4!

The pawn is a target on this square and so gives Black something to aim at. But how else is White to develop his game? If 16 ♘f1 then 16... ♘b3, or 16 ♚b1?? ♙a4. Note how inferior White's set-up is to that achieved in the previous game, where he was able to develop his bishop to f4 with impunity.

16 ... ♙c6
 17 ♙d1 ♗b8
 18 ♚e3! (D)



B

White finds a way to force Black to allow the knight into f6...

18 ... ♚c8
 19 ♚g3 g6
 20 ♘f6 ♘d7!

...but Eingorn has also prepared for this eventuality. In the Casper game, the black knight was wandering the edge of the board, while here it has been kept to expel the intruder from f6.

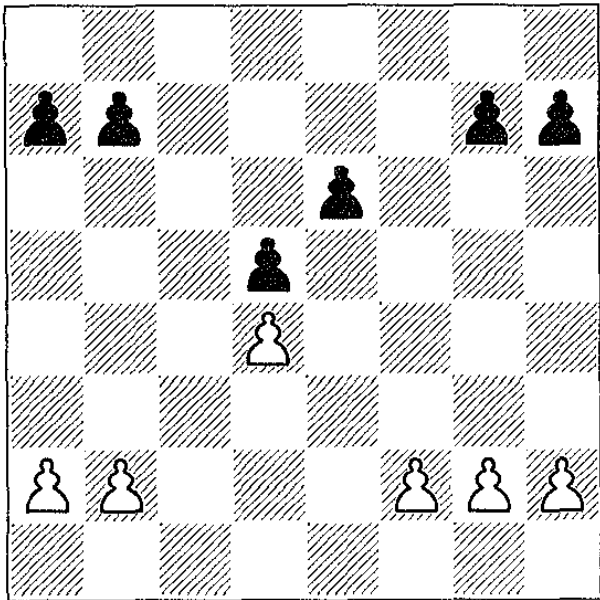
21 ♘xd7+ ♗xd7
 22 ♚f3 ♚c7
 23 ♗b1 ♗e8
 24 h4 h5

Not allowing the h4-h5 thrust. Black has enough counterplay and the game eventually concluded in a draw:

25 ♖g3 ♔d7 26 ♘f3 ♘b3 27 ♔xb3 cxb3 28 a5 ♔b5 29 ♔g5 ♔e2 30 ♔f6 ♖g8 31 ♘g5 ♔h6 32 ♘h3 ♔g4! (eliminating the white knight,

the minor piece that most thrives in this blocked position) 33 ♔g5 ♔xh3 34 ♖xh3 ♔xg5 35 hxg5 ♕d8 36 ♖g3 ♖c6 37 ♕f1 ♖a6 38 ♕b5 ♖e8 39 c4 dxc4 40 ♖c3 ♖c6! 41 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 42 ♕xc4 ♕xg5 43 a6 ♖c8 44 ♕xb3 ♖c1+ 45 ♖xc1 ♕xc1+ 46 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 1/2-1/2

2 e6 weakness vs d4 weakness



General observations

In Chapter 1, we discussed the value of White's cramping pawn centre. With the advance e5, he seizes a considerable amount of space, thereby depriving his opponent's pieces of squares and generally boxing them in behind the d5- and e6-pawns. White's winning plan, depending on the specific circumstances, is to use the superior mobility of his pieces either to launch an all-out attack on Black's king or, if such a direct approach is inappropriate, to subject his opponent to intense positional pressure.

We have seen that Black must oppose White's plan in a determined way. It is usual, indeed almost imperative, to contest White's grip on the centre with ...c5, attacking the d4-pawn. Another key advance is

...f6, further undermining the white centre. In the present chapter, we shall examine positions in which Black has carried out both thematic advances, ...c5 and ...f6. If we assume that White responds to ...f6 with exf6, answered by a recapture on f6 with a piece, and that the exchange ...cxd4, cxd4 has also occurred, then we reach the pawn structure to be discussed in this chapter.

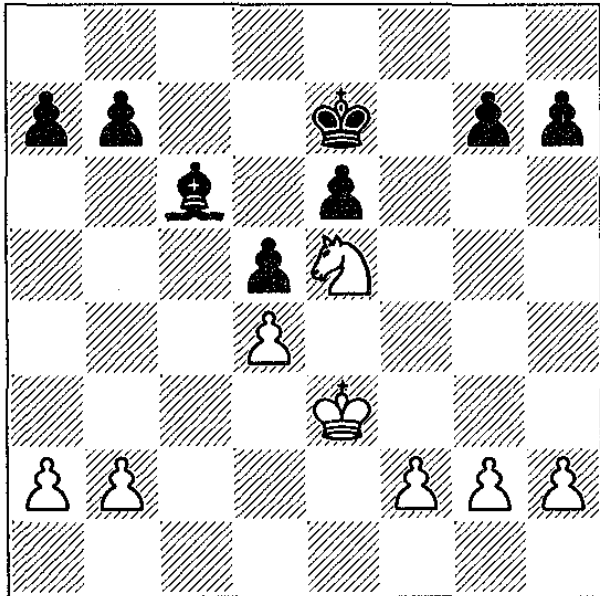
The weakness of e6

First, we notice the weakness of the e6-pawn. It is for all practical purposes an isolated pawn, since it can never be supported by another pawn, unless, of course, Black achieves the advance ...e4, which is however unlikely. It stands on an open file and as a result it can be attacked frontally by White's queen and rooks. Not only is the pawn weak, it also blocks in the c8-bishop.

The weakness of e5

The main drawback to an isolated pawn (and, as stated above, we may as well regard the backward e6-pawn as isolated) is usually the square directly in front of it. An enemy piece can be placed on the square without fear of attack by the opponent's

pawns. Thus in our specific situation, the e5-square would make an excellent outpost for a white knight.



This is the sort of endgame Black allows at his peril. White's knight on e5 entirely dominates the 'bad' black bishop, which is hemmed in by its own centre pawns. These pawns are permanently blocked on light squares.

An impregnable knight on e5 would also prove powerful in the middlegame. However, against a black player who understands the pawn structure and deploys his pieces correctly, it will be very difficult for White to achieve total control of e5 whilst at the same time safeguarding d4.

The weakness of d4

From the above discussion, we can conclude that White's d4-pawn, although isolated, is not as serious a liability as the e6-pawn. The d-file is blocked, and so the pawn cannot be attacked frontally by Black's queen

and rooks. And perhaps more importantly, there is no weak square in front of the pawn. Black can't put a knight on d5 since his own pawn blocks the square.

The battle for e5

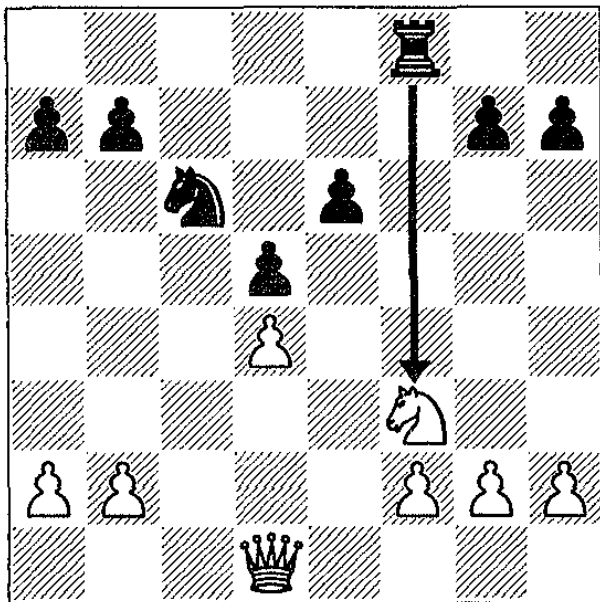
In *My System*, Nimzowitsch extolled the virtues of 'over-protection', that is defending a key point more times (or even many more times) than is necessary to guarantee its immediate safety. His theory was that in focusing on an important central square the pieces would 'almost by accident' find themselves well placed for the coming battle, of whatever nature it proved to be.

Something similar happens here, though here there is a real tussle for control of squares, not quite over-protection. All Black's pieces must be used to reinforce key points in the centre, notably e5. Then they will be ready for whatever plan the position later demands, whether it is the freeing ...e5 or an attack on White's king. Having a weakness on an important central square can almost be a virtue: in this instance, it helps Black find the correct deployment of his pieces!

White tries to win control of e5 whilst at the same time keeping d4 adequately defended. Even if the game ends with a violent attack on Black's king, in all but exceptional cases White will have conquered the centre as a first step. It is a well-known general principle that central supremacy is the prerequisite of a successful attack.

The ...♖xf3 sacrifice

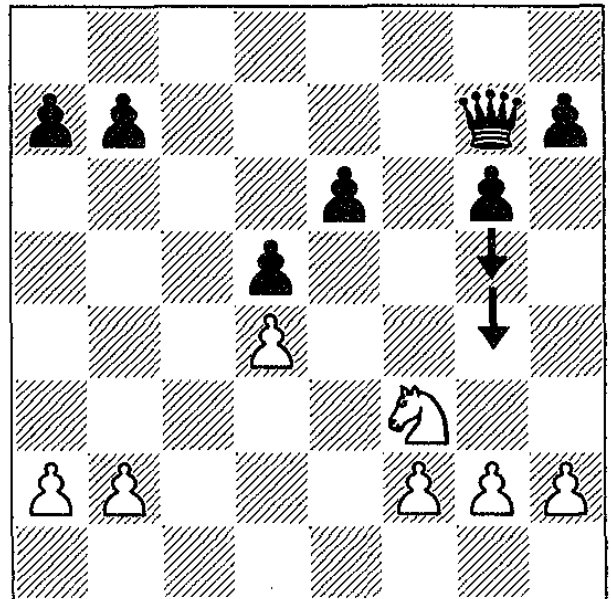
A white knight on f3 is well placed for the coming struggle. It protects d4, observes e5 and may suddenly become aggressive with ♖g5 or ♖e5 when appropriate. It also has an important defensive value: it shields the f-file and defends the h-pawn.



Therefore it is not surprising that this exchange sacrifice is a common motif. If it can be followed advantageously by ...♖xd4, then Black has succeeded in destroying the white pawn centre in return for a small material investment. If White is obliged to recapture gxf3, then in addition his kingside pawn structure is destroyed. With the black queen on c7 and bishop on d6, ...♕xh2+ may be a possible follow-up. In general, the open position of the white king gives Black sufficient counterplay; but during a real game the player has to use his judgement (or theoretical knowledge) to determine whether the counterplay is insufficient, adequate or winning.

Black plays ...♔g7

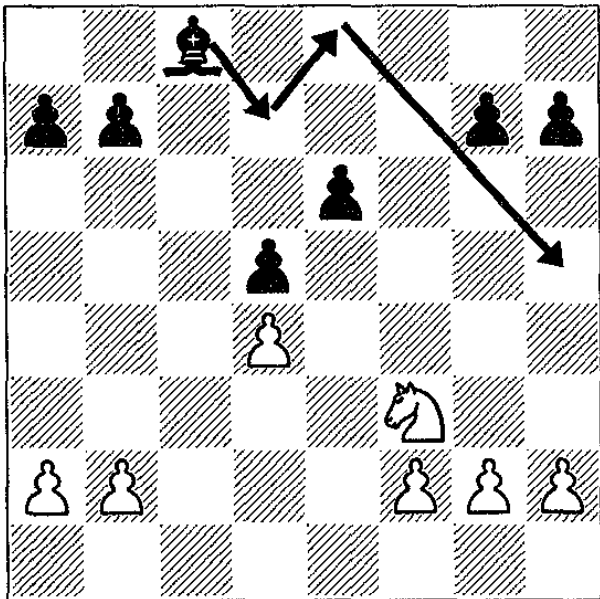
A standard plan for Black is to play ...♔c7, followed by ...g6 and ...♔g7.



The queen is beautifully placed here. She attacks d4, has influence on the e5-square and helps solidify the kingside. She also supports a possible ...g5 and ...g4 dislodging the f3-knight. It is hardly necessary to point out that such a pawn advance weakens Black's king's cover. Therefore Black has to be securely placed before he can contemplate such a pawn advance. In favourable circumstances, the ...g4 advance can be a precursor to over-running the white centre or launching a kingside attack.

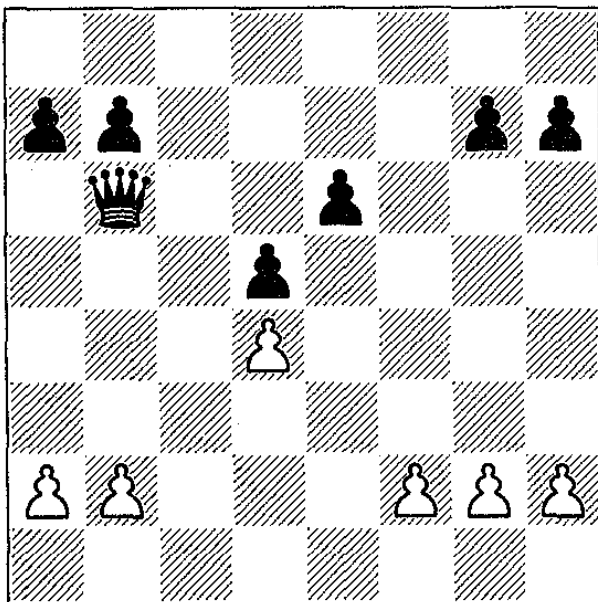
Black plays ...♗h5

With the manoeuvre ...♗d7-e8-h5, Black attacks and often pins the key knight, while activating his bishop. However, this manoeuvre is rather laborious and not always possible to achieve. Also, Black has to beware



that the e6-pawn doesn't become too vulnerable after it loses its natural guardian.

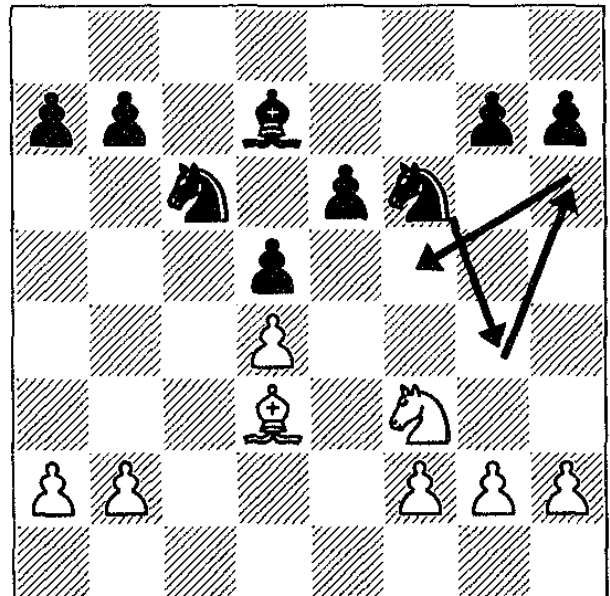
Black plays ...♚b6



This places the queen on what is her ideal square in other lines of the French. Indeed, there is no obvious objection to the move here: Black attacks d4 immediately and if White wants to move his bishop from c1 he has to worry about ...♚xb2. Furthermore, there are sometimes tactical tricks based on uncovering an attack on f2 after ...e5.

Yet for some reason ...♚b6 is rather less popular than ...♚c7 at the highest levels. The only apparent drawback is that the queen may prove less well placed to defend the kingside and second rank. However, Grandmaster Farago, a French Defence expert, always prefers ...♚b6 to ...♚c7 and never seems to experience any problems in his games!

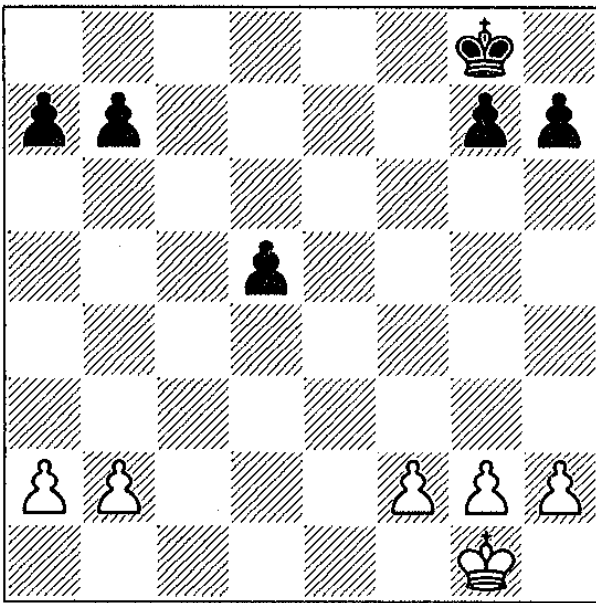
Black manoeuvres his knights



Black can be very creative with his knights. One possible plan is ...♞g4 perhaps supporting ...e5, perhaps attacking h2 or f2, perhaps just intending ...♞h6 and ...♞f5 adding more pressure to d4. The c6-knight can also be played to f5 via e7. This can free the queen's bishop for a later ...♞b5. Finally, ...♞e4 is also often possible, sometimes even as a pawn sacrifice for active play. If, for example, ♟xe4 dxe4; ♚xe4, then Black's bishop on d7 would seize an excellent diagonal by ...♞c6.

Black plays ...e5

If Black can achieve ...e5 without falling prey to an immediate tactical blow or incurring a structural weakness besides the resulting isolated pawn on d5, then he should achieve full equality or even more.



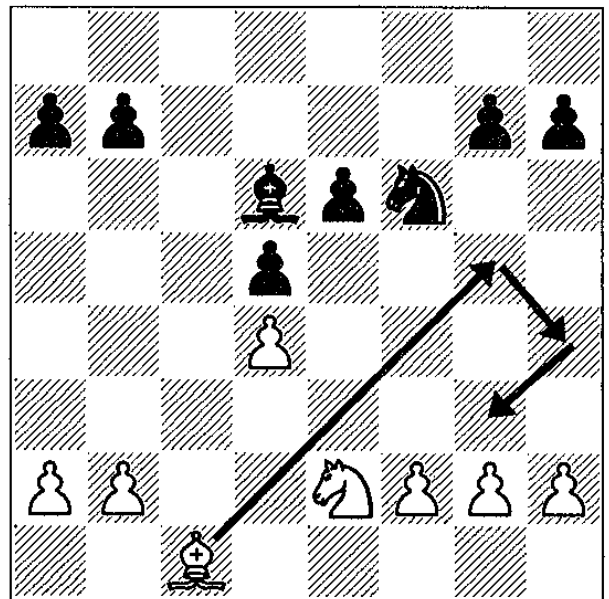
While this pawn structure is similar to isolated queen's pawn positions discussed later in Chapter 11, there are very important differences. The lack of a white c-pawn makes the d-pawn passed, more difficult to blockade and easier to advance, but does give White the opportunity to use the c-file as well as Black. The lack of a black f-pawn can give Black attacking chances down the f-file or White attacking chances against Black's more open king.

Since there is not much to choose between the two sides in terms of structure, the assessment of the position is entirely dependent on the activity of the pieces. After an ...e5 advance, Black's pieces often are strongly placed in the centre, but if

White can firmly blockade the d-pawn without allowing any counterplay along the open files, he could then start play against the d-pawn.

White exchanges dark-squared bishops

It is generally advantageous for White to exchange dark-squared bishops. Since Black will then be left with the 'bad' bishop on c8 which cannot directly fight for control of e5, White will have a clear advantage in most endgames.

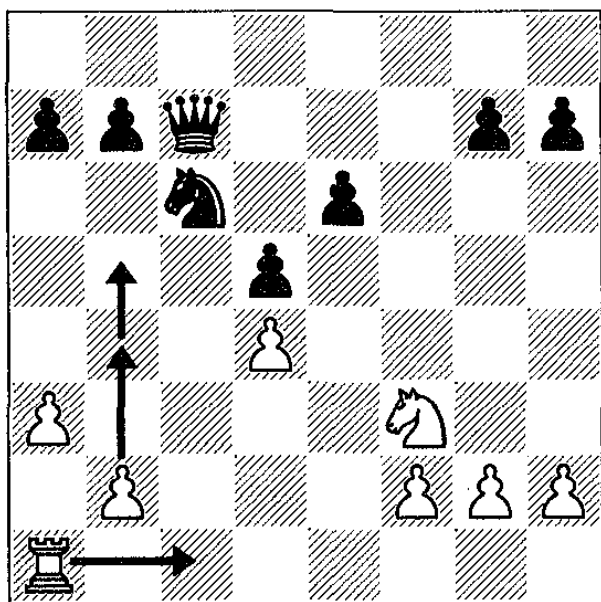


Black's bishop is normally developed to d6. Then there are two ways for White to try to exchange bishops. Firstly, he can play ♖g5, ♕h4 and ♖g3. Black then has the unenviable choice of allowing the exchange or relinquishing his bishop's influence on e5 by retreating it to e7. Black does best to pre-empt this plan with ...♘h5! as soon as White plays ♕h4. Then if White persists with ♖g3 he can play ...♘xg3, acquiring the two bishops.

At the time of writing the alternative method of exchanging bishops is very popular: with an early ♖f4 White practically obliges Black to exchange. However, things are not so simple because the f4-knight (after ...♗xf4, ♘xf4) may allow Black to generate some immediate tactical chances on the f-file or to use his queen to staunch up the dark squares by taking the bishop's place on d6 (or going to f6).

Sometimes, White plays g3 to support a bishop or knight on f4. This also secures the h2-pawn against pressure on the b8-h2 diagonal. The drawback to g3 is that it undermines the f3-knight by removing its pawn support.

Action against the c6-knight

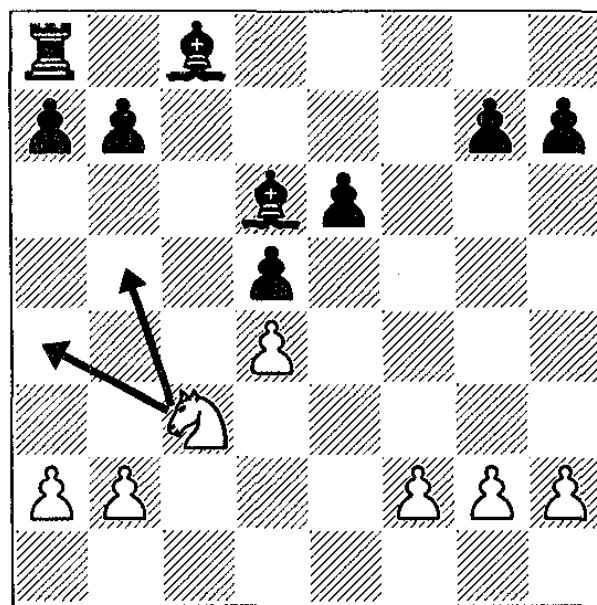


Black's knight on c6 attacks d4 and defends e5, so it is no surprise that it often receives unwelcome attention from White's pieces. White may try to dislodge it from its post

by means of b4 and b5, when the white knight could jump in at e5, perhaps as the prelude to a kingside attack. With the black queen on c7, ♖c1 can be an irritation, pinning the knight.

White could play ♗b5xc6 but normally prizes his light-squared bishop and is loathe to part with it for a mere knight. In exceptional circumstances, the exchange sacrifice ♖c1xc6 is played as part of a tactical sequence, especially when Black has advanced ...e5 and the follow-up dxe5 is possible.

White plays ♘c3

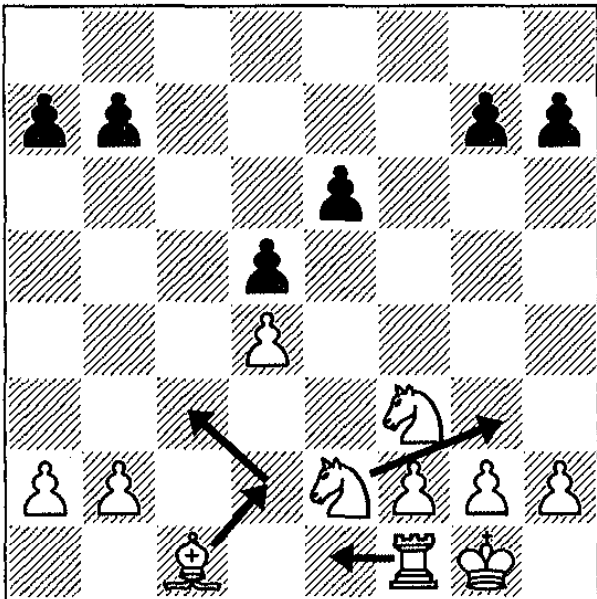


A white knight is well placed on c3. Firstly, it holds back ...e5 (by the attack on d5). Secondly, it threatens ♗b5 (especially if the black queen is on c7). Most importantly, White can continue with ♖a4 (perhaps hitting the queen on b6) and ♗c5. This is especially effective if Black has played ...a6, either due to the threat of ♗b5 or b5 (see 'action against the c6-knight' above). Sometimes, ♖a4-b6

is also possible. It is important to note that White is quite happy to play Nxd7 or Nxc8 , swapping off the 'bad' bishop but leaving e6 much weakened and White with the two bishops.

The only problem with Nc3 is that it can't really be combined with the other effective plans of Bf4 or Ne5 . It's usually a question of 'either ... or'.

Other restraining moves

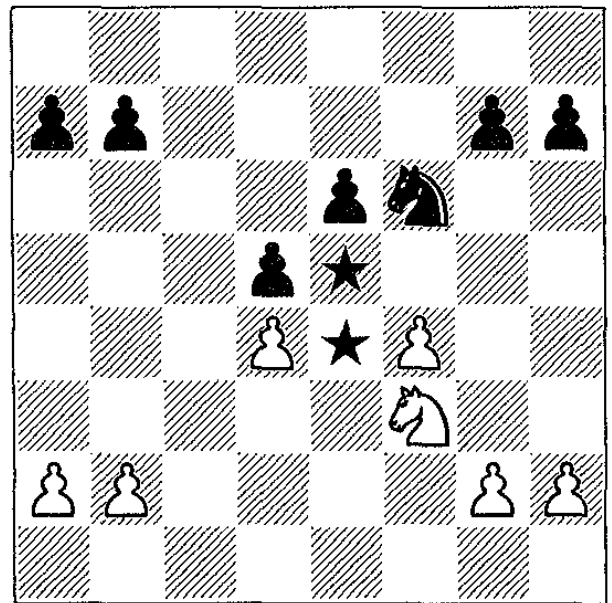


Be1 puts pressure on e6 and restrains Black's attempt to free his game with ...e5. However, White is weakening the f2-square and has to be careful that Black cannot exploit this with a sacrifice.

Ng3 blocks the diagonal attack on the h2-pawn, rules out a later ... Qh5 pin and bolsters the kingside generally. On the other hand, the knight has little dynamic value on this square as e4 and f5 are both inaccessible. Occasionally, Nh5 may be possible.

Qd2-c3 (or b3 and Qc1-b2) bolsters b2 and d4 and adds more control to e5. While this may indeed allow White to play Ne5 securely, the misplaced 'large pawn' bishop on c3 (or b2) will make it difficult to exploit that circumstance.

White plays f4



If White has played f4 before Black's ...f6 (as in the next chapter), he will only rarely consider playing exf6 , reaching the pawn structure above. White does, however, have strong control of e5, and after Ne5 could continue with a kingside pawn onslaught by g4 and g5, though this plan is slower than the corresponding piece attacks. Thus Black should counter quickly on the queenside, taking advantage of the extra tempi, and the weakened e4-square and a7-g1 diagonal. Also, it is hard for White to find an effective role for his dark-squared bishop. If Black should succeed in freeing his game (e.g. by ...e5), the weaknesses created by f4 could prove fatal for White.

Illustrative games

Game 6

Beliavsky – M.Gurevich

USSR Ch 1986

Tarrasch Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘d2	♘f6
4	e5	♘fd7
5	♙d3	

For 5 f4 see the next chapter.

5	...	c5
6	c3	♘c6

Black develops his pieces ready to break in the centre with ...f6. If he wishes to keep the position blocked, he can instead continue 6...b6 with play much as in the last two games of the previous chapter (or, after f2-f4, the games of the next chapter).

7 ♘e2

7 ♘gf3!? can lead to the Korchnoi Gambit after the continuation 7...♙b6 8 0-0 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♘xd4 10 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 11 ♘f3. White sacrifices his d-pawn in the hope of obtaining lasting positional pressure. Black is unlikely to be mated but, on the other hand, it is by no means easy to free his pieces from White's bind. Notably, he has to waste a lot of time getting his queen to a safe square. White has a far better version of the Milner-Barry Gambit (looked at in the previous chapter) with e5 secure and the d7-knight impeding Black's queenside development.

Black does not have to be so cooperative, though the 'normal' 7...f6 is no better. After 8 exf6 ♘xf6 9 0-0

cxd4 (9...♙d6 10 dxc5! ♙xc5 11 b4 ± Ehlvest-Andersson, Reykjavik 1991) 10 cxd4 ♙d6 11 ♘b3 0-0 12 ♙g5 ♙e8 13 ♙h4 ♙h5 (13...♘h5!?) 14 ♙g3 ♙xg3 15 fxg3!, White was comfortably better in G.Moore-Harley, Thames Valley League 1991.

Rather, Black should seek to take advantage of White's rather congested development, in particular the d2-knight, which doesn't play any useful role. It doesn't defend d4 as a knight would do on e2, and it blocks the queen's bishop in. Black can try to take direct tactical advantage with ideas involving ...g5!? and ...g4, or play more strategically with ...g6, deploying the bishop to g7, whence it pressurises e5 and d4, and taking advantage of the fact that White is not in a position to exploit the dark-squared holes thus created.

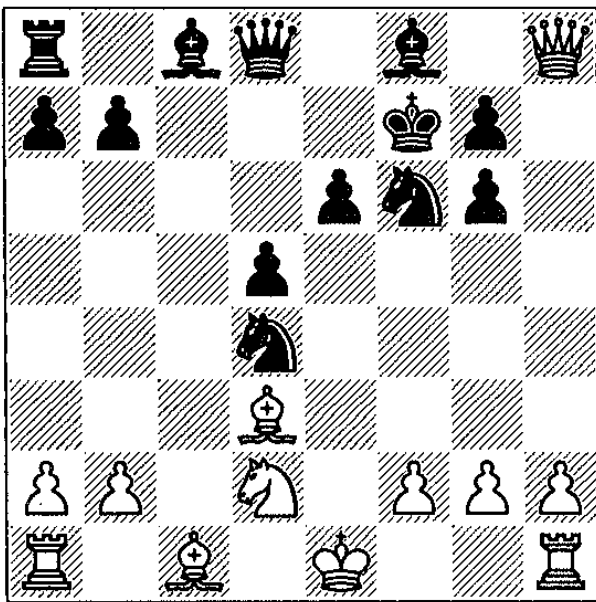
After 7...g6!? 8 0-0 (8 h4!? ♙b6) 8...♙g7 9 ♙e1 0-0 10 ♘f1, Black can then think about playing ...f6. However, in Agnos-Dittmar, Bad Wörishofen 1993, Black failed to exchange pawns on d4 first and faced a devastating kingside attack: 10...f6 11 exf6 ♙xf6 12 ♘e3! cxd4 13 ♘g4 ♙e7 14 cxd4 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 16 ♙xg6! ♙c5 17 ♙xh7+! ♙xh7 18 ♙d3+ ♙h8 19 ♙xe6 ♘f6 20 ♙e3!. Better is 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 f6 12 exf6 ♙xf6 13 ♙g5 ♙f7 14 ♙e3 e5 15 ♙c2!? e4 16 ♘g5 ♙e7 (Quillan-Harley, Liverpool 1995) 17 ♙b3! ♘f6 18 f3 exf3 19 ♘xf3 with equality.

7	...	cxd4
8	cxd4	f6
9	exf6	

We should mention two other moves here, both of which gambit the d-pawn in exchange for attacking chances:

a) 9 f4 fxe5 10 fxe5 ♖xd4 11 0-0 (11 ♖xd4 ♖h4+ is very bad for White) 11...♗b6 12 ♔h1 ♖xe5 leaves Black two pawns up but his king is still in the centre and his development has suffered somewhat. Kupreichik analyses the obscure line 13 ♖f4 g6 14 ♖b3 ♖xb3 15 axb3 ♙d6 16 ♖h5 (White must do or die) 16...gxf3 17 ♖xf3 ♙d7 18 ♙xf3.

b) 9 ♖f4!? is a sharp and popular move. Black is virtually forced to sacrifice the exchange and has to leave his king in the centre. On the other hand, he is able to destroy White's centre and has good counterplay. Play normally continues 9...♖xd4 10 ♖h5+ ♔e7 11 exf6+ ♖xf6 12 ♖g6+ hxg6 13 ♖xh8 ♔f7 (D).



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Then White has a choice: 14 ♖h4 e5 15 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 16 gxf3 ♙f5 17 ♙xf5 gxf5 18 ♙g5 ♖a5+ 19 ♔f1 g6! 20 ♙xf6 ♖a6+ 21 ♔g2 ♖xf6 22

♖xf6+ ♔xf6 was dynamically balanced in Van der Wiel-Timman, Brussels 1986. Black has a bishop and pawn for the rook, and a far healthier pawn structure. The alternative is 14 0-0 when play usually continues 14...e5 15 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 16 gxf3. Here 16...e4!? is interesting, while Stanton-McDonald, London 1990 went 16...♖h5 17 ♙xg6+! ♔xg6 18 ♔h1 ♖h4 (no other defence against ♖g1+) 19 ♖xf8 ♔h7 20 ♖a3 ♙h3? (tempting, but 20...♙d7 followed by ...d4 and ...♙c6 was better, with unclear play) 21 ♖g1 ♖xf2 22 ♖d3+ (here 22 ♖e3! forcing the exchange of queens was good for White) 22...♔h8 23 ♙d2 (23 ♖e3!) 23...♖f8 24 ♖g5 ♖f5 25 ♖ag1 ♖xg5 26 ♙xg5 d4! 27 ♖e4? ♙g2+! 28 ♖xg2 ♖f1+ 29 ♖g1 ♖g3+! 30 hxg3 ♖h3#.

9 ... ♖xf6

Interesting is 9...♖xf6 10 0-0 ♙d6 11 ♖f3 h6 12 ♙b1 0-0 13 ♖d3 ♖d8 14 g3 e5! 15 dxe5 ♖dxe5 16 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 17 ♖f4 ♖e7 – Kinsman. White always has a check on h7, but with any luck it's never going to be mate!

10 ♖f3

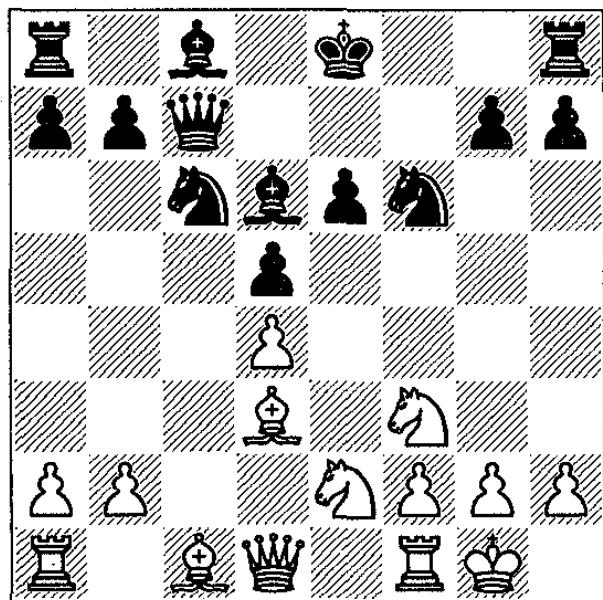
10 0-0 ♙d6 11 f4!? 0-0 12 ♖f3 ♖b6 13 ♔h1 ♙d7 14 a3 ♖ac8 15 ♖e5 ♙e8 15 g4 ♔h8 16 ♙e3 ♖e7 18 ♖c1 ♖xc1 19 ♙xc1 ♙b5 left Black better in Afek-Agdestein, London 1986.

10 ... ♖c7

A finesse in move-order, avoiding the variation 10...♙d6 11 ♙f4. Now 11 ♙f4 can be met by 11...♙b4+ with interesting play.

11 0-0

♙d6 (D)



W

Gurevich has, for the moment, prevented the exchange of his dark-squared bishop, but Beliavsky is persistent.

12 ♘c3

This piece can also go to the kingside, e.g. after 12 ♙g5 0-0 13 ♖c1 (another possibility is 13 ♙h4 when Black can try to take advantage of the loss of time with 13...e5 leading to an unclear isolated queen's pawn position) 13...♘g4, White can bolster his kingside with 14 ♘g3. Then play typically continues 14...g6 (intending ...♗g7) when Smagin-Dolmatov, USSR Ch 1986, went 15 ♘h4 e5 16 ♙e2 ♘f6 17 dxe5 ♙xe5 18 b4 ♙f4 19 ♙xf4 ♗xf4. Karpov claims that this position is equal, but Geller argues instead that White is better!

12 ... a6

Dealing with the positional threat of 13 ♘b5, which would exchange Black's good bishop for a knight.

13 ♙g5 0-0

14 ♙h4 ♘h5!

Once again Black ensures his d6-bishop remains on the board. This move deals with White's intended ♙g3.

15 ♖e1

In the game I.Gurevich-Klovsky, New York 1994, White played 15 ♖c1 and emerged from the complications with a big advantage after 15...g6 16 ♘a4 ♗g7?! 17 ♘b6 ♖b8 18 ♙xa6! ♘xd4 19 ♘xd4! bxa6 20 ♘xc8 ♖bxc8 21 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22 ♗g4! (not 22 ♘xe6 ♗e5). Matulović recommends 16...♙d7 not letting the knight in at b6; then after 17 ♘c5 ♖ae8 Black completes the development of his pieces.

15 ♙g3? allows the exchange of White's dark-squared bishop for Black's knight and led to a quick defeat in T.Upton-McDonald, London 1986: 15...♘xg3 16 hxg3 g6 17 ♗d2 ♗g7 18 ♗e3 ♙d7 19 ♖ad1 ♖ae8 20 ♙c2 (not 20 ♘e5? ♙xe5 21 dxe5 d4) 20...♙h8 21 ♗d2 ♙b8! 22 ♖fe1 ♙a7 23 ♙a4 b5 24 ♙b3 ♖xf3! 25 gxf3 ♘xd4 26 ♗d3 ♖f8 27 f4 g5! (Black's exchange sacrifice has destroyed White's centre and now the direct attack on White's king commences – note the enormous power of the a7-bishop against f2; if 28 fxe5, 28...♘f3+ wins) 28 ♘e2 ♘xe2+ 29 ♖xe2 gxf4 30 ♗c3 ♗xc3 31 bxc3 fxe3 0-1. Black will capture on f2 leaving White with a ruined position.

15 ... g6!

The prescribed plan, clearing the way for the queen. On g7 she will be excellently placed.

16 ♙f1 ♗g7

17 ♘a4

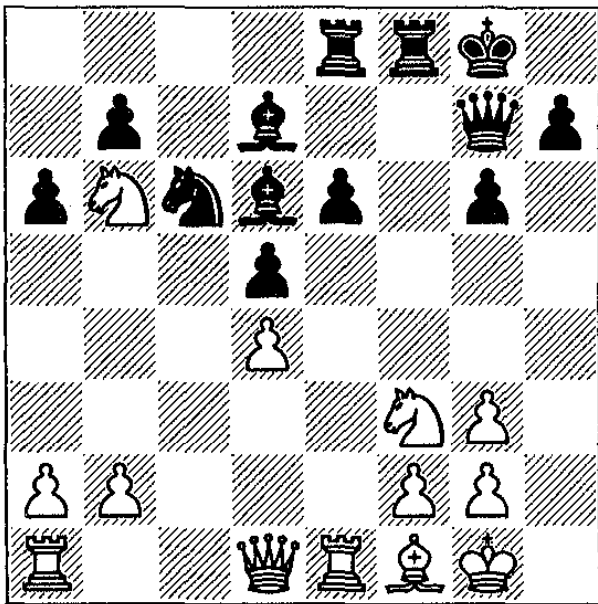
Exploiting the weak b6-square, as in the I.Gurevich-Klovsky game mentioned at move 15.

- 17 ... ♔d7
 18 ♖b6 ♜ae8
 19 ♕g3?

This is a bad mistake because after the exchange of his dark-squared bishop, the d4- and f2-pawns both prove weak. Instead, M.Gurevich recommends 19 ♕g5 with balanced chances after 19...♗c7 20 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 21 ♕h6 ♖g7.

The reader should compare the subsequent play for both sides to the finish of the game T.Upton-McDonald given at move 15.

- 19 ... ♖xg3
 20 hxg3 (D)



B

- 20 ... ♗c7!

Intending to deploy the bishop to a square where it attacks the d4-pawn, and at the same time forcing the b6-knight to declare its intentions.

- 21 ♖xd7 ♗xd7
 22 ♜c1 ♕b6

- 23 ♗b3 ♔a7
 Not 23...♕xd4 24 ♜xc6.
 24 ♜ed1 ♗g7
 25 ♗a4

25 ♗d3 is also bad due to 25...g5! 26 g4 (or 26...g4 follows) 26...♜f4.

Now, however, Black is able to over-run the d4-square and expose the f2-pawn to attack.

- 25 ... b5!
 26 ♗xa6 ♖xd4
 27 ♕xb5 ♜e7
 28 ♜c3 ♖f5!

An unexpected and powerful retreat. White must try 29 g4, though M.Gurevich analyses 29...♖h6 30 g5 ♖g4 31 ♜c2 e5 and ...e4 as terrible for White. The move he chooses leads to a quick defeat.

- 29 ♜c8 ♖xg3!

The triumph of Black's strategy! White can only avert 30...♗h6 intending 31...♗h1# at the cost of a piece.

- 30 ♕d7 ♜xd7
 31 ♗xe6+ ♗f7
 32 ♜xf8+ ♔xf8
 33 ♗e5 ♖e4
 34 ♜c1 ♕xf2+
 35 ♔h1 ♗f6
 36 ♜c8+ ♔g7

0-1

Game 7

Timoshenko – Gleizerov
 Cheliabinsk 1989
 Tarrasch Variation

- 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 ♖f6 4 e5 ♖fd7
 5 ♕d3 c5 6 c3 ♖c6 7 ♖e2 cxd4 8
 cxd4 f6 9 exf6 ♖xf6 10 ♖f3
 10 ... ♕d6

11 0-0 0-0

Black doesn't want to commit himself yet to ...♖c7 (Game 6) or ...♖b6 (Game 8), but this allows White to swap dark-squared bishops.

12 ♗f4 ♗xf4

13 ♘xf4 ♘e4

Alternatively:

a) 13...♘g4 14 ♖d2! ♖d6 15 g3 e5 16 dxe5 ♖h6! (Veinger-Hertneck, Munich 1987) 17 h4! with advantage.

b) 13...♖d6 14 g3 e5 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 ±.

c) 13...♖b6!? 14 ♖b1 (14 ♖d2 can be met by 14...g6 or 14...♗h8!?) 14...♘d4?! (14...♗d7!) 15 ♘d4 e5 16 ♘d5! leaves White better as 16...♘d5 is answered by 17 ♖h5 ♘f6 18 ♖xe5.

14 ♘e2

White also has three alternatives:

a) 14 ♘h5 g6 15 ♘g3 ♘xg3 16 hxg3 ♖b6 gives Black few problems.

b) 14 ♖c1 ♘g5 15 ♘xg5 ♖xg5 16 ♗xh7+!? ♗xh7 17 ♘xe6 ♖f5 18 ♘xf8+ ♖xf8 and Black can hold.

c) 14 g3 ♖f6 15 h4 h6 16 ♗xe4 dxe4 17 ♘e5 ♖d8 18 ♘xc6 bxc6 19 ♖c2 g5 was unclear in Kotronias-Ulybin, Khalkidhiki 1992.

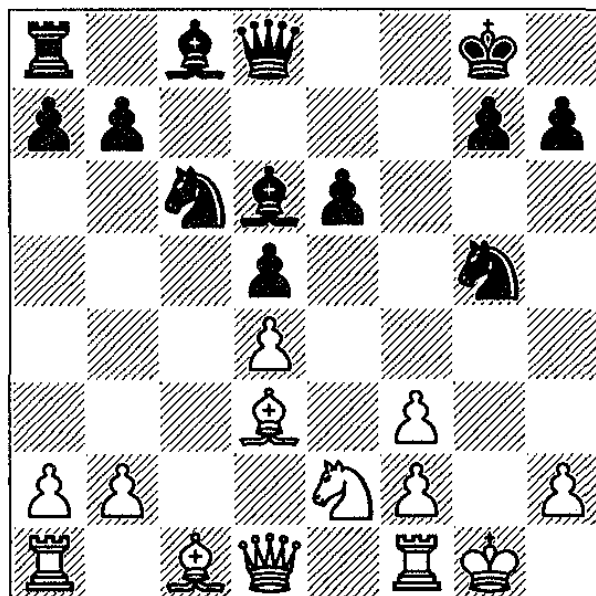
14 ... ♗xf3!

The most promising move. Black wrecks White's kingside pawn structure and generates enough counterplay for the exchange.

15 gxf3 ♘g5 (D)

16 ♗h1

After 16 f4, 16...♘h3+ 17 ♗h1 ♖h4 18 ♖d2 ♘xf2+ 19 ♗g2 ♘d3 20 ♖xd3 ♗d7 was unclear in the



W

game Heyken-Gleizerov, Loosdorf 1993, and also possible is the wild 16...♘f3+!? 17 ♗g2 ♘h4+ 18 ♗h1 e5! (Solozhenkin-S.Ivanov, Leningrad 1989) followed by 19...♗g4.

16 ... e5!

Opening the diagonal for the bishop.

17 dxe5 ♘xf3

18 ♗xh7+

The conservative 18 ♘g1 leads to dynamic equality after 18...♘fxe5 19 ♗c2 d4 20 ♖e1 (or 20 ♗e4 ♗e6 Rublevsky-Gleizerov, USSR 1991) 20...♗e6 21 ♗b3 ♗d5+ 22 f3 ♖d6 23 ♖e4 ♖d8 Popović-Kindermann, Vienna 1994.

18 ... ♗h8

18...♗xh7 would be bad due to 19 ♖d3+ and 20 ♖xf3. After the text there is a threat of 19...♖h4 winning at once.

19 ♘g1

White plans to answer 19...♘xg1 with 20 ♖h5!. The only other possibility is 19 ♘f4!?, as suggested by Gleizerov and Samarian.

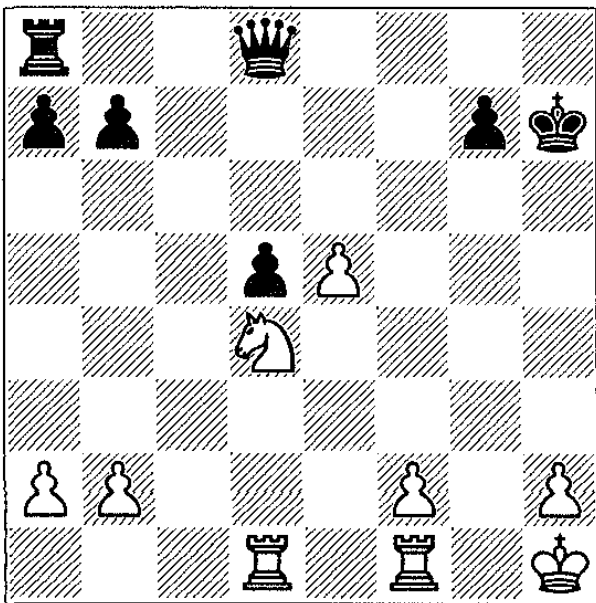
19 ... ♘cd4!

Keeping up the tempo of the attack. On 19...♘cxe5?, 20 ♖xf3 ♙g4 21 ♘xe5! ♙xd1 21 ♘f7+ wins.

20 ♖xf3 ♙g4
21 ♘xd4

The only move since 21 ♙xd4 ♙xf3+ 22 ♖g1 ♙g5+ mates.

21 ... ♙xd1
22 ♖axd1 ♖xh7 (D)



W

The dust has settled and it is time to take stock. In exchange for the queen, White has a rook, an excellently centralised knight and a mobile passed pawn. In all, he has slightly the better chances.

23 ♖d3

This position was reached again in Kramnik-Ulybin, USSR Ch 1991. White tried to utilise his pawns immediately and a sharp draw resulted: 23 f4 ♙b6 24 f5 ♙xb2 25 ♖d3 ♖c8 26 f6 ♖c1 27 ♖h3+ ♖g6 28 ♖g3+ ♖h5 1/2-1/2.

23 ... ♙b6
24 f4 ♖c8
25 f5 ♙g6
26 ♖e3 ♙b6

27 ♖d1 ♙h6
28 ♖f3 ♙g6
29 ♖e1 ♙b6
30 ♖d3 ♙b4
31 ♖dd1 ♙c3
32 e6 ♖g8?

Black has succeeded in activating his queen, and to equalise fully he only has to bring his rook into play. 32...♖g6! was correct here when, according to Gleizerov, after 33 f5+ ♖f6 34 ♖g1 ♖h8! Black has sufficient counterplay.

33 ♖g2 ♖e8
34 ♖e2 ♖f8
35 ♖e5 ♖e7
36 ♖xd5 ♖h8
37 ♖d7+ ♖f6
38 ♖f7+ ♖g6
39 ♘f3?

This allows Black to escape to a draw. White could maintain winning chances with 39 f5+ ♖g5 40 ♖xg7+.

39 ... ♖xh2+!
40 ♖xh2

If 40 ♘xh2, then 40...♙c2+ picks up a rook. Now the white king is completely exposed and he cannot avoid a draw by perpetual.

40...♙xf3 41 ♖g1+ ♖h6 42 ♖gxg7 ♙e2+ 43 ♖h3 ♙e3+ 44 ♖h4 ♙e1+ 45 ♖g3 ♙xe6 46 ♖xb7 ♙f6+ 47 ♖h3 ♙e6+ 48 ♖h2 ♙e2+ 1/2-1/2

Game 8

Tseitlin – Schulz

Berlin 1992

Tarrasch Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘d2 ♘f6

4 e5 ♘fd7
 5 c3 c5
 6 ♘df3

This transposition of moves has no real significance. Perhaps by delaying ♗d3 White wanted to dissuade Black from ...b6 since after 6...b6 7 ♗e3 ♗a6?! (7...cxd4 is better) 8 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9 ♘e2 White has gained a tempo on the standard line by playing ♗xa6 'in one go'.

6 ... ♘c6
 7 ♗d3 ♚b6

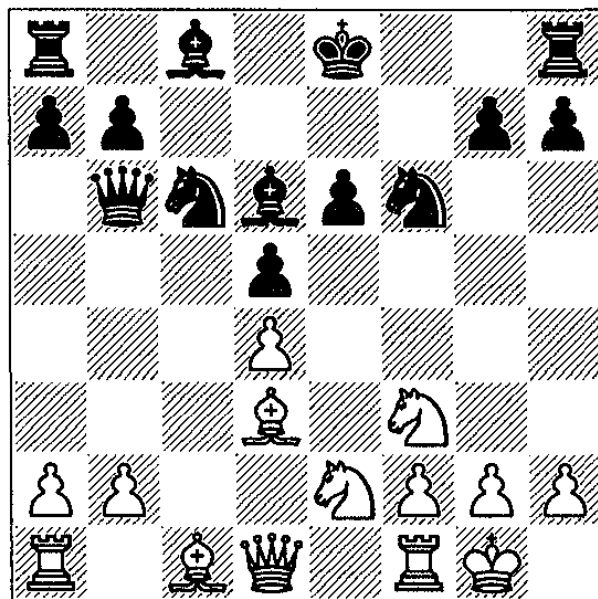
7...♚a5!? planning 8...cxd4 may show the weakness of White's move-order. On 8 ♗d2, Black simply retreats the queen to b6, while on 8 ♗f1, Black can play 8...b5 or simply 8...b6 followed by 9...♗a6.

8 ♘e2 cxd4
 9 cxd4 f6
 10 exf6

Interesting here is the pawn sacrifice 10 ♘c3!? fxe5 11 dxe5 ♘dxe5 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 ♚h5+ ♘f7 14 ♗b5+ ♗e7 15 0-0 with a strong attack, but Black can improve with 11...♗e7 or 11...g6, leaving White with a slightly uncomfortable pawn on e5.

10 ... ♘xf6
 11 0-0 ♗d6 (D)
 12 ♘c3

If White tries to exchange dark-squared bishops as in the previous game by 12 ♗f4 ♗xf4 13 ♘xf4, Black can simply and safely grab the b-pawn with 13...♚xb2 providing he doesn't mind a quick draw by repetition after 14 ♚b1 ♚xa2 15 ♘g5 0-0 16 ♚a1 ♚b2 17 ♚b1 as 17...♚a3 18 ♚c2! is dangerous (Uhlmann). For



W

the more adventurous, 13...0-0!? is also possible, transposing to analysis in Game 7. If White defends b2 first, by 12 ♚b1 or 12 b3, Black can, after 12...0-0, answer 13 ♗f4 by the trick 13...♘xd4! 14 ♘xd4 e5, but not 13...♗xf4 14 ♘xf4 ♘xd4 transposing to the analysis in the previous game, when White can take the advantage by 15 ♘xd4 e5 16 ♘xd5!.

White can try to use his advantage in development to pressurise the weak e6-pawn, but after 12 ♚e1 0-0 13 ♘f4, Black can simply ignore the threat since 13...♗d7 14 ♘xe6 (anything else allows 14...♚ae8 with a fine position) 14...♚fe8 15 ♗f5 leaves White precariously placed; Black just needs to get his knight and bishop out of the way to add the queen to the attack on e6.

Besides the move in the game, White could also consider playing the e2-knight to the kingside, normally after first fianchettoing the queen's bishop to secure the pawns on b2 and d4 as well as the e5-square. After 12 b3 (or 12 ♗d2 and

13 ♖c3) 12...0-0 13 ♖b2 ♖d7 14 ♘g3, Black has to be careful not to get slowly squashed after 14...♞ae8 15 ♘e5!, which Serper assesses as ±. This verdict seems somewhat pessimistic for Black, but in any case better is 14...♔h8! planning to meet 15 ♘e5 by 15...♘xd4. Then, 15 ♞e1 ♞ae8 16 ♖c2 ♘g4! 17 ♚d3 (17 ♖xh7 e5! Uhlmann) 17...g6 18 ♚d2 ♔g8! 19 ♞ad1 e5 was very good for Black in the game Minev-Brüchner, Bulgaria-E.Germany 1953.

12 ... 0-0

12...♖d7 sets the subtle trap 13 a3 ♘xd4! 14 ♘xd4 ♚xd4 15 ♖g6+?? hxg6 16 ♚xd4 ♖xh2+ winning, but White can keep things very unclear with 15 ♘b5 as in Zapata-Kuijf, Amsterdam 1986.

13 a3

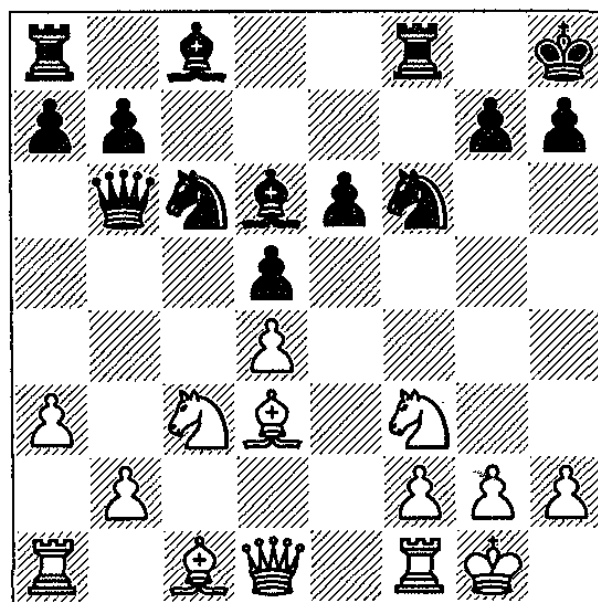
Freeing the queen's bishop as now a ...♚xb2 capture can be met by ♘a4 trapping the queen, and also planning in the longer term for the advance b4 followed by ♘a4-c5, a plan already encountered under the Advance centre.

White can, however, try to do without this move. Van der Wiel-Short, Biel IZ 1985 continued 13 ♞e1 ♖d7 14 ♖g5 (14 ♖e3) 14...♘g4!? (not 14...♚xb2? 15 ♘b5! but the simple 14...♔h8 is fine, e.g. 15 ♘a4 ♚a5 16 a3 ♘xd4!) 15 ♖h4 (seeking to swap dark-squared bishops and threatening 16 ♖xh7+; Black's idea was 15 h3? ♘xf2! 16 ♔xf2 ♘xd4) 15...♘h6?! (Van der Wiel suggests 15...♔h8!, attacking the d-pawn and planning to meet 16 ♖xh7 with 16...♘xh2! 17 ♘g5 ♚xd4 18 ♚h5

♚g4 and 16 ♘a4 ♚a5 17 ♖xh7 with 17...♞xf3! 18 gxh3 ♘xh2) 16 ♖g3 ♖xg3 (16...♖e7 17 ♘a4 ♚a5 18 ♖c2 {18 a3 ♞xf3!} 18...♘f5 19 a3 ♘xg3 20 hxg3 is also clearly better for White, Nijboer-Farago, Dieren 1988) 17 hxg3 ♞f6 18 ♘a4 ♚c7 19 ♞c1 ♞af8 20 ♘c5 ±.

13 ... ♔h8 (D)

Black forces White to defend the d-pawn immediately. Also possible was 13...♖d7 when, if White continues 14 ♖e3, Black can try to do without ...♔h8 by playing 14...♖e8 taking advantage of the fact that White has blocked the e-file and that 15 ♞e1 therefore doesn't attack the e-pawn. Bernard-Schmidt, Poznan 1987, continued 15 ♘g5!? ♘e7! 16 h3 ♖b8 17 ♚c2 h6 18 ♘f3 ♘h5 =.



W

14 ♖e3 a6

Now White has defended d4 and b2 (indirectly), Black prepares to return his queen to active play in the centre or on the kingside. As a first measure, he ensures that his queen can go to c7 without being molested

by ♞b5 , which would force the exchange of Black's valuable dark-squared bishop. Since Black plans $\dots\text{♞c7}$, it may appear that the attempt to profit by $\dots\text{♞b6}$ has failed. Shouldn't the queen have gone immediately to c7 and thereby saved time? However, this is not the case. The b2-pawn is only immune because White has been obliged to spend a tempo on 13 a3. Also, in conjunction with 13... ♚h8 , which rules out a later ♜xh7+ , the queen on b6 has allowed Black to threaten a double capture on d4. This threat has forced White into a somewhat passive development of his bishop to e3 rather than the aggressive and popular ♜g5 . So clearly, $\dots\text{♞b6}$ has been a useful enterprise for Black, even if he now considers it best to re-route his queen.

15 ♞c1 ♞c7

15... ♞xb2? still fails after 16 ♞a4 ♞xa3 17 ♞a1 ♞b4 18 ♜d2 .

16 h3

Ruling out 16... ♞g4 when after 17 h3 ♞xe3 Black would acquire the two bishops.

16 ... ♞f7

17 ♞g5

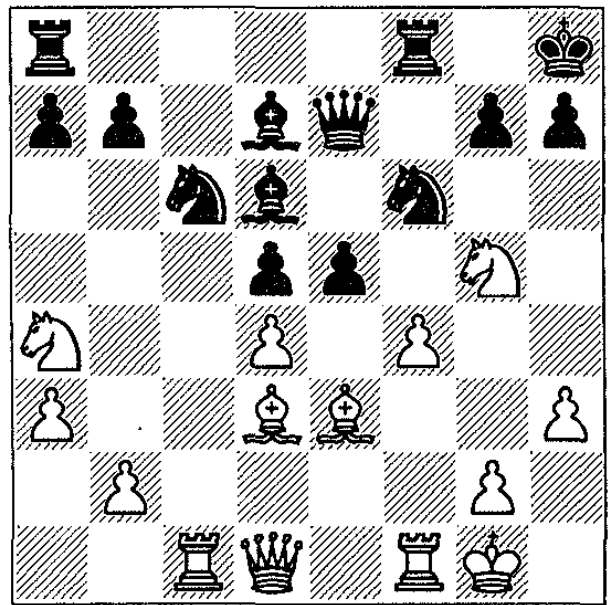
A good plan was 17 ♞a4 , intending 18 ♞b6 and 19 ♞xc8 . If Black replied 17... ♜c7 , covering b6, then after 18 ♞c5 the knight is well placed. White apparently intends to carry out this manoeuvre in the game, but first he tries to rule out Black's freeing $\dots\text{e5}$ advance forever by clamping down on the e5-square.

17 ... ♞e7

18 f4 ♜d7

The attempt to break out with the immediate 18...e5 fails to 19 fxe5! ♞xe5 20 ♞xd5! ♞xd5 21 ♞xf8+ ♞xf8 22 dxe5 ♜xe5 23 ♞h5 . After the text Tseitlin thinks White should play 19 ♞e1! ruling out Black's next move. Instead he was careless.

19 ♞a4?! e5!! (D)



W

An explosive move! Black breaks free from the bind, and now it is White who must tread carefully.

20 ♞xc6!

The only move. 20 fxe5 is bad: 20... ♞xe5 21 dxe5 ♞xe5 22 ♞f3 (22 ♜f4 ♞d4+) 22... ♞h2+ 23 ♚f1 ♞e4! 24 ♞xe4 dxe4 25 ♜xe4 ♜b5+ winning (Tseitlin).

20 ... exf4?!

In his analysis in *Informator 55*, Tseitlin gives this move an exclamation mark since 20... exd4? is disastrous after 21 ♜xd4 ♜xc6 22 ♞xh7! ♜xa4 23 ♞xf8! ♜xd1 24 ♞g6+ . However, he overlooks the strength of 20...e4!:

a) 21 ♞xd6 exd3 (attacking d6 and e3) 22 ♞b6 ♞xe3+ 23 ♚h1

♖ad8 leaves White's pieces uncomfortably placed, e.g. 24 ♜f3 ♚e7 25 ♘xd7 ♚xd6 26 ♘xf8 ♜xf8 27 ♜xd3 h6 28 ♘f3 ♘e4.

b) 21 ♙xe4 ♙xc6! leaves White in a fatal pin on the e-file.

c) If 21 ♜c3 exd3 22 ♜xd3, 22...♙b5 wins the exchange.

21 ♜xd6!

Now White can save himself.

21 ... ♚xe3+

22 ♙h1 ♙xa4

23 b3 ♙b5

Here 23...f3!? 24 ♘xf3 ♘e4 was an energetic alternative, but after 25 ♙xe4 dxe4 26 bxa4 ♚xa3 27 ♜d7 exf3 28 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 29 ♚xf3, it is Black who has to prove the draw.

24 ♙xb5 axb5

25 ♜f3

Bad are 25 ♜e6? ♚g3 and 25 ♚b1? ♘e4 26 ♘xe4 dxe4 27 ♜e1 ♚g3 followed by 28...f3 (Tseitlin).

25 ... ♚e7

26 ♜e6 ♚xa3

27 ♜xf4 h6

Black is a pawn up but White's pieces are very active. Perhaps Black

should have forced the exchange of queens with 27...♚a1, though he would be unlikely to win the end-game after 28 ♚xa1 ♜xa1+ 29 ♙h2 intending 30 ♜b6, etc.

28 ♘f3

28 ♜exf6 would rebound after 29...♜xf6! 29 ♜xf6 gxf6 30 ♚h5 ♚c1+.

28 ... ♘e4

29 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8

30 ♙h2 ♚b2

It was best to force a draw with 30...♜f6 31 ♜e8+ ♜f8 32 ♜e6, etc. since White's pieces now become very active.

31 ♘e5 ♜f6

32 ♚g4

This leads to a draw. It was even possible for White to play for advantage with 32 ♜e7 intending 33 ♚g4.

32 ... ♜xe6

33 ♚xe6 ♚f2

34 ♚e8+ ♙h7

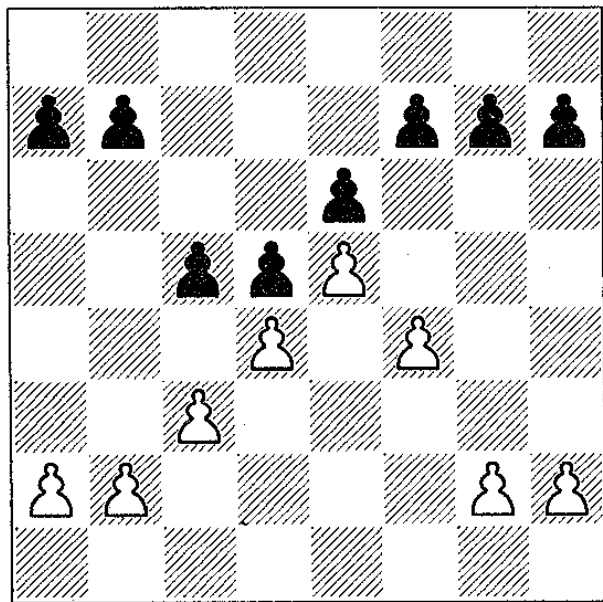
35 ♚g6+ ♙g8

36 ♚e6+ ♙h7

37 ♚g6+ 1/2-1/2

An interesting tussle.

3 f4 Central Clamp



General observations

White's fundamental long-term plan in an Advance centre is to achieve the f4-f5 pawn breakthrough. This advance could be the prelude to a violent attack on Black's king (we assume Black has castled kingside or, perhaps, left his king in the centre), or it could be part of a campaign of sustained pressure which aims to constrict Black's pieces until they have insufficient space to function properly.

Black, naturally, does everything possible to prevent the f5 advance, either through fortifying the f5-square itself or through using diversionary tactics to distract White from his aim – such as exerting enormous pressure on d4 or, less frequently, beginning a counter-attack on the queenside.

A necessary prerequisite for f5 is, of course, f4. This prior move is often difficult to achieve once White has played ♟f3 – if Black has countered well, White will find that a retreat such as ♞e1 or a decentralising move such as ♞h4 will have unpleasant consequences: most probably, the d4-square (and the pawn upon it) will be over-run by Black's pieces.

But what happens if White tries f4 *before* ♟f3 ? Then later in the game he won't have to worry about how he can unblock the f-pawn: he can get on with preparing f5 with no more ado. This sounds plausible in theory, but the problem is that White is making a lot of pawn moves in the opening and he may be overwhelmed before he finds time to develop his pieces. For example in the Advance Variation after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♞c6 White could play the strategically desirable 5 f4. However after 5... ♝b6 6 ♟f3 ♞h6 (5 f4 stops White trying ♞xh6) 7 b3 (7 ♞d3 ♞d7 ! or 7 ♞a3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♞xa3 9 bxa3 ♟f5 winning a pawn) 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♞b4+ 9 ♞f2 f6 Black is well placed.

In fact, in few lines can White play f4 before ♟f3 with impunity. One is 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞d2 (or 3 ♞c3) 3... ♟f6 4 e5 ♞fd7 5 f4. The present chapter looks at lines where

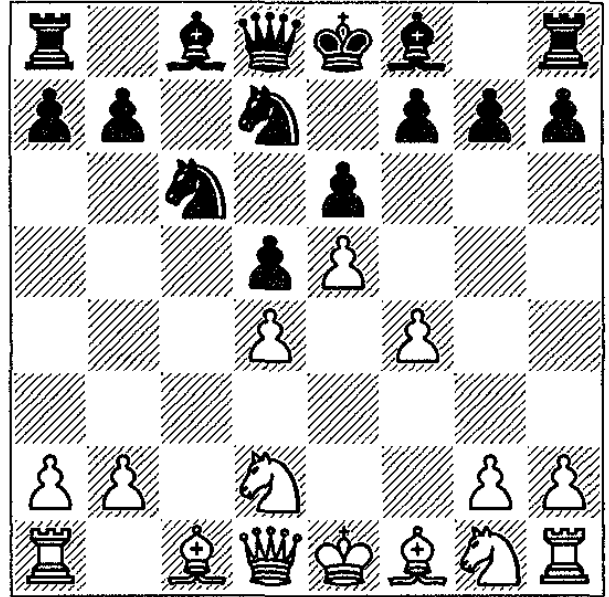
White keeps a pawn on d4, and thus concentrates more on 3 ♖d2. Lines where a white piece occupies d4 (usually after 3 ♖c3) are looked at in the next chapter, on the Classical centre. The key fact that allows White to boldly seize space with f4 in both these lines is that the black knight on d7 cannot be used to attack d4, and this means that White's centre is far safer than in similar variations where the black knight is within easy reach of d4.

White's aim is to achieve good development, whilst at the same time beating off all attacks and avoiding weaknesses. If he is successful in this then he will have good chances of a win: his space advantage will confer freedom and power upon his pieces just as at the same time it hinders and restricts the movement of his opponent's men. Moreover, as stated above, he will be in a position to carry out the important f5 advance without first having to prepare f4.

Black attacks in the centre

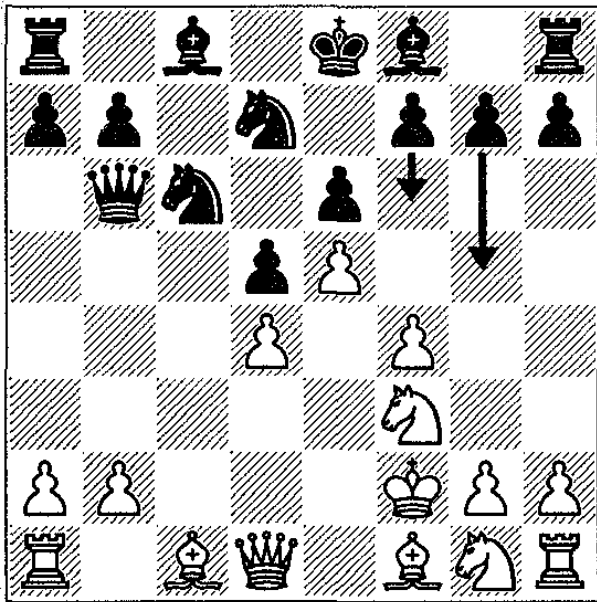
Even with the knight ineffectively placed on d7, Black can still attack the white centre with great force. In effect, with 3... ♖f6, Black has provoked his opponent into seizing a vast amount of space (4 e5 and 5 f4) and now hopes to prove that White is unable to defend all this territory adequately against the onslaught of the black pieces.

By attacking d4, Black can make it difficult for White to develop



naturally. This typical situation, from the Tarrasch Variation, illustrates White's difficulties in this line. If he defends the pawn on d4 by ♖gf3, then the d2-knight has no natural home: on b3 it would be out of play and vulnerable to attack by ...a5-a4; the very fact that White could even consider the manoeuvre ♖d2-b1-c3 illustrates the absurdity of White's situation. White ideally would like to play his knights to e2 and f3, but in such a way that he can still develop his king's bishop to d3 as well.

So White's first 'unnatural' move is ♖df3, moving the same piece twice in the opening before moving any others. Now, after Black's response ... ♖b6, White still cannot play ♖d3, thanks surprisingly to Black's knight on d7 (blocking a later ♖b5+). In fact, it is difficult for White to find a constructive move if he wants to stick to the set-up of a bishop on d3 and a knight on e2. Note that if White plays ♖f2 (e.g. after ... ♖b4+), Black has some tactics in mind:

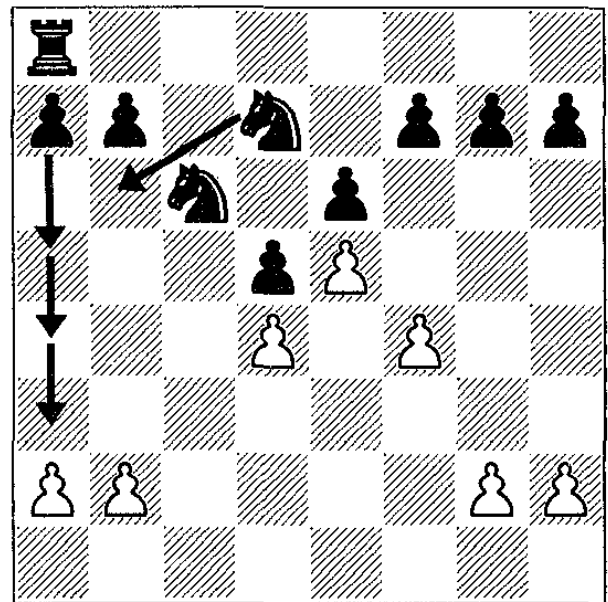


...g5 aims to decoy the knight from defence of d4 (for example after ...g4) or the f-pawn from defence of e5 (after fxg5) which will then fall thanks to the pin on the d-pawn (though it has to be said that the change in pawn structure might then actually be in White's favour). Similarly, ...f6 threatens to win the e5-pawn. If White manages to meet that immediate threat, then Black plans to castle kingside and open the f-file onto White's king. Then wherever White moves his king (to the g-file or the e-file) Black can open more lines with a knight sacrifice either on d4 or e5, when Black's queen and rook can combine with fearsome effect (for example by giving mate on f2).

Of course, it is not as simple as all that. A piece is a piece, and sacrifices like ...♗xe5 and ...♘xd4 are not always sound but require careful calculation. White could instead develop his king's knight to h3 (perhaps after h2-h4), or just play ♖e2 anyway, and develop the king's bishop to h3 after g2-g3.

Black plays on the queenside

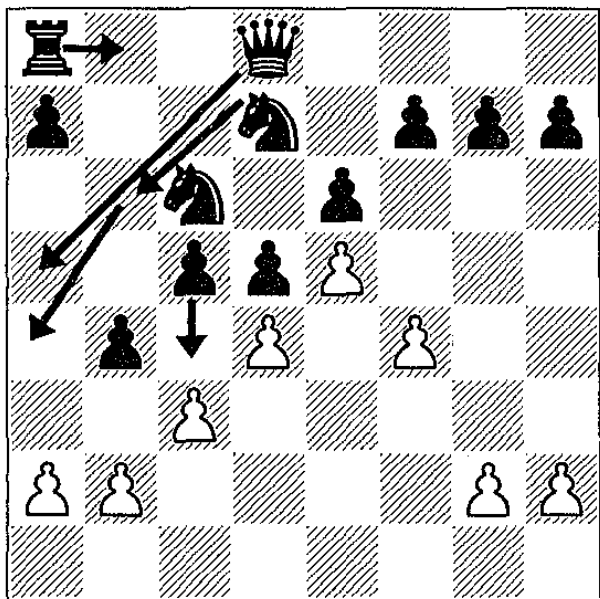
Alternatively, Black can use his advantage in development to try to create play where he doesn't have a space disadvantage: on the queenside. Black has two different approaches: the first is to play ...cxd4 and then ...a5:



Black intends to play for ...a3, securing the important b4-square for his knight and creating a strong end-game asset in the a3-pawn. By playing ...♞b6-c4 before ...a3, Black can try for more immediate tactical advantages with ...♞b2. If White plays a3, then Black can make use of the b3 and c4-squares, while if White plays a4, Black again has the b4-square. Perhaps White's best plan is the rather slow b3 and a3, intending to meet ...a4 with b4, but even then Black has the c4-square for his knight, though not quite so much space to go with it.

The second approach is not to exchange on d4, but to play for ...b5

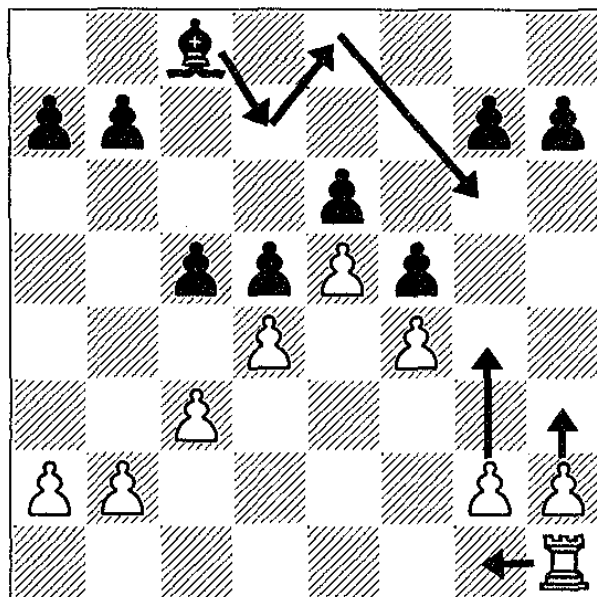
and ...b4, with the intention of playing ...bxc3, bxc3 and then attacking the weak end of the pawn chain on c3 rather than d4:



Now obviously White does not sit and wait against either plan but continues to press for the f5 breakthrough on the kingside (e.g. with g2-g4 and ♖g1-e2-g3). Therefore Black has to combine queenside play with some kind of blockade on the kingside.

Black blockades with ...f5

After ...f5 White can still try to storm the kingside with g4. One possible plan is h3 and g4, so that after ...fxg4, hxg4, White's h1-rook is well placed on the open h-file. However, Black would by no means be obliged to play ...fxg4, and since White may wish to carry on his attack with h4 and h5, h3 may prove a wasted tempo. So ♖g1 and g4 may be best, assuming that Black can't quickly grab the f5-square for his pieces after ...fxg4, ♖xg4.

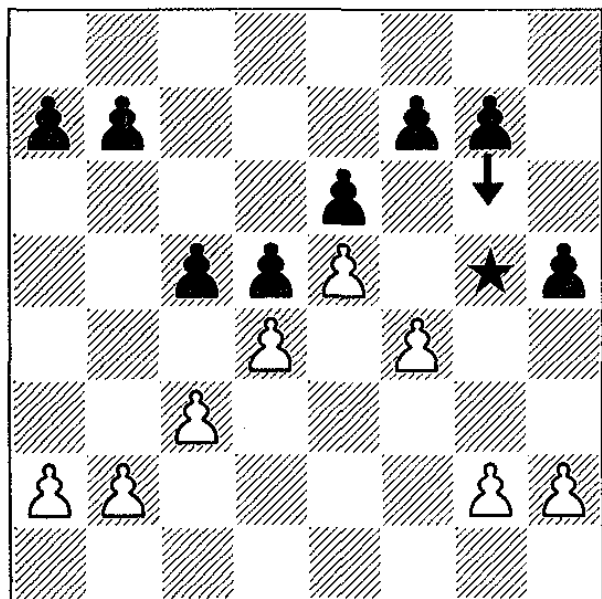


Assuming White has played g4, he will then try to put pressure on g7 in order to force Black to play ...g6. Then he can use his h-pawn to attack the g6-pawn with h5. In this way he would soften up Black's kingside and gain good attacking chances.

That is why we recommend that Black adopt the manoeuvre ...♗c8-d7-e8-g6. On g6, the bishop shields the sensitive g7-pawn and makes h5 harder for White to achieve. If White then plays gxf5, Black should usually recapture ...exf5, despite the fact that this gives White a protected passed pawn on e5. The game will most probably be decided by the cut and thrust of a struggle between Black's pressure on the queenside and White's on the kingside. The fact that White has a potential endgame advantage is of little relevance.

Black blockades with ...h5

An older method of blockade is the Leningrad System with ...h5 and



...g6. This has rather gone out of fashion in recent years, probably because White can choose to concentrate more on the queenside, happy at having created a weakness in the black kingside, including a gaping hole on g5 for White's knights. White can also still proceed with a well prepared h3, g4 and f5, particularly if Black castles kingside. The pawn structure is much the same as that in the recently popular Gurgenzidze System (1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 ♖c3 c6 4 f4 d5 5 e5 h5) but with the difference that Black usually manages to swap his light-squared bishop after ...♗g4 in the Gurgenzidze, whereas in the Leningrad System it remains undeveloped and 'bad'.

Illustrative games

Game 9

Pyda – Likavsky
Czechoslovakia 1991
Tarrasch Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5

3 ♖d2 ♗f6
4 e5 ♗fd7
5 f4 c5
6 c3 ♖c6
7 ♖df3 cxd4

Plans without this exchange can be met by comfortable theoretical responses:

a) 7...♗a5 8 ♗e3! cxd4 (8...b5 has been tried but Black doesn't seem to have sufficient counterplay after 9 dxc5 b4 10 a3! b3 11 ♗xb3 ♖xc5 12 ♗b5) 9 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 10 ♗xd4 and now the re-deployment ...♖d7-b8-c6 is a manoeuvre well worth remembering. However, White seems to have a clear edge in a rather dull position after 10...♖b8 11 ♖f3 ♖c6 12 ♗e3.

b) 7...c4 8 g4 b5 9 ♖e2 ♖b6 (9...h5 10 gxh5 ♗xh5 11 ♖g3 ♗h8 12 f5!) 10 ♖g3! (10 ♗e3 h5! 11 gxh5 ♗xh5 12 ♖g3 ♗h8 and Black will follow up with ...g6 ruling out the f5 advance) stops ...h5 and leaves White better.

8 cxd4 ♗b6

See Game 11 for the alternative plan of blockade.

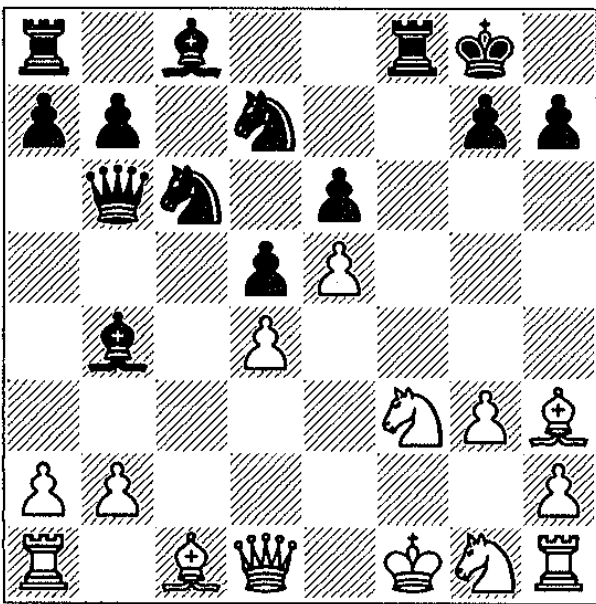
9 g3

This unusual-looking move is not played with the intention of ♗h3 (although White sometimes does play that) but with the idea of 'manually castling' the king to safety on g2. The 'natural' 9 ♖e2 is perfectly playable but rarely chosen here, the position more commonly arising from the Steinitz Variation after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♖f6 4 e5 ♖fd7 5 ♖ce2 c5 6 c3 ♖c6 7 f4 ♗b6 8 ♖f3 cxd4 9 cxd4. Black's position is fine

after the continuation 9...f6 10 g3 ♖b4+ 11 ♘c3 0-0.

9 ... ♖b4+

The other sharp approach is 9...f6. At the moment this is under a theoretical cloud after 10 ♖h3 (10 ♖d3 ♖e7 11 ♖f1 0-0 12 ♖g2 ♖h8 13 ♖b1 ♗f7 14 ♗d3 ♘f8 is solid enough for Black, if a little passive) 10...fxe5 11 fxe5 ♖b4+ 12 ♖f1 0-0 (*D*).



W

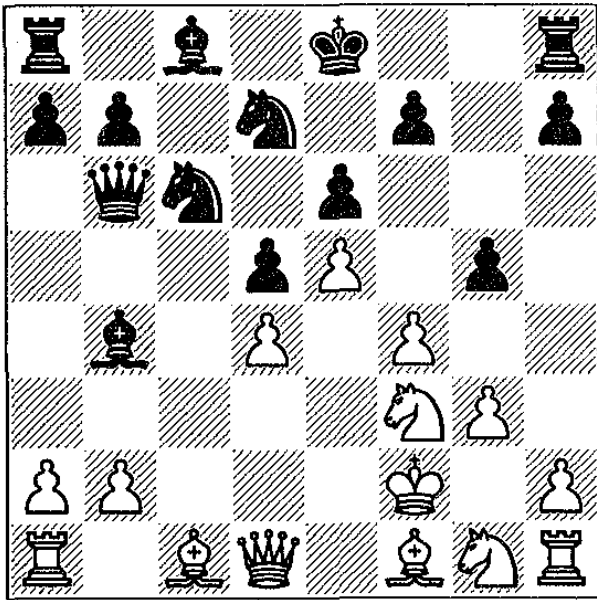
Taking the e-pawn is almost always inadvisable for White in this type of position. For example, if 13 ♖xe6+ here then 13...♖h8 (threatening 14...♘xd4) 14 ♖g2 ♘dxe5! 15 ♖xc8 ♘xf3 is good for Black. 13 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 14 ♖xd7 would be positionally disastrous because after 14...♖xd7 the black bishop on d7 will dominate the light squares. White's plan should be to constrict Black's pieces, and a mere pawn is too little compensation for allowing them such freedom. After all, in the main line below, Black is willing to give up a whole piece in order to activate his forces! White therefore

plays 13 ♖g2!, bringing his king to relative safety.

If Black does nothing active now he is quickly reduced to passivity, e.g. 13...♖h8 14 ♖g4 ♘d8 15 h4 ♘f7 16 ♘e2 ♘h6 17 ♖h3 ♘f5 18 ♗c2 and in an early Adams-I.Gurevich game (World U-16 Ch, 1987), but with the black bishop at e7 rather than b4, Black could find nothing better than 18...♗c6 19 ♗d3 ♗c4 entering a bad endgame after 20 ♗xc4 dxc4 21 ♘f4. If Black hadn't exchanged queens, then Adams had planned to build up his attack with ♖xf5 followed by ♘g5 or ♖g5.

Black is virtually compelled to sacrifice a piece with 13...♘dxe5 14 fxe5 ♘xe5 destroying White's pawn centre and freeing his pieces (of course 15 ♘xe5?? allows mate in one on f2). However, a critical position that seems in White's favour is reached after 15 ♗e2 (15 ♗b3 is interesting) 15...♘xf3 (15...♘c4 16 b3 ♖c3 17 ♗b1 ♖f6 18 ♘g5!) 16 ♘xf3 e5 17 ♖xc8 ♗axc8. Black's piece activity has reached its highest point, but sample variations such as 18 ♘xe5 ♗e6 19 ♖f4 and (perhaps stronger) 18 ♗d1 ♗g6 19 ♖d2 ♗c2 20 ♗xe5 are good, maybe winning, for White. The reader interested in adopting this line as Black should consult the analysis in a more detailed theoretical book on the French and then do some independent work of his own! However, the authors fear that the verdict on this line will remain unchanged.

10 ♖f2 g5! (*D*)
11 ♖e3



W

11 ♖xg5 ♗xd4+ shouldn't trouble Black.

The main alternatives are:

a) 11 fxg5 ♖dxe5 12 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 13 ♔g2 (13 ♙e3 ♖c4!) 13...♖c6 14 ♖f3 ♙f8! 15 b3 ♙g7 16 ♙b2 ♙d7 17 ♖c1 and now with 17...h6!, as in the game Gruzman-Glek, correspondence 1986, Black reduces White's space advantage on the kingside and gets rid of his potentially weak h-pawn.

b) 11 h3 gxf4 12 ♙xf4 (if 12 gxf4 then 12...f6 13 ♙e3 ♙e7! intending ...♖d7-f8-g6, ...♙d7, ...0-0-0 with strong pressure on White's centre) 12...f6! 13 ♔g2 ♙f8! 14 ♖b1 (if 14 ♖h2!? then 14...♗xb2+ 15 ♔h1 ♗a3 16 ♙b5 leads to an unclear game, while 14...♙g7 15 ♔h1 0-0 is sound for Black) 14...♙g7 15 ♙d3 0-0 and now 16 ♗c2 fails to 16...fxe5 17 ♙xh7+ ♔h8 18 dxe5 ♖dxe5 when the collapse of White's centre is more important than the loss of the black king's pawn cover. Therefore White has to play 16 exf6 when 16...♖xf6 looks at least OK for

Black (Yudasin-Moskalenko, Lvov 1984).

11 ... f6

In Yakovich-Machulsky, USSR 1985, Black played 11...g4! and obtained a clear advantage: 12 ♖d2 (12 ♖h4 ♙e7! 13 ♖b1 ♙xh4 14 gxh4 h5 15 h3 f5! maintains the blockade on the kingside with obscure play – Yakovich) 12...f6! 13 ♖b3 (13 ♗xg4? ♙xd2 14 ♙xd2 ♗xd4+ is bad for White) 13...fxe5 14 dxe5 ♙c5 15 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 16 ♙g2 (White should play 16 ♙xc5 ♗xc5+ 17 ♔g2 ∞) 16...d4! 17 ♙c1 (17 ♙xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♖d3+ 19 ♔e3 ♗xd4+ 20 ♔xd4 ♖f2 ♢ Yakovich) 17...h5 ♢.

12 ♙h3 fxe5

The most accurate move-order as it rules out the variation 12...0-0 13 ♙xe6+ ♔h8 14 ♖e2 fxe5 15 ♖xg5!, which proved good for White in Dobrovolsky-Tibensky, Czechoslovakia 1988.

13 fxe5 0-0

14 ♖c1

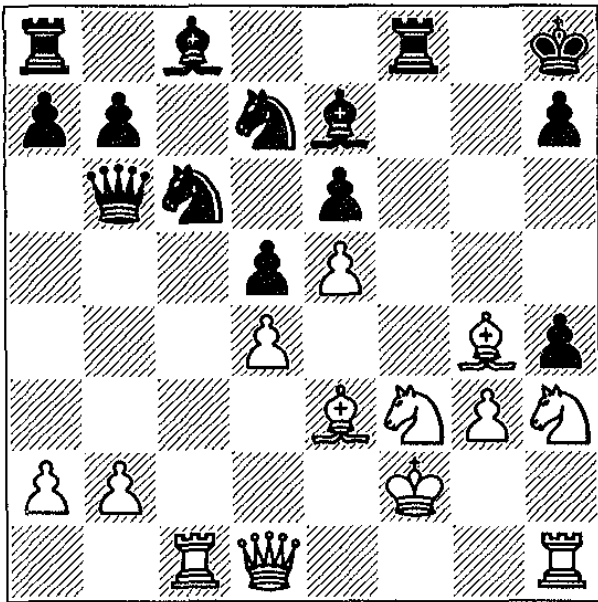
Black scored a crushing victory in Emms-Kosten, British Ch 1985 after 14 ♙g4?! ♙c5!! 15 ♙xe6+ ♔h8 16 dxc5 ♗xb2+ 17 ♙d2 g4! 18 ♙xd5? (18 ♙xg4 ♗d4+ 19 ♔g2 ♗xg4 is only slightly better for Black) 18...♖dxe5 19 ♙xc6 bxc6 20 ♖b1 ♗d4+ 21 ♙e3 ♖d3+ 22 ♔e2 gxf3+ 23 ♖xf3 ♗e4 and White resigned on move 32. This sudden and devastating attack reveals the potential of the black pieces if they can escape from the stranglehold of the white centre.

14 ... ♔h8?

A considerable improvement is 14...♙e7! (14...h5 is well met by

William Watson's suggestion 15 g4! h4 16 ♔f1) 15 ♖b3 ♗xb3 16 axb3 ♘b6 followed by ...a5 and ...a4.

- 15 ♔g4! ♔e7
 16 h4! gxh4
 17 ♘h3! (D)



B

A very direct method by White. He strips away the cover of the black king, confident that his great advantage in firepower in the crucial sector of the board will prove decisive.

- 17 ... hxg3+
 18 ♔xg3 ♘dx5

The requisite response to a wing attack: a counterattack in the centre. Nevertheless the odds are overwhelmingly against Black here, because he is playing without his queen's rook and bishop. Meanwhile, every white piece is ready to join the onslaught.

- 19 ♘hg5 ♖xf3+
 He must prevent h7 collapsing.
 20 ♔xf3 ♔xg5
 21 ♔xg5 ♘g6
 22 ♔f6+ ♔g8
 23 ♖xh7! ♔xh7
 24 ♔e4!

Clearing the queen's route to h5.

- 24 ... ♖c7+
 25 ♔g2 ♔g8

If 25...dxe4 then 26 ♖h5+ ♔g8 27 ♖xg6+ ♔f8 28 ♖h1 and mate follows.

- 26 ♖g4 ♖f7

If 26...dxe4 then 27 ♖xg6+ wins as in the note above. The game continuation isn't much better. Black soon has to part with a piece in order to stave off the mating attack which persists in spite of the exchange of queens:

- 27 ♖xg6+ ♖xg6+ 28 ♔xg6 ♔f8
 29 ♖h1 ♘e7 30 ♖h8+ ♘g8 31 ♔e5
 ♔d7 32 ♖h7 ♔e8 33 ♔d6+ ♘e7 34
 ♔xe7+ ♔g8 35 ♔b1 ♖c8 36 ♔g5
 ♖c4 37 ♔e3 e5 38 dxe5 d4 39 ♔d2
 d3 40 ♖e7 ♔c6+ 41 ♔f2 ♖h4 42
 ♔xd3 1-0

Game 10

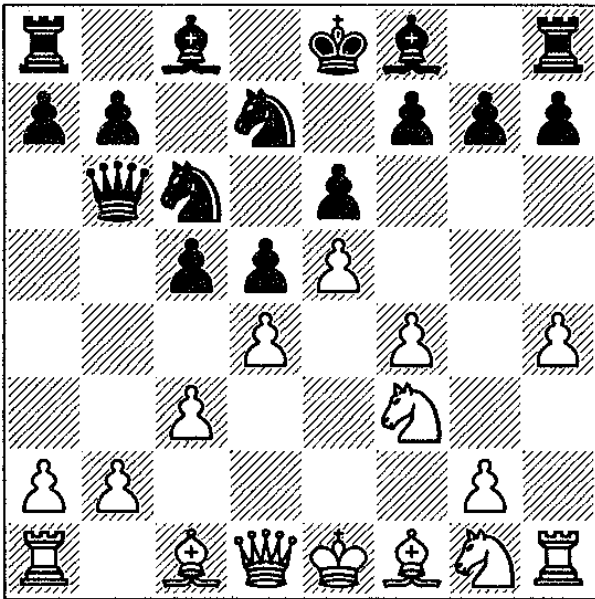
Conquest – M.Gurevich

Clichy 1993

Tarrasch Variation

- 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 e5
 ♘fd7 5 f4 c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♘df3 ♖b6
 8 h4 (D)

This is White's main alternative to 8 g3 and it is a very logical move. White reasons that since ...g5 is ruled out, Black will probably play ...f6, as only in this way can he attack White's centre. However, after ...f6, White will be able to develop his bishop to d3, its strongest square because the d4-pawn is taboo, e.g. 8...f6 9 ♔d3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♘xd4?? 11 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♔g6+ and Black loses his queen. Note that this trick is



B

not possible with the pawn on f7. So, argues White, why should he prepare ♙h3 with g3 when he can achieve ♙d3 simply by preventing Black's variation with ...g5 and waiting for ...f6? The slight drawback to this is that the white king may be in greater danger than in the g3 variation, since there is no hiding place on g2 should Black manage a breakthrough in the centre.

8 ... **cx**d4
9 **cx**d4 **f**6

In view of our comments above, it makes sense for Black to consider avoiding ...f6, thereby denying the white bishop its strongest attacking square on d3. With this in mind, 9... ♙e7 suggests itself. White then has no useful way to wait for ...f6 unless 10 h5! is good. After 10 g3, 10...f6 seems to offer good counter-chances after 11 ♙d3 fxe5 12 fxe5 0-0:

a) 13 ♙xh7+? ♚xh7 14 ♜g5+ ♚g8 15 ♞h5 ♙b4+! turning the tables.

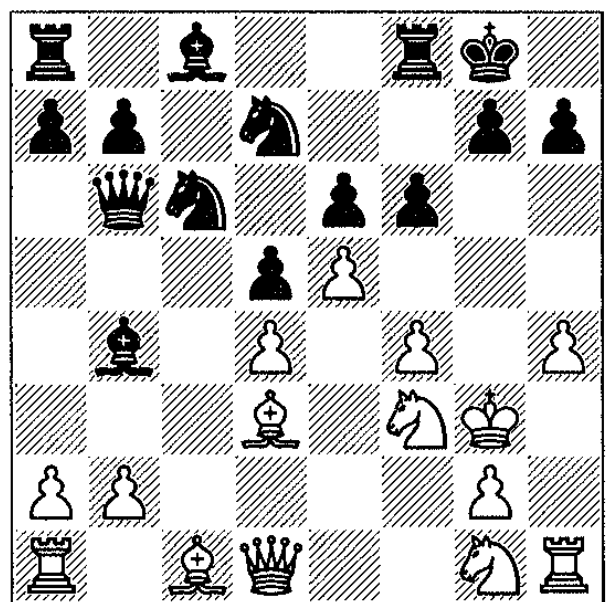
b) 13 ♜h3 ♙b4+ 14 ♚e2 ♞xf3! .

c) 13 ♙f4 ♞xb2 14 ♞h2 ♞c3+ 15 ♚f1 ♜b4 16 ♙b1 b6.

d) 13 a3 ♜dxe5! 14 dxe5 ♜xe5 .

Instead, Ferguson-Harley, Abergavenny 1996 continued 10...a5! 11 a3 a4 12 ♙h3 ♞a7 (here 12...f6 13 ♜e2 fxe5 14 fxe5 0-0 15 ♙xe6+ ♚h8 16 ♙xd5 ♜dxe5 17 dxe5 ♜xe5 fails after 18 ♙f4!) 13 ♜e2 ♜b6 14 $\text{♜c3?!$ (weakening d4; the simple 14 0-0 was good, while 14 g4 was the most enterprising, planning ♜g3 and f5) 14... ♙d7 15 0-0 ♜a5 16 f5! exf5 17 ♙g5 ♙xg5 18 ♜xg5 and now 18...g6 19 g4 may have been slightly better for Black.

Another way to temporarily stop ♙d3 is 9... ♙b4+ 10 ♚f2 f6 threatening to win a pawn on e5 thanks to the pin on the d4-pawn. Then 11 ♙e3 ♙e7 12 ♞d2 0-0 13 ♞d1 leads to unclear play. In Ljubojević-M.Gurevich, Linares 1991, White tried 11 $\text{♚g3?!$ and after 11...0-0 played the much desired move 12 ♙d3? (D).



B

However, he had made insufficient provision for his king's safety,

and Black was able to sacrifice a piece to obtain an overpowering attack: 12...♘xd4! 13 ♘xd4 fxe5 14 fxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♙c2 ♘g6! 16 ♙xg6 hxg6 17 ♘de2 (getting his knight away from attack after ...♙d6+ and ...e5+) 17...♚f2+ 18 ♚h3 ♙d6 19 ♚b3 e5+ 20 ♚h2 ♚xh4+ 21 ♘h3 ♙xh3! 0-1. This sharp defeat is a reminder of how carefully White must play in these f4 central clamp positions. A single slip can spell defeat. However, this is only just: if the punishment for careless play is more severe, then so is the reward for good play correspondingly higher. There are few draws in this variation!

10 ♙d3 ♙b4+
11 ♚e2

Gurevich's move-order has forced the king to e2 rather than f2. Although the king appears safer on e2, it is one square further from shelter on the kingside and, perhaps more importantly, it deprives the g1-knight of its best developing move ♘e2.

11 ... ♙e7

Played to hinder 12 ♙e3 which would bolster White's centre (it can now be answered by 12...♚xb2+). If instead Black plays passively, he could find himself facing a big attack. For example, Psakhis-Franke, Berlin 1988 went 11...0-0 12 ♙e3 a5 13 ♚c2 f5 14 g4! ♘db8 (14...fxg4 15 ♙xh7+ ♚h8 16 ♚g6! gxf3+ 17 ♘xf3 gives White a quick win since there is no answer to 18 ♚h5 mating) 15 a3 ♙e7 16 ♚f2! ♙d7 17 gxf5 exf5 18 ♘e2 ♘a6 19 ♚ag1 and Black had serious problems, e.g. 19...♚h8 (19...♚d8 20 ♘g3 ♚c8 looks the

best chance) 20 ♘g3 g6 (the only way to defend f5) 21 h5 with a crushing onslaught.

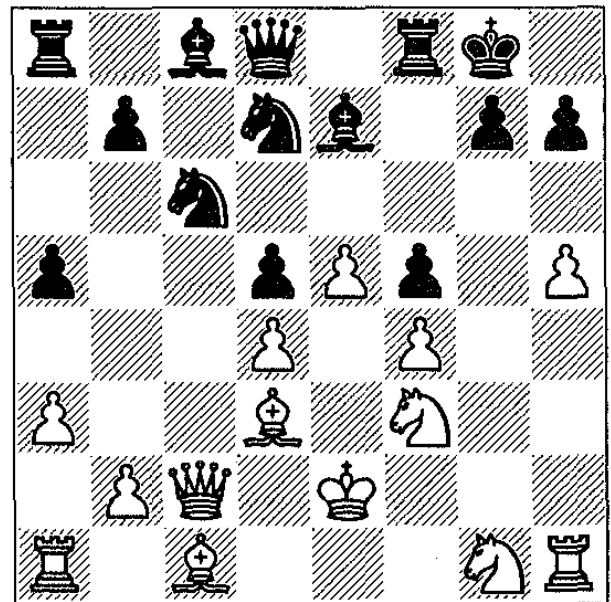
12 h5 0-0
13 ♚c2 f5
14 a3

This avoids 14 g4? ♘b4 and sets the trap 14...♘xd4+ 15 ♘xd4 ♚xd4 16 ♙e3 winning the queen.

14 ... a5
15 g4! ♚d8!

This clears the d4-square and prepares to develop with ...♘b6 and ...♙d7, when Black will be ready to generate counterplay with ...♚c8 and eventually ...♘c4.

16 gxf5 exf5 (D)



W

17 ♘h3

Capturing the pawn with 17 ♙xf5 would be bad since 17...♚xf5! 18 ♚xf5 ♘dx5 19 ♚c2 ♘xf3 20 ♘xf3 ♙g4 would give Black good counterplay for the exchange, as pointed out by Gurevich. White's intention is not to win material (unless it can be done very favourably) but rather to keep Black's pieces bottled up by his

space advantage. He hopes that as a consequence of their lack of mobility the black defenders will be unable to beat off an eventual attack on Black's kingside, while the attackers will be unable to achieve any real counterplay on the queenside.

17 ... ♖b6
 18 ♕e3 ♕e6
 19 ♗hg5 ♔d7
 20 ♖ag1 ♘c4

The first sign of counterplay from Black.

21 ♕f2 ♖ac8
 22 ♔b1

A prudent retreat, getting out of the way of any discovered attack on the c-file.

22 ... a4

Fixing the white queenside pawns and preparing ...b5-b4, opening lines on the queenside to compensate for White's pressure on the kingside.

23 ♗h4?

White tries for an immediate win, but his position was not yet strong enough to justify this. Instead he should continue his build-up with ♖g3, ♖hg1, ♖1g2 and then if appropriate ♔g1, sacrificing the queenside pawns but hoping to achieve a deadly breakthrough on the g-file. A very hard battle would have been in prospect if White had chosen this path.

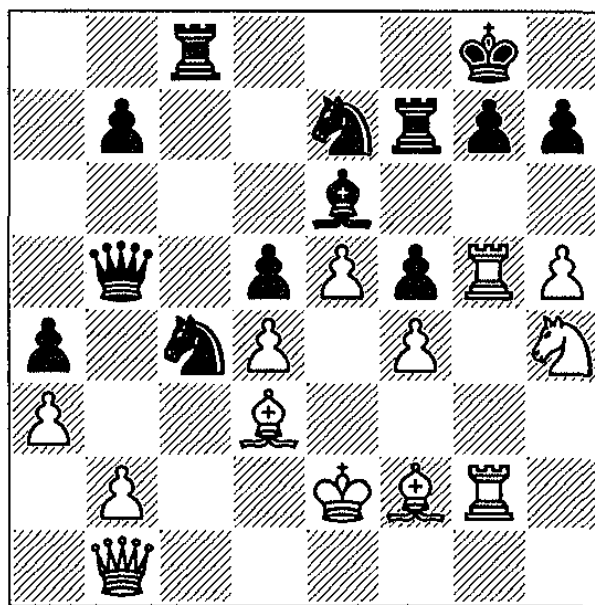
23 ... ♕xg5

Dealing with the immediate threat of 24 ♗xe6 and 25 ♗xf5.

24 ♖xg5 ♗e7!

This move bolsters the kingside defences and, just as importantly, opens the way for ...♔b5 with pressure on b2.

25 ♖hg1 ♖f7
 26 ♖1g2 ♔b5! (D)



W

Just in time before White played 27 ♔g1 with dangerous pressure on the g-file. Now 27 ♔g1 can be answered by 27...♔xb2+, e.g. 28 ♖f3 ♔c3 29 ♖xg7+ ♖h8 30 ♖xf7 ♔xd3+ 31 ♕e3 ♕xf7 and Black has won a piece. So we can conclude that Black has won the opening battle because White wasted a vital move with 23 ♗h4 when he should have been increasing the pressure on the g-file. In such a double-edged position the loss of a single tempo can turn a promising position into a lost one.

27 b4!?

This spirited try succeeds in confusing Black.

27 ... ♗xa3?

This gives White a chance. Gurevich believed that he should have played 27...axb3 28 ♔g1 b2! 29 ♖xg7+ ♖h8 when the fearsome passed pawn on b2 far outweighs White's chances on the g-file.

28 ♖xg7+!

This wins the black queen, though Black's passed pawn ensures he keeps all the winning chances.

28 ... ♖xg7
 29 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7
 30 ♔g1+ ♔f8
 31 ♙xb5 ♘xb5
 32 ♘f3!

This begins an excellent regrouping of White's pieces. If instead 32 ♔g5?, then 32...♔e8! 33 ♔f6 ♔d7 and the a-pawn rushes forward.

32 ... a3
 33 ♙h4! a2
 34 ♙f6 ♖c2+
 35 ♔d3 ♖c3+
 36 ♔d2 ♘c6

Not, of course, 36...♖xf3?? 37 ♔g7+ and mate next move. After the text the game seems won for Black, since after 37 ♔g7+ ♔e8 the king can run to b6 if necessary, when the a-pawn queens. However, White can still save himself.

37 ♘g5 ♘cxd4
 38 ♘xh7+ ♔e8
 39 ♔g7 ♘c6
 40 ♔h8+?

In time pressure, White allows the black king to escape from the enemy pieces, when the a-pawn is unstoppable. It was possible to draw with 40 ♙g5! a1♔ 41 ♘f6+ ♔d8 42 ♘xd5+ ♔c8 43 ♔f8+ ♔d7 44 ♔g7+ with perpetual check (as noted by Gurevich in *Informator* 58).

40 ... ♔d7
 41 ♘f8+ ♔c7
 42 ♘xe6+ ♔b6
 43 ♙d8+ ♔a7
 44 ♘c7 ♘xc7

0-1

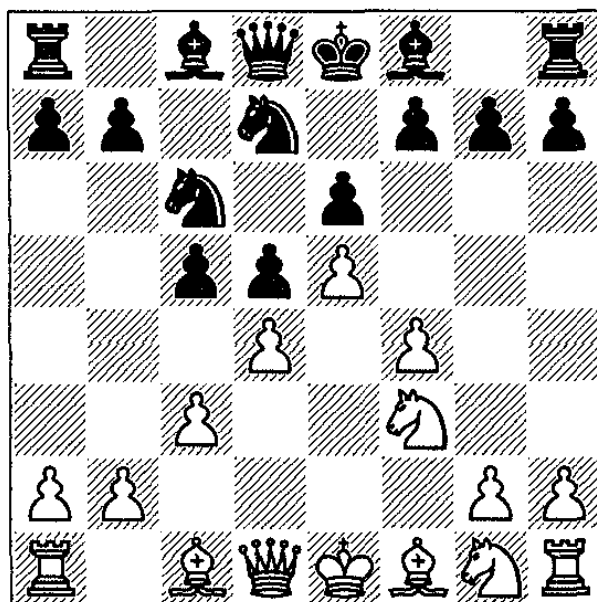
Game 11

Ye Jiangchuan – Short

Lucerne Wcht 1989

Tarrasch Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘d2 ♘f6
 4 e5 ♘fd7
 5 f4 c5
 6 c3 ♘c6
 7 ♘df3 (D)



B

7 ... f5!?

If Black wishes to solidify the position in this way, he should do so now. Inferior is 7...♔b6 8 g3 f5?! 9 ♘e2 a5 10 ♙h3 ♙e7?! (the last chance to play 10...cxd4 when if 11 ♘exd4, ...♘c5 and ...♘e4 gives counterplay; so White would probably play 11 cxd4 ±) 11 g4! ♘db8 (11...g6? 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 ♘g5 and ♔h5+ is disastrous) 12 gxf5 exf5 13 dxc5! ♔d8 14 ♙e3 ♘a6 15 ♔d3 0-0 and now 16 ♖d1 would have given White a clear advantage in Short-Reefschläger, Plovdiv Echt 1983. 7...♔b6 makes

White 'waste' a move with, e.g., 8 g3, but leaves the black queen misplaced on b6, a useful square for the d7-knight, so after a later ...♖d8 it is in fact Black who has wasted a move.

As mentioned in the first half of the chapter, Black can also try to blockade with 7...h5!?, but White maintains an edge after 8 ♖d3 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♖b6 10 ♖e2 (10 ♖h3 ♖d7 11 0-0 g6 12 ♖hg5!? – Bareev) 10...♖d7 11 0-0 a5 12 a3 a4 13 ♗e1 g6. Instead, Wade-Uhlmann, Skopje 1968 continued 13...♖a5? 14 f5! exf5 15 e6! fxe6 16 ♗g3 ♖f7 17 ♖f4 winning.

8 ♖d3

Of course, White will always choose to develop his bishop to this square if there is no apparent drawback.

8 ... cxd4

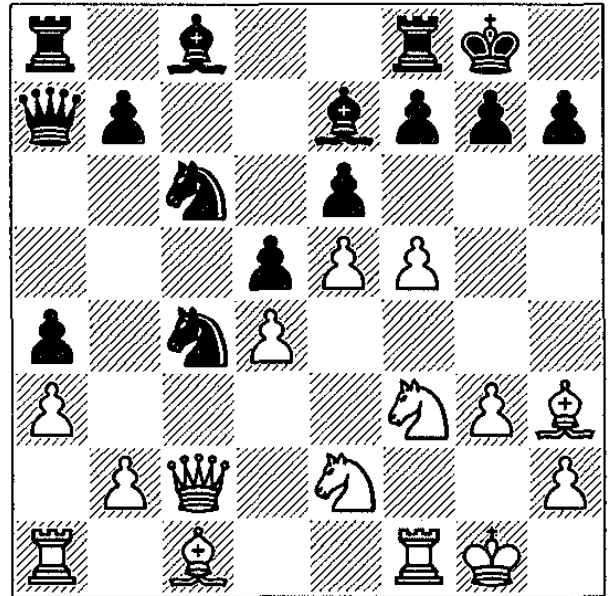
Black exchanges before White plays 9 ♖e2 and has the option of establishing a knight on d4, for example 8...♖e7 9 ♖e2 cxd4 10 ♖exd4. It is not clear that White would take up this opportunity but why should Black give him the choice?

9 cxd4 ♖e7

10 ♖e2 ♖b6

Now Black's ideas include ...a5-a4-a3, when if b3 in reply then ...♖b4 puts the knight on an excellent post. A comparable plan can be seen in Ljubojević-Hübner, Wijk aan Zee 1986, which went 7...♗b6 8 g3 ♖e7 9 ♖e2 0-0 10 ♖h3 cxd4 11 cxd4 a5 12 0-0 a4. Ljubojević responded with 13 a3 ♗a7 14 ♗c2 whereupon Hübner went wrong with

14...f5? when both Ljubojević's 15 exf6 and 15 g4 look good. In *Informator 41*, Hübner provides detailed analysis to show that Black should ignore the threat of f5. His main variation is 14...♖b6! 15 f5 ♖c4 (D).



W

Now after 16 f6? gxf6 17 exf6 ♖xf6 18 ♖h6 ♖xd4 19 ♖exd4 ♖xd4+ 20 ♖h1 ♖g7 21 ♖g5 f5 22 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 23 g4 h6! 24 gxf5 hxg5 25 fxe6 ♗e3! it seems that Black has defended successfully and should win. Therefore White does best to play safely with 16 ♖g2 or 16 ♖h1 when 16...exf5 17 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 18 ♗xf5 ♗b6 prepares to bring the queen over to the kingside for defensive duty if it proves necessary. Chances would then remain balanced.

11 h3

White prepares an immediate g4. Instead in the game Tagnon-McDonald, Cappelle la Grande 1991 White tried 11 0-0 when play continued 11...0-0 12 ♖h1 ♖d7 13 ♗g1 ♖e8 14 h3 ♖g6 15 ♖g5?! ♖xg5 (Black

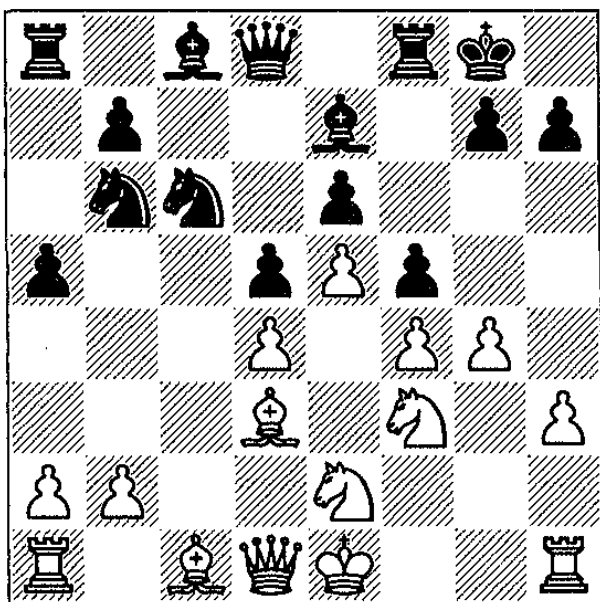
could also play 15...♖d7 preparing for a long siege) 16 fxg5 and now 16...♗e8! 17 ♔b1 (intending ♘f4) 17...♙h5 18 g4?! fxg4 19 ♘f4 (19 hxg4 ♙xg4!) 19...♞xf4! 20 ♙xf4 gxh3 would have favoured Black.

11 ... 0-0
12 g4

All according to plan. Ye thinks White should prefer the restrained 12 a3 answering 12...a5 by 13 b3 a4 14 b4, but in any case after the subsequent 14...♙d7 preparing ...♘c4 and ...♞c8 Black has little to fear unless White reverts to the g4 plan.

12 ... a5 (D)

12...♙h4+ would be wrong since after 13 ♔f1, Black would have to retreat the bishop to save it from capture after g5. Then White's king would be safer on h1 than e1 after ♔g2, ♞g1 and ♔h1. It is important to note that 12...g6 would be far too passive, providing White with a target on g6 and stopping Black from playing his bishop to g6 or h5 later.



W

13 a4

Here Clarke-McDonald, Dublin 1991 went 13 ♔f2?! a4 14 gxf5 exf5 15 h4 ♙d7 16 ♙e3 ♘b4! 17 ♘g3 (17 ♙b1 ♘c4 18 ♙c1 a3 19 b3 ♘b2! is excellent for Black) 17...♘xd3+ (a very favourable exchange for Black) 18 ♗xd3 ♘c4 19 ♞ab1 a3 20 b3 ♘b2 21 ♗e2 ♗b6 and Black (who threatens ...♙b5) had a clear advantage.

The text-move restrains the further advance of the black a-pawn. However, it was perhaps better to safeguard his king with 13 0-0!? and follow up with ♔h1 or ♞g1. Black would then have continued with ...a4 or ...♙d7.

13 ... ♘b4

White's previous move has made this a fine outpost for the knight, since it can no longer be dislodged by a3.

14 ♙b1 ♙d7
15 ♔f2?!

Ye doesn't want to slow down his attack by playing 15 0-0 since it would then take two moves to get the rook to g1. Nevertheless, the king proves so exposed on f2 that Ye plays it to the h-file anyway, thus spending four moves rather than three to achieve the desired set-up.

15 ... ♞c8
16 ♞g1 ♔h8
17 ♔g2 ♙e8!

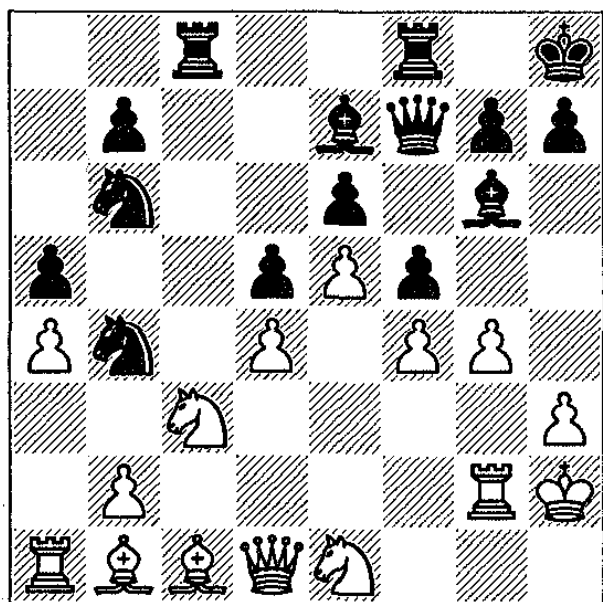
As described in the general observations at the start of the chapter, Black counters the pressure along the g-file by bringing his bishop over to g6.

18 ♔h2?!
18 ♔h1 was better.

- 18 ... ♔g6
 19 ♖c3 ♕e8!
 20 ♖e1 ♕f7

Black's queen manoeuvre has further bolstered the kingside.

- 21 ♖g2 (D)



B

White's attack has ground to a halt and Black can now seize the initiative on the kingside.

- 21 ... fxc4
 22 ♔xg6 ♕xg6
 23 hxg4 ♕h6+

If White's king were now on h1 (see the note to move 18), this check could be countered by 24 ♖h2 ♕g6 25 ♖g2 ♕h6+ drawing by repetition.

- 24 ♔g1 g5!

This breaks up White's kingside pawn structure and gives Black a clear advantage.

- 25 ♖h2 ♕g6
 26 ♖e2 ♖f7!
 27 ♖a3!

The rook arrives in time to stop a complete collapse on the kingside.

- 27 ... ♖cf8
 28 ♖ah3 gxf4

- 29 ♖xf4 ♕b1!

Here after 29...♖xf4?! 30 ♔xf4 ♖xf4 31 ♖xh7+ ♕xh7 32 ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 33 ♖g2 ♖f8 34 g5 (stopping ...♔g5! dominating the g2-knight) 34...♔xg5 35 ♕g4 and 36 ♕xe6 the exposed black king should give White enough counterplay to secure a draw. Short's move should win easily because there is no defence to 30...♖xf4. If 30 ♖e2 then 30...♖f1+ 31 ♔g2 ♕e4+ wins easily.

- 30 ♖c2 ♔g8?

30...♖xf4 wins after 31 ♖xh7+ ♔g8 32 ♖h8+ ♔f7 33 g5 ♔e8!, etc.

- 31 ♖a3!

White finds an unexpected drawing resource...

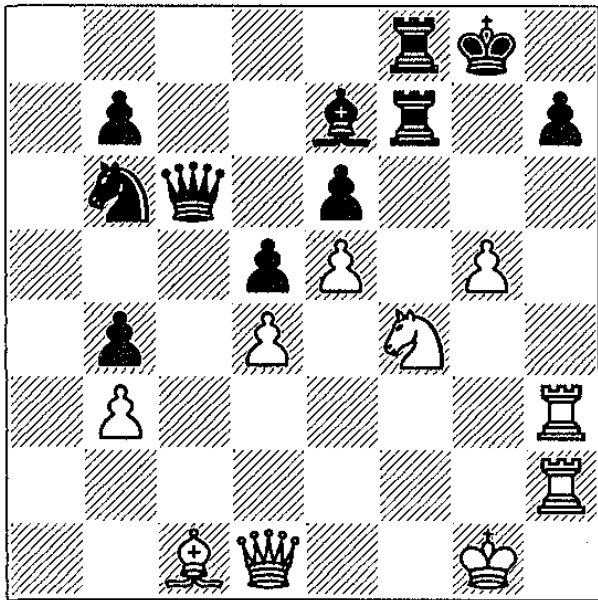
- 31 ... ♕a1
 32 ♖c2 ♕xa4?

...which becomes a winning attempt. There was a choice of draws by repetition after the mundane 32...♕b1 33 ♖a3, etc., or the spectacular 32...♖xc2 33 ♕xc2 ♖c8 (33...♖xf4 34 ♕xh7#) 34 ♕g6+! ♔f8 (34...hxg6?? allows mate in two) 35 ♖xe6+ ♔e8 36 ♖g7+, etc. (Ye Jiangchuan).

- 33 b3! ♕c6
 34 ♖xb4 axb4
 35 g5! (D)

Suddenly White is in control. Now Black should try 35...♖xf4 when there is no obvious win for White, e.g. 36 ♔xf4 ♖xf4 37 ♖xh7 (37 ♕h5? ♕c1+ mates first) 37...♔xg5 38 ♖h8+ ♔g7 39 ♖2h7+ ♔g6 and 40 ♕h5+ ♔f5 41 ♖f7+ ♔e4 or 40 ♖g8+ ♔xh7 41 ♖xg5 ♖h4 42 ♕d3+ ♔h8 43 ♕g6 ♕c1+.

- 35 ... ♔xg5?



B

Now Black gets into a fatal pin along the g-file.

- 36 ♖g2 h6
 37 ♖xh6 ♖g7
 38 ♘g6 ♙xh6

The lesser evil is to give up the queen, but it is hopeless all the same.

- 39 ♘e7+ ♔f7 40 ♘xc6 ♖xg2+ 41 ♔xg2 ♖g8+ 42 ♔f2 ♙xc1 43 ♚h5+ ♔g7 44 ♘e7 ♖f8+ 45 ♔e2 ♖f7 46 ♚g4+ ♔f8 47 ♘g6+ 1-0

Game 12
 Short – Psakhis
 Moscow OL 1994
 Classical Variation

- 1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘c3 ♘f6
 4 e5 ♘fd7
 5 f4

5 ♘ce2 c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 f4 ♚b6 8 ♘f3 transposes into a line analysed earlier, in Game 9.

- 5 ... c5
 6 ♘f3 ♘c6
 7 ♙e3 ♚b6

For other moves here, see the following chapter.

- 8 ♘a4 ♚a5+
 9 c3

Now White threatens 10 dxc5 when Black dare not recapture with a piece because of the b4 fork. So Black has to choose between a very passive and a very aggressive line. Unfortunately for Black the aggressive line seems dubious: 9...cxd4 10 b4 ♘xb4 (retreating the queen leaves Black in an unpleasant bind after 11 ♘xd4 so this piece sacrifice is more or less forced) 11 cxb4 ♙xb4+ 12 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13 ♘xd2. Black has three pawns for the piece and a solid position, but is his position really good enough? In the game Short-Timman, Amsterdam 1994, Black tried to destroy White's centre with 13...g5 but was soon in serious difficulties after 14 ♖b1 gxf4 15 ♙b5 ♖b8 16 ♘c5 ♚c3 17 ♘d3.

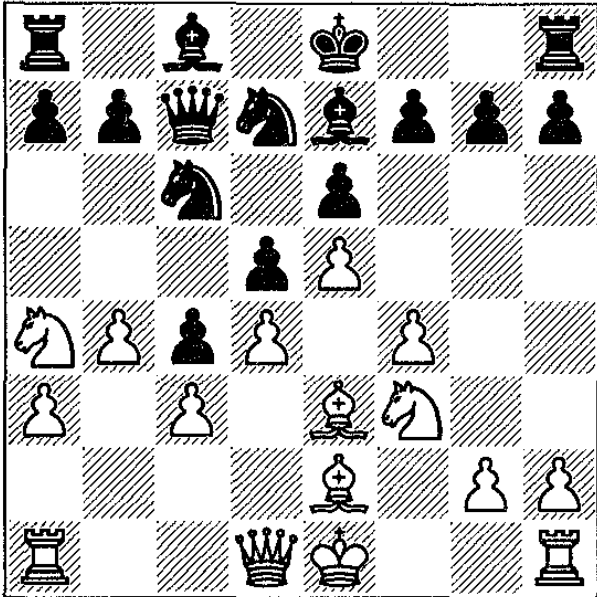
- 9 ... c4
 10 b4!

Against a routine move, for example 10 ♙e2, Black intended to continue 10...b5, when 11 ♘c5 ♘xc5 12 dxc5 b4 attacking c5, is evidently good for Black. So Short rules out this possibility.

- 10 ... ♚c7
 11 ♙e2 ♙e7

If 11...b5, then 12 ♘c5 and Black has the unenviable choice of either tolerating the knight on its outpost or giving White the better pawn structure after 12...♘xc5 13 bxc5 (or 13 dxc5, when d4 is a good square for White's pieces).

- 12 a3! (D)



B

A subtle move. It would be natural to castle, but Short sees that the best way to exploit his space advantage is to keep his king in the centre and prepare a wing assault against Black's kingside. Such an attack would culminate in the breakthrough f5, which may require preparation by g4 and the support of White's king's rook on the g1-square. The white king's presence on the kingside would only interfere with such an attacking operation.

12 ... f5

A critical moment. It seems Black has no fully satisfactory continuation. A survey of his possible plans will clarify this. First, if 12...b5 then the answer is still 13 ♘c5 as in the note at move 11. Another alternative is 12...b6 intending 13...♙b7 and 14...0-0-0. However, although the king would be very safe on the queenside, Black's basic problem would remain how to meet White's positional threat of f5.

Nor would 12...f6 help much, since after 13 ♙d2 (for example)

13...fxe5?! 14 fxe5 Black's game is still congested and an attempt at freedom with the piece sacrifice 14...♘dx5? is doomed to failure as it hardly disrupts White's game at all: after 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 0-0, Black can resign. In fact, in playing 12...f6, Black would actually be helping White in his quest to open lines on the kingside.

If we compare the situation in the diagram above with those positions usually reached in the Tarrasch Variation with 5 f4, it will easily be understood why Black's chances are in this instance so unpromising. Here, Black has failed to achieve any counterplay against White's queenside or the d4-square. White's queenside is totally solid and without weakness. Black has no activity, and can only plan to build a solid defensive fortress and await White's attack. He begins this with 12...f5, blocking the further advance of White's f-pawn in direct style, but now the f5-pawn can be undermined.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't exaggerate the size of White's advantage. He may have all the chances to play actively, but on the other hand if Black defends resolutely there is no good reason why he should lose. In the early days of French theory, the great world champion Botvinnik often undertook to defend such positions where Black had closed the game with ...c4 (though admittedly not usually this passively). He handled them with virtuoso skill, and even occasionally won when White overpressed!

13 ♖g1

A critical moment. White had a choice of two approaches to engineer a breakthrough with g4. The first was the one carried out by Short in the game: he plays 13 ♖g1 and 14 g4. This allows him to achieve strong pressure with his rook down the g-file. However, there is a drawback to this plan since after 14...fxg4 the f5-square no longer has any white pawn protection, and rather than a possible breakthrough square for White's attack eventually becomes a strong point for an enemy knight.

The alternative plan was to leave the rook on h1 and play 13 h3!?. This aims to play g4 without giving up pawn control of f5 after the sequence 13...♞f8 14 g4 fxg4 (now a very bad move) 15 hxg4; White can build up for an f5 advance. Black would do better to answer 14 g4 with 14...g6 in this sequence, but then after 15 ♖d2 or another non-forcing move the f8-knight would have little scope. White's plan would involve moves such as ♕f2 and ♕h4, exchanging off Black's good bishop; ♞b2-d1-e3, deploying the knight to its best square; and only then gxf5, when the reply ...exf5 is answered with a quick h4 and h5, attacking g6. The alternative recapture ...gxf5 meets with a breakthrough by the rooks on the g-file.

Note that White would make every possible strengthening of his position before releasing the tension with gxf5. One reason is that after the plausible recapture ...exf5, Black gains the e6-square for his knight,

and White doesn't want to allow him this luxury until it is absolutely necessary.

Finally, Black could try 14...♞g6, but then 15 gxf5 exf5 16 h4! (ruling out the attempt to ease his congestion by 16...♞h4) gives White strong play. Whichever plan was better (and it is by no means clear), Short's decision to delay castling was fully justified, since the white king's rook's optimum square proves to be either g1 or h1.

13 ... ♞f8

14 g4

White could still play 14 h3 and 15 g4 as in the other plan, when 14...♞g6 15 g4 ♞h4 16 ♞xh4 ♕xh4+ 17 ♖d2 ♕d8!? (avoiding being trapped with 18 g5) is one possible continuation.

14 ... fxc4

15 ♖xc4 g6

This exposes the g-pawn to a possible h4-h5 attack and takes away the g6-square from the f8-knight. Nevertheless, it was difficult to avoid and at least has the virtue of fortifying f5.

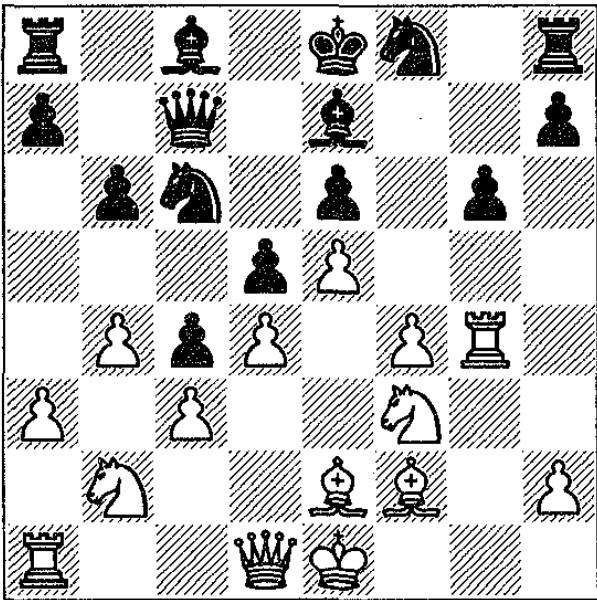
16 ♕f2!

This good positional move clears the e3-square for the a4-knight and prepares ♕h4, thereby carrying out the thematic exchange of Black's 'good' dark-squared bishop.

16 ... b6

17 ♞b2 (D)

Here 17...a5 was an interesting move. If White ignores this move and continues in thematic style with 18 ♕h4, Black can seize the initiative on the queenside after 18...♕xh4+ 19 ♞xh4 b5! when he intends to



B

continue 20...♔a7! threatening to capture twice on b4. Thus White would probably be compelled to block things up with 18 b5 ♘a7 19 a4. However, it is doubtful if his kingside pressure alone would then be sufficient to win the game. White needs to keep the possibility of pressurising Black on both wings: that is the way to exploit the greater mobility of the pieces that a space advantage confers. However, Psakhis evidently had no wish to be tortured in such a position.

17 ... ♔d7

18 a4 a6

It was still possible to play 18...a5 when after 19 b5 (forced since 19 axb5? is clearly bad after 19...♘xa5 and then ♘b3) 19...♘d8 should be sufficient to hold the game.

19 ♔b1 ♔b7

20 ♘d1 b5!

21 axb5

A blocked position doesn't appeal to Short and so he avoids 21 a5. Now, however, Black has a chance to activate his game...

21 ... axb5?

A routine recapture. Instead the alternative 21...♔xb5! keeps the a-pawn to stab at White. After 22 ♘e3 a5 23 bxa5 ♔xa5 24 ♔d1, as given by Short, Black is unlikely to have any problems, e.g. 24...♔a6 25 ♔xa5 ♔xa5 attacking c3. Looking back, it will be seen that Black could have avoided 18...a6, and begun the sequence with ...♔b7 and ...b5! one move earlier.

Few positions can survive total passivity, but at least the reader gets a valuable lesson in positional play, since White is, as they say, 'playing without an opponent'. All his ideas are therefore crystal clear.

22 ♘e3 ♔xa1

Giving up the open file looks wrong, but things were already unpleasant. For example, if 22...♔g8 23 ♔g1 ♔g7, 24 f5! looks strong.

23 ♔xa1 ♔d8

24 ♔d2

The king gets out of the way of a manoeuvre to bring the g4-rook over to the queenside, and defends the e3-knight.

24 ... ♘e7

25 ♔h4

Finally carrying out the thematic exchange of bishops.

25 ... ♘f5

26 ♔xd8 ♔xd8

27 ♔g1 ♔g8

28 ♔d1! ♔g7

29 ♔c2

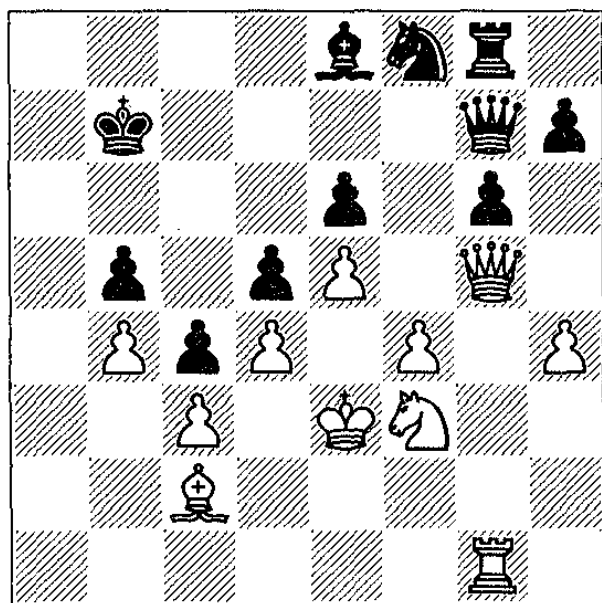
The bishop has been re-deployed to the most open diagonal on the whole board. Now Black has to reckon with 30 ♔xf5, since knights

are more valuable in blocked positions than bishops. However, White would hesitate to play this move since it opens up e6 for the 'dead' knight on f8. Most likely Psakhis played his next move because he couldn't find any constructive plan.

- 29 ... ♖xe3
- 30 ♔xe3 ♙e8
- 31 ♕e1

White's plan is to attack g6, using the h-pawn as a battering ram. First he brings the queen to h6.

- 31 ... ♕e7
- 32 ♕g3 ♔c8
- 33 ♖a1 ♙c6
- 34 ♕h3 ♔b7
- 35 ♕h6 ♖g8
- 36 h4 ♙e8
- 37 ♖g1 ♕g7
- 38 ♕g5 (D)



B

- 38 ... h5

A horrible move to have to make, but otherwise 39 h5 is crushing, e.g. 38...♔c7 39 h5 ♔b7 40 ♖h4 ♔c8 41 f5! and Black will be mangled. Now, however, the weakness on g6 and the massive dark square holes are fatal.

39 ♕d8

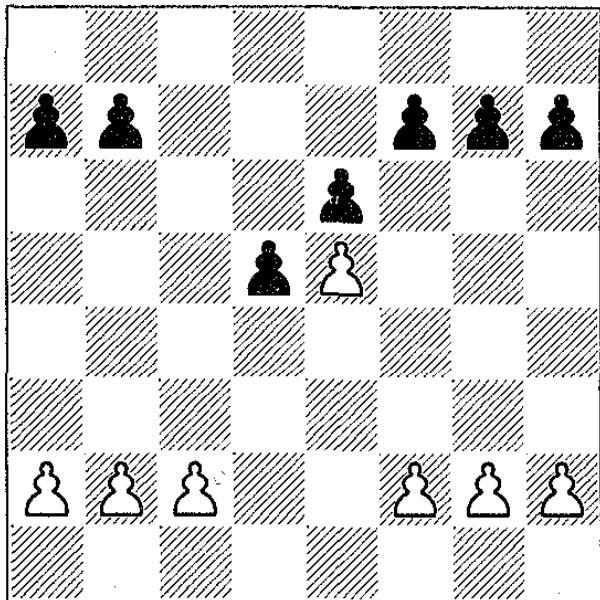
White's king can only penetrate along Black's weak dark squares if the queens are exchanged. Therefore White needs to bully Black into exchanging queens by the threat to attack down the a-file with 40 ♖a1, etc. If earlier Black had taken his chance to block the queenside, such a plan would now be unavailable to White. But it is too late for regrets...

- 39 ... ♕d7
- 40 ♕a5 ♕c7
- 41 ♕xc7+ ♔xc7
- 42 f5

This breakthrough proves decisive.

42...exf5 43 ♙xf5 ♙f7 44 ♙h3 ♙e6 45 ♖g5 ♙xh3 46 ♖xh3 ♖e6 47 ♖f1 ♖a8 48 ♖f7+ (in *Chess Monthly*, Hodgson gives this move as 48 ♖f2, and then wonders why 48...♖a3 wasn't played!) 48...♔c6 49 ♖f6 ♔d7 50 ♖f4 ♖xf4 51 ♔xf4 ♔c7?! (here 51...♖a3 was a better fighting chance according to Short, but White would still win after 52 ♖xg6 ♖xc3 53 ♖d6+, etc.) 52 ♖xg6 ♖f8+ 53 ♔e3 ♖f1 54 ♖d6 ♖h1 55 ♖xd5 ♖xh4 56 ♖xb5 ♖h3+ 57 ♔e4 1-0

4 Classical Centre



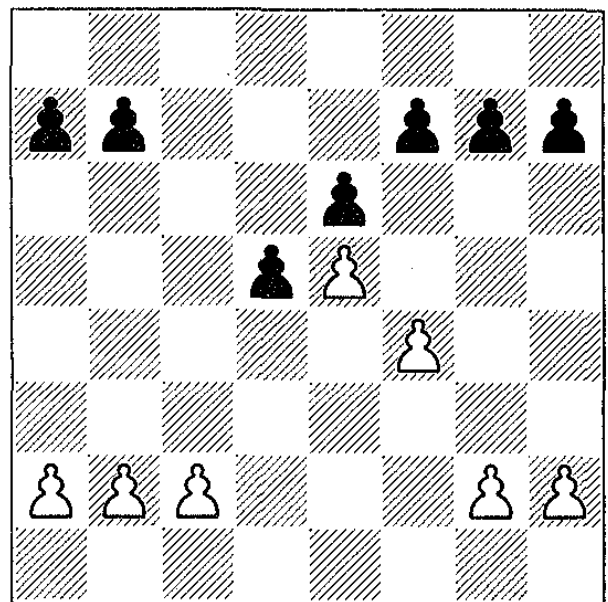
5 e5 ♖fd7), we have the standard cramping pawn centre but with White, temporarily at least, unable to support his centre with c3. Therefore, a quick ...c5 advance by Black will dissolve White's pawn occupation of d4.

If we assume White bolsters his important e5-pawn with f4, we have the distinct pawn structure of the Classical and Steinitz variations:

General observations

In Chapter 1, we examined positions where White played an immediate 3 e5. We saw that an integral part of White's plan was to answer ...c5, attacking his centre, with c3, maintaining a pawn on d4. In Chapters 2 and 3, White also established his cramping pawn chain, but this time (usually) after the preliminary moves 3 ♖d2 ♖f6, and only then 4 e5. Again, it was an important part of White's strategy that he could answer a subsequent ...c5 with c3, keeping his pawn centre intact.

In the present chapter, we look at positions that most typically arise when White plays 3 ♖c3. This is a natural and good developing move, but after the reply 3...♖f6 (3...♙b4 is the subject of the following two chapters) 4 e5 ♖fd7 (or 4 ♙g5 ♙e7



We see that White has kept his e5-pawn and therefore has a space advantage in the centre. However, the elimination of his d4-pawn means that Black's pieces have more freedom of action than lines in which White retains a pawn on d4. Notably, they have access to the c5-square and it is possible that Black will be able to take advantage of White's slight weakness along the a7-g1 diagonal.

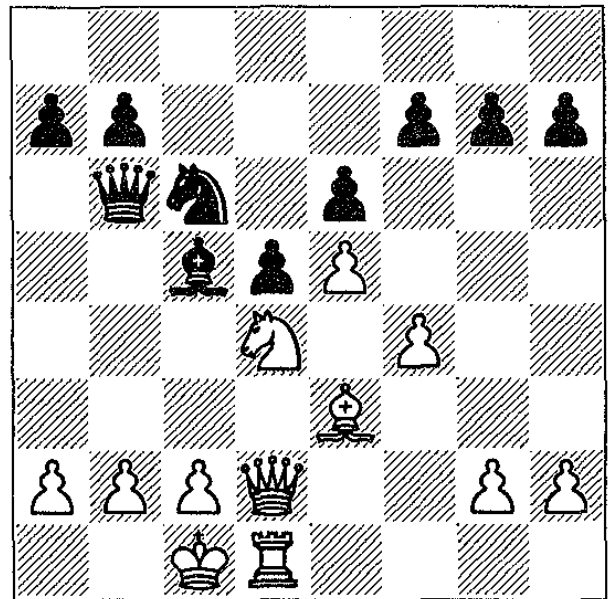
Furthermore, the e5-pawn, which is deprived of its 'natural' d4 defender is vulnerable to dissolution by ...f6, when White's space advantage will evaporate. However, there is a big plus point for White in the position: the d4-square.

The fight for d4

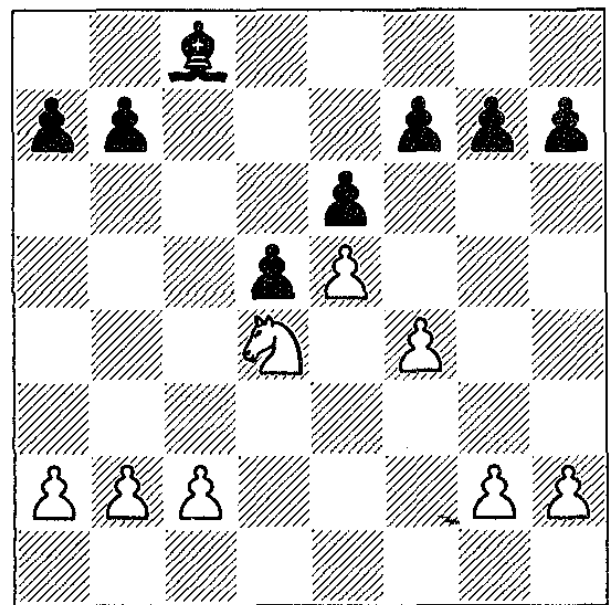
It is clear that the d4-square is an excellent square for a white knight. Here it would be safe from pawn attack and well centralised. If White can establish a knight on this square unmolested by the black pieces, then he will have good chances. Therefore Black will naturally try either to exchange off this knight or, once it reaches d4, make life uneasy for it. To this end, he will play moves such as ...♞c6, ...♙c5 and ...♚b6. And sometimes he will avoid the immediate capture ...c5xd4 to delay the arrival of the knight on the d4-square. In reply, White will bolster the d4-knight with a development such as ♙e3, ♚d2 and 0-0-0 (bringing the queen's rook to the defence on d1).

If in the next diagram Black exchanges three times on d4, he will ease his game. Nevertheless, the continued possession of d4 will still be a trump for White: any white piece, if unchallenged, would thrive on this centre square. Even the king would be well placed there in an endgame. However, we repeat that it is best of all to have a knight on d4.

Black's queen bishop is his problem piece in this structure. It is notably the only minor piece which



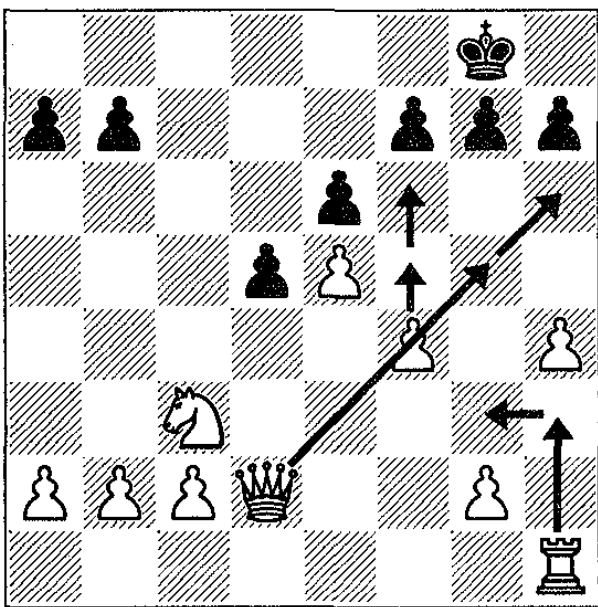
cannot join in the fight for d4. Above all, Black must avoid exchanging off pieces too quickly when he may be left in a bad bishop endgame. The worst scenario is shown in the diagram below:



Such an endgame is without prospect for Black since his bishop can attack nothing and his dark squares are very weak. In the diagram, it is too late to do anything except put up stubborn resistance, but in the discussion below we will show how Black can try to activate this bishop before things get so bad.

White's kingside attack

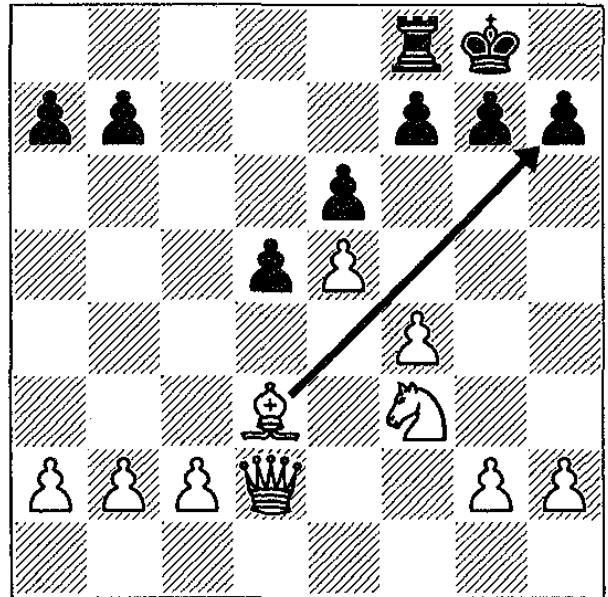
White often castles queenside, consolidates his hold on the centre, and then, assuming Black has castled kingside, begins a direct assault on Black's king. This attack can take three distinct forms. First, White can launch an all-out pawn onslaught using all his kingside pawns.



Secondly, White can play f5! planning f6 and ♖g5 with a quick mate. If Black replies ...exf5, then N(c3)xd5 will break up Black's centre. Alternatively White may have played his king's rook to g3 (via h3) and after ...exf5 continue ♖h6 with a winning attack.

Incidentally, we should point out that White's king's rook is often excellently placed on the third rank, where it is ready for operations on the kingside, queenside or in the centre. Therefore, the manoeuvre h4 and ♖h3 is well worth noting.

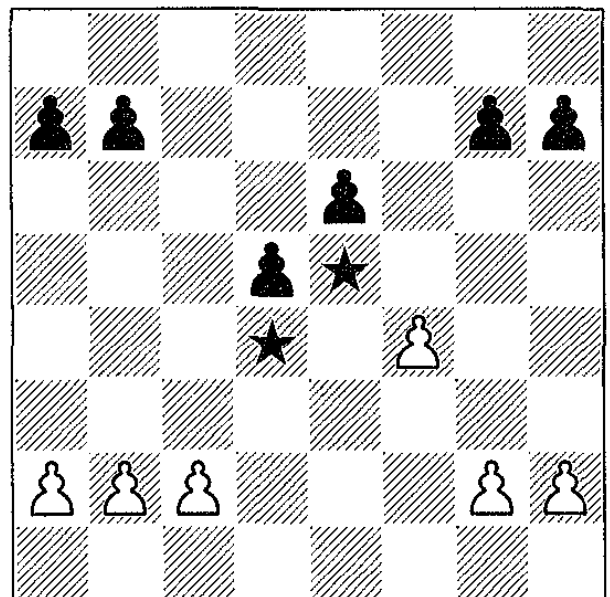
White's third attacking method is the famous 'Greek Gift' sacrifice. White plays ♔xh7+ when ...♔xh7,



♞g5+ ♔g8, ♕d3 (or ♕h5 if the queen is on d1) followed by ♕h7+ hounds the black king. Whether this is good or bad for White depends on the specific tactical circumstances.

Black plays ...f6

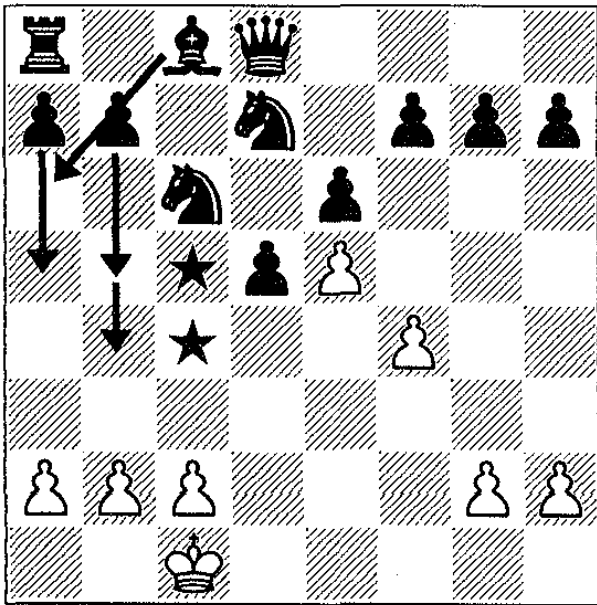
This good all-purpose move liquidates the e5-pawn and so negates White's Greek Gift idea.



However, Black has to make sure that after the exchange exf6 ♕xf6 (or a recapture with another piece), he has enough piece activity to fight for

control of the central dark squares, d4 and e5. Otherwise, White may gain a strong dark-square bind in the centre, in which case the d5- and e6-pawns will be sickly and vulnerable.

Black's queenside attack



If White does castle queenside (in preparation for a kingside attack), Black can make use of his queenside pawns and the half-open c-file to launch a rival attack on White's king, by utilising the half-open c-file, his queenside pawns and/or his knight pair via the key squares c5 and c4. It has the added virtue that, if Black achieves the advances ...b4 and ...a5, the problem bishop on c8 can emerge to active play via a6. Very precise calculation is needed in such a tactical race, which bears some of the hallmarks of certain lines of the Open Sicilian.

By leaving his king in the centre (where it is fairly safe behind the blocked pawns), Black rules out the

Greek Gift and reduces the value of White's advances such as f5. The immediate utilisation of the queenside pawns either dissuades White from castling queenside (in which case Black can castle kingside with no fear of a pawn attack) or, if White persists in castling queenside, places the white king speedily under attack. Sometimes Black even castles queenside. This can wrong-foot the white set-up, which is geared to attack on Black's kingside after the anticipated ...0-0. At the time of writing, theory regards this as one of Black's most promising approaches to the Classical centre.

White castles kingside

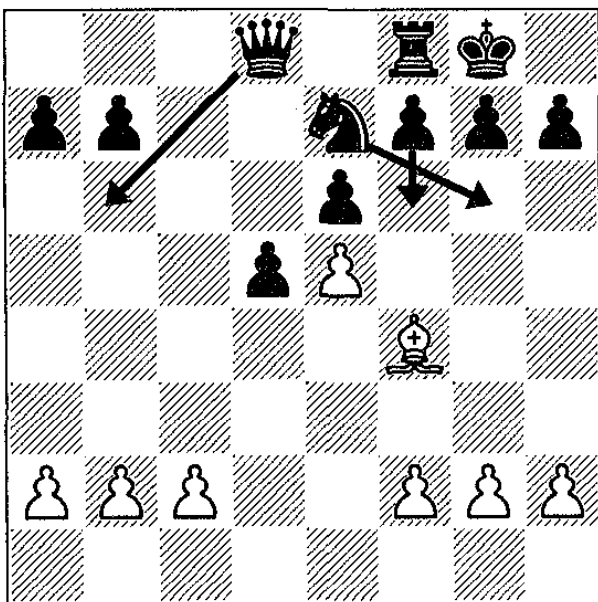
This is a more modest approach to the position than 0-0-0. White renounces any attempt to mate his opponent with a direct pawn attack. Instead, he simply develops and waits for Black's ...f6, which is more or less necessary if Black is to break White's pawn hold on the centre. Then White hopes that after e5xf6, he can utilise the e5-square as an outpost square for a knight. It is not all plain sailing though: the f4-pawn leaves the dark squares around White's king slightly weak, and furthermore, if it has to be defended by g3, then this also means rather weak light squares.

White avoids f4

So far we have considered positions in which White supports his pawn on

e5 with f4. However, sometimes he avoids this advance and instead bolsters his pawn with ♔f4. The advantage of this method is that the weakness created on the a7-g1 diagonal after f4 is avoided. Also, the c1-bishop isn't shut in behind its pawns, as is the case after f4.

Aron Nimzowitsch was particularly fond of this set-up and used it to illustrate his principle of over-protection, to which we have already alluded in Chapter 2. In *My System*, he wrote that just as “we have the enigmatic circumstance that blockading squares prove themselves as a rule to be in every respect good squares; and the pieces detailed for dull blockade duty find, unexpectedly, their reward in the possibility of a heightened activity from their blockading station, just as in a fairy-tale where good deeds are always rewarded. The idea of over-protection is ... no other than that ... though in an expanded form”, i.e. each piece used to protect the chosen strong point (here e5) will more than likely find itself well placed for the ensuing play.



The strategic drawback here is that White's space advantage in the centre can easily be eliminated by a timely ...f6. There are tactical disadvantages too: Black can play ...♘e7-g6, gaining time by attacking the f4-bishop, or perhaps disrupt White with ...♚b6, attacking b2. Also, after ...f6 and the opening of the f-file, the f4-bishop may find itself the target of a rook on f8.

Illustrative games

Game 13
Kasparov – Timman
Horgen 1995
 Steinitz Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘c3	♘f6
4	e5	♘fd7
5	f4	

This is the standard move. It also follows the advice of the first world champion, Wilhelm Steinitz: “When you have advanced e5, support it as soon as possible with f4.” White can instead choose to support the pawn with his bishop: 5 ♘f3 (the line 5 ♘ce2 c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 f4 is analysed in the previous chapter) 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♘c6 7 ♔f4. Then, the game Spaskey-Petrosian, Moscow Wch (19) 1966 continued 7...♔xc5 8 ♔d3 f6 9 exf6 ♘xf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♘e5 ♔d7 12 ♘xc6 ♔xc6 13 ♚e2 ♚e7 (13...♘e4!?) 14 ♚ae1 ♚ae8 15 ♔g3 a6 16 a3 ♚f7 17 b4 ♔d4 18 ♔e5 ♔xe5 19 ♚xe5 ♘d7 20 ♚g3 e5 21 f3 and now Black should have played

21...♖f6!? or 21...♞e7 with satisfactory chances.

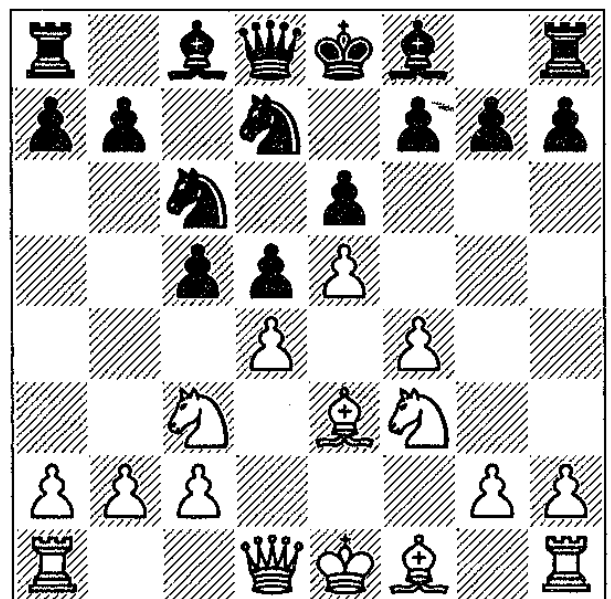
5 ... c5
6 ♖f3 ♖c6

Almost automatic, but at Tilburg in 1993, Korchnoi tried to bamboozle Beliavsky with 6...♖b6!?. For a time, the game continuation justified the delayed development of the queen's knight: 7 ♖a4 (the only direct attempt to punish Black because 7 ♖e3 ♖c6 transposes to normal lines; alternatively, Black could try to avoid main-line theory by answering 7 ♖e3 with 7...a6 8 ♖a4 ♖c6 or 7...♖xb2!?) 7...♖c6! 8 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 9 dxc5 ♖xc5 10 ♖d3 ♖b6 11 c3 a5 12 ♖b3 and now Korchnoi should have played 12...♖c6 finally developing his knight, when chances are equal. Instead, he took one liberty too many, playing 12...♖a7?, avoiding the exchange of queens. Perhaps he hoped that he could exploit White's apparent inability to castle kingside. If White has to castle queenside then he will face a strong attack. However, Beliavsky found a clever way to seize control of d4 and get his king to the kingside: 13 ♖c2! (attacking h7) 13...h6 14 ♖d4! ♖c6 (capturing twice on d4 allows ♖xc8+) 15 ♖e3 (fortifying d4; now 15...♖xd4 16 cxd4 ♖xd4? loses to 17 ♖a4+) 15...♖xd4 (if 15...0-0 then 16 ♖b5 ♖b6 17 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 18 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 19 ♖xf2 is a good endgame for White) 16 cxd4 ♖b4 (not 16...♖xd4 17 ♖a4+, but Black must do something fast or White will consolidate with 17 ♖f2 and 18 0-0 when he has a space advantage and the two bishops) 17 ♖b5+

♖d7 18 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 19 ♖a4+ ♖e7 20 0-0 (the defeat of Black's strategy) 20...♞hc8 21 f5! and, because 21...♖c2 achieves nothing after 22 ♞ac1 ♖xe3 23 ♖a3+ and 24 ♖xe3, White eventually exploited the precarious position of the black king to force a win.

7 ♖e3 (D)

We know that White aims to achieve firm control over d4 in the Classical centre so this move is natural and good. With the same idea, 7 ♖e2 has been tried, hoping to establish a knight on d4 after 7...cxd4?! 8 ♖exd4, and if Black refrains from 7...cxd4, White may choose to set up an 'f4 central clamp' with 8 c3. However, in Yudasin-Glek, Tilburg 1994, Black responded with the vigorous 7...b5!. Now White has no effective plan since Black is ready to answer 8 c3 with 8...b4 followed by ...♖a6 and ...♖a5. So Yudasin chose 8 a3 but, after 8...♞b8 9 ♖e3 b4 10 axb4 ♞xb4, Black had plenty of activity on the queenside.



B

7 ... cxd4

For 7...♖b6 8 ♗a4 ♖a5+ 9 c3, see Game 12 in the previous chapter. Black's main alternative is 7...a6. The idea is to utilise the queenside pawns to dissuade White from adopting the aggressive stance of queenside castling. If White perseveres with this plan, his king soon finds itself in danger. For example, Chandler-Andersson, Haninge 1988 went 8 ♖d2 b5 9 dxc5 (if 9 0-0-0 then 9...c4 intending 10...b4 looks strong) 9...♙xc5 10 0-0-0?! ♖b6 11 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 12 ♙d3 b4 13 ♗e2 a5 14 ♗ed4 ♗xd4 15 ♗xd4 0-0 16 ♔b1 a4 and the black pawns were already menacing the white king.

Thus White does better to castle kingside. However, at the time of writing Black seems to achieve comfortable equality by forcing the exchange of light-squared bishops. For example, Mainka-Glek, Recklinghaven 1995, went 8 ♖d2 b5 9 dxc5 ♙xc5 10 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 11 ♖f2 ♖b6 12 ♙d3 b4 13 ♗e2 a5 14 0-0 ♙a6 15 ♔h1 ♗e7 16 ♚fd1 (16 ♗g3 – intending 17 ♗h5 – 16...g6 17 ♗e2 ♚b8 18 ♙xa6 ♗xa6 19 ♗ed4 ♗c5 led to unclear play in Lutz-Glek, Germany 1995) 16...h6 17 ♗ed4 0-0 18 ♖h4 (the beginning of a bad plan; Glek recommends 18 ♗b3 with equality) 18...♚a7 19 g4? (our old friend the g4 advance, but here it is not properly supported by the white pieces and so merely leads to the break-up of White's kingside) 19...♗g6! 20 ♙xg6 fxg6 21 f5 ♚af7! and Black's pieces were poised to take advantage of the open lines on the kingside.

8 ♗xd4 ♙c5

Far sharper is the alternative 8...♖b6. Then in Hübner-Korchnoi, San Francisco 1995, White's attempt at a knockout blow with 9 ♗cb5 rebounded: 9...a6! 10 ♗f5 ♙c5 11 ♙xc5 [*Editor's note:* Nunn analysed 11 ♗bd6+ ♔f8 12 ♖h5 ♗d8 13 ♗xg7 ♙xe3 14 ♗xe6+ fxe6 15 ♖h6+ ♔e7 16 ♖g5+ as leading to a draw] 11...♗xc5 12 ♗bd6+ (12 ♗xg7+ ♔f8) 12...♔f8 13 ♖h5? (13 ♗xc8 was forced but Black is better) 13...♗d8 14 ♗xg7 (White must do or die, as a retreat allows 14...♖xb2) 14...♖b4+! (not 14...♔xg7 15 ♖g5+ ♔f8 16 ♖h6+ ♔e7 {16...♔g8? 17 ♗e8} 17 ♖f6+) 15 c3 ♖xb2 16 ♚d1 ♖xc3+ 17 ♚d2 h6! 18 ♗ge8 ♗e4! and White resigned since after 19 ♗xe4 dxe4 he cannot prevent both 20...e3 and 20...♔xe8.

So White should reply to 8...♖b6 with 9 ♖d2. Now White threatens 10 ♗xe6, which virtually forces Black to take the b-pawn. The question is how poisoned it is. The dose proved lethal in the game de Firmian-Hübner, Polanica Zdroj 1995: 9...♖xb2 10 ♚b1 ♖a3 11 ♙b5 ♗xd4 12 ♙xd4 ♙b4 13 ♚b3 ♖a5 14 a3 ♙e7 15 f5!? exf5 16 ♗xd5 ♙h4+ 17 ♔d1 ♖d8? (17...♖xd2+ 18 ♔xd2 ♙d8! defends satisfactorily according to de Firmian) 18 ♗f6+!! (this amazing move leaves Black defenceless) 18...gxf6 19 exf6 0-0 (there was no way to avert the threat of 20 ♖e3+ ♔f8 21 ♖h6+ ♔e8 22 ♚e3+ mating; de Firmian was planning to answer 19...h6 with 20 ♖b4! intending 21 ♚e3+) 20 ♚g3+! ♔h8 (or it is mate in two) 21

♖h6 ♜g8 22 ♜g7 ♘f8 and Black resigned before White could play 23 ♜xg8+.

We have seen two complete games emanating from 8...♖b6: one is a crushing win for White, the other an even more crushing win for Black. You may be wondering why such attention is given to a sideline? No, we do not have a vendetta against Hübner, who happened to be the victim in both cases. Rather, we think he is to be praised for testing the most critical variations and thereby developing theory in the process. Instead, we wish to warn of the danger of playing a sharp line with insufficient knowledge. If a super-grandmaster such as Hübner can be beaten so quickly, then care is obviously needed!

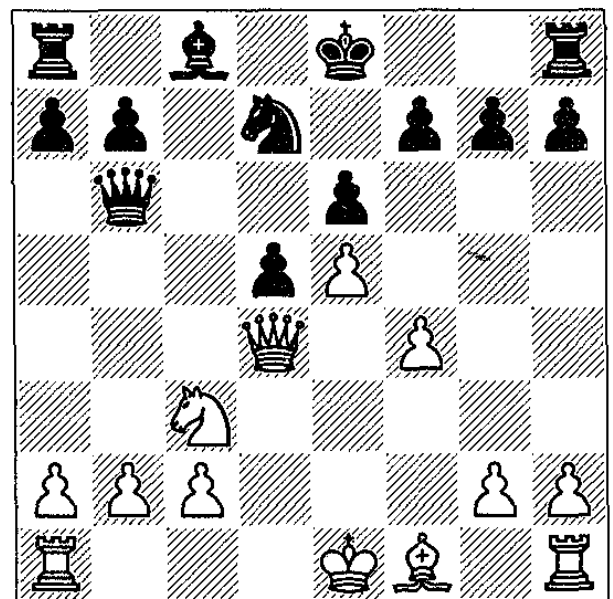
9 ♖d2 ♙xd4

This leads to a simplified position with a small edge to White. Instead, 9...0-0 would maintain the tension. Kasparov-Short, Amsterdam 1994, continued 10 0-0-0 a6 11 h4 ♘xd4 12 ♙xd4 b5 13 ♜h3 b4 14 ♘a4 ♙xd4 15 ♖xd4. Here Short played the logical 15...f6, planning to break up White's centre, but unfortunately for him there was a tactical flaw. After 16 ♖xb4 fxe5 17 ♖d6! ♖f6 (apparently all is well for Black) 18 f5!!, Short was left facing a typical Kasparov attack, since 18...exf5? 19 ♖xd5+ wins, as does 18...♖xf5 19 ♜f3 ♖g4 20 ♜xf8+ ♘xf8 21 ♘b6. So Short tried 18...♖h6+ but 19 ♙b1 ♜xf5 20 ♜f3 ♜xf3 21 gxf3 ♖f6 22 ♙h3 ♙f7 23 c4! proved too strong. Black was unable to develop his

pieces as the a4-knight, rather than misplaced, was always ready to swoop into b6 should Black try ...♘f8.

You should always remember to investigate the specific tactical features of a position before embarking on a plan. In our introduction, we pointed out the virtue of Black's ...b4 chasing the white knight 'off-side' to a4. We also eulogised ...f6 to attack White's centre. In this instance, Short carried out both ideas and was soundly thrashed! However, it should be mentioned that the a4-knight only became a monster because of 15...f6?. If Black had played 15...♖a5, answering 16 b3 with 16...♙b7 and then 17...♙c6, Black would have had adequate play. So the only 'culprit' was Black's 15th move – and Kasparov's brilliant play of course!

10 ♙xd4 ♘xd4
11 ♖xd4 ♖b6 (D)



W

12 ♖d2!?

An interesting idea from the world champion. In the earlier game

Short-Timman, Novgorod 1995, White had tried 12 ♖xb6 but he achieved nothing against Black's active defence: 12...♟xb6 13 a4 ♔e7! (the king is needed in the centre) 14 a5 ♞d7 15 g3 g5! (beginning to undermine White's centre) 16 ♔d2 gxf4 17 gxf4 f6! 18 exf6+ ♟xf6 19 ♕d3 ♕d7 20 ♞e2 ♞hg8 21 ♞hg1 ♔d6 22 c3 and a draw was agreed. The f4-pawn is weaker than anything in Black's position.

Another idea is 12 ♞b5, as seen in Gofshtein-Chernin, Brno 1993. After 12...♞xd4 13 ♞xd4, Black quickly fell into a bind: 13...♔e7 14 h4 h5 15 ♞h3! (our familiar move but with a new twist) 15...a6 16 ♞c3! and Black couldn't free his game with 16...♞b8 due to 17 ♞c7+ winning the b7-pawn after 17...♕d7, so he tried 16...♞a7 hoping to play 17...♞b8 next move. However, White maintained the pressure with 17 b4! ready to answer 17...♞b8 with 18 b5 axb5 19 ♞xb5 and then 20 ♞c7+, etc. Black was boxed in after 17...f6 18 ♞c7 fxe5 19 fxe5 ♞a8 (or else 20 ♞c6+ follows) 20 c4 ♞e8 21 cxd5 exd5 22 ♞ac1 but somehow wriggled out to a draw. After the game, Gofshtein suggested that Black should challenge the d4-knight as soon as possible: 13...a6 (ruling out ♞b5 ideas) followed by ...♞b8, ...♕d7 and ...♞c6.

Kasparov prefers to keep queens on the board.

12 ... ♞c5

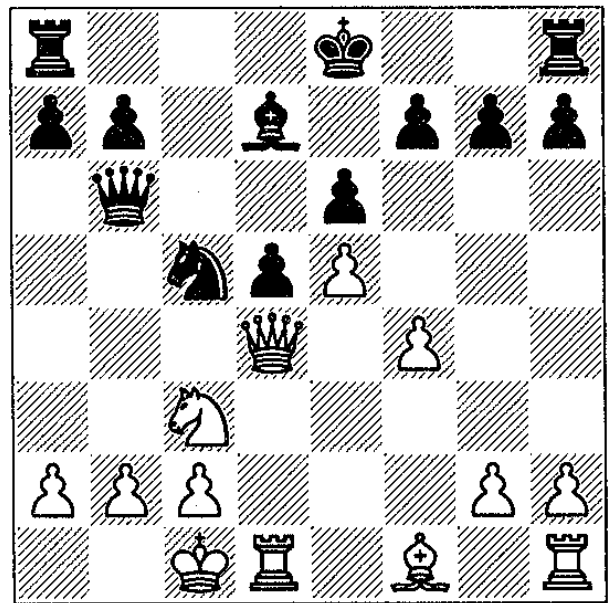
Black could win two pawns with 12...♞xb2 13 ♞b1 ♞a3 14 ♞b5 (or Black consolidates with 14...♞c5)

14...♞xa2. Then after 15 ♞d6+ ♔f8 16 ♞b3 (16 ♞b4 a5! 17 ♞b5 ♞xc2) 16...♞c5, there is no clear line for White despite his evident pressure. However, snatching pawns against Kasparov is a risky business and it is no surprise that Timman declines the chance for glory.

13 0-0-0 ♕d7

14 ♞d4!! (D)

A paradoxical return to the centre. However, Kasparov realises that normal development with 14 ♕e2 allows 14...♞a4! when after 15 ♞xa4 ♕xa4, the exchange of knights has freed Black's game and he is ready to attack c2 with ...♞c8.



B

14 ... a6

An interesting moment. According to his notes in *Informator 65*, Timman thinks this may be superfluous. During the game, he was apparently afraid of the line 14...0-0-0 15 b4 ♞a4 16 ♞xa4 when 16...♞xd4? 17 ♞xd4 ♕xa4 18 b5 wins a piece. However, in the calm of his study he concludes that 16...♕xa4 17 ♞xb6

axb6 18 ♔d3 is in fact only slightly better for White. But instead of 18 ♔d3, 18 b5 d4 (or 18...♔c7 19 ♖d4 ♗a8 20 h4 ♗a5 21 ♖b4 followed by ♗h3-a3 is ±; *Editor's note: Black may be able to survive this; there is also 18...♔d7, which deserves attention*) 19 ♔c4! (preventing 19...♗d5) 19...♔c7 20 ♗d3 followed by ♗a3 is ±. Perhaps we can philosophise that a good player's intuition is often more dependable than his post-game rationalisation of why he played certain moves!

15 h4

Here 15 b4 would miss its mark after 15...♗a4 16 ♗xa4 ♖xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♔xa4.

15 ... 0-0-0!

White has a ready-made attack on the black king after 15...0-0 16 h5 or perhaps better 16 f5!? intending 17 f6. Therefore Black prefers the relative safety of the queenside as the home for his king. Of course, his pawn structure there is loosened but on the other hand there are many black pieces at hand to offer their services to the king, and no threat of a white pawn storm.

16 ♗h3!

The standard manoeuvre to bring the king's rook into active play. Now Black has to reckon with 17 ♗xd5 exd5 18 ♗c3.

16 ... ♔c6

If he is given time, Black will play 17...♔c7 followed by 18...♗e4 with a good position. White's following manoeuvre is destined to prevent this, or at least to render it less effective. An important part of White's

plan is to deploy his knight to the key d4-square.

17 ♗e2! ♔b8

17...♔c7 allows White a small advantage after 18 ♗c3 ♗e4 19 ♖xb6+ ♔xb6 20 ♖b3+ ♔c7 21 ♗d4.

18 ♗c3 ♗a4

19 ♖xb6 ♗xb6

20 ♗d4 ♔d7

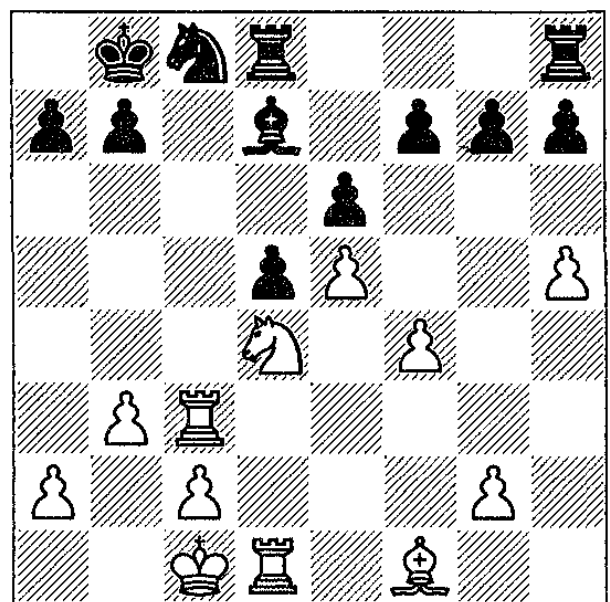
21 b3?!

Kasparov realises he has achieved all he can with his pieces and now tries to strengthen his position with his pawns. However, here, according to Timman, White should have increased his space advantage on the kingside with 21 h5. The text-move wastes an important tempo, which allows Black to re-deploy his knight to a more effective square.

21 ... ♗c8

22 h5 (D)

This is not to stop ...g6, which is positionally unjustifiable, but to stop ...h5, which would be the strong reply to 22 g4?.



B

22 ... ♗e7

From here the knight is able to challenge its white counterpart with ...♞c6 but its main function is to deter a white breakthrough with f5 (after the preparatory g4).

23 g4

If White hadn't squandered a tempo with 21 b3 it would now be his move and he could play ♔h3, answering ...♞df8 with f5, obtaining a good position.

23 ... ♞df8

24 g5!?

White still keeps an edge after 24 ♔h3 f6 25 exf6 (or 25 ♞e3) 25...♞xf6 26 ♞e1.

24 ... h6

Avoiding the trap 24...f6? 25 h6! when, as 25...fxe5 loses to 26 hxg7, Black has to enter a positionally lost game after 25...gxh6 26 gxf6.

25 ♞h3 g6

25...f6 is bad due to 26 exf6 gxf6 27 g6 e5 28 ♞e3! (or 28 g7). It is imperative for Black to break up the white pawn phalanx if he hopes to escape from his constricted position.

26 hxg6 ♞xg6

27 ♞xh6

27 gxh6 ♞xf4 28 ♞h2 f6! is clearly good for Black since the h6-pawn is indefensible after 29 exf6 ♞xf6.

27 ... ♞xf4?

Timman points out that 27...♞xh6 28 gxh6 ♞h8 wins the h6-pawn and therefore equalises. It seems that Black was trying for the advantage by proving that the g5-pawn is weak.

28 ♔d3 ♞hg8

29 ♞g1 ♞g7

30 ♔d2 ♞fg8

31 ♔h7!

This unexpected blow is the refutation of Black's plan, as 31...♞xg5 32 ♞f1! wins material.

31 ... ♞h8

32 ♔e3?

White would maintain a small advantage after 32 ♞g4 ♞gxh7 33 ♞xf4 (Timman).

32 ... ♞hxb7

33 ♞xh7 ♞xh7

34 ♔xf4 ♞h4+

35 ♞g4 ♞h1

Of course Black avoids the bad bishop versus good knight endgame after 35...♞xg4+? 36 ♔xg4. Instead he activates his rook, preparing to attack the white queenside pawns as quickly as possible.

36 ♞f3 ♞c1

37 ♞g2 ♔c7

38 a4 ♔d8

The black king rushes over to the kingside to dissuade any attempt at a breakthrough with g6.

39 ♞h2 ♔e8

40 ♔e3 1/2-1/2

It is fortunate for Black that his rook is so well placed. Otherwise, the wretched light-squared bishop would seriously compromise his game. But all is well, and at this point Kasparov gave up the game as a draw since progress is impossible.

Game 14

Wedberg – Korchnoi

Haninge 1989

Classical Variation

1 e4 e6

2 d4 d5

3 ♖c3 ♗f6
4 ♙g5

White aims to exchange dark-squared bishops before playing e5. But this gives Black extra options. Black can (and often does) play 4...dxe4 escaping from the material in this chapter and reaching a position discussed in Chapter 7 (under the Rubinstein centre). Thus when White plays 4 ♙g5, he has to be ready to play two completely different pawn structures. Furthermore, Black also has the less frequently used option 4...♙b4, which is discussed in Chapter 5 (under the Winawer centre). In contrast, after 4 e5 we definitely remain within the boundaries of this chapter.

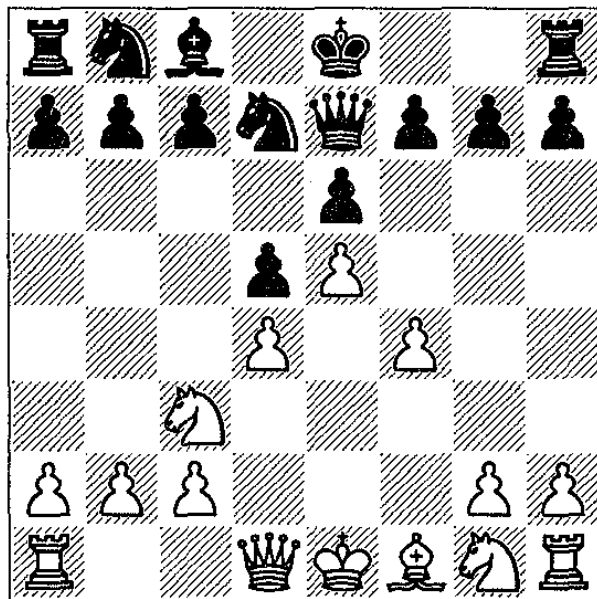
4 ... ♙e7
5 e5 ♗fd7

Occasionally 5...♗e4 has been tried here, but the variation 6 ♗xe4 dxe4 (6...♙xg5 7 ♗xg5 ♖xg5 8 ♗f3 is rather passive for Black) 7 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 8 ♖e2 b6 9 0-0-0 (9 ♖xe4 ♖b4+ and ...♖xb2) 9...♙b7 10 g3! seems unsatisfactory for Black, because the e4-pawn is a liability after 11 ♙g2, and if 10...e3, 11 f3.

6 ♙xe7

White can also choose to gambit a pawn with 6 h4!? ♙xg5 (6...c5!? is very complex but probably equal) 7 hxg5 ♖xg5. Then the game Khalifman-Gulko, Reykjavik 1991, continued 8 ♗h3 ♖e7 9 ♗f4 ♗c6 10 ♖g4 ♗xd4 11 0-0-0 ♗f5 12 ♗fxd5! exd5 13 ♗xd5 ♖xe5 with an unclear position.

6 ... ♖xe7
7 f4 (D)



B

White has reached the same kind of structure as in the previous game but with the dark-squared bishops already exchanged. There are several plus points to this. First, he has avoided his bishop being trapped inside his pawn structure by the f4 advance, when, theoretically at least, the dark-squared bishop becomes a 'bad' bishop. Moreover, the exchange of bishops has disposed of Black's 'good' bishop – the one that can fight for important squares such as d4 – and slightly misplaced the black queen. The queen ideally wants to go to b6 (after ...c5) to attack d4 and b2, and so has been dragged off course to e7.

However, there are also disadvantages. First, as already mentioned, there is the practical difficulty that the move-order needed to reach this position gives Black extra options, in particular the popular 4...dxe4. Secondly, a big empire requires a lot of defenders, and conversely, a little kingdom can suffer through overpopulation. Thus, it is not entirely

logical for White, who is seizing a lot of space in the centre, to have eased the congestion in Black's position by an exchange of bishops. Why not keep the bishop to help defend the crucial d4-square? Theory has not yet reached a decision as to whether White should exchange bishops first or not. Perhaps both 4 ♖g5 and 4 e5 are equally good (and bad).

7 ... 0-0

An important decision. The ideal strategic move for Black is 7...c5, striking immediately at the white centre. Unfortunately for Black, this would allow 8 ♘b5! when, in view of the twin threats of 9 ♙c7+ and 9 ♙d6+, Black is in serious trouble.

Therefore Black elects to castle, when he can follow up with ...c5 without worrying about ♘b5. However, in committing his king so early, Black makes it easier for White to form a plan. Notably, a white pawn storm on the kingside would be much less effective if the black king were still in the centre, especially if castling queenside were still an option. Also, there would be no Greek Gift sacrifices with an early ♙d3 and ♙xh7+.

In view of this, Black has tried delaying castling with 7...a6. The reasoning is that 7...a6 not only prevents ♘b5 after ...c5, but it also prepares ...b5 as part of a queenside demonstration, assuming that White has castled queenside, as he usually does. Should things ever get dangerous for the black king in the centre, then ...0-0-0 is an option (though this is unlikely to be combined with

...b5). Usually, Black will eventually castle kingside after 7...a6, but he hopes that in not revealing so quickly where his king will live, he is reducing his opponent's possible attacking plans.

At Reykjavik in 1991, the American grandmaster Yasser Seirawan tried 7...a6 three times. All the games continued 8 ♙f3 c5 9 ♗d2 ♙c6 10 dxc5 ♙xc5.

Now Chandler played 11 0-0-0 when the value of 7...a6 over 7...0-0 became apparent: 11...b5! 12 ♙d3 b4 13 ♙e2 a5 and in view of the menacing advance of Black's queenside pawns, White tried for counterplay with 14 f5. However, he ended up in a bad position after 14...♙xd3+ 15 ♗xd3 ♙a6 16 ♗e3 ♙xe2! (it is a good sign for Black that he can get rid of his bad bishop) 17 ♗xe2 0-0! – at last Black castles and the weakness of e5 gives him the advantage. White managed to scrape a draw but it wasn't pleasant for him.

The other two games continued 11 ♙d3 0-0. Then Hjartarson played 12 0-0 but this was well answered by 12...f5!. Now 13...♙e4 is an intolerable threat, so White was forced to give up his space advantage with 13 exf6. After 13...♗xf6 14 g3 ♙d7 15 ♖ae1, Seirawan claims that Black has full equality with 15...h6 (ruling out ♙g5 ideas) followed by ...♙e8 and then ...♙h5 or ...♙xd3 and ...♙g6. Ljubojević did best, delaying castling, playing 12 ♗e3 f5 13 exf6 ♙xd3+ 14 ♗xd3 ♗xf6 15 g3 ♙d7 16 ♙g5! ♗f5 17 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 and only then 18 0-0-0 ±.

8 ♖f3 c5
9 ♕d2

9 dxc5 normally indicates that White plans to castle kingside. One possible continuation is 9...♘xc5 10 ♙d3 f6 11 exf6 ♖xf6 12 g3 ♘c6 13 0-0 ♙d7 14 ♖d2. White would like to gain control of the weak dark squares in Black's centre, maybe beginning with ♗ae1 followed by ♘e5. However, Black's pieces are well mobilised and he should have nothing to fear as long as he plays actively. In the game Arnason-Bareev, Sochi 1988, Black went on to obtain excellent play by means of a pawn sacrifice: 14...♘xd3 15 cxd3 e5!? 16 ♗ae1 exf4 17 ♘xd5 ♖d6 18 ♘xf4 ♙g4 19 ♖e3 ♗ad8 with dynamic play.

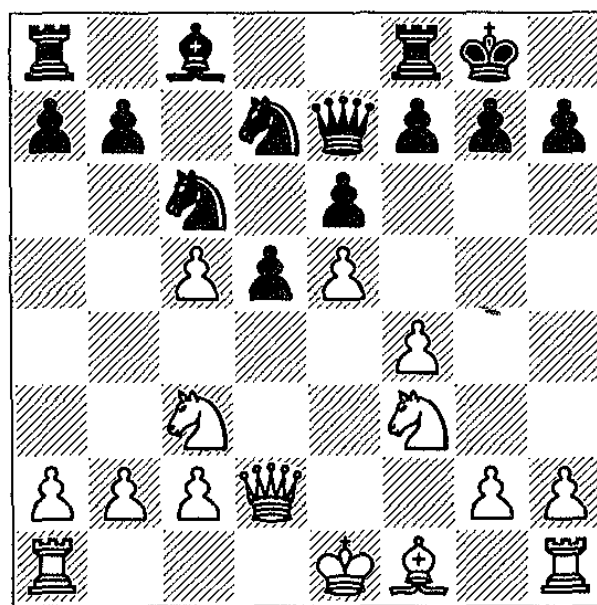
White's king is not altogether happy on the kingside in this variation: after the necessary g3 (to support f4) his kingside pawn structure is rather flimsy.

9 ... ♘c6
10 dxc5 (D)

Also possible is 10 0-0-0 when in McDonald-Crouch, Douai 1992, Black played the radical 10...c4!?. This completely changes the normal course of the struggle, since the centre is now firmly blocked. In the game, White gained a strong attack: 11 ♘b5 (heading for d6 and mechanically blocking the advance ...b5) 11...♗b8 12 h4 ♘b6 13 ♗h3 ♙d7 14 ♘c3! (a paradoxical retreat but the knight has served its duty on b5 – the advance of Black's b-pawn has been held up – and 14 ♘d6 ♘c8! helps Black after 15 ♘xc8 ♗fxc8

followed by ...b5, etc.) 14...♘a8?! 15 f5! and the threat of 16 f6! obliged Black to play 15...f6 when his central position collapsed after 16 ♗e1 fxe5 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♗xf5 19 ♗xf5 exf5 20 ♘xd5, etc. Nevertheless, Black's idea to 'punish' White for omitting dxc5 is interesting and Black's play in the game above can almost certainly be improved.

In the game Larsen-Bareev, Hastings 1990/1, play continued along more normal lines: 10 0-0-0 cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘b6 12 ♖e3 ♙d7 13 ♖b1 ♖c5 14 h4 ♗ac8 15 ♗h3 ♘a5?! 16 ♘b3! ♖xe3 17 ♗xe3 ♘ac4 18 ♗f3 f6 19 exf6 ♗xf6 20 ♘d4 and White had an endgame advantage. A better bid for equality is 15...♘xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♘a4!?) 16...♘a4!? exploiting the weakness of the c2-square to force some favourable exchanges.



B

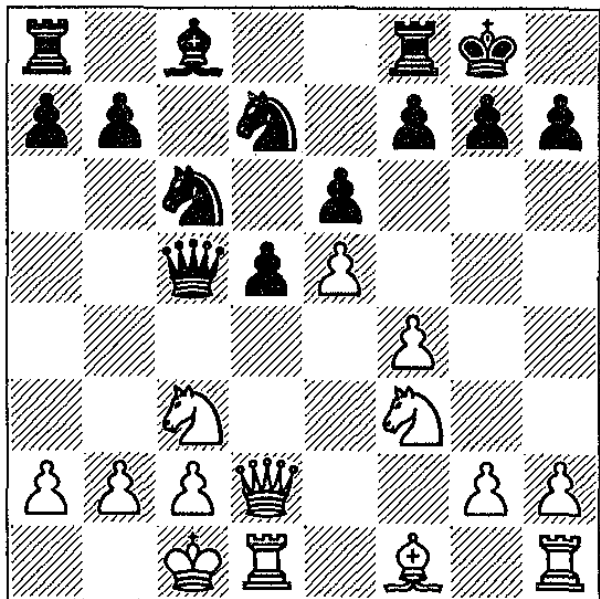
10 ... ♖xc5

The other recapture 10...♘xc5 also has its advocates, but it seems that White keeps the advantage after

11 0-0-0 a6 12 ♔b1 (or the immediate 12 ♕d3) 12...♕d7 13 ♖e3!. This is a key move with many tactical points. First, White plans 14 ♕d3 followed by the Greek Gift sacrifice 15 ♕xh7+. Second, he is ready to answer 13...♞ac8 with 14 f5! threatening to overload the black queen, which must guard the c5-knight, with a subsequent f6. Finally, after 13...b5 White has the interesting sacrifice 14 ♞xd5!? exd5 15 ♘xd5 followed by 16 ♖xc5 with the initiative. Nevertheless, this last variation is the one Black should probably choose. Instead, in the game Dolmatov-Draško, Sochi 1988, Black continued 13...♞fd8 and found himself in a worse endgame after 14 ♕d3 ♘xd3+ 15 cxd3 (15 ♞xd3 is also good) 15...f6 16 ♘e2 fxe5 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♖f6 19 ♘d4 ♖xe5 20 fxe5 ♞f8 21 ♞hf1, etc. Black has a bad bishop and White's knight is on an optimal square where it is well centralised and safe from attack. It is no wonder that the second player was slowly ground down.

The reader should compare this line with the note at move 7 above. It is apparent that 10...♘xc5 fits in much better if Black has postponed ...0-0, since then there is no Greek Gift sacrifice and Black has an extra move for a queenside pawn attack on White's king. This is well illustrated by the Chandler-Speelman excerpt at move 7, but as we also saw at move 7, White can delay 0-0-0 and wait for Black to castle, when the plan of ♖e3 and ♕d3 will once again be a good response to ...♘xc5.

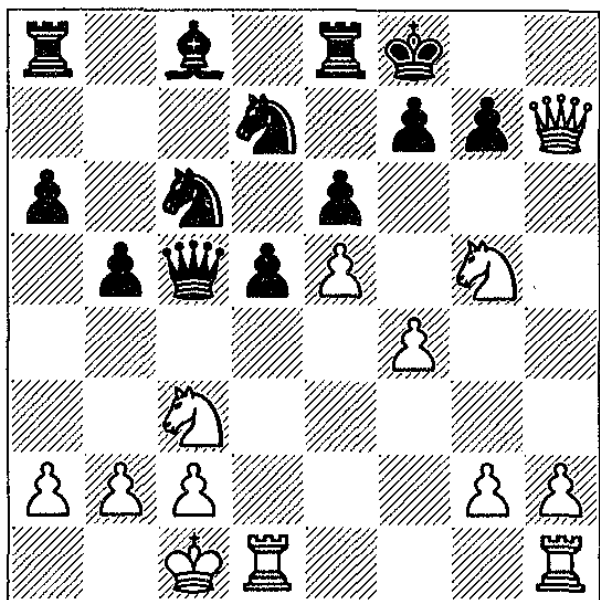
11 0-0-0 (D)



B

11 ... ♘b6

The Greek Gift sacrifice proved fatal for Black in Chandler-Agnos, London Lloyds Bank 1989, after 11...a6 12 ♕d3 b5? (he had to try something like 12...♘b4 or 12...♞e8) 13 ♕xh7+! ♔xh7 14 ♘g5+ ♔g8 15 ♖d3 ♞e8 16 ♖h7+ ♔f8 (D).



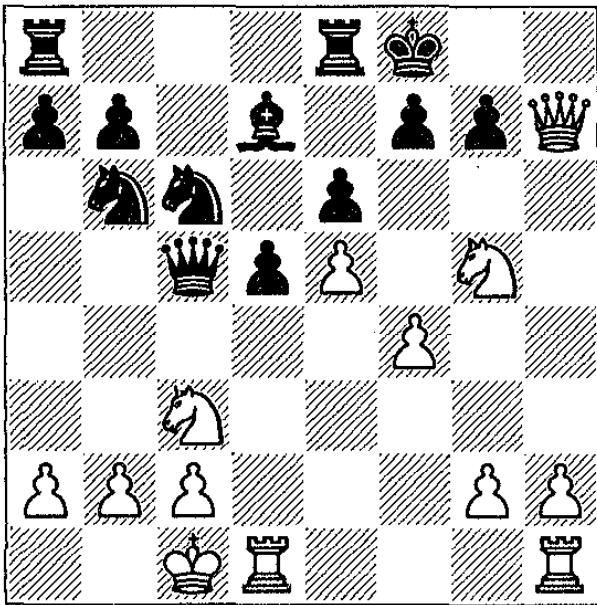
W

17 ♖h5! ♘d8 18 ♘h7+ ♔g8 19 ♞d3 ♖e7 20 ♞h3 f6 21 ♘xf6+! ♘xf6 (21...gxf6 22 ♖h8+ quickly

mates) 22 exf6 and Black resigned because both 22...♖xf6 23 ♗xe8+ and 22...♗f7 23 ♗h8# are winning for White.

12 ♘d4

This is not White's most dangerous idea. Greek Gift themes are still critical. White can play a prophylactic 12 ♖b1 or immediately jump in with 12 ♙d3 ♙d7 13 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 14 ♘g5+ ♖g8 15 ♗d3 ♗fe8 16 ♗h7+ ♖f8 (D).



W

Black has the annoying threat of ...♗e3+ and ...♗xf4, e.g. 17 ♗h8+ ♖e7 18 ♗xg7 ♗e3+ 19 ♖b1 ♗xf4 20 ♗hf1 ♗g8!, so Van der Wiel-Korchnoi, Amsterdam 1991 continued 17 ♗he1 but, after 17...♗b4 18 ♗h8+ ♖e7 19 ♗h4 ♖d8 20 ♘xe6+ ♖c8, Black's king had escaped to the relative safety of the queenside. White still has attacking chances but Black eventually consolidated and won.

Thus it makes sense for White to play ♖b1 before sacrificing on h7. The position in the diagram above

but with the extra moves ♖b1 and ...♗ac8 was reached in the game Sax-Timman, Rotterdam 1989. Like in Chandler-Agnos in the note to Black's 11th move, Sax continued with 18 ♗h5. Timman replied with 18...♖e7!, a defence that was not available to Agnos as his knight was still on d7, allowing ♗xf7+ ♖d8, ♘xe6+. After 19 ♘xf7 ♘a5! 20 ♘d6, a draw was agreed disappointingly early. Timman gives the possible continuation 20...♖d8 21 f5 exf5 22 ♘xe8 ♙xe8 23 ♗xf5 with obscure play.

The other idea is ♗h8+. Again returning to the diagram above, but this time adding the moves ♖b1 and ...a6, Sieiro-Gonzalez – Paneque, Cuba 1989, continued 18 ♗h4!? ♗ec8 then 19 ♗h8+ ♖e7 20 ♗xg7. With 20...♗e3+ not available, Paneque replied 20...♖d8 21 ♗xf7 ♗e7 when, according to Paneque, 22 h4 is unclear. Instead, the game continued 22 ♗g6 and Black consolidated and won after 22...♖c7 23 h4 ♗g8 24 ♗d3 ♗ac8, etc.

So, assuming Black has played ...♙d7 before the Greek Gift sacrifice, he seems to have at least equal chances. Therefore, it is no surprise that White has tried more restrained methods to keep a slight advantage in the position. Besides 12 ♘d4 in our illustrative game, White has experimented with the manoeuvre ♘c3-b5 hoping to jump in at d6. Z.Almasi-Sermek, Bukfurdo 1995 saw 12 ♙d3 ♙d7 13 ♖b1 ♗ac8 14 ♘b5!? f6!? (the black queen could find itself embarrassed for squares

after 14...a6? 15 ♖d6 ♜c7 16 c3! and 17 b4) 15 exf6 ♜xf6 16 ♖bd4 ♖xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖a4 (the d4-knight is of course immune) 18 ♖b3 ♜b6 19 ♜he1 and White achieved a good game by seizing control of the d4- and e5-squares. Instead of 14...f6, 14...♖a4 is an interesting reply to 14 ♖b5. Then the Greek Gift rebounds: 15 ♙xh7+ ♚xh7 16 ♖g5+ ♜g8 17 ♜d3 ♜fd8 18 ♜h7+ ♜f8 19 ♜h8+ ♜e7 20 ♜xg7 ♖xe5! (threatening ...♜xc2+ with mate to follow on b2) 21 ♜xe5 ♜xb5 and Black wins. Therefore White should probably answer 15 ♖d6, although 15...♜b6 16 c3 (16 c4!?) 16...♜c7 gives Black counterplay.

12	...	♙d7
13	♜b1	♜ac8
14	♙e2	♖xd4
15	♜xd4	♜a5?

Korchnoi is playing for a win and so avoids the exchange of queens. However, in the resulting middle-game, White's attack on the black king proves more potent than any counterplay Black can create on the queenside. Thus Black should have satisfied himself with 15...♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 f6!, undermining White's centre and achieving equality.

16	♜hf1	♖c4
17	♜f3!	

The rook arrives in time to bolster the c3-knight and so rule out variations with ...♖a3+.

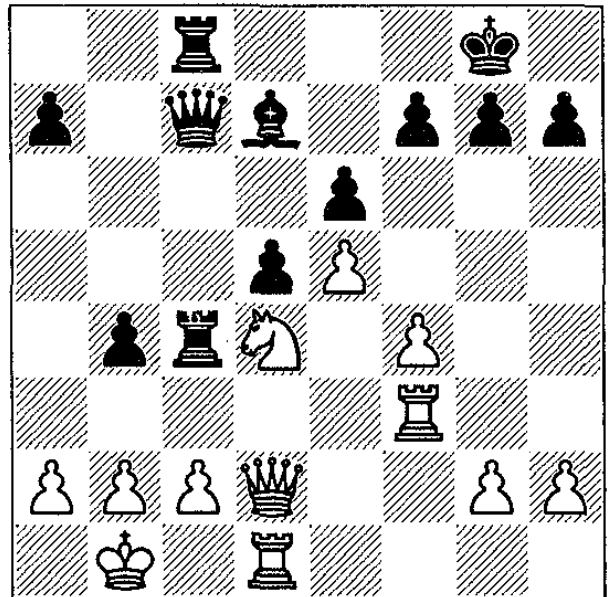
17	...	b5
18	♙xc4	♜xc4

If 18...bxc4 then 19 f5 (threatening 20 f6) 19...exf5 20 ♖xd5 is very strong.

19 ♜d2

With the incidental threat of 20 ♖xd5! ♜xd2 21 ♖e7+ ♜h8 22 ♜xd2.

19	...	b4
20	♖e2	♜fc8
21	♖d4	♜c7 (D)



W

22 ♜d3

Black threatened 22...♜xd4!. So far Black has played the aggressive moves and White has had to defend precisely. But Black's attack with his heavy pieces is now stymied. The c2-square is firmly defended and there are no other potential breakthrough points in White's position. Therefore Black now resorts to advancing his queenside pawns in an attempt to open lines. However, White can also begin a pawn onslaught against the black king and his chances of a successful outcome are far better as the kingside is denuded of black defenders. It is obvious in all this that White's knight is a far superior piece to Black's bishop. From d4, the knight can orchestrate both defensive and

aggressive manoeuvres, while the d7-bishop can do little either to help his own king or attack White's.

22 ... a5
23 ♖e1 a4
24 g4

At last White decides all is ready and begins his attack.

24 ... h6

This creates a target for White's pawn advance but if Black does nothing then White will continue (after allowing for the exchange sacrifice ...♗xd4) with f5 and f6 followed by ♖g5 and a quick mate.

25 h4 ♔a7
26 h5 ♗a8
27 g5 hxg5
28 f5! exf5
29 ♖xg5!

So the white queen gets to g5 after all. This piece sacrifice leads to an unstoppable attack.

29 ... ♗xd4
30 ♗g3 g6
31 hxg6 ♗g4
32 ♗xg4 fxg4
33 gxf7+ ♔f8
34 ♖h6+ ♔xf7
35 ♖f6+ 1-0

After 35...♔e8, 36 ♗h1 leads to a quick mate.

Game 15

Hebden – McDonald

British Ch 1989

Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘c3 ♗b4
4 e5 c5

5 ♗d2

White plans to recapture on c3 with his bishop after ...♗xc3, thereby avoiding the shattering of his queenside pawns that occurs after 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3. However, the drawback of this move is that White, temporarily at least, neglects to fight for the d4-square. This should allow Black to equalise easily. Other types of Classical centre arise after:

a) 5 a3 ♗a5 6 b4!?! (6 ♗d2 ♘c6 7 ♘b5 ♘xd4! =) 6...cxd4 7 ♘b5 (for 7 ♖g4, see Chapter 6) 7...♗c7 8 f4! ♘h6 9 ♘f3 ♗d7 10 ♘xc7+ ♖xc7 11 ♗d3 a6 12 a4! ± Atlas-Kindermann, Ptuj 1995.

b) 5 dxc5 ♘c6 6 ♘f3 ♘ge7 7 ♗d3 d4! 8 a3 ♗a5 9 b4 ♘xb4 10 axb4 ♗xb4 11 0-0 ♗xc3 12 ♗b1 h6! 13 ♘d2 ♗xd2 14 ♗xd2 ♗d7! 15 ♗xb7 ♗c6 16 ♗b4 ♖d5 ∞ Hodgson-S.Arkeell, London 1988.

c) 5 ♖g4 ♘e7 6 ♘f3 (6 dxc5 ♘bc6 7 ♗d2 transposes to analysis at move 6 below) 6...cxd4 7 ♘xd4 ♘g6! ♞.

5 ... ♘e7

The most natural move. Instead, 5...cxd4 runs into trouble after 6 ♘b5 ♗xd2+? (6...♗e7 is best) 7 ♖xd2 threatening 8 ♘d6+.

6 f4!?

Quite a rare move. White has three alternatives:

a) 6 a3 is consistent since, after 6...♗xc3 7 ♗xc3, White has acquired the two bishops without allowing the break-up of his queenside pawns. However, he cannot stabilise his centre in time to consolidate this positional advantage. For example,

Black won spectacularly in Ljubovjević-Nogueiras, Wijk aan Zee 1987 after 7...♖bc6 8 ♗f3 cxd4 9 ♗xd4!? ♗xe5 10 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 11 ♕xe5 0-0 12 ♕d3 ♗c6 13 ♕c3 d4 14 ♕d2 ♗e5! 15 ♕xh7+? ♔xh7 16 ♖h5+ ♔g8 17 ♖xe5 ♖e8 18 ♖g3 ♕c4+.

b) 6 ♗b5 ♕xd2+ 7 ♖xd2 0-0 8 c3 (after 8 dxc5 ♗d7 Black regains his pawn with equality) 8...♗bc6 9 ♗f3 a6, and since 10 ♗d6 cxd4 11 cxd4 f6! 12 ♗xc8 (best) 12...♖xc8 favours Black, White has to play 10 ♗a3, when Black equalises after 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♗f5 or 11...f6.

c) 6 dxc5 ♗bc6 7 ♖g4 0-0 8 0-0-0 (better is 8 ♕d3 ♗g6 9 ♗f3 ♕xc5 10 0-0 ±) 8...♗g6! (8...f5 9 exf6 ♖xf6 10 ♕d3 e5 11 ♖h4 h6 12 ♗e4!? ∞) 9 ♗f3 ♕xc5 (9...d4! may be even better) 10 ♖h5! ♕d7 11 ♕d3 ♗b4 12 ♕xg6 fxg6 13 ♖g4 ♖f5 14 h4 ♕e7! ♚ Harley-B.Martin, Cheltenham 1995.

6 ... ♗bc6

Now White is obliged to give up his pawn occupation of d4.

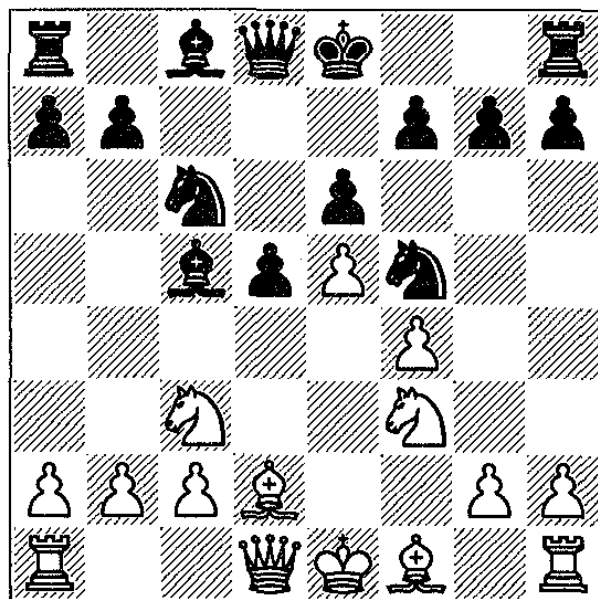
7 dxc5

If 7 ♗b5, then 7...♕xd2+ 8 ♖xd2 ♗xd4 9 ♗d6+? ♔f8 .

7 ... ♗f5

8 ♗f3 ♕xc5! (D)

The bishop is no longer interested in attacking c3. Now Black has three pieces covering the vital d4 centre square. It is now Black who hopes to prove Nimzowitsch's maxim that pieces engaged in over-protecting a key centre square will find themselves well placed almost 'by accident' for other important tasks that arise in the course of the struggle.



W

9 ♕d3 ♗h4!

Not allowing 10 ♕xf5. Instead, after the exchange of knights on f3, Black remains in firm control of d4.

10 ♖e2

In the game W.Watson-Harley, British Ch 1994, White improved with 10 ♗xh4 ♖xh4+ 11 g3 ♖d8 (11...♖h3!? W.Watson) 12 a3! stopping ...♗b4. The game then continued 12...f5?! 13 exf6 ♖xf6 14 ♖e2 0-0 15 0-0-0 ♕d7 16 ♖h5! (16 g4! is better) 16...g6 17 ♖e2 ♗d4 18 ♖g2 ♖ac8 19 h4 ♖e7 20 ♔b1 ♕xa3! 21 ♗xd5! ±. Instead of castling king-side into an attack, Black should have followed the principles discussed in the notes to the previous game and considered 12...a6!? followed by ...b5 with good chances. If 13 ♖g4 then 13...♕f8!.

10 ... ♗xf3+

11 ♖xf3 ♗b4!

After 11...0-0? 12 a3! (preventing ...♗b4) White would have a ready-made attack on Black's king. So Black delays castling and instead seeks to eliminate White's strong

light-squared bishop. However, he doesn't hurry to carry out his idea of ...♗xd3+ since if the bishop retreats then other problems would loom for White.

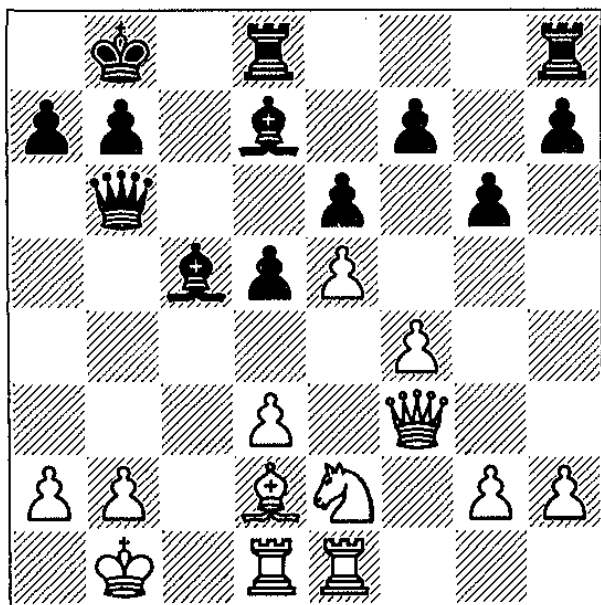
- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 12 | 0-0-0 | ♔d7 |
| 13 | ♙b1 | ♚b6 |
| 14 | ♖he1 | 0-0-0 |

If 14...0-0 then White would still have an attack, perhaps with 15 f5!? straight away. The black king is far much safer on the queenside, where it is surrounded by black defenders.

- 15 ♘e2

If 15 ♔f1 then 15...♔c6 planning 16...d4 looks awkward for White.

- | | | |
|----|------|---------|
| 15 | ... | ♗xd3 |
| 16 | cxd3 | ♙b8 (D) |



W

Having safeguarded his own monarch, Black now prepares an assault against the white king. The first stage in his plan is to double rooks along the c-file.

- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 17 | ♖c1 | ♖c8 |
| 18 | ♙a1 | ♖c7 |
| 19 | f5 | ♖hc8 |
| 20 | g4 | a5! |

The real attack begins. Black uses his a-pawn to break up the white queenside.

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 21 | ♚f4 | a4 |
| 22 | fxe6 | fxe6 |
| 23 | d4 | |

White has managed to regain the d4-square, but only with a pawn rather than a piece, and too late in the day.

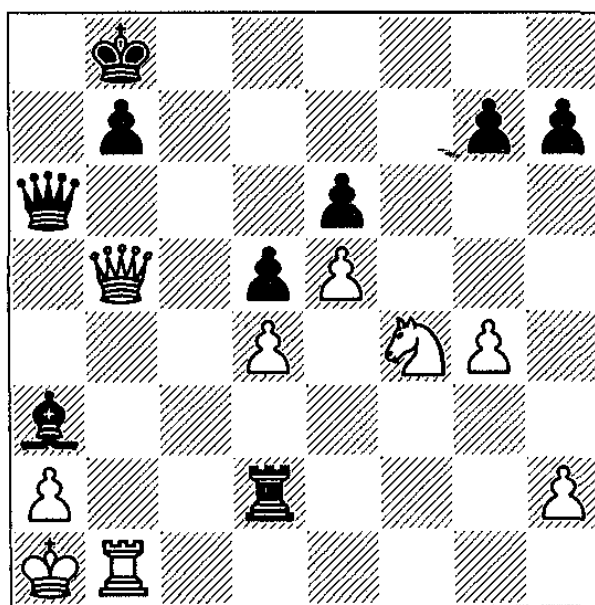
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|----|-------|----|
| 23 | ... | a3 |
| 24 | ♖b1?! | |

24 b3 was better because now Black's onslaught proves irresistible.

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 24 | ... | ♔e7 |
| 25 | bxa3 | ♚a6 |
| 26 | ♚e3 | ♔b5 |
| 27 | ♘f4 | ♖c2 |
| 28 | ♖ec1 | ♔xa3 |
| 29 | ♖xc2 | ♖xc2 |
| 30 | ♚b3 | |

There was no good answer to the threat of ...♔c4.

- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 30 | ... | ♖xd2 |
| 31 | ♚xb5 (D) | |



B

- | | | |
|----|-----|-------|
| 31 | ... | ♔b2+! |
|----|-----|-------|

A tactical trick which wins the white queen.

32 ♔xb2

Or 32 ♖xb2 ♗d1+ 33 ♖b1 ♔xb5.

32 ... ♗xb2

33 ♔xb2 g5

0-1

Game 16

Ivanović – Beliavsky

Yugoslavia 1994

Wade Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 e5 c5
 4 c3

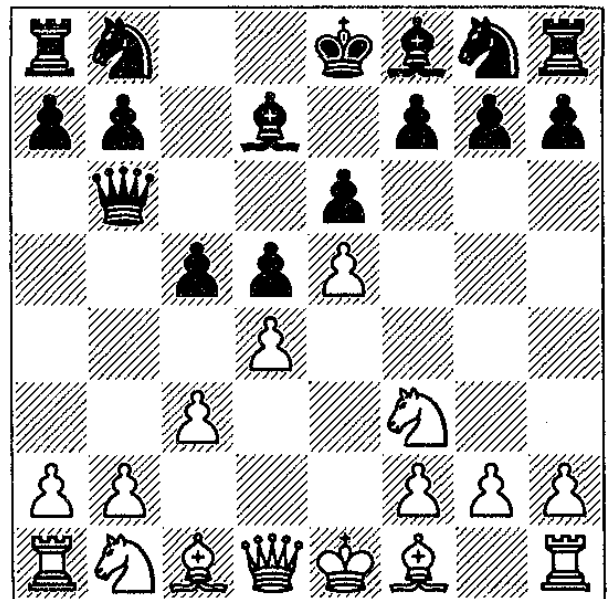
Another Classical centre hybrid is reached after 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 ♙d3 cxd4 6 0-0. White is almost certain to regain the d4-pawn and then hopes to use the d4-square as an outpost for a knight. In Levenfish-Botvinnik, Moscow-Leningrad 1937, play continued 6... ♙c5 7 ♘bd2 ♘ge7 8 ♘b3 ♙b6 9 ♙f4 ♘g6 and now instead of 10 ♙xg6 fxc6!, White should have maintained the tension with 10 ♙g3.

4 ... ♔b6

Black plans to exchange the light-squared bishops as soon as possible. After the main variation 4... ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♙d7, White can play 6 dxc5!?, arguing that it is just too much trouble to defend the d-pawn and instead seeking to develop his pieces to healthy squares. In Dunworth-B.Martin, London 1995, play continued 6... ♙xc5 7 b4 ♙b6 8 b5 ♘a5 9 ♙d3 ♘e7 10 0-0 ♖c8 11 a4 ♘g6 12 ♗e1 0-0. As Dunworth pointed out after the game, White has kept

his space advantage and has attacking chances on the kingside. On the other hand, his queenside, notably c3, is somewhat compromised. He cannot develop his b1-knight without dropping the c3-pawn. Here, Dunworth recommends 13 ♗a2!? intending ♗ae2 reinforcing the e-pawn, following Nimzowitsch's famous principle of over-protection. In the game, after 13 ♙a3 ♙c5 14 ♙xc5 ♖xc5, Black was a bit less congested, though White later won a nice game through exploiting the dark-square holes in Black's centre. It is clear that 6 dxc5 deserves more attention.

5 ♘f3 ♙d7 (D)



W

6 ♙e2

It is difficult for White to stop Black's idea. 6 ♘a3!? is possible but allows 6... cxd4 7 cxd4 ♙xa3 8 bxa3, while after 6 a4?! Black could successfully transfer to normal lines with 6... ♘c6 7 ♙b5!? cxd4 8 cxd4 a6 9 ♙xc6 bxc6 followed by a quick ...c5.

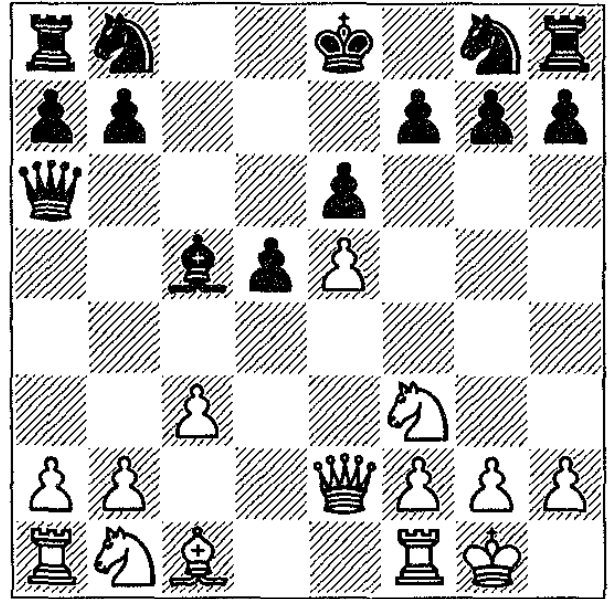
6 ... ♙b5

7 dxc5

A far sharper move is 7 c4!? when 7...♙xc4 8 ♙xc4 ♖b4+ 9 ♘bd2 dxc4 10 0-0 is a critical position. In *Informator 61*, Beliavsky recommends 10...cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘e7? for Black, but this loses to 12 a3! ♖c5 13 ♘e4 ♖xe5 14 ♘xe6! and Black has no good line, e.g. 14...♖xe6 15 ♘d6+ ♔d7 16 ♘xf7+, 14...fxe6 15 ♘d6+ ♔d7 16 ♘f7+ ♖d5 17 ♖e2! ♘bc6 18 ♙e3! or 14...♘bc6 15 ♙f4!. In all cases Black is material down or facing a winning attack (or both). Black's alternatives at move 11 also seem unsatisfactory, for example the piece sacrifice line 11...♘d7 12 ♖e2 ♖c5 (12...♙c5 13 a3) 13 ♘xc4 ♖xd4 14 ♙d1 ♖h4 15 ♙e3 is very dangerous for Black. If 15...0-0-0, then 16 ♙xa7, while otherwise 16 ♙d4, 16 ♙xd7, 16 ♖d3 and 16 ♘b6 are all possible. So instead of 10...cxd4, Black tried 10...♘c6 in Adams-Illescas, Las Palmas 1994. Nevertheless, White had a clear advantage after 11 dxc5 ♙xc5 12 a3 ♖b5 13 ♘e4 ♘ge7 14 ♙e3! ♙d8 15 ♖e2 ♙xe3 (there is no choice) 16 ♘d6+ ♙xd6 17 exd6 ♙xf2+ 18 ♙xf2 ♘f5 19 ♙d1, etc.

Unless the line above is strengthened for Black, we suggest the interested reader play 6...cxd4 and only after 7 cxd4 continue 7...♙b5, when White has no option of c4. The slight drawback to this method is that White is able to play ♘c3, but in view of the closed nature of the position this shouldn't prove too serious.

7	...	♙xc5
8	0-0	♙xe2
9	♖xe2	♖a6 (D)



W

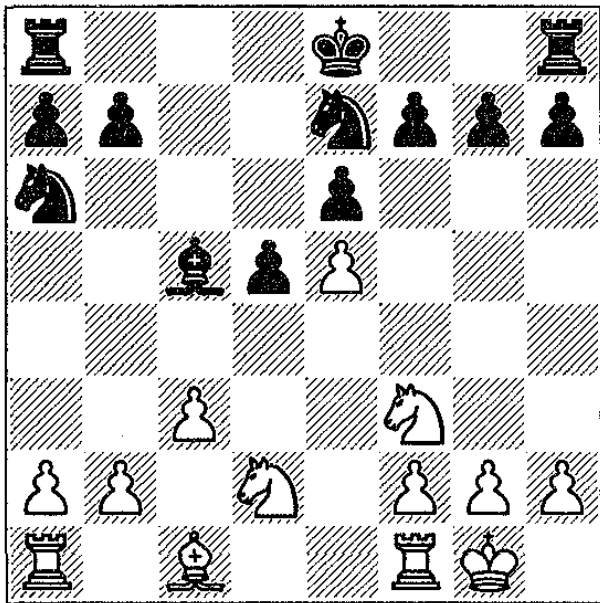
Black has achieved his objective of exchanging light-squared bishops, and now wants to swap queens. This will weaken any white initiative on the kingside, since Black's king will no longer be in serious danger of being mated.

10 ♖xa6

An important decision. Should White have avoided the exchange of queens? A plausible refusal is 10 ♖c2 when the game could continue 10...♘e7 11 ♙f4 ♘g6 12 ♙g3 (the bishop willingly entombs itself on g3, since it overprotects e5, and if Black tries to negate White's space advantage with a subsequent ...f6 then after exf6 the bishop will suddenly command a key diagonal; besides, the g6-knight is not so well placed either) 12...♘c6 13 ♘bd2 0-0 14 h4 h6 (preventing the sacrifice h5 and h6!, which would break up the black kingside) 15 ♙ab1 (with ideas of b4 and b5) 15...b5 16 ♘b3 ♙b6 with an interesting game in prospect. White could try to prove that the queen is misplaced on a6.

After the exchange of queens, Black has to lose time bringing his a6-knight to a reasonable square. In the game White proved unable to exploit this, but only because he chose an inferior plan.

10 ... ♖xa6
 11 ♖bd2 ♖e7 (D)

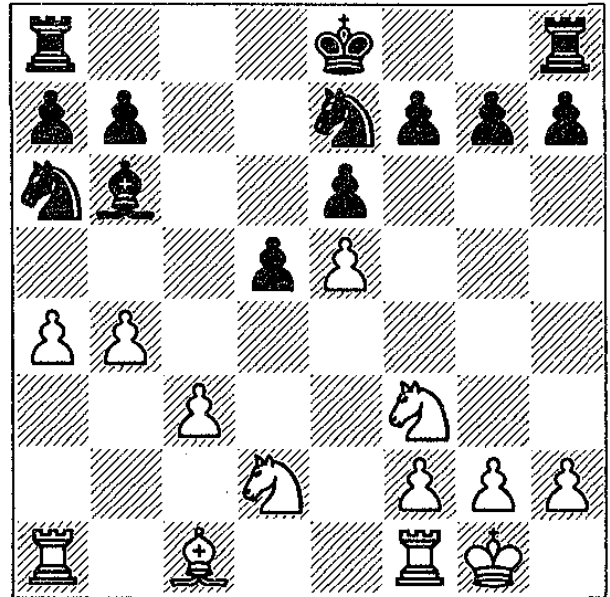


W

White needs a plan in this position. An attack with pawns on the kingside is inappropriate, e.g. 12 g4 h5! 13 h3 (13 g5 allowing ... ♖f5 is horrible but best) 13...hxg4 14 hxg4 ♖g6 (14...f6!?) 15 ♖b3 (guarding f4 against invasion) 15...♖h4! 16 ♖xh4 ♖xh4 and White either loses a pawn after 17 ♖xc5 ♖xg4+ or has to play the ghastly 17 g5.

Attempts to use the f-pawn actively are also bad, for example 12 ♖d4? ♖xd4 13 cxd4 ♖c8, and Black will penetrate down the c-file. Or 12 ♖b3 ♖b6 13 ♖cd4 ♖c6 14 f4 ♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 (15 cxd4 ♖b4) 15...♖xd4+ 16 cxd4 ♖b4! and the knight returns to active play with the awkward threat of 17...♖c2.

A much more promising plan is to use his pawns to gain space on the queenside, e.g. 12 b4! ♖b6 13 a4! (D) and now:



B

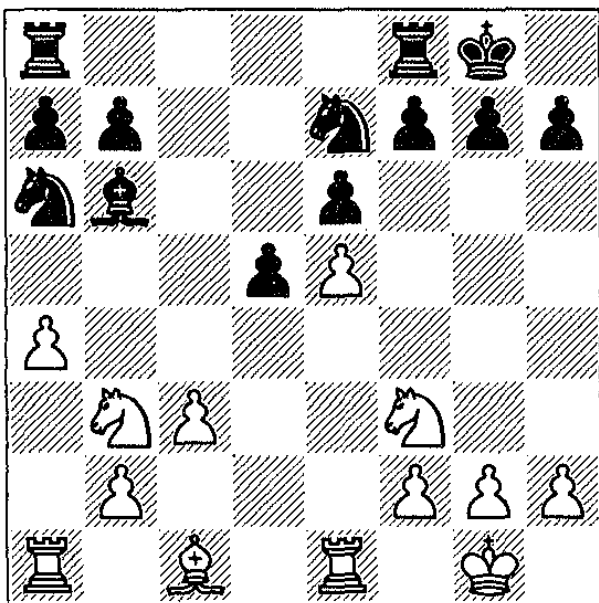
a) 13...d4 14 b5!? dxc3 15 bxa6 cxd2 16 axb7 ♖b8 17 ♖xd2 ♖xb7 18 a5 (18 ♖b1) 18...♖d8 19 ♖fb1 ♖xb1 20 ♖xb1 and Black has a difficult position since White will attack the a7-pawn before he can develop.

b) 13...♖c8 14 ♖b2 0-0 15 ♖fc1. Normally such positions are good for Black – White has a backward pawn on an open file – but here two black minor pieces are bunched clumsily on the queenside. The black knight on a6 has trouble finding a good square: it is at least five moves away from ever getting to its ideal square, c4. Nor can Black easily double rooks against the c3-pawn, as both 15...♖c7 16 a5 and 15...♖c6 16 b5 lose a piece. The attempt to break out with 15...d4 is well met by 16 a5, while 15...♖b8 (regrouping) 16 c4 gives White a clear edge. Finally, if 15...♖fd8 then 16 ♖b3 keeps the

advantage, e.g. 16...♖c4 17 a5 ♕c7 18 b5 ♘c5? 19 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 20 ♕a3.

In the game White misses the plan of using his queenside pawns to constrict Black. Instead he opts for positional play in the centre. He plans first of all to gain control of the d4-square. Then he will gradually push his pawns on the kingside. However, he never succeeds in carrying out his plan – Black doesn't let him!

- 12 ♖b3 ♕b6
 13 ♗e1 0-0
 14 a4?! (D)



B

In the game this proves a pointless weakening of the queenside, but only because White avoids the natural follow-up. Instead, Beliavsky gives 14 ♕e3 ♕c7 15 ♘c5 as leading to equality.

- 14 ... ♘c6
 15 ♕e3?

The consistent move is 15 a5 when 15...♕c7 16 ♗a4!? is interesting. The trick 15 a5 ♘c5 would be unclear after 16 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 17 b4 ♕e7 18 b5, etc.

- 15 ... ♕c7!

Avoiding the exchange of bishops, when White could prepare ♘fd4 and a kingside pawn advance. Now the e5-pawn becomes vulnerable.

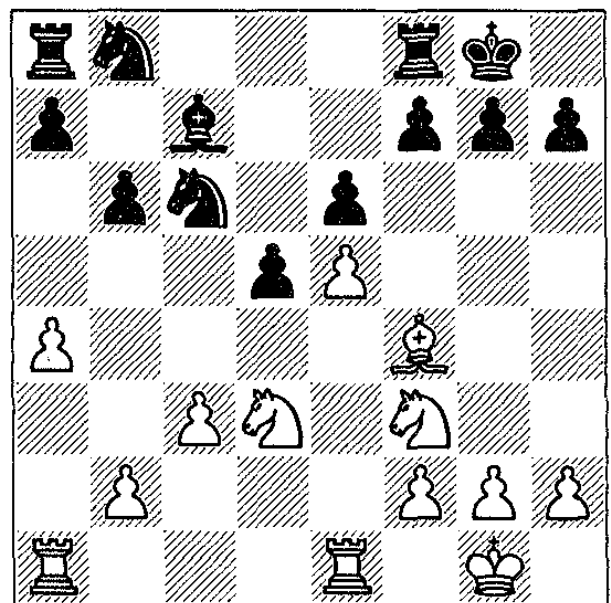
- 16 ♕f4

More or less forced, but now two white pieces block the f2-pawn, ruling out any kingside pawn advance.

- 16 ... ♘ab8!

A well-known manoeuvre. The horse seeks greener pastures.

- 17 ♘c5 b6
 18 ♘d3 (D)



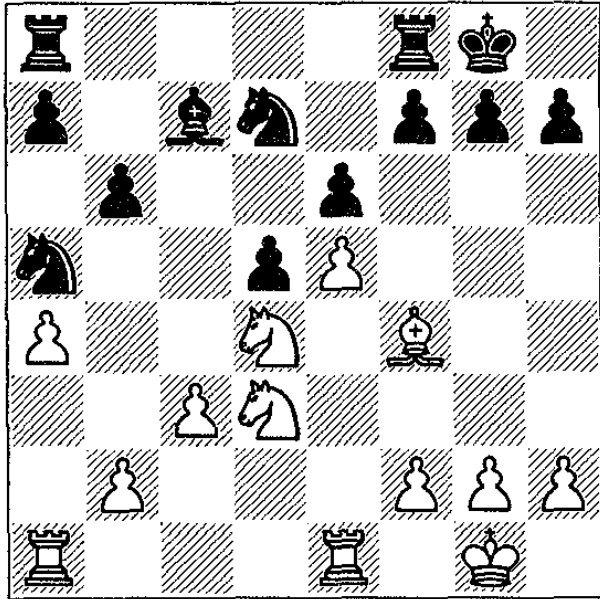
B

Not only reinforcing e5, but also adding a defender to the bishop on f4, to discourage ...f6. It would be a cliché to say that Nimzowitsch would have been very proud of White's position since the e5-pawn is many times overprotected. But what else can the white pieces do?

- 18 ... ♘d7
 19 ♘d4 ♘a5! (D)

Another crucial avoidance of an unfavourable exchange: 19...♘xd4 20 cxd4, besides strengthening e5,

would open the c-file for White, and deprive the d7-knight of c5 (an important square, as the game will disclose).



W

20 b3?

White's use, or lack of use, of his queenside pawns has led to the gradual deterioration of his position. This move keeps the black knight out of c4, which is 'traditionally' the key square in this type of position. However, the c5-square is in fact more important here, so 20 b4! is better, when after 20...♘c4 Beliavsky recommends 21 ♖a2 ♜fc8 22 ♘c6 with complications. However, 21 ♔g3 looks more worthwhile than Beliavsky's 21 ♖a2, for example 21...♜fc8 22 f4 g6! (he must prevent f5) 23 ♔h4 ♔d8 24 ♔xd8 ♜xd8 25 g4 ♜ac8 26 f5 and White has achieved his ambition of a kingside pawn attack.

20 ... ♜fc8
 21 ♖ab1 ♔d8
 22 ♔d2 ♘c5!

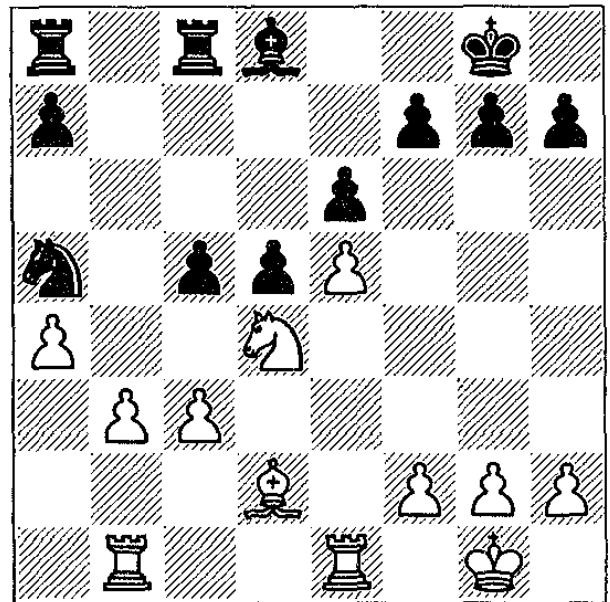
The fortunes of this knight have improved dramatically. The threat is

now to jump in at e4, attacking c3 and d2, so White's reply is virtually forced.

23 ♘xc5

This horrible-looking move fortifies Black's pawn centre and leaves the b3-pawn very vulnerable. Now Black has a strategically winning position.

23 ... bxc5 (D)



W

24 ♘b5 ♜cb8
 25 b4

Another unpleasant move to have to make, but Black was threatening 25...a6.

25 ... ♘c4
 26 ♔f4 g5!

Giving the bishop a miserable choice of either being buried on the kingside after 27 ♔g3 h5 29 h3 h4 30 ♔h2, when it can't help the queenside, or retreating passively to c1, when it is more an obstruction than a useful defender.

27 ♔c1 cxb4
 28 cxb4 a5!
 29 h4 h6!

No chances for the opponent! White might gain some counterplay after 29...gxf4 30 ♔h6 and 31 ♖b3.

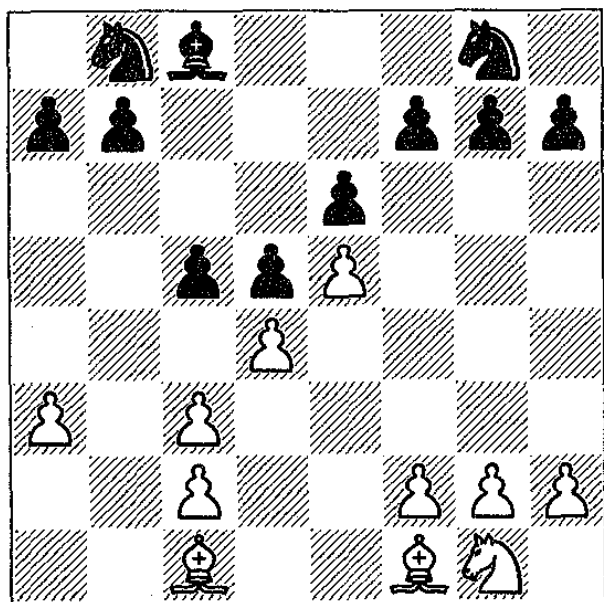
30 hxg5 hxg5
 31 bxa5 ♖xa5
 32 ♔e3

32 ♖a1? allows 32...♖bxb5. So Black finally wins one of the weak queenside pawns.

He gradually exploited his advantage:

32...♖xa4 33 ♘d6 ♖xb1 34 ♖xb1 ♔g7 35 ♖b8 ♘xe3 36 fxe3 ♔e7 37 ♖b7 ♔xd6 38 exd6 ♖a8 39 ♖d7 ♔f6 40 ♔f2 ♖f8! 41 ♔f3 ♔e5 42 ♔g4 f5+! 43 ♔h5 (43 ♔xg5 ♖g8+ and 44...♖xg2) 43...f4 44 exf4+ gxf4 45 ♔g6 d4 46 ♔g7 ♖b8 0-1.

5 Winawer Centre



General observations

The pawn structure on the queenside is definitely in Black's favour. The c2- and c3-pawns are particularly weak; on the other hand, they provide more support for the central pawn chain (d4 and e5) than in other variations. White's compensation lies in the two bishops, especially the dark-squared bishop which has no rival (this makes it difficult for Black to defend the a3-f8 diagonal and the g7-square), the kingside space advantage created by the strong e5-pawn, and the open b-file. As a result Black is particularly eager to reach the endgame in this variation, when his advantages should at the very least cancel out White's; but first of all he must survive the middlegame.

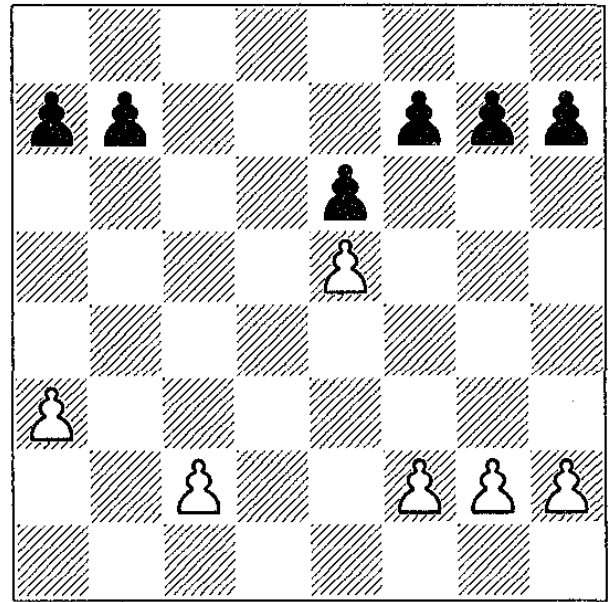
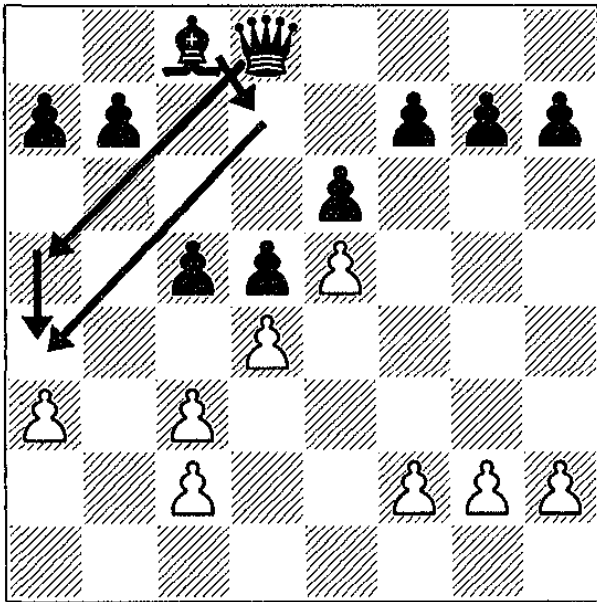
These factors explain why it is unusual nowadays for White to play an

early f2-f4 in this variation, although it was played in early games with this line. The move f2-f4 places a pawn on a dark square, where White already has control, and supports an already strong point on e5. White would generally only play f2-f4 with the intention of f4-f5 as a quick follow-up, and that will not be easy with Black's knight on e7 and bishop on c8 or d7.

In *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer wrote "I may yet be forced to admit that the Winawer is sound. But I doubt it! The defence is anti-positional and weakens the kingside." Yet his results against the variation were not overly convincing, so the debate goes on.

The a4-square

The advance a3-a4 has always been one of White's key ideas in this line. The idea is to grab the a3-f8 diagonal by playing the dark-squared bishop, or sometimes the queen, to a3. With no black dark-squared bishop to counter it, the a3-bishop can exert immense pressure: on the c5-pawn, often forcing ...b6 or ...c4; on e7 and f8 if Black castles kingside; coming in on d6 or c5 if Black castles queenside. Incidentally, the a4-pawn can support a bishop on b5 and help in a queenside attack directly after a4-a5.

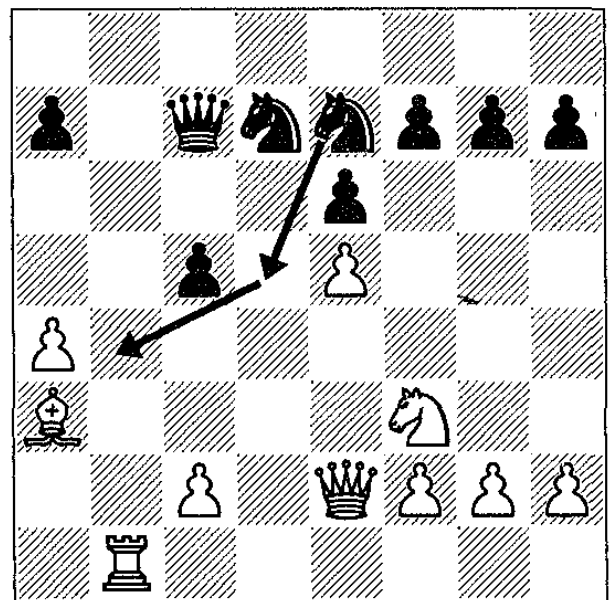


Black can try to stop a4 by placing his queen or bishop on that very square. There, they exert some pressure on c2 and (the queen only) d4. White may wish to play a3-a4 just to stop Black placing a piece there; however, modern practice has shown that things are not so simple. A black piece on a4 can be rather out of play. White may actually want to use his dark-squared bishop on the kingside. In an endgame, the a4-pawn can be easy prey. In the opening, a3-a4 played too early may waste an important tempo if Black can quickly open play in the centre or on the kingside. For these reasons, it has now become much more a matter of debate whether White does want to rush into playing a3-a4.

White still hasn't solved his structural problems. He still has a weak pawn on c2, and has now also weakened his e5-pawn. On the other hand he has gained lots of open lines for his two bishops, and an open d-file for his rooks. Black has a good square for a knight on d5, but this can be dislodged at an appropriate moment by the advance c2-c4.

White opens the centre

White has the two bishops and it is in his interests to open the centre. This can be achieved by a combination of c3-c4 and d4xc5, ending up with this pawn structure assuming that Black recaptures on c5 with a piece:

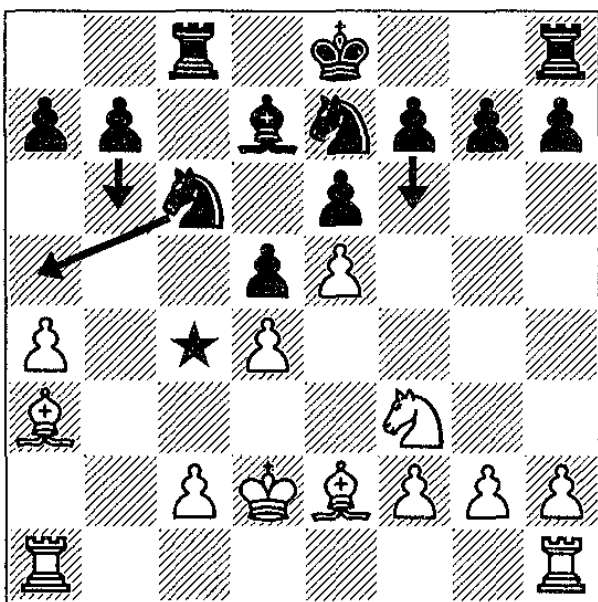


Black will seek to pressurise e5 with a knight on c6 or d7 and his queen on c7. If Black has castled kingside, it is often best to recapture on c5 with the b-pawn (after an

earlier ...b6). While this blocks the c-file, it more importantly blocks White's dark-squared bishop's control of the a3-f8 diagonal. White can gain compensation on the b-file but then ♖d5-b4 can help Black.

Black exchanges on d4

One way to stop White opening the centre is to exchange pawns on d4. This opens the c2-pawn to attack down the half-open c-file. However, the exchange itself opens the a3-f8 diagonal for White's dark-squared bishop; and a bishop on d3 both defends c2 comfortably and menaces the black kingside, while Black has no option of ...c4. So Black generally swpps on d4 only if he can thereby win the d4-pawn (in some gambit lines) or exchange queens to reach a more endgame-like position where Black's positional advantages can compensate for White's two bishops:

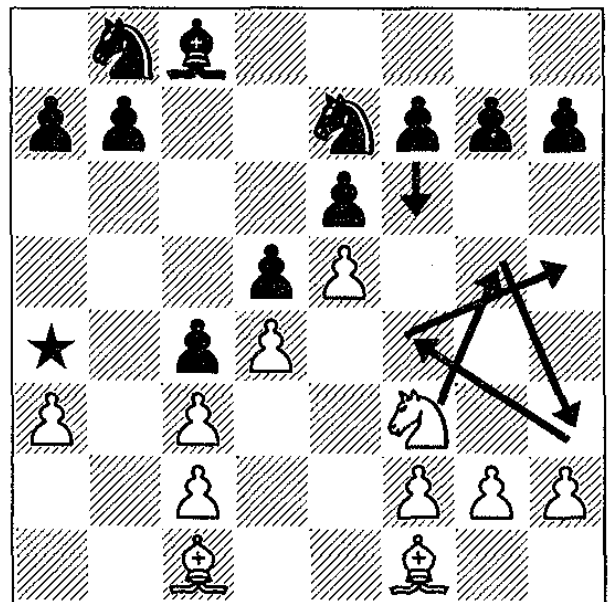


This position is equal. White can try to play for ♕b4 and a5, or to cramp Black with ♕b5 or ♕a6 (after

...b6); but Black can play ...♘a5-c4, ...b6 and perhaps ...♘e7-c6-a5 and ...f6, followed by ...♔f7, ...♚c7 and ...♞hc8. Black should be careful about playing the natural-looking ...♘f5 as both knights may well be better placed on the queenside.

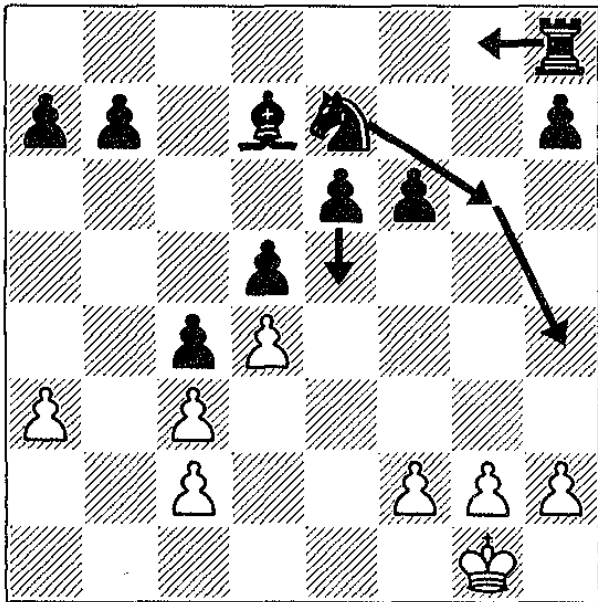
Black plays ...c4

The other way to stop White opening the centre is to close the position with ...c4. This is usually (but not always) combined with queenside castling; kingside castling is more commonly associated with pressure down the c-file.



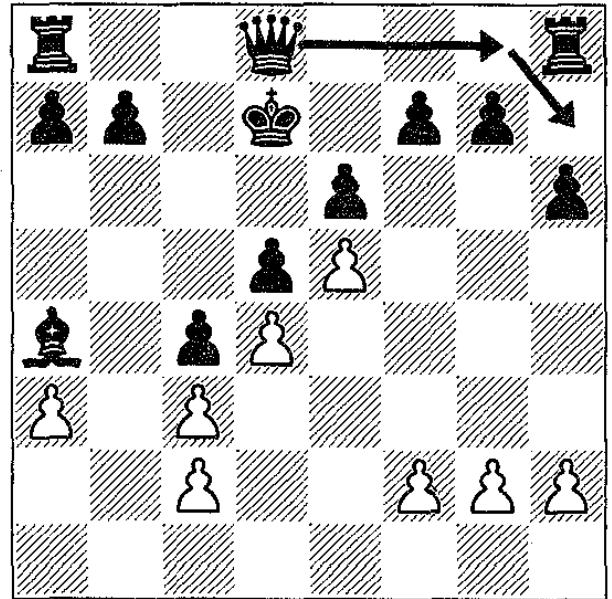
It is interesting to compare this position with an equivalent position from the Advance variation already considered in Chapter 1, by moving the pawn from c2 to b2 and adding an extra minor piece to each side. White here has the two bishops and already has an open b-file. On the other hand, White only has the c1-square to move his pieces between the kingside and the queenside; and

control of the b-file, even combined with control of the a3-f8 diagonal, is rarely enough to break through decisively. So White needs to combine kingside and queenside play much as in the equivalent Advance variation. One key idea is to play a knight to h5, not just to restrain Black's kingside breaks (...f6 or ...g5), but also to follow up with f4 and an eventual f5. Black will generally try to get ...f6 in before the knight is firmly ensconced on h5, even though this opens the position for White's two bishops. After exf6 gxf6, Black can continue with ...♖g8, ...e5 threatening ...♕h3, and increase the pressure by bringing a knight to h4.

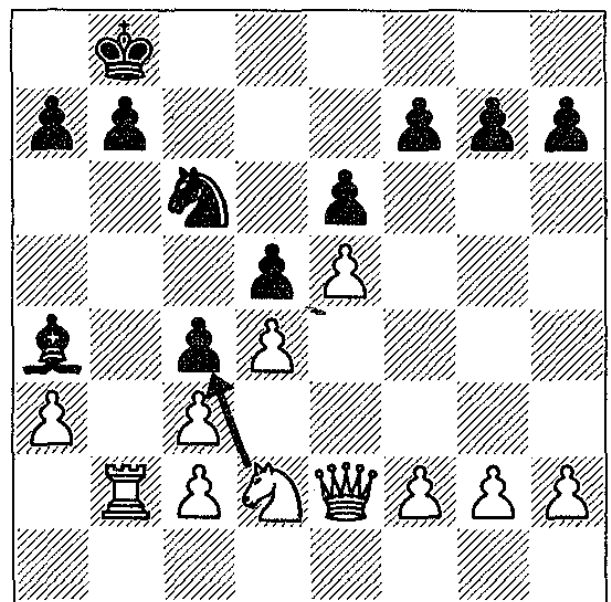


Timing is of key importance. Does White have time to play a4? Has Black time to play ...c4? Does ...f6 allow White's bishops into the game too soon? Is that knight coming to h5 already?

The importance of the a4-square has already been discussed. If Black has chosen to play ...♕a4, then he certainly hinders White's queenside



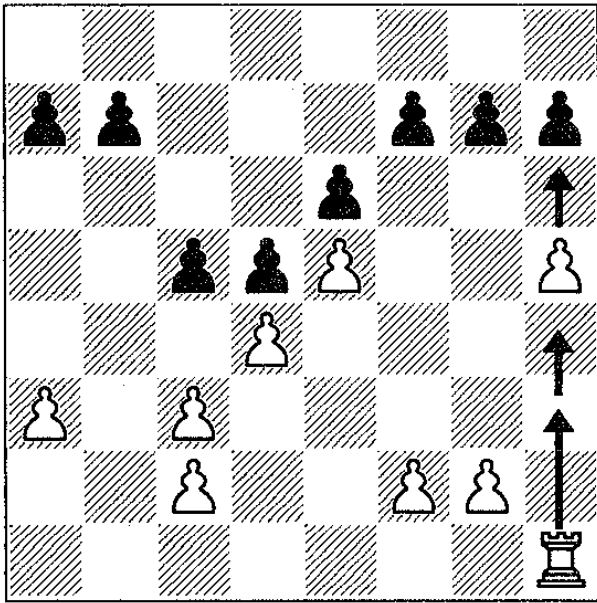
play but he also makes it more difficult to start active kingside play or defend against White's kingside play. One enterprising plan that has been tried in recent years is to play ...h6, then manoeuvre the queen to h7, thus increasing the pressure on c2 and getting all the major pieces prepared for active play on the kingside.



In many positions, Black has to watch out for ♖xc4 opening lines for a bishop on g2 or f3. In this particular position, it is the stray bishop on a4 that is in trouble. After ♖xc4

$dxc4$, ♔xc4 the bishop has no squares and $\dots b5$ is met by ♔xc6 (or ♔xa4 thanks to the pin). Note that if the rook were on $a2$, ♞xc4 would fail to $\dots \text{♞b5}$.

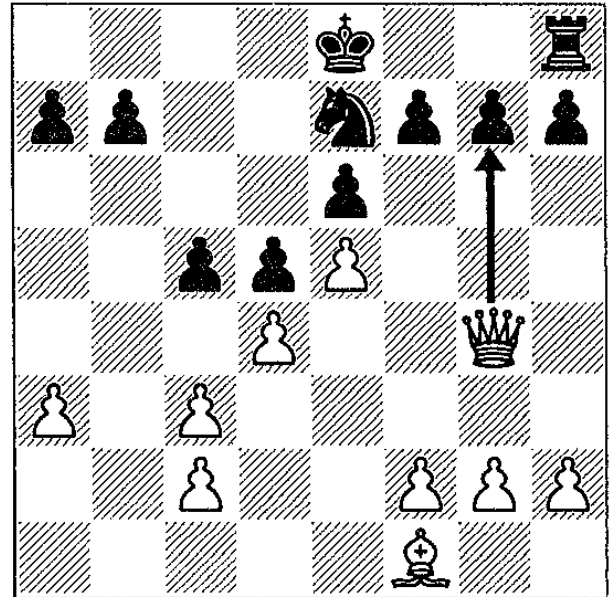
White advances the h-pawn



White often chooses to gain space on the kingside by advancing his h-pawn. If Black doesn't respond with $\dots h6$, White intends to play $h6$ himself, disrupting Black's kingside pawns and creating a hole on $f6$. Nevertheless, Black can allow this, hoping to gain from the three tempi White has expended on his h-pawn. More usually, Black does play $\dots h6$, which is often a very useful move anyway because it prevents ♞g5 . On $h5$ the pawn does somewhat cramp Black and allow White to play his rook to $h4$ or $h3$; if instead White castles, the $h5$ -pawn could become vulnerable to attack from a bishop on $e8$ after $\dots f6$. One more subtle point is that White is no longer able

to play his knight to the square $h5$, but his space advantage gives him other options.

White plays ♔g4

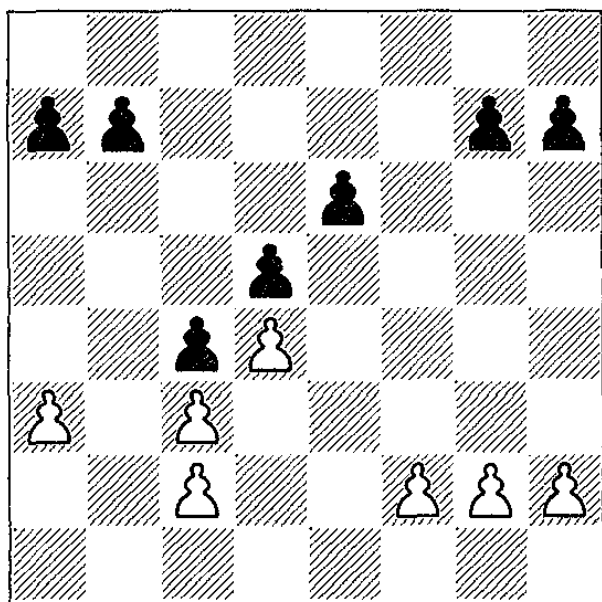


Black's lack of a dark-squared bishop makes it very difficult for him to defend the $g7$ -pawn. The move ♔g4 seeks to take immediate advantage of this fact. Black's options are:

- 1) to gambit the pawn, leading to play considered in the next chapter;
- 2) to play $\dots g6$, accepting a dark-squared weakness on $f6$;
- 3) to play $\dots \text{♞f5}$; but ♞d3 then repeats the threat to $g7$;
- 4) to play $\dots \text{♞g6}$; but then after $h2-h4$ the response $\dots h7-h5$ leaves a dark-squared weakness on $g5$;
- 5) to play $\dots 0-0$ and hope to withstand a kingside attack by White's pieces;
- 6) to play $\dots \text{♔f8}$ and eventually 'castle' by $\dots h7-h6$ and $\dots \text{♔f8-g8-h7}$, the point of this roundabout manoeuvre being that $\dots \text{♔f8}$ creates no pawn weaknesses, and the rook on $h8$ may actually give Black more chances of

surviving a kingside attack than after castling.

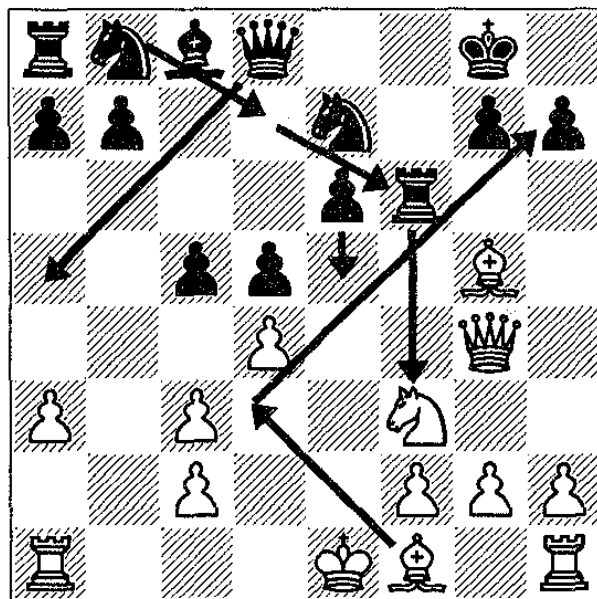
Kingside castling (option 5) has become a popular option in modern play, as White, despite some spectacular wins, has not been able to force mate in every variation. One group of players have played it as a solid option aiming to reach a rather dull endgame after playing ...f5, exf6 ♖xf6, and then ...c4:



It is very difficult for White to build up enough pressure to win the e6-pawn (or d5 by a pin). While in theory the pressure on e6 should enable White to use his extra space on the kingside to launch an attack with the major pieces, in practice Black turns out to have sufficient pressure on the f-file. Black can also threaten to play a rook to a6 and consume White's weak queenside pawns; for this reason, White often seeks to force ...b6 at an earlier stage with a timely ♖b1.

Another group of players have played ...0-0 intending a wild tactical mêlée, from where, armed with

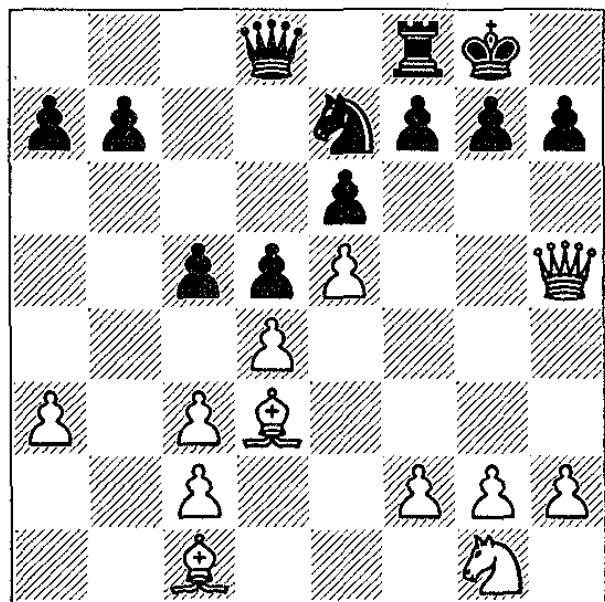
home preparation, they hope to emerge victorious. The tactical ideas range over the whole board, as illustrated by this position:



Black's ideas include ...e5 (with the double threat of ...♙xg4 and ...e4), ...♚a5 (threatening ...♚xc3+ winning the rook on a1), and sacrificing the exchange by ...♖xf3 or by just leaving the rook on f6 in some lines, the soundest being ...♘d7 with the idea of ♙xf6 ♘xf6, when the black knights on e7 and f6 combine together beautifully, heading for f5 and e4, exploiting the white queen cut off on g4 and White's weakened queenside with no bishop or queen to defend it. White, seemingly far more poised for the attack, only really has one tactical stroke, ♙xh7+. Black never used to play ...0-0 because it was thought that ♙xh7+ would always prove too powerful. It is indeed a dangerous threat but a well-prepared player will now find adequate resources as Black.

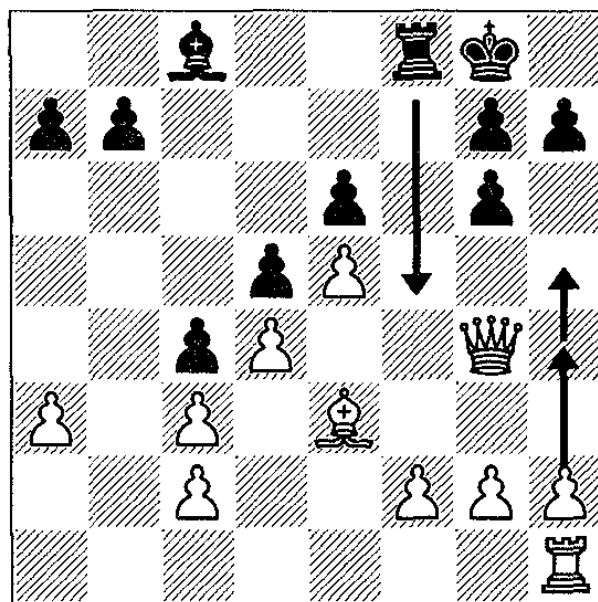
One way White has managed to avoid some of these tactical ideas is

by moving his queen yet again, from g4 to h5, threatening mate in combination with a bishop on d3:



Black has now missed his opportunity to play ...f5, so has to find some other way to counter the threat. ...Qf5 has been found wanting after Qf3 and g4. (Note that an immediate g4 can be met by ...Wh4, but that Qf3 c4, g4! cxd3, gxf5 leaves White on top.) ...h6 can be met by Qxh6 if White can bring a rook or knight into the attack quickly enough. Therefore, as ...g6 is clearly too weakening (with White's dark-squared bishop still on the board), only ...Qg6 remains. Then, when Black plays ...c4, White will reply Qxg6 when Black must respond ...fxg6, reaching a position of the form shown in the next diagram.

White aims to break open the kingside with the h-pawn. Black in turn will play ...Rf5 aiming to exchange off a pair of rooks if h5 is ever played, and meanwhile hoping to create counterplay by doubling on the f-file.



Illustrative games

Game 17

de Firmian – Chernin

Tunis IZ 1985

Winawer variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Qc3	Qb4
4	e5	Qe7
5	a3	Qxc3+
6	bxc3	c5
7	Qf3	

An immediate 7 h4 can be quite dangerous. Black can choose between:

a) 7...Wc7 8 h5 h6 9 Rh3 (9 Qf3 transposes to lines similar to the following game, in some of which the h5-pawn can be a liability) 9...Qbc6 10 a4 (10 Wg4 Qf5 11 Qd3? cxd4! 12 Qxf5 Wxe5+ ♣) 10...Qd7 11 Qa3 b6 12 Qb5 0-0! 13 f4! f6 14 Qf3 Rae8 ∞ Steinbacher-Harley, London Lloyds Bank 1992.

b) 7...Wa5 8 Qd2 cxd4 9 cxd4 Wa4 10 h5! Qbc6 11 Qc3 (11 Qf3 Qxd4 12 Qd3 is a complex gambit

line) 11...b6 12 h6 gxh6 13 ♖d3 a5 14 ♖d2 ♘f5 = Short-Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

7 ... ♘bc6

It is funny how early on in this line, White would happily play 7 a4, reasoning that his dark-squared bishop would always be going to a3. Later White realised that the bishop could sometimes prove useful on the kingside and that it may prove better to develop the kingside quickly; then Black started playing 7...♗d7 to try to force White to play a4 by threatening a blockade with ...♗a4. White generally does respond to 7...♗d7 with 8 a4 but has also tried:

a) 8 dxc5 ♘g6 9 ♗d3 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♘cxe5 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 ♗f4 ♖f6 13 ♖d2 ♘xd3 = Chandler-Beliavsky, London 1985.

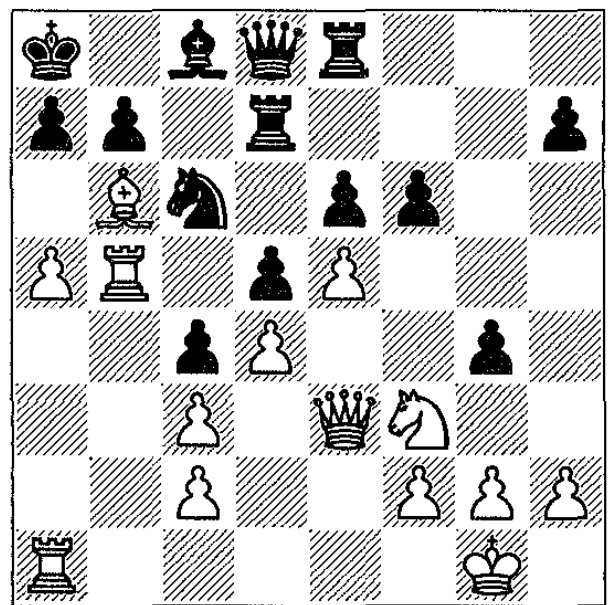
b) 8 ♗d3 ♗a4 9 h4 ♖c7 10 h5 h6 11 dxc5!? ♘d7 12 ♖h4 ♖a5 13 ♗e3 ♖c8 14 ♖b1 ♗c6 ± Short-Ivanchuk, Horgen 1995.

8 ♗e2

de Firmian has decided to reply to ...♖a5 with ♗d2 rather than ♖d2, so sees no reason to hurry to play a4, which in some lines can just prove a waste of a tempo. After 8 a4 ♖a5:

a) 9 ♖d2 seems to have gone out of fashion, probably because White doesn't see much hope of advantage in the endings analysed earlier, which arise after 9...♗d7 10 ♗e2 ♖c8 (Black can also continue here with ...f6 and ...0-0-0 but White's pieces are better placed than after ♗d2) 11 ♗a3 (11 dxc5 ♘g6 12 0-0 ♘cxe5 13 ♘d4 a6! ♖ J.Watson) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 ♖xd2+ 13 ♔xd2.

b) 9 ♗d2 ♗d7 10 ♗b5. White is happy to exchange his 'good' bishop and lose the advantage of the two bishops, in return for weakening still further Black's control of the a3-f8 diagonal. Chandler-Ivanchuk, Manila IZ 1990 went 10...0-0-0 (Black probably does best to loosen White's control of the dark squares straight away with the central break 10...f6) 11 0-0 c4 12 ♗c1 f6 13 ♖e1 ♖he8 14 ♗a3 ♔b8 15 ♗xc6! ♘xc6 16 ♖e3 ♔a8 17 ♖fb1 ♗c8 18 ♗d6 ♖d7 19 ♖b5 ♖d8 20 a5 g5? (20...♖xd6 was necessary) 21 ♗c5! g4 22 ♗b6! (D)



B

An important thematic idea. After 22...axb6 23 axb6+ ♔b8 24 ♖c1, Black cannot stop mate down the a-file. Ivanchuk, seeing that 22...♖e7 23 exf6 ♖xf6 24 ♘e5 ♖g7 would be clearly better for White, offered an exchange to try to quell the attack: 22...♖c7 23 ♘e1 fxe5 24 dxe5 ♗d7 25 ♖c5! ♖e7 26 a6! (smashing his way through) 26...bxa6 27 ♖xa6 ♗e8 28 ♗xc7 ♖xc7 and Chandler went on to win.

8 ... ♖a5

8...♖c7 9 0-0 (9 a4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖b4! ∞) 9...♙d7 10 a4 reaches a similar position to the game, but with the important difference that White can play a quick ♙a3.

9 ♙d2

♙d2 is generally the main alternative to this move, but here makes less sense as White has not yet played a4 (preparing a later ♙a3). In fact, Black could try to take immediate advantage of this fact by responding to 9 ♖d2 with 9...b6! and a quick ...♙a6. If White had played 8 a4 ♖a5 9 ♖d2, then 9...b6 would be met by 10 ♙b5 ♙a6 (10...♙d7 11 ♙a3! ♖xe5? 12 ♙b4! wins the queen) 11 ♖b1 0-0 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♖d3! ♙xb5 14 axb5 ± Shishkin-Zilber, USSR 1978.

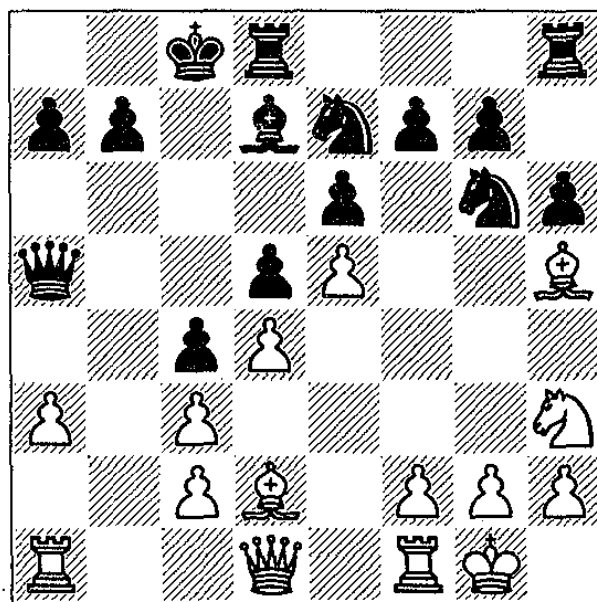
Note that 9 0-0 is also possible, as 9...♖xc3?? 10 ♙d2 ♖b2 11 ♖b1 ♖xa3 12 ♖b3 ♖a2 13 ♖c1 ♖a4 14 ♙b5 ♖a2 15 ♖a3 wins the black queen. It would appear that 7...♖a5 is probably slightly more accurate than 7...♖bc6, since after 7 ♖f3 ♖a5, 8 ♙e2?! is unwise on account of 8...cxd4, and 8 ♖d2 gives Black the sound alternative 8...b6 (which is even better if Black has not played ...♖bc6 yet).

9 ... ♙d7

An interesting modern gambit line arises after 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖a4 11 ♖b1! (11 ♙c3 b6 12 ♖d3 a5! =) 11...♖xd4 12 ♙d3. The assessment of this line will determine whether White needs to play an early a4 or not. Current best play is 12...♖dc6! 13 ♖b3! ♖f5 (13...0-0

14 ♙xh7+!) 14 0-0 (Dolmatov-Oll, USSR Ch 1989) 14...a6!?

Planinc beat Timman twice in 1974 after 9...c4 10 ♖g5! h6 11 ♖h3 ♖g6 (to stop ♖h3-f4-h5) 12 0-0 ♙d7 13 ♙h5 ♖ce7 14 a4 0-0-0 (D).



W

The first game continued 15 f4 f5 16 exf6 gxf6 17 f5! but in the second, Planinc tried a slower plan: playing ♖d1-e1, a2-a3, ♙d2-c1-a3, ♖h3-f2-d1-e3 and f2-f4-f5. He won both games by combining kingside and queenside play.

10 0-0 ♖c7

An interesting retreat. Black is happy despite the apparent loss of a tempo as the d2-bishop will almost certainly want to retreat to c1 and then go to a3 at some stage.

A very open game arises after 10...f6 11 c4 ♖c7 12 cxd5 ♖xd5 13 c4 ♖de7 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♙c3 0-0-0. Note how irrelevant the move a4 would be in a position like this. The difference here could well be critical: 16 d5 exd5 17 cxd5 ♙e6 18 ♙xf6 ♖hg8 19 dxc6! ♖xd1 20 cxb7+ ♙b8

21 ♖fxd1 ♘g6 22 ♖ab1 a6 23 ♙d3
 ♙d5 24 ♙xg6 ♙xf3 25 ♖e1 1-0
 Makarychev-Lputian, USSR 1979.

11 ♖e1 c4
 12 ♙f1

On 12 ♘g5, following the Planinc
 plan, Black could try 12...h6 13 ♘h3
 0-0!? 14 ♘f4 f6 15 exf6 ♖xf6 16
 ♘h5 ♖f7 with pressure on f2.

12 ... h6
 13 g3 0-0-0
 14 ♙h3 ♔b8
 15 a4 ♙a5

Amazing or stupid? Black is in no
 hurry and decides to return to a5 (for
 a few moves!) to stop White playing
 ♙c1.

16 ♙c1

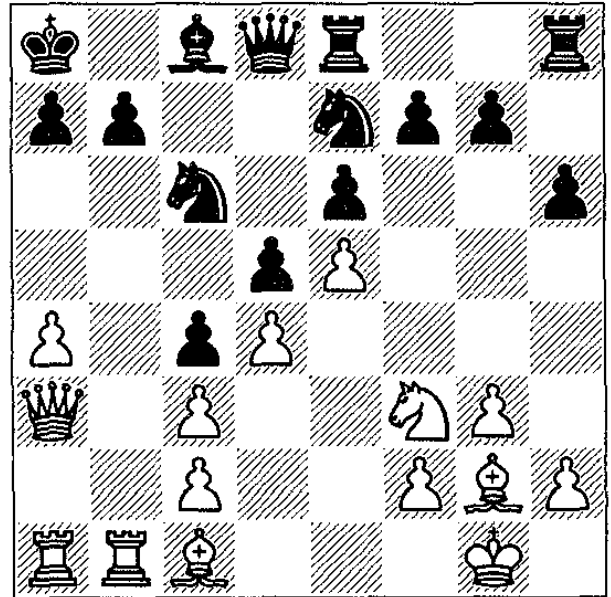
White starts moving his pieces
 over to the queenside. It was prob-
 ably better to follow Planinc's exam-
 ple and try to create more pressure
 on the kingside first with 16 ♘h4.
 White could follow with f4 and ♖f1
 (Black's move-order has made this
 plan psychologically difficult for
 White to follow) or ♘g2 and ♘e3.

16 ... ♔a8
 17 ♙a3 ♖de8
 18 ♖eb1 ♙d8
 19 ♙c1

After 19 a5, 19...a6! is good here.

19 ... ♙c8
 20 ♙g2 (D)
 20 ... f5

Black could instead play 20...♘a5
 21 ♙a2 ♘ec6 22 ♙a3 when we
 reach a position where White cannot
 break through with a4-a5-a6 or ♘f3-
 d2xc4 and would always have to
 worry about a potential ...f6 break.
 The threat can often be greater than



B

its execution. After 20...f5 21 exf6
 gxf6, White has to worry about ...e5
 but can contain this with pressure on
 d5, play ♙f4 and use the f4-b8 di-
 agonal, and even play against the
 weakness on e6, all while keeping up
 the queenside pressure. Christiansen
 criticises 20...f5, claiming that White
 should be happy to keep the kingside
 blocked and decline to play exf6, but
 White has to be careful as he only
 has c1 through which to manoeuvre
 all his pieces if Black breaks through
 on the kingside, e.g. 21 ♙c5 g5 22
 h4 g4 23 ♘d2 ♘g6! threatening ...f4.

21 exf6 gxf6
 22 a5!

A risky move, giving away the b5-
 square, but 22 ♙c5 is well met by
 22...♘a5.

22 ... a6?!

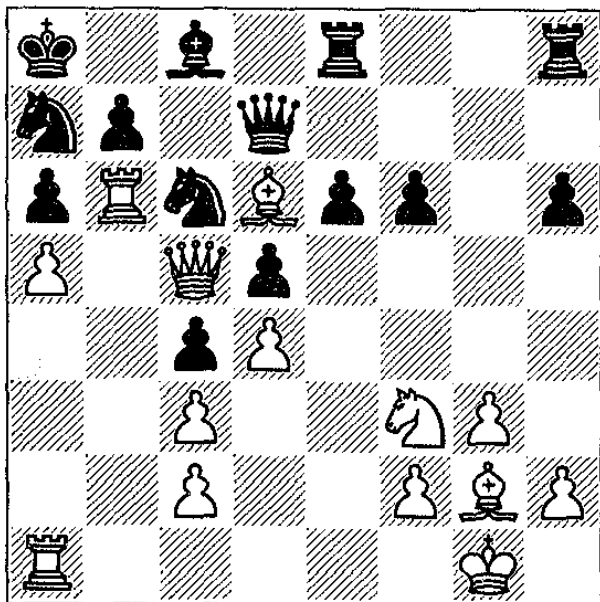
Black grabs the b5-square but at
 the cost of the b6-square; this should
 have proved tactically premature.
 Black would also have been wrong
 to play an immediate 22...e5, when
 after 23 dxe5 fxe5 24 ♙c5 followed
 by ♙e3, it would prove impossible

for Black to defend c4, d5 and e5 and the queenside. Black would have done better simply to wait or proceed slowly on the kingside with a move like 22...h5.

- 23 ♖b6 ♘a7
24 ♔c5 ♘ec6

24...♘b5 would be met by 25 ♘d2 (25 ♔f4!?) 25...♘ec6 (25...♘xc3 26 ♘xc4! dxc4 27 ♖xa6+ with a strong attack) 26 ♘xc4! dxc4 27 ♔xc6 bxc6 28 ♔xc6+ ♔a7 29 ♔f4 e5 30 dxe5 fxe5 (30...♔d7 31 ♖xa6+!) 31 ♔e3 winning.

- 25 ♔f4 ♔e7
26 ♔d6 ♔d7 (D)



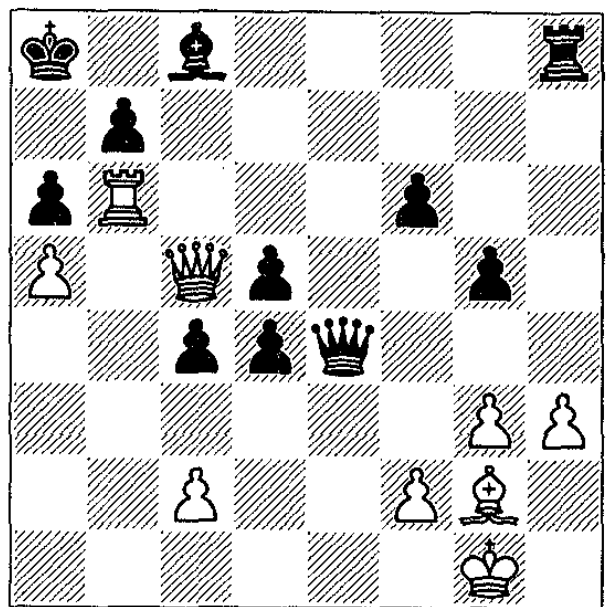
W

- 27 ♔h3?

White has to contain ...♘b5. He should have chosen between 27 ♖ab1 ♘b5? (27...♖h7) 28 ♖1xb5 axb5 29 a6 and 27 ♘d2 ♘b5? (27...♖d8 28 ♔f4 e5!?) 28 ♘xc4 dxc4 29 ♖xb5 axb5 30 a6.

- 27 ... ♘b5
28 ♔f4 ♘xc3
29 ♔f1 ♘e4
30 ♔a3 ♘g5!

- 31 ♘xg5 hxg5
32 ♔d6 e5
Why not 32...♘xd4?
33 ♖ab1 ♖e6
34 ♔c5 ♘xd4
35 ♔xd4 exd4
36 ♔c5 ♔h7
37 h3 ♖xb6
38 ♖xb6 ♔e4
39 ♔g2! (D)



B

Setting a diabolical trap. Black could still win by 39...♔e5 40 ♔xd5 (40 ♔xd5? ♔e1+ 41 ♔h2 ♔xf2+ 42 ♔g2 ♖xh3#) 40...♔xd5 41 ♔xd5 d3 and pushing the d-pawn.

- 39 ... ♔e1+?
40 ♔h2 ♔xf2??

40...♔e5 would have kept Black in the game but after 41 ♔xd5 it would have been very messy.

- 41 ♖xa6+! bxa6
42 ♔xd5+ ♔b8
43 ♔d6+ 1-0

Did either player really understand what to do? It shouldn't have been enough for White just to attack on the queenside – he needed to

balance it with play in the centre and the kingside, as for example by the suggested 16 ♖h4.

Game 18
Harley – Whiteley
London League 1994
Winawer Variation

1	e4		e6
2	d4		d5
3	♖c3		♙b4
4	e5		c5
5	a3		♙xc3+
6	bxc3		♚c7

The variation 6...♗e7 7 ♖f3 b6 is related to that seen in this game, and has become very popular recently, since ...♚c7 is far from being an essential part of the strategy. White has three main approaches:

a) 8 ♙b5+ ♙d7 9 ♙d3 c4 (the line 9...♗bc6 is similar to the game, though White could choose to omit a4 altogether) 10 ♙f1 ♙a4 11 g3 ♗bc6 12 h4 h6 13 ♙h3 (interestingly preserving h5 for a piece) 13...♖d7 14 ♖h2 ♚g8 15 ♖f1 ♖c7 16 ♗e3 ± Chandler-Harley, London 1991.

b) 8 ♖g5 h6 9 ♚h5 g6 10 ♚h3 ♚c7 11 a4 ♖f8 12 ♖d1 (A.Sokolov-Yusupov, Riga Ct (13) 1986) and now 12...♙a6! ♣.

c) 8 a4 ♙a6 9 ♙xa6 (9 ♙b5+ ♙xb5 10 axb5 h6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♚e2 ♗d7 13 ♙a3 a6 14 bxa6 ♚c8 with equality, Apicella-Hertneck, Uzes 1990) 9...♗xa6 10 0-0 ♗b8 11 dxc5 bxc5 12 c4 0-0 13 cxd5 ♗xd5 14 ♚d3 h6 15 c4 ♗e7! 16 ♚e4 ♗d7 17 ♙b1? ♚a5 18 ♙d1 ♙ad8 19 ♚c2 ♗xe5! won

a key pawn in A.Sokolov-Yusupov, Riga Ct (3) 1986, e.g. 20 ♗xe5 ♚c3! exploiting the back rank.

Hertneck has since come up with the even more refined 6...♗e7 7 ♖f3 h6!?, aiming to get the best of all worlds. After 8 a4 b6 9 ♙b5+ (9 a5!? ♙b7 10 ♙b5+ ♗d7 = Anand-Hertneck, Munich 1991) 9...♙d7 10 ♙d3 ♗bc6, White has committed himself to a4 but Black has not had to play ...♚c7. Perhaps 8 dxc5!? is worth a try.

7 ♖f3

The point of 6...♚c7 is revealed after 7 ♚g4 f5 (7...f6 8 ♙b5+! ♖f8 9 a4!? is very messy) 8 ♚g3 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♗e7 10 ♙d2 0-0 11 ♙d3 b6 12 ♗e2 ♙a6 13 ♖f4 ♚d7 =.

7 ... ♗e7

8 a4 b6

9 ♙b5+ ♙d7

10 ♙d3

After 10 0-0 ♙xb5 11 axb5, the oft-recommended 11...a5 seems dubious after 12 dxc5! bxc5 13 c4 dxc4 14 ♗d2 c3 15 ♗e4! (Korchnoi).

10 ... ♗bc6

11 0-0 h6

11...0-0? allows the Greek Gift sacrifice 12 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 13 ♖g5+ winning.

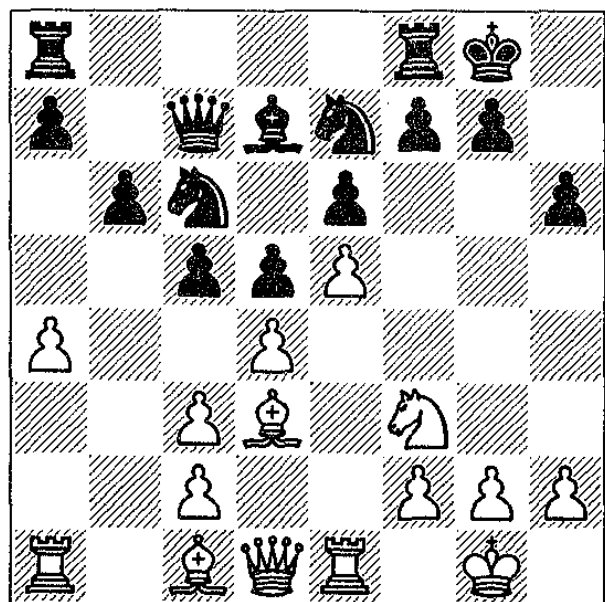
12 ♙e1

After 12 ♙a3 ♗a5 13 ♗d2 0-0 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♗b3 ♗xb3 16 cxb3, crucial is 16...a5! = stopping further white expansion with b4.

12 ... 0-0 (D)

Castling queenside is not out of the question after the preparatory 12...c4.

13 ♙a3



W

The bishop may actually prove more useful on the kingside. An alternative is 13 ♔f4 ♞g6! (13...f5 14 exf6 ♞xf4 14 fxe7 ♞xe7 15 ♔b5 was slightly better for White in Timman-Ljubojević, Amsterdam 1991) 14 ♔g3 cxd4 15 ♞xd4 (15 cxd4 ♞b4!) 15... ♞a5 16 ♞e3 $\text{♞c4} \infty$ Nunn-Nikolić, Amsterdam 1988.

13 ... ♞a5
14 ♞d2!

A nuance of move-order, because after 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♞d2 Black has the additional option of 15... ♞g6 16 ♞h5 ♔e8 17 ♞e2 (Hartston-Portisch, Nice OL 1974) 17...f6 18 exf6 ♞xf6 19 ♞f3 ♞c8 with equality.

If now 14... ♞g6 , 15 ♞g4! is very strong.

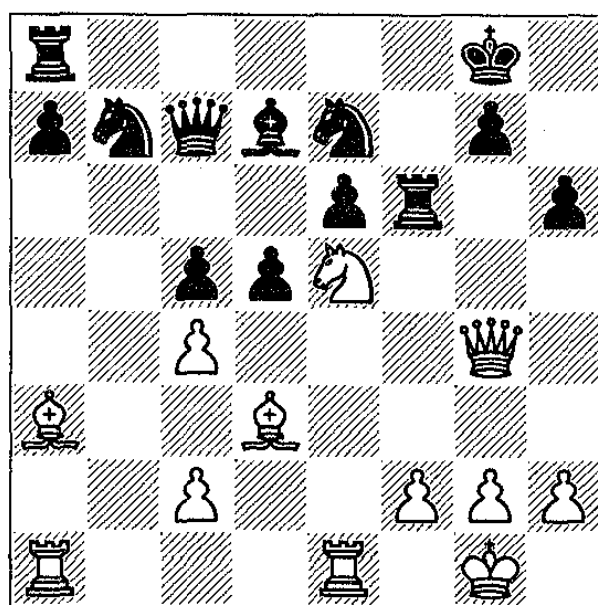
14 ... ♔xa4

After 14...f6?! 15 exf6 ♞xf6 , White no longer has the e-pawn to worry about and can safely break open the position with 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 c4! as in Gligorić-Marović, Osijek 1978.

15 dxc5 bxc5
16 ♞g4 ♔d7
17 ♞f3 f5?!

Premature. Hertneck held on to the pawn successfully against Chandler (Bundesliga 1994) after 17... ♞ab8 18 ♔c1 ♞h8 , but instead of Chandler's 19 ♞h4 ♞g8 20 ♞g5 , better was 19 ♞h3 ♞g8 20 g4!? with a continuing attack.

18 exf6 ♞xf6
19 ♞e5 ♞b7
20 c4 (D)



B

20 ... d4?

A previous game between the same players (London Lloyds Bank 1987) continued 20... ♔e8 21 ♔c1?! ♞d6 22 ♞h3 ♞ef5 23 g4 ♞e4! but better was 21 cxd5 exd5 22 c4! smashing open the position for the two bishops.

21 ♞e4! ♔e8

With the intention of 22 ♞h7+? ♞f8 23 ♞h8+ ♞g8 24 ♔h7 ♔f7 leaving White's queen rather embarrassed. If instead 21... ♞f5 , then 22 ♞xd7 ♞xd7 23 ♞xe6+ ♞xe6 24 ♞xe6 ♞f7 25 ♔e4 ♞b8 26 ♞b1 ♞f5 27 ♔xc5 wins.

22 ♔xc5! ♞xc5

23 ♖xb7 ♜c8
24 ♜xa7

White has not only regained his sacrificed pawn but won another and gained decisive control of the seventh rank. It is as good as over.

24 ... ♔f8
25 ♜ea1 ♙c6
26 ♘xc6 ♜xc6
27 ♜1a5 ♚d6
28 c5! ♜xc5
29 ♜5a6!

Much better than 29 ♜xc5 ♚xc5
30 ♜a8+ ♔f7 31 ♚b8 e5 32 ♚f8+
♔e6 33 ♚xg7.

29 ... ♚d8
30 ♜a8 ♘c8
31 ♜6a7 1-0

Game 19

Tal – Short

Subotica IZ 1987

Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘c3 ♙b4
4 e5 c5
5 a3 ♙xc3+

White gains a useful tempo after 5... ♙a5 6 ♚g4 ♘e7 7 dxc5 ♙xc3+ 8 bxc3 0-0 (better is 8... ♘d7 9 ♘f3 ♚c7! Psakhis) 9 ♘f3 ♘d7 10 ♙d3 f5 11 exf6 ♘xf6 12 ♚h4 ♘c6 13 c4! ± Lau-Lputian, Altensteig 1989.

6 bxc3 ♘e7
7 ♚g4 0-0

A modern alternative is 7... ♔f8, planning to castle by hand with ...h6 (also ruling out ♘g5 manoeuvres), ...♔g8 and ...♔h7. This may seem slightly nonsensical since Black can

just castle, saving plenty of tempi, but then, as the variations below show, Black's castled king is very open to attack. Here, Black keeps the kingside closed, rather than seek counterplay there. His play is down the c-file, with an important theme being ...b6 and ...♙a6 to exchange off White's bishop.

The exchange ...c5xd4 is crucial. Either it allows White's a3-bishop to become a killer, bearing down on the pinned e7-knight, or it allows Black play on the c-file. Also, Black must beware lest after ...c5xd4, c3xd4 White is able to play c2-c4! opening the game when the black rooks are still disconnected. The b-file could also become a source of danger for Black if White is allowed to seize it after he plays d4xc5, etc.

Black plays ...♚a5 usually to attack c3, hoping after ♙d2 that the white bishop is not heading for a3. Black also tries to get in ...♚a4, attacking c2 and blocking the white a-pawn, thereby preventing a4 and ♙a3. White, however, may stop this by playing a4 before Black has time for ...♚a4.

In short, the drawback of 7... ♔f8 is not that White gets an immediate raging attack on the kingside (as happens after 7...0-0). Rather, it is the problem of how to co-ordinate his pieces. It takes a long time to get the h8-rook into the game. In the meantime, White may be breaking through on the queenside – which Black opens!

White used his extra co-ordination to good effect in Videki-Vareille,

Toulouse 1995, starting first with pressure on the kingside and then moving nimbly over to the queenside: 7...♔f8 8 h4 ♖a5 9 ♕d2 ♗a4 10 ♜h3! ♞bc6 11 h5 h6 12 ♗f4 cxd4 13 ♜f3 ♞d8 14 cxd4 b6 15 ♕b4 a5 16 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 17 ♞e2 ♕a6 18 ♞c3 ♗c6 19 ♕xa6 ♜xa6 20 a4 ♜a8 21 ♞b5! with advantage.

A less fashionable alternative is 7...♞f5 8 ♕d3 h5 9 ♗f4 (or 9 ♗h3 with the idea of g4) 9...♗h4 10 ♞e2 ♗xf4 11 ♞xf4 ♞e7 12 ♕e2 h4 13 ♞h5! ± Tal-Petrosian, USSR Ch 1983. For 7...♗c7 or 7...cxd4, allowing 8 ♗xg7, see the next chapter.

8 ♞f3

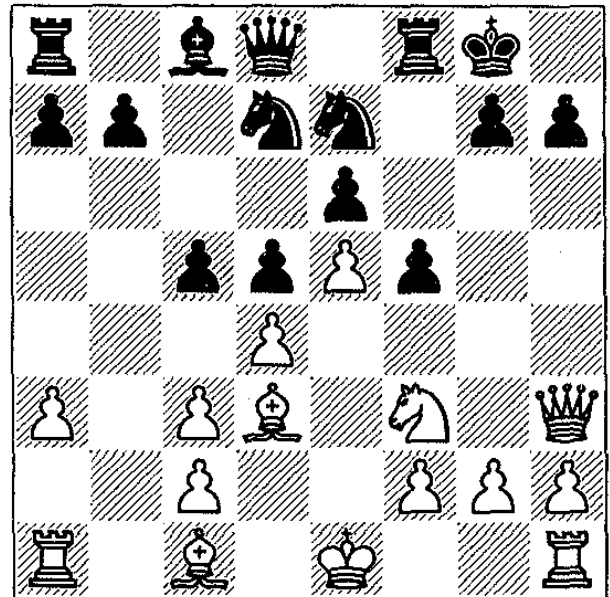
8 ♕d3 is more accurate:

a) 8...c4?! 9 ♕h6 ♞g6 10 ♕xg6 fxg6 11 ♕e3 followed by h4 and h5. Black's best defensive plan is ...♜f5.

b) 8...♞bc6 9 ♗h5! (9 ♕g5 ♗a5 10 ♞e2 ♞g6! ∞) 9...♞g6 (Black has to be very careful: 9...♞f5 10 ♞f3 c4 11 g4! cxd3 12 gxf5 f6 13 ♜g1 and 9...h6 10 ♕xh6! are both devastating) 10 ♞f3 ♗c7! (with the idea of 11 ♞g5 h6 12 ♞xf7 ♗xf7 =) 11 ♕e3 c4 12 ♕xg6 fxg6 13 ♗g4 with play much as in 'a' above. Black has gained the extra move ...♗c7, and White can no longer develop his knight to e2.

c) 8...f5 9 exf6 ♜xf6 10 ♗h5 (10 ♕g5 ♜f7 11 ♞f3 ♞bc6 transposes to the game) 10...h6 (10...g6 11 ♗d1! is like the game but with the queen better placed on d1!) and if 11 g4 then 11...♞bc6 12 g5 g6! is fine for Black.

d) 8...♞d7?! 9 ♞f3 f5 10 ♗h3! (D) leaves the d7-knight misplaced:



B

10...♞b6 11 a4 (11 ♜g1 ♞c4! 12 g4 ♗a5!) 11...c4 12 ♕e2 a5 13 ♜g1! ♗e8 14 g4 with a strong attack (Sax-Dolmatov, Clermont Ferrand 1989).

8 ... ♞bc6

Wild variations arise after 8...f5!? 9 exf6 ♜xf6 10 ♕g5 ♗a5 (the alternative 10...♞d7! is sounder) 11 ♕xf6 ♗xc3+ 12 ♔e2! and now our new suggestion is the temporary rook sacrifice 12...♗xc2+!? 13 ♞d2 ♞g6 14 ♕e5 (14 h4 h5!) 14...c4 15 ♔e1 ♞xe5 16 dxe5 c3 17 ♗d1 cxd2+ 18 ♗xd2 ♗e4+ 19 ♗e3! ♗a4 with compensation for the exchange.

9 ♕d3 f5

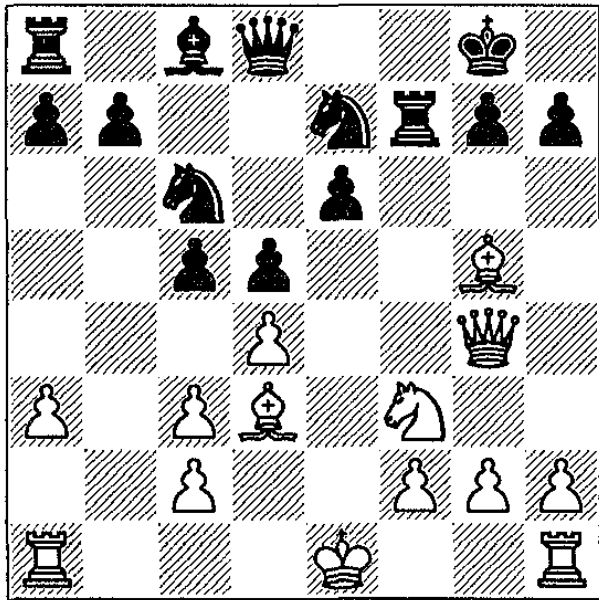
Black has to play this as White threatened the Greek Gift sacrifice 10 ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 11 ♗h5+ ♔g8 12 ♞g5. If White now tries to keep the game blocked with 10 ♗h3 as in 'd' above, Black's best response is probably 10...♗b6 counterattacking in the centre.

10 exf6 ♜xf6

11 ♕g5 ♜f7 (D)

11...e5! 12 ♕xh7+ (12 ♗g3 ♜xf3!) 12...♔xh7 13 ♗h5+ ♔g8 14 ♕xf6

gxf6 15 dxe5 ♖f8! is more adventurous.



W

12 ♔xe7

White exchanges now to restrict Black's options, as 12...♖xe7 is met by 13 ♘g5. After 12 ♖h4 h6 13 ♔xe7 ♖xe7! 14 ♖g3 (14 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 15 0-0 ♔d7 16 dxc5 ♗c8 =) 14...c4 15 ♔g6 ♗f6 16 0-0 ♔d7 17 ♗fe1 ♔e8 18 ♔xe8 ♗xe8, Black's pieces are more comfortably placed than in the equivalent line after ...♗xe7.

12 ... ♗xe7
13 ♖h4 g6

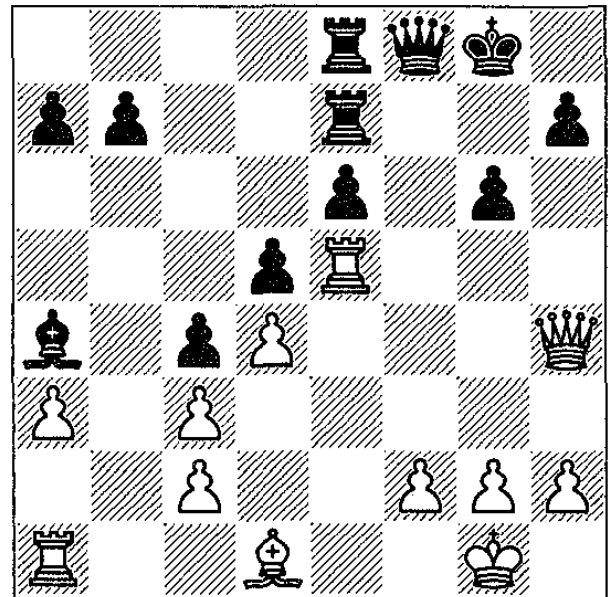
Or 13...h6 14 0-0 c4 15 ♔g6 ♔d7 16 ♗fe1 ♔e8 17 ♔xe8 ♖xe8 when White has a very slight advantage due to the pressure on e6 and Black's slightly tangled pieces.

14 0-0 c4
15 ♔e2 ♔d7
16 ♗fe1 ♖f8
17 ♔d1!

A new move in this game. The idea is to improve on 17 ♔f1 by planning a later ♔g4 as well as temporarily defending c2.

17 ... ♗ae8
Simplest here is 17...♔g7 then ...♖f6 and ...♗f8.

18 ♘e5 ♗xe5
19 ♗xe5 ♔a4?! (D)



W

20 ♔f3?

White should have defended c2 first, even though the immediate 20...♔xc2? now fails to 21 ♗ae1 h6 22 ♔xd5 g5 23 ♗xe6!. Better was 20 ♖g5 ♔g7 21 ♖d2 followed by ♔g4.

20 ... ♔g7!
21 ♖g5 ♔xc2
22 ♗ae1 ♖f6
23 ♖e3 ♔f8

1/2-1/2

Play would have continued 24 ♖h6+ ♔g8 25 ♖e3 ♔f8.

Game 20

Kovaliov – Vaiser

Clichy 1991

MacCutcheon Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘c3 ♗f6

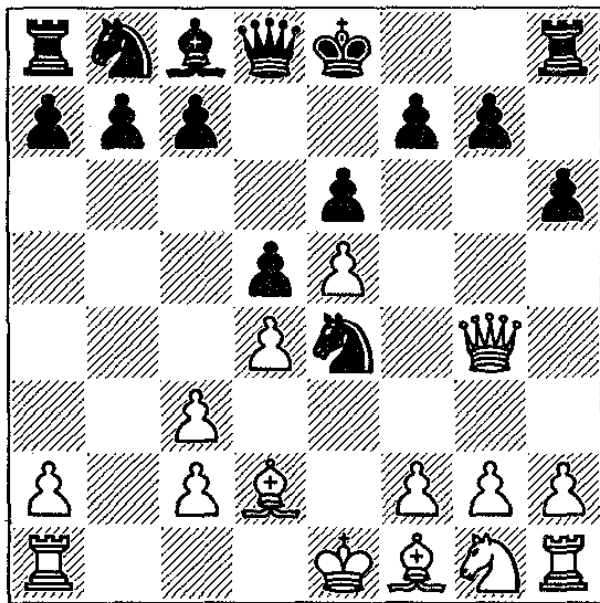
4 ♖g5 ♗b4
5 e5

For 5 exd5, see Chapter 8.

5 ... h6
6 ♖d2

White can choose to hold on to his dark-squared bishop with 6 ♖e3!?, e.g. 6... ♗e4 7 ♖g4 ♖f8 8 a3 ♖xc3+ 9 bxc3 c5 10 ♖d3 ♗xc3 11 dxc5 ♗c6 12 ♗f3 f5 13 exf6 ♖xf6 = Klovan-Shereshevsky, USSR 1977.

6 ... ♖xc3
7 bxc3 ♗e4
8 ♖g4 (D)



B

8 ... g6

Positionally weakening but the main line. 8... ♖f8 is obviously more positionally sound, and at least at present seems to survive tactically after 9 h4 c5 10 ♖h3 ♗c6 11 ♖d3 ♗xd2 12 ♖xd2 c4 13 ♖e2 b5 14 ♖g3 ♖g8 (Yurtaev-Shabalov, Riga 1988). The only super-grandmaster encounter in recent years was Anand-Ivanchuk, Linares (8) 1992, which continued 9 ♗f3?! c5 10 ♖d3 ♗xd2 11 ♖xd2 ♗c6 12 ♖f4 ♖e7 13 a3

♖d7 14 ♖hb1 b6 15 ♖e3 ♗a5! ♢ but would Ivanchuk risk it again?

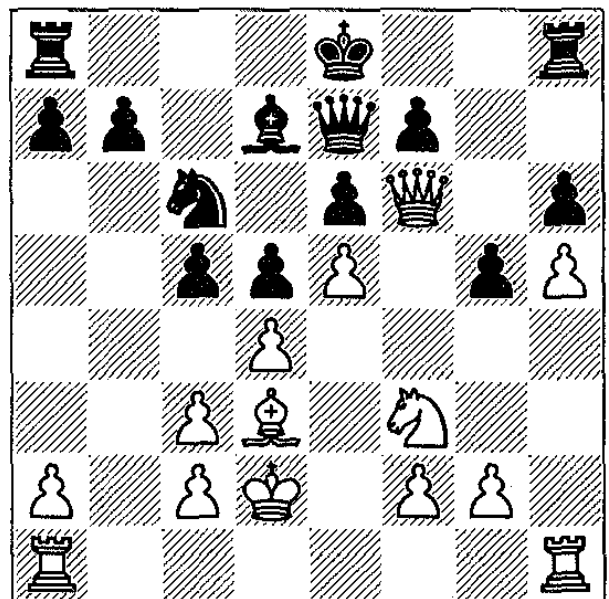
9 ♖d3 ♗xd2
10 ♖xd2 c5
11 h4 ♗c6

One general idea in this line is 11... ♖c7 12 ♖f4 f5! but here White can try 12 ♖f3!?, 12 ♖h3 or 12 h5 g5 13 f4!.

12 ♖f4 ♖d7

Better is 12... ♖a5 13 ♗f3 b6!? 14 ♖hb1 ♖a6 15 a4 ♖xd3 16 cxd3 a6 17 dxc5 ♖xc5 18 d4 (Aseev-Piskov, Berlin 1991) 18... ♖c4! with counterplay.

13 ♗f3 ♖e7
14 h5 g5
15 ♖f6! (D)



B

15 ... ♖xf6

After 15... 0-0-0 16 ♖xe7 ♗xe7, White could try 17 dxc5. After an earlier ...c4 and ♖e2, Madl-J.Horvath, Hungarian Cht 1992 continued 16... 0-0-0 17 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 18 ♗h2 ♖df8 19 ♖he1 ♗g8 20 ♖g4 f5 21 exf6 ♗xf6 22 f3 ±.

16 exf6 c4

17 ♔f1 0-0-0
 18 ♖e1 ♔c7
 19 ♘e5 ♗xe5
 20 ♖xe5 b5

An alternative plan is 20...♔e8!? and ...♞d6-a6, keeping one of the white rooks on the defensive.

21 ♔e2 ♔d6
 22 g4?

White should have played 22 ♔e3 and 23 f4 straight away, preserving the option of bringing a rook to the g-file in front of his g-pawn.

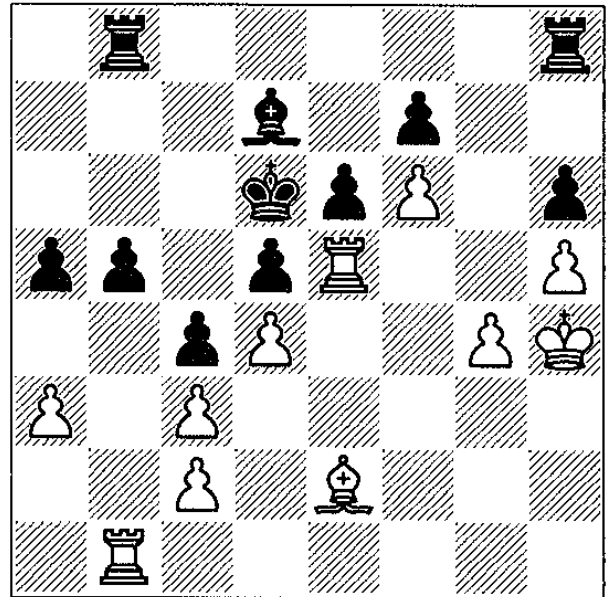
22 ... ♞b8
 23 a3 a5
 24 ♞b1 ♔c6
 25 ♔e3 ♔d7
 26 f4 gxf4+?

Now Black could have played 26...♞bg8!, when White would never have been able to break through.

27 ♔xf4 ♔c6
 28 ♔g3! ♔d7
 29 ♔h4 ♔c6
 30 ♔f3 ♔d7
 31 ♔d1 ♔c6
 32 ♔e2 ♔d7 (D)
 33 ♖f1!

After 33 g5 hxg5 34 ♖xg5 ♞h6 35 ♞f1 ♞bh8 36 ♞g7 ♔e8 Black holds, but now in the event of 34 g5 hxg5 35 ♖xg5 ♞h6 36 ♞g7 ♞f8 37 ♔g5 ♞hh8 38 h6 White would win.

33 ... b4



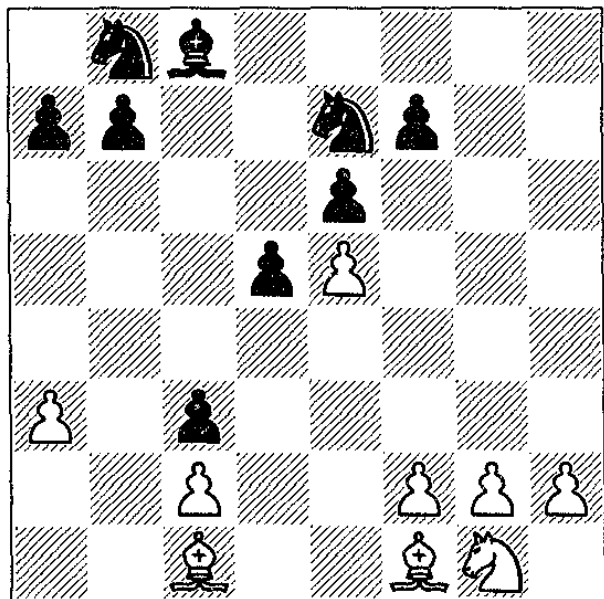
W

34 cxb4 axb4
 35 axb4 ♞xb4

So the threats on the kingside force Black to open the queenside to create counterplay. White can now make progress (analytical comments by Kovaliov):

36 ♞a1! (36 g5? c3!) 36...♔c6 37 ♞e3 ♞g8 38 ♞a7 ♔b7 39 ♞e5 ♞b1 40 ♔f3 ♔c6 41 g5! ♞f1 42 ♞a3 ♔d6 43 ♔g4 hxg5+ 44 ♖xg5 ♞h8 45 ♞f3! ♞h1+ (45...♞xf3 46 ♔xf3 ♞h6 47 ♞g6!) 46 ♔h3 ♔c6 47 ♞g7 e5 (47...♔e8 48 ♞fg3!) 48 dxe5+ ♔xe5 49 ♞xf7 d4 50 ♞e7+ ♔d6 51 ♞e6+ ♔c7 52 ♞g3 d3 53 cxd3 c3 54 d4! c2 55 ♞c3 ♞xh5+! 56 ♔g4! ♞5xh3 57 ♞exc6+ ♔d7 58 ♞c7+ ♔e6 59 ♞7c6+! ♔f7 60 ♞xh3 c1 ♞ 61 ♞xc1 ♞xc1 62 ♔f5 1-0

6 Poisoned Pawn Centre



General observations

In the previous chapter we saw Black responding to White's early queen thrust ♕g4 with ...0-0. This dealt with the threat of ♕xg7 and held the kingside intact. However, as we saw, it exposed Black's king to a rather dangerous, although by no means overwhelming, onslaught from the white queen and minor pieces. In defending against the threats, Black was often forced to simplify into an ending where he stood very slightly worse and had no real winning chances.

In the present chapter Black is much more ambitious. He wants to seize the initiative and create dynamic chances for his pieces. So he allows White to wreak havoc on his kingside pawns by ignoring the threat of ♕xg7. Instead he develops

his pieces rapidly, puts immediate pressure on the white centre and spirits his king away to the queenside.

This strategy depends for its success on exploiting the precarious situation of the white king in the centre, both directly and indirectly. Directly, Black plans a massive attack on White's pawn centre, hoping to demolish it with some heavy blows. Then, once the white king is stripped of its cover, it will be easy prey to Black's massed pieces. Indirectly, Black will try to prove that the white king's presence in the centre severely hampers the co-ordination of the white pieces. Indeed, if in the endgame it is possible to speak about 'pawn islands', then here we can talk about 'piece islands': Black's pieces come together and act in unison, whereas the white pieces are divided into two separate groups, those on the queenside and those on the kingside, which are bisected by the white king. In particular, it is difficult for White to co-ordinate the action of his rooks.

Staying in the centre is therefore not ideal for the white king, but there is usually no good alternative. Seeking refuge on the queenside, with its mangled pawn structure, looks risky. The kingside, although a more plausible haven, also has its drawbacks.

In particular, Black may be able to utilise the open g- and h-files to launch a big attack. Also, White's own winning strategy often requires the utilisation of his extra passed pawn on the h-file. If he houses his king on the kingside then it may interfere with the implementation of this plan since a rapid advance of the kingside pawns may expose the monarch to attack.

So, although at first glance the white trumps are more apparent – an extra passed pawn and a pair of bishops, especially a dark-squared one with no rival – Black can actually generate a lot of counterplay.

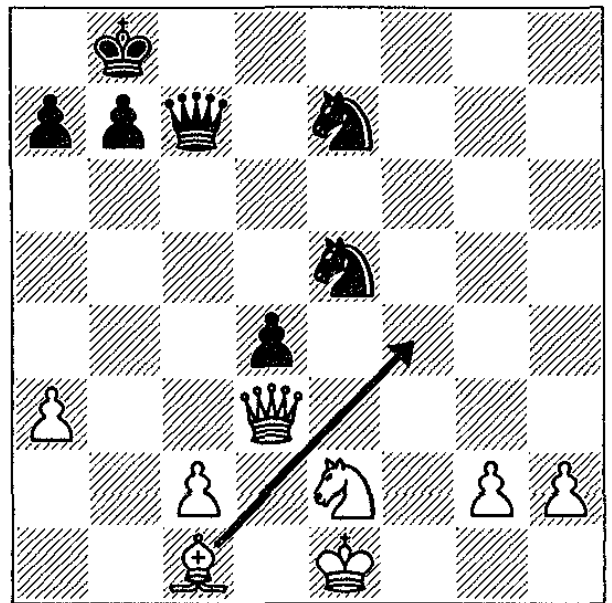
The clash is particularly sharp because, in order to attack White's king, Black is striving to open the position, despite the fact that his opponent has the two bishops, which thrive on open lines.

At club and lower international levels, Black often succeeds in crashing through the white centre and mating the enemy king because White loses control of the position or makes a tactical oversight. It is by no means easy to co-ordinate the white pieces. However, at the highest levels, where players have a sophisticated knowledge of defensive technique and understand the tempo of the battle, Black often struggles to prove the validity of his sacrifice.

White forces queens off

Since an integral part of Black's strategy is to attack White's king, the

exchange of queens can be fatal to him. In fact, when White has two bishops, an extra pawn and the passed h-pawn, swapping off queens can be enough to force Black's resignation. When Black's queen is on c7, White can oppose with his queen on c3 (similarly ...♚b6 is met by ♚b3), 'pinning' a black knight on c6.

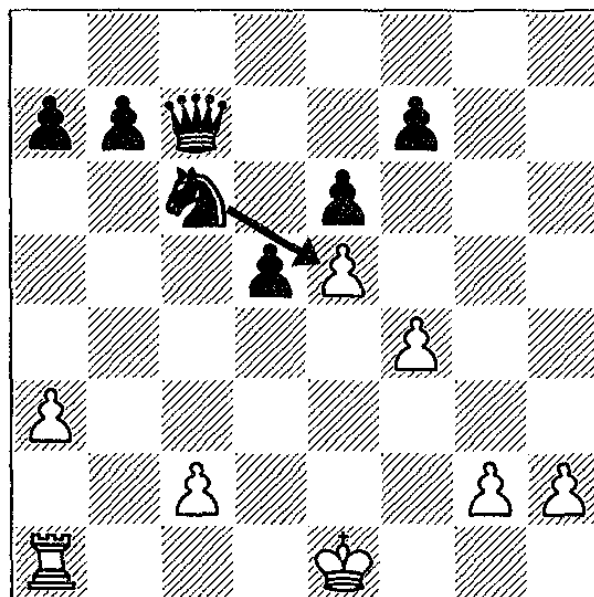
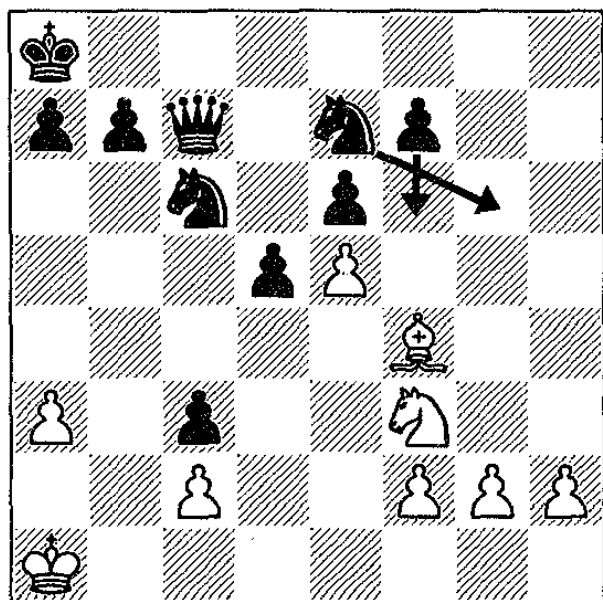


In the fairly typical situation above, Black has smashed open the centre, but White stops the attack in its tracks with the tactic ♗f4. Then after ...♘xd3+?, cxd3, Black's queen can't escape the pin and White reaches an endgame where the kingside pawns should prove decisive. White threatens ♗xe5 ♚xe5, ♚g3 anyway, so Black has to tangle himself up somewhat to stay in the game at all.

The battle for e5

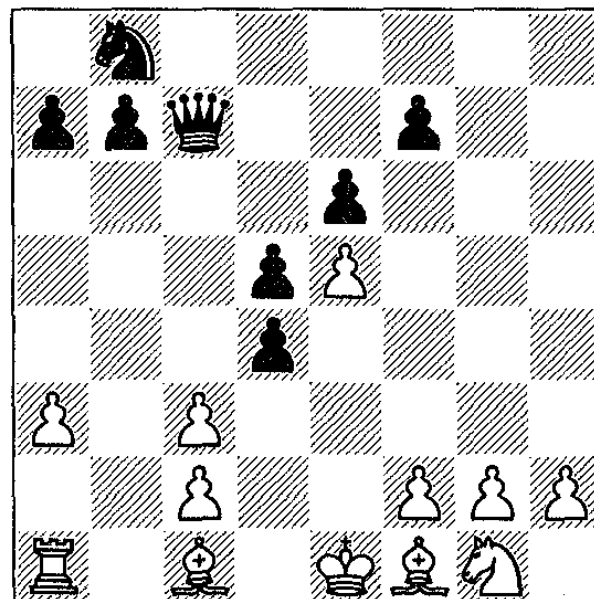
The e5-pawn holds White's game together but is out on a limb, with no d4-pawn left to protect it. White has to choose either to defend it with the

f4-pawn or with his pieces (Qf4 and Nf3).



Black defers ...dxc3

Even if White does get time to defend e5 with his pieces, it can still be very difficult to hold on to it, though a pin by a bishop on g3 against a knight on e5 and queen on c7 can be a useful counter-idea. More importantly, White's pieces are tied down to defence and Black need not fear them being used actively elsewhere (e.g. in capturing the c3-pawn).

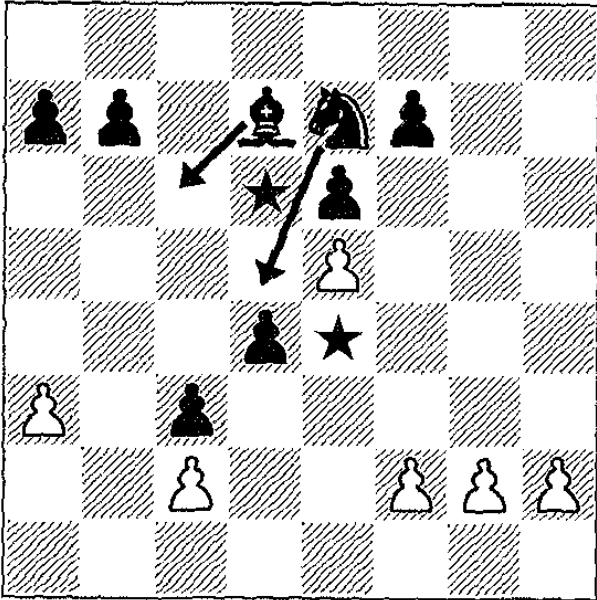


If White defends with f4, he wastes an important development tempo, blocks in his dark-squared bishop (which can't then help the h-pawn reach h8) and leaves potentially crucial holes on e3 and g3 (if the h-pawn tries to advance). Black can still destroy White's centre with ...f6 or the more radical piece sacrifice ...Nxe5.

By deferring ...dxc3, Black can often disrupt White's development. Here, the threats of ...Qxe5+ and ...Qxc3+ force White to either play Ne2, blocking his bishop in and not defending e5, or waste a move with Qd1. Note that after Qd1, White need not fear an immediate ...Qxe5 (Nf3 and cxd4) or ...Qxc3 (Rb1) but Black can instead exploit the early king move by playing ...dxc3, Nf3 Nc6, Qf4 Qb6! attacking the undefended f2-pawn as well as threatening ...Qb2.

The following diagram shows an ideal scenario, where ...Nxe5 wins the exchange after fxe5 Qxe5+ or ...Qxc3+, but the sacrifice can often be playable without such immediate tactical benefits.

Black plays ...d4

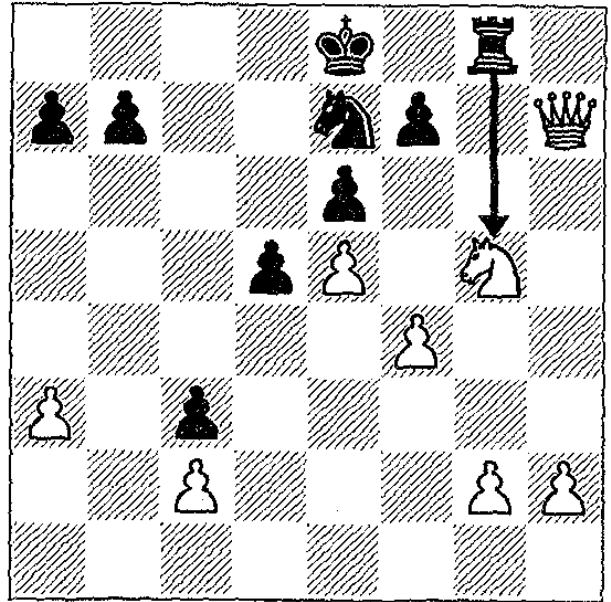


By playing ...d4 (with or without a pawn on c3), Black opens the long diagonal for his bishop (which is certainly not 'bad' in this variation) as well as freeing the d5-square for a knight. With no dark-squared bishop, Black has to be careful not to let White get a knight to d6 via e4 as a result.

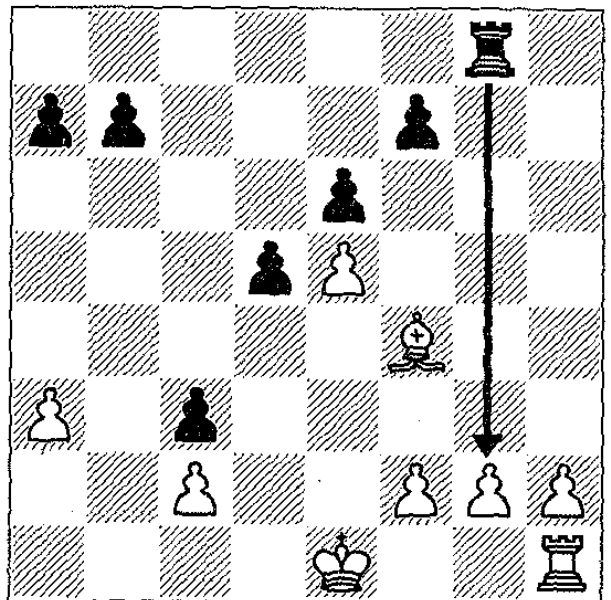
Black sacrifices the exchange

Black is often only too happy to sacrifice the exchange even when already a pawn down. An active minor piece can often be more valuable than a passively placed rook in these types of middlegame. The following are typical examples, illustrating how a rook can be sacrificed for any of White's minor pieces.

In the following diagram Black counters the threat to f7 by playing ... $\text{R} \times \text{g}5$!?. After the forced recapture fxg5 , e5 is bound to fall in compensation, e.g. after ... $\text{d} \times \text{g}6$.



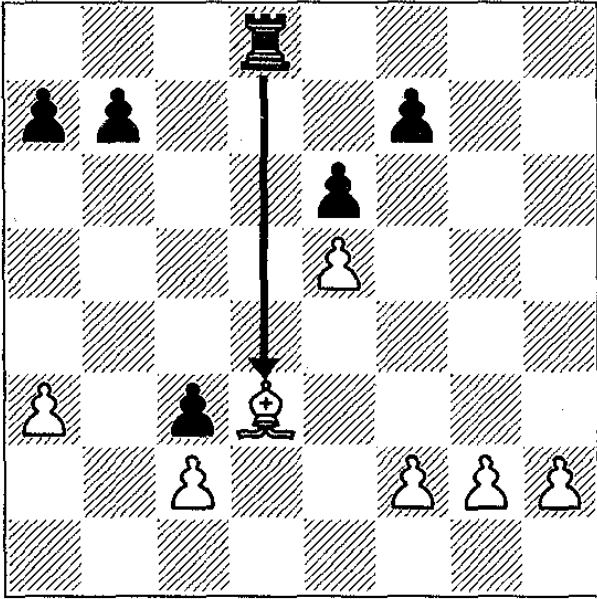
Now consider the next diagram. It appears that the g2-pawn is invulnerable.



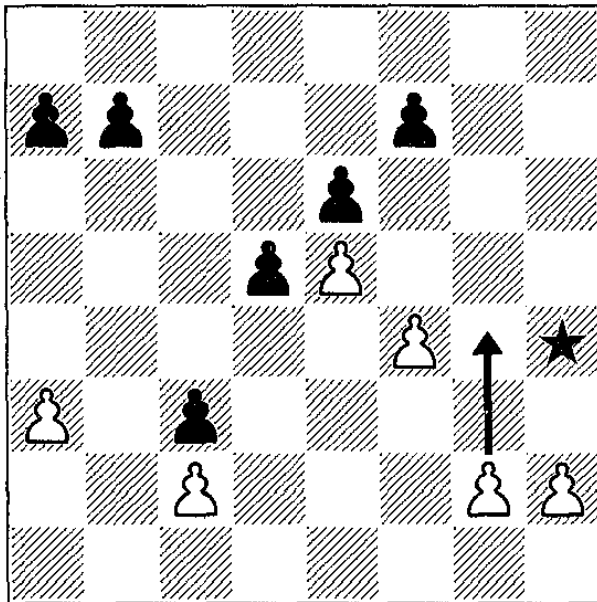
However, Black plays ... $\text{R} \times \text{g}2$ not fearing $\text{Q} \times \text{g}3$ and $\text{Q} \times \text{f}1$ trapping the rook, as then ... $\text{R} \times \text{g}3$ removes one of the defenders of e5.

Next, consider the diagram on the following page.

Black plays ... $\text{R} \times \text{d}3$ with no immediate tactical benefit, simply believing White's light-squared bishop more important than a rook. Black would follow up such a sacrifice with play on the light squares.



White plays g4



It has already been mentioned that if White plays h4 and f4, he leaves a hole on g3; it is also difficult to see how the h-pawn can advance successfully. If it reaches h7, it becomes more of a liability than a threat as White has no easy way of controlling the h8-square. Therefore the most effective way of pushing forward on the kingside (after f4) is by playing g4. Unlike other systems, White is not intending to play for f5 (when e5 would be fatally weakened) but is rather gaining space for his kingside

pieces (e.g. ♖g1-g3, ♕f1-h3, ♔e1-f2) while only leaving one hole for Black's knights on the rather out-of-the-way square h4.

If Black does try to smash open the centre with ...f6, exf6 e5, then White's g- and f-pawns can often be worth as much as a rook or more, as some grandmaster examples have shown. Material then becomes irrelevant and the battle is one of time between White's charging pawns and Black's attack down the central files.

Illustrative games

Game 21

Stefansson – Kaminski

Linares 1995

Winawer Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘c3	♙b4
4	e5	

If White plays for the g7-pawn immediately, Black can reply with ...dxe4 and ...♗f6 preserving the h7-pawn. It therefore becomes a simple swap of e4 for g7 which, if anything, is to Black's advantage. Examples are:

a) 4 a3 ♙xc3+ 5 bxc3 dxe4 6 ♖g4 ♗f6 7 ♖xg7 ♗g8 8 ♖h6 ♗bd7 9 ♗h3 b6 10 ♗g5 ♗g6 11 ♖h4 ♙b7 12 ♗xh7 ♗xh7 13 ♖xh7 ♖f6 ∞ De-graeve-Djurhuus, Arnhem jr Ech 1988.

b) 4 ♙d2 dxe4 5 ♖g4 ♖xd4! 6 0-0-0 ♗f6 (6...f5!?) 7 ♖xg7 ♗g8 8 ♖h6 ♙f8! =.

c) 4 ♖g4 ♘f6 5 ♗xg7 ♜g8 6 ♗h6 ♜g6 7 ♗e3 c5 8 ♙d2 ♘g4! 9 ♗d3 ♘c6 ♞.

4 ... c5
5 a3

Inferior is 5 ♗g4 ♘e7 6 ♗xg7?! (6 a3?! ♗a5!) 6...♜g8 7 ♗h6! (defending c1) 7...cxd4 8 a3 ♙xc3+ (8...♗a5 9 axb4 ♗xa1 10 ♘b5! with compensation) 9 bxc3 ♗c7 with a good version of the game, as White has not captured on h7.

5 ... ♙xc3+
6 bxc3 ♘e7
7 ♗g4 ♗c7

For 7...0-0, 7...♙f8 and 7...♘f5 see the previous chapter, while for 7...cxd4 see the next game.

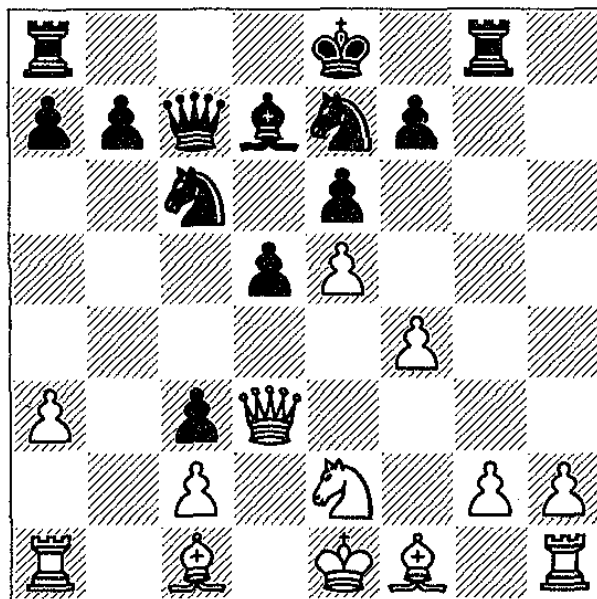
8 ♗xg7

Other moves give Black the option of keeping the position closed, for example 8 ♙d3 (8 ♙d1 0-0!) 8...c4 (8...cxd4 transposes to the next game) 9 ♙e2 ♘f5 (or 9...0-0) 10 ♘f3 ♘c6 11 ♗h5 ♙d7 12 g4 ♗a5 13 ♙d2 ♘h6 14 ♗g5 0-0 = Leko-Beliavsky, Belgrade 1995.

8 ... ♜g8
9 ♗xh7 cxd4
10 ♘e2

White has to block his own development if he wishes to defend both c3 and e5. Black gets a lot of play after 10 ♙d1?! ♘bc6 11 ♘f3 dxc3 12 ♘g5 (12 ♙f4 ♗b6! ∞) 12...♘xe5 13 f4 f6 (13...♜xg5 14 fxg5 ♘5g6 ∞) 14 fxe5 fxg5 15 ♗h5+ ♙d8 16 ♙xg5 ♗c5! 17 h4! ♙d7 18 ♜h3 ♙c7! ♞ Popović-J.Watson, New York 1981.

10 ... ♘bc6
11 f4 ♙d7
12 ♗d3 dxc3 (D)



W

A standard position for this line. White now normally chooses to capture on c3 in spite of the potential play this gives Black along the c-file. Otherwise, Black just plays ...d4 (usually after a preparatory ...0-0-0 or ...♘f5) when Black's central control and open lines on the kingside give Black plenty of play without the cost of a pawn.

13 ♗xc3

This line has gone in and out of fashion and will quite probably continue to do so! The main alternatives are:

a) 13 ♘xc3 a6 14 ♜b1 ♘f5 (not 14...0-0-0? 15 ♗xa6!) 15 ♘e2 (15 g4!? intends 15...♜xg4 16 ♙h3 but Black is able to counter-sacrifice with 15...♘xe5! ∞) 15...♘a7! 16 ♗c3 ♙c6 17 ♘d4 ♘xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♘b5 19 ♗c5 d4 20 ♜b3 ♗d8! 21 ♜h3 ♜c8 ♞ Ehlvest-Nikolić, Reykjavik 1991.

b) 13 ♜b1 d4! (13...♘f5?! 14 h3! ♜c8? 15 g4 ♘h4? 16 ♗h7! 1-0 Harley-Carton, London League 1995) 14 ♘xd4 (14 ♜g1 0-0-0 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♙b5! with balanced

play in Aseev-Eingorn, USSR Ch 1989) 14...♗xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♗f5 16 ♖f2 ♗c6! 17 ♖g1 0-0-0 18 g4!? (18 ♗d3 b6 19 ♗f1 ♖xd3! 20 cxd3 ♖d7 ♣ Harley-Levitt, London Lloyds Bank Masters 1985) 18...♗d4 19 ♖g3 ♖xg4!? 20 ♖xc3 ± (20 ♖xg4 ♗f3+ 21 ♗e2 ♗d4+ gives Black at least a draw).

c) 13 ♗g3 0-0-0 14 ♗e2 ♗f5! 14 ♗xf5 exf5 16 0-0 d4 =.

13 ... ♗f5

In some ways this seems illogical as it encourages White to gain time and space later on with g4; yet this is in fact an idea straight out of the hypermodern school, hoping that such a thrust leaves White badly over-extended. Against other lines White has tended to play more placidly with g3 but this can still be very effective, e.g. 13...0-0-0 14 ♖b1 d4 (or 14...♗b8 15 g3 ♗c8 16 ♗g2 b6 17 ♖d3! d4 18 0-0 ±) 15 ♖d3 ♗d5 16 g3 f6 17 exf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗g2 e5 19 fxe5 ♗xe5 20 ♖b3 ± Balashov-Agdestein, Dortmund 1987. But more recently, J.Polgar, playing against Motwani at the Isle of Lewis 1995, just ignored the fact that Black had not played ...♗f5 and carried on regardless (after 13...0-0-0) with 14 ♖g1!? d4 15 ♖c5 ♗e8 16 g4 ♗d5 17 ♖g3! intending ♗g2 and g5! (preventing ...f6) later on, and won nicely.

14 ♖b1

An important move to grab the open file and stop ...♖b6. If 14 ♖g1, then 14...♖d8!?

14 ... d4

More aggressive than 14...♖c8 15 ♗d2 b6 (15...a6 16 ♖g1! ♖d8 17 ♖d3

♖h4+ 18 g3 ♖xh2 19 ♖xb7 with a slight advantage to White, Schmidt-Schäffer – Walter, Baden 1993) 16 g3! (16 ♖g1 ♖d8! ∞ Short-Timman, Belfort 1988) 16...♖b7 17 ♖d3 ♗ce7 18 ♖g1 ♖c4! 19 g4 ♗h4 20 ♖g3 ± Karpov-Farago, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

15 ♖d3

15 ♖c5?! gives Black two extra tempi on a perfectly playable plan: 15...b6 16 ♖c4 0-0-0 followed by ...♗b8 and ...♗d7-c8-b7, ...♖c8 and ...♗a6. 15 ♖c4 is answered by either 15...♖a5+ or 15...0-0-0 16 ♖g1 f6 17 exf6 ♗d6!.

15 ... 0-0-0

16 ♖g1!

White takes up the challenge but has little choice. Black threatens both to break through in the centre, e.g. after 16 ♗d2 f6! 17 exf6 e5! 18 f7 ♖g7 19 g4 (Ki.Georgiev-Rasidović, Sarajevo 1986) when 19...♗d6 would have left Black clearly on top, or on the queenside, e.g. after 16 g3 ♗a5 17 ♖b4 a6 18 a4 ♗c6 ♣ (Garber-Wallace, Guarapuava 1991).

16 ... ♗e8!?

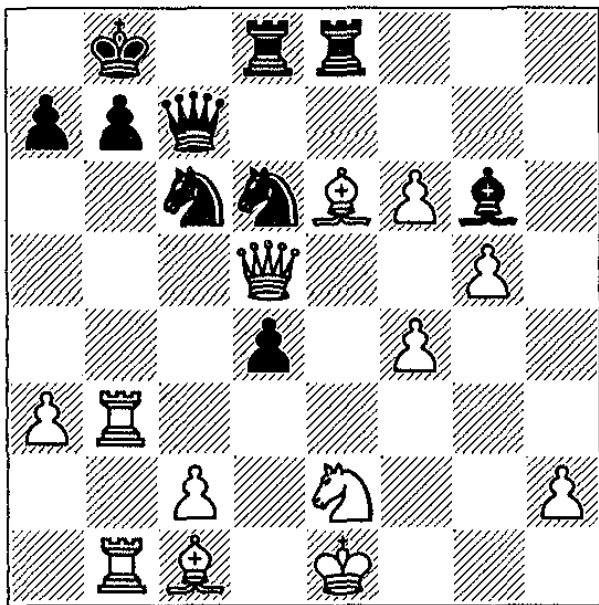
Maybe not best. Better chances are perhaps offered by:

a) 16...f6 17 g4 ♗h4 18 exf6 e5 19 f7 (19 h3 ♗e6! and ...♗d5 or 19 f5 e4! 20 ♖xe4 ♖de8 21 ♖d3 ♗xf5!) 19...♖xg4 20 ♖xg4 ♗xg4 21 ♗h3 ♖d7 22 ♗xg4 ♖xg4 23 ♖g3 ♖h5 24 ♖b3! e4! 25 ♖g8 ♖d5! 26 ♖g7 ♗f3+ 27 ♗f2 ♖h5 28 f8 ♖ ♖xh2+ 29 ♗f1 1/2-1/2 Brenke-Rummele, correspondence 1994.

b) 16...♗a5 17 ♖b4 (17 g4 ♗a4!) 17...♗c6 18 ♖b2 ♗a5 19 g4 ♗e3 20 ♗xe3 dxe3 21 ♗d4! ±.

17 g4 ♖h4
 18 ♖g3 ♜f6
 19 exf6 ♙g6

Harley-B.Martin, British Ch 1993 instead went 19...♙f7 20 ♙h3 ♖ge8 (20...e5 21 g5+ ♖b8 led to a quick black win in Sznepik-Nogueiras, Thessaloniki OL 1988, but instead of Sznepik's 22 fxe5? White should push forward fast with 22 f5 ♙d5 23 g6 e4 24 ♖b5 ♖e5 25 ♙f4 ♖hf3+ 26 ♖xf3 exf3 27 f7!) 21 g5 ♙g6 22 ♖c4 ♖f5 23 ♙xf5?! exf5 24 ♖h3? ♖e4! and Black won. White should have tried the very risky 23 ♖gb3 ♖d6 24 ♙xe6+! ♖b8 25 ♖d5 (D).



B

A typical scenario for this line where White hopes his pawns will queen before Black mates him in the centre! Here, the tactics just seem to be in White's favour:

a) 25...♖xe6!? 26 ♖xe6 ♖e8 27 f5!! ♖xe6 (27...♙f7 28 ♙f4! ♙xe6 29 ♖xb7+!) 28 fxe6 b6 (28...♙xc2 29 f7 ♖e7 30 ♖f3 ♖f8 31 ♙f4 ♖c7 32 ♖xb7+) 29 ♙f4 ♙xc2 30 f7 ♖e7 31 ♖f3!.

b) 25...♙xc2 26 f7! ♖f8! (or 26...♖e7 27 f8♖! ♖xf8 28 f5!) 27 f5! ♙xb3 (27...d3!? 28 ♙f4! ♙xb1 29 ♖xb1 dxe2 30 g6 ♖e7 31 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 32 ♖xb7+ ♖xb7 33 ♖xd6+ ♖a8 34 ♙d5!) 28 ♖xb3 ♖xf7 29 ♙xf7 ♖xf7 30 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 31 ♖g3 ♖h8 32 ♖b2.

c) 25...b6 26 f5! ♖xf5 27 ♙f4 ♖d6 28 f7!? ♖xe6 29 f8♖! ♖xf8 30 ♖xe6.

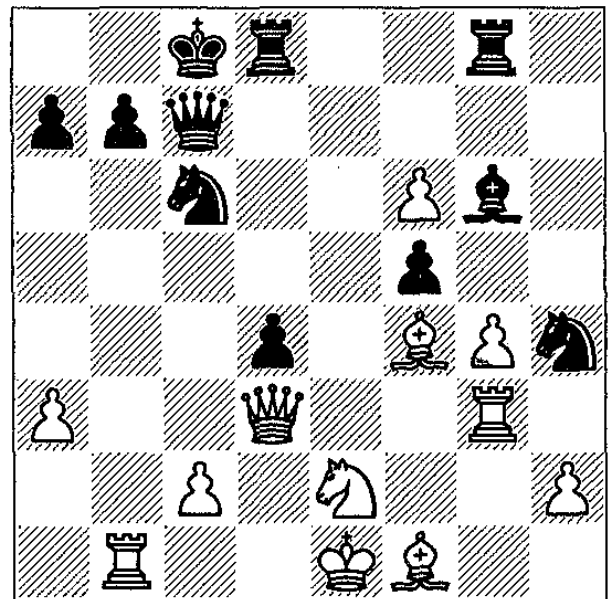
d) 25...♖a8! 26 ♖3b2!?.
 20 f5!

Instead, Ernst-Kaminski, Groningen 1992 continued 20 ♖c4 ♙f7 21 ♖a4 e5 22 f5 e4 and Black went on to win.

20 ... exf5

Knaak analyses 20...♖e5 21 ♖e4 exf5 22 gxf5 ♙xf5 23 ♖xh4 ♖xc2 24 f7 as winning for White.

21 ♙f4 (D)



B

21 ... ♖d7

Hellers-Djurhuus, Skei 1993, resulted in a quick white win after 21...♖a5+ 22 ♖f2 ♖d5 23 ♖b5! ♖d7 24 ♖gb3 b6 25 ♖a6+ forcing

the exchange of queens. Tisdall gives the variation 21...♞e5 22 ♠xe5 (22 ♣b5!?) 22...♣xe5 23 ♣c4+ ♣c7 (or 23...♚b8 24 ♜xb7+!) 24 ♣xc7+ ♚xc7 25 g5 as clearly better for White.

22 g5 ♠h5

The other way to get this bishop into the game is 22...♠f7 23 ♠h3 ♠d5 but then White could try 24 ♞xd4! ♞xd4 25 ♣xd4 ♜ge8+ 26 ♚f2 ♞e2+ 27 ♚g1, planning to hang on and then exploit his extra pawns.

23 ♚f2 ♜ge8

23...♞g6 is simply met by 24 ♠h3.

24 ♠d2!?

A strange-looking move, seeking to use f4 for the knight. An alternative was 24 ♜h3 ♠xe2 (24...♞g6 25 ♜xh5 ♜xe2+ 26 ♠xe2 ♞xf4 27 ♣f3 ♞xh5 28 ♣xh5 or 24...♜h8 25 ♜xh4! ♠xe2 26 ♜xh8 ♠xd3 27 ♜xd8+ ♣xd8 28 ♠xd3 +-) 25 ♠xe2 ♞g6 26 ♠d2 ♞ge5 27 ♣b5 ♜h8 28 ♜xh8 ♜xh8 29 ♚g1, when 29...d3!? 30 cxd3 ♣d4+ 31 ♚g2 ♣h4 32 ♣xb7+ ♚d8 33 ♠a5+ ♞xa5 34 ♣b8+ ♚d7 35 ♣xa7+ wins by force.

24 ... ♞e5

White consolidates after either 24...♞g6 25 ♞f4 ♞xf4 26 ♠xf4 ♜e4 27 ♣d2 ♜de8 28 ♠d3 or 24...♞f3 25 ♜xf3 ♞e5 26 ♣xf5 ♞xf3 (26...♠xf3 27 ♣xd7+ ♜xd7 28 ♞g1!) 27 ♣xd7+ ♜xd7 28 ♠f4.

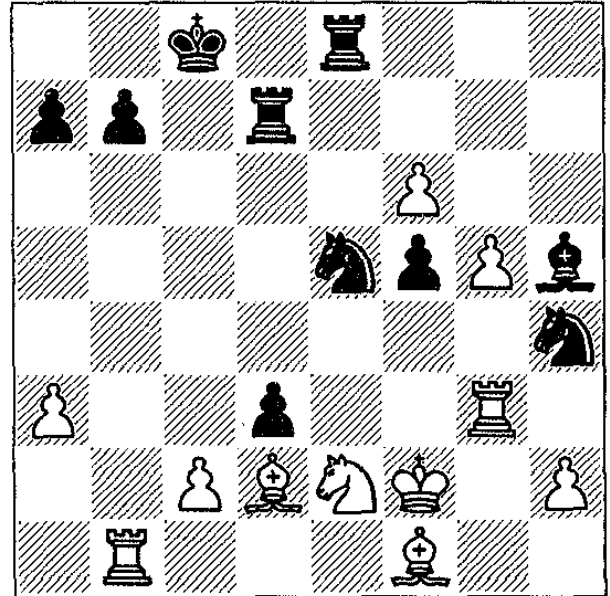
25 ♣b5 d3

26 ♣xd7+

26 ♣c5+? would have been a bad mistake, hoping for 26...♣c7 27 ♣xc7+ ♚xc7 28 ♞f4 ♞g4+ 29 ♜xg4! dxc2 30 ♞d5+ ♜xd5 31 ♜c4+

winning, because Black has instead 26...♚b8 27 ♠f4 dxe2 28 ♠xe5+ ♚a8 29 ♠xe2 ♠xe2 30 ♚xe2 f4! turning the tables.

26 ... ♜xd7 (D)



W

27 ♞f4?

White has succeeded in exchanging queens but now makes a fatal mistake. Better are 27 cxd3 ♞xd3+ 28 ♚g1 ♞f3+ 29 ♜xf3 ♠xf3 and 27 ♞g1 ♞g4+ (27...f4 28 ♠xf4 d2 29 ♠h3!) 28 ♜xg4 ♠xg4 29 ♠xd3, but 27 ♞c1! seems to be the best move: 27...f4 (27...dxc2 28 ♜c3+ ♜c7 29 ♜bb3 ♠d1 30 ♚g3 ♜h8 31 ♠f4 or 27...♞hf3 28 ♠f4 dxc2 29 ♜b2 ♜c7 30 ♠e2 ♞g4+ 31 ♜xg4 fxg4 32 ♠xc7 ♚xc7 33 ♜xc2+) 28 ♠xf4 d2 29 ♞d3 ♞xd3+ 30 ♠xd3 d1 ♣ 31 ♜xd1 ♠xd1 32 g6 ♜d4 33 ♠g5 when White may well be winning.

27 ... ♞g4+

28 ♚g1

It is all over. 28 ♜xg4 loses after 28...dxc2 29 ♜c1 ♜xd2+.

28 ... dxc2

29 ♜c1 ♜xd2

30 ♖xh5
 Or 30 ♖c3+ ♕h8 31 ♖xh5 ♖e3!
 30 ... ♖e3
 31 ♖g2 ♖f3+
 32 ♕h1 ♖f2+
 33 ♖xf2 ♖xf2
 34 ♔g2 ♖xg5
 0-1

Game 22
 Geller – Sokolsky
 USSR Ch 1950
 Winawer Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♖c3	♔b4
4	e5	c5
5	a3	♔xc3+
6	bxc3	♖e7
7	♗g4	cxd4
8	♔d3	

This move has recently come back into fashion against 7...♗c7 but it is particularly appropriate against this older move-order. The theme is that instead of winning a pawn, White sacrifices one.

If instead 8 ♗xg7 ♖g8 9 ♗xh7, Black gains little by playing his queen to a5 instead of c7 (as there is then no double attack on c3 and e5), e.g. 9...♗a5 10 ♖b1! ♖bc6 11 ♖f3 ♔d7 12 ♖xb7 ♗xc3+ 13 ♕d1 ♖a5 14 ♖b4! ♖c8 15 ♖g5 ± Short-Timman, Amsterdam 1988. Finally, it should be noted that White can play the innocuous 8 cxd4, when Black can happily revert to play in the style of the previous chapter after 8...♗c7 followed by 9...0-0 or 9...♖f5.

8 ... ♗c7

Black forces the white knight to e2 rather than f3, where it could quickly leap to g5 with devastating consequences. 8...♗a5 allows Black to defer ...dxc3 after 9 ♖e2, but as Black is inevitably going to play ...dxc3 at some stage anyway, the temporary gain of time is unlikely to be worth the slight misplacement of the black queen.

9 ♖e2 dxc3

Geller analyses 9...♗xe5 10 ♔f4! (10 cxd4 h5! 11 ♗h4 ♗c7) and then:

a) 10...h5 11 ♗h4 ♖f5 12 ♗g5 ♗f6 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♔xf5 exf5 15 ♔xb8 ♖xb8 16 cxd4 and “White gained an advantage in the end-game” in the game Bonsch-Osmolovsky – Rovner, Lvov 1951.

b) 10...♗f6 11 cxd4 h5 12 ♗g3 ♖bc6 13 ♔g5 ♖f5 14 ♔xf6 ♖xg3 15 ♔xg7 ♖g8 16 hxg3 ♖xg7 17 ♖xh5 again with the better ending.

10 ♗xg7 ♖g8

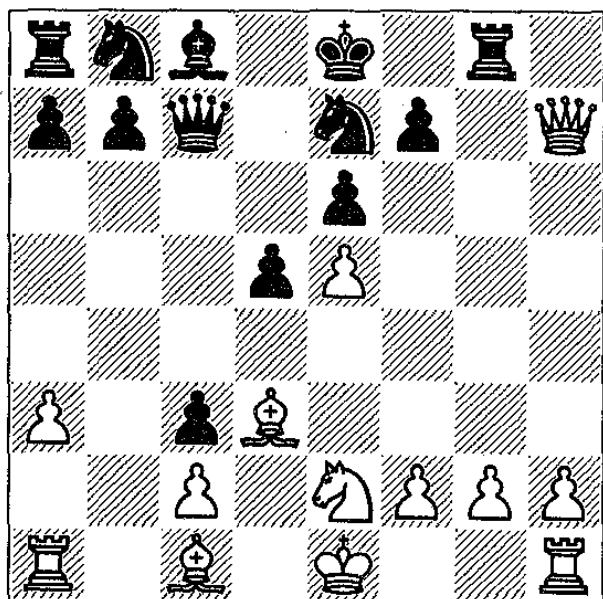
11 ♗xh7 (D)

An interesting alternative is 11 ♗h6!? intending 12 ♔xh7, but Black can respond with 11...♖d7 intending ...♖f8, holding on to the h7-pawn for good.

By comparison with the previous game, White has managed to develop much more harmoniously, but effectively at the cost of two pawns as instead of being a pawn up, he is now liable to be a pawn down with both e5 and g2 hanging.

11 ... ♗xe5!?

The main alternative is 11...♖bc6 (11...♖d7 12 ♔f4 ♖c5 13 ♖d4! ± J.Watson) 12 ♔f4 (12 f4 ♗b6! A.Rodriguez) 12...♔d7 13 0-0 0-0-0



B

14 ♔g3! ♖xe5 15 ♜fe1 ♗7c6 (or 15...♞de8 16 ♗d4! f6 17 ♚h4 ♞g5?! 18 ♞xe5! ♞xg3 19 ♚xf6 ♗g8 20 ♚f4 ♞g4 21 ♚e3 ± Nunn) 16 ♗xc3 ♗d4 17 ♗e2! (A.Rodriguez-Panegue, Havana 1990) 17...♗dc6 18 ♔b5!?! ±.

12 ♔f4 ♚f6

13 h4

White shoves forward the h-pawn, hoping of course to queen it with the help of the two bishops, but more immediately to gain control of important squares like g5. Note that White need not fear 13...♞h8 because of 14 ♔g5 (even before h4). Instead, Madl-McDonald, Oakham 1988 continued 13 ♚h5 ♗bc6 14 h4 ♔d7 15 ♞b1 0-0-0 16 ♞b3 e5 and Black went on to win.

13 ... ♗bc6?!

The critical line is probably the pawn grab 13...♞xg2. Black is quite happy to sacrifice the exchange if in return he gets central control and plenty of tempi, e.g. 14 ♔f1 e5 15 ♔xg2 (15 ♔g3 ♞xg3 16 ♗xg3 ♔g4 ♚ Popescu) 15...exf4 16 ♔f1 (16

♚h5 ♗bc6 17 ♚f3 ♗g6 ∞ Milu-Popescu, Bucharest 1992) 16...♗bc6 17 ♚h5 f3 18 ♗g1 ♗d4 ∞ Vidarsson-Blees, Iceland 1995.

14 ♔g5 ♚e5

15 ♚h6

White prepares to manoeuvre his queen back into play, clearing the way for the h-pawn.

15 ... ♔d7

16 ♚f6 ♞c8?

A strange move, aiming to improve the position of his worst-placed piece, but in fact fiddling while Rome burns. White cannot play h5 without swapping queens, which would bring Black's knight to e5 before White plays ♔f6. However, White is not so obliging. Black should have exchanged queens, although White still has good chances after the continuation 16...♚xf6 17 ♔xf6 e5 18 ♔h7 (getting outside the pawn chain, not trying to win the exchange) 18...d4 19 h5 ♔f5 20 ♔xf5 ♗xf5 21 h6 ♔d7 22 h7 ♞h8 23 g4 and f4 (Korchnoi).

17 f4! ♚e3

Now after 17...♚xf6 18 ♔xf6, Black can't even play ...e5.

18 h5 e5

19 h6

It's nice to have a plan!

19 ... e4

20 ♔b5 ♞xg5

21 h7 ♔g4

22 ♚xg5 ♚d2+

23 ♔f1 ♔xe2+

24 ♔xe2 ♗d4

25 h8♚+ 1-0

Black does have to watch that h-pawn in these variations.

Game 23

M.Müller – Vaganian

Bundesliga 1994

Winawer Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘c3	♙b4
4	e5	c5
5	a3	♙a5

After 5...cxd4 6 axb4 dxc3, 7 ♖g4?! is inferior due to 7...♙b6!, but White has strong compensation for a pawn after 7 ♘f3!, for example 7...♗e7 8 ♙d3 ♘d7 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 ♚e1 ♘xb4 11 bxc3 ♘xd3 12 cxd3 0-0 13 ♚a4 ± Nunn-Eingorn, Reykjavik tt 1990.

6 b4!?

Move-order is important. Not 6 ♖g4 ♗e7 7 b4?! (7 dxc5 is analysed in the previous chapter) 7...cxb4! 8 ♘b5 b3+ 9 c3 ♘f5 ♢ Timman-Vaganian, Horgen 1995.

6 ... cxd4

Worthy of further analysis is 6...cxb4! 7 ♘b5 ♘c6 8 axb4 ♙xb4+ 9 c3 ♙e7 10 ♙a3 ♘h6 11 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 12 ♘d6+ ♗f8 13 ♙b5! ± Topalov-Ermenkov, Bulgaria 1994.

7 ♖g4

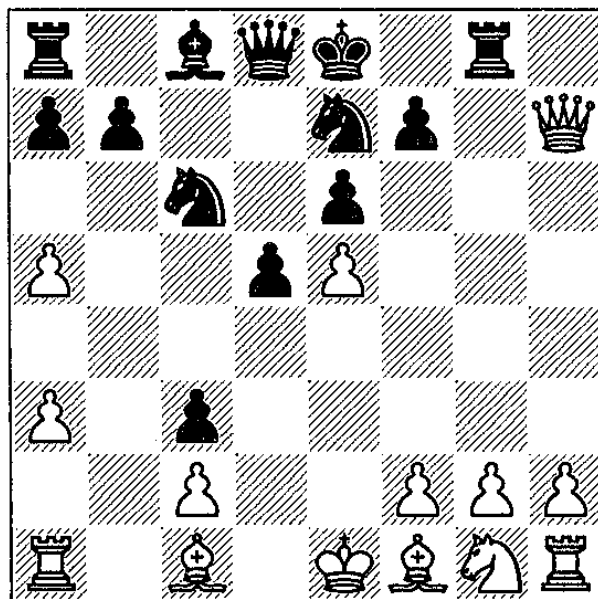
White's other main plan is 7 ♘b5 ♙c7 8 f4, which is analysed under the Classical centre.

7 ... ♗e7

8 ♘b5

The main alternative is 8 bxa5 dxc3 9 ♖xg7 ♚g8 10 ♖xh7 ♘bc6 (*D*), when a position of a very similar nature to that in the first two games of this chapter is reached. The differences are that White has an extra

pawn on a5 (which can prove a nuisance for Black after a5-a6) and that Black has already played ...dxc3 so White can choose ♘f3 (with the possible follow-up ♘g5) rather than ♗e2. In return, Black has approximately an extra tempo.



W

White has to defend e5. His first option is to follow the structure of Game 21 and play 11 f4. Then one recent game continued 11...♙d7 12 ♘f3 (12 ♚b1 ♘xa5 13 ♘f3 ♖c7 14 ♘d4 ± Shirov-Ljubojević, Monte Carlo 1996) 12...♖xa5 13 ♘g5!? 0-0-0 14 ♘xf7 ♘f5! 15 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♖h3 ♘cd4 17 ♖xc3+? (17 ♙d3 ♚h8 18 ♖g4 ♚g8 =) 17...♗b8 18 a4 [*Editor's note:* this unfortunate novelty was actually part of Ernst's preparation] 18...♖h4+ 19 g3 ♚xg3 20 hxg3 ♖xh1 21 ♗f2 ♖h2+ 22 ♙g2 ♗e2 23 ♖f3 ♘fd4 0-1 Ernst-Kinsman, Gausdal Troll 1995.

His second option is to use his pieces to defend e5 rather like Game 22. Recent theory has continued 11 ♘f3 ♖c7 12 ♙f4 ♙d7 13 ♙d3 0-0-0

14 a6 f5! 15 exf6 ♖xf4 16 fxe7 ♔de8
 17 ♕g6 ♜h8 (17...♘e5 18 ♕xe8 ♜xg2
 19 ♕xd7+ ♖c7 20 e8♘+ ♖b8 21
 ♖f1 ♜xf2+ 22 ♖xf2 ♖xf3+ 23 ♖g1
 ♖e3+ 24 ♖f1 ♖f4+ 25 ♖g2 ♖f3+
 1/2-1/2 Dolmatov-S.Ivanov, Russia
 1995) 18 ♖g7 ♖g4! 19 axb7+ ♖xb7
 20 ♜b1+ ♖a8 21 ♕xe8 ♖xg6 22
 ♕xd7 ♘xe7 and Black stood well in
 Strange-Kinsman, Sheffield 1996.

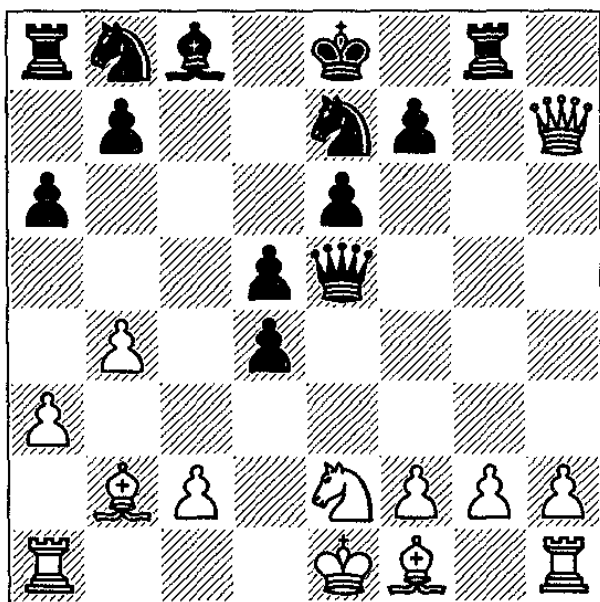
8 ... ♕c7
 9 ♖xg7 ♜g8
 10 ♖xh7 a6

Too optimistic was the 10...♕xe5
 11 ♘f3 ♜h8 12 ♖d3 ♕g7 13 ♕f4
 ♘g6 14 ♘c7+ ♖f8 15 ♕g3 e5 16
 ♘xa8 ♘c6 of Sion Castro-Arenci-
 bia, Leon 1991, though Black man-
 aged to trick his way to a draw.

11 ♘xc7+ ♖xc7
 12 ♕b2

If White plays 12 ♘e2 first, Black
 can try 12...♕d7 13 ♕b2 a5! 14
 ♘xd4 ♖xe5+ 15 ♕e2 ♘bc6 ∞ Yer-
 molinsky-Vaganian, Tilburg 1993.

12 ... ♖xe5+
 13 ♘e2 (D)



B

A rather different structure has
 arisen. White has a healthy queen-
 side pawn formation, which makes
 castling queenside possible. Also, he
 has good prospects of being a pawn
 ahead after winning d4. However,
 Black has won the important pawn
 on e5 and after retreating the queen
 can threaten ...e5 activating his pieces
 with good chances.

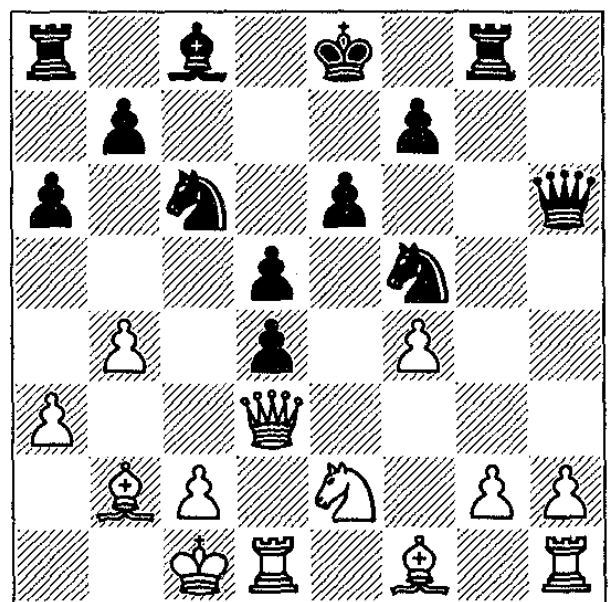
13 ... ♖f6

The alternative retreat is 13...♖c7
 14 f4 ♘bc6 15 ♖d3 ♘f5 16 0-0-0
 ♕d7 (16...♘e3 17 ♜e1 ♘xc2! 18
 ♖xc2 d3 ∞) 17 ♜e1 ♜c8 18 ♖b1 ♘ce7
 19 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 20 ♕xd4 (Nunn-
 Kinsman, London Lloyds Bank 1993)
 20...♕a4! 21 c3 ♖xf4 but White's
 two bishops give him the edge.

14 f4

White has to stop 14...e5. Instead,
 Čabrilo-Vaganian, Manila IZ 1990
 continued 14 ♖d3 e5 15 f4 ♕f5 16
 ♖d2 ♖h4+ 17 g3 ♖h7 18 ♕g2 f6 ♞.

14 ... ♘bc6
 15 ♖d3 ♘f5
 16 0-0-0 ♖h6! (D)



W

Creating tricky pins on both the f4- and h2-pawns.

17 ♖b1?!

If instead 17 ♜e1, then 17...e5 18 ♖d2 e4 19 ♗xd4 ∞ Van de Oudewetering-Timmer, Netherlands 1987 or 17...♙d7 18 ♖d2 ♜c8 19 ♗xd4 ♗cxd4 20 ♙xd4 ♗g3 = Klovan-Liogky, USSR 1986.

17 ... ♙d7

Wrong would be 17...♗e3 18 ♜e1 ♗xg2? (better is 18...♗c4) 19 ♙xg2 ♜xg2 20 ♜hg1 with strong compensation: the g-file is more important than the g-pawn.

18 ♜e1 ♜c8

19 g3

Little better is 19 g4 ♗e3! (or 19...♜xg4 20 ♙h3) 20 g5 ♖h4 21 ♜c1 e5 22 fxe5 ♙f5 23 ♖d2 ♜xg5!? ♣.

19 ... ♗e3!

An important improvement over 19...♙f8 20 h4 ♗ce7 21 ♗xd4 ♗xg3 ∞ Yudasin-Lputian, USSR Ch 1986.

20 ♗xd4

If White now continues as in Yudasin-Lputian above with 20 h4, Black can launch a surprise queen-side attack with 20...♗xc2! 21 ♖xc2 ♗xb4 22 ♖d1 ♖g6+ 23 ♙a1 ♗c2+ 24 ♙a2 ♗xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♖e4 winning. Yudasin suggested 20 ♜c1 but this is well met by 20...e5! 21 fxe5 ♙f5 22 ♖d2 ♙e4 23 ♜g1 ♖xh2.

20 ... ♗xd4

21 ♙xd4 ♗xc2

22 ♜c1 ♗xd4

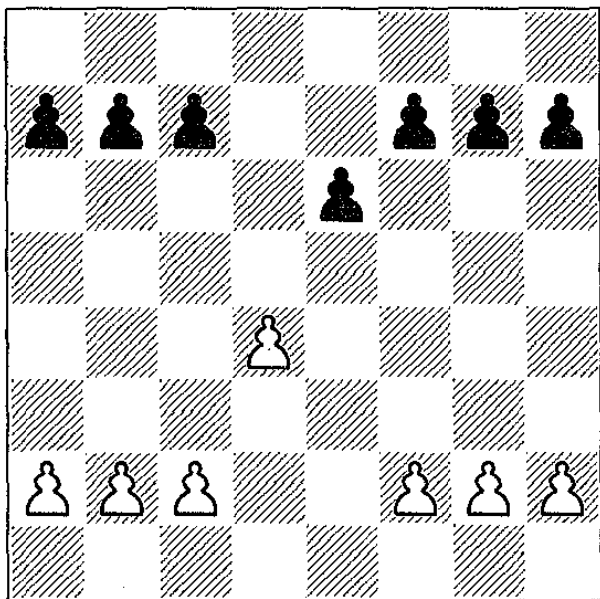
23 ♜xc8+ ♙xc8

24 ♖xd4 ♜xg3

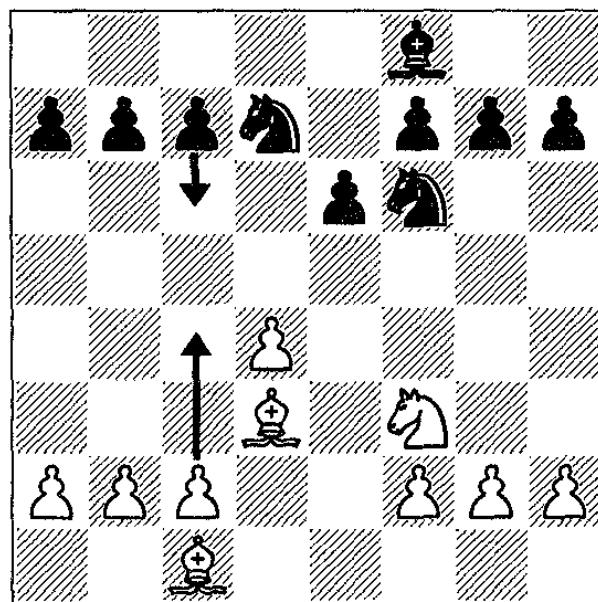
This crucial capture at the end of the tactical sequence leaves Vaganian a clear pawn up. He now consolidates well:

25 ♙d3 ♜h3 26 ♜g1 ♖h8 27 ♖c5 ♙d7 28 ♖d6 f5 29 ♜e1 ♖f6 30 ♖xd5 ♜xh2 31 ♜e5 ♖g6 32 ♜e1 ♖f6 33 ♜e5 ♜f2 34 ♙xf5? ♖xf5+ 0-1

7 Rubinstein Centre



development and two bishops. This is done by the long-winded manoeuvre ...♗c8-d7-c6 followed by capturing a knight on e4 or f3, arriving at the following structure:



General observations

Black has eliminated White's e-pawn and so prevented him from setting up the cramping pawn chain with e5, which is the characteristic pawn structure in the main lines of the French. However, Black has by no means solved all his problems. He still has, at least temporarily, a bad bishop which is difficult to develop, and a space disadvantage – three ranks as opposed to White's four.

Setting up Fort Knox

One radical approach to this problem is to swap off the bad bishop for a knight as quickly as possible and then keep the position closed, trusting that White will not be able to break open the position and thereby exploit his space advantage, lead in

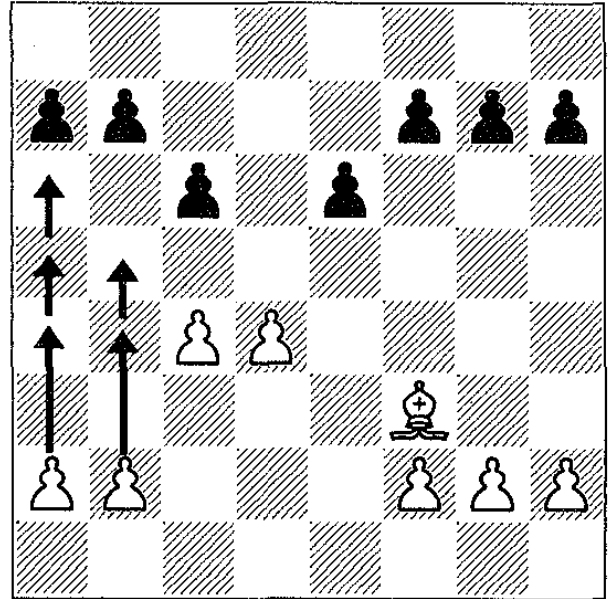
Black plays ...c6 to build up a solid fortress on the light squares, in particular hindering any white breakthrough with d5 and protecting the b7-pawn from attack along the h1-a8 diagonal. This pawn structure is identical to positions that arise from the Scandinavian and Caro-Kann, though in the latter particularly Black hasn't usually given up the two bishops, and should really be discussed fully in a book on *Mastering the Scandinavian*. It is indeed a very solid set-up, well deserving the name Fort Knox Variation, and its soundness is confirmed by the fact that Anatoly Karpov is one of its

most recent converts. On the other hand, because Black has conceded the two bishops, he has to accept a permanently cramped, but playable position.

Often White will play c4 to seize more space. If White succeeds in advancing d5, it is natural to suppose that the centre will be opened after a double exchange on d5. Such a breakthrough would greatly increase the power of White's light-squared bishop by opening up the diagonals a2-g8 and h1-a8. This bishop has no enemy rival. Once the advance has occurred, the bishop could be used to terrorise the black pawn on b7 (if the general plan is an attack on the queenside) or as part of a kingside attack by pressurising f7. If White is allowed to advance d5, then everything has probably gone wrong for Black. His strategy depends on the centre remaining closed.

White's most natural plan is to prepare a direct attack on the enemy king (which is more often than not on the kingside). Such a plan would be abetted by the advantage of the two bishops and the greater freedom of action which his pieces enjoy. White can also attempt to force a weakness in Black's queenside pawn structure by following up with b2-b4-b5 or a2-a4-a5-a6. Ideally the light-squared bishop would be at f3 or somewhere else along the h1-a8 diagonal to help pulverise Black's queenside.

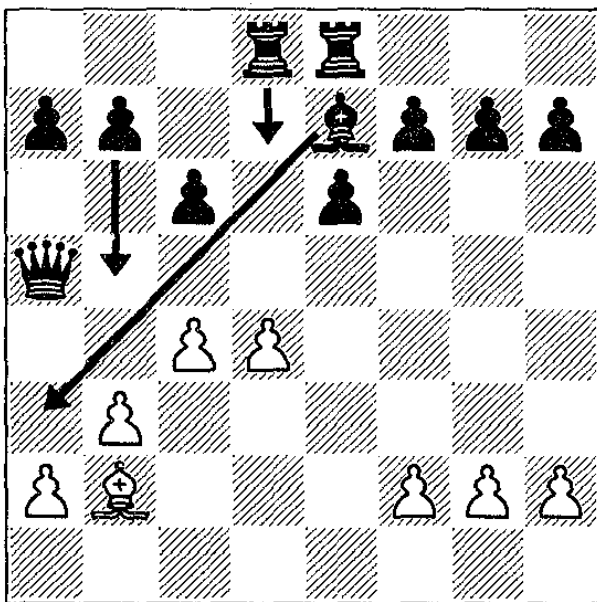
Of course, Black doesn't have to let this happen. Basically, Black has to be alert to danger and try to neutralise his opponent's threats. Every



exchange of pieces of more or less of equal value tends to favour him. His priority is to avoid weaknesses: there is little scope for immediate active play. He must try to wear down White's position rather than expect to demolish it quickly.

A key question is whether Black should try to eliminate White's d-pawn by preparing ...c5 followed by ...cxd4. Such a plan is normally a good idea if this basic structure is reached. For example, it is the principal idea in the main-line Caro-Kann. However, things are different in the Fort Knox. Black no longer has his light-squared bishop, and in advancing ...c5 he may well expose the soft under-belly of his position – the b7-pawn. In general, it is unwise to open the centre when your opponent has the two bishops. Therefore a better approach by Black is to remember Nimzowitsch's advice about an enemy passed pawn: "first restrain, then blockade, and finally destroy". The white d-pawn deserves the same treatment. Here is an ideal strategy for Black:

First, Black achieves a vice-like grip on d5 to prevent White advancing his d-pawn. Then if possible he exchanges off dark-squared bishops, so that there is one fewer white piece able to defend d4. A quick word about Black's king's bishop. Normally it goes to e7 (rather than d6). Sometimes Black plays ...♖fe8 and ...♔f8, or even ...g6 and ...♔g7. In the latter case, the bishop will exert pressure against d4 while also bolstering the defences of the kingside. Ideally Black would like to exchange it for its white counterpart.



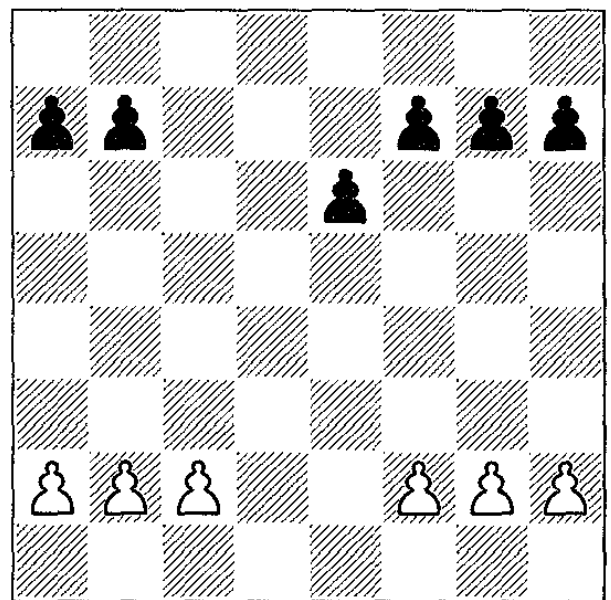
If White plays b3 and ♔b2, a good plan is ...♕a5 and then ...♔a3 to exchange bishops. Black's rooks are well placed defensively on e8 and d8, but if possible, perhaps after the exchange of a pair of minor pieces, they can be doubled on the d-file against the white d-pawn.

If possible, perhaps by putting the queen on b6, Black will try to provoke White into advancing c5, when the d5-square becomes an excellent outpost for a black knight. However,

Black wouldn't hurry to occupy this outpost, as then the d4-pawn is sheltered. Alternatively, Black could try ...b5 to break up White's pawns and win control of d5 that way. If White has played badly, he will find that the d4-pawn becomes indefensible. If on the other hand he has been vigilant, then he will be able to avoid being provoked into c5 and have bolstered his d-pawn, in which case an impasse is reached.

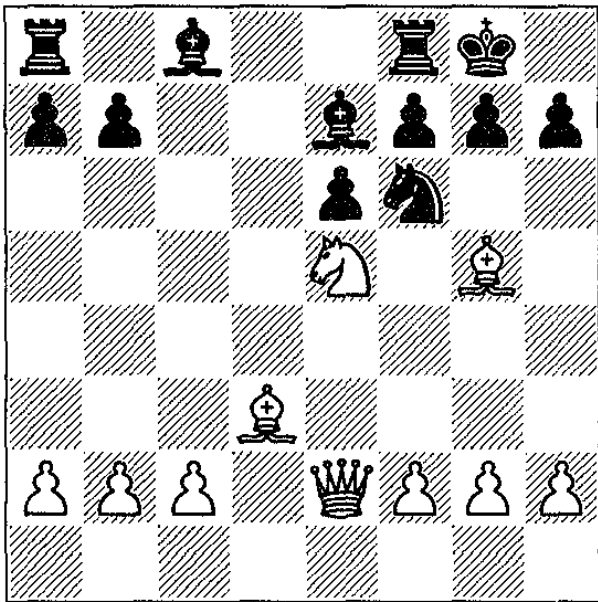
Black plays ...c5

As already mentioned, if Black has not given up the two bishops, Black's key liberating advance is the move ...c5. This means that he achieves the exchange ...cxd4, which eliminates White's space advantage.



Thus Black has no need to worry about his pieces being constricted by his opponent's pawn centre, as occurs for example in the standard cramping centre when White plays e5. However, Black's development will have suffered somewhat and

with the disappearance of the centre pawns, the white pieces will easily find healthy attacking squares. In the meantime, it is difficult for Black to deploy his c8-bishop to a good diagonal. In fact, a central theme of the white strategy is to keep this bishop from active play.

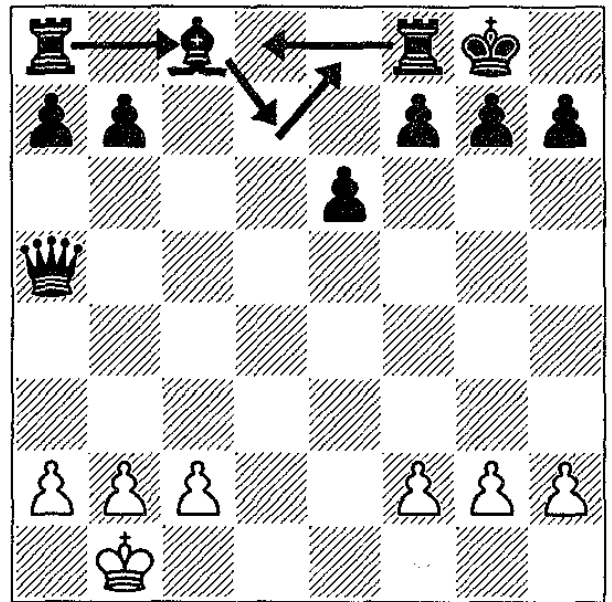


Because White's pawn centre has vanished, he cannot play a patient game, hoping to squeeze Black's pieces: there is nothing to squeeze them with! Instead, he has to try to exploit the superior deployment of his pieces with an attacking plan. In the idyllic scenario above, White has positioned his pieces perfectly for an attack on Black's kingside: bishops to d3 and g5, queen to e2, knight to e5. Note that Black cannot play ...b6 because of ♗xf6 ♗xf6, ♔e4 winning the exchange by the double attack on h7 and a8.

By castling queenside and playing h4, White can quickly counter ...g6 with h4-h5, or ...h6 with g2-g4-g5. White can of course also choose to castle kingside, when he can use

his c-pawn more aggressively, either to support a knight on d4 or to deny the black pieces the d5-square.

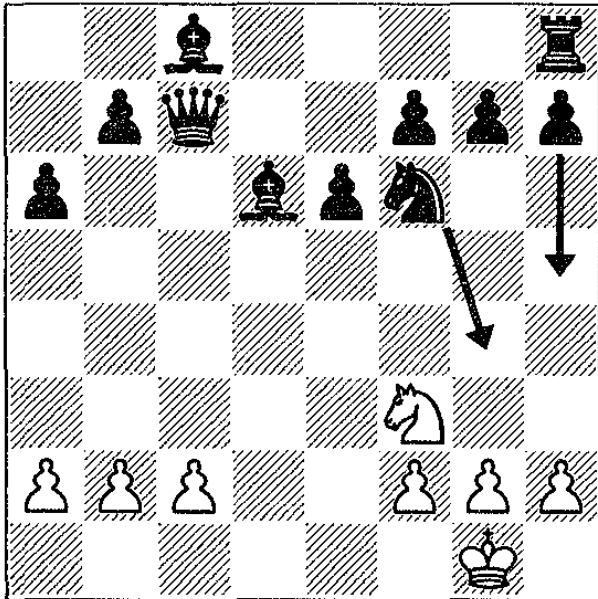
Against queenside castling, Black either has to accept a slight disadvantage by castling queenside himself (if it is not too late to do so), or has to launch a violent attack against the white king.



Black's attack is easier to play in some ways as he has fewer options, generally having to play in Sicilian style with moves like ...♔a5, ...♗d7, and ...♖c8, but he has to be very inventive in defence if he is going to counter White's usual lead in development. One important idea is the manoeuvre ...♖f8-d8, ...♗c8-d7-e8 defending the f7-pawn.

Against kingside castling, Black has more options. With a kingside pawn advance unlikely, he can try to defend accurately and slowly neutralise White's slight advantage.

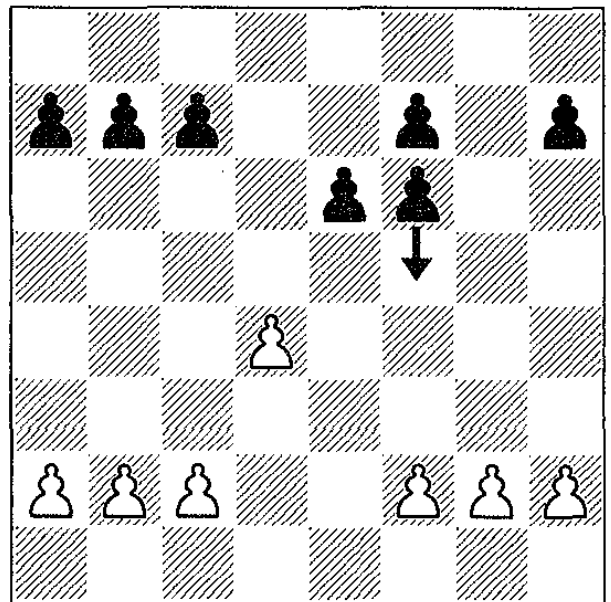
On the other hand, and given time, he can play ...♔c7 and ...♗d6 attacking h2 (usually after ...a6 to stop ♘b5 ideas). If Black has castled



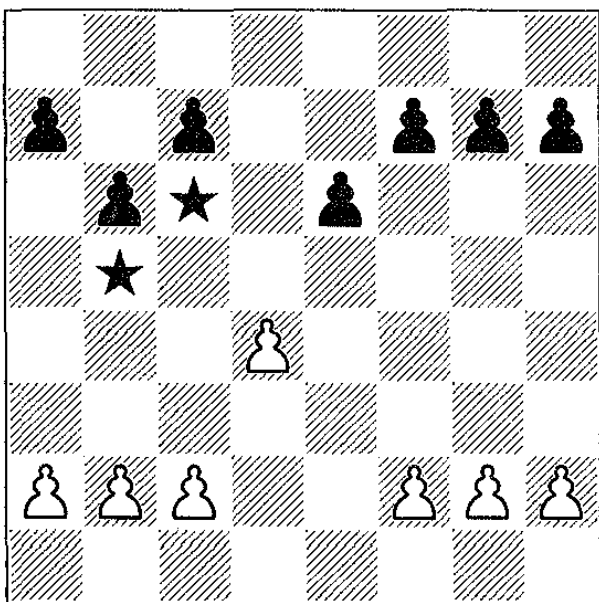
queenside, this can be followed up by ...♘g4 and ...h5 (but White can also advance his queenside pawns very quickly). Whichever side he has castled, he will seek to bring his light-squared 'problem' bishop into the attack with often devastating consequences, either by ...♗c8-d7-c6 or by ...b5 and ...♗b7.

the b5- and c6-squares, and White can normally take advantage of this by moves like ♖b5 or ♘c6. It also fails to challenge White's space advantage, but if Black can get in ...b6 and ...c5 without falling too far behind in development, then he may well reach comfortable equality.

Black plays ...gxf6



Black plays ...b6

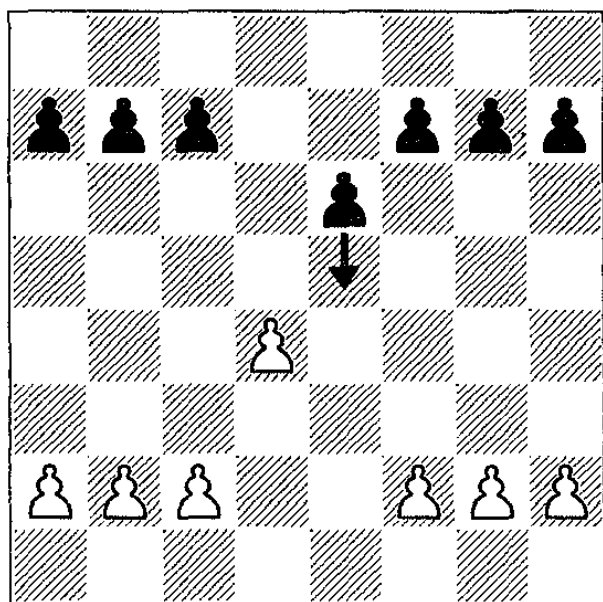


It may seem that the simple plan of ...b6 and ...♗b7 is the solution to all Black's problems. If only it were so simple! The move ...b6 weakens

White's knights can often make good use of the 'semi-outposts' e5 and e4 as the pawn move that could dislodge them (...f6 or ...f5) would leave the e6-pawn uncomfortably backward. This is part of the reasoning behind the recapture ...gxf6 after a ♗xf6 capture – White's two knights have fewer central squares. Black also gains the g-file for his rooks, which can be very useful when White has castled kingside. A rook on g8 and bishop on b7 or c6 can combine against g2. Black often combines ...gxf6 with ...0-0-0 for seemingly obvious reasons, but the capture can be surprisingly effective after ...0-0 as well. The king on h8

defends the weak h7-pawn and is fairly secure after ...f6-f5, though Black must watch out for piece sacrifices on f5.

Black plays ...e5



Black can sometimes play the alternative central break ...e5, freeing his light-squared bishop, providing he very carefully considers the consequences of both the simplifying dxe5, when White's lead in development could prove awkward, and the advance d5, when a very complex position arises in which White's space advantage on the queenside would usually be easier to exploit than Black's on the kingside, assuming both players have castled kingside.

In summary, in the Rubinstein Centre, Black has fewer winning chances than in the various Advance Centres after e5. However, he has a safe position with fewer weaknesses. White in turn is allowed smooth development of his pieces and a space advantage. However, this can easily evaporate into sterile equality.

Illustrative games

Game 24

Shirov – Hübner

Munich 1993

Fort Knox Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘c3	dxex4
4	♘xe4	♙d7

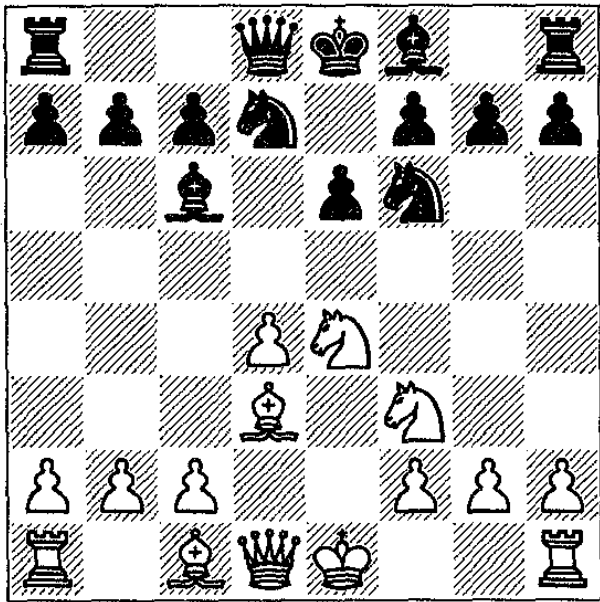
Black seeks to get rid of his problem piece in an immediate and radical manner. Ignoring all the classical rules of rapid development, he plays his bishop from c8 to c6 and then seeks to swap it for a white knight on e4 or f3. 4...b6 is inferior due to 5 ♙f3! ♙b7 6 ♘d6+ with advantage. For 4...♘d7, see the following game.

5	♘f3	♙c6
6	♙d3	♘d7
7	0-0	

7 ♙g5?! leads to exchanges that help Black, who has a cramped position, for example 7...♙e7 8 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 9 ♙e2 ♙xe4 10 ♙xe4 (10 ♙xe4 ♙b4+) 10...♘gf6! 11 0-0 (11 ♙xb7?? ♙b4+) 11...♘xe4 12 ♙xe4 c6 = Enders-McDonald, Budapest Elekes mem 1995.

7	...	♘gf6 (D)
8	♘g3	

One alternative is 8 ♘ed2 planning to manoeuvre the knight to e5 via either c4 or f3. Black must react actively: 8...♘d5! 9 ♘c4 ♘b4 10 ♙e2 ♙e4! 11 c3 ♘c2 12 ♙b1 ♘xd4 13 ♙xd4 ♙xb1 14 ♙g5 f6 15 ♙xb1 fxg5 is uncomfortable but an exchange and a pawn is a lot of material! The game I.Rogers-McDonald,



W

London Lloyds Bank 1993 continued more sedately: 9 ♖e1 ♙e7 10 c4 ♘f4 11 ♙f1 0-0 12 ♚b3 ♘g6 13 ♚e3 ♙xf3 14 ♘xf3 c6 15 b3 ♚a5! 16 ♙d2 ♙b4 =.

Another alternative is 8 ♘eg5 hoping for tactical ideas with ♘xf7 or ♘xe6 but Black has no problems after 8...♙d6!, e.g. 9 ♖e1 h6 10 ♘h3 (10 ♖xe6+ ♙f8!) 10...♙xf3 11 ♚xf3 c6 12 ♘f4 ♚a5 (stopping the knight going to h5) 13 c3 0-0 = Harley-McDonald, Cheltenham 1994.

8 ... ♙e7
9 b3 0-0
10 ♙b2 ♙xf3

In the game Adams-Dreev, Manila OL 1992, Dreev attempted to immediately exploit White's queen-side weaknesses with 10...a5 11 a3 b5! 12 ♖e1 b4 and succeeded in both preserving his bishop and creating a hole on c3. However, in Bologan-Kramnik, Khalkidhiki 1992, White played the better 11 c4! a4 12 ♘e5 ±, and Bologan later suggested the logical improvement 10...b5!?

11 ♚xf3 c6

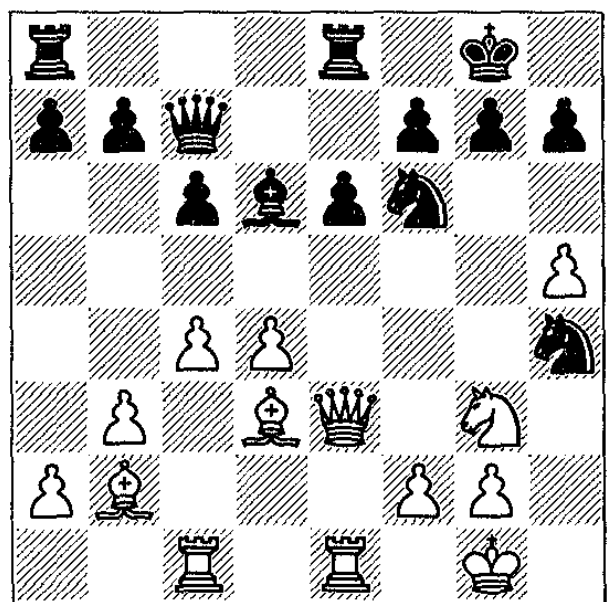
12 c4 ♖e8
13 ♖fe1 ♘f8
14 h4 ♚c7
15 ♖ac1 ♘g6!

Black continues with his standard manoeuvre regardless of the threatening pawn on h4, as he cannot afford to waste any time. With a white rook lined up on the c-file against the black queen, d5 is a strong threat, for example 15...♖ad8?! 16 d5! cxd5 17 cxd5 ♚d7 18 d6! ♚xd6 (18...♙xd6? 19 ♙xf6 gxf6 20 ♘h5 ♙e5 21 ♖xe5!) 19 ♙b5 ♘8d7 20 ♖ed1 ♚b6 21 ♙xf6 ♚xb5 22 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 23 ♖c7! (Shirov) and Black's knight is pinned in both directions, leaving White in complete control.

16 h5

Now after 16 ♙xg6 hxg6 17 d5, Black can play 17...exd5 18 cxd5 ♖ac8 (Hübner).

16 ... ♘h4
17 ♚e3 ♙d6! (D)



W

Black threatens 18...♙f4, winning the exchange. Rather than move his rook from c1, which would allow

Black to simplify the position with 18...♙xg3 and 19...♘f5, Shirov preferred to keep the initiative, and not the rook:

18 ♘e4!?

Black now has no choice, since 18...♘xe4 19 ♚xe4 ♘f5 20 g4 is bad. So:

18 ... ♙f4

19 ♘xf6+ gxf6

20 ♚e4!

An essential part of White's plan. He provokes 20...f5 for two important reasons: first, the diagonal a1-h8 is weakened, so that White is forever poised to play d5! unmasking the b2-bishop. The bishop will have no natural adversary once Black has played ...♙xc1 so Black will always be faced with the possibility of White's queen and bishop arranging a mating dénouement on g7. Secondly, after 20...f5, the h4-knight suddenly finds its escape route cut off, and is vulnerable to attack by g3, or by White's queen.

20 ... f5

21 ♚e2 ♙xc1

22 ♙xc1

Note how thoroughly unpleasant is Black's defensive task. Not only has he to deal with direct threats (such as g3 winning the knight), he also has to worry about White's more vague ideas involving d5. Regardless of whether Shirov's sacrifice is sound, it is certainly very dangerous.

22 ... f6!

An excellent move. The knight on h4 can't be saved so Hübner bolsters the a1-h8 diagonal and prepares to

utilise the g-file for a counter-attack against White's king.

23 g3 ♙f7

24 gxh4 ♚f4!

Black is battling for the initiative. He has blunted the power of White's bishops and is now ready to dismantle White's kingside with ...♚xh4 and ...♙g8+. However, the material balance has now swung firmly in White's favour. If we remove the queens from the board, White would have a very advantageous endgame. (He would prepare d5, breaking up the centre, when the two bishops would far outweigh a rook.) This means that White can gain time to shepherd his king to the safety of the queenside by 'bullying' Black with an unacceptable offer to exchange queens. The more immediate 24...♙g8+ 25 ♙f1 ♚h2 26 ♙e1 ♚f4 27 ♙d1 would have done White's job for him.

25 ♙e1 ♙g8+

After 25...♚xh4 26 ♚f3 White's queen would be too dominant.

26 ♙f1 ♙ae8

27 ♚e3! ♚xh4

28 ♙e2! ♚xh5+

29 ♙d2 ♙g2

30 ♙e2

White has safeguarded his king and is ready to begin a strong attack with d5. Black therefore has to force an exchange of queens, however disagreeable this may be.

30 ... ♚g5

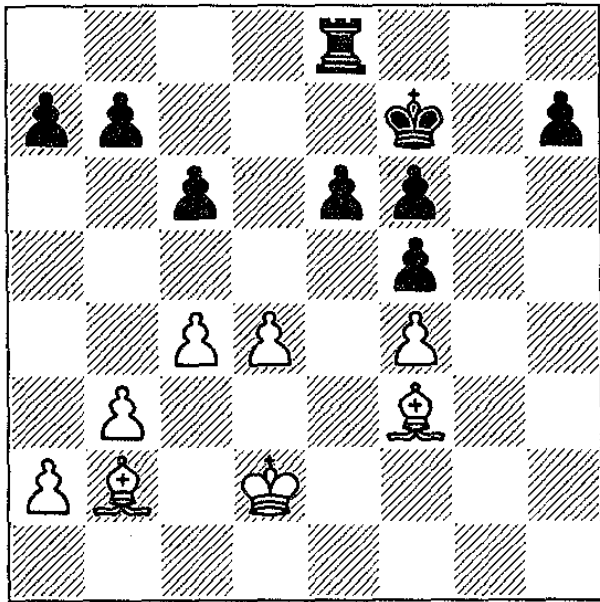
31 f4

Of course 31 ♚xg5? fxg5 would greatly increase the value of Black's kingside pawns.

31 ... ♖xe2+
 32 ♔xe2 ♗g2
 33 ♗f3! ♗xf3

Not 33... ♗h2?? 34 ♗h5+! winning at once.

34 ♔xf3 (D)



B

34 ... ♔g6?

A false trail. As Shirov points out, Black should bring his king to the centre to bolster his pawns against d5. The king does nothing on g6, since the penetration squares g5 and h5 are inaccessible. Furthermore, the king blocks the g-file, and so prevents any active play with ... ♖g8 and ... ♗g1.

35 ♔e3 ♖d8
 36 ♔c3 ♗f7

Correcting his mistake, but valuable time has been lost.

37 a4!

Rather than rush the d5 breakthrough, White strengthens his position further. He intends to attack the black queenside pawns with a5 and a6.

37 ... ♔e7

38 a5 ♔d7

If 38... a6, then 39 b4 intending to break up Black's queenside with 40 b5. Shirov suggests 38... ♔d6, but 39 ♔b4+ ♔d7 (39... ♔c7 40 ♔e7) 40 d5 is still unappealing for Black.

39 d5! exd5
 40 cxd5 cxd5
 41 ♔xf6 ♖f8
 42 ♔h4!

Keeping the d8-square covered, so that Black can't defend the d-pawn with ... ♖d8. Thus the centre is swept clear and the bishops become a deadly force.

42 ... ♔c6
 43 ♔d4 ♔b5
 44 ♔xd5 ♔xa5
 45 ♔xb7 ♖b8
 46 ♔d5 h5

If Black had managed to advance this pawn to h3 or h2 at an earlier stage of the endgame, the outcome may have been different. As it is, the passed pawn proves irrelevant.

47 ♔e6 ♔a6
 48 ♔c4+ ♔b6
 49 ♔e5 a5

The f5-pawn is doomed. Meanwhile, White's own f-pawn has a glorious future.

50 ♔xf5 ♔c5
 51 ♔e5 1-0

Game 25

Hector - L.Hansen

Copenhagen Open 1995

Rubinstein Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘c3 dxe4

4 ♖xe4 ♜d7
5 ♜f3

In the game Beliaevsky-Vaganian, Tilburg 1993, White tried the novel 5 g3!? and gained some advantage after 5...♜gf6 6 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 (6...♜xf6 may be better) 7 ♜g2 ♜d6 8 ♜e2 e5 9 0-0. The g2-bishop far outstrips its counterpart on c8. Rather than Black's routine fifth move, 5...b6 was an interesting response. Then 6 ♜g2 ♜b8! (not 6...♜b7 7 ♜d6+!) 7 ♜e2 ♜b7 (threatening 8...f5!) 8 0-0 ♜gf6 9 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 10 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 11 c4 ♜e7 and Black is ready to castle followed by ...c5, with an equal position.

5 ... ♜gf6

5...♜e7 6 ♜d3 ♜gf6 7 ♜e2 c5 8 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6?! (8...♜xf6 transposes to the game) 9 d5! proved good for White in Timman-Granda, Amsterdam 1995.

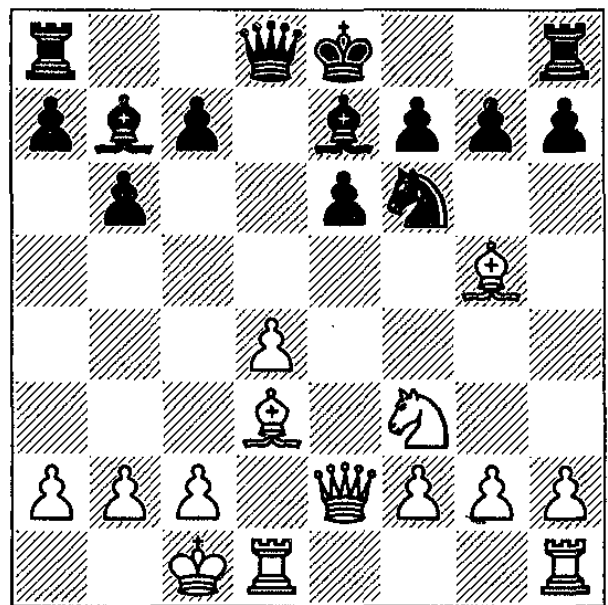
6 ♜xf6+

In Anand-Vaganian, Riga 1995, 6 ♜d3 proved effective after the continuation 6...♜xe4 7 ♜xe4 ♜f6 8 ♜g5! ♜e7 9 ♜xf6. Here Black would like to play 9...♜xf6, but then 10 ♜d3 looks awkward, since if 10...0-0 then 11 ♜xh7+, while 10...h6 (recommended by Anand!) allows 11 ♜xb7!? ♜xb7 12 ♜b5+ and White will win a pawn or at least have rather the better of the game. In the game, Black chose 9...gxf6, but after 10 ♜e2 c6 (countering any idea of 11 ♜xb7, but Anand points out that 10...♜d6! was much stronger, when the queen covers some important dark squares) 11 0-0 ♜b6 12 c4 Black's bishop on c8 was a miserable

piece and White was ready to exploit his space advantage, perhaps with the breakthrough d5 (after suitable preparation). So Black does best to answer 6 ♜d3 with 6...c5, when play will probably transpose to the game after 7 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6.

6 ... ♜xf6
7 ♜d3 c5

Black has also tried 7...b6, a noble attempt to solve the problem of the c8-bishop before challenging the white centre with ...c5. However, in Topalov-Vaganian, Riga 1995, after 8 ♜e2 ♜b7 9 ♜g5 ♜e7 10 0-0-0 (D) Black found that it had become difficult to enforce the ...c5 advance because of a potential attack on his queen by the d1-rook.



B

Vaganian continued 10...♜d6 but after 11 ♜e5 0-0 12 ♜b1 ♜ad8 13 c4! (taking away the d5-square from Black's pieces) 13...h6 14 ♜f4 he found that his queen was in deep trouble. Topalov succeeded in exploiting his material advantage after 14...♜xd4 15 ♜h7+ ♜xh7 16 ♜xd4.

Rather than 10...♖d6, the alternative 10...0-0 looks a better try. If White plays 11 h4, then 11...c5!? 12 dxc5 ♖c7 looks an interesting pawn sacrifice, for example 13 cxb6 axb6 14 ♔b1 ♘d5 and Black has attacking chances against White's king. However, White does not need to hurry to start a kingside attack. He can keep a solid advantage with 11 ♔b1. In all, 7...b6 looks suspicious.

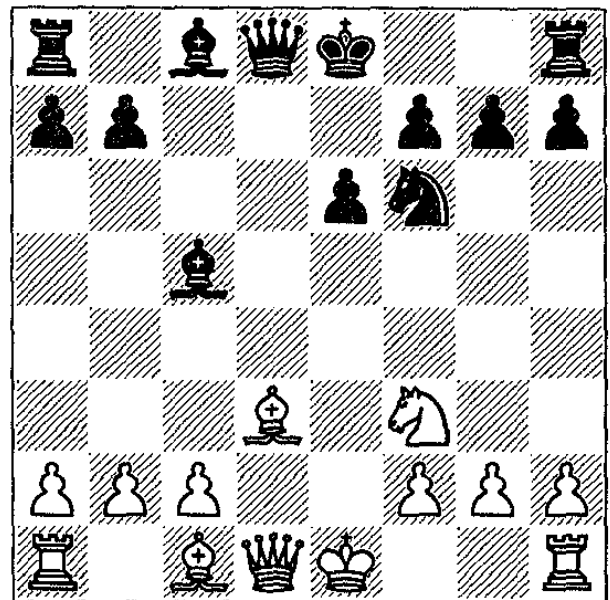
8 dxc5

An alternative is 8 0-0 cxd4 9 ♘xd4, when Tseshkovsky-Kholmov, Akmolala 1993 continued 9...♙e7 10 c3 0-0 11 ♚e1 a6 (11...b6 12 ♘c6 acquires the two bishops) 12 ♙g5 ♚e8. Here, Kholmov gives 13 ♖f3! as best and suggests the line 13...♖d5!? 14 ♖e3 ♘g4 15 ♖h3 ♙xg5, overlooking 16 ♖xh7+ ♔f8 17 ♘f5! winning; therefore Black needs to improve.

More incisive is 9...♙c5, challenging the d4-knight. Then after 10 c3 ♙xd4! 11 cxd4 h6!? (ruling out the ♙g5 pin, but the simple ...♙d7 is also possible) Black is ready to complete his development with ...♙d7-c6. White can also meet 9...♙c5 by 10 ♙e3. Now 10...♘d5? would be bad after 11 ♙b5+! ♙d7 12 ♘xe6! ♘xe3 13 ♖xd7+, so Black should choose between 10...♙b6!? (intending 11...♘d5) and 10...♖e7 when play could continue 11 ♚e1 0-0 12 c3 b6 13 ♙g5 ♙xd4 14 cxd4 ♙b7 15 ♙c2 ♚fd8 16 ♖d3 h6 17 ♙h4 ♚ac8 with balanced chances.

8 ... ♙xc5 (D)

This is the main-line position in the Rubinstein. Black has achieved much. He has entirely eliminated



W

White's pawn centre without conceding any weaknesses in his own pawn structure. Nor is he dangerously behind in development. So why doesn't everyone play the Rubinstein variation? The problem is, of course, the c8-bishop. If Black could play ...b6 and then ...♙b7 without anything nasty happening, he would have a good position. But this proves a very big 'if' – so big that all White's strategy is based on Black's inability to carry out this simple plan.

9 ♖e2

This is the usual aggressive plan. White prepares to castle queenside and launch a direct attack on Black's king.

9 ... 0-0
10 ♙g5 h6

This apparently forces the bishop either to break the pin on the knight or retreat to h4, when ...♖a5+ is more effective. But White has a surprise for Black. Note that 10...b6?? loses trivially to 11 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 12 ♖e4 picking up a rook.

11 h4!

In the earlier game Smirin-Yudasin, Israel 1995, White continued 11 ♖h4 whereupon 11... ♗a5+! disrupted the build-up of White's attack. After 12 c3 ♘d5! 13 ♗d2 (not 13 b4 ♗a3!, while 13 ♗e4 meets with 13...f5, and if 13 0-0 then 13...♘f4 will swap off White's strong bishop on d3; that is why Black drove the bishop away from g5 with ...h6! at move 10) 13... ♙e7 14 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 15 0-0 ♗c7, Black had equalised.

11 ... ♗a5+

Obviously suicidal is 11...hxg5?, when 12 hxg5 ♘d5? (12...g6 returning the piece would be best) 13 ♙h7+ ♙h8 14 ♘e5 ♗xg5 15 ♙g6+ ♙g8 16 ♙xf7+! ♗xf7 17 ♗h8+! ♙xh8 19 ♘xf7+ wins Black's queen.

12 ♙d2

This would of course be impossible if White had played 12 ♙h4 rather than 12 h4.

12 ... ♙b4
 13 0-0-0! ♙xd2+
 14 ♘xd2

White is playing in a vigorous attacking style. He wants to begin a direct onslaught on Black's king before Black is able to develop his queenside. He is prepared to gambit his a-pawn, as although 14... ♗xa2 leaves the black queen excellently placed for a counterattack on the queenside, she lacks the support of the other black pieces and is therefore ineffective, while White can quickly blast open the kingside with 15 g4 and 16 g5, e.g. 14... ♗xa2 15 g4 a5!? (15... ♘d5 16 g5 ♙d7 17 gxh6 ♗fc8 18 ♗g4 wins) 16 g5 a4 17

gxf6 (17 ♙c4 ♗a1+ 18 ♘b1 a3 19 bxa3 ♘d5 20 ♙xd5 exd5 21 gxh6 ♙f5 is very messy) 17...a3 18 ♘e4 ♗xb2+ 19 ♙d2 and White will win.

14 ... e5!

Resisting the temptation of the a-pawn. Black realises it is more important to develop his queenside and slow down White's kingside play.

15 a3

Of course 15 g4? can now be met by 15... ♙xg4.

15 ... ♙e6

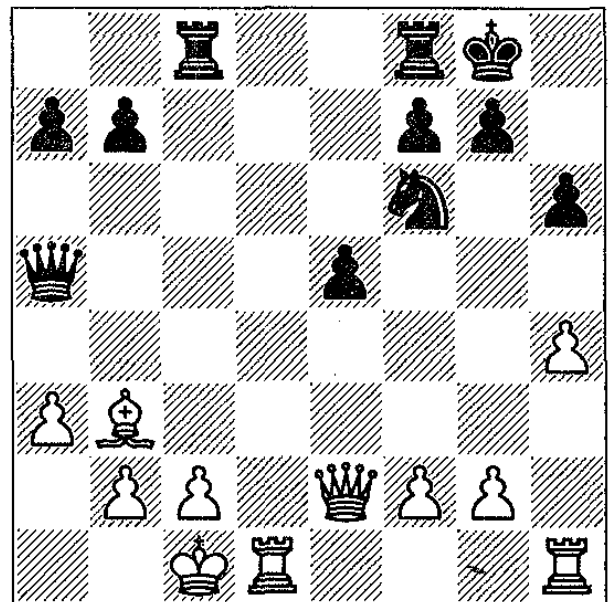
16 ♘c4

16 ♗he1 may have been better.

16 ... ♙xc4

17 ♙xc4 ♗ac8

18 ♙b3 (D)



B

White now has a minimal edge because his bishop is better than the knight and he has the potential to attack with g4.

18 ... e4

Clearing the fourth rank so that from a5 the queen deters the projected g5.

19 g4 ♗fd8

Black's pieces are actively placed and he is ready to counter White's kingside aspirations with counterplay in the centre and on the queenside.

20 f4 ♖c7!
 21 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8
 22 ♖f1 ♘d7!
 23 g5

Here 23 ♖xe4 ♘c5 24 ♖e3 ♖b6 (with the threat 24...♘d3+) 25 ♖b1 ♘xb3 26 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 27 cxb3 is ± (Hansen).

23 ... ♘c5
 24 ♖a2 ♖d6
 25 ♖b1 ♖d7

The counterplay Black now generates along the d-file gives him equal chances.

26 ♖c1 b6
 27 f5!?! hxg5
 28 hxg5 ♖xf5
 29 ♖h2?

A tempting move: attacking the d6-rook and preparing the lethal-looking 30 ♖h1. However, White's real attacking chances were against f7. After 29 ♖f1 ♖xg5 30 ♖xf7 (or 30 ♖xf7+ ♖f8) the position is dynamically balanced according to analysis by Hansen.

29 ... ♖d7!

Black defends the rook and is ready to meet 30 ♖h1? by 30...♖d1+. Therefore White's attack falters and the counterattack, as is usual in such games, proves decisive.

30 ♖h5 g6
 31 ♖h6 ♘e6
 32 ♖h4 ♖d1!

With this move and the next Black clinches the game:

33 ♖xe4 ♖d2 34 ♖xe6 ♖xc1+ 35 ♖a2 ♖xg5 36 ♖a8+ ♖g7 37 ♖xa7 ♖f6 38 ♖b3 ♖f1 39 ♖d5 ♖a1+ 40 ♖b3 ♖b5+ 0-1

Game 26

Hector – M.Gurevich

Antwerp 1994

Burn Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘c3 ♘f6
 4 ♖g5 dxe4
 5 ♘xe4 ♖e7

5...♘bd7 6 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 7 ♘f3 reaches the Rubinstein Variation by a clever move-order, where White has played ♖g5 rather earlier than he might have liked. Black can take advantage of this by playing an immediate 7...h6!, e.g. 8 ♖h4 c5 9 ♖b5+ ♖d7 10 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 11 ♖e2 ♖e7 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 dxc5 ♖c6 = Anand-Ivanchuk, Linares 1992.

6 ♖xf6 ♖xf6

6...gxf6!?! is currently a very popular option. It leads to complex play, but if Black is not careful, he will be annihilated by a well-timed d4-d5 advance, as in the game Gdanski-Babula, Odorheiu 1995: 7 ♘f3 b6 8 ♖d3 (it is amazing how often White loses a tempo by playing 8 ♖b5+; Black has every intention of playing ...c6 anyway to hinder a d5 advance) 8...♖b7 9 ♖e2 f5? (mixing plans; better is 9...c6 10 0-0-0 ♖c7 11 ♖b1 ♘d7 12 c4 with a slight advantage to White, Becerra Rivero-Borges Mateos, Cuban Ch 1995) 10 ♘c3 c6 11 0-0-0 ♖c7 12 ♖he1 ♘d7

13 ♖b1 (13 ♗xf5?? ♜f4+) 13...♗f6
 14 ♗e5 (White grabs the e5-square,
 so freely given) 14...♞f8 15 d5!!.
 Black's position now collapses be-
 cause 15...exd5 is met by 16 ♗xf5
 and 15...cxd5 by 16 ♗b5+ ♕d8 17
 ♗xf7+! ♞xf7 18 ♜xe6 with a crush-
 ing attack.

More testing is 7...f5 8 ♗c3 ♗f6 9
 ♜d2 c5 and:

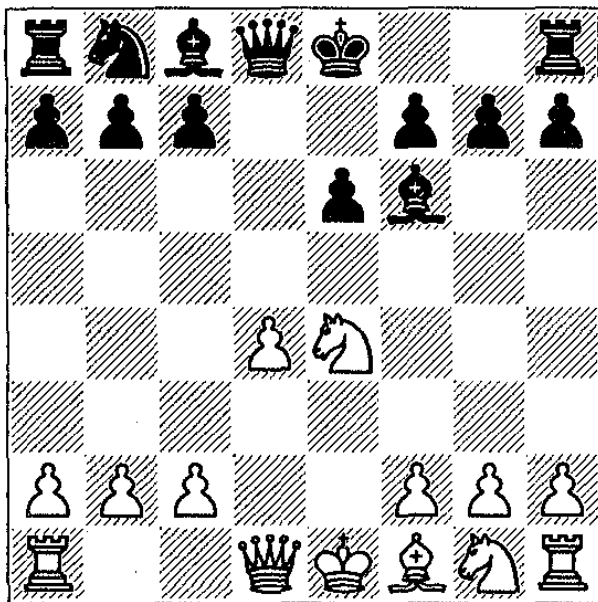
a) 10 0-0-0 cxd4 11 ♗b5+ ♗d7
 12 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7! 13 ♗xd4 ♗b6 14
 ♜d3 ♜c7 15 ♗cb5 ♜f4+ 16 ♖b1 0-
 0 17 ♜g3+ ♜xg3 18 hxg3 ♢ Lukin-
 Kiriakov, Moscow 1995.

b) 10 d5 e5!? 11 0-0-0 e4!? ∞
 Loskutov-Belozerov, Moscow 1995.

c) 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 dxc5 a6 12
 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 13 0-0-0 ♜c7 14 ♜d6
 ♞c8 15 ♗d5 ♜xc5 = Romero Hol-
 mes-Sion Castro, Leon 1996.

d) 10 dxc5 ♜xd2+ 11 ♗xd2 ♖e7
 12 0-0-0 ♗d7 13 ♗b3 ♗xc3!? 14
 bxc3 a5 ± Gaponenko-Kiriakov,
 Groningen 1995.

Returning to the game continu-
 ation, 6...♗xf6 (D).



W

Black has virtually forced White
 to exchange his dark-squared bishop
 for a knight, which is a significant
 positional achievement for Black.
 However, the liberating advance ...c5
 now becomes particularly problem-
 atic. The e4-knight is as good as on
 an outpost, safe from pawn attack
 and difficult to exchange.

7 ♗f3

In Topalov-Bareev, Linares 1994,
 White tried delaying ♗f3 so that he
 could gain space in the centre with a
 later f4. Play went 7 c3 ♗d7 8 ♜c2
 e5! (Bareev is alert and avoids the
 stereotyped 8...0-0, when 9 f4!, pre-
 venting the freeing move ...e5, justi-
 fies White's opening experiment) 9
 dxe5 (Bareev suggests 9 0-0-0 here)
 9...♗xe5 10 f4 ♗g6 11 g3 0-0 12
 ♗d3 ♜d5! and Black had achieved
 comfortable equality. Now White
 should play the modest 13 ♗e2, giv-
 ing up all hope of advantage. In-
 stead, Topalov blundered with 13
 a3?? forgetting that time is important
 in such an open position. Punish-
 ment was swift: 13...♗xf4! 14 ♗xf6+
 (if 14 gxf4 then 14...♗h4+ 15 ♖f1
 f5! regains the piece with a clear ad-
 vantage) 14...gxf6 15 ♗xh7+ ♖g7
 16 ♜e4 ♞e8!! 17 ♜xe8 ♗f5 18
 ♜xa8 ♜e4+ 19 ♖f2 ♜g2+ 20 ♖e3
 ♗d5+ 21 ♖d4 ♜d2+ 22 ♖c5 ♜e3+
 23 ♖c4 ♗b6+ and White gave up
 since he is soon mated.

7 ... 0-0
 8 c3

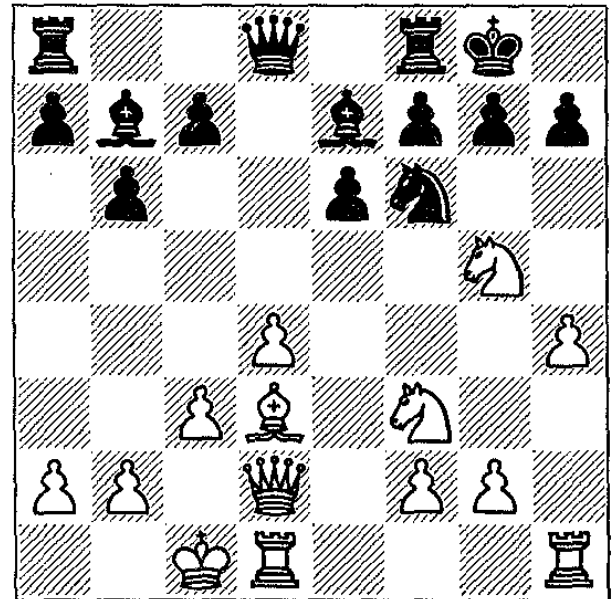
White plans to play his queen to
 c2, where it eyes h7 and is not in the
 way of a d1-rook. The most impor-
 tant alternative is 8 ♜d2. Then 8...b6

9 Qxf6+ Wxf6 10 Qd3 has caused problems for devotees of this variation after both 10... Qd7 11 Qg5 g6 12 0-0-0 Qb7 13 h4 h6 14 Qe4 Wxd4 15 Wxh6 Wg7 (forced) 16 We3 with the makings of a strong attack on Black's fragile kingside in Yudasin-Dreev, Lyons 1994, and 10... Qb7 11 Qg5 h6 12 Qh7 Wxd4 13 Qxf8 Qxf8 14 c3 Wh4 15 g3! Wf6 16 Kg1 and though Black has a solid position he doesn't quite have compensation for the exchange (Chandler-Prasad, Novi Sad OL 1990). This didn't stop Bareev, the leading expert in this variation, from repeating that whole line with Black against Kindermann at Pardubice 1994 – and losing!

So it seems that Black does better to play 8... Qd7 first to answer 9 Qxf6+ with 9... Qxf6 , or just 8... Qe7 immediately. Topalov-Dreev, Linares 1995 continued 8... Qd7 9 0-0-0 Qe7 10 Qd3 (ideas with d5 don't seem effective in this line so it seems better to place the bishop on d3 , pointing at h7 , rather than on c4) 10... b6 11 h4 (11 Wf4 Qb7 12 Qeg5 Qxg5 13 Qxg5 Qf6 14 Qf3 Wd6 15 Qe5 c5! 16 dxc5 Wxc5 = J.Polgar-Lputian, Biel IZ 1993) 11... Qb7 12 c3 Qf6 13 Qeg5! (D).

Here Dreev played 13... Qxf3?! , underestimating the strength of the recapture 14 gxf3! , which bolstered White's attack by opening the g -file.

Dreev's suggestion of 13... c5 is critical. Then 14 dxc5 h6 (14... Qxc5? 15 Wc2!) 15 Wc2 Wc7 16 cxb6 axb6 17 Qb1 $\text{Qd5!?$ and Black has play for his pawn, or 14 $\text{We2!?$ (threatening a Greek Gift sacrifice 15 Qxh7!



B

Qxh7 16 Qxh7+ Qxh7 17 Qg5+ Qg8 18 Wh5) 14... Qxf3! (14... h6 15 dxc5! Wc7 16 Qxe6!) 15 Wxf3 (15 $\text{gxf3!?$ cxd4) 15... Wd5 . So 13... c5 seems satisfactory for Black.

8 ... Qd7
9 Wc2 e5

Taking advantage of the fact that White hasn't castled yet. 9... b6 10 Qd3 Qb7 11 0-0-0 followed by h4 just gives White a superior version of the line given for 8 Wd2 .

10 d5

Instead, White can allow the dissolution of the centre by playing 10 0-0-0 exd4 and then:

a) 11 Qxf6+ is ineffective after 11... Wxf6 12 Kxd4 Qc5 13 Qc4 Qf5 14 Wd2 (Ljubojević-Dreev, Linares 1995) and now Black gains the advantage in Dreev's variation 14... Qe6 15 Kd7 Qg5! 16 Kxc7 Qxf3 17 gxf3 Qg6! , threatening 18... Wf5 .

b) 11 Qxd4 We7! (breaking any potential pin on the d -file and so freeing his d7 -knight to challenge the e4 -knight with ... Qc5) 12 Qd3 (in Glek-Lputian, Antwerp 1993,

12 h4 ♖c5 13 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 14 ♔d3 h6 15 ♔h7+ ♚h8 16 ♔e4 a5 should have been OK for Black) 12...h6! and both 13 ♜he1 ♖c5 (Hübner-Chernin, Groningen 1993) and 13 ♖f5 ♜e6! 14 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 15 ♜he1 ♖e5 16 ♔e4 ♖c4, as given by Chernin in *Informator 59*, are satisfactory for Black. A particularly wild possibility is 14 g4 ♜xa2 15 h4 ♔e5 16 g5 ♔f4+ 17 ♖e3 ♖e5 18 gxh6 ♔f5 19 hxg7 ♚xg7.

10 ... ♔e7!?

This leads to hair-raising complications. Black can choose the more solid 10...g6 11 0-0-0 (11 h4 ♔g7 12 h5 ♖f6 intending ...♔f5 is unclear) 11...♔g7 12 ♔c4?! (12 h4 h6 intending 13...f5 maybe) 12...♖b6 13 ♔b3 a5 ♞ Hellers-Vaganian, Reykjavik 1990.

11 0-0-0 ♔d6
 12 h4 ♖f6
 13 ♖fg5 g6
 14 f3

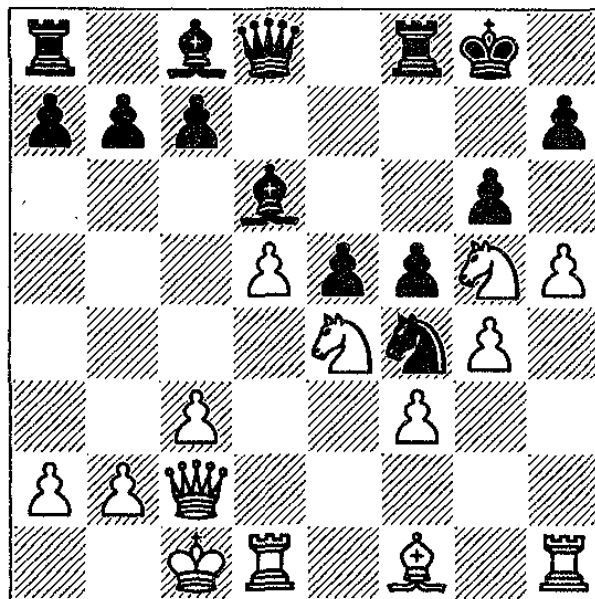
14 h5 is recommended by Dreev, but 14...♖xe4 15 ♖xe4 g5! 16 ♔d3 f5 17 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 18 g4 e4 17 ♔c4 fxg4 18 ♜xe4 ♔f5 19 ♜e3 h6 20 ♜he1 ♜ae8! is good for Black.

14 ... ♖h5
 15 g4 ♖f4
 16 h5 f5 (D)
 17 ♖xh7 fxe4
 18 hxg6 ♜f6
 19 ♖g5

Threatening 20 ♜h8+! with mate to follow.

19 ... ♖xg6
 20 ♖xe4

In the game Minasian-Dreev, St Petersburg 1993, White blundered



W

with 20 ♜xe4? when Black beat off the attack with 20...♖f8! (threatening 21...♜f4) 21 ♜h5 ♜h6!. 20 ♖xe4 was Dreev's suggested improvement.

20 ... ♜f7
 21 ♜h6 ♜g7
 22 ♜h2

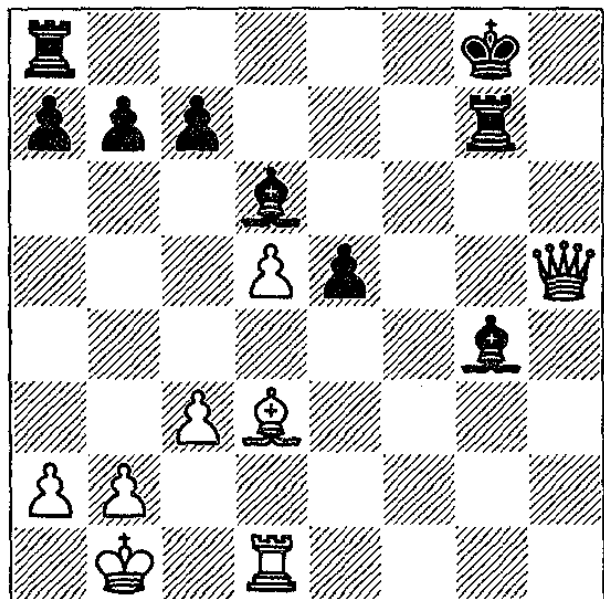
22 ♔d3 seems strong, e.g. 22...♜f8? 23 ♖xd6 ♜f4+ 24 ♜d2 wins and 22...♔d7 23 ♜dh1 (23 ♖xd6? ♜g5+ 24 ♜d2 ♖f4!? 25 ♜dh1 cxd6 turns the tables) 23...♔e8 24 ♜h2 looks highly dangerous for Black.

22 ... ♜f8
 23 ♜h5 ♜xf3

Gurevich gives 23...♜f4+! 24 ♖d2 e4! 25 ♜xg6 e3 26 ♔d3 exd2+ 27 ♜xd2 ♜e5! 28 ♜xg7+ ♚xg7 with an unclear position.

24 ♜xg6 ♜xe4
 25 ♔d3 ♜f4+
 26 ♚b1 ♜xg4
 27 ♜xg4 ♔xg4 (D)
 28 ♔h7+!

Black probably didn't realise the strength of this check.



W

- | | | |
|----|-------|------|
| 28 | ... | ♔h8 |
| 29 | ♖h4 | ♙e7 |
| 30 | ♖h2 | ♖xh7 |
| 31 | ♖xe5+ | ♖g7 |

Now the simplest win was 32 d6! but White took longer:

- 32 ♖g1 ♙d6 33 ♖f6 ♙e7 34 ♖h6+ ♔g8 35 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 36 ♖e6+ ♔h7 37 ♖xg4 ♙d6 38 ♖d7+ ♔g6 39 ♖b5 b6 40 ♖a6 ♔f6 41 ♖b7 ♖f8 42 ♖xa7 ♔e5 43 ♖b7 ♖f1+ 44 ♔c2 ♖f2+ 45 ♔b3 ♖d2 46 c4 ♔d4 47 ♖c6 ♖g2 48 a3 ♔d3 49 ♖e8 ♔d4 50 ♖a4 ♙e5 51 c5+ ♔e3 52 cxb6 cxb6 53 ♖d7 ♖xb2+ 54 ♔c4 ♖c2+ 55 ♔b5 ♔d4 56 ♖g4+ ♔c3 57 ♔xb6 ♙d6 58 a4 ♖d2 59 ♖e6 ♙h2 60 a5 ♖b2+ 61 ♔c6 ♔b4 62 ♖e1+ 1-0

Game 27

Barber – Harley

Hastings Challengers 1988/9

Winawer Variation

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |
| 3 | ♘c3 | ♙b4 |

4 ♘e2

4 ♙d3 leaves the wrong piece on e4 after 4...dxe4 5 ♙xe4 ♘f6 6 ♙g5 ♘bd7 followed by 7...h6. 4 ♖d3, however, is a different matter entirely: after 4...dxe4 5 ♖xe4 ♘f6 6 ♖h4, the white queen is well placed, so 4...♘e7 is better.

4 ... dxe4

Not the most accurate continuation, because it opens the position for White's congested pieces. Best is 4...♘c6! 5 a3 ♙a5 6 ♙e3 ♘f6 7 e5 ♘g4 8 ♙d2 (8 ♘f4 ♘gxe5!) 8...0-0 9 f3 ♘h6 10 ♙xh6 ♖h4+ 11 g3 ♖xh6 12 f4 g5!? ♞ Van Mil-B. Martin, Oakham 1994.

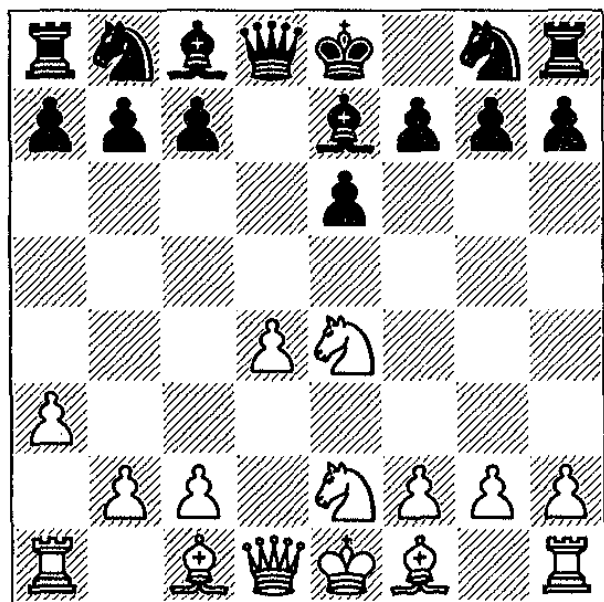
5 a3 ♙e7

Also possible is 5...♙xc3+ 6 ♘xc3 ♘c6 7 ♙b5 ♘e7 8 ♙g5 (8 ♘xe4 ♖d5!) 8...f6 9 ♙e3 0-0 10 ♖d2 f5 (10...e5!? 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♙xd4 exd4 13 ♖xd4 ♘f5 14 ♖xe4 ♘d6 15 ♖b4 ♘xb5 16 ♖xb5 ♖e8 17 ♔d2! c6 18 ♖c5 ± Vujadinović-Gavrić, Yugoslav Ch 1991) 11 0-0-0 a6 12 ♙xc6 ♘xc6 13 f3 exf3 14 gxf3 e5! 15 d5 ♘e7 (15...♘a5 16 ♖e2! b5 17 f4 ±) 16 ♖hg1 ♘g6 ∞ Hakki-Johansen, Dubai OL 1986.

Interesting but unsound is the idea 5...♙a5?! 6 b4 ♙b6 7 ♘xe4 e5 8 c4! ♙xd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 10 ♖xd4 exd4 11 ♙f4 ± McDonald-A. Martin, British Ch 1994.

6 ♘xe4 (D)

We have now reached a position just like the Rubinstein Variation but where White has developed his king's knight to e2 rather than f3. This leaves White temporarily tangled up, and with little control of e5;



B

but on the other hand, the e4-knight can be bolstered by $\text{d}2\text{c}3$ or $\text{d}2\text{g}3$.

6 ... $\text{d}2\text{c}6$

This move temporarily hampers White's development but $6... \text{d}2\text{f}6$ gives Black more options, e.g. $7 \text{Wd}3$ $0-0$ $8 \text{Qf}4 \text{d}2\text{b}7$.

7 $\text{Qf}4$

The most popular choice, controlling the ...e5 break. Also possible are $7 \text{Qe}3 \text{d}2\text{f}6$ $8 \text{d}2\text{c}3$ $0-0$ $9 \text{d}2\text{g}3 \text{d}2\text{d}5$ $10 \text{d}2\text{xd}5 \text{exd}5$ $11 \text{Qd}3 \text{f}5!$ = Dvoretzky-Vaganian, USSR Ch 1974 and $7 \text{c}3 \text{d}2\text{f}6$ $8 \text{d}2\text{g}3 \text{e}5$ $9 \text{d}2\text{xf}6+ \text{Qxf}6$ $10 \text{d}5 \text{d}2\text{e}7$ $11 \text{c}4 \pm$ Tseitlin-Vilela, Trnava 1979.

7 ... $\text{d}2\text{f}6$

8 $\text{Wd}3$ $0-0$

9 $0-0-0$ $\text{d}2\text{d}5$

Better is $9... \text{b}6$ $10 \text{d}2\text{c}3$ and only then $10... \text{d}2\text{d}5$ $11 \text{d}2\text{xd}5 \text{exd}5$ $12 \text{d}2\text{g}3 \text{Qe}6$ $13 \text{Wc}3 \text{Qd}6!$ with an equal position, Mokry-Short, Thessaloniki OL 1984.

10 $\text{Qe}3$ $\text{a}6!?$

11 $\text{d}4\text{c}3?!$

$11 \text{d}2\text{c}3 \text{f}5!?$ $12 \text{d}2\text{xd}5 \text{exd}5$ $13 \text{d}2\text{c}3 \text{f}4!$ followed by $... \text{Qf}5$ is unclear,

but best is $11 \text{c}4! \text{d}2\text{xe}3$ $12 \text{fxe}3 \text{b}5$ $13 \text{c}5 \pm$.

11 ... $\text{b}5$

12 $\text{d}2\text{xd}5$ $\text{exd}5$

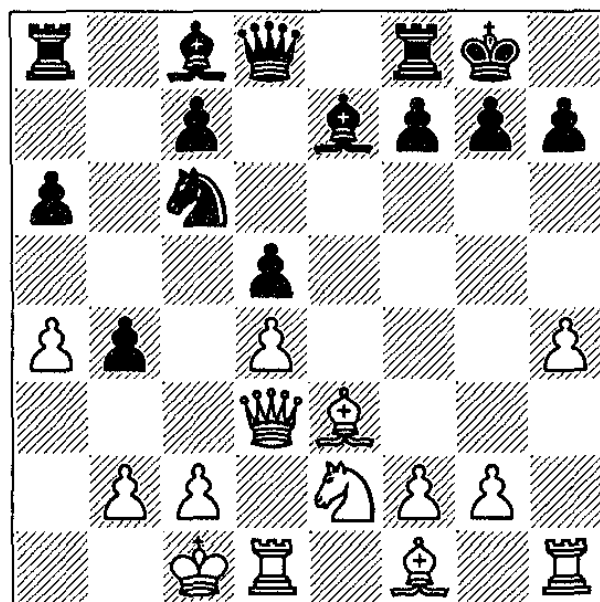
So we now have an Exchange centre, but with Black's queenside attack well under way.

13 $\text{h}4?$

White has to start untangling his pieces, for example by $13 \text{d}2\text{f}4$, before launching an attack.

13 ... $\text{b}4!$

14 $\text{a}4$ (D)



B

14 ... $\text{b}3!$

15 $\text{cxb}3$

Or $15 \text{Wxb}3 \text{b}8$ $16 \text{Wc}3 \text{d}2\text{b}4$ $17 \text{c}2\text{b}1 \text{Qf}5$ $18 \text{d}2\text{d}2 \text{Wd}7$ with a strong attack.

15 ... $\text{d}2\text{b}4$

16 $\text{Wb}1$

Tucking the queen away, but $16 \text{Wd}2 \text{Qf}5$ $17 \text{d}2\text{c}3 \text{Qc}2$ $18 \text{d}2\text{e}1 \text{Qxb}3$ is no better.

16 ... $\text{g}6$

$16... \text{c}5$ seems visually tempting but the doubled b-pawns help keep the c-file blocked after $17 \text{d}2\text{c}3$.

17 ♖f4

After 17 ♖g3 Black could then choose between 17...c5, 17...f5 and 17...♙xh4. Interesting is 17 g4 with the idea of 17...♙xg4 18 ♖g1 ♙f5?? 19 ♗xf5, but 17...♙xh4 should be good enough.

17	...	♙f5
18	♙d3	♖xd3+
19	♖xd3	c5!
20	dxc5	d4
21	♙f4?!	

More testing is 21 ♙h6 ♙xc5 (21...♖e8 22 b4 a5!) 22 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 23 ♗a2!? ♗c7+ 24 ♙b1 ♖c8 25 ♙a1 ♗c2.

21	...	♙xc5
22	♙d2?	

Better was 22 ♖de1 followed by ♙d1, but now it is all over.

22	...	♖e8
23	♖c1	♗e7
24	♖xc5	♗e2+!
25	♙c1	♙xd3
26	♗a2	♖ac8
27	♗a3	♗xf2
28	g3?	♖e1+

0-1

Game 28

Adams – Dreev
Wijk aan Zee 1996
Tarrasch Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♖d2	c5
4	exd5	

After 4 ♖gf3, Rubinstein centres can arise as follows:

a) 4...cxd4 5 ♖xd4 (5 exd5 ♗xd5 transposes to the game) 5...♖f6 6

exd5 ♗xd5!? (6...♖xd5 is more solid) 7 ♖b5 ♖a6 8 ♖c4 ♗xd1+ 9 ♙xd1 ♙c5 = (Adams).

b) 4...♖f6 5 exd5 ♖xd5 6 ♖b3 cxd4 7 ♖bxd4 ♙e7 8 ♙d3 0-0 9 0-0 ♙f6 10 ♖e1 ♖b4 = King-Dolmatov, Reykjavik 1990.

c) 4...♖c6 5 ♙b5 dxe4 (5...a6 and 5...cxd4 are sound alternatives) 6 ♖xe4 ♙d7 7 ♙g5! ♗a5+ 8 ♖c3 cxd4 9 ♖xd4 (Tal-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971) 9...♙e7 10 ♙e3 ♗c7 ±.

4	...	♗xd5
---	-----	------

Black chooses to concede the centre. The main alternative, 4...exd5, is analysed in the next two chapters.

5	♖gf3	cxd4
6	♙c4	♗d6

Petrosian preferred 6...♗d8. If the queen is going to go to c7 in the end anyway, it may not make all that much difference.

7	0-0	
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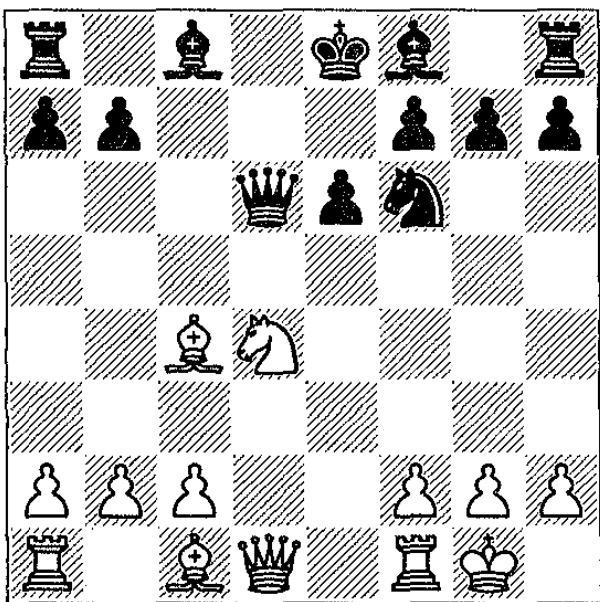
An important point about this variation is that White has to castle kingside. If 7 ♖b3? then 7...♗b4+.

7	...	♖f6
8	♖b3	♖c6
9	♖bxd4	

White can try to confuse Black by delaying the capture on d4 with 9 ♖e1. Then the most accurate reply is probably 9...♙d7 10 ♖bxd4 (10 g3 ♙e7 11 ♙f4 ♗b4 with equality, Ljubojević-Nikolić, Tilburg 1987) 10...♖xd4 11 ♖xd4 ♗c7, but it is very tempting to set a trap with 11...♙e7, when 12 ♙g5? ♗c5! wins a piece but 12 c3 is ± (analysed below).

9	...	♖xd4
10	♖xd4 (D)	

White has also tried the capture 10 ♖xd4 here. By allowing the trade of queens White foregoes any attempt to exploit his lead in development with a mating attack. However, he hopes that he will be able to force a weakness in Black's queenside before his opponent completes his mobilisation. The game Tiviakov-Chernin, Podolsk 1993 continued 10... ♖xd4 11 ♘xd4 ♙d7 12 ♙e2!? (re-aligning the bishop to attack b7) 12... ♙c5 (12... ♖c8!? 13 ♙f3 ♙c5 14 ♘b3 ♙b6 15 c3 ♙c6 = J. Watson) 13 ♘b3 ♙b6 14 a4 a6 15 ♙f3 0-0-0 (the king comes to the rescue of the b7-pawn) 16 ♙d2! and White had slightly the better chances after 16... ♙c6 17 ♙xc6 bxc6 18 ♙c3. Maybe Black should try 16... ♘d5, e.g. 17 ♙a5 ♙xa5 18 ♘xa5 ♙c6 19 ♘xc6 bxc6 and there is no good reason why Black should lose.



B

A Rubinstein centre has been reached, but with all the pieces on different squares from the illustrative games we have seen thus far and

with White well ahead in development. Nonetheless, this line, with its Sicilian-like qualities, has proved one of the most popular French variations for Black in recent years. Black's 'compensation' lies chiefly in the fact that White has already castled kingside, but also in the fact that White's already developed pieces are not on ideal squares: the d4-knight would really rather be on e5, and the c4-bishop would rather be on d3.

10 ... a6

Though behind in development, Black fails to develop a piece! The most obvious continuation at first sight would appear to be to develop with ... ♙e7 and ... 0-0, but White's lead in development then gives him an easy advantage, e.g. 10... ♙d7 11 c3 ♙e7 12 ♖e1 0-0 13 ♖f3 ♖c7 14 ♙d3 ♖fe8 (A.Sokolov-Nogueiras, Brussels 1988) 15 ♙f4 ♖b6 16 ♖e2 ±.

Therefore, to make sense of the whole variation (at least as an active weapon), Black has to try to develop his king's bishop more actively. The obvious plan is ... ♖c7 (gaining time by attacking the c4-bishop) and ... ♙d6 (gaining time by attacking the h2-pawn), but first Black has to deal with the counter ♘b5. Besides the game continuation, Black has also experimented a lot with 10... ♙d7 11 c3 ♖c7 12 ♖e2 ♙d6 13 ♘b5 ♙xb5 14 ♙xb5+ ♙e7 15 g3, but the conclusion has been that White's two bishops give him the edge despite the simplified position.

An interesting idea is 10... ♖c7, aiming to meet 11 ♙b3 by 11... ♙d7

avoiding transposing to the main game, and 11 ♖e2 with 11...a6 avoiding the line above. However, the queen serves a useful purpose on d6, attacking the d4-knight, and White can try to take advantage of Black's move-order after 11 ♖e2 a6 by omitting c3, as the knight no longer needs to be defended, e.g. 12 ♖g5 ♖d7 13 ♖h4!? 0-0-0 14 ♖g3 ± Kotronias-Hassan, Moscow OL 1994.

Finally, Black has also tried quickly castling queenside but this is a very risky strategy, e.g. 10...♖d7 11 b3 0-0-0?! 12 a4! (12 ♖b2 ♖c7 13 ♖e2 h5! 14 ♖f3 ♖g4 15 h3 ♖c6 16 ♖fd1 ♖c5! justifies Black's strategy) 12...h5 13 ♖b5 ♖b8 (13...♖xd1) 14 ♖f3 a6 15 ♖e3! with a strong attack (Dimitrov-Miljanić, Mataruška Banja 1996).

11 ♖e1

White has several other moves here, against all of which Black can try the same plan:

a) 11 a4 ♖c7 12 ♖e2 ♖d6 13 ♖f5 is an aggressive attempt to exploit White's lead in development. After 13...♖xh2+ 14 ♖h1 it is risky to play 14...0-0, when 15 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 16 f4 ♖g3 17 ♖a3 regains the piece for White with good chances to exploit the weak dark squares in Black's kingside. If 17...♖h4, 18 ♖h3. This version of the ♖xg7 sacrifice is far superior to that seen in our illustrative game, because White's queenside rook gets into play so quickly. However, Black can avoid all this with 14...♖f8! when in the game Van der Wiel-Glek, Tilburg 1994, he had good counterplay

against White's own king after 15 ♖g3 h5 (15...♖xg3 is risky, if not exactly bad) 16 ♖xh2 h4 17 ♖g1 hxg3 18 fxg3 e5.

b) 11 b3 ♖c7 12 ♖b2 ♖d6 13 ♖f3 b5 14 ♖d3 ♖b7 15 ♖e1 0-0! 16 ♖e5 ♖ad8 17 ♖e2 ♖d5! 18 ♖g4 f5 19 ♖h4 ♖b4 20 ♖e2 ♖xd3 21 ♖xd3 ♖e4 22 ♖ae1 ♖fe8 = Tiviakov-Psakhis, Rostov on Don 1993.

c) 11 c3 ♖c7 12 ♖e2 ♖d6 13 h3 0-0 14 ♖g5 ♖e4! 15 ♖h4?! ♖d2! ♖ Kosashvili-Holzke, Biel 1989.

d) 11 ♖b3 ♖c7 12 ♖f3 ♖d6 13 h3 0-0 14 ♖g5 ♖d7! 15 c3 b5! 16 ♖xa8? ♖b7 17 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 and Black's queen and active pieces proved far stronger than White's two rooks in Ernst-Wiedenkeller, Swedish Ch 1989.

11 ... ♖c7

12 ♖b3

After 12 ♖d3 ♖d6 13 ♖f5!? ♖xh2+ 14 ♖h1, Black should play 14...♖f8! keeping the rook on the h-file; ...h5 is always in the air.

12 ... ♖d6!?

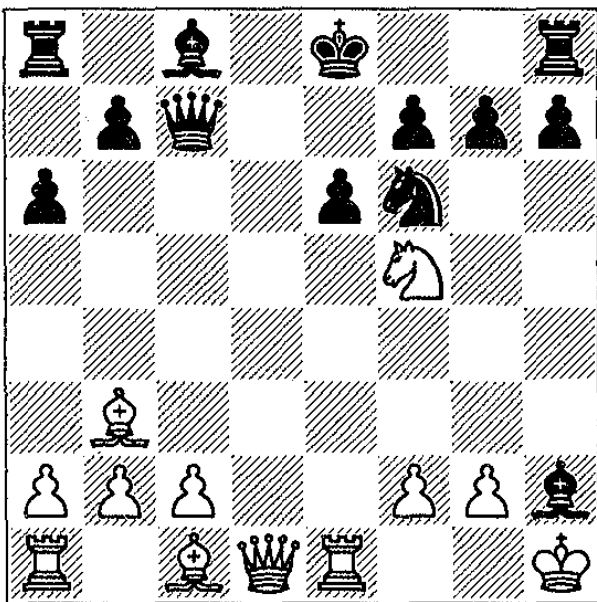
This may be the losing move! If no improvements can be found, Black will have to play 12...♖d7 first instead, losing the chance to develop the bishop to the long diagonal (at least immediately). White should not then be tempted to play 13 ♖g5 as after 13...♖d6 14 h3 0-0-0 15 ♖f3, the exposed position of the g5-bishop enables Black to equalise with 15...♖c5!. Instead, better is 13 c3 ♖d6 14 h3 0-0-0 (14...0-0 is better but the d7-bishop is then misplaced) 15 ♖e2 ♖b8 16 a4 ♖c8 17 a5 ♖hg8 18 ♖f3 h6 19 ♖e3 ♖d7 20

♙a4 ♙c5 21 b4 ♙xe3 22 ♖xe3 g5 and White's attack should have been the quicker in the game Adams-Akopian, Khalkidhiki 1992.

13 ♜f5!

The exclamation mark is dependent on Adams's idea holding up in future theoretical tussles! Adams has also had success playing more calmly: 13 h3 0-0 14 c3 b5 15 ♙g5 ♙b7! 16 ♙c2 (16 ♙xf6 gxf6 17 ♖g4+ ♙h8 18 ♖h4 ♖g8 19 ♖xf6+ ♖g7; the g-file counterattack is a very important theme) 16...♜d5 17 ♖h5 g6 18 ♖h4 ♙h2+ 19 ♙h1 ♙f4 20 ♙e4 ♖ab8?! 21 ♖ad1 ♙xg5 22 ♖xg5 (Adams-Gulko, Groningen 1993) 22...♖f4 23 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 24 ♜c6 ♙xc6 25 ♙xc6 ±.

13 ... ♙xh2+
14 ♙h1 (D)



B

14 ... 0-0

In other similar lines (illustrated above), 14...♙f8 is frequently the critical response, but here it can be met by the brilliant 15 ♖d4! h6 (15...exf5 16 ♖xf6! gxf6 17 ♙h6+

♙g8 18 ♖e8#) 16 g3 exf5 17 ♙f4 of Beliavsky-Hertneck, Munich 1991.

15 ♜xg7! ♖d8!

An important *zwischenzug* before capturing White's knight. 15...♙xg7 16 ♖d4!, with ideas such as 17 ♙h6+ ♙g6 18 ♖h4 threatening mate on g5, would be very dangerous for Black.

16 ♖f3

16 ♖e2 has also been tried, but Black seems OK after 16...♙xg7 17 g3 ♙xg3 18 fxg3 ♖c5 19 ♙f4 ♖h5+ (Vorontsov-Savchenko, St Petersburg 1993).

16 ... ♙xg7
17 ♙h6+!

This is White's idea. Black's reply is forced, because he is soon mated after 17...♙xh6 18 ♖xf6+ ♙h5 19 ♖e4 or 19 g4+, etc. Also possible is 17 g3, when in Yandemirov-S.Ivanov, Minsk 1995, Black had promising counterattacking chances after 17...b5! 18 ♙xh2 ♙b7 19 ♖e2 ♖c6 20 ♖g1 ♖ac8.

17 ... ♙g6
18 c3!

An insidious move, which plans to bring the b3-bishop into the attack with a lethal ♙c2+.

After 18 c4 ♜h5 19 ♙e3, Black managed to defend successfully in Gufeld-Ravi, Calcutta 1994 after 19...f5 20 g4 ♜f6 21 gxf5+ exf5 22 ♖g2+ ♜g4. It is clearly to White's advantage that the c-pawn is on c3 rather than c4 (as the a2-g8 diagonal remains open), but it is not clear whether this difference is decisive.

18 ... ♜d5

Bad would be 18...e5 19 ♙c2+ e4 20 ♙xe4+ ♜xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♙f5 (or

21...f5) 22 ♖h4 ♕e5 23 ♗h5+, etc. A possible improvement is 18...♗h5 when Gulko recommends 19 ♕e3.

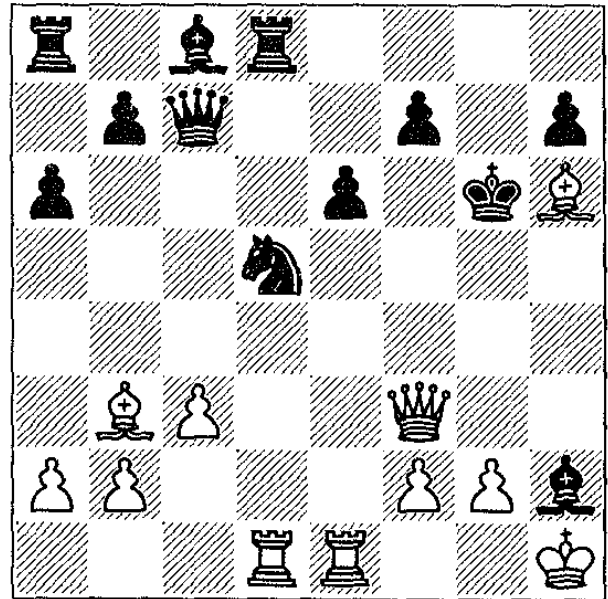
19 ♖ad1! (D)

A very important improvement over previous play, bringing White's final piece into the attack. Black's position is far more resilient than it might look at first sight, e.g. 19 ♖e4 ♖xh6 20 ♖g4! (cutting off the black king's escape route and threatening 21 ♗h3#; much weaker would be 20 ♕xd5? ♖g7!) 20...♗f4! (the only way to save the king) 21 g3 ♖d3! (both 21...♗g6 22 ♗f6! and 21...♗h5 22 ♖h4 are bad, while 21...♗c6 exchanges queens but leads to a bad endgame after 22 ♗xc6 bxc6 23 gxf4; instead, Black forces a simplification that is very much on his own terms) 22 ♗xf4+ ♗xf4 23 gxf4! (Black is also better after 23 ♖xf4 ♕xg3 24 fxg3 f5!) 23...♖h3 24 ♖g2 ♖h5 25 ♖h1 ♕d7 26 ♖xh2 ♕c6+ 27 ♖g1 ♖xh2 28 ♖xh2 ♖d8 29 f5 (White is forced to play this sacrifice because Black threatened 29...♖d2) 29...exf5 30 ♖d4 ♖e8 31 ♕xf7 ♖e2 32 ♖g3 ♖xb2 33 ♕d5 ♕xd5 34 ♖xd5 ♖xa2 35 ♖xf5 ♖g6 36 ♖c5 and although Black has fair winning chances, White managed to escape with a draw 20 moves later in the game Khalifman-Gulko, Lucerne Wcht 1993.

19 ... f5

The key point is that 19...♖xh6 can be answered by 20 ♖xd5! and 20...♖g7 21 ♖g5+ or 20...♖xd5 21 ♗f6+ ♖h5 22 ♖e3.

A detailed discussion of this position on the Internet came up with the



B

suggestion 19...♕e5 20 ♕c1 f6!? (I.Marin) with the idea of 21 ♗d3+ ♖g7 22 c4 ♖h8! 23 cxd5 exd5 24 f4!? ♕xf4 25 ♗f3 ♕e5 26 ♕xd5 ♗g7 27 ♖e4 ♖d6 28 ♖h4 ♕e6, but after 21 ♗g4+ ♖f7 22 f4! (S.Carr) 22...♗xf4 (22...♕d6 23 ♖xd5!) 23 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 24 ♕xf4 ♕xf4 (24...♗g8 25 ♗xg8+ ♖xg8 26 ♕xe5 fxe5 27 ♖xe5 ♖f7 28 ♖c5 ±) 25 ♗xf4, Black is still in grave trouble although a pawn up in a simplified position.

20 ♕c1 ♕d6?

After this Black is definitely lost. The last chance at improvement is to return the piece by 20...♕e5! 21 c4 (21 g4!? ♖f8!) 21...♗f6 22 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 23 ♖xe5 ♗g4 24 ♗f4! ♗f6!.

21 ♕xd5 exd5

22 ♖xd5 ♕d7

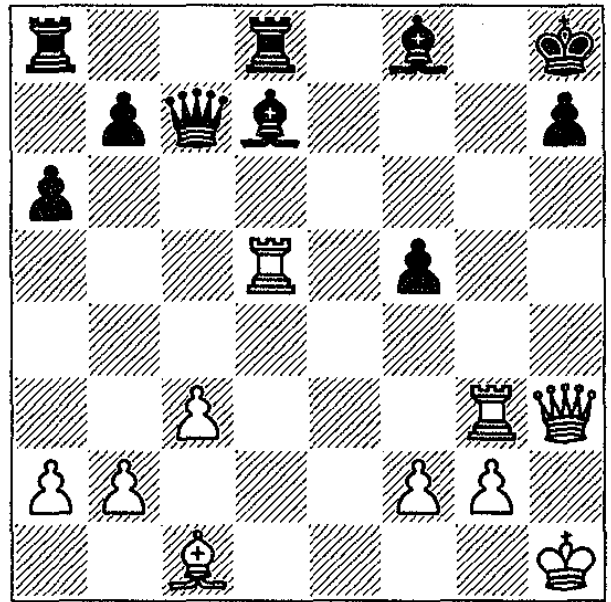
Black tries to get his light-squared bishop on to the long diagonal to counter the threat of g4, since after 22...♖g8 23 g4 ♖f6 24 gxf5! ♗c6 25 ♕e3 ♕e7 (25...♕e5 26 ♕c5!) 26 ♕d4+ ♖f7 27 ♗h5+ ♖f8 28 f6! ♕xf6 29 ♖e8!! ♗xe8 30 ♗h6+ mating, or 22...a5 (with the idea of ...♖a6) 23 g4

♔g7 24 gxf5! ♖a6 (24...♔h8 25 ♕e3 ♖a6 26 ♕d4+ ♔g8 27 ♗h5) 25 f6+ ♔h8 26 f7 ♕f8 27 ♖g1 ♕g7 28 ♗g3! White wins. Adams suggests 22...b5 as best (with the same idea as 22...♕d7) but feels White is winning after both 23 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 24 ♗xa8 and 23 ♗h3.

23 ♗h3!

Far stronger than the obvious 23 ♖ed1?! ♕c6 24 ♖xd6+ ♖xd6 25 ♗g3+ ♔f7 26 ♖xd6 ♖d8, when Black retains some drawing chances according to Adams.

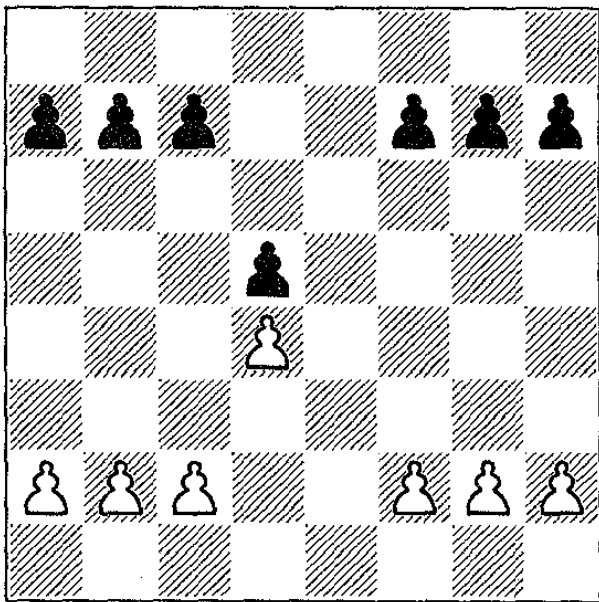
23	...	♕f8
24	♖e3	♔g7
25	♖g3+	♔h8 (D)



W

26	♗h4!	♕e6
27	♕f4	♕e7
28	♕xc7	1-0

8 Exchange Centre



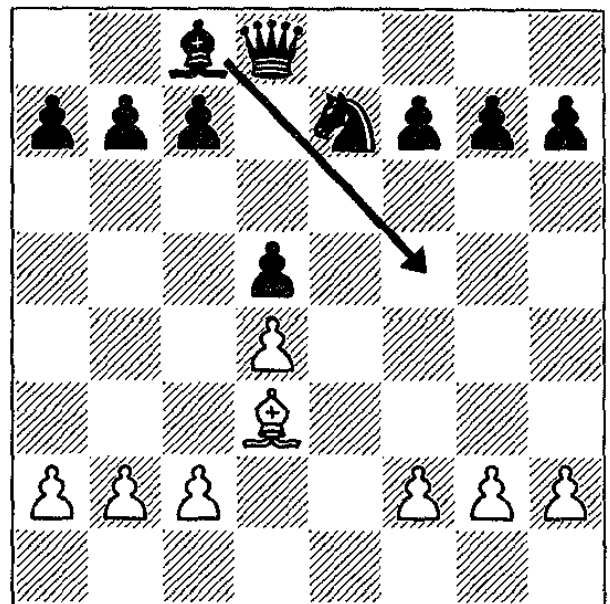
General observations

The Exchange centre has always been dismissed as drawish, but this is only the case if both sides are amenable. Although the pawn structure is symmetrical, White still has the advantage of the move, while Black can use the 'advantage' of going second to unbalance the position at any point: for example, if White develops with ♞g1-f3 Black can respond ... ♞g8-e7 and answer ♞g1-e2 by ... ♞g8-f6 .

If one player castles kingside and the other queenside, both players will usually launch violent pawn storms against their opponent's king. (White's extra tempo could then prove critical.) Even if both players castle on the same side, the fact that the centre is blocked and therefore counterplay limited means that the

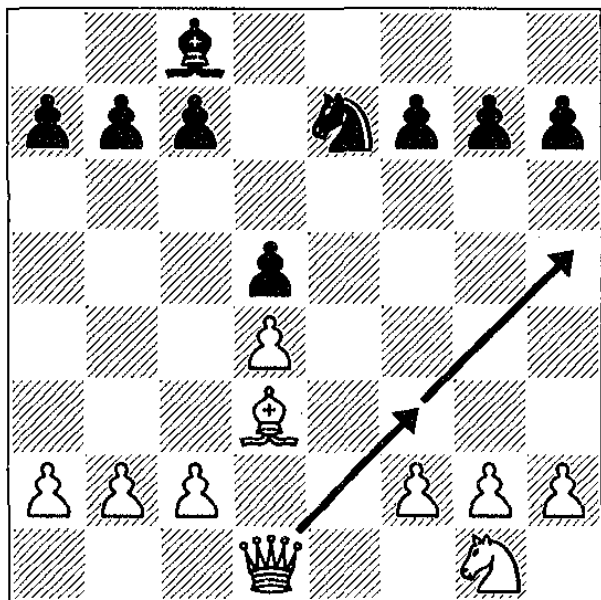
more actively placed player can launch an attack, with pieces or pawns, against his opponent's king in relative safety.

Exchanging on f5/f4



The exchange of pawns on d5 has liberated Black's 'bad bishop'. Nonetheless, it is still not fully redeemed, as the d5-pawn is set firmly on a light square. Therefore Black almost invariably seeks to exchange it for White's good bishop, usually by playing ... ♞f5 supported by a knight on e7. Sometimes, when White has greater control of f5, it will first be necessary to play ... ♞e6 and ... ♞d7 and only then ... ♞f5 . Naturally, White can use the same method (♞f4 after ♞e2) to seek to exchange off his bad bishop, but this is unlikely to bring White any advantage.

Early white queen development

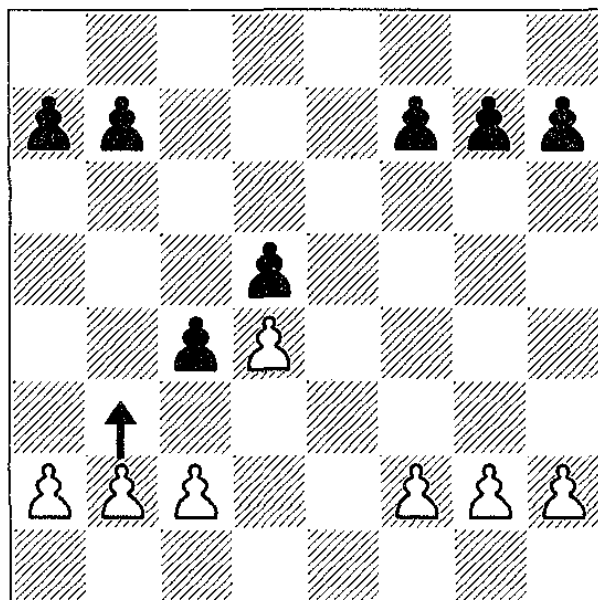


If Black has played ... $\text{N}g8-e7$ before White has developed his king's knight, White can safely play his queen to the kingside without fearing the response ... $\text{N}f6$ (followed by ... $\text{B}g4$). A queen on f3 or h5 controls the important f5-square as well as adding annoying pressure to such squares as d5, f7 and h7, and there is no easy way for Black to chase the queen away. Again of course, Black can use the same strategy if White plays $\text{N}g1-e2$ before Black has developed his king's knight.

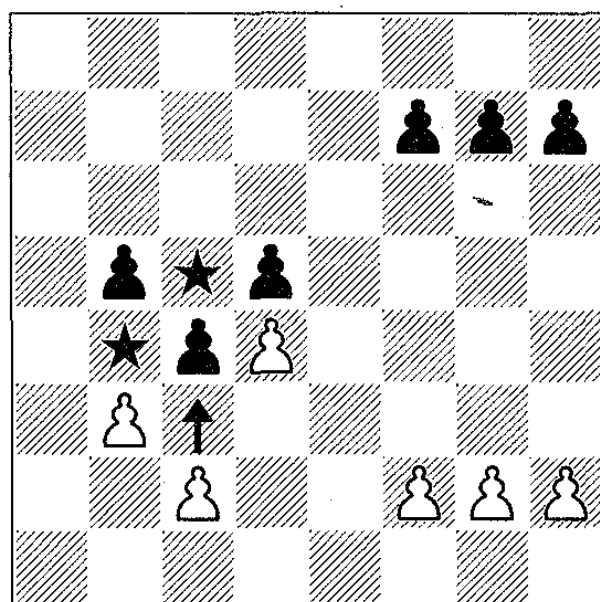
Advancing the c-pawn

One way either side can unbalance the position is by pushing their c-pawn forward two squares. Then if the c-pawn is exchanged for the enemy d-pawn, an IQP centre results. The position of interest to this chapter arises if the pawn continues its advance. We will assume it is Black

playing ...c5 and ...c4, but obviously the same principles apply when White plays c4 and c5.



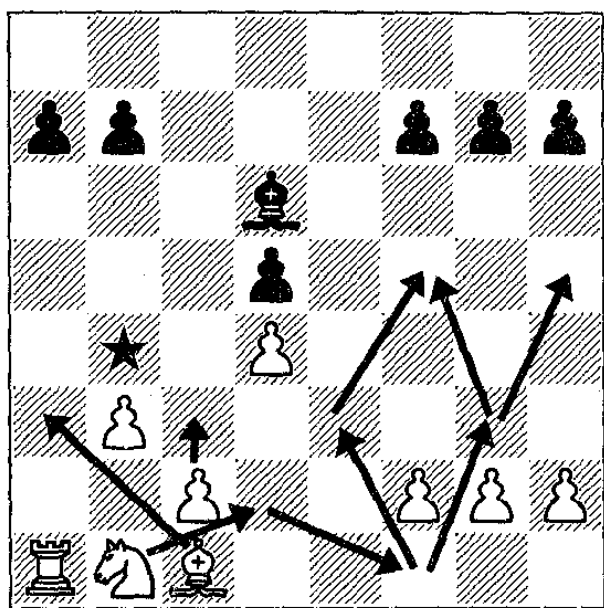
Black has clearly gained a space advantage on the queenside, and it is important for White to challenge this immediately with b3. If Black then replies ...b5, White's best approach is to ease his cramp on the queenside by exchanging one pair of pawns after a4 a6, axb5 axb5 ...



... and then to use his queen and queen's bishop to exploit the dark-square holes on b4 and c5 and exert

pressure against the weakness on b5, usually after first fixing the pawns by playing a preparatory c3.

Another possibility for Black is exchanging pawns on b3 instead of playing ...b5, when White will recapture with the a-pawn (capturing towards the centre and opening the a-file for the undeveloped rook), reaching the following pawn structure:



White can then try to exchange off his bad bishop by means of ♖a3, though must be careful not to waste too much time. If White plays too slowly, Black can happily build up pressure on the c-file against White's backward c-pawn. Playing c2-c4 doesn't help, because the b3- and d4-pawns are then weakened and b4 becomes a useful hole for Black's pieces. White's best plan is to play c2-c3 controlling b4 and creating some manoeuvring room for his pieces. An essential part of White's strategy is the manoeuvre of his queen's knight to the kingside via d2 and f1.

Illustrative games

Game 29

Tal – Korchnoi

USSR 1955

Exchange Variation

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |
| 3 | exd5 | exd5 |
| 4 | ♗d3 | |

Tal admitted that he was playing for a draw, and claimed that it was the only time in his life he had done so as White. In view of his previous results against Korchnoi, this was understandable but nonetheless not very wise. It is far easier to draw as White if you come out of the opening with the advantage! Mikhail Gurevich fell into the same trap at the Manila Interzonal in 1990, when needing a draw to qualify for the Candidates, against Nigel Short, who needed to win. He played the Exchange and sought to quickly exchange off pieces, but after 4 ♖f3 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗h5 6 ♗e2 ♗d6 7 ♖e5 ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 ♖e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗f4 ♗e8 11 ♕g4 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♖g6, Black had gained a slight advantage and went on to win.

White does not have to play for a draw. A number of top grandmasters, including Kasparov, have experimented with 4 ♖f3 recently. 4...♖c6 is met by 5 ♗b5, 4...♗d6 by 5 c4!, taking advantage of the fact that the bishop is not well placed on d6 for the resulting IQP positions (see the next chapter), and Short's 4...♗g4 by the more aggressive 5 h3 ♗h5 6

♖e2+! ♗e7 7 ♙e3 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 0-0-0 9 g4 ♙g6 10 0-0-0 ♘b4 11 a3 ♘xc2 12 ♙f4 ♘a1! 13 b4! ± Ulybin-Vilela, Santa Clara 1991. Black's safest reply is 4...♘f6. Then, another point of White's move-order is that 5 ♙d3 c5 6 0-0! c4 7 ♙e1+ ♙e7 8 ♙f1 is better for White, e.g. 8...0-0 9 ♙g5 ♙g4 10 h3 ♙xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♘c6 12 c3 ± Kasparov-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1991. But Black need not fear: both 5...♙d6 and 5...♙e7 give Black Petroff-like positions with an extra tempo (as Black doesn't have to play the retreat ...♘e4-f6), and the Petroff itself is renowned for its solidity!

4 ... ♙d6

For 4...c5!? see the next chapter.

5 c3

Bannik-Korchnoi, USSR Ch 1956, instead went 5 ♘f3 ♘e7 6 ♘c3 c6 7 0-0 ♙g4 8 ♙e1 ♗b6! 9 ♙d2?! ♘d7 10 ♘a4 ♗c7 11 h3 ♙h5 12 a3 b6 13 ♙b1?! ♘f8 14 ♘c3 ♘e6 15 ♙e3 h6 16 ♘a2 0-0 17 c3 ♙ae8 18 ♘b4 a5 19 ♘c2 ♙g6 20 ♙xg6 ♘xg6 21 ♗d3 ♘gf4 22 ♙xf4 ♘xf4 23 ♗d2 ♙e4! 24 ♙xe4 dxe4 25 ♘e1 f5 and Black continued his attack with ...♗f7 and ...♗h5 and went on to win.

5 ... ♘c6

Of course 5...c6 is also possible.

6 ♘f3

After 6 ♘e2, Black can safely move his queen to the kingside with 6...♗h4 or 6...♗f6. In some ways it is easier for White to make a mistake than Black in the Exchange Variation. Here White's extra tempo gives him the chance to develop the queen before Black's king's knight,

which is not such a good thing, e.g. 6 ♗f3 ♘f6 7 h3 0-0 8 ♘e2 ♙e8 9 ♙g5 ♙e7 10 ♙e3 ♘e4! 11 ♙xe4 dxe4 12 ♗xe4 ♘b4! ♚ Malaniuk-Psakhis, Moscow 1983.

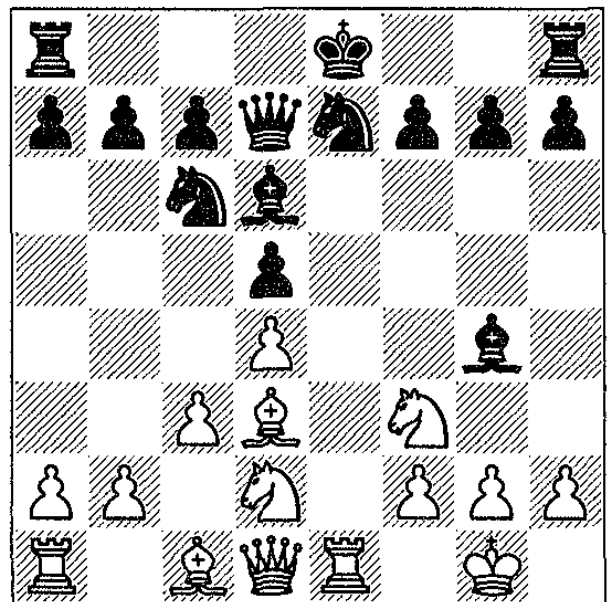
6 ... ♘ge7

Now Black's one less tempo enables him to develop his knight to e7 (controlling the important f5-square) without fearing a white queen invasion on the kingside.

7 0-0 ♙g4

8 ♘bd2 ♗d7

9 ♙e1 (D)



B

9 ... 0-0

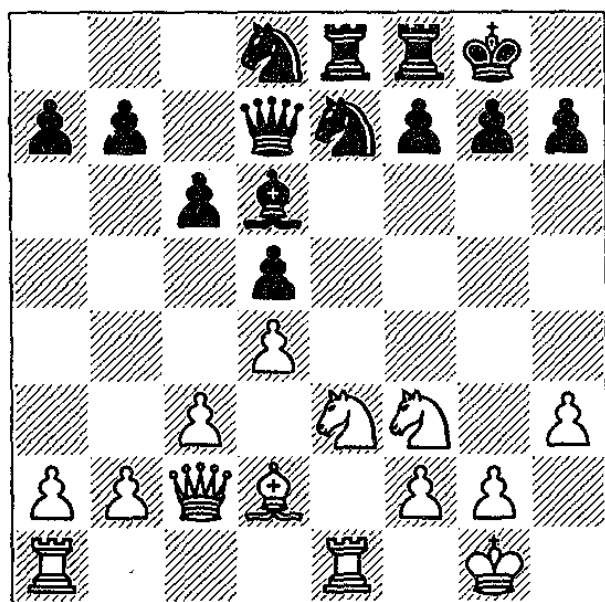
Many players would automatically castle queenside here. White has dared to indicate he's happy with a draw, so they'll show him! However, White's queenside pawns are ideally poised for the attack, the c3-pawn supporting a potential b4 advance. And don't forget that White here is the awesome attacker Tal, not that that would have frightened the master defender Korchnoi. Korchnoi realised that he could still get plenty

of winning chances just by castling kingside. Nonetheless, 9...0-0-0 is quite playable too, e.g. 10 b4 ♖g6 11 b5 ♗ce7 12 a4 ♗h4 13 ♕e2 ♗eg6 = (Bardwick).

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 10 | h3 | ♗f5 |
| 11 | ♗f1 | ♞ae8 |
| 12 | ♗xf5 | |

White can try to exchange bishops with the familiar plan ♗g5-h4-g3, but after 12 ♗g5 h6 13 ♗h4 (13 ♗xf5 ♞xf5 14 ♗d2!?), Black can play 13...♗g6 14 ♗g3 ♗f4 ♞ (J. Watson).

- | | | |
|----|-----|--------|
| 12 | ... | ♞xf5 |
| 13 | ♗e3 | ♞d7 |
| 14 | ♗d2 | ♗d8 |
| 15 | ♞c2 | c6 (D) |



W

The pawn structure is now virtually symmetrical but Black has two slight but distinct advantages: Black has kept his 'better' bishop and the white h3-pawn is a potential target.

- | | | |
|----|-----|----|
| 16 | ♞f1 | f6 |
| 17 | ♗h4 | f5 |

Black has to be prepared to play this move and risk the hole on e5 if he wishes to play for the win. This

anti-positional looking move can often be a key idea in Exchange centres.

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 18 | ♞e2 | ♗g6 |
| 19 | ♗xg6 | hxg6 |
| 20 | ♞ae1 | |

White has achieved his aim: he has doubled rooks on the e-file and now just awaits the mass exchanges and subsequent draw, but Black will have nothing of it.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 20 | ... | ♗e6 |
| 21 | ♗d1 | ♞f7 |
| 22 | ♞c1 | b6 |

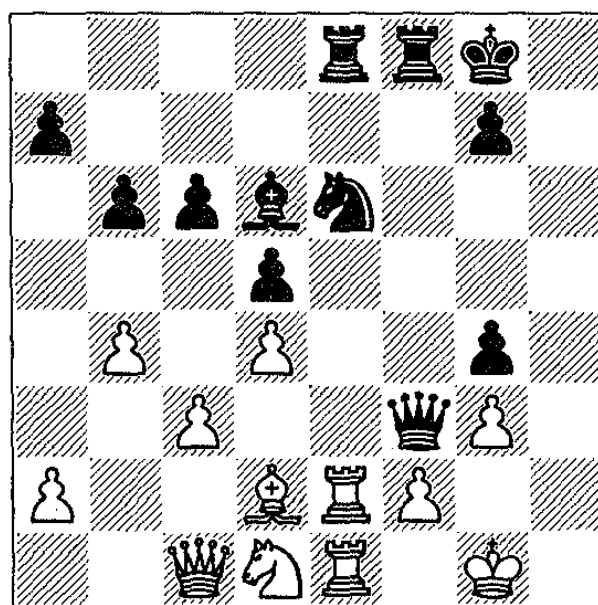
Black first threatens to break with ...c5, dxc5 bxc5 and ...d4, so White keeps the position blocked:

- | | | |
|----|----|-----|
| 23 | b4 | g5! |
|----|----|-----|

The queen being on c1 didn't stop this break after all. Now 24 ♗xg5? would be met by 24...f4! 25 ♗h4 g5 winning a piece.

- | | | |
|----|------|----------|
| 24 | ♞g1 | g4 |
| 25 | hxg4 | fxg4 |
| 26 | g3 | ♞f3? (D) |

A tactical error. 26...♞g6 keeps the pressure on.



W

27 ♖xe6! ♙xg3
 28 ♖xe8 ♙xf2+
 29 ♜xf2 ♚xf2+
 30 ♔h1 1/2-1/2

Korchnoi had probably planned 30...g3? and only now realised that 31 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32 ♖e8+! ♔xe8 (32...♔f7 33 ♚g1) 33 ♚e1+ wins for White. Therefore he has to settle for a draw – a fortunate escape for Tal.

Game 30
Hickl – Uhlmann
German Ch 1991
 Exchange Winawer

1 e4 e6
 2 ♘c3 d5
 3 d4 ♙b4

By delaying the creation of an Exchange centre, White can add a bit more venom to the position. Besides the game continuation, other dangerous possibilities are:

a) 3...♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙b4 5 exd5 exd5 (5...♚xd5!? 6 ♙xf6 gxf6 7 ♚d2 ♚a5 8 ♙d3 c5! with an equal position, Kindermann-M.Gurevich, Budapest 1987) 6 ♚f3! ♜bd7 7 a3 ♙e7 8 ♙d3 0-0 9 ♘ge2 c6 (Schmittdiel-Dreev, Groningen 1991) 10 0-0 ±.

b) 3...♘c6 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 exd5 (5 e5 ♘e4 6 ♙d3 ♙b4 7 ♙d2 ♘xd2 8 ♚xd2 f6 9 a3 ♙xc3 10 ♚xc3 fxe5 11 dxe5 0-0 12 h4 with a slight advantage to White, Hjartarson-Rozentalis, Tilburg 1994) 5...exd5 6 ♙b5 ♙e7 7 ♘e5 ♙d7 8 0-0 0-0 (Rogovsky-Borovikov, Pavlograd 1995) 9 ♖e1 ±.

4 exd5 exd5
 5 ♙d3 ♘e7

Similar play to the game arises after 5...♘c6 6 a3! ♙xc3+ (6...♙e7 7 ♙f4 a6 8 ♘ce2 ± Janowsky-Huster, Dortmund 1993, or 6...♙d6!? 7 ♘xd5 ♙xh2) 7 bxc3 ♘ge7 (7...♚f6 8 ♚h5!) 8 ♚f3 ♙e6 9 ♖b1 b6 10 ♘e2 ♚d7 11 h3 ♙f5 12 0-0 0-0 13 a4 ♙xd3 14 ♚xd3?! ♔b7 (14...♘a5? 15 ♚a6+ ♔b8 16 ♚xa5) 15 c4 dxc4 16 ♚xc4 ♚d5 ♚ Chandler-Harley, Warwick 1996.

The immediate 5...♚f6 is well answered by 6 ♘e2 c6 7 ♙f4! since 7...♙xc3+ 8 bxc3 ♙f5? allows 9 ♙e5 ♚g6 10 ♙xf5 ♚xf5 11 ♙xg7, but best may be 5...c6 6 ♚f3 ♚f6! =.

6 ♚f3

After 6 ♚h5, Black can try to take advantage of the decentralised white queen with 6...c5!? 7 dxc5 ♘d7! (7...d4 8 a3 ♚a5 favours White after both 9 axb4 and 9 ♖b1) 8 ♘ge2 ♘xc5 9 ♙b5+ ♙d7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♙xd7 ♚xd7 12 ♙g5 ♙xc3 13 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 14 ♘xc3 d4 = Gdanski-Socko, Poland 1996.

6 ... ♙e6

6...c5!? is again worthy of consideration.

7 ♘ge2 ♚d7
 8 0-0 ♘bc6

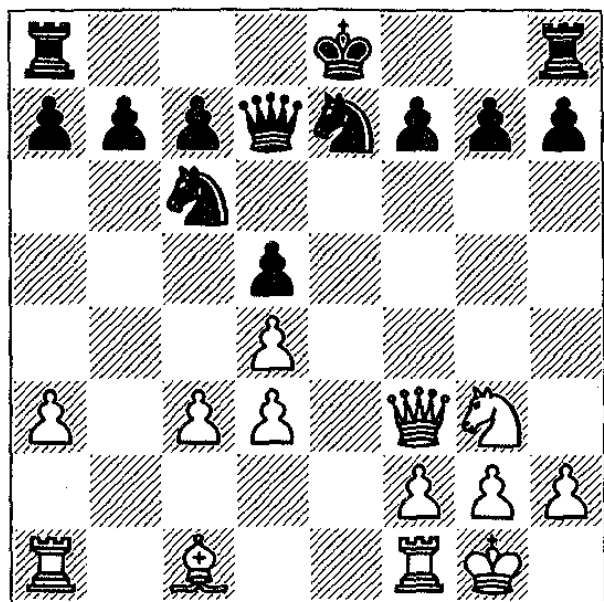
8...♙f5? fails to the tactic 9 ♘xd5! ♙xd3 10 ♘xb4 ♙xe2 11 ♚xe2 (but not 11 ♚xb7? ♙xf1 12 ♚xa8 0-0 13 ♔xf1 ♚b5+ 14 ♔g1 ♘bc6 –+) 11...a5 (11...♚xd4 12 ♚b5+) 12 ♘d3 ♚xd4 13 ♙f4 ±. 8...c6 is interesting, not worrying about the temporary difficulty in developing the queen's knight.

9 a3 ♙xc3
 10 bxc3 ♙f5

11 ♖g3 ♗xd3

12 cxd3 (D)

After 12 ♖xd3 ♗a5, Black has a lovely knight outpost on c4.



B

12 ... 0-0?!

Black would like to castle queen-side, but if 12...f6, then 13 ♗h5 ♖g8 14 ♗h6! is strong.

13 h4 ♗ae8

14 h5 h6

15 a4!

An earlier game between the same two players (W.Germany-E.Germany 1988) reached the same position but with the moves ♖b1 and ...b6 inserted. White gained no advantage after 16 a4 ♗d8 17 ♗a3 ♗e6 18 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 19 ♖xd5 ♗f4 20 ♖f3 ♗e2+ 21 ♗xe2 ♖xe2, as White didn't have the option of 20 ♖xb7.

15 ... ♗h7?!

15...♗d8 was still a better option, though White would have an advantage.

16 ♗a3 g5?!

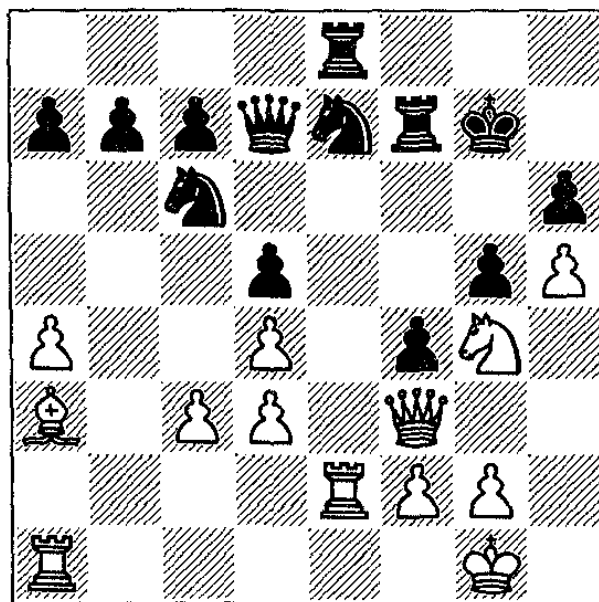
17 ♖fe1 f5

18 ♗f1! f4

19 ♗h2 ♖f7

20 ♗g4 ♗g7

21 ♖e2 (D)



B

White has kept Black's pawn onslaught under careful control, and now plans to double rooks on the e-file, creating intolerable pressure on e7. Therefore Black tries to complicate things:

21 ... ♗f5

22 ♖xe8 ♖xe8

23 ♖xd5 ♖e2?

Knaak gives 23...♗h4 24 ♖e4! (24 ♗e5 ♖f5 25 ♖d7+ ♖xd7 26 ♗xd7 g4 ∞) 24...♖c8 25 ♗e5 as winning.

24 ♗xh6! ♗xh6

Or 24...♗xh6 25 ♖xf7.

25 ♖xg5+ ♗h8

25...♗h7 26 ♖g6+ ♗h8 27 ♖xh6+ transposes.

26 ♖xh6+ ♗g8

27 ♖g5+ ♗h8

28 ♖g6 1-0

For example 28...♖g7 29 ♖h6+ ♗g8 30 ♖xf4 ♖xh5 31 ♖e1 ♖h7? (Black is three pawns down anyway) 32 ♖f8#.

Game 31
 Kr.Georgiev – P.Nikolić
 Elenite 1993
 Tarrasch Variation

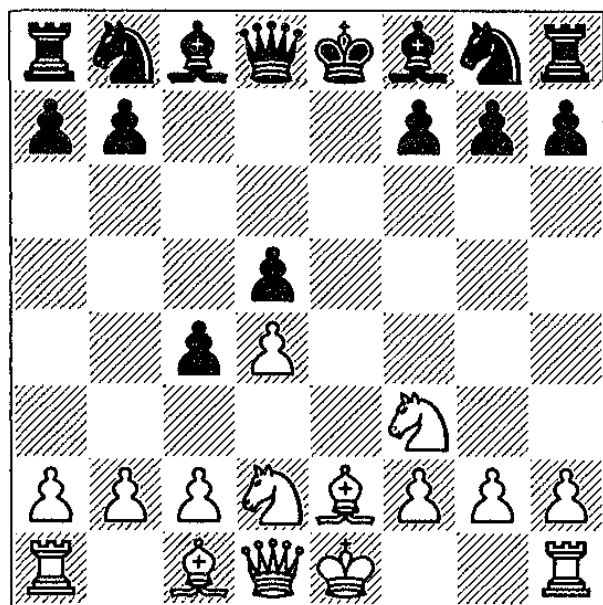
1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘d2 a6
 4 ♘gf3 c5
 5 exd5

For 5 dxc5 ♙xc5 6 ♙d3, see Chapter 10.

5 ... exd5
 6 ♙e2

For 6 dxc5, see the next chapter, on the 'IQP centre'.

6 ... c4 (D)



W

The point of this move is to gain space on the queenside and to avoid the IQP positions that occur after 6...cxd4 or 6...♘f6 7 0-0 ♙e7 8 dxc5. However, Black has yet to mobilise his pieces and this leads to a critical struggle over the next few moves. Black will try to stabilise his queenside and keep the position blocked, whereas White will try to exploit

his advantage in development by breaking up Black's queenside pawn structure, perhaps even employing a piece sacrifice.

7 0-0 ♙d6
 8 b3 b5!?

This is the most ambitious move. Instead, the resolution of the tension with 8...cxb3 9 axb3 ♘e7 10 ♚e1 ♘bc6 11 c3! (11 ♘f1 0-0 12 ♘e3 ♙b4!, clearing the d6-square for the queen, led to equality in Tseshkovsky-M.Gurevich, USSR Ch 1986 after 13 ♙d2 ♙xd2 14 ♚xd2 ♚d6 15 c4 ♙d7) 11...0-0 12 ♘f1 ♙e6 13 ♘g3 ♚d7 14 ♘g5 gave White the slightly better chances in Wahls-Landenbergue, Biel 1994. The pawn structure is virtually identical to that in a line of the c3 Sicilian after 1 e4 c5 2 c3 e6 3 d4 d5 4 exd5 exd5 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 ♙e3 c4 7 b3 cxb3 8 axb3, but here White has not had to expend a tempo on ♙e3, and Black's ...a6 is not particularly useful.

9 a4?!

After this move, White is committed to a piece sacrifice that appears somewhat dubious. Instead, he should play more solidly, e.g. 9 c3 ♘e7 10 a4 ♙b7 11 ♙a3 ♙xa3 (11...0-0 12 ♚c2 ♘g6 13 ♚fe1 ♚e8 14 ♚b2 ♙xa3 15 ♚xa3 ♘d7 16 ♙f1 ♚c7 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♚b4 ± Chandler-Dolmatov, Minsk 1982) 12 ♚xa3 ♘d7 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♚xa8 ♙xa8 15 bxc4 bxc4 16 ♚a1 0-0 17 ♙d1 ♙c6 18 ♚e1 ♘c8 19 ♚a3 ± Ivanchuk-P.Nikolić, Moscow OL 1994.

9 ... c3!

The careless 9...♙b7?! allowed White a devastating sacrifice in the

game Geller-Dreev, New York 1990:
 10 bxc4 bxc4 11 ♔xc4! dxc4 12
 ♖xc4 ♕e7 13 ♜e1 ♚c7 14 ♜b1
 (here we see why 9...♕b7 was disas-
 trous – White brings his final piece
 into the attack with the threat of 15
 ♜xb7 ♚xb7 16 ♘d6+, and Black
 therefore never succeeds in castling
 into safety) 14...♚xc4 15 ♜xb7 ♘c6
 16 ♘d2! ♚xd4 17 ♕b2 with a crush-
 ing attack. In our illustrative game,
 White's piece sacrifice proves much
 inferior. Although he gains three
 pawns for the piece, Black is pre-
 vented neither from castling nor
 completing the development of his
 pieces.

10 axb5

10 ♘b1? leaves the white queen-
 side entombed after 10...b4.

10 ... cxd2

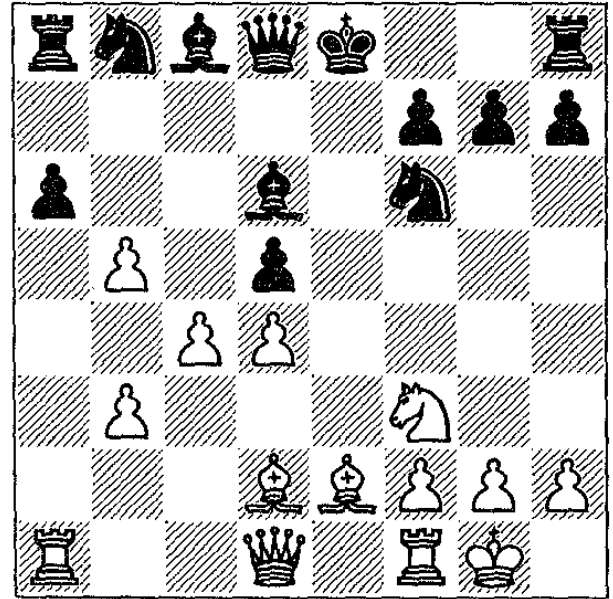
11 ♔xd2 ♘f6

After 11...♕b7? 12 bxa6 ♘xa6 13
 ♕xa6 ♜xa6 14 ♚e2+ ♚e7, Geller
 unleashed the spectacular 15 ♚xa6!!
 ♕xa6 16 ♜xa6 against Kekki (CSKA-
 Matynkylä 1986). White has only a
 rook and two pawns for the queen,
 but he has a decisive lead in develop-
 ment: 16...♚c7 (16...♚d8!? 17 ♜fa1
 ♘e7 18 ♜xd6 ♚xd6 19 ♜a8+) 17
 ♜e1+ ♔d7 18 c4 dxc4 19 bxc4 f6 20
 c5 ♔xc5 21 dxc5 ♘e7 22 ♘d4 1-0.

12 c4 (D)

12 ... dxc4!

A key move. It seems slightly
 strange to concede control of the d5-
 square and straighten out White's
 pawn structure, but it is essential to
 eliminate the b3-pawn, because if



B

Black plays the automatic 12...0-0?
 then, after 13 c5 ♕e7 14 b4! with the
 threat of bxa6 followed by b5, Black
 would be crushed on the queenside
 by the advance of the white passed
 pawns. The b3-pawn proves more
 valuable than the d5-pawn! In the
 game, White carries out a similar
 queenside pawn advance to that de-
 scribed above but the absence of a
 pawn on d5 lets Black use that
 square for his pieces.

13 bxc4 0-0

14 c5?!

White is already in trouble but
 after this move, giving up the d5-
 square, he is lost.

14 ... ♕e7

15 ♜e1 ♕e6

16 ♚b1 ♕d5

17 ♕a5 ♚c8

18 bxa6 ♕d8

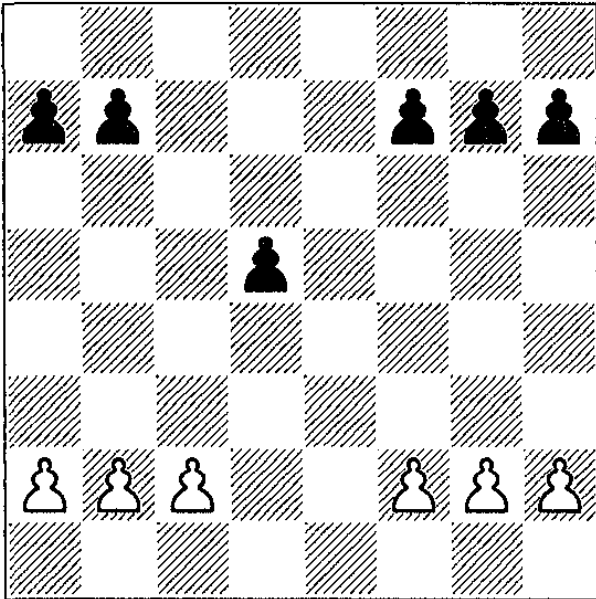
19 ♕xd8 ♜xd8

20 a7 ♘c6

21 ♚b6 ♘d7

0-1

9 IQP Centre



General observations

An isolated queen's pawn is a standard feature of many opening systems. In all of them, the side playing against the IQP seeks to exchange off to an endgame, while the side with the IQP seeks to preserve the tension, hoping either to generate attacking chances thanks to the extra central control provided by the IQP or to exchange off the d-pawn in as favourable circumstances as possible.

The most common IQP positions are those that arise from openings such as the Queen's Gambit Semi-Tarrasch, Queen's Gambit Accepted, Nimzo-Indian, Caro-Kann Panov Attack and Sicilian 2 c3. In all these systems it is White who has the IQP. While an endgame would without doubt be unpleasant for him, the

middlegame comes first and practice has shown that White's dynamic chances on the kingside and in the centre offer him fully adequate compensation for his structural weakness. This strategy was demonstrated in world championship and qualifying matches by Kamsky, who used the power of the IQP to score crushing victories over Short and Karpov with the central breakthrough d4-d5.

In the French Defence, IQP positions are most usually reached via the Tarrasch Variation after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 exd5 exd5. To those who don't play them (and perhaps those who do!), these systems tend to be seen as a hard defensive slog offering Black very few winning chances. Why is this, when the same IQP in White's hands allows him to fight for the initiative, not just equality?

Well first, there is a psychological difference. If Black has the IQP, he is assumed to be on the defensive and therefore heading towards that inferior endgame. Yet we must remember that we are only talking about a difference of one tempo.

Secondly and more importantly, there is a structural difference. In the most common positions mentioned above where White has the IQP, Black has a pawn on e6 which shuts in the light-squared bishop on c8.

This means that Black cannot play ...♗g4 pinning the knight on f3 and thereby making the d-pawn more vulnerable. Also, in a general sense, the c8-bishop is 'bad' and the attempt to develop it with ...b6 and ...♗b7 can be fraught with danger, especially if White can blast open the centre with d5 before the plan is implemented.

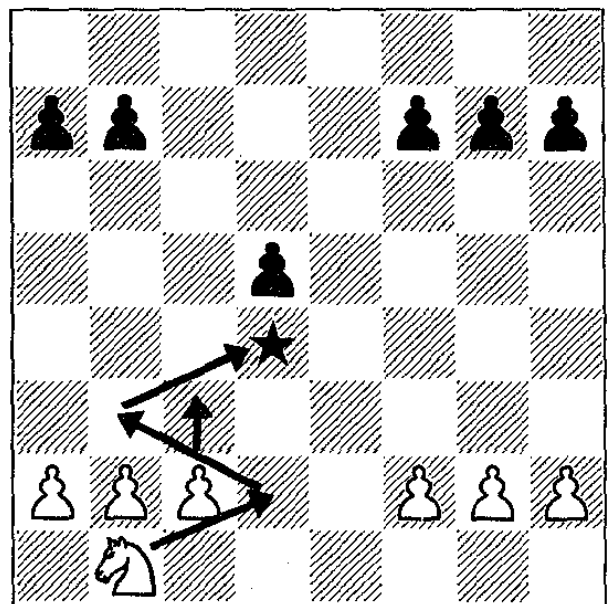
In contrast, when Black has an isolated d-pawn in the French Defence, there is no white pawn on e3 blocking the path of the c1-bishop. This means that the bishop enjoys an open diagonal and White can develop it to g5, attacking a knight which we assume is on f6, defending the d5-pawn. Hence, Black's centre is put under more immediate and severe restraint than Black can achieve in the equivalent situation against a white IQP.

However, all is not doom and gloom for Black! The absence of a white pawn on e3 in the French IQP version means that Black's pieces have access to the f4-square and the 'soft underbelly' of White's position – the f2-pawn – is more vulnerable to attack.

White can choose to play the same IQP structure in the French Exchange after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 c4, but though a tempo up on the French Tarrasch (by virtue of being White), Black has the option of the more active ...♖c6 as opposed to ...♖d7, and providing Black delays ...dxc4 until White has developed his king's bishop, Black will end up gaining a tempo over lines of the

Petroff (e.g. 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 0-0 ♗c6 8 c4 ♗f6) and Queen's Gambit Accepted (1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 ♗xc4 exd4 5 exd4). For the sake of simplicity, we assume throughout this chapter that Black is playing with the IQP.

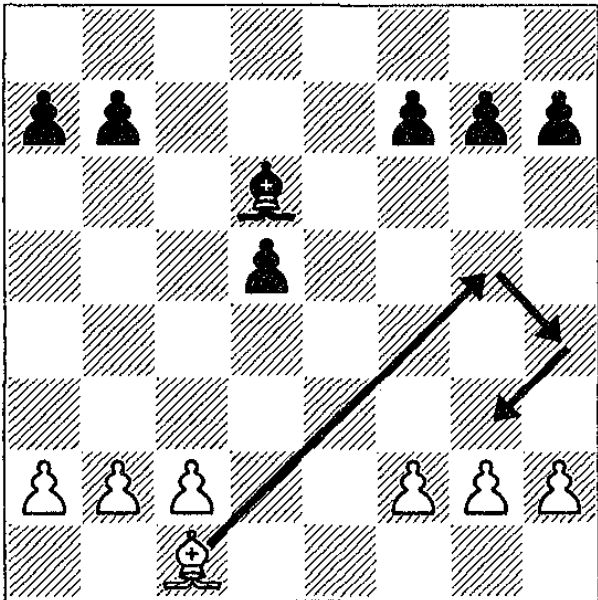
The d4-square



In IQP positions, the focus of the battle is the square in front of the isolated pawn. Normally, White tries to establish a knight on d4 both to blockade the pawn and also to reduce any attacking chances Black may have against f2, the weakest square in his position. A typical white manoeuvre would be ♖b1-d2-b3-d4, perhaps in conjunction with c3.

Exchanging the dark-squared bishops

We have already seen this idea in our discussion in Chapter 2. White puts his bishop on g5, then drops it back

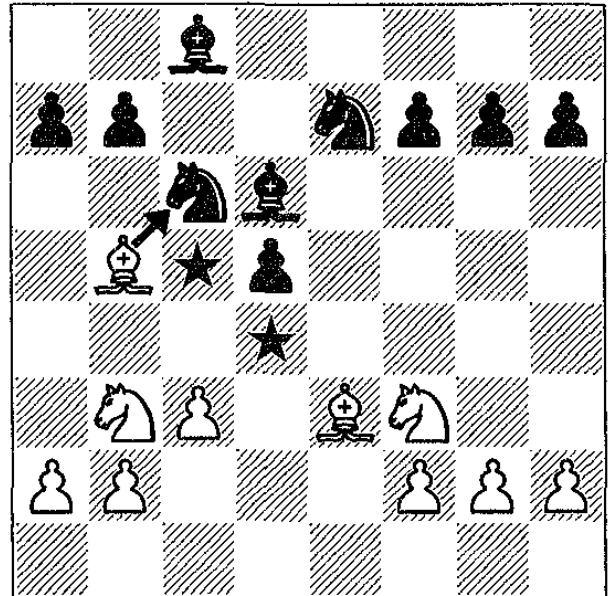


to h4 and g3, challenging the dark-squared black bishop on d6. In exchanging bishops, White removes one of the black pieces that could fight for control of d4 and also attack the f2-square. He also safeguards h2 against possible attack.

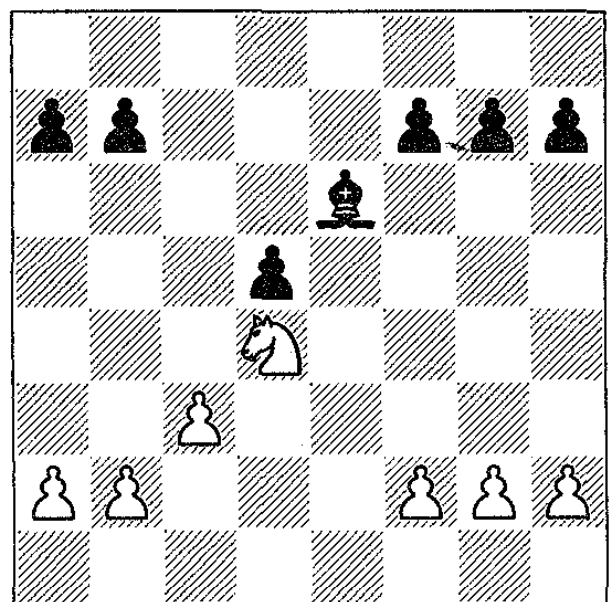
Exchanging the light-squared bishops

Classically, this exchange is supposed to favour Black because he gets rid of his 'bad' light-squared bishop and avoids any chance of ending up in a bad bishop vs good knight scenario. However, things are not so simple, since every exchange reduces the dynamism in Black's position and brings him closer to an unpleasant endgame. Also, the bishop is not actually so bad: it can generate counterplay, perhaps with the pin ...♗g4, which lessens White's control of d4. In general, White is therefore happy to swap light-squared bishops. As Suba has stated, in the middlegame bishops are not good or bad, just well placed or badly placed.

White exchanges bishop for knight



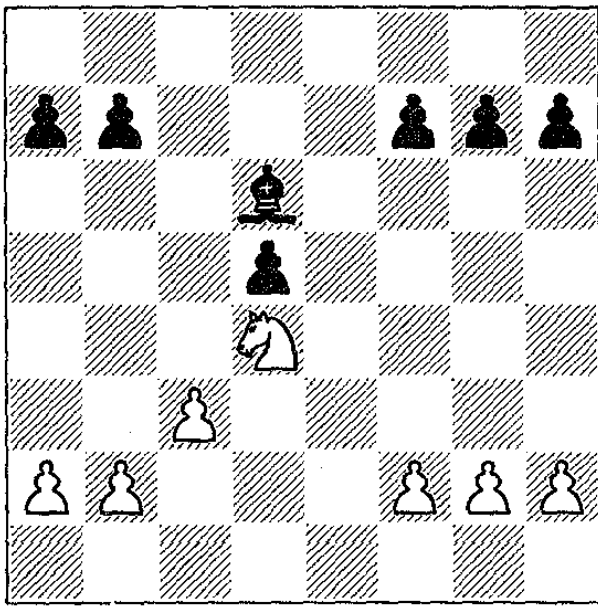
As part of his plan to gain control of d4, White sometimes 'sacrifices' his light-squared bishop for a knight with ♖xc6 (in situations where the recapture ...bxc6 is not advantageous for Black). Then he hopes to exchange off to an endgame in which his knight outstrips the light-squared bishop.



There are dark-square holes in Black's position and the bishop is

hindered by the d5-pawn. White has good winning chances.

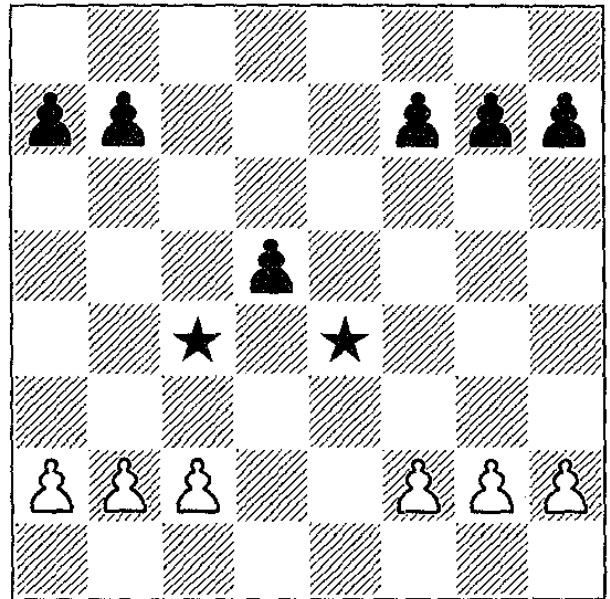
On the other hand, if White exchanges his dark-squared bishop for a knight and an endgame with knight vs dark-squared bishop is eventually reached, then Black is almost always OK.



Here the bishop shores up any dark-square holes in Black's structure and is unimpeded by the pawn on d5. White has a minimal advantage, but is unlikely to be able to win.

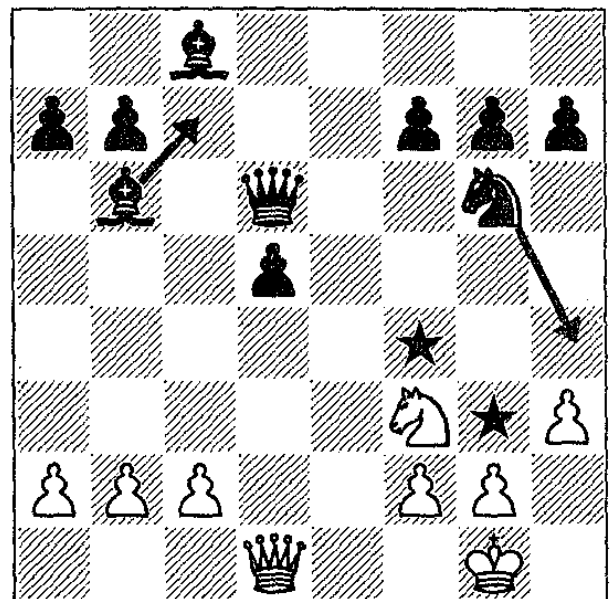
The c4 and e4-squares

The main plus point of an isolated pawn is the support it gives to the two squares diagonally in front of it. With an isolated pawn on d5, Black has, in effect, outpost squares for his knights on c4 and e4. This is because if White tries b3 to prevent ... Nc4 or f3 to prevent ... Ne4 then he obviously creates a weakness in his queenside or kingside respectively. However, it is by no means easy for



Black to manoeuvre his knights to c4 and e4 without compromising his position in some way. For example, ... Nf6-e4 may jeopardise the safety of his d-pawn.

White plays h3

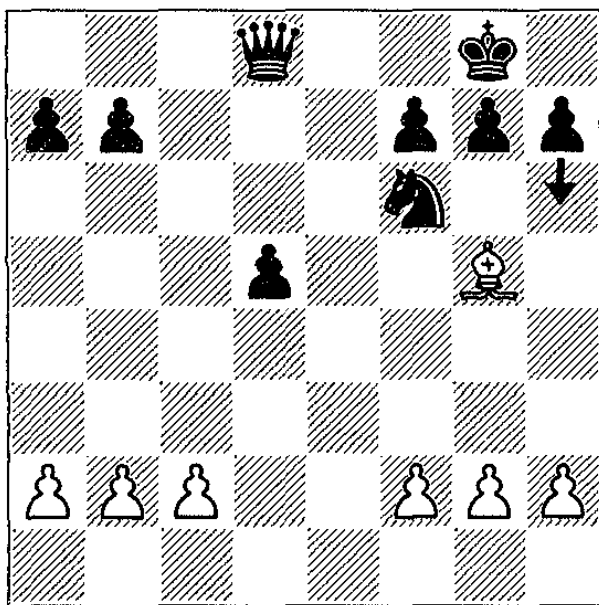


Since White wants to fight for control of d4, it makes sense to play h3, preventing ... Qg4 , which would pin the knight, a defender of d4, against the queen.

However, the drawback to h3 is that it weakens the kingside, and Black can take advantage of this in a

number of ways. Firstly, Black can line up his bishop and queen on the b8-h2 diagonal, by ...♔c7 and ...♚d6 (followed by ...♞h4), as Black cannot block ...♚h2+ by g3 without losing the h3-pawn. Secondly, Black could try to manoeuvre his knight to f4, where it introduces the idea of a sacrifice on h3. It cannot easily be expelled from f4 since playing g2-g3 would almost certainly be ruinous. Thirdly, with a black bishop on the a7-g1 diagonal pinning the f2-pawn, Black can suddenly jump in on g3 with his queen, maybe after ...♔xh3. Finally, Black no longer need fear the manoeuvre ♔g5-h4-g3 mentioned above, which would probably just lose a pawn on g3.

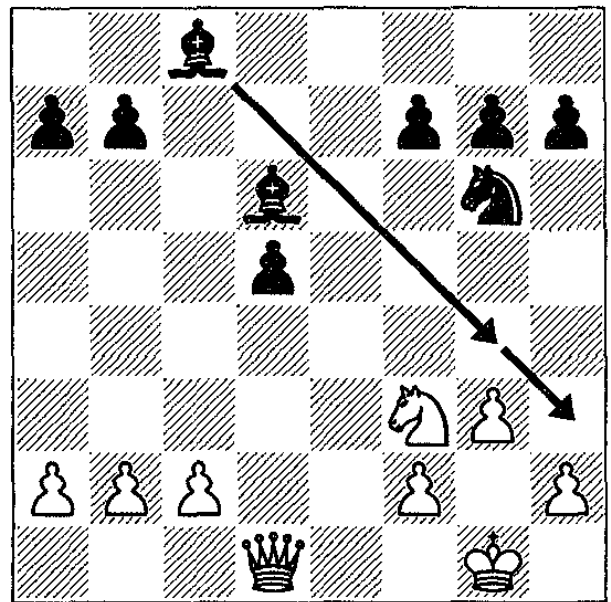
Black plays ...h6



Black can play the equivalent of White's move h3. With ...h6, he prevents ♔g5, which would undermine the defence of his d5-pawn by pinning the knight on f6 (or e7). Or more likely, he would play ...h6 in response to ♔g5. This would force

the bishop to give up control of one long diagonal, either c1-h6 (after ♔h4) or h4-d8 (after, e.g., ♔f4 or ♔e3). Also if White played ♔h4, then the follow-up ...g5!? would sometimes be possible, breaking the pin on the f6-knight in radical fashion. Of course such a move weakens the kingside and so would require careful consideration.

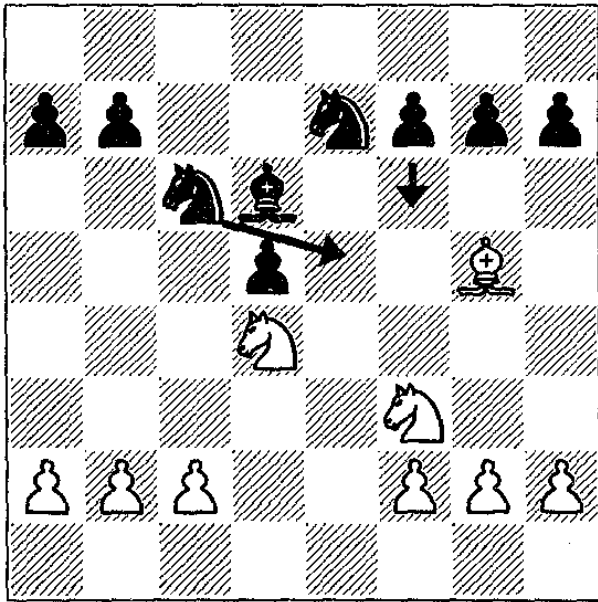
White plays g3



This reduces the scope of a black bishop on d6 and rules out ...♞f4 or ...♞h4 by Black. Assuming White hasn't played h3, his kingside remains fairly solid. However, the pin ...♔g4 may prove more annoying (since it cannot be challenged with h3 any longer) or perhaps Black could try to exploit the slight weakening of the kingside with ...♔h3.

Black plays ...f6

Black can sometimes consider playing ...f6, creating a weakness on e6 but also a strong-point on e5 for a



knight. White cannot usually then play Nxe5 because $\dots\text{fxe5}$ would leave Black with two strong central pawns.

Illustrative games

Game 32

Ivanchuk – Yusupov
Brussels Ct (1) 1991
Tarrasch variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	$\text{N}d2$	c5
4	exd5	exd5
5	$\text{N}gf3$	$\text{N}c6$

For $5\dots\text{Nf6}$ see the following game. An important sideline is $5\dots\text{a6}$ 6 dxc5 (for 6 e2 c4 see the previous chapter) $6\dots\text{xc5}$ 7 Nb3 a7 8 g5 Ne7 9 Wd2 Nbc6 10 e3 xe3 11 Wxe3 $0-0$ 12 0-0-0 f5! with a slight advantage for White, Van der Wiel-Seirawan, Biel IZ 1985.

6	b5	d6
7	dxc5	

An alternative is 7 0-0 cxd4 8 Nb3 Ne7 $9\text{ Nbx}d4$ $0-0$ 10 c3 (10

g5 $\text{f6!?$ 11 e3! Ne5 12 Ne1 a6 13 f1 Kh8 = Geller-Uhlmann, Amsterdam 1970) $10\dots\text{g4}$ 11 Wa4 h5 12 Ne1 Wc7 13 h3 g6 ($13\dots\text{a6}$ 14 e3!) 14 g5 a6 15 f1 h6 16 xe7 Nxe7! 17 Rad1 Nc6 18 d3 h5! (refusing to swap bishops until White makes some concessions) 19 g4 g6 = Karpov-Korchnoi, Moscow Ct (8) 1974. It should be mentioned that 20 xg6 fxg6 21 Ne6 now wins the exchange, although $21\dots\text{Wf7}$ 22 Nxf8 Nxf8 gives Black the initiative.

7	...	xc5
8	0-0	ge7
9	Nb3	d6

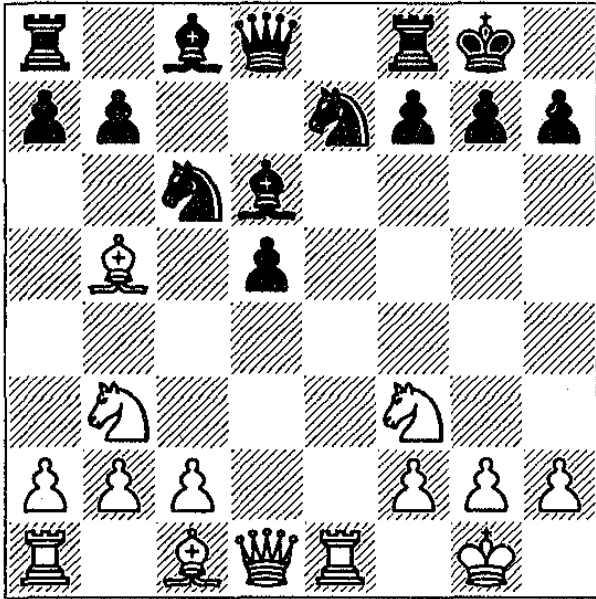
$9\dots\text{b6}$ 10 Ne1 $0-0$ is met simply by 11 e3 , aiming to exchange dark-squared bishops; then if Black responds $\dots\text{c7}$, c5 is a possibility.

10 Ne1

A surprisingly important move. If White tries to play without this move then after 10 g5 $0-0$ 11 h4 , Black can play $11\dots\text{Wb6!}$ as e7 is not *en prise* after 12 xc6 bxc6 , and after 12 d3 a5! 13 a4 Nf5 Black has full equality.

10	...	0-0 (D)
11	g5	

White starts the standard manoeuvre g5-h4-g3 . The main alternative is 11 d3 whereby White stops Black developing his bishop to g4 (because of Nh7+) without immediately weakening his kingside by 11 h3 . After the alternative bishop development to f5 , White would reply with c3 (stopping any $\dots\text{Nb4}$ ideas and solidifying d4) and Nbd4 , forcing Black to waste time exchanging



W

bishops. So Black's main tries have been:

a) 11...♘f5 12 c3 ♖c7 13 g3!? (13 ♜c2 ♘h4! 14 ♘bd4 ♖g4 gave Black a strong attack in the game Yandemirov-Kovaliov, Minsk 1995) 13...h6 14 ♖c2 ♖b6 15 ♜d3 g6 16 ♖f4 ♗g7 17 ♘e5 ♞e8 18 ♜d2 ± Emms-Mortensen, Hastings Challengers 1995/6.

b) 11...h6 12 h3 ♘f5 13 c3 ♖c7 14 ♖c2 ♜d6 15 ♜d3 g6 16 ♜d2 (16 g4 ♖b6! 17 ♗g2 ♖xf2! ∞ Yudasin-Moskalenko, Norilsk 1987) 16...h5 17 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 18 ♜h6 ♖e4! 19 ♘bd2 f5 20 g3 ♞f6 ∞ Tolnai-Schmittziel, Dortmund 1989.

11 ... ♖g4

Tellingly, Yusupov later in the match diverged here with 11...♜c7 12 c3 (12 ♖h4 ♘f5) 12...a6 13 ♖e2 ♖d7 14 ♖e3 (intending to play ♖c5) 14...♘d8 (keeping pieces on) 15 ♜d4 ♘f5 16 ♜xd5 ♘xe3 17 fxe3 ♖c6 reaching a position where Black had some compensation for a pawn.

Another way to stop the exchange of bishops is to play ...f6 followed by

...♘e5, e.g. 11...f6 12 ♖h4 ♜b6 13 ♖e2 ♖e6 14 ♖g3 ♘e5 15 ♘fd4 ♖d7 16 a4 a6 17 a5 ± Gipslis-Korchnoi, Amsterdam 1976.

12 ♖h4

12 ♖xe7 would be premature, but an interesting alternative is 12 h3 ♖h5 13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♘bd4 ♞c8 15 c4!? seeking to take immediate advantage of Black's weakened queenside and f5-square. Black has to react accurately: 15...h6 16 ♖xe7 (16 ♖h4 ♜c7) 16...♖xe7 17 g4 ♖g6 18 ♘e5 ♖h4! ♢ Adams-Vandendriessche, Ostend 1989.

12 ... ♞e8

Black cannot now stop ♖g3, so plays this useful developing move, adding another defender to e7.

13 ♖g3 ♖xg3

In view of the game continuation, Black should probably try 13...a6 14 ♖d3 h6 (defending against the threat of ♖xh7+) transposing to Kruppa-Lputian, Irkutsk 1986, which continued 15 c3 ♜d7 16 ♞e3 ♞ad8 17 ♜c2 d4!? 18 cxd4 ♘d5 with compensation. The threat of ...♖xf3 doubling the f-pawns is stronger if Black hasn't exchanged bishops on g3. White in turn can improve by retreating his light-squared bishop to e2 rather than d3 on move 14.

14 hxg3 ♜b6

The game A.Sokolov-Portisch, Bugojno 1986, was immediately agreed drawn after 14...d4!?, but this was presumably either due to pre-arrangement or shock. After 15 ♘bxd4 ♜b6 16 c3 White should be able to hold on to the extra pawn without too much difficulty.

15 a4!

An important improvement over 15 ♔d3 a5! 16 ♔xh7+ ♚f8 17 ♔d3 a4 18 ♖bd2 ♗f5 (A.Sokolov-Vaganian, Minsk Ct (6) 1986) when Black's play was more than worth the rather irrelevant h7-pawn.

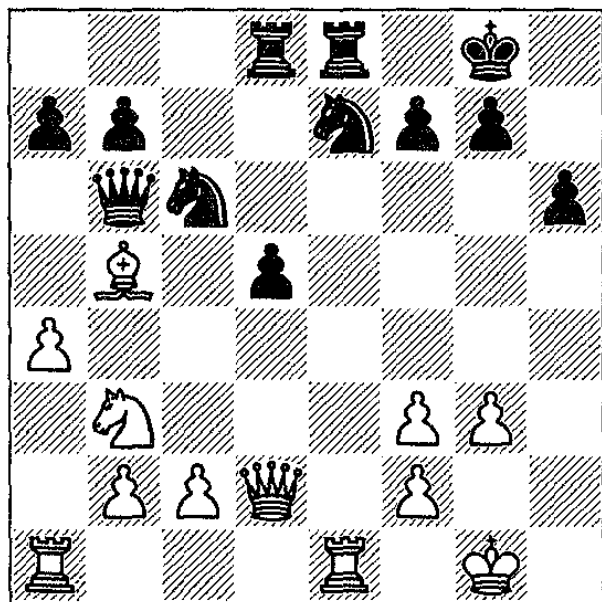
15 ... h6

In the game Ivanchuk-Vaganian, Novgorod 1995, Black moved the pawn a square further but with little success: 15...h5 16 ♖d3 ♔f5 17 ♖d2 ♔e4 18 ♗fd4 ♗xd4 19 ♖xd4 ♗c6 20 ♖xb6 axb6 and White had a clear advantage in the endgame.

16 ♖d2 ♔xf3

Black seeks to gain counterplay against White's disrupted kingside pawns.

17 gxf3 ♖ad8 (D)



W

18 f4

White could have kept a comfortable advantage by simply playing 18 ♔d3 (stopping ...♗f5) followed by doubling rooks on the e-file.

18 ... a6

19 ♔f1 ♖d6!

20 a5?!

Unnecessarily weakening. Doubling rooks on the e-file was still the best plan.

20 ... ♖c7

21 ♗c5 h5!

22 ♖a3 h4

23 g4!?

23 ♔g2 was safer, but this tries for more.

23 ... ♖f6

24 ♗d3 ♗d4?

Black should now have grabbed the e-file himself. After 24...♖e6 25 ♖xe6 fxe6, he would have successfully 'unisolated' his d5-pawn and achieved equality.

25 ♗e5 ♗ec6

25...♗xc2?? loses to 26 ♖c3. Ivanchuk gives the brilliant variation 25...♗e6 26 f5 ♗c5 27 ♖c3 ♖xa5 28 ♗d7! ♖c6 (28...♗xd7 29 ♖xe7! ♖xe7?? 30 ♖c8+) 29 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 30 ♖g5! f6 31 ♖h5 winning.

26 ♗xc6! ♖xe1

27 ♗xd4 ♖e4

27...♖xf4 28 ♖xe1 ♖xg4+ 29 ♚h1 ♖xd4 would have forced a position similar to the game, but with the important difference (to White's advantage) that the f-pawn is still on f2.

28 ♗f5?

28 ♗e2 would have saved giving back a pawn, and not allowed Black the option of sacrificing the exchange for another pawn.

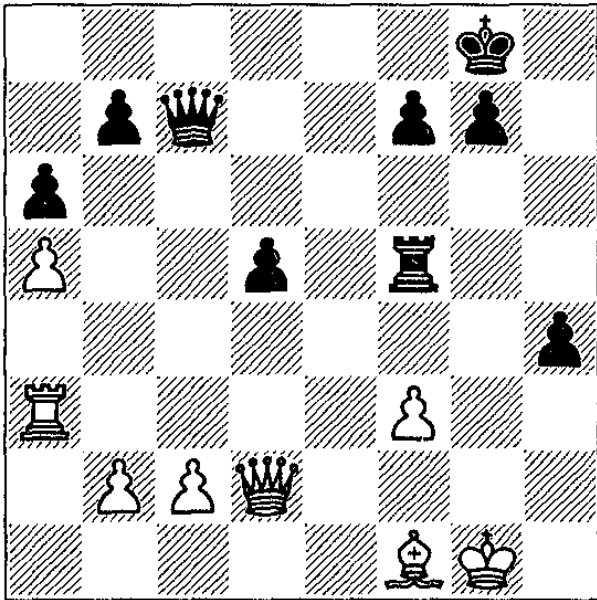
28 ... ♖xf4

29 f3 ♖4xf5!?

Ivanchuk criticises this sacrifice, considering Black to have more chances after 29...d4!? preventing ♖c3. 30 ♗xd4? ♖c5 followed by

...♖xf3 is fine for Black but 30 ♘xh4 should be OK for White – eventually.

30 gxf5 ♖xf5 (D)



W

31 ♖c3 ♖g3+
 32 ♖g2 ♖e1
 33 ♔h2 ♖e5+?!

Better was 33...g6, simply stopping the threat of 34 ♖c8+ ♔h7 35 ♙d3.

34 ♔h1 ♖g5?!

This allows White to consolidate. Better was 34...♖e1 trying to repeat.

35 ♖f2 ♖f4
 36 ♖d3 ♖g3
 37 ♖d4 ♖g5
 38 ♖g4?

Unnecessary. Black has no threats, but it is easy to say that after a time scramble.

38 ... ♖xg4
 39 fxg4 ♖xg4
 40 ♙d3 g6
 41 ♖e3 ♖a4
 42 ♖b6 ♔g7
 43 b4 ♖a1+
 44 ♔g2 ♖e5

45 ♖f2 g5
 46 ♖f3 ♖d4
 47 ♖f5 ♖e3
 48 ♖h7+?

Yusupov showed that Ivanchuk could still have won here after the brave 48 ♖xd5! h3+ 49 ♔h2 g4 50 ♖e4! ♖f2+ 51 ♔h1 f5 52 ♖xb7+ ♔f8 53 ♖c8+ ♔g7 54 ♖c7+ ♔g8 55 ♖d8+ ♔f7 56 ♙c4+ ♔g7 57 ♖g5+ ♔h7 58 ♖xf5+!! ♖xf5 59 ♙d3 ♔g6 60 b5!.

48 ... ♔f8
 49 ♖h6+ ♔e7
 50 ♖h5 1/2-1/2

Game 33

Adams – Short
 English Ch 1991
 Tarrasch Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘d2 c5
 4 exd5 exd5
 5 ♘gf3 ♘f6

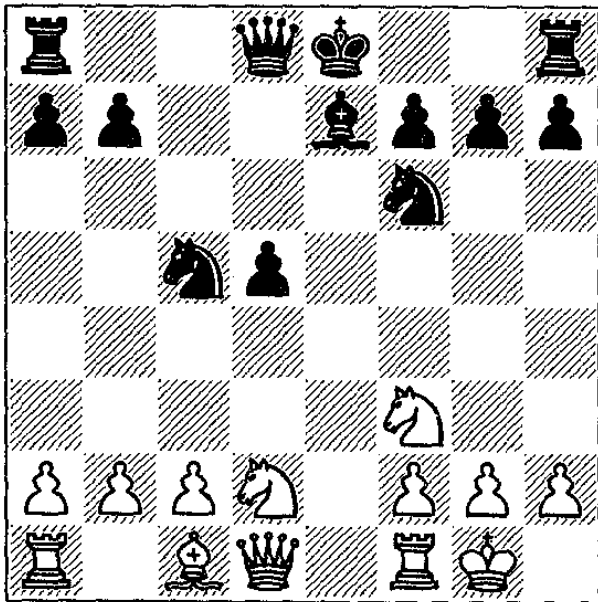
The most popular continuation in modern grandmaster chess.

6 ♙b5+ ♙d7
 7 ♙xd7+

7 ♖e2+ will transpose to the next game.

7 ... ♘bxd7
 8 0-0 ♙e7
 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 (D)
 10 ♘d4

The main alternative plan is 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 ♘f1 ♖e8 12 ♙e3. In Tiviakov-Dreev, Wijk aan Zee 1996, Dreev played the new 12...♘fe4 13 c3 ♖d6 14 ♘g3 ♙f8 15 ♖c2 ♖a6!? 16 ♖ed1 ♖ad8 and went on to draw.



W

10 ... ♖d7

Black meets the threat of ♘f5.

11 ♘f3

Two popular alternative set-ups arise after 11 ♘2b3 ♘ce4. White can seek to control the important c4- and e4-squares with 12 f3!? ♘d6 13 ♘c5 ♖c7 14 ♘d3 0-0 15 b3, or to play his pieces to the kingside with 12 ♖f3 0-0 13 ♘f5 ♙d8! (note how Black judiciously avoids any further exchanges) 14 ♙e3 g6 15 ♘g3. Both lines are still receiving many tests at the top level.

11 ... 0-0

12 ♙f4

The immediate 12 ♘e5 is best met by 12... ♖c8! (avoiding the h2-b8 diagonal and still preventing ♘f5) 13 ♖f3 ♙e8 14 ♙f4 ♘ce4 15 ♘d3 a5!? 16 ♙fe1 ♙a6 = Kr.Georgiev-Bareev, Novi Sad 1990.

12 ... ♙fe8

13 ♙e1 ♘ce4

Karpov-Bareev, Linares 1994 instead went 13... ♙f8 14 ♘e5 ♖a4 15 c3 ♖a6 16 ♖e2 ♖xe2 17 ♙xe2 ♙d6 18 ♘d7! ♙xf4 (not 18... ♙xe2? 19

♘xf6+ gxf6 20 ♙xd6 ± Karpov) 19 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 20 ♘xc5 ♙c7 21 ♘d3 and White had a minuscule advantage. This game had a dramatic finish when, in sight of a draw, Bareev allowed Karpov a mate in one!

14 ♘e5 ♖d8

This retreat is safe now Black has the possibility of ... ♙f8.

15 ♘d3! ♙c8

16 c3 ♙f8

17 ♖b3 ♘h5

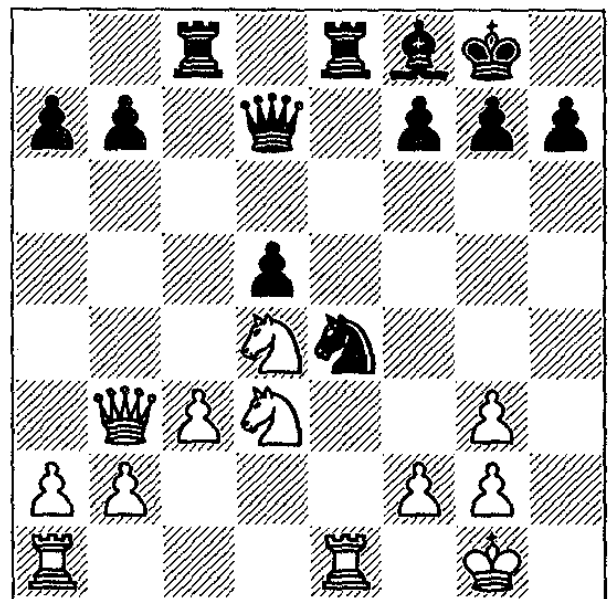
Short is prepared to swap a knight for a bishop.

18 ♙g3?!

Adams should have refused, since he had more chance for advantage after 18 ♙e3. Unwise would have been 18 ♖xb7 ♘c5! 19 ♘xc5 ♘xf4 with plenty of compensation.

18 ... ♘hxg3

19 hxg3 ♖d7 (D)



W

A similar pawn structure to the last game has arisen, but here Black has the bishop rather than White. If this were the light-squared bishop, White could still hope to be well on

top. But here it is the dark-squared bishop, and all Black's pieces are well placed. We looked at Karpov-Bareev above (at move 13); this position has similar material and is again very slightly favourable for White.

20 ♖ad1 ♜cd8
21 ♘f3 ♖c8
22 ♜e2 ♘c5

Short exchanges off a pair of rooks to stop White building up any pressure by doubling on the e-file.

23 ♖c2 ♜xe2
24 ♖xe2 ♘e4
25 ♖c2 g5?!

An impatient move which is typical of quickplay games. Instead of this rash attacking plan, 25...g6 would have been a far sounder way to continue.

26 ♘d4 ♙g7
27 ♘b4

White must pressurise d5.

27 ... f5?

A further over-ambitious move which Adams punishes with precision. Short could still have bailed out with 27...♘xg3! 28 fxg3 a5 29 ♘f5 ♖c5+ 30 ♙h2 axb4 31 ♖d2 ♙f6 32 cxb4 ♖c4 ± (Adams).

28 ♖d3! ♙h8
29 ♖f3 a5
30 ♘bc2 ♜f8
31 ♘e3 ♙xd4

Now the d5-pawn falls. The alternative 31...f4 32 ♘xd5 fxg3 33 ♖xe4 gxf2+ 34 ♙f1 ♖c4+ 35 ♖e2 ♖xd5 ends in a win for White after 36 ♘e6 (Adams).

32 ♜xd4 f4
33 ♘xd5 ♘c5

34 gxf4 ♘e6
35 ♖e4! gxf4
36 ♘e7! 1-0

Game 34

Karpov – Korchnoi
Baguio City Wch (22) 1978
Tarrasch Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘d2 c5
4 exd5 exd5
5 ♙b5+ ♙d7

After 5...♘c6, White can transpose to Game 1 with 6 ♘gf3 or try 6 ♖e2+!? (6 ♘e2 blocks the e-file so allows Black to improve on the strategy of Game 32 by 6...♙d6 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 8 ♘b3 ♙b6 9 0-0 ♘f6) 6...♙e7 7 dxc5 ♘f6 8 ♘b3 0-0 9 ♘f3 ♜e8 10 ♙e3 ♘e4! = ECO.

6 ♖e2+

6 ♙xd7+ ♘bxd7 7 ♘gf3 ♘gf6 transposes to the previous game.

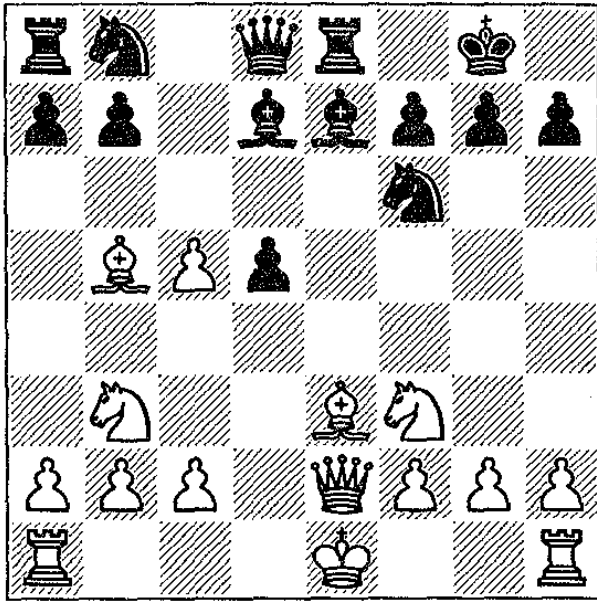
6 ... ♙e7

Earlier in the match, Korchnoi had held on to draw after 6...♖e7 7 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 8 dxc5 ♘xc5 9 ♘b3! ♖xe2+ 10 ♘xe2 ♘xb3 11 axb3 but clearly did not trust the line enough to repeat it here.

7 dxc5 ♘f6
8 ♘b3 0-0
9 ♙e3 ♜e8
10 ♘f3 (D)

10 0-0-0 is well answered by 10...a5! 11 a4 ♘a6 12 ♙xd7 (12 c6?! ♙xc6 13 ♘f3 ♘c7 with the initiative) 12...♖xd7 13 ♖b5! ♖xb5 14 axb5 ♘c7 15 ♘h3? (15 c6! =) 15...a4 16 ♘d4 ♙xc5 17 ♘f5 a3

with a clear advantage to Black, Gurgenzidze-Psakhis, Volgograd 1985.



B

10 ... Bxc5?!

Black exchanges off his dark-squared bishop for White's light-squared one. Modern practice has shown a preference for 10...a6. Then 11 Bxd7 helps Black's development so 11 Bd3 is better. Then 11...a5?! (11...Ba4 12 Bfd4 Bbd7 13 0-0 Bxc5 14 Bfd1 Bxb3 15 axb3 g6 ± Wahls-Schmittiel, Bad Endbach 1995; note how Black prefers to exchange his light-squared bishop rather than his knight for the b3-knight) 12 a4 Bg4 13 0-0 Ba6 14 c6! Bxc6 15 Bd4 proved good for White in Karpov-Bareev, Tilburg 1994, since Karpov succeeded in neutralising all his opponent's active play. Bareev was left with compromised pawns on the queenside besides the isolated pawn on d5. As a general rule, in such endgames one weakness in the pawn structure is tolerable, but two weaknesses are fatal.

11 Bxc5

White could have exchanged another pair of pieces with 11 Bxd7 Bbxd7 12 Bxc5 Bxc5 but Black's lead in development then gives him full equality: 13 Bb5 Bc8 14 0-0 a6 15 Bb4 Be4 16 Bd2 De6 = Tseshkovsky-Uhlmann, Manila 1976.

11 ... Ba5+

12 Bb5 Bxb5

13 0-0 b6

Unlike the previous note, the further exchange of pieces does not now come with a corresponding lead in development for Black, so Black just has a slightly worse endgame. Korchnoi often seemed happy to play such uncomfortable positions, obviously not rating White's winning chances so highly. Uhlmann showed that Black could play more actively: 13...Bg4!? 14 Bd4 (14 h3 Bxf3 15 gxf3 Bc6 16 Bhg1 De5! 17 Bd4! Bg6 is the critical variation) 14...De4 15 Bf4! Bh5! (15...Bxf3 16 gxf3 Bxc5 17 Bhg1! De6 18 Bxg7+!! wins) 16 Bhe1 Bc6! 17 Bxe4 dxe4 18 Bxe4 Bxe4 19 Bxe4 Bg6 20 Be3 Bb4 21 Be5 Bxe5 22 Bxe5 Bxc2 ± Stoica-Uhlmann, Bucharest 1979.

14 Bxd7 Bbxd7

15 Bb1 De4

16 Bb3

Not 16 Bxd5?? Bc3+. White is very happy to force the exchange of queens, thus diminishing Black's chances of counterplay.

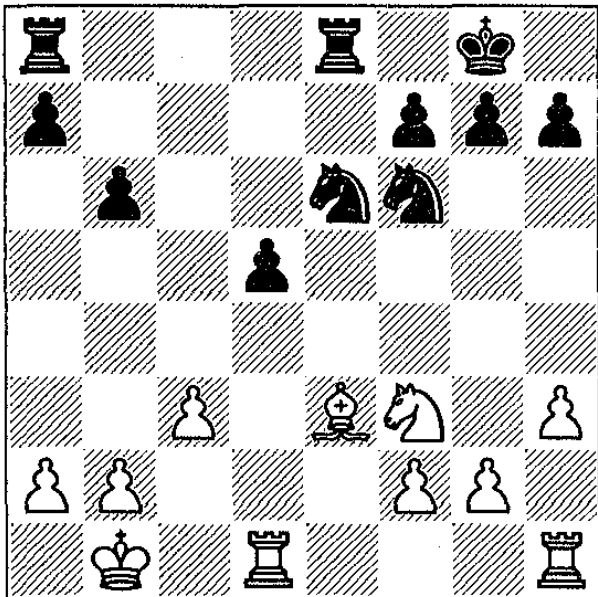
16 ... Bxd3

17 Bxd3 Bdf6

18 h3 Bc5

19 Bdd1 De6

20 c3 (D)



B

20 ... b5?!

It is difficult just to sit and wait in such positions – Black may well be lost then anyway. Korchnoi makes the practical decision that the extra complexity added to the position by this advance is worth the weaknesses thus created.

21 ♖d4 a6
 22 ♖c2 a5
 23 ♜d3 ♜ab8
 24 ♜hd1 h6
 25 f4

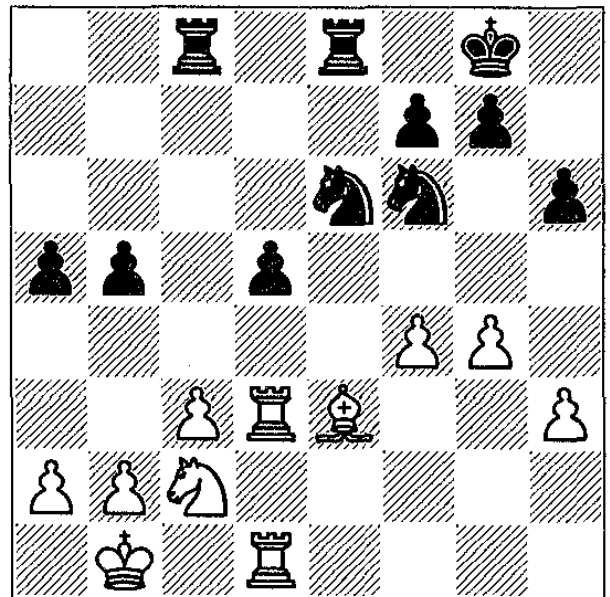
White plays for g5, attacking the all-important defender of the d-pawn.

25 ... ♜bc8
 26 g4 (D)

Korchnoi can see no good answer to the threat of g5. Therefore desperate remedies are called for.

26 ... d4!

The d-pawn makes a bold kamikaze lunge, freeing crucial squares for the black knights by giving White the isolated d-pawn!



B

27 cxd4

The tactical points are 27 ♖xd4 ♖c5! and 27 ♙xd4 ♖xf4. However, Karpov's choice of capture should win.

27 ... ♖d5
 28 ♜f1 b4
 29 ♙d2 ♜e7
 30 f5

White still has to be vigilant. Here he creates another hole for a black knight, but there was little choice: 30 ♖e3? ♖exf4 31 ♜xf4? ♖xf4 32 ♖f5 ♜e2 33 ♙xf4 ♜e1+ mates.

30 ... ♖g5
 31 ♖e3 ♖f6
 32 d5! ♖xh3

An understandable decision in time pressure, but 32... ♖ge4 offered more hope.

33 d6 ♜d7
 34 ♖d5 ♖xd5
 35 ♜xd5 ♜a8
 36 ♙e3 ♖g5?

Losing the queenside pawns. 36... ♜a6 was essential.

37 ♙b6 ♖e4
 38 ♜fd1 a4

39 ♖5d4 ♗e8
 40 ♖xb4 ♖xd6
 41 ♖xd6 ♗xd6
 42 ♔c7?

An unbelievable mistake by Karpov, who presumably missed the coming ...♗e8. After 42 ♖xa4, Korchnoi would almost certainly have had little choice but to resign at adjournment.

42 ... ♗e1+
 43 ♔c2 ♗e8
 44 ♔a5 a3
 45 ♖b8 ♗e7
 46 ♔b4?

Karpov now appears to miss the coming ...axb2. Even the strongest players get exhausted after five hours' play. The game concluded:

46...♗e2+ 47 ♔d3 axb2 48 ♔d2 ♗e7 49 a4 ♖d7+ 50 ♔c2 ♔h7 51 ♖xb2 h5! 52 gxh5 ♗d6 53 ♖a2 ♗xf5 54 a5 ♗d4+ 55 ♔c3 ♗c6 56 a6 ♖d5 57 ♔f4 ♖f5 58 ♔d6 ♖d5 59 ♔g3 ♖g5 60 ♔f2 ♖xh5 61 ♔c4 ♗a5+ 62 ♔c3 ♗c6 63 ♖a4 ♔g8 64 ♔c4 ♗a5+ 1/2-1/2

Game 35

Lhagvasuren – Ulybin

Cheliabinsk 1991

Exchange Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 exd5 exd5
 4 ♔d3

White can himself play an IQP position by playing 4 c4 here, but one of many effective replies is 4...♗f6 5 ♗f3 ♔b4+ 6 ♗c3 0-0 7 ♔e2 dxc4 8 ♔xc4 ♖e8+ 9 ♔e3

♔e6!? 10 ♖b3 ♗c6 with an equal position.

A better try is 4 ♗f3 ♔d6 5 c4! with an extra tempo on the game. Two examples are: 5...♗f6 6 ♗c3 dxc4?! 7 ♔xc4 0-0 8 0-0 ♔g4 9 h3 ♔h5 10 g4! ♔g6 11 ♗e5 c5 12 ♗xg6 hxg6 13 dxc5 ♔xc5 14 ♔xf7+! +- Ulybin-Lautier, Sochi 1989 and 5...c6 6 ♗c3 ♗e7 7 ♔d3 dxc4 8 ♔xc4 0-0 9 0-0 ♗d7 10 ♔g5 ♗b6 11 ♔b3 ♔h8 12 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 13 ♖e1 ♔e6 (13...♖c7 14 ♖c1! ♔g4!? 15 h3 ♔xf3 16 ♖xf3 ±) 14 ♔xe6 fxe6 ± Junge-Hertneck, Bundesliga 1989.

So as discussed in the previous chapter, Black does better to meet 4 ♗f3 with 4...♗f6 5 ♔d3 ♔d6 (5...c5 6 0-0 c4 7 ♖e1+ ♔e7 8 ♔f1 ±). Then 6 c4!? dxc4 7 ♔xc4 transposes to the game but with colours reserved. Considering the result of this game, that may not be so bad though!

4 ... c5!?

This leads to more double-edged play than is usual in the French Exchange. It is especially appropriate in that White has already committed his bishop to d3, so that he longer has the options of ♔b5(+) or ♔e2 (which is better in that it doesn't block the queen's control of d4 and d5, and could be followed eventually by B(x)f3, increasing the pressure on d5).

5 dxc5

In the game Tatai-Korchnoi, Beer-sheba 1978, White played carelessly and was overwhelmed by the dynamism in Black's position: 5 ♗f3 ♗c6 (5...c4!?) 6 ♖e2+? (this puts the

queen on an exposed square) 6...♔e7
 7 dxc5 ♖f6 8 h3? (much too slow; 8
 c3 followed by ♔e3 and ♖bd2 was
 best in the circumstances) 8...0-0 9
 0-0 ♔xc5 10 c3 ♖e8 11 ♗c2 ♗d6
 12 ♖bd2? (overlooking the threat)
 12...♗g3! 13 ♔f5 ♖e2 14 ♖d4 ♖xd4
 0-1.

5	...	♔xc5
6	♖f3	♖f6
7	0-0	0-0
8	h3?	

He wants to prevent the aggressive development of Black's queen's bishop to g4. However, as in Tatai-Korchnoi above, White has underestimated Black's dynamic chances. It was better to develop with 8 ♖c3 ♖c6 9 ♔g5 ♔e6 10 ♗d2 ♔e7 11 ♖ad1 ♗a5 = Marco-Schlechter, Nuremberg 1896, or 8 ♖bd2 ♖c6 9 ♖b3 ♔b6 10 c3 ♔g4 11 ♔e2 ♗d6 = Moldobaev-Orlov, Belgorod 1989.

8	...	♖c6
9	♖bd2	♗d6!
10	♖b3	

If 10 c3 then 10...♗g3! is devastating.

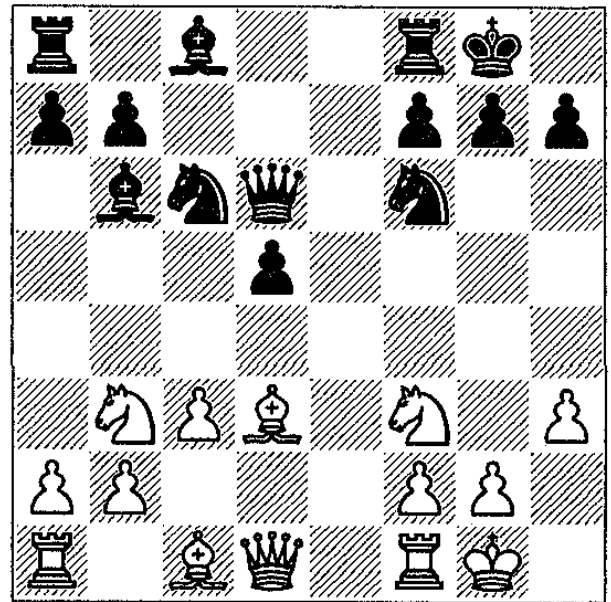
10	...	♔b6
11	c3?! (D)	

11 ♔h1 was better, breaking the pin on f2.

With the text, White plans to answer 11...♗g3 with 12 ♖bd4 but has overlooked the strength of Black's coming sacrifice.

11	...	♔xh3!
12	g3h3	♗g3+
13	♔h1	♗xh3+
14	♖h2	

Knaak analyses 14 ♔g1 when Black maintains an attack after both



B

14...♖g4 15 ♔f4 ♖xf2 16 ♖xf2 ♗g4+ 17 ♔f1 ♔xf2 18 ♔xf2 ♗xf4 and 14...♔c7!? 15 ♖e1 ♖g4 16 ♔e3 ♖ce5! 17 ♖bd4 ♖xe3 18 ♖xe3 ♖g4.

14	...	♖e5
15	♔e2	♖f3!

An elegant move. After 16 ♔xf3?, 16...♔c7 would mate since the white f-pawn advance is blocked by its own bishop.

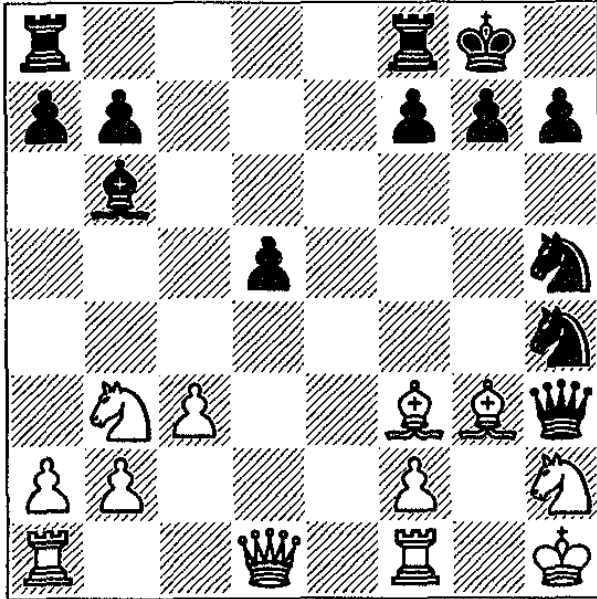
16	♔f4	♖h4
17	♔f3	

Or if 17 ♖g1 then 17...♖e4! 18 ♔g3 ♔xf2 wins (Knaak).

17	...	♖h5!
18	♔g3 (D)	
18	...	♗xg3!
19	♖g1	

If 19 fxg3 then 19...♖xg3 is mate. After the text Black regains all his sacrificed material with substantial interest.

19	...	♔xf2!
20	♔xh5	♔xg1
21	♗xg1	♗e5
22	♔f3	♖xf3
23	♖xf3	♗h5+

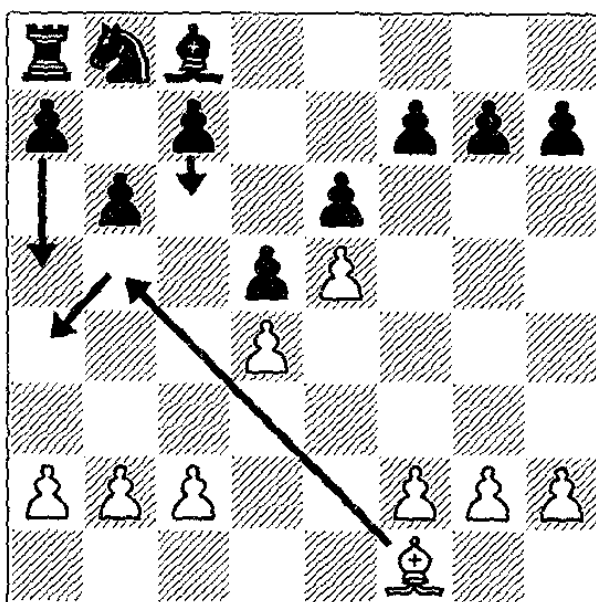
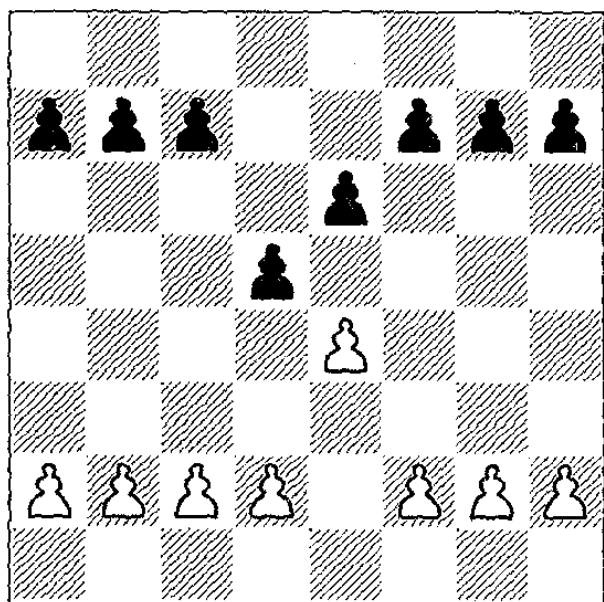


B

Black's three connected passed pawns mean that any endgame is hopeless for White while in the middlegame he has to worry about his exposed king. The game finished as follows:

24 ♖h2 ♜fe8 25 ♘d4 ♜e5 26 ♙g3 ♜g5 27 ♛e3 ♛g6 28 ♜e1 h6 29 ♘df3 ♜h5 30 ♛f4 ♜f5 31 ♛c7 ♛c6 32 ♛g3 ♛f6 33 ♘g4 ♛g6 34 ♘h4 (losing at once, but things were already difficult) 34...♜h5 35 ♙g2 ♜xh4 0-1 (36 ♛xh4 h5 wins)

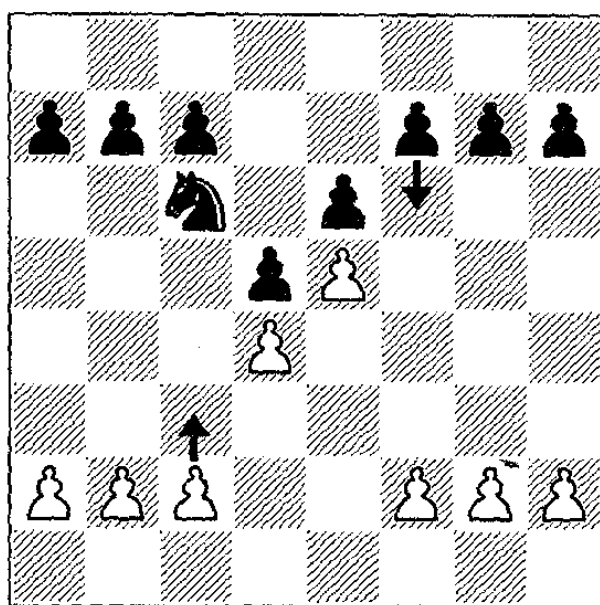
10 Miscellaneous Structures



General observations

In this chapter, we look at a number of pawn structures that don't fit neatly elsewhere. Rather than give many varied general observations here, we advise the reader to use this chapter more as a revision aid, as themes from previous chapters will constantly reappear!

Black plays ...♞c6

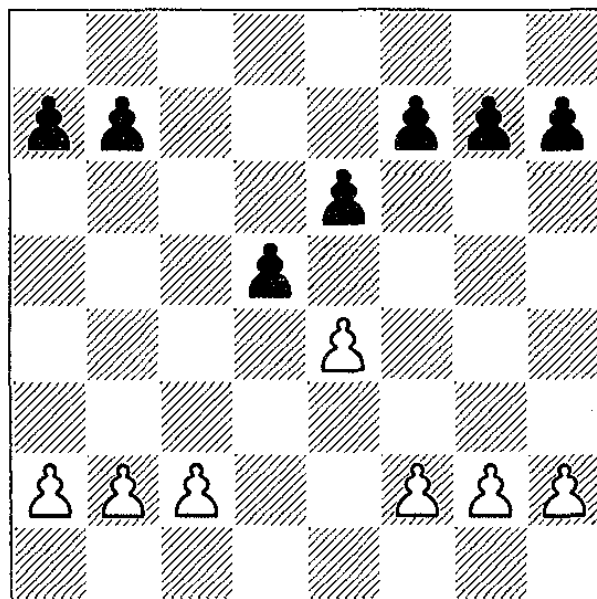
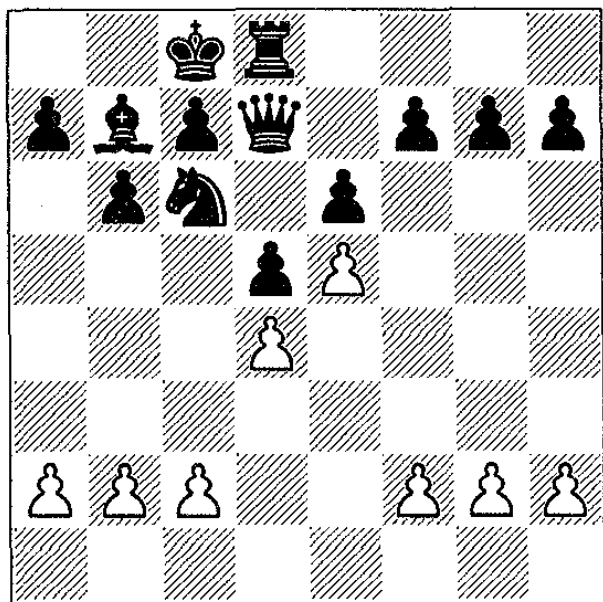


Black plays ...b6

Black can choose to meet e5 by ...b6 before ...c5, trying first to swap off his 'bad' light-squared bishop. White does not have to acquiesce in this plan and can play ♕b5(+) intending after ...c6 to retreat the bishop to a4. Black in turn can play ...a5, threatening to trap the bishop after ...b5, ♕b3 a4, but White can usually escape by playing either a3 or c3.

Black can choose to answer e5 with ...♘c6 before ...c5. Black intends to challenge the pawn chain by means of ...f6 as soon as possible. After exf6 and a piece recapturing on f6, we reach a set-up similar to that analysed in Chapter 2 but with c-pawns for both sides. This difference

certainly favours White: he can support his d4-pawn with c3, but the black e6-pawn remains weak and backward.



advance will lead to a Classical centre, an exchange on e4 to a Rubinstein centre, or an exchange on d5 to a Rubinstein or IQP centre.

Black can also combine ...♘c6 with rapid queenside development by ...b6, ...♙b7, ...♚d7 and ...0-0-0, followed by a kingside pawn storm, or by playing a deferred ...c5 (after ...♘c6-e7 or ...♘c6-a5). White of course is left free to do as he likes!

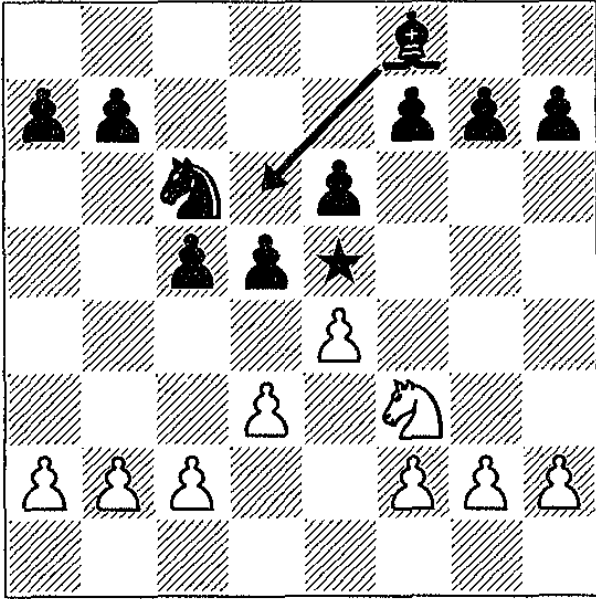
Black plays ...c5 before White advances e5

Various centres can arise if Black plays ...c5 before e5. Usually White captures immediately on d5, when we reach either an IQP or Exchange centre (after ...e6xd5) or a Rubinstein centre (if a piece recaptures on d5). On the other hand White can instead exchange the d4-pawn for the c5-pawn and then defend the e-pawn. A situation of tension then arises where both sides have to place their pieces with all the potential central pawn structures in mind. An e4-e5

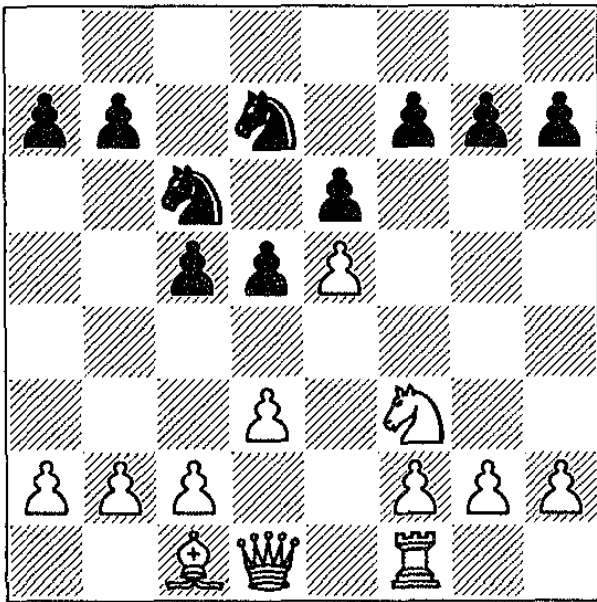
White omits d4

White can choose not to play d4, but Black then is far freer to choose from many alternative plans of action, including grabbing the centre with ...d5 and ...c5. After ...d5, an Exchange-type centre after exd5 or a Rubinstein-type centre after ...dxe4 offer White little, so White has to choose between playing d3, supporting the e4-pawn and preserving the central tension, or playing e4-e5 immediately, with a type of Classical centre where White still has his d-pawn but Black has control of the d4-square after ...c5.

If White defers e4-e5 and supports his e-pawn with d3, the battle then rages around the e5-square. White may try to force the e5 advance later, while Black can seek to control the e5-square with a knight on c6, a bishop on d6 or g7, and even

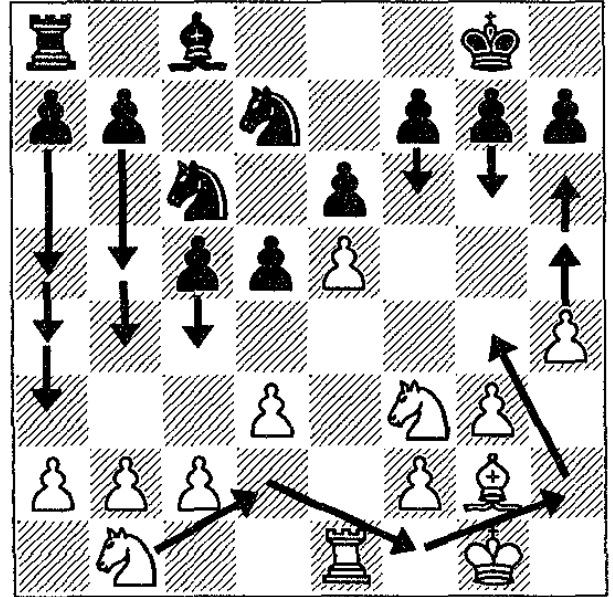


a pawn on f6. Black may sometimes choose to play ...d4 and ...e5, providing White's pieces are not well placed for an f2-f4 counter break.



Black can also choose to provoke the e5 advance by playing ...♘f6. Then on e5, Black plays ...♘f6-d7 attacking the e-pawn. With no pawn on d4, White will have to resort to moves like ♖e2, ♜e1 or ♙f4 to defend the e-pawn. Unlike the Classical centre, White doesn't have the d4-square as compensation, but then neither does Black have a half-open c-file or the c5-square. White does

have a clear space advantage on the kingside, while Black has a clear space advantage on the queenside.



White normally chooses a King's Indian set-up, fianchettoing his king's bishop and castling kingside. Black's safest option is to castle queenside and try to undermine e5. On the other hand Black can choose to castle 'into the attack' on the kingside. White will then manoeuvre his pieces to the kingside, one key idea being h2-h4, ♖b1-d2-f1-h2-g4 and then h4-h5-h6. Black in turn will launch a queenside pawn storm, aiming to open any lines he can so that his pieces can use all their extra space on the queenside to advantage.

Illustrative games

Game 36
Kasparov – Ivanchuk
Horgen 1995
 Winawer Variation

- | | | |
|---|----|----|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |

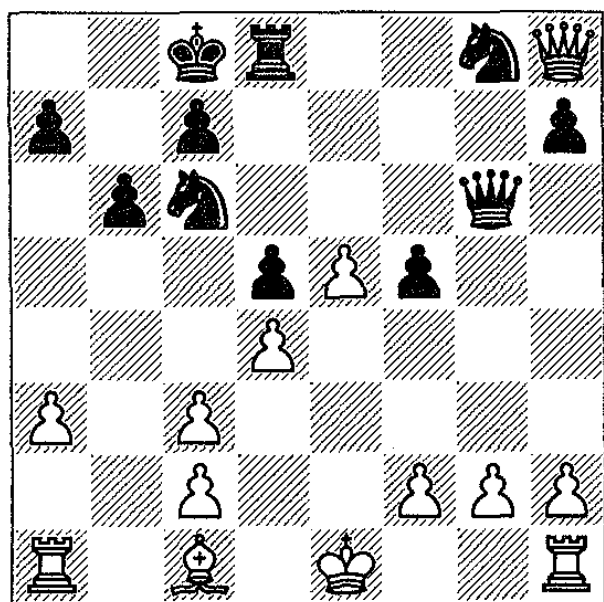
3 ♖c3

There has been some discussion as to whether Kasparov said “3 ♖d2 is good enough to win, but 3 ♖c3 is the best move.”

Similar positions to the game can arise after 3 e5 b6, except that White does not have to move his knight out of the way to play c3 (and 4 c3 ♙a6?? 5 ♙xa6 ♘xa6 6 ♚a4+ wins a piece), and also has the additional option of playing 4 c4!? if he likes the resulting positions.

3 ...	♙b4
4 e5	b6
5 a3	♙f8

We should point out a controversial variation after 5... ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♚d7 7 ♚g4 f5 8 ♚g3 ♙a6 (the simple 8... ♖c6 followed by 9... ♙b7 and queenside castling is a less active but certainly safer option) 9 ♙xa6 ♘xa6 10 ♖e2 ♖b8 11 ♖f4 ♖c6 12 ♖xe6!? ♚xc6 13 ♚xg7 ♚g6 14 ♚xh8 0-0-0 (best) (D).



W

White, of course, has a massive material advantage: two pawns and

the exchange. But the queen is entombed on h8, and the outcome of the game depends on whether he can successfully extricate her. In *Play the French* (1984) John Watson believed the queen would perish, giving many variations. The critical one was 15 ♙e3 ♚d7! with the idea of 16...h5 and 17... ♚h7. He noted that 16 e6 now failed to 16... ♚d8!: the rook retreats back again with the threat of 17... ♖ge7 or 17... ♖f6, as now 18 ♚f6 is no longer an answer. White has no defence since pawns, unlike rooks, can't move backwards!

Then Schiller came along and showed that after 15... ♚d7, as given by Watson, White can play 16 0-0-0 when 16...h5 17 g4!! allows the queen to break out in all lines, e.g. 17... ♚h7 18 gxf5 or 17...fxg4 18 f4! ♚h7 19 f5 ♚f7 20 e6! and the black queen is overworked, having to defend g8 and h7 simultaneously. Schiller then proposed 16...f4!? when 17 ♙xf4 h6 18 h4 ♚h7 19 h5 ♚f7 wins for Black since the bishop is attacked: 20 e6 ♚xf4 is check. Schiller thought that White should answer 16...f4 with 17 e6.

A third analyst became involved. In an article in *Inside Chess* in 1988 Michael Valvo began by castigating Schiller for recommending 17 e6?? since 17... ♚d8! (as in Watson's original idea) wins at once. Then he attempted to improve on Schiller's line with 16...f4 17 ♙xf4 h6 by now recommending 18 g4 ♚h7 19 ♚xh7 ♚xh7 20 ♙d2 when White plans a massive pawn advance on the king-side. However, he thought that after

20...♠a5! the threats to White's king "tip the balance in Black's favour". John Watson, the original analyst, then intervened here and gave 18 ♖d3! (instead of Valvo's 18 g4) 18...♗h7 19 ♖g3 ♜xg3 20 ♜xh7 ♜xf4+ 21 ♔b1 "when White has material for his exposed king". His conclusion was that it was unclear. Valvo attempted to improve on all this with 16 f4 (instead of 16 0-0-0). This rules out Black's f4 idea. After Valvo's variation 16...♞d8 17 g4 ♞f7 18 gxf5 ♜g2 19 ♖g1 ♜xg1+ 20 ♙xg1 ♞xh8, White has excellent compensation for the piece and "is probably winning" (Valvo).

Yet all these analysts were barking up the wrong tree of analysis. Right at the beginning simply 15 ♙d2 (rather than 15 ♙e3) avoids the bishop being attacked by a tempo gaining f4. White wins easily, for example 15...♗d7 16 0-0-0 ♞d8 (if 16...h6, 17 g4! and since the bishop is on d2, not e3, Black no longer has the Schiller recipe with ...f4; here 17...f4 could be answered by 18 h4 ♗h7 19 h5 ♜f7 20 e6! and the black queen is again overworked) 17 h4 ♞f7 18 h5 ♜g4 19 f3 ♜xg2 20 ♜xh7 intending both 21 ♜xf5 and 21 ♗hg1.

6 ♞f3 ♞e7!

Black's thinking is as follows: "6...♙a6 would allow me to exchange my bad bishop for White's good one, which is pretty desirable. But I shouldn't hurry to make this move! Why not? Well, in order to develop his game and castle White must bring out the f1-bishop at some

point. So I will wait until he moves out this bishop, either to e2 or d3 as he chooses, and only then will I challenge it with ...♙a6. Therefore I will be a tempo up over the immediate 6...♙a6 7 ♙xa6 ♞xa6 8 0-0, when White hasn't wasted a move on a preliminary ♙d3 or ♙e2."

Note that in the suggested sequence 6...♙a6 7 ♙xa6 ♞xa6 Black hasn't gained time by developing his knight on a6: rather, it is very badly placed there, and will almost certainly have to be re-deployed via b8 to c6 or d7 if it is to make a telling contribution to the game. So having to recapture on a6 with the knight loses, rather than gains, time.

7 h4!

Kasparov is not a player to make a superfluous bishop move. He finds a way to gain space on the kingside, and the onus once again is on Black to find a waiting move.

7 ... h6
8 h5 a5!

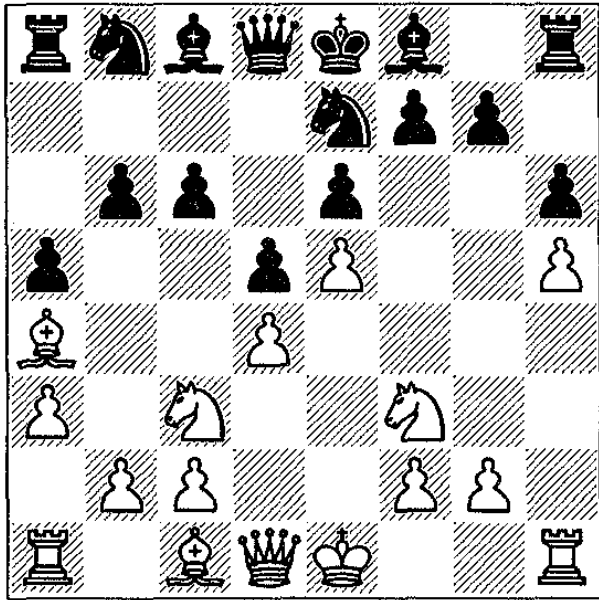
Black responds with a rook pawn move of his own, gaining space on the side of the board where he is strongest. Now White has run out of useful waiting moves, and so rather than be bullied into 9 ♙e2 or 9 ♙d3, when ...♙a6! would come in a flash, he decides to preserve his good bishop, even at the cost of time.

9 ♙b5+ c6

If 9...♞bc6, then 10 ♜e2! and White has the last laugh since ...♙a6 is prevented.

10 ♙a4 (D)

White's plan is to meet 10...♙a6 by 11 ♞e2!, a move with at least two



B

good points. It makes possible 12 0-0, which completes his development. It vacates the c3-square and so prepares c3. This simple pawn move not only adds support to the centre, but also prepares Qc2, returning the a4-bishop to the fray. So it is by no means in Black's interests to provoke 11 Nde2 with 10...Qa6.

There are some rather paradoxical features in all this. The first is that both sides' strategy has revolved around a move (...Qa6) which, although never actually prevented, has never proved worthwhile for Black to play. Who has won this poney war? I don't know what a computer would make of it. It certainly proves the adage that the threat is stronger than its execution.

The second curious feature is the importance of White's rook's pawn being on a3 rather than a2. This means that White can carry out his grand strategy with 10 Qa4 without losing a piece after 10...b5 11 Qb3 a4, since he has a retreat square on a2. How convenient: and yet when

he played 5 a3, was White thinking about this future need?

And thirdly, if Black continues 10...Qa6 and White answers 11 Nde2, Black would be reluctant to play ...Qxe2, either immediately or later on. For all our talk about 'bad' bishops, it seems there is some truth in the adage that the worst bishop is better than the best knight!

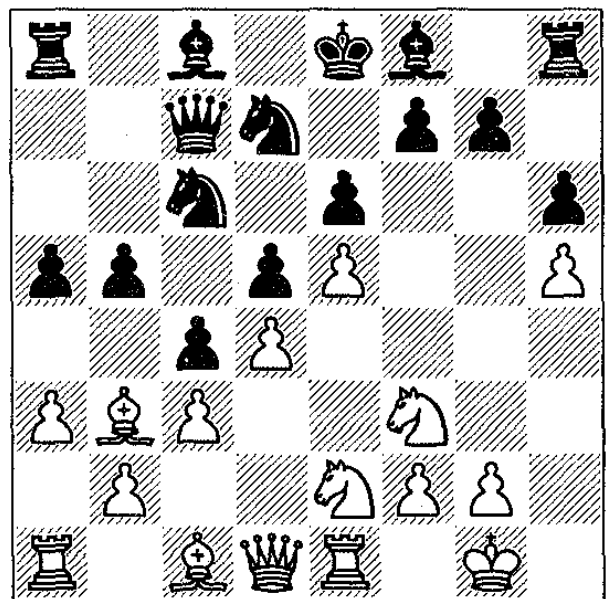
10 ... Qd7
11 Nde2

The white knight goes to e2 of its own accord, without the prompting of 10...Qa6. See the note above for a description of the virtues of 11 Nde2.

11 ... b5
12 Qb3 c5
13 c3

Bolstering the centre. 13 dxc5? is bad after 13...Nxc5 or, even better, 13...Nc6 and 14...Wc7, when e5 is indefensible.

13 ... Nc6
14 0-0 Wc7
15 Re1 c4 (D)



W

At last Ivanchuk commits himself to a definite plan. He will advance on the queenside (eminently logical as he has more space there) and try to undermine White's pawn chain, perhaps leaving White with a vulnerable pawn on c3 after ...b4 and exchanges.

And what of White's plan? In the *British Chess Magazine*, Chandler points out the drawback to White's advance h4 and h5: White cannot now play the standard manoeuvre ♖f4 or ♖g3 followed by ♖h5. For example, if we put the white h-pawn back on h2 then after 16 ♙c2 ♖b6 (as in the game) play could continue 17 ♖f4 ♙b8 18 ♖h5! ♙d7 (here 18...♗d8 would be better, slowing down White's initiative) 19 ♖h4! b4 20 axb4 axb4 21 ♗g4 and White has a dangerous attack. Since the white pawn is really on h5, and so White can't create such threats against g7, he must find another idea.

An alternative strategy is to prepare the advance f5! which is the logical plan in the position: after all, White has a space advantage in the centre and on the kingside, and so should be looking to make a pawn breakthrough there. Furthermore, such a plan would justify the position of the pawn on h5: it dissuades Black from playing ...g6, which would normally (i.e. with the white pawn on h2) be a powerful fortification against a threatened f5. Ivanchuk, as befits a world-class player, has made some provisions against this plan.

First of all, he has avoided castling kingside. This implies that

should things ever begin to look very dangerous for his king he can always castle on the queenside, where he will be surrounded by his own pieces. However, the presence of the black king on the queenside would interfere with the active operations of the other pieces there, so it is not something Black would wish to happen. Rather, he would hope that his defences would hold firm in the centre and on the kingside.

Secondly, Ivanchuk maintained the tension in the centre until White played 15 ♙e1. Only then did he bypass the d4-pawn with ...c4 and look for play on the queenside. The reason is that the e1-rook would be much better placed back on f1 for supporting the advance f4 and f5 (after preparatory moves), and so Black waited until White moved the rook away before closing the position with ...c4.

Why then did White play 15 ♙e1? Well, he was reluctant to commit himself to an attack on the wing as long as the situation in the centre was unresolved. If with the black pawn still on c5 he had played moves such as ♖h2, f4, and ♖g3, all supporting the f5 advance but decentralising his knights, Black would have been able to open the position with ...cxd4 and put severe pressure on the d4-pawn. White's play would have been too one-sided with an insecure centre. But now that Black has played 15...c4 White's centre is no longer under pressure, and he can afford some 'one-sided moves'. Let's see how the game continued.

16 ♖c2 ♜b6
17 ♖f4

With the black king in the centre, the attack on Black's kingside cannot be carried out just with pieces. It also requires the use of pawns. Here White should consider a sequence of moves such as ♜h2, ♜g3, ♖f1 and f4, preparing the f5 advance. A good way to start would be the paradoxical 17 ♖f1!?

The game move re-deploys the bishop to the kingside, but it is no better placed there than on the queenside. Furthermore, it obstructs the f-pawn and whether it goes to h2 or g3 it will be taking a useful manoeuvring square away from a white knight.

17 ... ♖e7
18 ♖g3 ♜b8

There is no white attack in sight and therefore Black prepares his own breakthrough. Note that 18...0-0?? would be suicidal, since White could play 19 ♖b1 and 20 ♖c2 with a quick mate, or even 19 ♖f4 and 20 ♖d2, followed by a winning sacrifice on h6. The black king is safe in the centre, even though Kasparov has a strong wish to disturb him there...

19 ♜h2 ♖d8!

An excellent move. White's plan was to play 20 f4 and then 21 f5! achieving the desired advance and answering 21...exf5? with 22 e6, when there is a discovered attack on Black's queen from the g3-bishop. So the black queen side-steps this possibility.

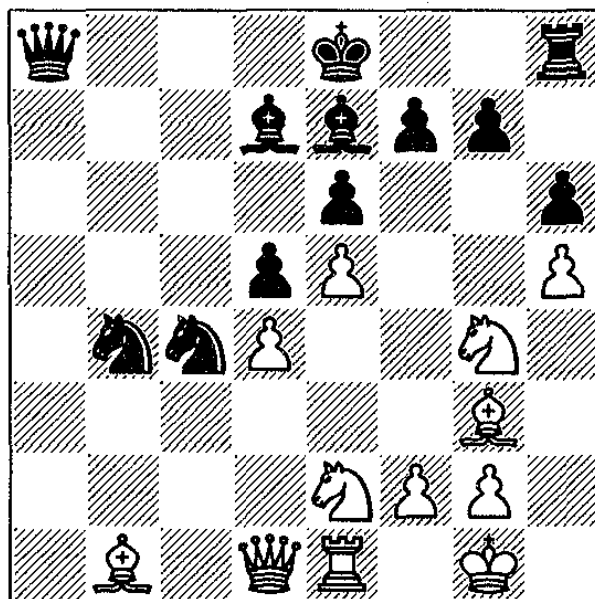
20 ♜g4

Here 20 f4 was consistent, when 20...♖h4 was an interesting reply

20 ... ♖b4
21 axb4 axb4
22 cxb4?

Kasparov doesn't seem to have been in a mood for a hard struggle. However, it is by no means easy to draw simply by eliminating Black's queenside pawns, since their places are taken by tremendously active pieces. Besides, it is against the logic of the position for White to seek to seize the initiative on his weaker side. It was still possible to prepare the build-up to f5 with 22 ♖f1 or 22 f4, etc.

22 ... ♜xb4
23 ♖b1 ♖d7
24 b3 ♜a8
25 ♖xa8 ♖xa8
26 bxc4 ♜xc4 (D)



W

27 ♜c1?

White's position was very uncomfortable, but with 27 ♖f4! (Chandler) he would reactivate his bishop and could hope to defend. Black's

build up on the queenside looks overwhelming, but on the other hand he is playing without his h8-rook: 27...0-0? would still allow White a decisive attack. So perhaps Black would answer 27 ♖f4 with 27...♙a4 28 ♖c1 ♗d7!? threatening 29...♞c8 when the white queen is in terrible danger. In any case it would be a hard fight, whereas after 27 ♗c1? the battle is over.

27 ... ♙a4
28 ♖e2 ♗a7!

Suddenly the d-pawn is lost!

29 ♗e3 ♖xd4
30 ♗xc4 dxc4
31 ♖f1 0-0!

It is now safe to castle as White's pieces are hopelessly passive. There is no defence against the advance of the c-pawn, and so White resigned.

0-1

Game 37

Geller – Karpov

USSR Ch (Moscow) 1976

Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♗c3!

Along with the study of labyrinthine variations and intricate winning schemes, the reader should practise the art of surprise in the opening. Karpov has never been a connoisseur of the black side of the French Defence, neither at the present time of writing nor as a young man when this game was played. So obviously he had something prepared against Geller's habitual 3

♗d2. Geller quite sensibly switches to 3 ♗c3 and asks "What do you know about this line?" Not much, is the answer given by the following moves.

3 ... ♙b4
4 e5 ♖d7

When Black plays 4...♖d7 his idea is to meet the attacking ♖g4 with ...f5! uncovering a defence of the g7-pawn by the black queen. On the other hand, if he plays an immediate 4...b6 here then his reply to ♖g4 will be ...♙f8. Which method of defending g7 is better? As usual it is a question of pros and cons. In playing ...♙f8 Black is wasting a lot of time, whereas the alternative ...f5 weakens the dark squares in Black's position, a factor that increases in significance after the subsequently more or less forced ...♙xc3 and the disappearance of his dark-squared bishop.

5 ♗f3 b6
6 ♙d2!

The reader will recall from the first game in this chapter that White does well to delay developing his f1-bishop. Here 6 ♙d3 loses a tempo: after 6...♙a6, White has to exchange bishops anyway. 6 ♙d2 is a useful move, dissuading Black from playing the variation with ...♙xc3 since now White can recapture with his bishop and avoid weakening his pawns. It also prepares to retreat the knight from c3 and then start an attack on Black's position with ♞c1 and c4.

6 ... ♙a6

For 6...♙f8, see the next game.

7 ♖xa6 ♘xa6
8 0-0

As Geller points out, White could play 8 ♖e2, more or less forcing the reply 8...♘b8. However, the knight on c3 needs the square e2 to carry out White's plan, so it is not wise to obstruct it.

8 ... ♘b8

Black makes this retreat anyway. Geller suggests 8...♙xc3 9 ♙xc3 ♘e7 when Black is ready to castle kingside. Black would then have a sound position, but White maintains the advantage: he has more space, a bishop which should prove of more value than a black knight once the game opens up, and a plan (an eventual ♖c1 and c4) to clear lines and increase the pressure on Black's centre.

9 ♘e2 ♙e7?

This is altogether bad, and shows the young Karpov's lack of experience with this variation. The bishop takes away the e7-square from the g8-knight and so prevents Black developing his kingside. The alternative 9...♙f8 was better, but still dangerous because White can break through very quickly with 10 ♖c1 and 11 c4, before Black has time to mobilise his kingside pieces with 10...♘e7, 11...♘g6 and 12...♙e7. Therefore it was essential, as noted by Geller, to play 9...♙xd2 10 ♖xd2 ♘e7.

10 ♖c1 b5

A valiant attempt to thwart the line-opening 11 c4. Black must at all costs attempt to keep the position closed.

11 ♘f4 h5

To prevent 12 ♘h5. Black's plight is desperate since he cannot even develop with 11...♘h6: 12 ♘h5! answering 12...♘f5 with 13 g4 (Geller) is unacceptable.

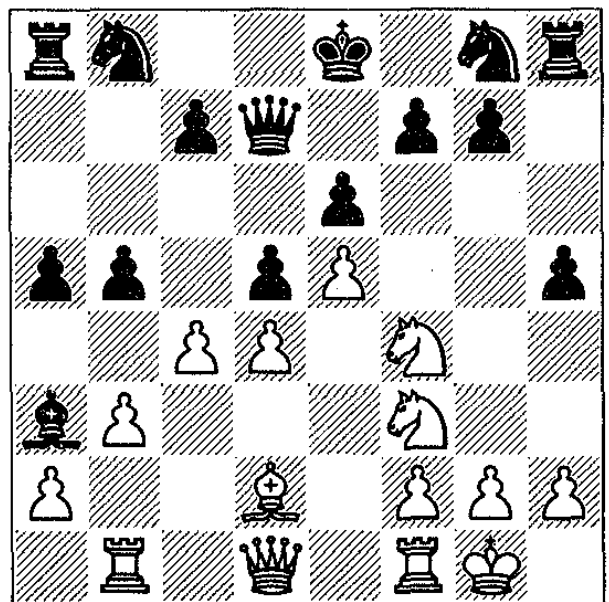
12 b3

Geller thinks it was even stronger to play 12 a4! when 12...bxa4 13 c4 breaks through and 12...a6 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖a1 will penetrate on the queenside.

12 ... ♙a3
13 ♖b1 a5

13...♙e7 was the last chance, according to Geller.

14 c4! (D)



B

The long-awaited breakthrough. Geller was planning a massive attack on Black's king after 14...bxc4 15 bxc4 dxc4 16 d5 exd5 17 e6 fxe6 18 ♘e5. Therefore Karpov has to maintain the blockade, but then finds his a3-bishop is cut off from the rest of his pieces, and can only be saved from eventual capture by doing what he wants to avoid: opening lines!

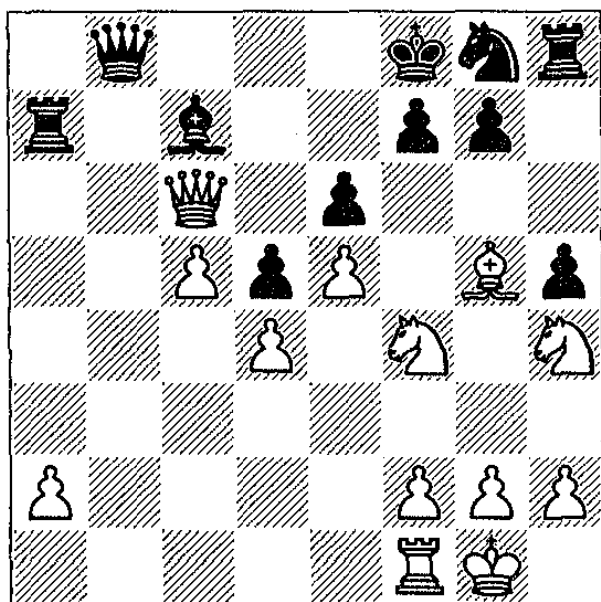
14 ... c6
 15 c5 ♖b4
 16 ♖c1 a4

The aforementioned necessity to open lines.

17 ♘d3 ♖a5
 18 bxa4 bxa4
 19 ♗xa4 ♗a7
 20 ♖g5 ♖c7
 21 ♙xb8+!

The concluding attacking phase, as in the next game against Petrosian, gives the impression that Geller is primarily an outstanding tactician. However, only a brilliant strategist could lay the necessary ground work to crush 'invincible' players like Karpov and Petrosian.

21 ... ♗xb8
 22 ♗xc6+ ♖f8
 23 ♘f4 ♖a7
 24 ♘h4! (D)



B

With a brilliant and unanswerable threat.

24 ... ♗e8
 25 ♗xe6!! fxe6
 26 ♘fg6+ ♗xg6

After 26...♗f7 27 ♘xh8+ ♖f8 28 ♘4g6+ Black will nevertheless have to part with his queen. After the text Black suffers a fatal loss of material and despite his stubborn resistance there is no hope. The game finished:

27 ♘xg6+ ♖e8 28 ♘xh8 ♙a4 29 ♙d1 ♘e7 30 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 31 ♘g6+ ♖f7 32 ♘f4 ♖xe5 33 dxe5 ♙xf4 34 ♙c1 ♖e8 35 c6 ♖d8 36 c7+ ♖c8 37 g3 ♙a4 38 ♙c6 ♙xa2 39 ♙xe6 g5 40 ♙d6 ♙d2 41 e6 ♖xc7 42 e7 1-0

Game 38

Geller – Petrosian

Moscow 1963

Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♘c3 ♖b4
 4 e5 b6
 5 ♘f3 ♗d7

After 5...♖a6, Geller says he planned 6 ♖xa6 ♘xa6 7 ♗d3! when due to the fact that 7...♘b8?? is met by 8 ♗b5+, Black has either to play ...♗c8 or capture on c3, when White has got by without a3. Neither option would be comfortable for Black.

6 ♖d2 ♖f8

The alternative plan to Karpov's 6...♖a6.

7 a4!?

In Geller's game against Karpov we mentioned how important it was to surprise your opponent. Here we may add another 'rule' of chess psychology: if you know your opponent's style and preferences, try to play in a way that is disagreeable to him. In the present instance, Geller

knew that Petrosian had played many games in this variation with Black and always castled queenside. So, by threatening a pawn storm on that wing, Geller tried to force Petrosian away from his familiar lines of play. Generally speaking, if the former World Champion had a weakness, it was when facing a headlong attack. Polugaevsky mentions this in his classic work *Grandmaster Preparation*: "In those rare instances where he did lose, or obtained an inferior position, it was when his opponents played directly and sharply, because Petrosian, at times fearing something at the board, would avoid a critical dispute in the opening." So Geller's enterprising 7 a4! suits the psychological situation perfectly.

7 ... ♖c6

The alternative is 7...♙a6 8 ♙xa6 ♖xa6. Then 9 a5?! b5 keeps the position blocked. (Karpov tried this plan as Black in the previous game, but under much less favourable circumstances.) If White should play 9 ♖e2 then 9...♗b4 is awkward, so the simple 9 0-0 would be best. With his actual move, Petrosian is following his standard scheme in this variation.

8 ♙e2

Now this bishop can be mobilised without fear of challenge.

8 ... ♗ge7

9 0-0 f6?

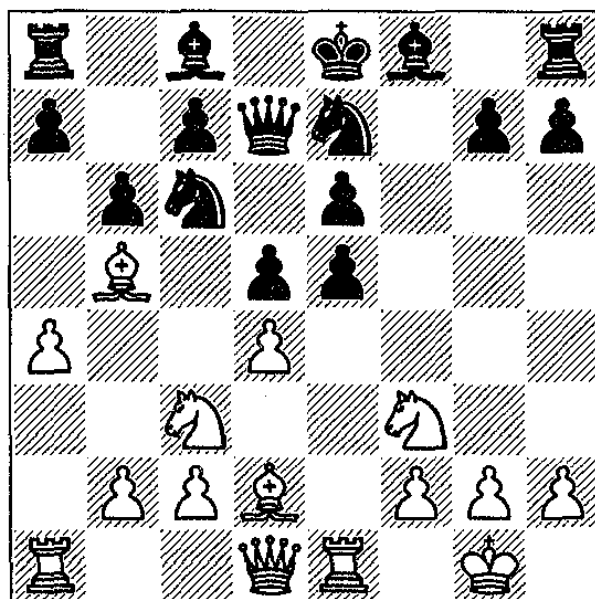
Normally, Petrosian would continue 9...♙b7 and 10...0-0-0 in such a position, playing according to his tried and trusted strategy in this variation. However, he is worried by White's possible pawn storm on the

queenside, so instead he attacks White's centre. This is a dangerous policy since it leads to an opening of lines which favours the better developed player. As an alternative, Geller discusses the solid 9...f5, but then Black has no counterplay, and must wait to see if White finds a way to break through. Geller notes that he would have prepared b4, perhaps combined with some play on the kingside if the opportunity arose. Nevertheless, Petrosian was a maestro in such blocked positions, so it would have been very hard for Geller to force the win.

10 ♖e1 fxe5?

It wasn't too late for 10...f5 or 10...♙b7, but Black expects to have time for ...♙b7 after White recaptures on e5...

11 ♙b5! (D)



B

An unexpected and lethal blow. Now Black's hold on the centre collapses. If 11...e4, trying to keep the position blocked, 12 ♗e5 ♖d6 13 ♙f4 is fatal. Geller also points out

the ghastly 11...exd4 12 ♖xd4 ♗d6
13 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 14 ♙f4 ♗d7 15
♗xd5.

11 ♙b5 is also a reminder that tactics and strategy go hand in hand. If Geller had played a routine recapture on e5, for instance 11 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12 dxe5, he would have lost most of his advantage. You can only play good positional chess if you are alert to tactical nuances.

11 ... ♗g6
12 ♗xe5 ♗gxe5
13 ♙xe5 a6

There is no adequate way of defending d5, since 13...♙e7 fails to 14 ♗f3 ♙f6 15 ♗xd5 ♙xe5 16 ♗f6+.

14 ♙xc6 ♗xc6
15 ♗xd5 ♙d7
16 ♙g5 ♙d6
17 ♗h5+ ♙f8

17...g6 is answered by 18 ♗e2 ♙xe5 19 ♗xe5 winning. The game concluded:

18 ♗f3+ ♙g8 19 ♙xe6 ♙f8 20 ♗e7+ ♙xe7 21 ♗xc6 ♙xc6 22 ♙xe7 ♙f7 23 ♙ae1 ♙xa4 24 b3 ♙c6 25 ♙1e6 ♙d5 26 ♙e8+ ♙f8 27 ♙6e7 h6 28 ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 29 ♙xc7 ♙g8 30 ♙f4 g5 31 ♙e5 ♙h7 32 ♙c8+ ♙f7 33 c4 ♙b7 34 ♙d8 ♙e6 35 ♙d6+ ♙f5 36 f3 g4 37 ♙f6+ ♙g5 38 f4+ ♙h5 39 ♙xb6 ♙e4 40 ♙f2 ♙b7 41 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 42 d5 1-0 (time)

Game 39

A.Petrosian – Panchenko

Odessa 1973

Guimard Variation

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5

3 ♗d2 ♗c6

An underestimated move! After 3...♗f6 4 e5 or 3...dxe4 4 ♗xe4 White has a space advantage while 3...c5 4 exd5 exd5 leaves Black with an isolated pawn. So is it really worse to develop the queen's knight immediately and attack White's centre? True, the advance ...c5 is now difficult to achieve, but there is always the alternative ...f6 to pressurise White's centre, as will be seen.

Another variation is 3...a6 4 ♗gf3 c5. The play after 5 exd5 exd5 6 dxc5 ♙xc5 and 6 ♙e2 c4 has already been analysed in previous chapters. White can instead choose to preserve the tension by playing 5 dxc5 ♙xc5 6 ♙d3. Then a number of different centres can arise: 6...♗c6 7 0-0 ♗ge7 (7...♗f6 8 exd5 ♗xd5 9 ♗e4 ♙e7 10 c4 ♗f6 11 a3 ♗c7 12 b4 ± Anand-M.Gurevich, Wijk aan Zee 1990, is a Rubinstein centre) 8 c3 (8 e5 ♗g6 9 ♗b3 ♙a7 = Smirin-Nikolić, Paris 1994, is a Classical centre) 8...0-0 9 ♙e1 ♗g6 10 exd5! exd5 11 ♗b3 with a slight plus for White, Speelman-Schussler, Thessaloniki OL 1988, is an IQP centre.

4 ♗gf3

An important alternative is 4 c3, when complex play, somewhat in White's favour, arises after 4...e5!? 5 exd5 ♗xd5 6 ♗gf3 exd4 7 ♙c4 ♗f5 8 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 9 cxd4 ♙e6 10 ♗a4+ ♙d7 11 ♗b3 0-0-0 12 0-0.

4 ... ♗f6
5 e5 ♗d7
6 ♙e2

White simply develops. Black clearly plans ...f6 so maybe ♙h5+

will be strong at some point. 6 ♘b3 is an alternative. Then Qi Jingxuan-Johansen, Jakarta 1987, continued 6...a5 (6...♙e7 7 c3 0-0 8 ♙d3 f6 is recommended by *ECO*, but 9 ♚c2 looks dangerous) 7 a4 b6 8 c3 ♙b7 9 ♙g5 (9 ♙d3 is better according to Johansen) 9...♚c8! 10 ♙d3 h6 11 ♙h4 ♙a6 12 0-0 ♙xd3 13 ♚xd3 ♚a6 14 ♚d2 ♘e7! 15 ♙xe7! (or else 15...♘f5 will be awkward) 15...♙xe7 16 ♘e1 (preparing f4) and now Johansen claims that Black could equalise with 16...h5 17 f4 g6. Black has combined ideas from the last three games, and the Leningrad System in Chapter 3.

6 ... f6
7 exf6 ♚xf6 (D)

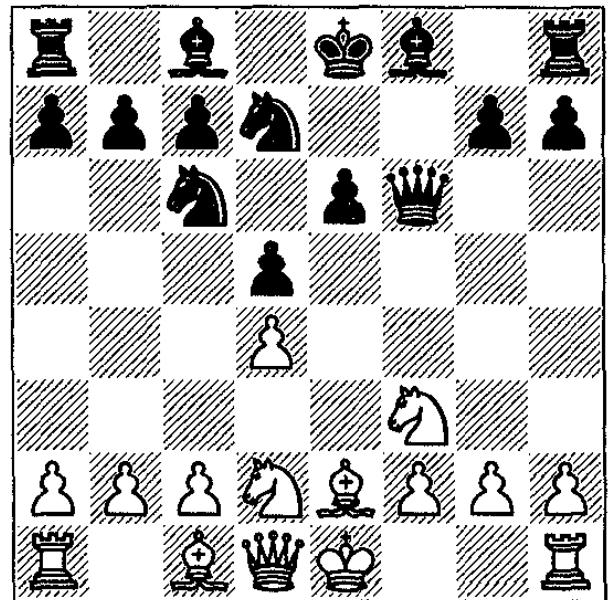
The most dynamic move. Black recaptures with his queen, planning to break in the centre with ...e5. If successful, he would solve one of the chief problems in this position: the development of his c8-bishop, which at the moment is entirely shut in. Instead, 8...♘xf6 would offer Black little compensation for his weak e-pawn.

8 ♘f1! e5?!

Consistent but not quite sound. 8...♙d6 is better, though White maintains some advantage after 9 ♘e3 0-0 10 0-0: Black cannot easily achieve the ...e5 advance since his d5-pawn will hang.

9 dxе5?

After 9 ♘e3! e4 10 ♘xd5 ♚d6 11 ♙c4! (but not 11 c4 exf3 12 ♙f4 fxg2! 13 ♚g1 ♚xf4! 14 ♘xf4? ♙b4+ Schellingerhout-De Vries, correspondence 1981) 11...exf3, White has



W

a fierce attack for the piece after either 12 0-0 or 12 ♙f4.

White seems to have been taken by surprise by his opponent's variation and fails to find the strongest move. Sometimes it pays to have a dangerous, if unsound, opening repertoire.

9 ... ♘dxе5
10 ♚xd5?

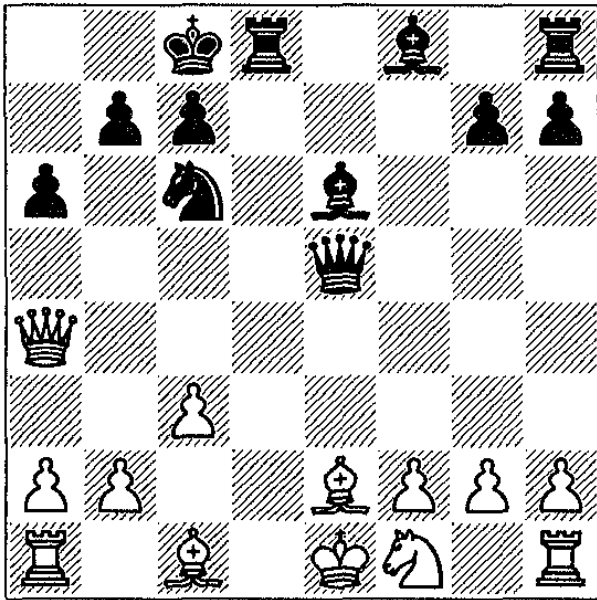
Zak, from whose book *Improve Your Chess Results* we have quoted this illustrative game, points out that it was dangerous for White to accept the pawn sacrifice since Black would clearly have studied the resulting position at home prior to the game. More 'street-wise' was 10 ♘e3.

10 ... ♙e6
11 ♚b5 a6!
12 ♚a4

If 12 ♚xb7?? then 12...♚a7 wins the queen, so she is forced to a square from which she has less influence on the centre.

12 ... 0-0-0
13 ♘xe5 ♚xe5
14 c3 (D)

Preventing ...♘d4. If given one free move, White will now play 15 ♖e3 with a safe game, but he is denied this luxury.



B

14 ... ♗b4!!

Completing his development in some style.

15 cxb4 ♗c4

16 ♘g3

In the later game Makarychev-Vaganian, Tbilisi 1973, White repeated all(!) these moves but then played 16 ♖e3. Evidently he thought this was the refutation of Black's attack. But not for long: after 16...♗xe2 17 ♖xe2 ♘d4+ 18 ♖e1 ♖he8! 19 ♗d2 ♗e4! the twin threats of ...♗xg2 and ...♘c2+ couldn't be parried. White resigned after 20 ♖d1 ♗d3 21 ♖e1 ♖b3 22 ♖e2 ♘xa1 23 ♖e1 ♖xe3! 24 fxe3 ♘c2+ 25 ♖d1 ♘xe3+ 26 ♖e1 ♗b1+ 27 ♖f2 ♘g4+. White fares no better in our main game.

16 ... ♗b5

17 ♗a3 ♖d3!

Threatening both the queen and ...♖xg3. White has no defence.

18 ♗f4 ♗e6
 19 b3 ♖xg3
 20 0-0 ♖xg2+
 21 ♖xg2 ♗xe2
 22 f3

If 22 ♖fe1, then 22...♗g4+ 23 ♗g3 ♗f3+ and 24...♗h3 will mate.

22 ... ♖f8
 23 ♗g3 ♗e3
 24 ♗c1 ♗xf3+
 25 ♖xf3

If 25 ♖h3, 25...♗e6+ mates next move.

25 ... ♗xf3+
 26 ♖g1 ♖e8
 27 ♗f1 ♗e3+
 28 ♖g2 ♗e4+

0-1

A wonderfully energetic display by Panchenko.

Game 40

Lau – Uhlmann

W.Germany – E.Germany 1988

King's Indian Attack

1 e4 e6
 2 d3

White defers from grabbing the centre. A rarer alternative is 2 ♘f3 d5:

a) 3 e5 c5 4 b4!? (4 d4 cxd4 transposes to analysis in Chapter 4) 4...cxb4 5 d4 (5 a3 d4!) 5...♘c6 6 a3 ♗a5!? (Motwani).

b) 3 ♘c3 d4!? (3...♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 d4 again transposes to analysis in Chapter 4) 4 ♘e2 c5 5 c3 ♘f6 6 d3 ♘c6 7 g3 e5 ± leaves Black two tempi down on the white side of a King's Indian Defence.

2 ... d5

Black can also choose to play a Sicilian after 2...c5.

3 ♖d2 ♗f6

Black can instead develop the knight to e7 after 3...c5 4 ♗gf3 ♗c6 5 g3 and:

a) 5...g6 6 ♖g2 ♖g7 7 0-0 ♗ge7 8 ♖e1 h6! (waiting to see which side is best to castle on) 9 c3 (9 e5 g5!? 10 ♗b3 b6 11 d4 c4 12 ♗bd2 g4) 9...b6 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♗b3 0-0 12 d4 c4 ♢ Bitman-Eingorn, Berlin 1992.

b) 5...♗d6 6 ♖g2 ♗ge7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1 (8 ♗h4!? ♖c7 9 f4 f6! with equality) 8...♗c7 9 c3 b6 10 e5 a5 11 ♗f1 ♖a6 12 h4 d4 13 c4 ♢ Sznajk-Karpov, Skopje 1972.

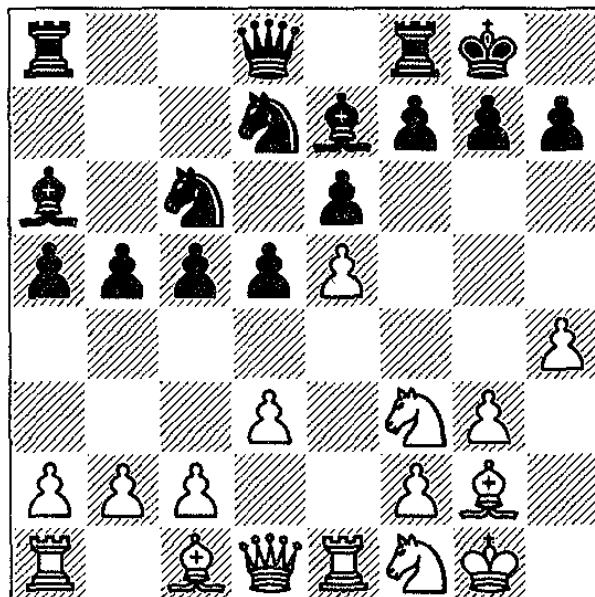
4 ♗gf3 c5

An interesting plan is 4...♗c6!? with the idea of 5 g3 dxe4 6 dxe4 ♖c5 7 ♖g2 e5 8 0-0 0-0 9 c3 a5, when Black gets to play the white side of a Classical Pirc (1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 ♗f3 ♖g7 5 ♖e2 0-0 6 0-0 c6 7 a4 ♗bd7 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♖c4!?) one tempo down (only one because the tempo spent on ...e6-e5 is cancelled out by the bishop moving to the useful c5-square in one move). But White can cross this plan with 5 c3!? a5 6 e5 (6 ♖e2 e5 is a reversed Philidor's Defence with White two tempi up, but that should not be enough to muster much advantage) 6...♗d7 7 d4 with a position much like the previous game, though Black has gained a useful tempo: 7...f6 8 ♖b5 (8 ♗h4 ♖e7! 9 ♖d3 fxe5! 10 ♖h5+ ♖f7 11 ♖g6 hxg6 12 ♖xh8 e4! ♢ Ljubojević-Vaganian, Belgrade 1974) 8...fxe5 9 dxe5 ♖e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♗c5

with an unclear position, Filipović-Langeweg, Lugano 1989.

Also possible is 4...b6 5 g3 ♖b7 6 ♖g2 ♖e7 7 0-0 c5 8 e5 ♗fd7 9 ♖e1 ♗c6 10 ♗f1 ♖c7 11 ♖e2 h6 12 h4 0-0-0 = Bobekov-Vankov, Bulgaria 1977.

5	g3	♗c6
6	♖g2	♖e7
7	0-0	0-0
8	♖e1	b5
9	e5	♗d7
10	♗f1	a5
11	h4	♖a6 (D)



W

Both sides carry on with their respective attacking plan, more or less regardless of each other. White plans ♗f1-h2-g4 bringing another piece to the kingside, while Black intends ...b4, ...a4 and ...a3 opening lines (or holes) on the queenside.

12 ♗1h2

White has also tried 12 ♖f4 b4 13 ♗g5!?, when Bronstein-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971 ended abruptly after 13...♖e8! 14 ♖g4 (14 ♖h5 ♖xg5 15 hxg5 f5! ♢) 14...a4?? (you have to

take some notice of White's threats)
 15 ♖xe6! (winning two pawns for nothing) 1-0.

12 ... b4
 13 ♘g4

Slightly inaccurate. 13 ♕f4 a4 14 ♖c1 a3 15 b3 is better, as in Polugaevsky-Guyot, France 1993. Polugaevsky kept the queenside blocked and slowly ground away on the kingside.

13 ... ♘d4!

Removing one of White's attacking forces, and taking advantage of the fact that White's knight on g4 can't quickly come to f3.

14 c3?!

After 14 ♘xd4 cxd4, the half-open c-file would compensate for the weak pawn on d4, but the move played makes it easy for Black to open lines.

14 ... ♘xf3+
 15 ♕xf3 ♖b8
 16 ♕f4 a4
 17 ♗d2

17 ♗xa4 ♕xd3 is great for Black, who wants to open lines.

17 ... a3
 18 b3

18 bxa3 would be answered by 18...bxc3! with advantage.

18 ... bxc3
 19 ♗xc3 ♖b4

19...c4 picks up the exchange after 20 dxc4 ♕b4, but White has some compensation after 21 ♗e3! ♕xe1 22 ♖xe1 dxc4 23 bxc4 ♗b6 24 ♗xa3 ♕xc4 (Uhlmann).

20 ♖ad1 ♕xh4!
 21 ♕c1 ♕e7
 22 ♕xa3 ♕b7

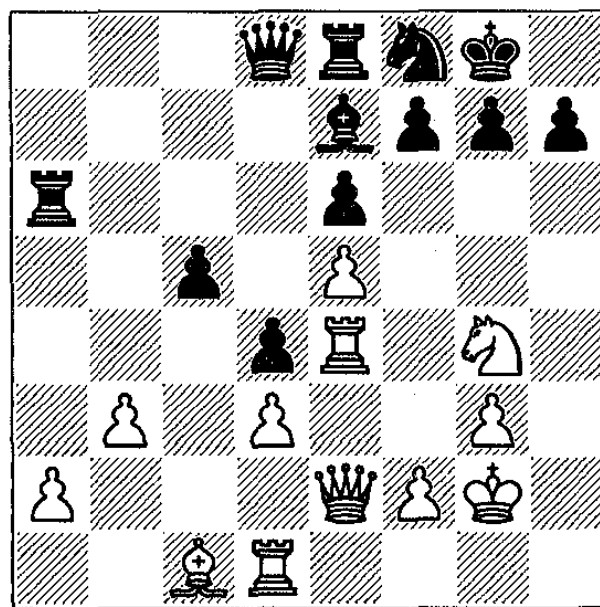
23 ♗c2

23 ♕xb4? fails to 23...d4! 24 ♕a5 ♗b8 26 ♗d2 ♕xf3 27 ♗f4 ♕xd1 28 ♖xd1 h5 29 ♘h2 ♗xe5 winning a pawn.

23 ... d4?!

Giving away the e4-square. The simple 23...♖b6 is better.

24 ♕e4! ♖b6
 25 ♕c1 ♕xe4
 26 ♖xe4 ♖a6
 27 ♗e2 ♖e8
 28 ♔g2 ♘f8 (D)



W

29 ♖h1

White has to go all-out for the attack as Black's advantage on the queenside is clear.

29 ... ♘g6
 30 ♖h5 ♗a8
 31 a3 ♖b6
 32 ♔h2

White has to give up his b-pawn. After 32 ♗d1 ♖eb8 33 ♗h1, Uhlmann gives 33...♖xb3 34 ♖xh7 ♕f8! 35 f3 ♖xd3 holding on to win.

32 ... ♖xb3
 33 ♕h6!? ♗a6?

An understandable move in time pressure, but Black should have accepted the desperado sacrifice, e.g. 33...gxf6 34 ♖xh6+ (34 ♔d2 ♕g5!) 34...♔g7 35 ♖g4 ♗h8! 36 ♔d2 ♕f8 escaping.

34 ♕xg7! ♔xd3

Now 34...♔xg7 35 ♔d2 ♗h8 36 ♔h6+ ♔g8 37 ♖f6+ ♕xf6 38 exf6 forces mate.

35 ♔xd3 ♗xd3

36 ♕f6?

White misses a very clever drawing opportunity: 36 ♖f6+! ♕xf6 37 exf6! c4 38 ♗eh4! ♖xh4 39 ♗xh4 c3 40 ♕h6 c2 41 ♗g4+ ♔h8 42 ♕g7+

and White delivers perpetual check (Uhlmann).

36	...	♕f8
37	♗e1	♗f3
38	♔g2	♗f5
39	♗h3	h5
40	♗eh1	c4

Not, of course, 40...hxg4 41 ♗h8+ ♖xh8 42 ♗xh8#. Black has now managed to safely reach the time control and consolidated smoothly:

41 ♗xh5 ♗xh5 42 ♗xh5 c3 43 ♕f3 d3 44 ♕g5 ♕g7 45 ♔e3 d2 46 ♔e2 ♗c8 47 ♗h1 ♖xe5 48 ♖f6+ ♔f8! 49 ♖h7+ ♔e8 50 ♖f6+ ♕xf6 51 ♕xf6 ♗c5 52 f4 ♖f3! 0-1

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