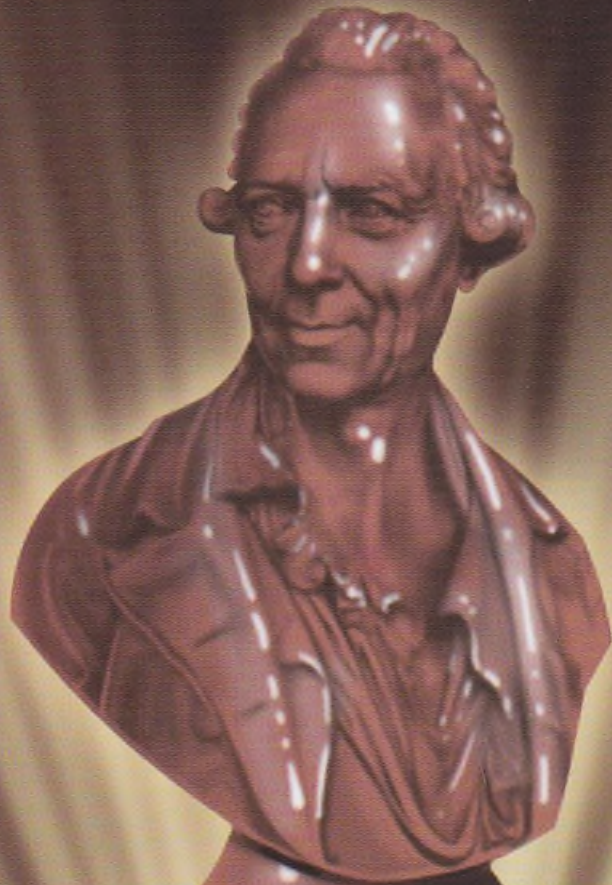


THE MODERN PHILIDOR DEFENCE



FRANCOIS-ANDRÉ
PHILIDOR
1726 - 1795



Vladimir Barsky

chessstouring.com



Technical Editor: IM Sergey Soloviov
Translation by: GM Evgeny Ermenkov
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Vladimir Barsky

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Defence**

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Bibliography

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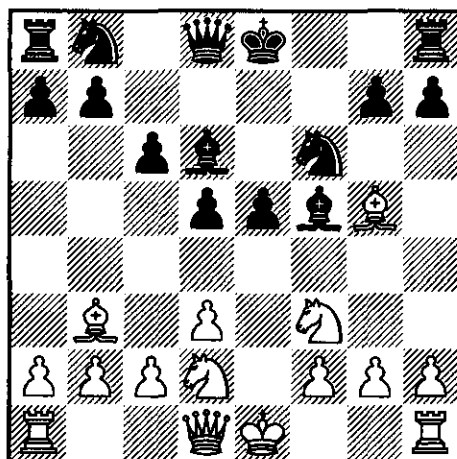
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PREFACE

I decided to make a list of the grandmasters having included the Philidor Defence in their opening repertoire when I began my work with this monograph. I gave up that idea almost instantly, because I understood that I have literally to copy the names of almost the entire database! So, see just some of the players: Alexander Morozevich, Levon Aronian, Vasily Ivanchuk, Alexander Grischuk, Teimur Rajabov, Viorel Bologan, Pavel Elianov, Etienne Bacrot, Baadur Jobava, Zurab Azmaiparashvili, Maxim Vachier Lagrave, Shakhryar Mamedyarov, Ernesto Inarkiev, Vladimir Malanjud, Dmitry Bocharov, Christian Bauer and many many others. It looks like a contemporary competitive player cannot make an all-purpose repertoire without this opening, just like a beautiful lady, with an intense social life, must have a nice Black evening dress in her wardrobe....

Francois Andre Philidor published back in the year 1749 his great work "Analysis of the Game of Chess" and there he shared with the readers some almost revolutionary concepts for that time, concerning strategical problems in chess: "My intention is to offer to the public something new. I have in mind the role of the pawns. They are the very spirit of chess, they are at the base of attack and defence and their handling is crucial for the outcome of the game. A player, who has no stimulus to play with pawns (even if he can do that well) is like an army general who has tremendous experience, but is not familiar with the theory of war".

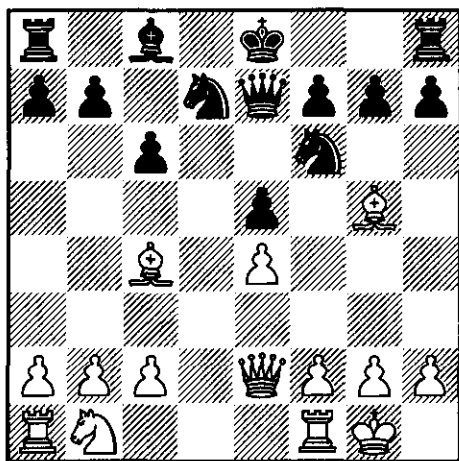
It is well-known that the essence of Philidor's famous book, having had more than a hundred re-publishings, is the great number of instructive exemplary games, composed by the author and commented thoroughly by him. See the beginning of one of them: **1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙c4 f5 4.d3 c6 5.exf5 ♙xf5 6.♙g5 ♘f6 7.♘bd2 d5 8.♙b3 ♙d6**



Black has obtained a position, he could have only dreamed about! It is not amazing that the new method of playing in the opening (“Pawns in front and pieces behind!”) attracted immediately many followers. In fact, Philidor himself was a very pragmatic player and he wrote prudently “This game was not quite correct, but Black’s play in the opening was very good, particularly after he obtained an advantage.”.

Unfortunately, the records of only 78 games played by Philidor have survived until today. He began in the normal fashion only 14 of them, while in the rest he was playing with handicap. That was because at that time nobody could create any serious problems for the great French player in the opening, or in the other parts of the game. It is evident that GM Bent Larsen was quite right asserting that “According to his understanding of the game of chess, Philidor was ahead of his contemporaries by decades.”

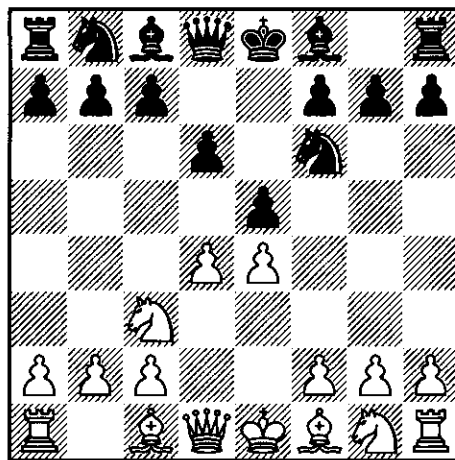
Still, time was running by and his chess ancestors managed to solve some of the puzzles of the great French genius. First of all, it had become clear that instead of 3.♔c4, it was much stronger for White to play **3.d4!**, creating immediate tension in the centre. It is also worth mentioning that in a period of more than two centuries (!) there were brave enough players, who even in that tremendously dangerous situation for Black tried to follow Philidor’s plan with 3...f5. Nowadays, the computer programmes have given a final verdict of this line and it is – Black cannot play like that at all...There were times when Henema’s plan was popular – 3...♘d7 4.♔c4 c6, but then it was established that White would obtain a stable advantage after 5.0-0 ♕e7 6.dxe5 dxe5 7.♘g5! ♔xg5 8.♚h5 ♚e7 9.♔xg5 ♖gf6 10.♚e2



It is possible that Black may hold this position after all, but its defence is a very difficult task, since he has no compensation for White’s bishop-pair and he can hardly ever win it. It may sound like a joke, but

when Ilf and Petroff described the legendary simultaneous display in Vasjukah on June 22nd 1927, mentioning “...the outdated, but quite reliable Philidor Defence...”, it turned out that they were very close to the truth...This defence acquired for a long time the reputation of a solid, but tremendously passive opening. See a really expert opinion on the theme of **1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6**: “Nowadays it is rarely used by top players, but not because of some forced refutation. The reason is that the pawn structures after 2...a6 are relatively not very promising for Black. White has precise ways of getting a better (even if sometimes only slightly better) position without real counterchances for the opponent”. (A.Khalifman “Opening for White According to Anand, volume 1).

The situation began to turn into Black’s favour after some creative minds invented the rather original move-order: **1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5!?**



Now, White has a choice – whether to enter an endgame after **4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8**, or to obtain a basic position from the Philidor defence – **4.♘f3 ♘bd7**, having given up the hope of obtaining effortlessly the two-bishop advantage. Contemporary tournament practice has indicated that in both cases there arise quite original and complicated positions. White can occupy more space, but after the natural developing moves he must solve the problem what to do later? Black is keeping his pieces behind his pawns, preserving his pawn-structure intact and waits for the opportune moment to inflict a counter strike in the centre, or on the queenside. There has happened numerous times that White, caught napping under the impression that his opponent was doing nothing dangerous, began some hasty operations and realized the danger only after it had become too late for counter measures!

The modern Philidor Defence is a very solid and strategically rich opening, in which there arise various pawn-structures. Some of them are typical for other entirely different openings like the Sicilian Defence, the Ruy Lopez and even the King's Indian Defence. I hope that the Philidor Defence will become a reliable weapon for you against aggressive players who begin the game with a move with their king's pawn. After the contemporary move-order it is practically impossible to avoid this opening, moreover that in our book we deal thoroughly with all possible attempts by White to avoid the main lines as early as on move three!

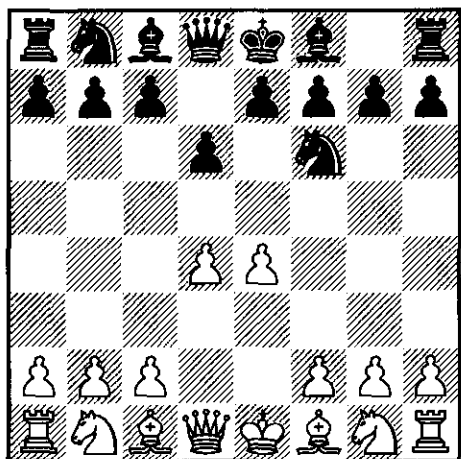
The Philidor Defence is not so difficult to learn and there are not many forced lines. The book consists of seven chapters, devoted to different move-orders. Each chapter comprises of a "Quick Repertoire", thoroughly analyzed theoretical lines in the part "Step by Step" and "Complete Games". At the beginning, it would be sufficient for you to have a look at the surveys and to see the games and that would not take too much of your time. After that you can test bravely the new opening in short games at your club, or on the Internet. After you have played about 10-15 games in the Philidor Defence, have a look at the part "Step by Step" and compare your play with the recommendations of the author. It may be possible that you would like to introduce corrections in a part of your actions.

Some masters and grandmasters have embraced the Philidor Defence as their basic opening weapon against 1.e4 and you may decide to do the same. White players, as a rule, leave the studying of this opening aside, because they have too many urgent problems to solve in the other open and semi-open theoretical lines. Meanwhile, the Modern Philidor Defence is a serious opening with numerous concrete lines and if White plays only according to "common sense" his chances of obtaining an advantage are closer to nil. In case White players overlook the critical moments and go too far in their ambition to obtain an advantage, they may face difficulties rather quickly.

Finally, I would like to thank IM Maria Fomynikh and GM Alexander Morozevich for their valuable advices, which have helped me tremendously in my work with this book.

Vladimir Barsky
Moscow, May 2010

Quick Repertoire



B) 3.f3

C) 3.♙d3

A) 3.♘d2

The drawbacks of this move are quite obvious. White's knight does not participate in the fight for the centre (It would attack the important d5-square from c3.), but it impedes the movement of his own pieces – closing the bishop on c1 and severing the connection of the queen on d1 with the d-pawn. Still, this rather unpretentious move has been played by famous grandmasters like Rublevsky, Godena, Dvoirys, Zagrebelny etc. What is the point behind it?

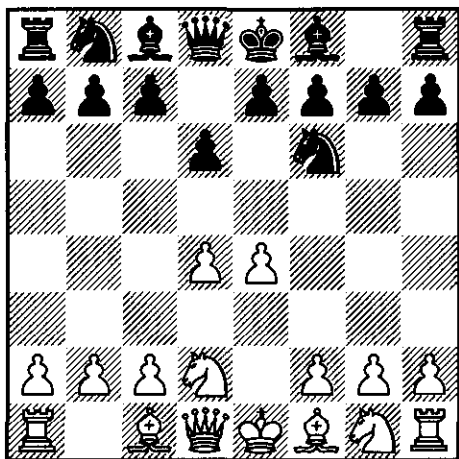
In the first chapter we will analyze the different possibilities for White to avoid the main lines, which characterize the contemporary treatment of the Philidor Defence. The moves 3.♘d2, 3.f3 and 3.♙d3, taken together, according to statistics are about ten times more rarely played than the basic move for White – 3.♘c3. Still, they are tested quite often in competitions at various levels, both by amateurs as well as by super-professionals. There are not so many variations to learn (The theory is developing, though...), but the abundance of new ideas is just striking.

A) 3.♘d2

Let us make just half a step backwards and have a close look at the position arising after Black's move two. White has made two active moves and he has occupied the centre with his pawns, opening the diagonals for his bishops. Black, in his stead, has stopped his opponent's e4-pawn and has attacked it with his second move. He wishes to attack White's centre from a distance and is prepared,

depending on circumstances, to undermine it with moves like c5, e5, or even d5. White wishes to preserve his pawn-tandem in the centre and he has in reserve the possibility to support it with c2-c3 and/or f2-f3.

I believe that the move 3.♞d2 is better than its reputation. You should remember, for comparison, the Tarrasch system in the French Defence – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞d2, in which it is considered that White can rely on a slight but stable advantage. In the Modern Philidor Defence, the move 3.♞d2 is not as well-analyzed as in the Tarrasch system, so just after a few moves you have to sit down and play chess...



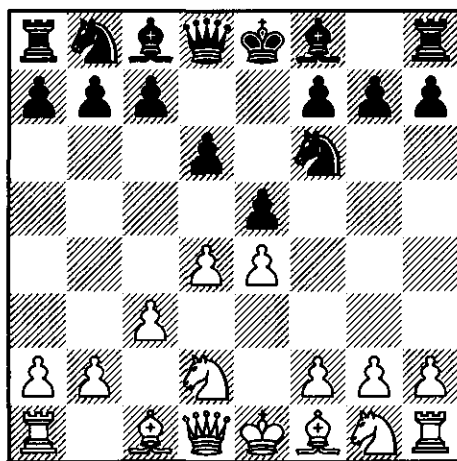
3...e5

Our book is devoted to the Philidor Defence, so I will deal mostly with pawn-structures arising after e7-e5. Still, it would be necessary to enter for a while the territory of the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence – 3...g6, because with a knight already on d2, White is deprived of many

aggressive set-ups (for example: ♕e3 + ♖d2). We will point out the details for you in the chapter “Step by Step”.

4.c3

This is the only move for White, which combines somehow with his previous move. It would not be consistent for him to play 4.d5, 4.dxe5, or 4.♞gf3, because the knight on d2 is terribly misplaced for the accomplishment of his other possible plans.



4...♗e7

Why are the new and not well-analyzed positions so attractive? This is because there are so many interesting possibilities for both sides and there are no axiomatic rules to obey, or schemes or anything...The task of this opening monograph is to point out to Black reliable lines with which he can avoid drowning in the swamp of opening information and theory. This can definitely be said about the solid move 4...♗e7. Still, we would like to inform you about the possible alternatives

at that moment. Accordingly, in the chapter "Step by Step" we will analyze what might happen if the pawn-structure is changed after the possible exchange of pawns on d4.

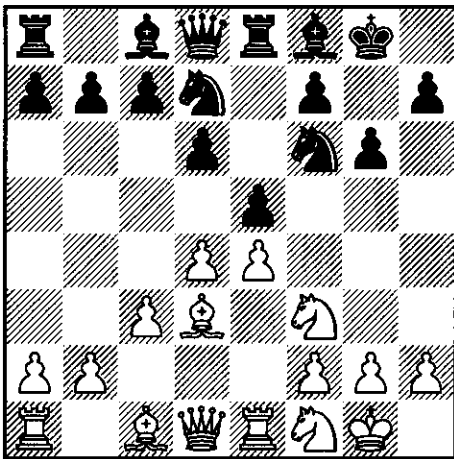
5. ♖gf3 ♜bd7 6. ♙d3

White plays sometimes 6. ♙c4, or 6. ♙e2. Here, we will keep to staying in the "middle".

6... 0-0 7. 0-0

It is amazing, but more than 100 years ago, some absolutely unknown players treated that position in a contemporary fashion: 7. ♛e2 ♞e8 8. ♜f1 ♙f8 9. ♜g3 h6 10. 0-0 g6 11. ♙d2 ♙g7 12. ♞ad1 c6 13. ♙c1 ♛c7 14. dxe5 dxe5 15. ♙e3 b6 16. h3 ♜h7 17. ♜h4 ♛d8 18. ♜f3 ♛e7 ↗ Mortimer – Billicard, Ostend 1907.

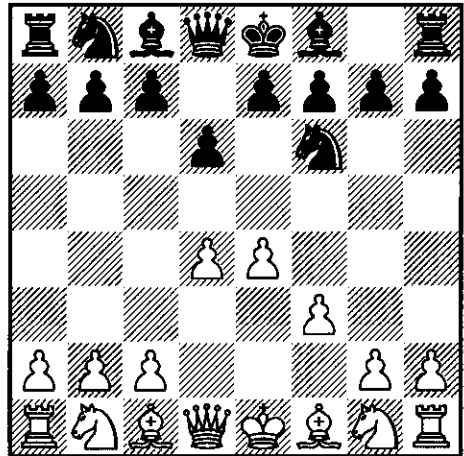
7... ♞e8 8. ♞e1 ♙f8 9. ♜f1 g6



Black plans to fianchetto both his bishops. If White decides to close the centre with d4-d5, then Black will undermine it with the move c7-c6. In this particular case, the weakening of the d5-square would not be so important,

because Black can hardly exploit this outpost effectively, because both his knights are too far away from it.

B) 3.f3



White has protected reliably his e4-pawn and he is waiting for his opponent to clarify his intentions. In case of 3...g6, he can enter the Saemisch system of the King's Indian Defence: c2-c4, ♙e3, ♛d2 etc. White can also leave his pawn on c2, because the plan with ♙e3, ♛d2 and castling long is very dangerous against the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence.

The move 3...d5!? is quite reliable for Black in this position, but then there arise positions similar to the French Defence and that would be the only connection to the nationality of the famous chess player of the 18th century. Instead, we will begin by studying the more habitual set-up, with a black pawn on e5.

3... ♜bd7

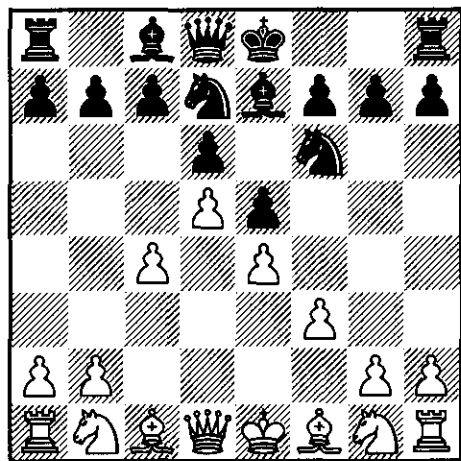
In the endgame arising after

3...e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8
6.♗c4, Black can hardly fight for
a win, so it would be sensible for
him to prepare the pawn-advance
e7-e5.

4.c4 e5 5.d5

In case White protects the
pawn with his knight – 5.♞e2,
then Black can calmly prepare a
counter strike in the centre: 5...c6
6.♞bc3 ♗e7 7.♗e3 0–0 8.♙d2 d5!?
9.cxd5 (The position is simplified
rather quickly after 9.exd5 cxd5
10.0–0–0 dxc4.) 9...cxd5 10.exd5
exd4 and White must play accu-
rately in order to avoid entering
an inferior position.

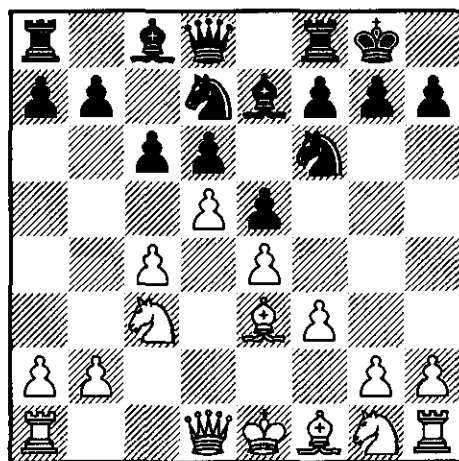
5...♗e7



White played five moves with
his pawns and he obtained a
pawn-structure typical for the
Saemisch system. Black has al-
ready developed several pieces
and contrary to the King's Indian
Defence, he has not weakened his
kingside with the move g7-g6.
Now, he can easily prepare the
trade of the dark-squared bishops
on the g5-square (In order to do

that, it would be sufficient for him
to play a move like ♖h5.).

6.♞c3 0–0 7.♗e3 c6



It would be reasonable for
Black to maintain the tension in
the centre. After the exchange on
d5, at an opportune moment, he
can play a6 and b5. After that, his
queen can go to a5.

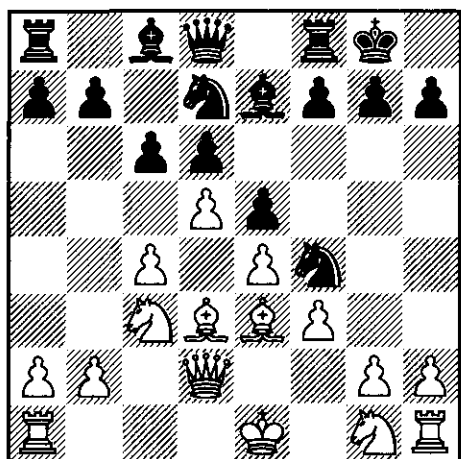
White can choose between nu-
merous moves and in the chapter
“Step by Step” we will try to ana-
lyze the most popular lines for
him. Meanwhile, here we will deal
with possibly not his strongest,
but very ambitious move –

8.♗d3

The idea of that move is to
achieve everything possible out
of the opening. White wishes to
place his bishop on d3, the knight
on e2, the queen on d2 and then
decide on which side to castle.
Later, he can begin a pawn-of-
fensive with g2-g4, or wait a bit...
This is all quite understandable,
but there are two people involved
in a chess game and Black has im-
mediate arguments concerning

White's long-term plans...

8...♖h5! 9.♔d2 ♖f4!?



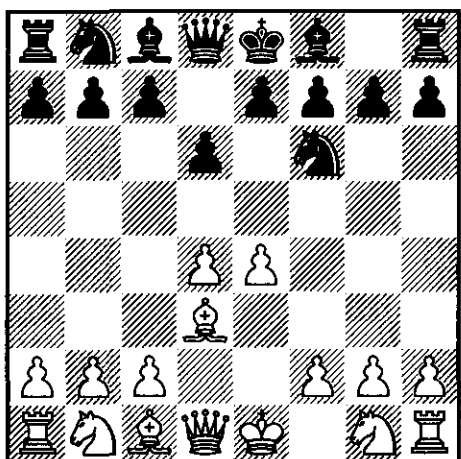
This interesting gambit was suggested by the "silicone brain"...

10.♙f1

White should better not accept the sacrifice.

10...♖b6 11.g3 ♖h5 12. 0-0-0 ↗

C) 3.♙d3



This is White's second most popular move after 3.♖c3. Just like in variation A, he does not determine the placement of his c

and f-pawns, but his bishop on d3 is quite acceptably placed, which could not be said about the knight on d2. It is evident that sooner or later, Black will have to inflict a counter strike against his opponent's centre with c7-c5, or e7-e5. In case of 3...c5 4.c3, the game transposes to the Sicilian Defence with 2.c3 and this position is evaluated as advantageous for White by Evgenij Sveshnikov, who is the most outstanding specialist of this system. We will study here the other undermining move, which is closer to the spirit of the Philidor defence.

3...e5 4.c3 g6!

Black intends to develop his bishop to g7, then to exchange on d4 and to exert pressure against both his opponent's central pawns.

5.♖f3 ♖bd7

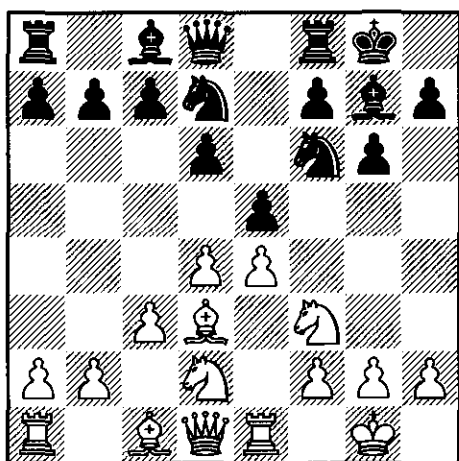
It would be premature for Black to exchange on d4, since White will counter that with cxd4, freeing the c3-square for the development of his knight. Therefore, Black fortifies his centre and waits for a move of White's knight on b1.

6.0-0 ♙g7 7.♞e1 0-0 8.♖bd2

(diagram)

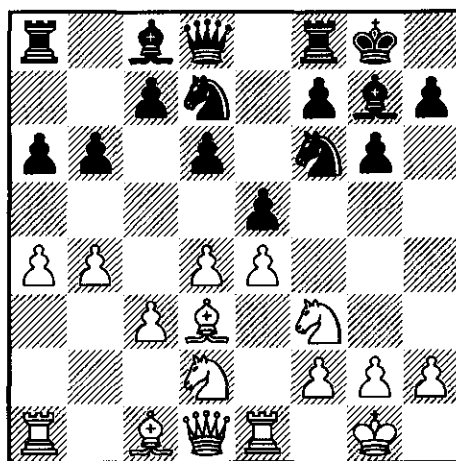
White has numerous moves at his disposal (just like Black...) and it would be essential for the readers to understand the possible plans. Here are some basic landmarks:

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗d3



deep strategic plans, you should be tremendously careful about some tactical tricks! This is an axiomatic rule and you can put it in a frame and follow it as ardently as the Constitution!

8...b6 9.a4 a6 10.b4



– Black maintains the tension in the centre, delaying for a while the exchange on d4;

– Black wishes to develop his light-squared bishop to the long diagonal after playing b7-b6;

– Black counters the flank diversion of his opponent with a2-a4, by playing a7-a6, in order to control the b5-square and to be able to counter a4-a5 with b6-b5;

– White can wait for the appearance of the bishop on b7 and then close the centre with the move d4-d5, but then Black plays the undermining move c7-c6, ignoring the weakening of the d5-square, because White's knights are too far away from it;

– In case of the exchange on e5, Black should begin the preparation of f7-f5.

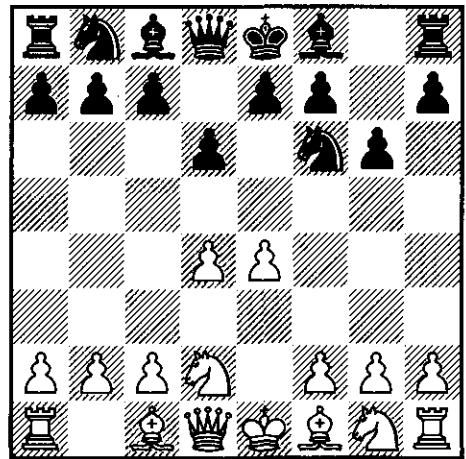
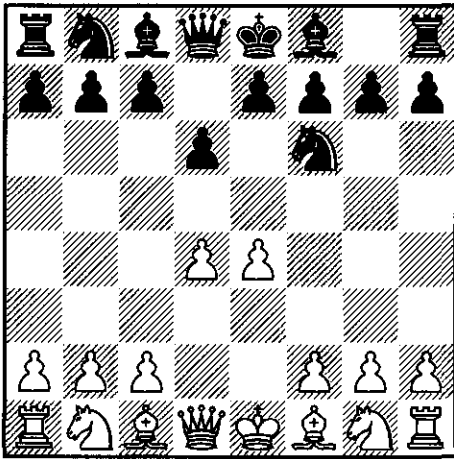
Finally, the most important rule is that while following the

This pawn-formation resembles some Hollywood movies devoted to ancient times about regiments of soldiers marching against each other!

10...♗b7 11.♞b3 ♘h5 12.♘f1 h6 13.♘g3

This is how the game Zagrebely – O.Kalinin, Schwerin 1999 developed. As it is well-known, you need to have two sets of pieces in order to attack successfully on both sides of the board. Black could have obtained an excellent counterplay with the line: 13... ♘f4! 14.♗xf4 exf4 15.♘f1 ♞e8↗

Step by Step



- A) 3.♘d2
 B) 3.f3
 C) 3.♙d3

A) 3.♘d2

I have already mentioned in the Quick Repertoire – this is by far not the most dangerous way for White to counter Black’s set-up. We will see now two quite promising defensive lines for him.

- A1) 3...g6
 A2) 3...e5

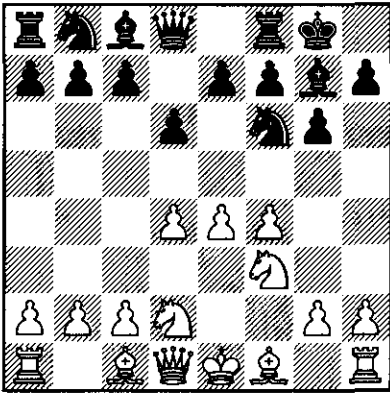
A1) 3...g6
(diagram)

- 4.♘gf3
 4.♙d3 (In principle, variation

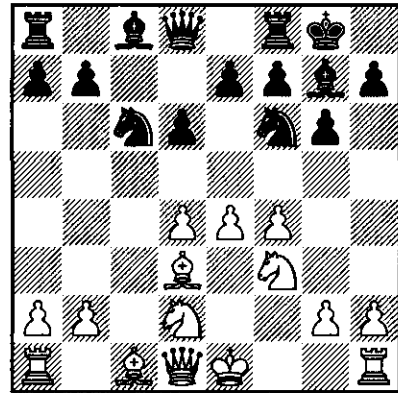
C is devoted to a thorough analysis of White’s plan with 3.♙d3, therefore now we will only have a look at one rather awkward idea for him to place rather passively his second knight – on e2.) 4... ♗g7 5.♘e2 c5!?! (In case of 5...e5, White can close the position with the move d4-d5, while it would be advantageous for Black to obtain a more dynamic position, in order to exploit the defects of White’s passive set-up.) 6.d5 0–0 7.0–0 ♘a6 8.a4, Genser – Krebs, Koeflach 2006, 8...♘b4 9.♙c4 e6 10.dxe6 ♙xe6=. The vulnerability of Black’s d6-pawn is absolutely immaterial with White’s knights on e2 and d2.

It would be at least inconsis-

ent for White to play 4.f4, because the idea behind the move 3. ♖d2 is to avoid early clashes and it would be useless for him to try to acquire additional space. There may follow: 4... ♙g7 (4... e5!?) 5. ♖gf3 0-0



7. dxc5 dxc5 8. 0-0 ♖c6 9. a3 ♖g4 10. ♚e1 ♖d4 ♞ Keuschnig – Pitzl, Austria 1995.) 7... cxd4 8. cxd4 ♖c6



1) Black should not fear 6.e5 ♖d5 7. ♖e4, because of the standard undermining move 7... c5!?! 8. c4 (After 8. dxc5 dxe5 9. fxe5 ♙f5 10. ♖g3 ♙e6♣, White will hardly keep his c5-pawn and he may have additional problems with the protection of his e5-pawn too.) 8... ♖c7 9. d5 ♖d7! (White's centre is under pressure and now it is about to crumble.) 10. exd6 exd6 11. ♙d3 (After 11. ♖xd6? ♚e7+ he loses a piece.) 11... f5 12. ♖c3 ♙e8+ 13. ♙f2. Black's position is a bit cramped, but he is considerably ahead in development, having deprived his opponent of castling rights. Now, it would be quite reasonable for him to continue in the spirit of the Benko Gambit: 13... b5!?! 14. cxb5 a6 and Black's initiative more than compensates the sacrificed pawn.

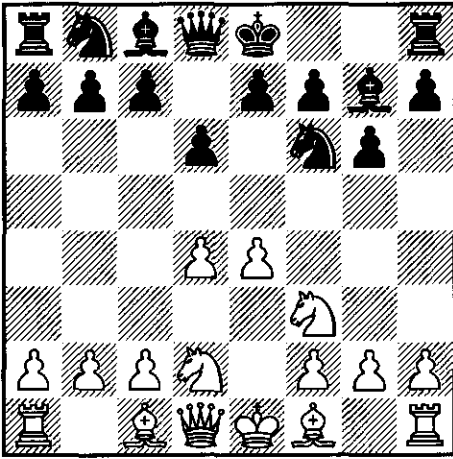
2) 6. ♙d3 c5 7. c3 (The exchange on c5 is harmless for Black after

9. d5 (White cannot keep his pawn on d4: 9. ♖b3 a5! 10. ♙e3 a4 11. ♖bd2 a3 12. bxa3 ♙xa3 13. ♖b3 ♚b6♣ Edwards – Watson, Hastings 2000.) 9... ♖b4 10. ♙b1?! (This move is too risky for White. He had better comply with the trade of this bishop, admitting his failure to obtain an opening advantage.) 10... ♙d7! (This bishop is headed for the b5-square, from where it will be eyeing White's kingside.) 11. a3 ♖a6 12. ♚e2 (Black's idea will triumph in the following variation: 12. 0-0 ♚b6+ 13. ♙h1 ♙b5 14. ♙e1 ♖g4-- and his knight-sortie crowns the damage done by Black's long-range pieces – the queen and the bishop.) 12... ♙c8 13. ♙a2 ♚a5 14. b4 ♙xc1+! 15. ♙xc1 ♚xa3 16. ♙a1 ♖xb4-- Provoost – De Graaff, Netherlands 1994. I would like to add that the computer programme "Rybka" likes very much Black's play in this game and thus it more or less admits condescendingly that

Chapter 1

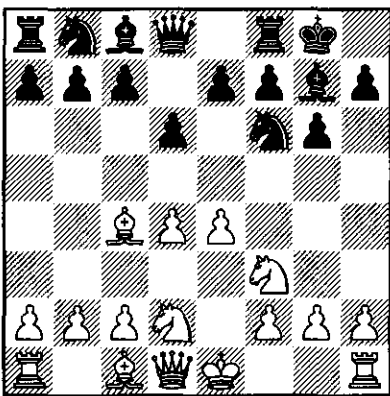
humans were capable of playing chess well even in pre-computer, or much rather in early computer times!

4...♗g7



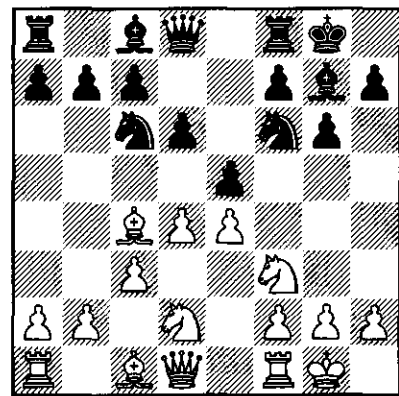
5.♗d3

After 5.♗c4, White's bishop is beautifully placed, but he cannot obtain any pluses out of his pressure against the f7-square. As a rule, Black will push e7-e5 sooner or later, provoking the exchange on e5 and then after some duly preparation he will develop his bishop to e6, initiating additional simplifications. For example: 5...0-0



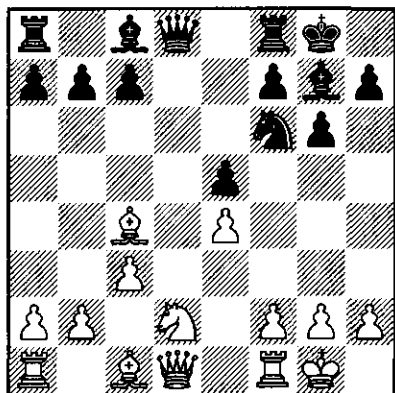
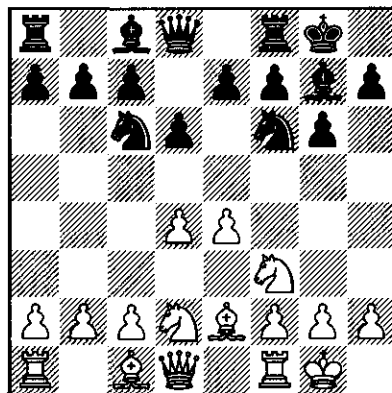
6.0-0 (After 6.♖e2, with the idea to prevent Black's standard

exchange operation ♖xe4 and d5, as well as to prepare the pawn-break e5-e6 just in case, Black has the interesting argument – 6... ♖h5!? – this knight is headed for the f4-square and he prepares e7-e5. There has followed: 7.♖f1 e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5 ♗f6 10.♖d2 ♗xg5 11.♖xg5 ♖xg5 12.♖xg5 ♖c6 13.♖e3 ♖f6= I.Sokolov – Carlier, Netherlands 2000, or 7.♖b3 c6 8.h3 e5 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.a4 ♖d7 11.g3 ♖e7 12.♗g5 ♖hf6 13.a5 h6 14.♗d2 b5!?, Pelikian – Vescovi, Teresina 2000, 15.axb6 ♖xb6 with counterplay for Black. In case of 6.♗b3, he can create some pressure against the d4-square: 6...♖c6 7.c3 e5 8.0-0 ♗g4 9.d5 ♖b8 10.c4 ♖a6 11.♗c2 c6 12.a3 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♖c8. In the game Butnorius – Tal, Riga 1975, after 14.h3, Black decided to sacrifice a piece with 14...♗h5!? 15.g4 ♖xg4 and in the complications the 8th World champion prevailed. He could have simply exchanged on f3 with a quite acceptable position.) 6...♖c6 7.c3 e5



8.dxe5 (With a bishop on c4, White had to consider the posi-

tional threat 8...exd4 9.cxd4 d5, while closing the centre with the move d4-d5 would not be attractive at all, since then he would need to lose more tempi to retreat the bishop from c4 and to support his centre with c3-c4.) 8...♞xe5 9.♖xe5 dxe5



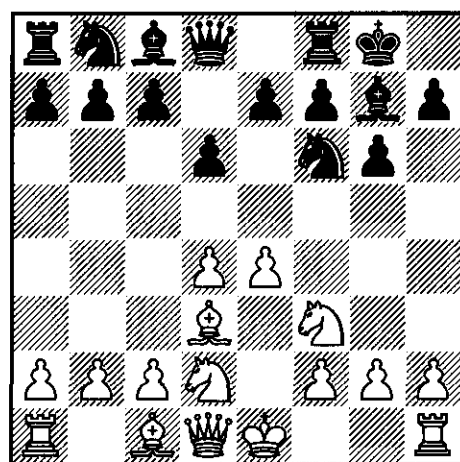
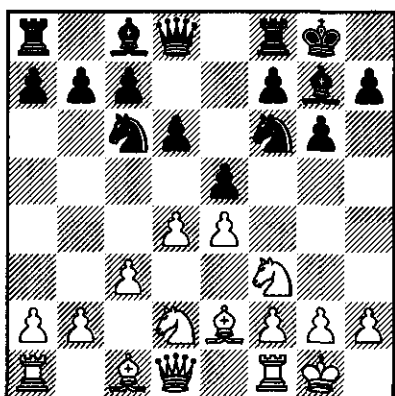
7.c3 (White will have to play this consolidating move sooner or later. In case of 7.♞e1, Black can reply with the useful waiting move – 7...♞e8. Now, White would not achieve anything with 8.d5 ♖b8 9.c4 e6!?, since his far-advanced d5-pawn is a juicy target for exchanges and simplification. 10.♕d3 c5. Black is trying to obtain a pawn-structure in the spirit of the Benoni Defence, but it would be at least as good for him to opt for 10...c6!?, forcing his opponent to clarify his intentions concerning his d5-pawn. 11.♖f1 exd5 12.exd5 ♕g4 13.♞xe8+ ♖xe8 14.h3 ♕xf3 15.♞xf3 ♖d7 16.♕d2 b6 17.♞b1, Cosulich – Zichichi, Venice 1971, 17...♕d4♣. After the immediate move 7.d5, Black should react in the same fashion as after the inclusion of the moves 7.♞e1 ♞e8 – retreating with the knight to b8 and undermining later his opponent's d5-pawn with the move e7-e6.) 7...e5

(diagram)

It would not be advantageous for White to allow the exchange on d4, while his knight is almost idle on the d2-square, for exam-

10.♞e1 (In case of 10.♞c2, Black should better deploy his pieces according to the same scheme, we have already mentioned: 10...♞e7 11.a4 ♕e6 12.b3 ♞fd8 13.♕a3 ♞e8 14.♞ad1 a6 15.♕xe6 ♞xe6 16.c4 ♞d7= Savic – Savicevic, Vrnjacka Banja 2006.) 10...♞e7 11.a4 (11.♞e2 ♕h6 12.a4 ♖h5 13. g3 a5 14.♖f1 ♕xc1 15. ♞axc1 ♕d7 16.b3 ♖f6 17.f3 ♞fd8= Gausel – D.Cramling, Slupsk 1987) 11...a5 12.b3 ♞d8 13.♞c2 ♖h5 14.g3 ♖f6 15.♕a3 ♞e8 16.♕b5 ♕d7 17.♕xd7 ♞xd7 18.♖c4 ♕f8 19. ♕xf8 ♖xf8= V.Sergeev – Nevednichy, Warsaw 2005. White's pieces look a bit more active, but he has no objects to attack and he can hardly support his initiative, which has ebbed away – **see game 1.**

5.♕e2 0–0 6.0–0 ♖c6



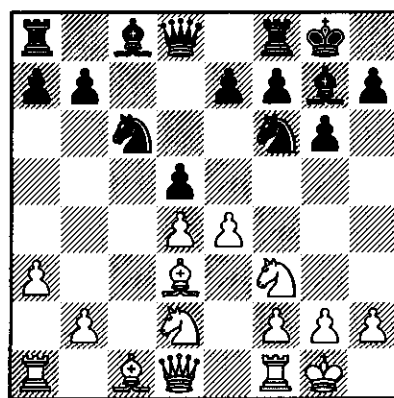
ple: 8.♞e1 exd4 9.cxd4 ♞e8 10.♔b5 ♔d7 11.h3 a5! and we enter the position from the game Christiansen – Goldin, Qingdao 2002, which we have analyzed after another move-order – 3...e5 4.c3 exd4. White cannot obtain an edge either after 10.d5 ♖b8 11.♔d3 c6 12.dxc6 ♖xc6 13.♖b3 ♔g4 14.♔g5 d5 15.♖bd2, draw, Ciocaltea – Bilek, Siegen 1970.

Following 8.dxe5 ♖xe5 9.♖xe5 (9.♞e1 ♞e7 10.♞c2 ♔g4 11.h3 ♔xf3 12.♖xf3 ♞fe8 13.♖d4, Korda – V.Smironov, Canberra 1999, 13... ♖ed7 14.♔f1 d5 15.e5 ♖e4) 9... dxe5 10.♞c2 (In the game Adorjan – Shamkovich, Polanica Zdroj 1970, the opponents failed to create anything interesting and after 10.b3, agreed to a draw.) 10...♞e7 11.a4 (11.b4 b6 12.a4 ♖h5 13.♔xh5 gxh5 14.b5 ♞e6 15.♞e1 ♖h8 16.♖f1 f5 17.♔a3 ♞f7 18.exf5 ♞xf5 19.♞xf5 ♔xf5 20.♖g3 ♔g6) Waitzkin – Ehlvest, Saint Martin 1993) 11... ♞d8 12.a5 ♔d7 13.♞e1 ♔h6 14.♖f3 ♔xc1 15.♞axc1, the game Tringov – Huebner, Skopje 1972 ended in a draw as well.

5...0-0

6.0-0

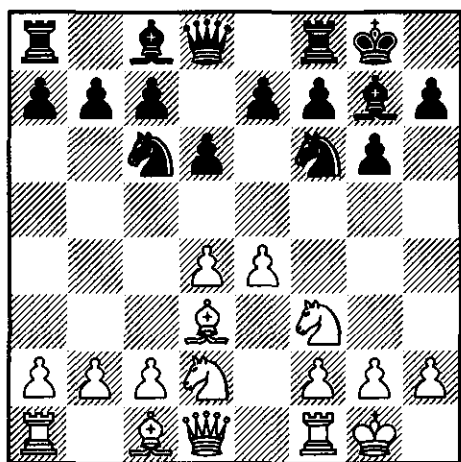
In the variation 6.c3 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♖c6 9.a3, “Rybka” suggested a very interesting idea – 9...d5! (This move has not been tested in practice yet. Black usually played 9...e5 10.d5 ♖e7, but after 11.a4! White would have a stable advantage. He continues with b3, develops the bishop to a3 and the knight to the c4-square, squeezing his opponent’s forces with the protection of the d6-pawn.).



“Rybka’s” move is strong and quite logical. Black ensures the unassailable position on c6 for his queen’s knight, while his king’s knight will soon go back to its natural f6 square. 10.e5 ♖h5

11. ♗b3 (White must begin long maneuvers with his knight to cover the f4-square.) 11...f6! 12. exf6 ♗xf6 13. h3 ♖d6. The weakness of Black's backward e7-pawn is immaterial in this position and he has an excellent counterplay thanks to the pressure against his opponent's d4-pawn.

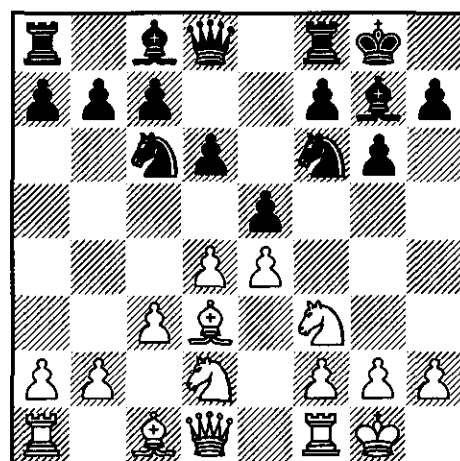
6... ♗c6



7.c3

White plays sometimes 7. ♖e1 and after 7...e5, he replies not with 8.c3, leading to positions, which we will analyze later, but with 8.dxe5, or even 8.d5. I believe, both these plans are not dangerous for Black, for example: 8.d5 ♗e7 9.c4 ♗h5 10. ♕f1, Velimirovic – Parma, Vrbas 1982, 10...c5!? 11.dxc6 ♗xc6 with mutual chances. It is evident that White's knight on d2 is too far away from the key d5-square. Or 8.dxe5 dxe5 9. ♗c4 ♗h5 10. ♕e3 ♖e7 11.c3 a5 12.a4 h6 13. ♗fd2 ♕e6 14.f3 ♖ad8 and Black has a very good position, Borngaesser – Ribli, Athens 1971.

7...e5



8.dxe5

About 8.h3 a5 9. ♖e1 ♗d7 – see 8. ♖e1 a5 9.h3 ♗d7.

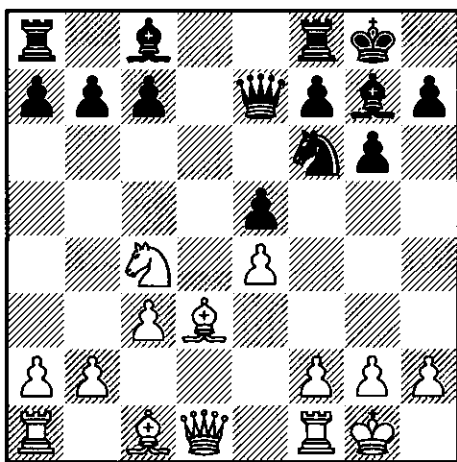
8. ♖e1 a5!? (This is a useful prophylactic move. Black occupies additional space on the queenside and in case of the symmetrical response 9.a4, he obtains the excellent b4-square for his knight: 9...exd4 10.cxd4 ♗b4 11. ♕f1 ♖e8, exerting pressure against White's e4-pawn. Theory considers the move 8...♗h5 as the main line for Black, but I think he should not disclose his plans so early. The rook-pawn move is much more flexible for him.) 9.h3 ♗d7 10. ♕b5?! (This mysterious sacrifice resembles a banal mistake. White had better choose 10.d5 ♗e7 11. ♕c2 h6↗) 10...exd4 11.cxd4 (He relied maybe on the move 11. ♕xc6, underestimating the intermediate exchange 11...dxc3 12. ♕xd7 cxd2 13. ♕xd2 ♖xd7+) 11...♗xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♕xd4 13. ♗f3 ♕f6 14. ♕h6 ♖e8 15. ♖d2 c6 16. ♕f1 ♗c5 and White had no compensa-

tion for the sacrificed pawn in the game, Harikrishna – Ivanchuk, Merida 2007 – **game 2**.

8...♖xe5 9.♗xe5

Or 9.♙c2 ♗d7 10.♗xe5 dxe5 11.♚e2 ♗h6 12.a4 ♚e7 13.b4 ♗g4 14.f3 ♗e6 15.♗c4 ♗xc1 16.♞axc1 ♗xc4 17.♚xc4, Dvoirys – Y.Zilberman, Oberwart 1994, 17...c5!? 18.b5 ♞ac8 19.♞fd1 ♞fd8 20.♗b3 ♗e8⇀

9...dxe5 10.♗c4 ♚e7



11.a4

White has tried here some other moves too. The following two games were not so interesting, but there arose a very dynamic fight in the third game:

11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4 ♚e6 13.♗e3 c6 14.♚f3 ♗h7 15.♗c4, draw, Nanu – Timoshenko, Predeal 2006;

11.♚e2 ♗d7 12.b4 ♞d8 13.♗c2 ♗f8, draw, Bednarski – Bilek, Skopje 1972;

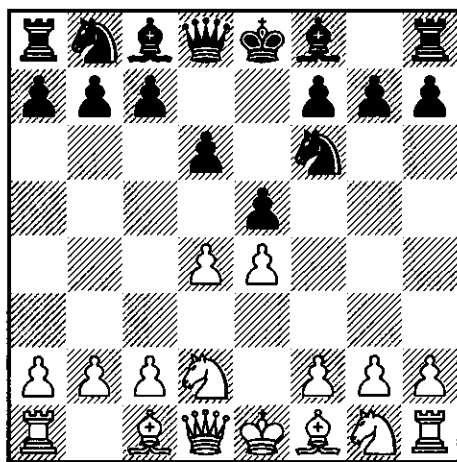
11.♚c2 b6 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 ♗b7 14.♗e3 ♞fd8 15.♞ad1 ♞d6 16.f3 ♞ad8 17.♗e2 h5 18.♞xd6 ♞xd6 19.♞d1 ♗h6⇀ Ambroz – Van Wely, Bern 1993.

11...♗h5 12.♞e1

12.g3 ♗h3 13.♞e1 ♞ad8 14.♚c2 ♗f6 15.b3 ♗g5 16.♗a3 ♚f6 17.♗f1 ♗xf1 18.♞xf1 ♞fe8 19.♚e2 ♚e6= Meduna – Babula, Lazne Bohdanec 1994.

12...♗f4 13.♗xf4 exf4 14.e5 ♗e6 15.♗f1 ♚g5 Fontaine – Nakamura, Le Port Marly 2009 – **game 3**.

A2) 3...e5



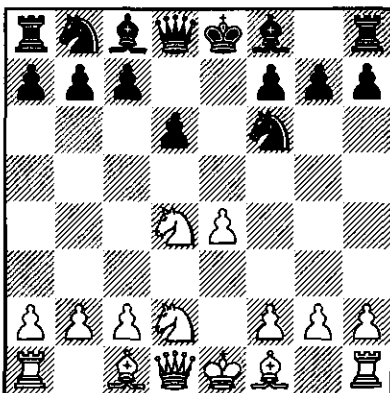
4.c3

4.d5?! After this move it becomes quite clear that in this pawn-structure the place of White's knight is not the d2-square for sure. Where should it go to open the diagonal for the bishop on c1 – to b3, or to c4. In fact, he must first take care of the protection of his e4-pawn and all that takes time. Black succeeds in undermining his opponent's centre and he obtains a comfortable game. 4...c6 5.c4 ♗e7 6.♗d3, Hobelsberger – Haeusler, Passau 1998, 6...0-0 7.♗gf3 ♗a6 8.0-0 ♗c5 9.♗c2 a5 and later he places his bishop

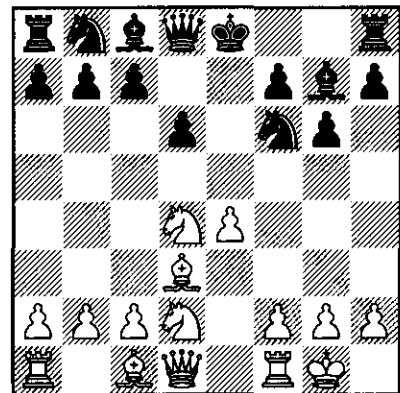
on d7 and prepares the standard pawn-break b7-b5. Notice that White's knight on d2 is again totally misplaced – it impedes the action both of the queen and the bishop on c1, while Black can accomplish his plans with ease.

With a white knight on d2, hampering his development, the exchange on e5 is completely harmless for Black. His most effective set-up is tremendously simple and easy to understand. He develops his bishop on c5, the queen on e7 (in order to protect the pawn on e5) and then completes calmly his development: 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♖gf3 ♗c5 6. ♗c4 (Naturally, the e5-pawn is poisoned: 6. ♖xe5? ♗xf2+ 7. ♖xf2 ♔d4+ 8. ♖e1 ♔xe5+) 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♔e7 8. ♔e2 a6 9.a4 ♗a7 10.b3 ♖c6 11. ♗a3 ♗c5 12. ♗xc5 ♔xc5 13.c3 a5 14. ♔e3 ♔xe3 15.fxe3, and the opponents agreed to a draw, Iuldachev – Dzhumaev, Tashkent 2008.

It is inconsistent for White to play 4. ♖gf3, since the main idea behind the move 3. ♖d2 is to preserve the possibility c2-c3, supporting the d4-pawn. There may follow: 4...exd4 5. ♖xd4

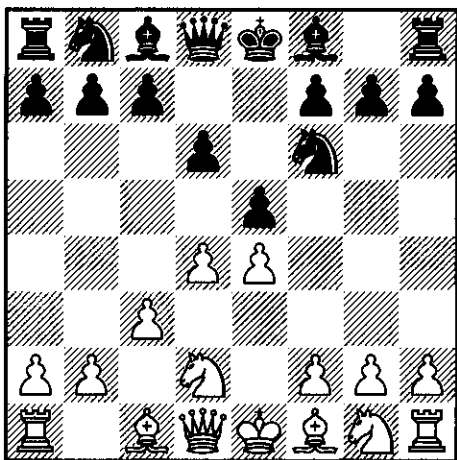


5...g6 (After the exchange on d4 and the deployment of Black's bishop on the long diagonal, the drawbacks of the placement of White's knight on d2 will be emphasized convincingly.) 6. ♗d3 (It seems sensible for White to develop his bishop to g2 in this pawn-structure, but the position of his knight on d2 precludes him from obtaining an advantage anyway: 6.g3 ♗g7 7. ♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e8 9.c3 c5!? The weakness of the pawn on d6 and the d5-square is not so evident yet, so Black has the possibility to develop his light pieces on the queenside to comfortable positions. 10. ♖c2 ♖c6 11. ♖e3, Hidding – L.Mueller, Kleve 1999, 11...♖b8 12.a4 ♗e6. He has several promising plans now: d6-d5, a7-a6 and b7-b5, and if White removes his knight from d2 – ♖a5-b3 etc.) 6...♗g7 7.0-0



7...0-0 (Black should avoid the simple trap: 7...♖xe4? 8. ♖xe4 ♗xd4 9. ♗b5+.) 8. ♖e1 ♖e8 9.c3 (White is possibly annoyed to consider all the time the possible moves of Black's knight on f6 and he decides to protect his knight

on d4.) 9...♖bd7 (It deserves attention for Black to have in mind the set-up – 9...c5!? 10.♘4f3 ♘c6.) 10.♙c2 d5!? (He is trying to equalize in the quickest possible fashion, provoking exchanges and simplification. He could have maintained the tension, though... – 10...a6 11.a4 ♘e5!? White has more space, but his pieces are not harmoniously placed and Black has an excellent game.) 11.exd5 ♗xe1+ 12.♚xe1 ♘xd5 13.♘2f3, Dvoiry – Miltner, Biel 2003, 13...♘7f6 14.♙g5 c5! 15.♘b3 ♚b6 and Black's prospects are at least equal.



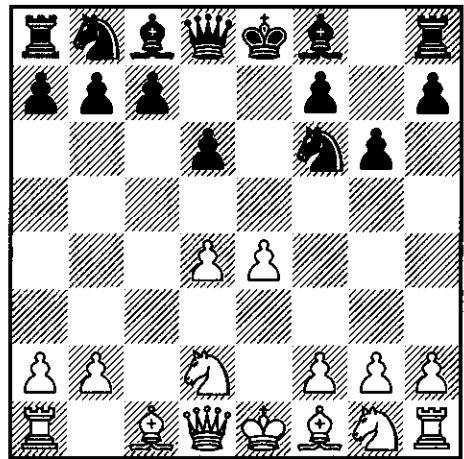
A2a) 4...exd4

A2b) 4...♙e7

There are so many different set-ups in these lines from the Modern Philidor Defence and so many transpositions that to analyze all of them move by move is practically impossible. It is useless to try to achieve that and it would be much more reasonable to mention the useful ideas and to

apply them depending on the circumstances on the board.

A2a) 4...exd4!? 5.cxd4 g6

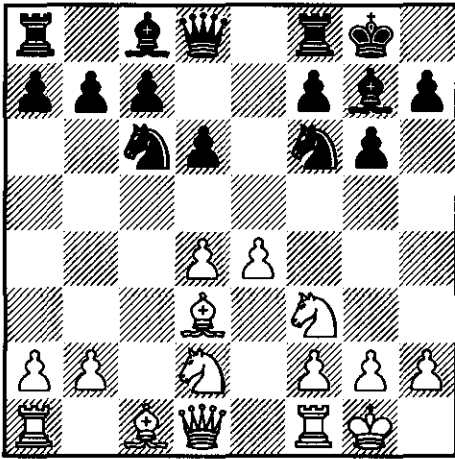


So, White's two central pawns are encountered by a single black pawn on d6. Meanwhile, after the exchange on d4, White has obtained an access to the c3-square, but he can hardly make any good use of it. His queen's knight has already been developed to d2 and it impedes the protection of the d4-pawn by the queen. Black plans to develop his knight to g7 and his rook (after castling short) to e8 and the knight on c6, exerting pressure against both his opponent's central pawns. Most probably, White will have to advance one of them and then Black will obtain an outpost in the centre.

6.♘gf3 ♙g7 7.♙d3

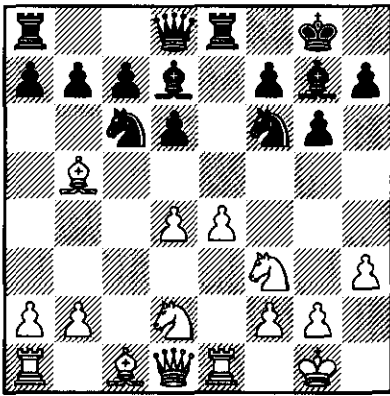
White takes care of the protection of his e4-pawn in advance. In addition, his bishop on c4 could have been attacked with tempo after d6-d5.

7...0-0 8.0-0 ♖c6



9.h3

It seems inconsistent for White to play 9. ♖b5, although he can usually afford to lose a tempo in the opening remaining in the vicinity of equality. There may follow: 9... ♗d7 10. ♖e1 ♖e8 11.h3



Black's attempts to play in the spirit of the Ruy Lopez may end up very badly for him: 11... ♖e7 12.a3 ♗e8 (After the transfer of the queen to e8, he is threatening ♖xd4 winning a pawn. In addition, his opponent's e4-pawn is hanging. Still, White can parry easily both threats.) 13. ♗d3 a5 14. ♗c2 ♖d5! (It is obvious that Black relied on this trick.) 15. ♖d1?

(White is helping his opponent. He had to play instead 15. ♖f1!, continuing calmly his development and covering the f4-square in the process. It is easy to see that the d4-pawn is untouchable: 15... ♖xd4? 16. ♖xd4 ♗xd4 17. ♗c4 and that means that Black's counterplay has reached its dead end and he will soon need to turn to passive defence.) 15... ♖f4 (Now, everything comes out perfect for Black, since he regroups his forces in the best possible fashion obtaining an excellent outpost in the centre.) 16. ♗f1 ♖e6! 17.d5 ♖cd4 18. ♗b1 ♖xf3+ 19. ♖xf3 ♖c5+ Dizdar – Smirin, Zagreb 1993.

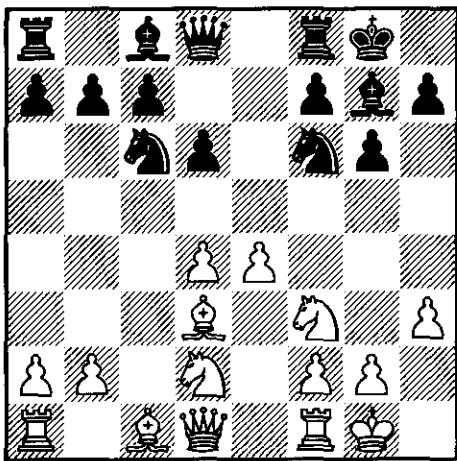
11...a5! 12.a3 ♖e7 13. ♗d3 ♖h5 (This is the same motif as in Smirin's game, but tactics being excluded.) 14.d5 ♖b8 15. ♖f1 ♖f6 16. ♖g3 ♖a6 17. ♗xa6 (White must exchange the knight in order to prevent it from coming to the c5-outpost.) 17... ♖xa6 18. ♗f4 h6 19. ♖c1 a4, Christiansen – Goldin, Qingdao 2002 – **game 4**. White has acquired a bit more space, but Black has a bishop-pair and a good position.

(diagram)

9...a5!

This energetic move is played with the idea to prevent White's regrouping on the queenside. It is now bad for him to play 10.a3 (with the idea b2-b4), or 10. ♖b3, because of the obvious response a5-a4.

10. ♖e1 ♖d7



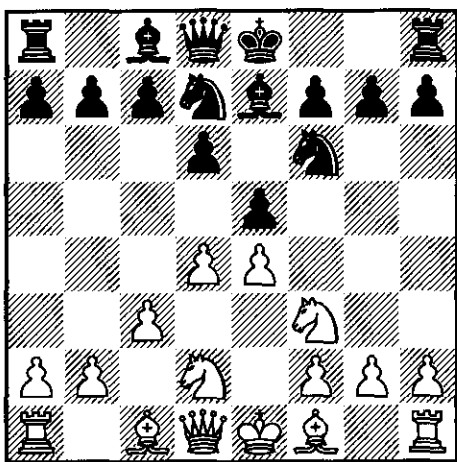
White has failed to remove his knight from d2 and to protect his d4-pawn with his bishop, so he will have to advance now his central pawn.

11.d5 ♖ce5 12.♗f1 a4 13.♞b1 ♜xf3+

The alternative for Black is to play 13...♞e8, not forcing the issue.

14.♜xf3 ♜c5 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗d2 ♞e8 17.♞c2 ♗d7, draw, Godena – Hamdouchi, Calvia 2007.

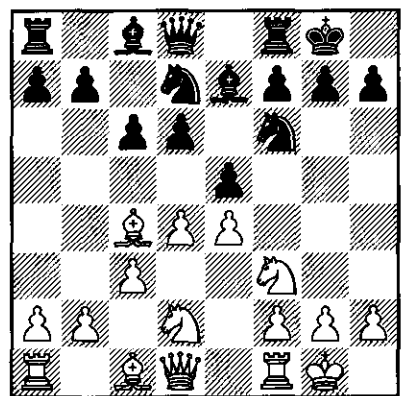
A2b) 4...♗e7 5.♜gf3 ♜bd7



6.♗d3

6.♗c4 (No doubt, this bishop

is more actively placed here than on d3, or e2, but as we will soon understand, it will need to retreat to b3, so White will have to lose another tempo to reach with the bishop its final destination.) 6...0-0 7.0-0 (In case of the prophylactic move 7.♗b3, defending in advance against the possible counter strike d6-d5, it would be interesting for Black to play 7...b5!?, opening the long diagonal for the bishop on c8 and gaining additional space on the queen-side. There may follow: 8.♞e2 ♞b8 9.d5 a5 10.♗c2 ♗b7 11.0-0 c6 12.dxc6 ♗xc6 13.♞d1 ♞c7↗ Sowray – Van Der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1983. This pawn-structure is typical for the Ruy Lopez. Black has achieved a lot in view of his possible counterplay. He is ready to push d6-d5 and he has another attractive plan connected with b5-b4, attacking White's queenside.) 7...c6

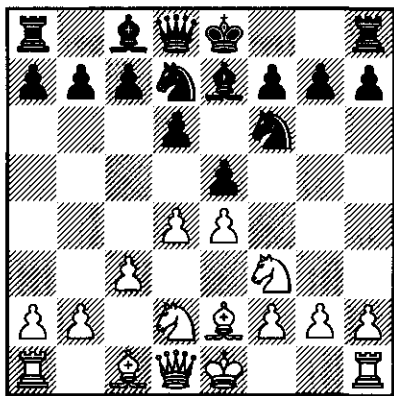


8.♗b3 (White can hardly continue without this move; otherwise, he will have to consider all the time Black's possibilities b7-b5, or d6-d5, as well as the attack

3. ♖d2 e5 4.c3 ♗e7 5. ♖gf3 ♖bd7

against the e4-pawn, followed by d6-d5.) 8...h6 9. ♖e1 ♖e8 10. ♖f1 ♗f8 11. ♖g3 ♗c7 12. ♖h4 ♖b6 (12... d5?! 13.exd5 cxd5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15. ♗f4 ♗d6 16. ♖gf5 ♗xf5 17. ♖xf5 ♖f3+ 18. ♗xf3 ♗xf4 19.g3 ♗e5 20. ♖ad1± Kachkaev – G.Pogosian, Kaluga 2002.) 13. ♖hf5 d5 14. ♗f3 ♖xe4 15. ♖xe4 dxe4 16. ♖xe4 ♗xf5 17. ♗xf5 exd4 18. ♗f4 ♗d7 19. ♗xd7 ♖xd7 20. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21.cxd4 ♖f6 with an approximately equal endgame, Kovacevic – Mestel, Hastings 1983.

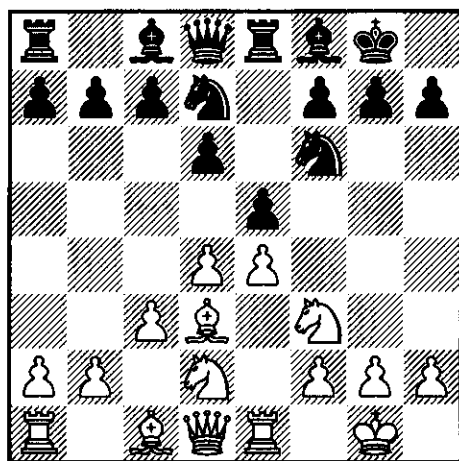
6. ♗e2 – This move is not ambitious at all. White should not just develop pieces, but he should try to deploy them to their optimal squares, preventing the opponent from doing the same. If he fails to do that, his opening initiative will evaporate in a flash.



Pay attention to Black's next five moves, which are absolutely standard for the Philidor Defence. The next game was played on the Internet and most probably some of the moves were played by Zurab Azmaiparashvili "in advance" – that was he was ready with them even before having seen what the

opponent had played. 6...0–0 7.0–0 c6 8. ♖e1 ♗c7 9. ♗f1 ♖e8 10. ♗c2 ♗f8 11.b4 d5! (Black is perfectly prepared to inflict this standard counter strike against White's centre. Still, it deserved attention for him to play at first 11...a5 12.b5 and only then – 12... d5.) 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 14. ♖f3 ♗h5 15.e5 ♗f5 16. ♗d3 ♗xd3 17. ♗xd3 ♖e4± Rublevsky – Azmaiparashvili, Internet 2004.

6...0–0 7.0–0 ♖e8 8. ♖e1 ♗f8



9. ♖f1

9. ♗c2, Trabert – Resika, Budapest 1999, 9...c6 10.h3 ♗c7 11. ♖f1 b6±

9.a4 h6 10.a5 ♖b8 11.b4 b5 12.axb6 axb6 13. ♗b5, Magai – Efimov, Istanbul 2000, 13... ♗b7 14.d5 ♖a8 15. ♗b2 ♖xa1 16. ♗xa1 ♗a8 and Black's position is a bit cramped indeed, but it is quite solid.

9...g6 10. ♖g3 ♗g7 11.h3 b6 12. ♗g5

12.a4 a6 13. ♗c2 ♗b7±

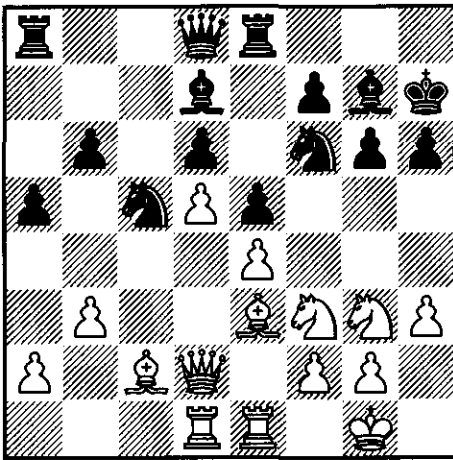
12...h6 13. ♗e3 ♗b7 14.d5 c6

He is not afraid to weaken the d5-square, because the enemy knights are too far away from it.

15.c4 a5

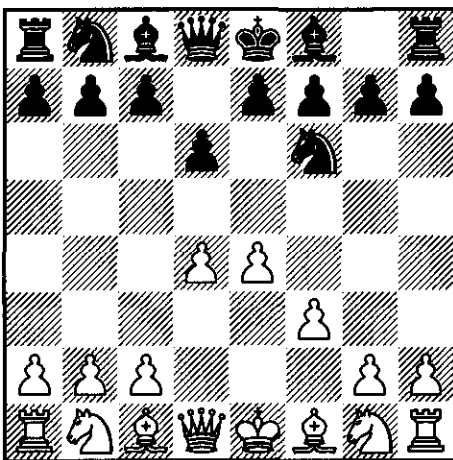
Black ensures the excellent c5-outpost for his knight.

16.♖d2 ♔h7 17.♞ad1 ♘c5 18.♙c2 cxd5 19.cxd5 ♙c8 20. b3 ♙d7 ⇒ Popovic – Damljanovic, Yugoslavia 1994.



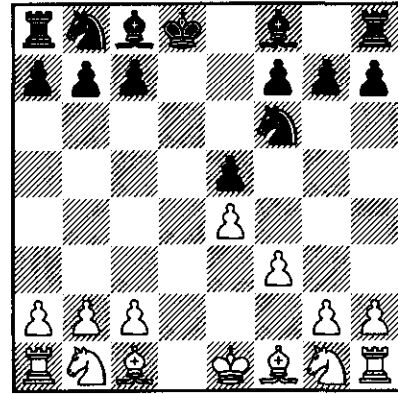
There has arisen on the board a position with dynamic balance and Black is perfectly prepared to neutralize an offensive by the opponent on both sides of the board.

B) 3.f3

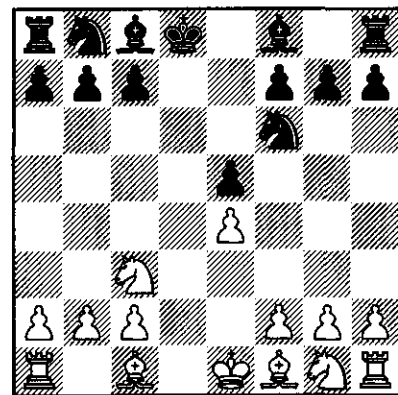


3...♘bd7

After the immediate 3...e5, White can enter an endgame with 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♚xd8+ ♔xd8



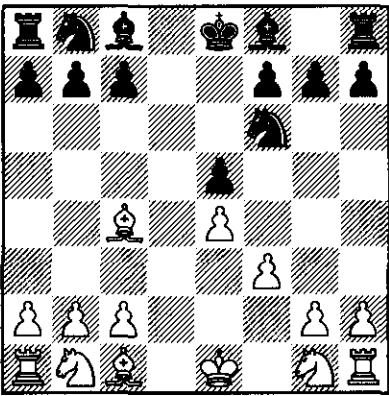
According to the French grandmaster C.Bauer, who is the author of the excellent book “The Philidor Files”, after 6.♙c4 ♔e8, followed by ♘bd7 and ♙c5, Black has no problems, except one – he has practically no chances of playing for a win. In our third chapter we will analyze a similar endgame, arising after 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♚xd8+ ♔xd8



White’s knight on g1 can be developed there on f3, attacking the e5-pawn and this, according to Bauer, enables him to seize the initiative in the opening. Now, Black has enough time to develop

his forces comfortably.

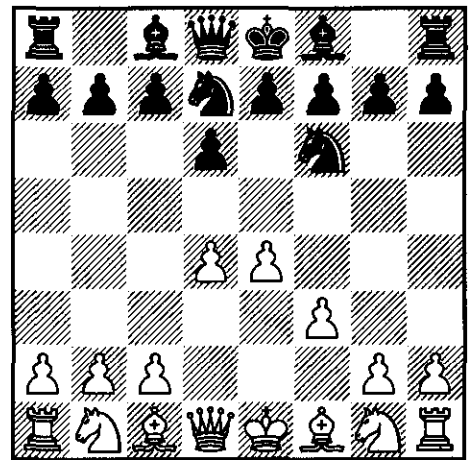
Still, there are some other fine points to consider. In that end-game, White's knight on c3 is not so well placed and after the prophylactic move c7-c6, he will need several tempi to find a more suitable square for it. See how young Vladimir Kramnik played this position, while his experienced opponent Johnathan Speelman failed to equalize and he never even thought about playing for a win.



7.♗e3 ♖bd7 8.♞d2! (This knight is headed for c4, or b3.) 8...♗c5 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗h4 ♗e7 (Black creates the threat 11...♞xe4, but even with the trade of the dark-squared bishops the game is far from over.) 11.♗f2 ♗c5 12.♞h3 (White wins a tempo in the process, in order to deploy his knight on d3, from where it can attack the e5-pawn.) 12...♗xf2+ 13.♞xf2 ♖e7 14.0-0-0 ♞c5 15.b4 (It was also interesting for him to try 15.♞f1 ♗e6 16.♞e3, with a slight advantage, but that was a blitz game, so White's desire to play more aggressively was quite understandable, since it would be always use-

ful to force your opponent to defend, when you were playing with a faster time-control.) 15...♞a4 (15...♞cd7!?) 16.♗b3 ♞c3 17.♞de1 ♗e6 18.♖b2 ♞b5 19.♞d3± Kramnik – Speelman, Biel 1993. It is likely that Black should be able to make a draw in this position after an adequate defence, but it is quite obvious that the game will surely end in only two possible results.

Therefore, I recommend to Black to prepare the move e7-e5, developing at first his knight to d7.

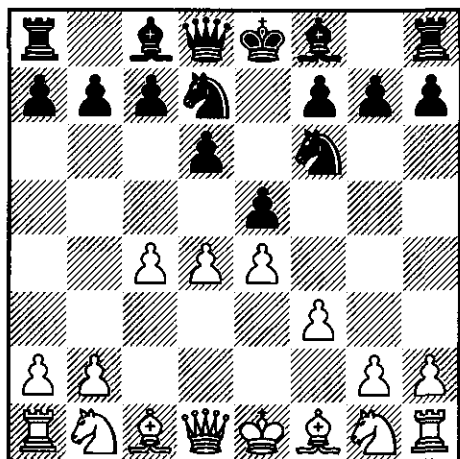


4.c4

The move 4.♗e3 usually leads to a transposition of moves, because after 4...e5 5.d5 (About 5.c4 ♗e7 – see 4.c4 e5 5.♗e3 ♗e7.) 5...♗e7, White can hardly avoid playing the fortifying move 6.c4. Here after 6...0-0 (Garry Kasparov did not maneuver so successfully with his pieces on the kingside in the First World Blitz Championship and he failed to equalize: 6...c6 7.♞c3 a6 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♞ge2 ♞h5

10.♖d2 g6 11. 0–0 ♖g7 12.♔h1 f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4 e4 15.♗c2 c5 16.g4!± Dlugy – Kasparov, Saint John 1988.) 7.♗c3, leads to a position, which we analyze after another move-order – see 4.c4 e5 5.d5 ♗e7 6.♗c3 0–0 7.♗e3.

4...e5



Now, White is faced with a choice – he can protect his pawn with the knight, or he can advance it.

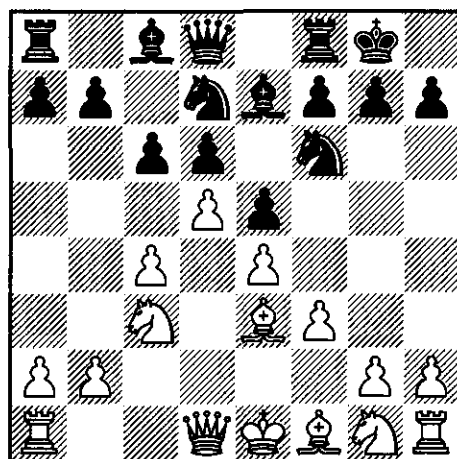
B1) 5.d5

B2) 5.♗e2

Black should not be afraid of 5.♗e3 ♗e7 (It is also good for him to play 5...exd4, because White's bishop on d4 is a bit misplaced, for example: 6.♗xd4 ♗e7 7.♗c3 0–0 8.♗d3 ♗e5 9.♗ge2 ♗fd7 10.b3 ♗h4+ 11.♗g3 ♗xd3+ 12.♖xd3 ♗e5 13.♖d2 f5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.0–0 ♗g6 16.♗xe5 dxe5 17.♖xd8 ♖axd8± Sirnik – Skoberne, Murška Sobota 2007. Black's bishop-pair is tremendously powerful in this open position, while White

can hardly exploit the weakness of his opponent's isolated e5-pawn.) 6.♗d3 (6.♗c3 c6 7.♗ge2 – see 5.♗e2 c6 6.♗bc3 ♗e7 7.♗e3) 6...exd4 7.♗xd4 ♗e5 8.♗e2 0–0 9.0–0 ♗fd7 10.b3 (It is bad for White to play 10.♗bc3?, in view of 10...♗c5 11.♗c2 ♗xc4 12.b4 ♗e6 13.♗f2 ♗g5 14.♖d3 ♗e5 15.♖d1 c6± Aliev – Iuldachev, Ashkhabad 1996. Black can counter 10.f4 with the nice tactical trick 10...♗xd3 11.♖xd3 ♗e5!, enabling him to regroup advantageously his light pieces: 12.♖c2 – 12.fxe5? dxe5 and thanks to the pin Black regains his piece and obtains a positional advantage – 12...♗c6 13.♗f2 f5±) 10...♗c5!? 11.♗c2 ♗c6 12.♗b2 (12.♗e3 ♗f6 13.♗bc3 a5±) 12...♖e8 13.♗bc3 ♗f6±

B1) 5.d5 ♗e7 6.♗c3 0–0 7.♗e3 c6



We are again on a crossroads, because White has numerous possibilities to continue with his development.

3.f3 ♖bd7 4.c4 e5 5.d5 ♕e7 6.♞c3 0-0 7.♕e3 c6

B1a) 8.♞ge2

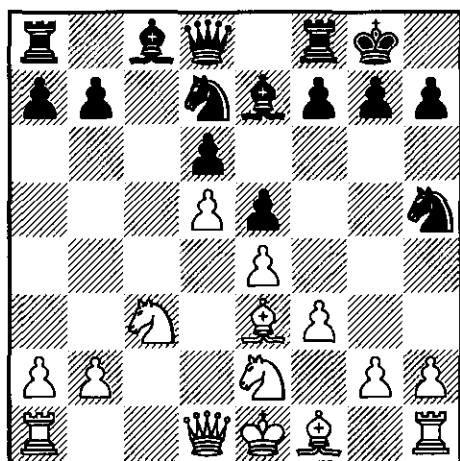
B1b) 8.♕d3

B1c) 8.♞h3

B1d) 8.♝d2

It would be too much for White to play 8.g4, since chess should not be played with pawns only! After 8...cxd5 9.exd5 (It looks more natural for him to follow with 9.cxd5 a6.) 9...♞e8 10.♞ge2, Papp – Sutorikhin, Szeged 1998, 10...f5 11.gxf5 ♞xf5 12.♞g3 ♞f7, Black has a good counterplay, thanks to his pressure against the f3-pawn and the permanent threat ♕g5, exchanging the dark-squared bishops.

B1a) 8.♞ge2 cxd5 9.cxd5 ♞h5



In this pawn-structure, when White's central pawns have been fixed on light squares, it would be advantageous for Black to trade the dark-squared bishops. This is one of the ideas behind the move 9...♞h5 – to prepare ♕g5. In addition, he opens the road for his

f7-pawn and if White plays g2-g3 at some moment (This move can be provoked with the help of the check from h4.), then the maneuver f7-f5-f4 may become very unpleasant for White. Finally, Black may sacrifice a pawn with the move ♞f4!?, obtaining as a compensation for it the central e5-outpost for his knight and the access to the long diagonal for his bishop on e7. He should better sacrifice a pawn only if White will have to capture on f4 with his bishop, for example after he removes his knight from e2.

10.♝d2

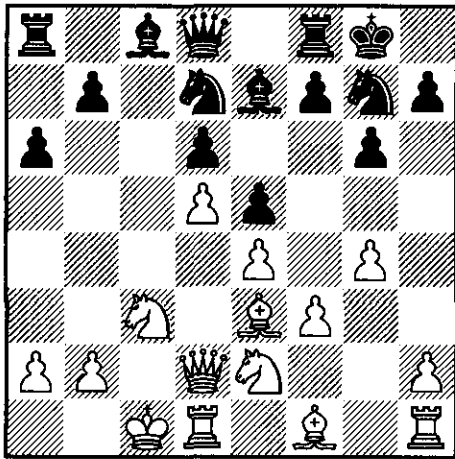
In case of 10.g3 ♕g5 11.♕f2, Franic – Kiss, Mravinci 1993, Black has a very powerful maneuver, worth remembering: 11...♝f6! 12.♕g2 ♝h6! He is threatening 13...♕e3, exchanging the dark-squared bishop and after 13.♝d3, Black can reply with 13...♞c5 and White will have to trade his bishop on f2 either for the knight on c5, or for the bishop on g5. Instead of 13.♝d3, it deserves attention for White to play more aggressively with 13.h4!? ♕e3 14.g4 ♞f4 15.♞xf4 ♕xf4 16.♞e2!? and if Black follows carelessly his plan – 16...♕e3, then after 17.g5 ♕xf2+ 18.♞f2 ♝g6 19.♕h3, his situation may become worrisome. Still, bishops are not omnipotent and for example after: 16...b6!? 17.♞xf4 exf4, Black has a good position again, because his knight obtains an excellent outpost on e5

and his bishop goes to a6, while White's king remains in the centre.

10...a6

He has defended against both ♖g5 and ♜f4, but Black still has numerous resources up his sleeve. At the beginning he can open a second front on the queenside.

11.0-0-0 g6 12.g4 ♜g7



13.♞g1?!

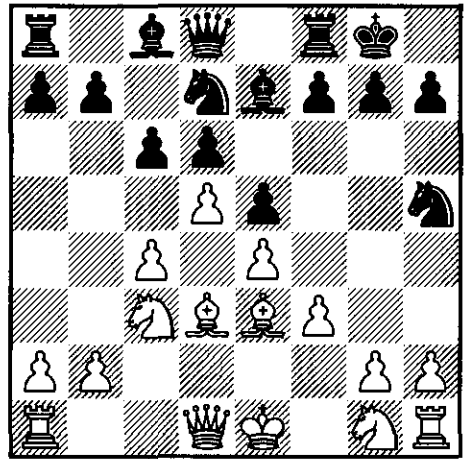
This is a loss of time. White should have played instead 13.♞b1 b5 14.♜g3 ♜b6 15.♞c1 ♖h4!?! (preventing opening of the h-file with h2-h4) with a double edged position.

13...b5 14.♞b1 ♜b6 15.♜c1

White can avoid the trade of the dark-squared bishops with 15.♞c2, but then after 15...♖d7 and ♞c8, his knight on c3 would come under a very dangerous pin and Black's queenside initiative would develop quite effortlessly.

15...b4 16.♜3e2 ♜c4 17.♞d3 ♜xe3 18.♞xe3 ♖g5 Guerra – Galego, Oliveira de Azemeis 2001.

B1b) 8.♖d3 ♜h5!



9.♞d2

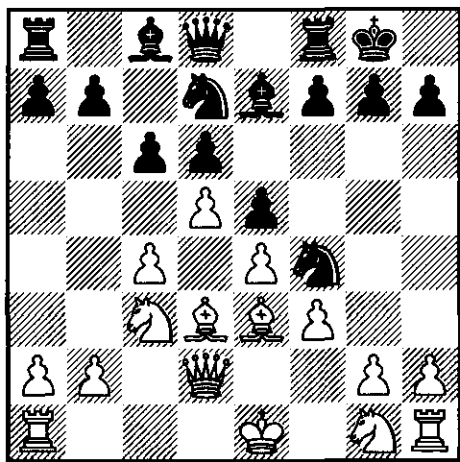
Black can counter 9.♜ge2 with 9...♖h4+ (This intermediate check is necessary in order to weaken the pawn on f3.) 10.g3 ♖g5 11.♖f2 ♞f6! (We are already familiar with this maneuver.) 12.♜c1 ♞h6 13.0-0 ♖e3 and he obtains a comfortable game.

White can no doubt prevent the trade of the dark-squared bishops, but then Black has other resources of obtaining counterplay: 9.g3 ♖g5 10.♖f2 g6 11.h4 ♖h6 12.♜ge2 ♞f6 13.♜c1 ♞e7 14.♖c2 ♜b6 15.b3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♖d7 17.♜1e2 f5 ♞ Miltner – Reinhardt, Buchen 2007.

9...♜f4!?

In case he plays routinely, in the spirit of the Saemisch system, White ends up with a slight, but stable advantage, for example: 9...g6 10.♜ge2 f5 11.0-0-0 f4 12.♖f2 c5 13.♞b1 a6 14.♞hf1 ♜g7 15.♜c1 ♞b8 16.♞e2 ♜f6 17.a4 ♜ge8 18.♜1a2± Boensch – Lerner, Berlin 1989.

3.f3 ♖bd7 4.c4 e5 5.d5 ♕e7 6.♞c3 0-0 7.♙e3 c6



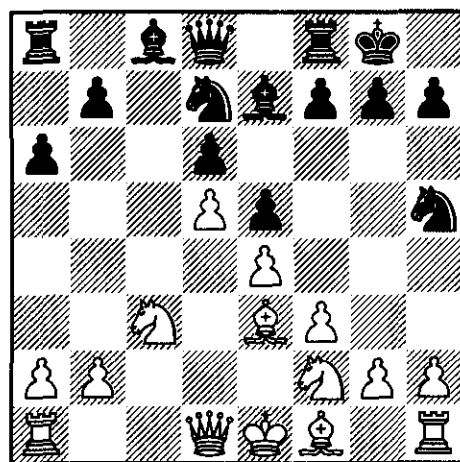
He is preparing to open the f-file in order to prevent White's possible kingside activity.

Black plans to organize an offensive on the other side of the board according to the standard scheme: ♖c8, ♞c4, b5, ♚a5.

B1c) 8.♞h3 cxd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.♞f2 ♞h5

10.♙f1

After 10.♙xf4 exf4 11.♚xf4?! (It is better for White to choose 11.0-0-0, but even then after 11...♞e5 12.♜b1 a5!?, Black has no problems at all.) 11...♞e5 12.♚d2 (Or 12.♙e2? ♙g5 and White loses his queen.) 12...♙g5 13.♚e2 ♚b6 and Black has an excellent position.



10...♞b6 11.g3 ♞h5 12.0-0-0 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♙d7 14.♜b1

In case of 14.g4?! Black can sacrifice a pawn with the move 14...♞f4, opening the long diagonal for his dark-squared bishop.

He is trying to attack White's centre on both sides of the board.

11.♞d3

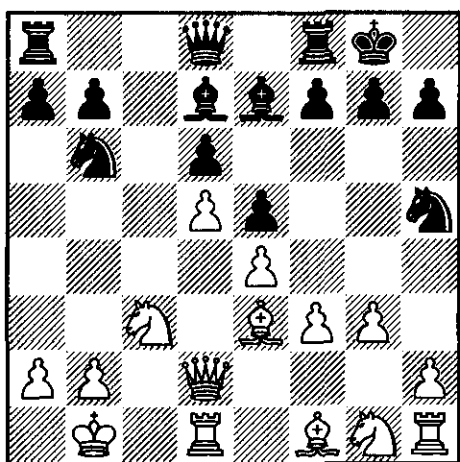
Or 11.♚d2 g6 12.♙h6 ♞g7 13.g4 (White is trying to impede the pawn-advance f7-f5, but he weakens the h4-square and now Black can prevent mechanically the advance of his opponent's h-pawn.) 13...♙h4 14.0-0-0 ♞c5 15.♞d3 ♞xd3+ 16.♙xd3 ♙d7 17.♜b1 ♖c8⇌ Martinovic – Popchev, Belgrade 1998.

11...♙g5 12.♙f2 ♞f4 13.♞xf4

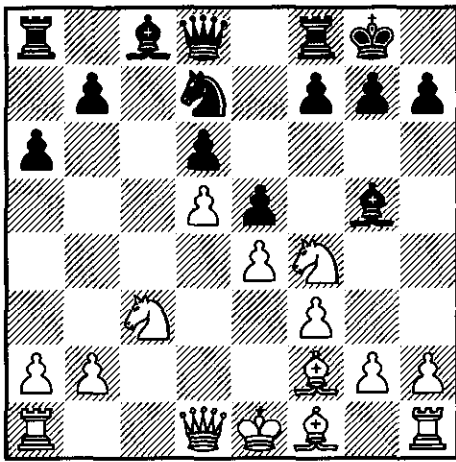
(diagram)

13...exf4

He ensures the excellent e5-outpost for his knight.

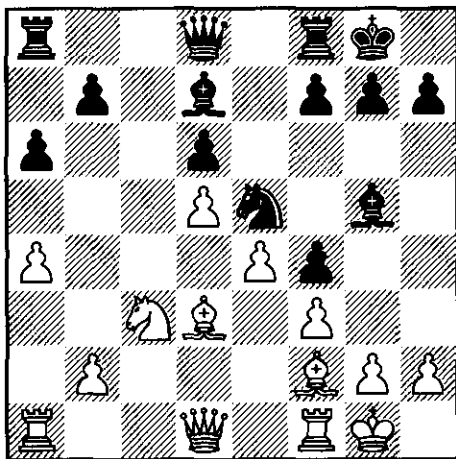


14...f5!?!⇌



Meanwhile, it would be very good for Black to play 13...♙xf4, for example: 14.g3 ♗h6 15.♙g2 b5 with an excellent game for him.

14.♙d3 ♘e5 15.0-0 ♙d7
16.a4



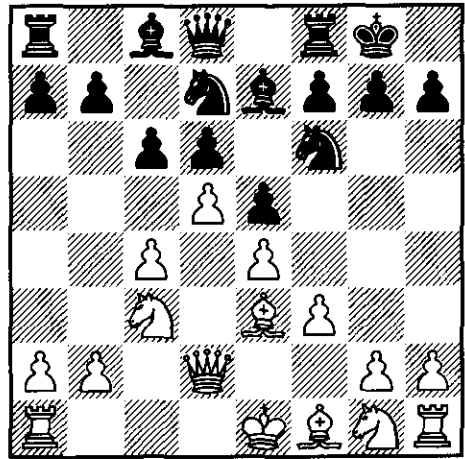
16...♞f6?!

He is acting too straightforwardly, planning to attack White's king. It seems more consistent and logical for Black to have chosen 16...♙h4 17.♙d4 ♞c8 with mutual chances.

17.♙e2 ♞ae8 18.♞d4 h5 19. a5! ♙h6 20.♘a4 g5 21.♘b6 ♙b5 22.♙xb5 axb5 23.♞b4 g4 24.♙d4 B.Savchenko – Chuprov, Sochi 2004. White's advantage is

obvious, but later he made mistakes and Black managed to survive.

B1d) 8.♞d2



8...a5!

This prophylactic move is necessary, so that his knight can occupy quite comfortably the c5-outpost. After the immediate 8...♘c5, White has the rather unpleasant resource – 9.b4! cxd5 10.cxd5 ♘cd7 11.♞c1±

He is better too after 8...♞a5 9.a3 ♞c7 10.♙d3 cxd5 11.cxd5 ♘c5 12.♙c2±, or 8...♘h5 9.0-0-0 a5 10.♘ge2±

9.♘h3

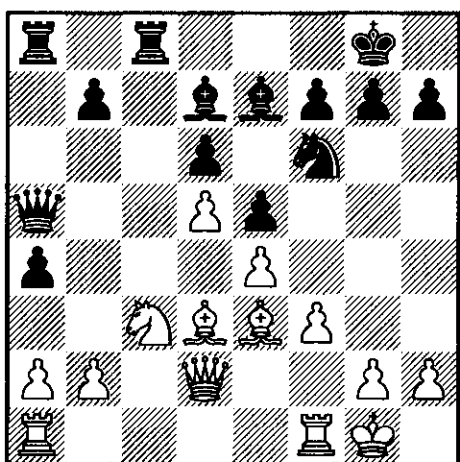
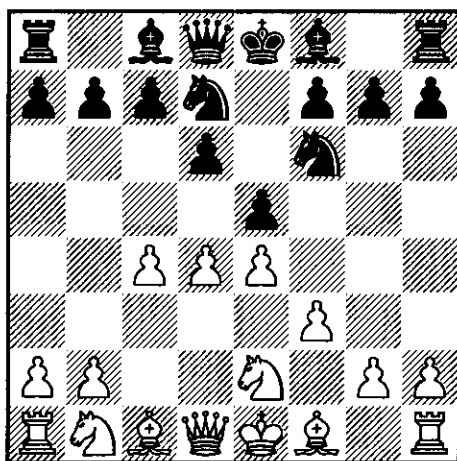
Castling long seems to be very risky for White. In the next game however, after 9.0-0-0 a4 10.♙b1 ♞a5 11.♘ge2 ♘c5 12.♘c1 cxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♞xa5 ♞xa5 15.cxd5 f5♞ Bukhman – Zagrebelny, St Petersburg 1994, there arose a double-edged endgame, but Black play could be improved (for example, he should not exchange on d5 on move 12) and

3.f3 ♖bd7 4.c4 e5 5.♗e2 c6 6.♗bc3 ♕e7

then White's king might come under a direct attack.

Black has a comfortable game following 9.♗ge2 a4 10.♗g3 ♖c5, or 9.♕d3 a4 10.♗ge2 ♗a5 11.0-0 ♖c5 12.♗g3 g6 13.♞ab1 ♕d7↗

9...a4 10.♗f2 ♗a5 11.♕e2 ♖c5 12.0-0 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♕d7 14.♗d3 ♖xd3 15.♕xd3 ♞fc8



16.♗e2

Black has no problems even with queens present on the board, for example: 16.♞fc1 ♕d8 17.♗f2, Werner – Stimpel, Bad Wiessee 2003, 17...h6 18.a3 b5↗

16...♗xd2 17.♕xd2 ♕d8 18.♕e3 ♗e8 19.♞fc1 ♖c7 20.♖f2 ♖f8 21.♞c3 ♖a6 22.♞xc8 ♞xc8 23.♞c1 ♖c5 24.♕b1 ♕b6 25.g4 ♖e7= Alburt – Soltis, Greenville 1983.

B2) 5.♗e2

(diagram)

5...c6 6.♗bc3 ♕e7

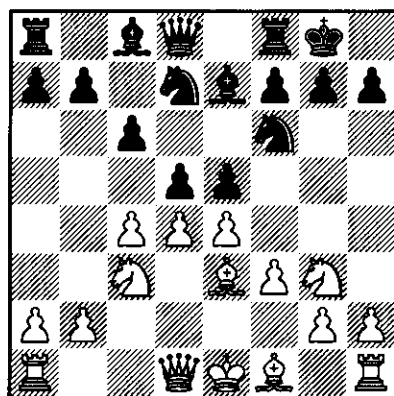
White has a slight advantage after 6...a6 7.a4 a5 8.♕e3 ♕e7 9.♗g3 g6 10.♕e2 h5 11.0-0

h4 12.♗h1 ♗h5 13.♗d2± Yildiz – Zhao Xue, Istanbul 2009.

7.♕e3 0-0 8.♗d2

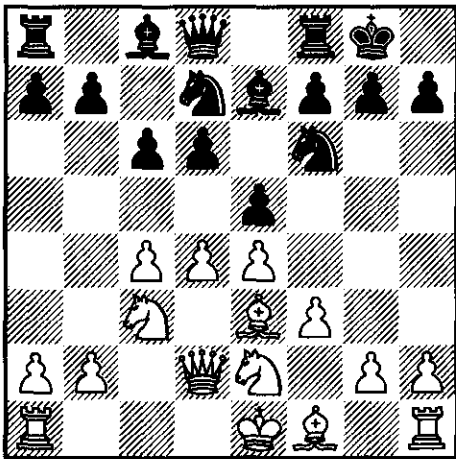
If he decides to close the centre with 8.d5, then Black obtains a good position continuing in a standard fashion: 8...cxd5 (The other acceptable set-up for him would be – 8...a5 9.♗g3 ♖c5.) 9.cxd5 ♗h5 10.♗d2 ♖b6 11.b3 a5!? 12.a4 ♗d7, followed by ♖c5, or 12.♗c1 h6, with the idea ♕g5.

Black can counter 8.♗g3 quite effectively with 8...d5!



White lags in development, while the pawn-structure in the centre is very tense and Black can equalize inflicting a timely counter strike. For example: 9.dxe5 (In case of 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.exd5

♙b4 11.♚b3 ♚b6 12.0–0–0 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♚xb3 14.axb3 ♘xd5 15. ♙d2 exd4 16.cxd4 ♖d8, he maintains the balance, Barkovsky – Epishin, Leningrad 1987.) 9... ♘xe5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♘xd5. Here, in the game Dreev – Rashkovsky, Kazan 1995, the opponents agreed to a draw. There could have followed 11...♘xd5 12.♚xd5 ♙b4+ 13.♔f2 ♚f6 14.♔g1 ♘c6 and Black would have an excellent compensation, since his opponent's king would have remained endangered for long.



8...d5!?

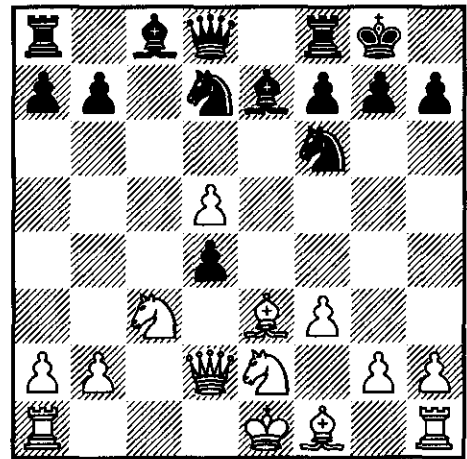
White obtains a slight advantage if Black begins his standard pawn-offensive on the queenside: 8...a6 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 b5 11.♘g3 ♘b6 12.a4 b4 13.♘d1 a5 14.b3 ♙d7 15.♚f2 ♖b8 16.♘b2± Krizsany – Alperovich, Tel Aviv 1990.

9.cxd5

The position is simplified quickly in case of 9.exd5 cxd5 10.0–0–0 (About 10.cxd5 – see 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.exd5.) 10...dxc4 11.♘g3 exd4 12.♚xd4 ♘b6, draw,

E.Gasanov – Matjushin, Odessa 2005.

9...cxd5 10.exd5 exd4



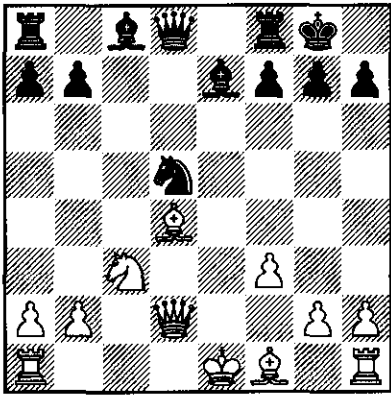
11.♘xd4

This is an accurate move, but it only leads to draw for White by a repetition of moves.

Black is better after 11.♚xd4 ♙c5 12.♚d2 ♙xe3 13.♚xe3 ♘b6 14.0–0–0 ♘bxd5 15.♚e5 ♙e6 16.♘f4 ♖c8!±

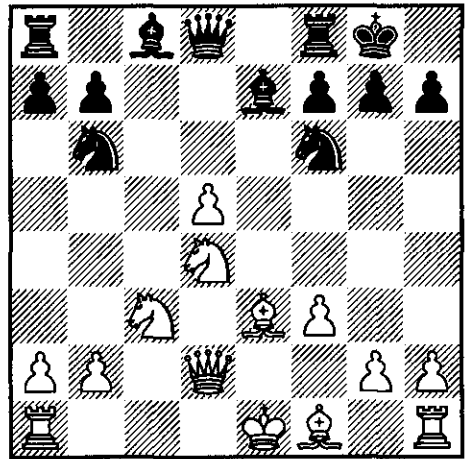
If White tries to make a counter combination, it all may end up very badly for him after: 11.♙xd4 ♘b6 12.♘f4 (It would be more reliable for him to opt for 12.♙xb6 axb6 13.d6 ♚xd6 14.♚xd6 ♙xd6 15.0–0–0 ♙c5 16.♘g3 ♙e6 17.♔b1 ♙b4 18.♘ge2 ♙f5+ 19.♔c1 ♖fc8 20.a3 ♙c5 21.♘d4 ♙g6 22.♘c2 ♙f5, draw, Stephan – Hirn, Heroldsbach 1997.) 12...♘bxd5 (It is possibly more precise for Black to play 12...♘fxd5, after which White can play neither 13.♙c4, nor 13.♖d1, in view of 13...♘xf4 14.♚xf4 ♙g5, while following 13.♘fxd5 ♘xd5 the game transposes to the main line, which we will analyze later.)

13.♞fxd5 (Black's attack develops very swiftly after 13.♙c4 ♞b4 14.0-0-0 ♚c7 15.♙b3 a5 16.♞b1 ♙f5+ 17.♞a1 a4! 18.♞xa4 ♞xa4 19.♙xa4 ♚c4 20.b3 – or 20.♙b3 and Black wins with 20...♚xb3! 21.axb3 ♞a8+ – 20...♞c2+ 21.♞b1 ♚xd4 22.♚xd4 ♞xd4+ 23.♞b2 ♞e6♯ Mihajlovic – Vojinovic, Obrenovac 2004.) 13...♞xd5



14.♙xg7 (This is the tactical strike I have already mentioned. White had better ignore it and play instead 14.♞f2♯, preserving some chances for a draw.) 14... ♞e8! (Black's lead in development is overwhelming, so it is not surprising that he refutes outright White's careless play.) 15.♙e2 (Black's knight is untouchable: 15.♚xd5 ♙f6+ 16.♞f2 ♚b6+, or 16.♞d1 ♙xc3. It is also hopeless for White to try 15.0-0-0 ♙g5 16.f4 ♙xf4 17.♚xf4 ♞xf4 18.♞xd8 ♞xd8 19.♙f6 ♞d6♯ V.Zilberstein – Utemov, Smolensk 1992.) 15... ♞e3 16.♙h6 ♞xg2+ 17.♞f2 ♚b6+ 18.♞xg2 ♚g6+ 19.♞f1 ♙h3+ 20.♞e1 ♚g2 21.♚f4 (21.♞f1 ♞ad8) 21...♚xh1+ and Black soon won, I.Novikov – Dorfman, Lvov 1984.

11...♞b6

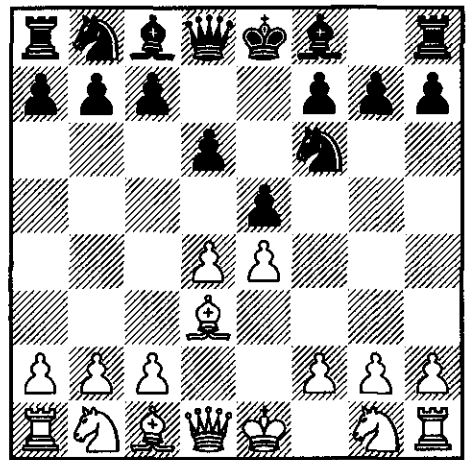


12.d6

White gives back the pawn at an opportune moment and saves the day. In case of 12.♙e2 ♞fxd5♯, he would need to fight long and hard for the draw.

12...♚xd6 13.♞db5 ♚c6 14. ♞d4 ♚d6= Jakobsen – Berg, Denmark 1982.

C) 3.♙d3 e5



C1) 4.c3

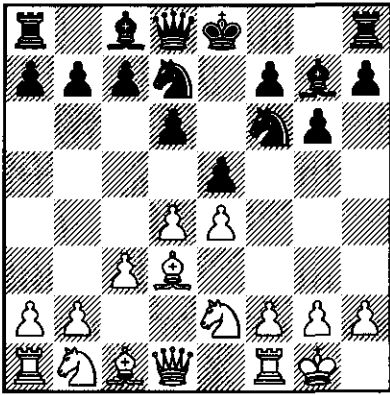
C2) 4.♞f3

The following line is completely harmless for Black: 4.dxe5 dxe5

Chapter 1

5.♘f3 ♕c5 6.0–0 (6.♘xe5? ♕xf2+ 7.♖xf2 ♗d4+ and 8...♗xe5) 6... ♗e7. In the game Zozulia – Grischuk, Spain 2007, he seized the initiative after 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 ♗g4 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♘bd2 ♘bd7 11.c3 a6 12.b4 ♗a7 13.♘c4 g5 14.♗g3 g4 15.hxg4 ♗xg4 16.♗h4 ♖g8.

In reply to the rather routine move (or if you like – accurate...) 4.♘e2, Black can respond with 4... exd4 5.♘xd4 g6, transposing to variation **C2**. Meanwhile, he has some other promising set-ups, for example: 4...♘bd7 5.0–0 g6 6.c3 ♗g7

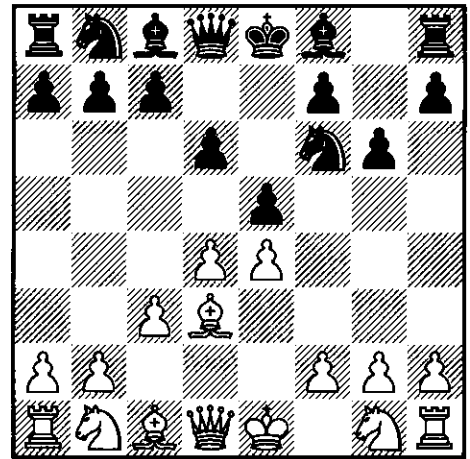


The game Campora – Kinderman, Graz 1981 ended in a surprising draw after 7.f4 0–0 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗h4 c5 11.d5 c4 12.♗c2 ♗b6+ 13.♗f2 ♗xb2 14.♘d2 ♘g4.

In case of 4.d5, Black should try to accomplish the same plan as in variation **B**, developing the bishop to e7, then removing the knight from f6 and attempting to trade the dark-squared bishops. Have a look at two games, in which White refrained from the move f2-f3 (otherwise, there aris-

es a transposition to variation **B**): 4...♗e7 5.c4 0–0 6.♘c3 c6 7.♘ge2 ♘h5 8.0–0 (8.♗e3 ♗g5 9.♗d2 h6 10.h4 ♗xe3 11.♗xe3 ♘a6⇒ Prohaszka – Czebe, Budapest 2005) 8...♗g5 9.b4, Roiz – Nielsen, Panormo 2002, 9...♗xc1 10.♖xc1 a5 11.b5 (It seems sensible for White to close the position, because after 11.dxc6 axb4 12.cxb7 ♗xb7 13.♘d5 ♘a6, Black has excellent chances of seizing the initiative.) 11...c5 12.♗d2 ♘d7⇒

C1) 4.c3 g6!



We have already seen a set-up of this type. Black wishes to develop his bishop to g7, to exchange on d4 and then to exert pressure against both his opponent's central pawns.

C1a) 5.f4

C1b) 5.♘e2

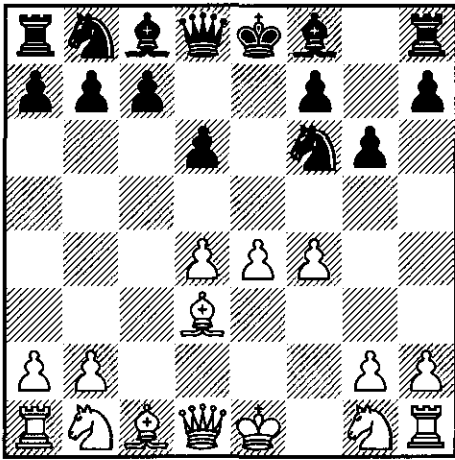
C1c) 5.♘f3

C1a) 5.f4

This is an ambitious move in the spirit of the King's Gambit.

White is trying to open the f-file for his rooks, or to obtain a powerful mobile pawn-centre. Black must play very energetically in order to avoid ending up in a clearly inferior position.

5...exd4 6.cxd4



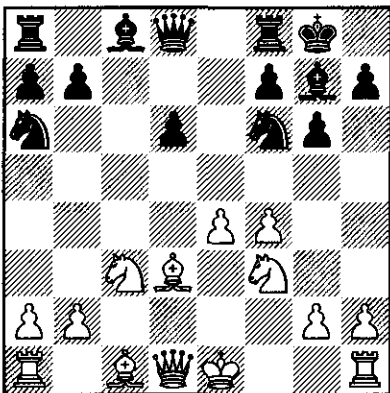
6...c5!?

White has pushed too many pawns and his position is vulnerable, so Black must attack it before the opponent has brought reserves.

It is amazing this logical move has not been tested in practice yet.

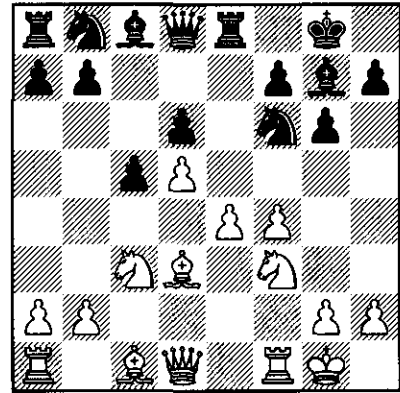
7.dxc5

Black has no problems after 7. ♖f3 cxd4 8. ♗xd4 ♖g7 9. ♗f3 (9. 0-0? ♜b6) 9...0-0 10. ♗c3 ♗a6



Later, this knight will go to c5 and from there it will attack the bishop on d3 and the e4-pawn.

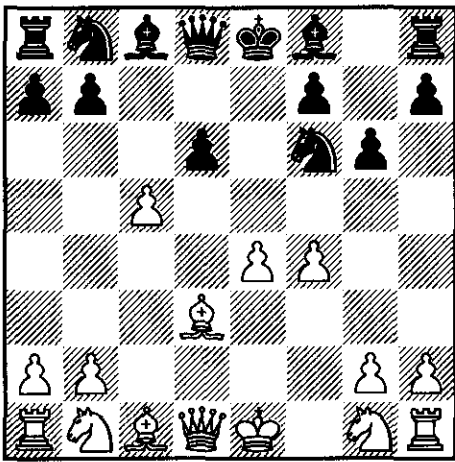
In case of 7.d5 ♖g7 8. ♗f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♜e8 10. ♗c3, there arises a favourable position for Black from the Four-pawns attack in the King's Indian Defence.



There may follow 10...c4! (This is a standard deflection of the bishop on d3 from the protection of the e4-pawn.) 11. ♖c2 (Black has a good position after 11. ♖xc4 ♗xe4 12. ♗xe4 ♜xe4 13. ♖d3 ♜e8 14.f5 ♗d7. Now, fortunately for White, he still has the possibility to complicate the position and to maintain the dynamic balance with the line: 15.fxg6 hxg6 16. ♗g5 ♗e5 17. ♗xf7!? ♜b6+ 18. ♗h1 ♖g4 19. ♜d2 ♗xf7 20. ♖xg6 ♗e5 21. ♖xe8 ♜xe8) Garcia Ortega – Reyes Munoz, Benidorm 2004.) 11...b5 12.a3 ♗bd7 13. ♖e3 ♗b6 14. ♖d4 ♖d7 15. ♜e1 a5 16. ♜d2 ♜b8) Landaw – Peters, Los Angeles 2003. Black is well-prepared to begin a massive offensive on the queenside.

(diagram)

7...d5!



This is the essence of his idea. He sacrifices temporarily a pawn and destroys enemy's beautiful pawn-tandem in the centre.

8.e5

It is not good for White to play 8.exd5 ♙xc5 and he will have problems with the safety of his king, while he will have to part with the extra pawn sooner or later.

8...♖g4 9.b4

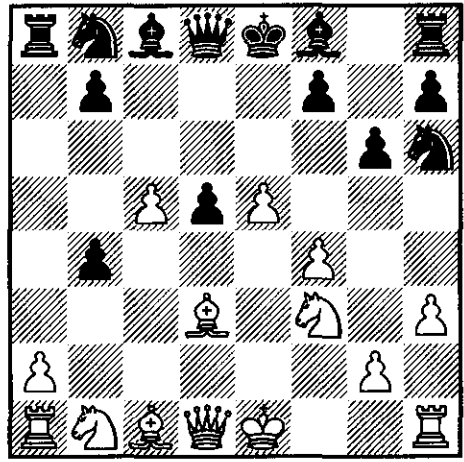
The alternative for him is 9.♙c2 ♙a5+ 10.♖c3 ♖c6! (White can counter the immediate move 10...♙xc5 with 11.♙a4+ and it would be preferable for Black to keep the queens on the board, since White's king is vulnerable.) 11.h3 d4 12.♙a4 ♖gxe5 13.fxe5 dxc3 with a very good position for Black.

9...a5 10.♖f3 axb4 11.h3 ♖h6

(diagram)

This is just a temporary retreat. White will fail to keep the enemy knight at the edge of the board.

12.♙e3 ♖f5 13.♙f2

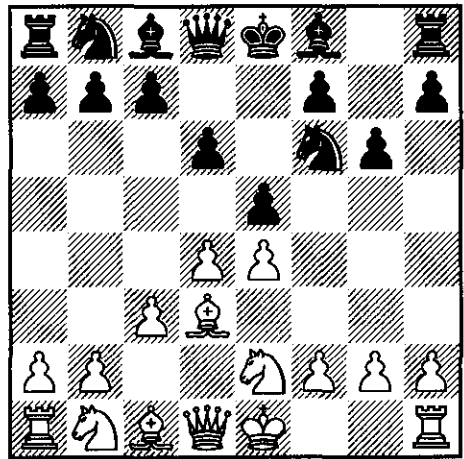


Black should not be afraid of 13.♙xf5 ♙xf5.

13...♙a5 14.g4 ♖g7

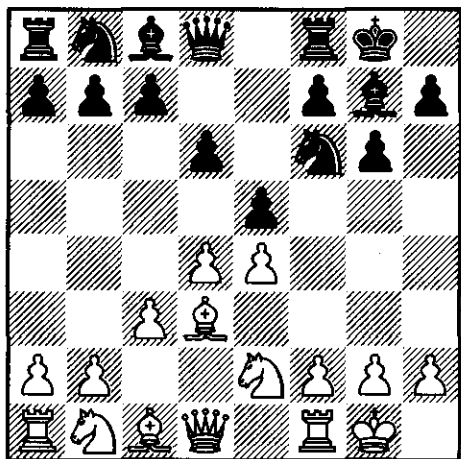
This knight will soon go to e6 and it will be very active there in the fight for the centre.

C1b) 5.♖e2



It may sound banal, but this move is not without venom. First of all, White preserves the possibility to play f2-f4 at an opportune moment. Meanwhile, Black will not have the possibility to pin with ♙g4, because of the simple reply f2-f3.

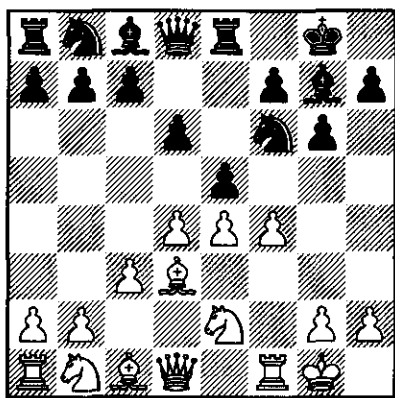
5...♙g7 6.0-0 0-0



7. ♖d2

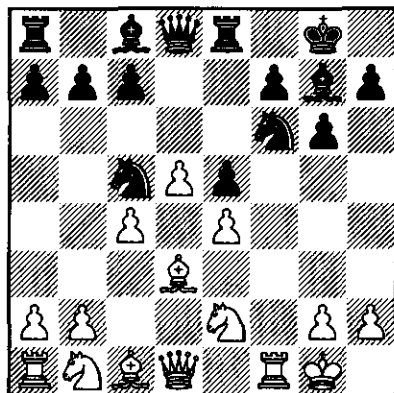
It would be too slow for White to play 7.f3 ♖bd7 8. ♖e3 ♗e7 9. ♗d2, since Black will be perfectly prepared to inflict the counterstrike in the centre – 9...d5!, for example: 10. ♖g5 dxe4 11.fxe4 ♗e8 12.d5 ♖c5 13. ♖g3 h6 14. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖b5 ♖g5 16. ♗f2 ♗f8 17.b4 ♖d7 18. ♖d2 a5 ♗ Cajzler – Brkic, Croatia 2006.

White would not achieve anything with 7.f4 ♗e8



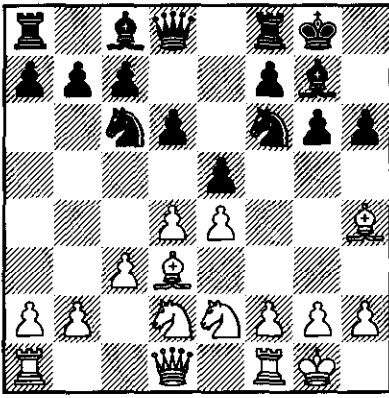
8.fxe5 (In case of 8. ♖d2 ♖c6 9.fxe5 dxe5 10.d5 ♖e7, White fails to fortify his centre, for example after 11. ♖f3, Black has the beautiful counter strike 11...♖exd5! 12. ♖c4 ♖b6 13. ♖xf7+!? ♖xf7 14.

♗b3+ ♗e6 15. ♖g5+ ♖e7 16. ♖e3 ♗d6 17. ♗ad1 ♗c6 ♗ Amaral – Silva, Portugal 1993.) 8...dxe5 9.d5 ♖bd7 10.c4 ♖c5



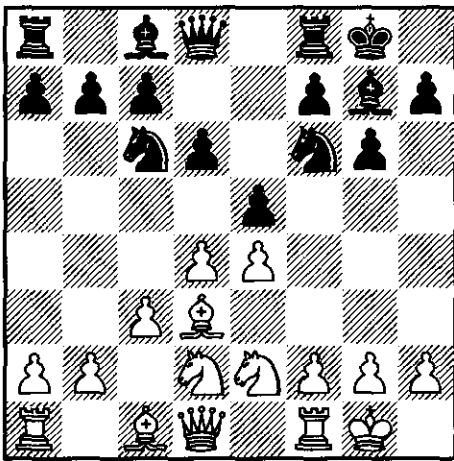
11. ♖bc3 (White needs one more tempo to protect everything and to prevent the exchange of his bishop.) 11...♖xd3 12. ♗xd3 ♖h5!? 13.c5 b6 (Black is again half a step ahead of his opponent and does not allow him to consolidate his space advantage.) 14.b4 a5 15. ♖a3 axb4 16. ♖xb4 ♖f8 17. ♗e3 f5 ♗ Schuetze – Zwanzger, Germany 1996.

In case of 7. ♖g5, Black begins immediately to attack the enemy bishop: 7...h6 8. ♖h4 (It deserves attention for White to exchange 8. ♖xf6, because he parts with his bishop indeed, but he gains several tempi to develop his initiative. Black can still neutralize the direct threats, though, for example: 8...♖xf6 9. ♗d2 ♖g7 10.f4 ♖c6 11.d5 ♖b8 12.f5 ♖d7 13. ♖a3 ♖h7 14. ♗f3 h5 15. ♗af1 ♖h6 16. ♗e1 ♖f6 17.fxg6+ fxg6 18.h3 ♖d7 ♗ Ljubcic – Tkachiev, Pula 1999) 8...♖c6 9. ♖d2



9...g5 10.♔g3 ♖h5 11.d5 ♗e7 12.f3 f5 (This is the beginning of Black's standard "King's Indian" – type of an offensive on the king-side.) 13.♕f2 f4 14.c4 ♗g6 15.c5 g4 16.fxg4 ♕xg4 17.♗f3 ♕f6 ♞ J.Horvath – Lazic, Szekszard 1994. The fight is very tense and all possible three results may happen, while White's king will not be safe for a long time to come.

7...♗c6

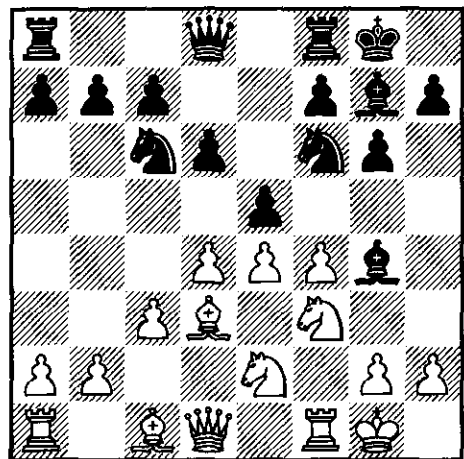


Black exerts pressure against the d4-pawn, so that White cannot continue with his kingside offensive at ease. If he plays d4-d5, then after ♗c6-e7, there would arise a position, typical for the classical variation of the King's Indian Defence, except that his

knight on e2 and the bishop on d3 would be a bit misplaced.

8.f4 ♕g4 9.♗f3

White's lag in development can provoke numerous tactical tricks, with the help of which Black can destroy his opponent's seemingly impressive pawn-centre, since it is not supported sufficiently by his pieces. For example: 9.d5 ♗e7 10.fxe5 dxe5 11.♗f3?! (It is more reliable for White to play 11.c4, but then Black can undermine his centre from the other side – 11...c6, having in mind the resource – b7-b5.) 11...♗exd5! 12.♗xe5 (Black is better after 12.exd5 e4.) 12...♗b6 (He should better play here 12...♖d6! 13.♗f3 ♖b6+, seizing the initiative.) 13.♕g5 ♕xe2 14.♖xe2 ♖d6 15.♗f3 ♗g4 16.♞ad1 h6 17.♕c1 ♗d7 18.♕c4 ♖e7 19.h3 ♗ge5 20.♗xe5 ♗xe5 21.♕b3 ♗h7 ♞ Heyken – Malaniuk, Dortmund 1993.

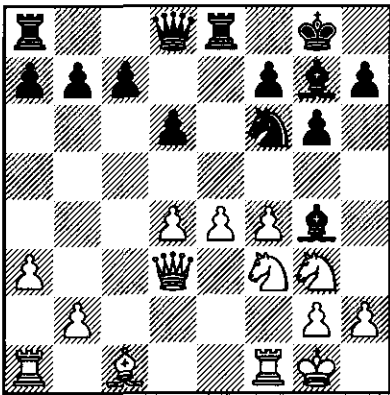


After White's last solidifying move, Black must play actively; otherwise, if White manages to develop his bishop to g5 and con-

nect his rooks, he will obtain a stable advantage.

9...exd4 10. ♖exd4

Naturally, he would like to play 10.cxd4, but then Black can begin a queenside diversion with 10...♖b4 11.a3 (White did not need to part with his bishop voluntarily. He should have played instead 11.♖b1, for example: 11...c5!? 12.d5 ♖xf3!? 13.♖xf3 ♖e8 14.a3 ♖a6 and then Black will push c5-c4, coming back with his knight to c4.) 11...♖xd3 12.♖xd3 ♖e8 13.♖g3? (White overlooks a beautiful tactical strike, but even after 13.e5 ♖d5, Black would have the initiative.)



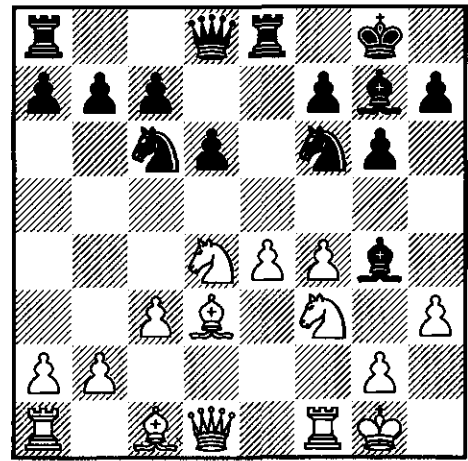
13...♖xe4! 14.♖xe4 ♖f5 (Suddenly the absence of White's light-squared bishop leads to a very unpleasant diagonal pin for him.) 15.♖fg5 ♖e7 16.♖e1 d5 17.♖d2 ♖xe4 18.♖xe4 dxe4 19.♖e3 ♖ad8 ♣Taha – Parma, Nice 1974.

10...♖e8 11.h3

(diagram)

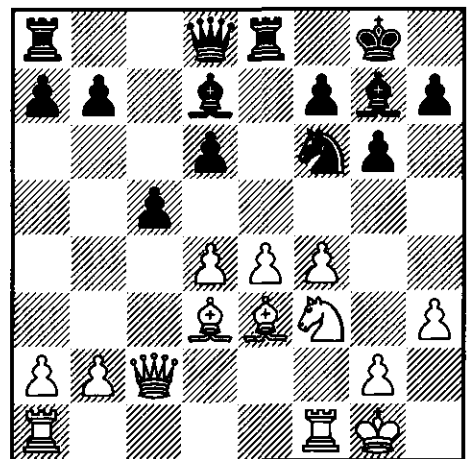
11...♖d7

Black takes care of his bishop, since he needs it at least to defend against the pin after ♖b5.



12.♖c2 ♖xd4 13.cxd4 c5 14.♖e3

White's bishop comes under the x-ray juxtaposition with Black's rook on e8 on the e3-square. He had better continue with 14.e5 ♖d5 with mutual chances.



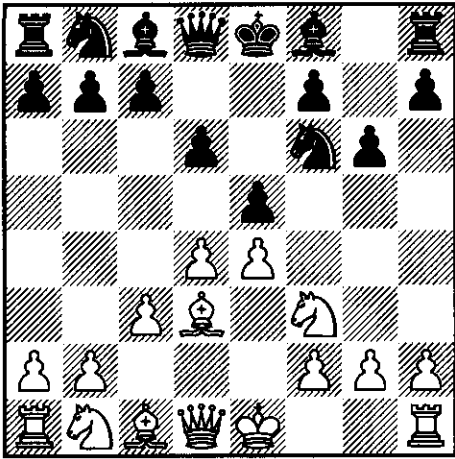
14...c4! 15.♖xc4 d5!

This move is even stronger than the unpretentious capture 15...♖xe4, since White can counter that with the powerful argument 16.♖b3!?

16.e5 dxc4 17.exf6 ♖xf6 18.♖fe1 ♖c6 19.♖e5 ♖d5 ♣Venalainen – Keene, Lugano 1968. White's knight on e5 looks very

impressive indeed, but his bishop on e3 is a sorry sight, because it must protect the weak pawns on d4 and f4 and it will hardly come out of its cage. Black can repel his opponent's beautiful knight from e5 after he removes his queen and plays f7-f6.

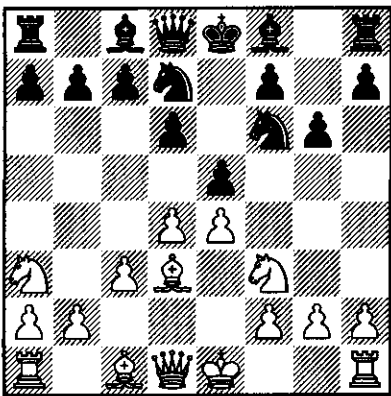
C1c) 5. ♖f3



5... ♜bd7 6. 0-0

About 6. ♗g5 ♗g7 7. 0-0 – see 6. 0-0 ♗g7 7. ♗g5.

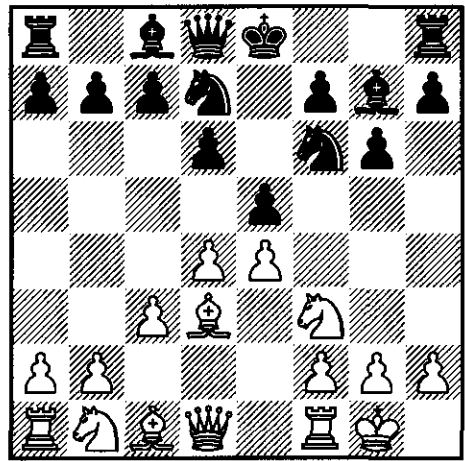
Mikhail Krasenkow played that position in a very original fashion – 6. ♖a3!?



Here, it deserves attention for Black to play immediately 6...exd4, but I believe it is even

stronger for him to continue with 6...d5!? 7.dxe5 ♜xe4. In the next game, he preferred not to define immediately the pawn-structure in the centre and that decision was quite reasonable too: 6... ♗g7 7.dxe5 ♜xe5 8. ♜xe5 dxe5 9. ♗g5 0-0 10. ♖e2 b6 11. ♜c2 ♗b7 12.f3 a5 13.a4, Krasenkow – Lorscheid, Krumbach 1991, 13...h6 14. ♗h4 ♖e8 15. 0-0 ♜h5

6... ♗g7



Now, White has two basic alternatives – to develop immediately his bishop to g5, or to wait a little bit.

C1c1) 7. ♖e1

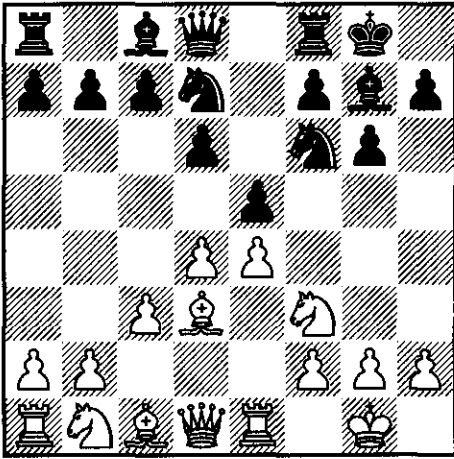
C1c2) 7. ♗g5

About 7. ♜bd2 0-0 8. ♖e1 – see 7. ♖e1 0-0 8. ♜bd2.

It would be too slow for him to opt for 7.h3 0-0 8. ♗e3 and Black can react to that with a typical counter strike in the centre – 8... d5! obtaining an excellent position, for example: 9.dxe5 ♜xe4 10. ♗f4 ♜dc5 11. ♗c2 b6 12. ♖e1

♗a6 13. ♖a3 c6 14.c4 ♖e6 15. ♗h2 ♖4g5 16. ♖xg5 ♗xg5 17.cxd5 cxd5 18. ♗xd5 ♗ad8 19. ♗e4 ♗d2 20. ♗ad1 ♗fd8, Novitzkij – Bologan, Warsaw 2004.

C1c1) 7. ♗e1 0–0



8. ♖bd2

White has tried here some alternatives as well:

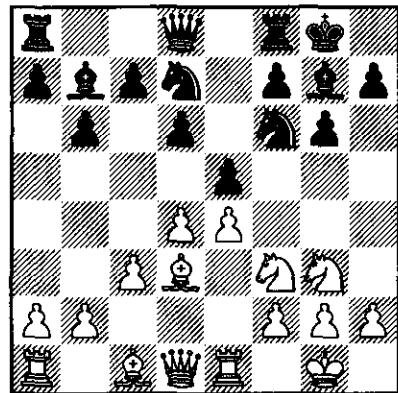
8. ♗g5 h6 9. ♗h4 b6 10.a4 (This is a useful prophylactic move. The following game showed that it would be harmless for Black if White plays 10. ♖bd2 ♗b7 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.b4, in view of 12...a5! 13. ♖c4 ♗e7 14. ♗b3 ♗e6 15. ♗g3 and the opponents agreed to a draw, Tiviakov – Norwood, Calcutta 1994, most probably after an offer by White. Having played prudently a2-a4, he restricts his opponent's active possibilities on the queenside.) 10...a6 11. ♖bd2 ♗b7 12.dxe5 dxe5 13. ♖c4 (13. ♗c2 ♗e7 14. ♗f1 a5 15. ♖c4 ♖c5 16. ♖fd2, Tiviakov – Kasimdzhanov, Groningen 1999, 16...♗ad8 17.f4 ♖cd7 18. ♖f3 ♗c5+ 19. ♗f2

♗e7=) 13...♗e8 (Black unpins his knight and he begins soon a kingside diversion.) 14.b4 ♖h5 15. ♖e3 ♖f4 16. ♗b1 ♖f6 17. ♖c4 ♗d8 and he seized the initiative, I.Sokolov – Mamedyarov, Hoogeveen 2006 – **game 5.**

8.h3 b6 9.a4 a6 10. ♗e3 ♗b7 11. ♖bd2 ♗e8 12. ♗c2 ♗e7 13.b4 ♗ac8 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.a5 (This attempt by White to weaken the c5-square and to deploy there the knight on d2 is countered quite effectively by Black.) 15...c5! 16.b5 (Unfortunately for White, this is not a step forward to promotion, but an introduction to simplifications.) 16...axb5 17. ♗xb5 bxa5 18. ♗xa5 ♗ed8 19. ♗ea1 ♖f8 20. ♗a6 ♗xa6, draw, Chojnacki – Markowski, Lubniewice 2005.

8...b6 9.a4

The plan with 9. ♖f1 ♗b7 10. ♖g3 is not so dangerous for Black, since White has no chances of a successful kingside attack.



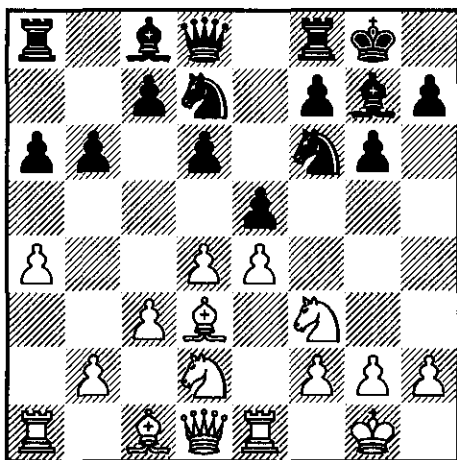
For example: 10...a6 11.h3 h6 12. ♗d2 ♖h7 13. ♗c1 h5 14. ♗h6 ♗e7 15. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 16. ♗d2 ♗ad8 17. ♗ad1 ♗fe8 18. ♖h2 ♗f6 19. ♗c2 ♖df8 20. ♗e3 ♖e6 21. ♗f3 ♗g5 22.

Chapter 1

♖e1 ♜f6 ♞ Vaganian – Ehlvest, Dordrecht 2002.

9...a6

Black has built a very flexible defensive pawn-formation on the queenside (a6, b6) and he is not afraid of his opponent's assault there. Black's bishop will go to b7, attacking the e4-pawn, squeezing White's forces with its protection. The move d4-d5 will not be advantageous for him, because he would be reluctant to reduce the tension in the centre. Black will play c7-c6 at an opportune moment and he will continue with his undermining operations in the centre.



10.b4

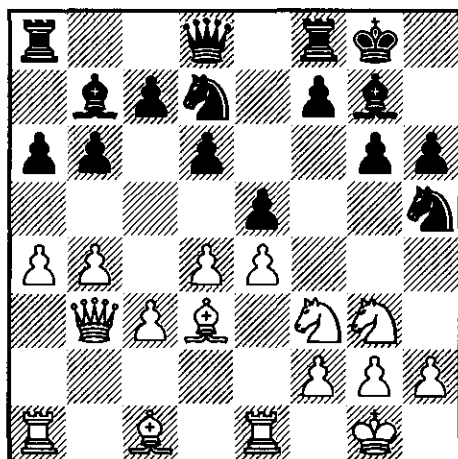
White cannot break Black's defence with only knight-sorties, for example:

10.♘c4 ♞e8 11.d5 ♜c5 12.♙c2 ♙d7 13.h3, Kulaots – Iordachescu, Medellin 1996, and here Black could have repelled his opponent's knight away from the c4-square with 13...b5 14.axb5 axb5, without being afraid of 15.♘a5 ♞b8 16.b4 ♜b7

If White tries to attack on the kingside with 10.♘f1 ♙b7 11.♘g3 ♞e8 12.h3, then Black can counter that with actions on the opposite side of the board: 12...exd4 13.cxd4 c5 14.d5 ♞c8 15.♙c4 ♜e5 16.♘xe5 ♞xe5 17.♙f4 ♞e8 18.♞d3 ♞c7 19.♞ac1 ♜d7 ♞ Hug – Nedev, Istanbul 2003.

10...♙b7 11.♞b3 ♜h5 12.♘f1 h6 13.♘g3

This is how the game Zagrebelyny – O.Kalinin, Schwerin 1999 developed.



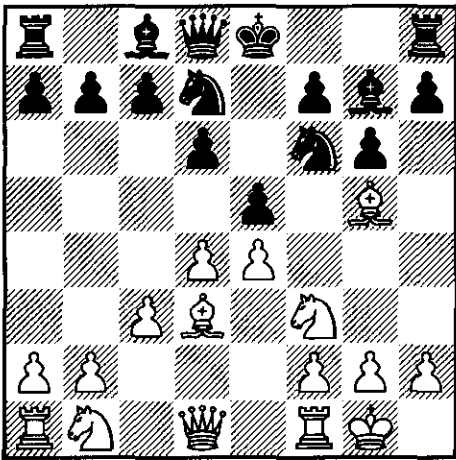
It is a well-known fact that you need two sets of pieces to attack successfully on both sides of the board. Here, Black could have obtained a very good counterplay by playing

13...♘f4! 14.♙xf4 exf4 15.♘f1 ♞e8

C1c2) 7.♙g5

We have already seen that if White develops first his knight to d2, then he will have some problems to redeploy it to c4, or f1 and to open the diagonal for his bish-

op on c1. So, maybe it would be better for him to develop at first the bishop and then the knight to d2, where it will be well-placed after that. This all seems to be true, but Black can repel immediately the bishop to h4 and then he will have in reserve the possibility g6-g5 and ♖f6-h5, starting active actions on the kingside.



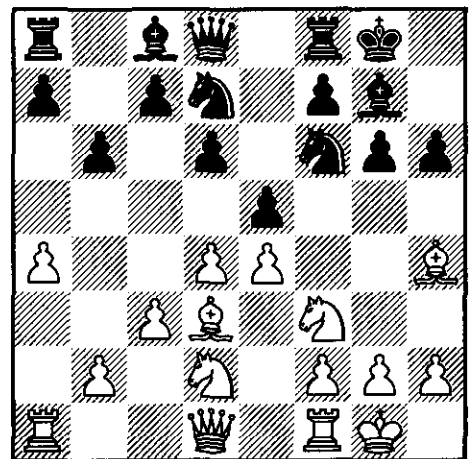
7...h6 8.♖h4

White has also tried here 8.♖e3, but this is not the best square for his knight, because it hampers there the movement of the rest of his pieces. For example: 8...0-0 9.h3 ♖e7 10.♖bd2 ♖h5 11.♞e1 ♖f4 12.♖f1 ♖e6 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♖h2 a5 ♞ Veljkovic – Basagic, Slovenia 2003.

8...0-0 9.♖bd2 b6 10.a4

Black's position is very solid and that can be demonstrated by the following examples: 10.♞e1 ♖b7 11.a4 (Or 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.b4 a5 13.♖c4 ♖e7 14.♖b3 ♖e6 15.♖g3 and here the opponents agreed to a draw, Tiviakov – Norwood, Calcutta 1994.) 11...a6 12.b4 ♖e8

13.♖c2 (White's attempt to weaken the light squares in his opponent's camp failed after 13.♖c4 ♖h8 14.♖b3 ♖h5 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♖d5 c6! 17.♖c4 b5! 18.♖f1 f5 19.exf5 gxf5 20.♖d4 – that trick enabled him to offer some more tough fight – 20...♖f4 21.♖g3 ♖d5 22.c4 bxc4, Kharlov – Kreiman, Ubeda 1999 and here the simplest move for him was 23.♖xc4 with mutual chances.) 13...♖h5 14.♖g3 ♖xg3 15.hxg3 ♖d8 (Black has obtained the bishop-pair in the meantime. The position will be opened soon and then the bishops will become very powerful.) 16.♞ad1 ♞e8 17.d5 ♞f8 (Black's maneuvers with the queen and the rooks are very impressive.) 18.♖c4 ♖f6 19.♖e3 h5 20.♞a1 ♖d7 21.c4 c6! (This is the right time to play that move; otherwise, White could have started active actions on the queenside as well.) 22.dxc6 ♖xc6 23.a5 ♞fc8 24.axb6 ♖xb6 with sufficient counterplay for Black, Fedorov – Iordachescu, Kishinev 1998.



10...a6

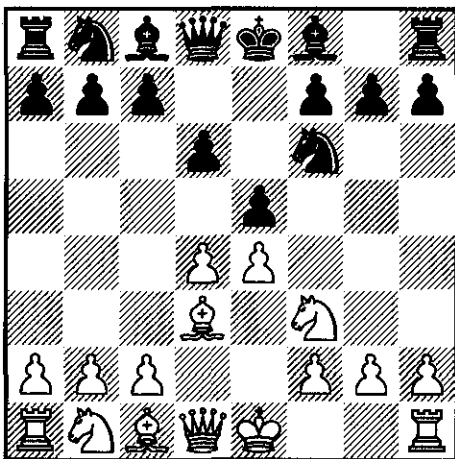
Black is following an already familiar scheme – his bishop goes to b7 and he counters a4 with a6.

11. ♖c2

There were very amusing pawn-moves in the following game: 11. ♖e1 ♗b7 12. b4 ♕e8 13. a5 b5 14. d5 c6! (We have already mentioned that White can hardly exploit the weakness of the d5-square.) 15. c4 bxc4 16. ♘xc4, Bagheri – Bologan, Corsico 2005 (game 6) and here it deserved attention for Black to play 16...cxd5 17. ♘xd6 ♖b8 18. ♘xb7 ♖xb7↗

11... ♗b7 12. dxe5 ♘xe5 13. ♘xe5 dxe5 14. ♘c4 ♕e7 15. b4, draw, Fedorov – Svidler, Polanica Zdroj 2000.

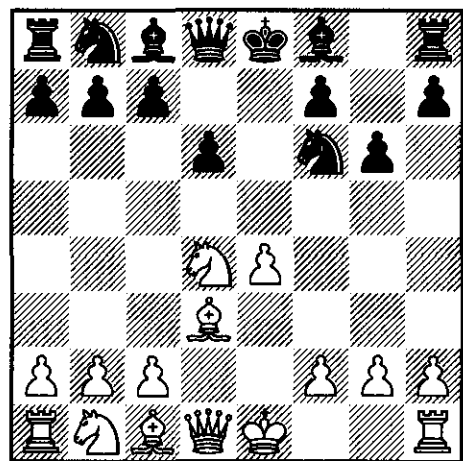
C2) 4. ♘f3



This move is not so consistent with White's previous play, but it is quite possible. He plans to capture on d4 with his knight and to follow that with c4 and ♘c3, in order to establish control over the centre. This is an ambitious set-up, but it is a bit slow and the

bishop on d3 is not so well-placed for this plan. It covers the file for the queen and the knight on d4 is hanging in some lines. Therefore, after the exchange 4...exd4 5. ♘xd4, White plays sometimes more modestly – c2-c3, in order to protect everything at first and without the intention to develop his knight to c3.

4...exd4 5. ♘xd4 g6



6. ♘c3

About 6. ♗g5 ♗g7 7. ♘c3 – see 6. ♘c3 ♗g7 7. ♗g5.

White can play modestly, but that would not harm his opponent: 6. 0–0 ♗g7 7. c3 ♘bd7 8. ♗c2 h6 (This is useful prophylactic for Black, although the pin is not so dangerous any more. It would be quite sufficient for him to equalize with 8...0–0!? 9. ♘d2 ♖e8.) 9. ♘d2 0–0 10. ♖e1 b6 11. ♘f1 ♗b7 12. ♘g3 ♖e8 13. ♗f4 ♘c5= Godena – Almasi, Gothenburg 2005. He has developed his forces comfortably, attacking the e4-pawn, so he has nothing to worry about.

What is going to happen if

3. ♖d3 e5 4. ♗f3 exd4 5. ♗xd4 g6

White tries to realize his most ambitious plan? He must be ready to face the fact that Black can organize a very powerful counterplay: 6.c4 ♖g7 7.0-0 0-0 8. ♗c3 ♗c6!? (There begins the fight for the d4-square.) 9. ♗xc6 bxc6 10. ♖g5 (After the careless move 10. ♖c2, Black can start successful kingside actions with 10... ♗g4 11. ♖e2 ♖h4 12. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 13. ♖e3 ♖e6 14.b3 f5 15.exf5 ♖xf5 16.f4 ♖h5 17.g3 ♖h3+ Banas – Jansa, Austria 2002.) 10...h6 11. ♖d2 (He should not be afraid of 11. ♖h4 g5 12. ♖g3 ♗g4 13. ♖c2 ♖b8+ Riebort – Hellwig, Germany 2007.) 11... ♗g4 (This knight is headed for the e5-square, but this is not its final destination.) 12.h3 ♗e5 13. ♖e2 c5! (Black's plan is quite clear now. He plans to deploy his knight on d4 and the bishop on e5, establishing control over the dark squares.) 14.f4 ♗c6 15.f5 ♗d4 16. ♖d3 c6 17. ♖e1 g5 18. ♖f2 ♖e5+ L.B.Hansen – Fries-Nielsen, Aalborg 2000.

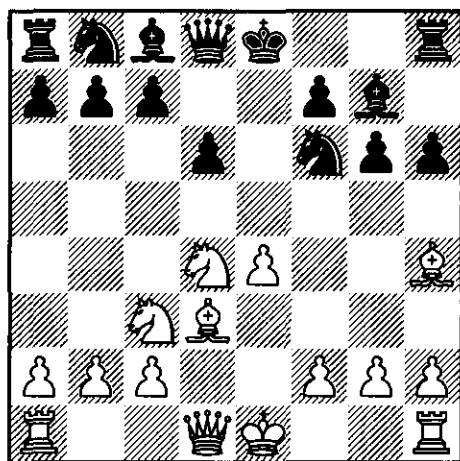
6... ♖g7 7. ♖g5

White cannot harm his opponent with 7.0-0 0-0 8.f4?! (It was better to play more prudently – 8. ♖e1 c6 9.a4 ♗bd7 with equality.) 8...c6 9. ♗h1 ♗bd7 (Black wishes to place his knight on c5, exchanging the bishop on d3 and thus reducing his opponent's active possibilities.) 10. ♖e3 ♗c5 11. ♗b3 ♗xd3 12. ♖xd3, Salai – Petrik, Slovakia 2003, 12... ♖e8 13. ♗d4 (He can counter 13. ♖ad1? with

13... ♗xe4! 14. ♗xe4 ♖f5+; remember we have already seen this resource – see variation **C1b**, the game Taha – Parma, Nice 1974, the notes to White's move ten.) 13... ♖d7+

7...h6 8. ♖h4

White would not change anything much with 8. ♖f4 0-0 9. ♖d2 g5 10. ♖g3 ♗h5 11. ♖c4 ♗c6 12. ♗de2 ♖e6 13. ♖d5 ♗b4 14. ♖b3 a5 15.a3 ♗c6+ Bilokha – Bjorn-toft, Kiev 1999.



8... ♗c6!?

This is a standard resource for Black in his fight for the d4-square and the dark squares in general.

9. ♗xc6 bxc6 10.0-0

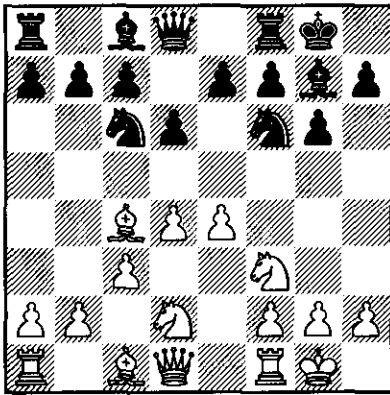
After 10.f4?!, he plays 10...g5! anyway and he establishes control over the dark squares: 11.fxg5 ♗g4 12. ♖d2 ♖g8! 13.0-0-0 hxg5 14. ♖g3 (White loses after 14. ♖xg5? ♖xc3, or 14. ♖xg5? ♖xg5+ 15. ♖xg5 ♖xc3.) 14... ♖e6+

10...g5! 11. ♖g3 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗e5+ Black's knight on e5 cements his position and he has an excellent game, Lautier – Kramnik, Biel 1993 – **game 7**.

Complete Games

1 V.Sergeev – Nevednichy
Warsaw 2005

1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.e4 d6
4.c3 ♘c6 5.♙c4 ♘f6 6.♘bd2
0-0 7.0-0

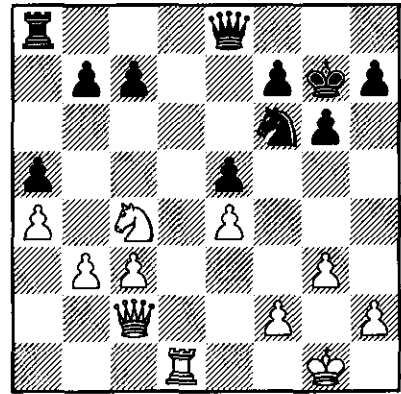


7...e5 8.dxe5 ♘xe5 9.♘xe5
dxe5 10.♞e1 ♚e7 11.a4 a5 12.
b3 ♞d8 13.♚c2 ♘h5 14.g3 ♘f6
15.♙a3 ♚e8 16.♙b5 ♙d7 17.
♙xd7 ♞xd7 18.♘c4 ♙f8 19.♙xf8
♙xf8

It is understandable that Black cannot capture with his queen on f8, since he would lose his e5-pawn.

20.♞ad1 ♞xd1 21.♞xd1 ♙g7
(diagram)

There has arisen an approximately equal and symmetrical position on the board. White's ambition to obtain more from it than

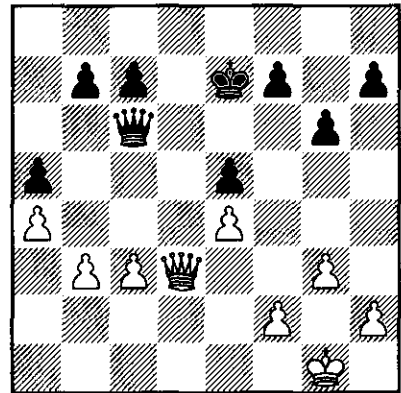


it is reasonably possible ended up very badly for him.

22.♘e3 ♚c6 23.♘d5 ♞d8!

He obviously underestimated this resource.

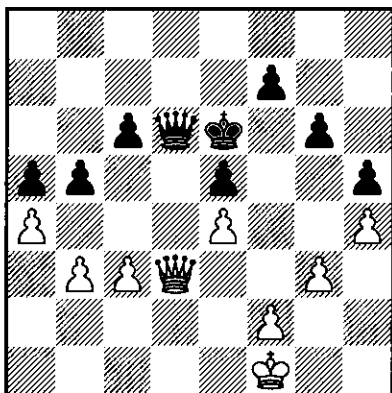
24.♘xf6 ♞xd1+ 25.♚xd1
♙xf6 26.♚d3 ♙e7



Now, Black has already a symbolic advantage, because his king is more active and White's queen-side pawns are vulnerable. Still,

we will soon see that the game remains in the vicinity of equality for a long time.

27.h4 h5 28.♔f1 ♚c5 29. ♔g2 c6 30.♔g1 b5 31.♔g2 ♔e6 32.♔f1 ♚d6



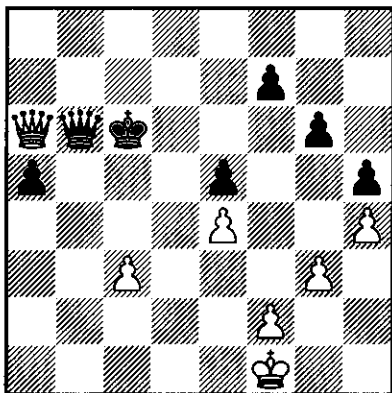
33.♚e2

It is always too risky to enter a king and pawn ending, since there will be no way back for White. Still, after 33.♔e2, he was not risking anything.

33...♚a3

Black has succeeded in sharpening the game. White cannot remain passive any more and he must make some quite concrete decisions.

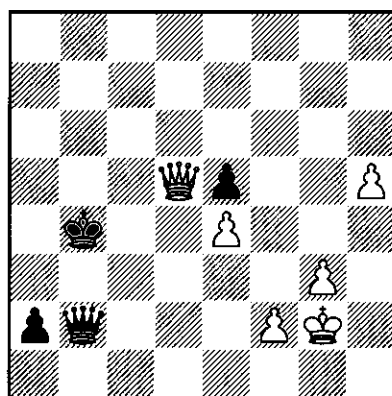
34.axb5 ♚xb3 35.bxc6 ♔d6 36.♚d3+ ♔xc6 37.♚a6+ ♚b6



38.♚c4+

Now, White cannot exchange queens, because Black remains with an outside passed pawn.

38...♚c5 39.♚xf7 ♚xc3 40. ♚xg6+ ♔c5 41.♚xh5 a4 42.♔g2 a3 43.♚f7 ♚b2 44.♚d5+ ♔b4 45.h5 a2



46.♚d6+?

This check loses the game. He could have made a draw with 46.h6 a1♚ 47.h7 ♚a7 48.♚d6=. Meanwhile, finding a draw like this is only possible for a computer programme.

46...♔c3 47.h6

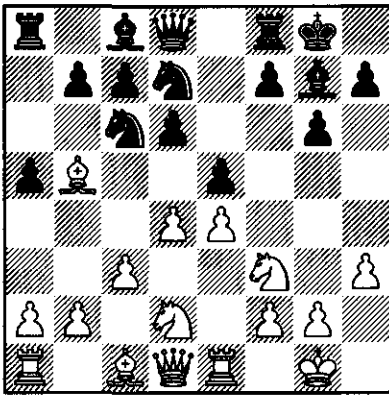
It would have been more tenacious for White to have defended with 47.♚c6+, but that was losing anyway after 47...♔d3 48.♚a6+ ♔d2 49.♚a5 ♔d1 50.♚a4+ ♔c1 51.♚c4+ ♔d2.

47...a1♚ 48.♚c6+ ♔d3 49. h7 ♚b8 50.♚f6 ♚aa8 51.♚f3+ ♔d4 52.♚d1+ ♔xe4. White resigned.

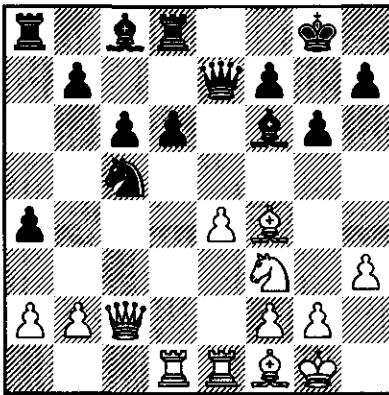
2 Harikrishna – Ivanchuk
Merida 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘bd2

♠g7 4.e4 d6 5.♠d3 0-0 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.h3 e5 8.c3 a5 9.♞e1 ♘d7 10.♠b5



10...exd4 11.cxd4 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♠xd4 13.♘f3 ♠f6 14.♠h6 ♞e8 15.♞d2 c6 16.♠f1 ♘c5 17.♞c2 ♞e7 18.♞ad1 a4 19.♠f4 ♞d8



20.e5!?

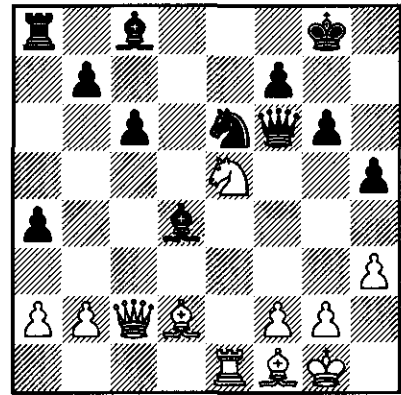
White cannot achieve much exerting pressure against the d6-pawn, so he decides to open the position and to try to exploit his slight lead in development.

20...dxe5 21.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 22.♘xe5 ♘e6 23.♘g4 ♠d4 24.♠d2 h5 25.♘e5 ♞f6

(diagram)

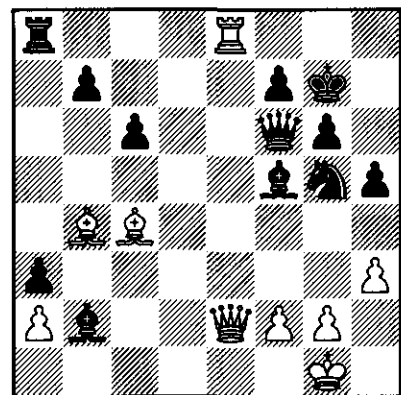
26.♘f3?!

This is a faint-hearted retreat as



if White does not care about the result of the game any more. It was more resilient for him to have played 26.♠c3 ♠xc3 27.♞xc3, although Black would maintain the advantage after: 27...♘c7 28.♠c4 ♠e6 29.♠xe6 ♘xe6 30.♞b4 ♞d8 31.b3 (31.♞xa4 ♞d2; 31.♞xb7 ♞d2 32.♘f3 ♞xb2 33.♞a8+ ♔g7 34.♞xa4 ♘f4) 31...♘f4 32.bxa4 ♞g5 33.♞e4 ♞d4!

26...♠xb2 27.♠c4 a3 28.♘g5 ♘xg5 29.♞e8+ ♔g7 30.♠b4 ♠f5 31.♞e2



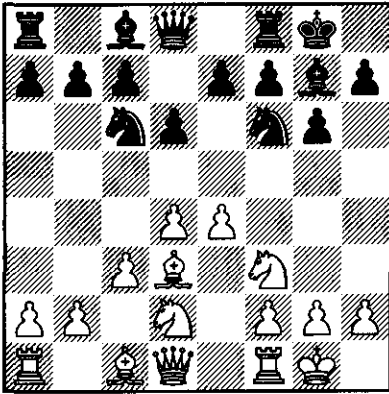
31...♘xh3+!

This is a beautiful finish on the theme of “a double-attack” with the queen.

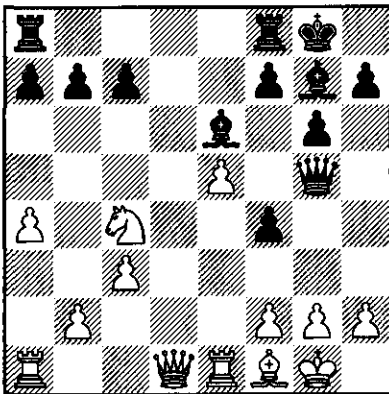
32.gxh3 ♞g5+ 33.♔h1 ♞xe8 34.♞xe8 ♞c1+ 35.♔g2 ♞xc4. White resigned.

3 Fontaine – Nakamura France 2009

1.d4 g6 2.♟f3 ♟g7 3.e4 d6
4.c3 ♟f6 5.♟bd2 0–0 6.♟d3
♟c6 7.0–0

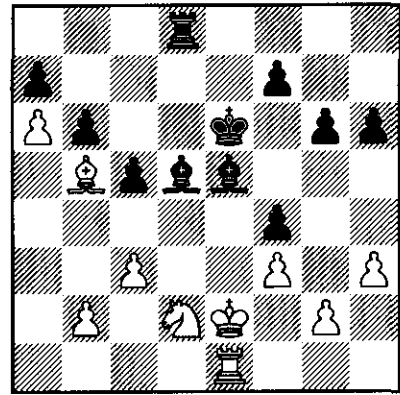


7...e5 8.dxe5 ♟xe5 9.♟xe5
dxe5 10.♟c4 ♟e7 11.a4 ♟h5
12.♟e1 ♟f4 13.♟xf4 exf4 14.e5
♟e6 15.♟f1 ♟g5



Black has a bishop-pair in an open position and in addition his opponent's e5-pawn is weak. White tries to enter an endgame, because this was probably his most tenacious defence.

16.♟d2 ♟fd8 17.♟f3 ♟xd1
18.♟xg5 ♟xe1 19.♟xe1 ♟b3 20.
a5 b6 21.a6 ♟d8 22.♟f3 c5
23.♟b5 h6 24.h3 ♟f8 25.♟f1
♟e7 26.♟e2 ♟e6 27.♟d2 ♟d5
28.f3 ♟xe5



So, Black has won a pawn, but he has serious problems to turn it into a full point.

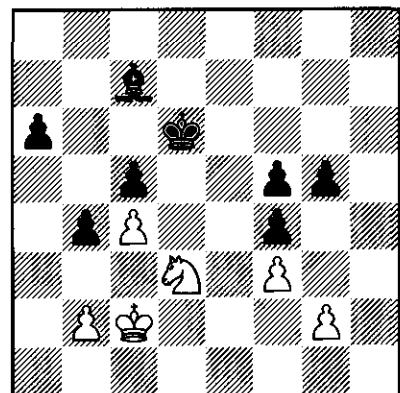
29.♟c4 ♟c7 30.♟d1 ♟e7
31.♟a3 ♟e6 32.♟xd8 ♟xd8
33.♟d3 ♟d6 34.♟c4 ♟e7 35.
♟d2 g5 36.♟e4 f6 37.♟e2 ♟e5
38.♟d2 ♟d7

Black can hardly improve the position of his pieces without this exchange.

39.♟xd7 ♟xd7 40.♟d3 b5
41.c4 b4 42.♟c2 ♟c6 43.h4
f5 44.hxg5 hxg5 45.♟b3 ♟b6
46.♟c1 ♟d4 47.♟d3 ♟xa6

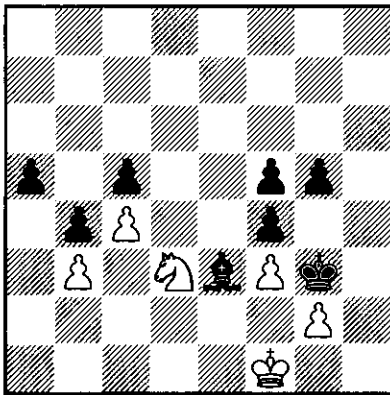
The game is not over even now, when Black has two extra pawns.

48.♟b3 ♟a5 49.♟e1 ♟e5
50.♟d3 ♟d6 51.♟f2 ♟b6 52.
♟a4 ♟e5 53.♟d3 ♟c7 54.♟b3
♟c6 55.♟a4 a6 56.♟b3 ♟d6
57.♟c2



White has built something like a fortress. Black cannot conquer it with a direct assault, so he organizes a diversion on the kingside.

57...♖b6 58.♗b3 ♔e6 59. ♗c2 ♗f6 60.♘c1 ♗g6 61.♗d2 a5 62.b3 ♗f6 63.♘d3 ♗e6 64.♘b2 ♗d8 65.♘a4 ♗d6 66.♗d3 ♗f6 67.♘b6 ♗c6 68.♘a4 ♗e7 69. ♗e2 ♗d6 70.♘b6 ♗e6 71.♘a4 ♗f7 72.♗f1 ♗g6 73.♘b2 ♗f6 74.♘d3 ♗d4 75.♘c1 ♗e3 76. ♘d3 ♗h5 77.♘e5 ♗d4 78. ♘d3 ♗h4 79.♘c1 ♗e3 80.♘d3 ♗g3

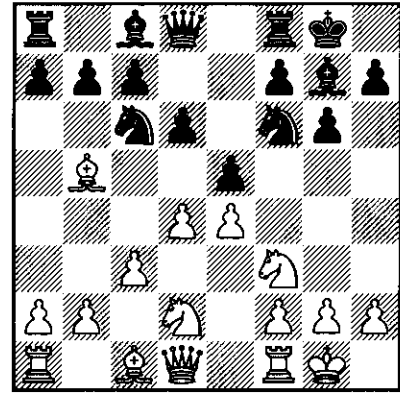


Now, the end is close. He creates two passed pawns, one on each side of the board, and White's miserable knight cannot cope with them.

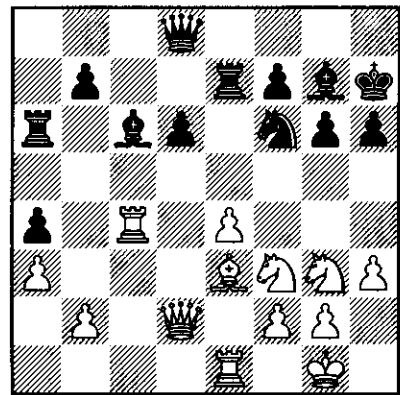
81.♘e1 g4 82.fxg4 fxg4 83.♗e2 ♗f2 84.♘d3 ♗d4 85. ♘e1 ♗e3 86.♗f1 ♗h2 87.♘d3 f3 88.gxf3 g3 89.♘e1 a4. White resigned.

4 Christiansen – Goldin Qingdao 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♖b5 ♘f6 4.d3 d6 5.♘bd2 g6 6.c3 ♗g7 7.0–0 0–0 8.d4



8...exd4 9.cxd4 ♗d7 10.♞e1 ♞e8 11.h3 a5 12.a3 ♞e7 13.♗d3 ♘h5 14.d5 ♘b8 15.♘f1 ♘f6 16. ♘g3 ♘a6 17.♗xa6 ♞xa6 18. ♗f4 h6 19.♞c1 a4 20.♞c4 ♗h7 21.♞d2 ♗e8 22.♗e3 c6 23.dxc6 ♗xc6



24.♗d4

White had better try to simplify the game with 24.e5 ♘d5 25.exd6 ♞xd6 26.♘e4 ♞d8 27.♗c5 ♞d7 with equality.

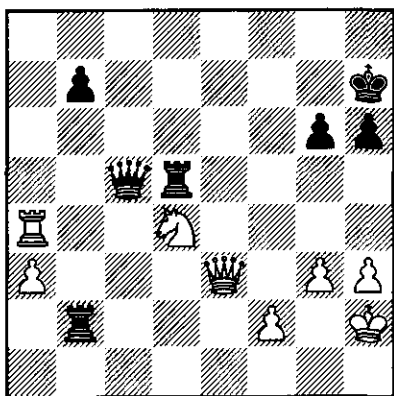
24...♞a8 25.♗c3 d5! 26.♞d4 ♞e8 27.e5?!

He had to opt for 27.exd5 ♞xe1 28.♘xe1 ♘xd5 29.♞e4 ♗xc3 30. bxc3 ♞f8 31.♘c2 and Black would have difficulties to attack the weak a3 and c3-pawns. White would not be worse then. Instead of this, Christiansen went for a rather dubious exchange-sacrifice.

27...♞e4 28.♞xe4 dxe4
 29.♞exe4?! ♟xe4 30.♞xe4 ♞d7
 31.♞c2 ♞d5 32.e6 ♞c8 33.exf7
 ♞xf7 34.♞e2 ♞c7 35.♟xg7
 ♞xg7 36.♞xa4 ♞c1+ 37.♟h2
 ♞c7+ 38.g3 ♞c2 39.♞e3 ♞c5
 40.♞d4

This is the only move. White's situation would have been terrible after 40.♞xc5 ♞dxc5 41.♟g2 ♞xb2.

40...♞xb2



41.♞c4?

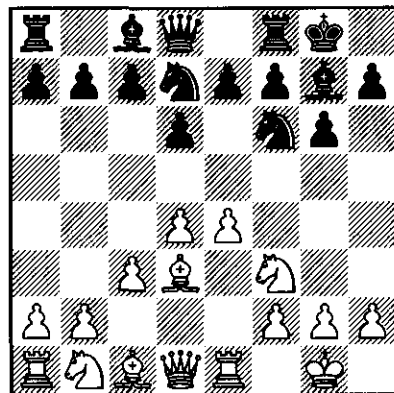
This is a fatal mistake. He had to attack the enemy queen from the other side – 41.♞a5!, and White would have saved the day.

41...♞e5! 42.♞c3 ♞xf2+ 43.♟g1 ♞f8 44.♞c7+ ♞f7 45.♞f3 ♞ee7 46.♞e6 ♞e8 47.♞e4

He decided not to test whether his opponent would fall into the cheap trap 47...♞xc7? (The game is immediately over after 47...♞xe6.) 48.♞g5+!, so White resigned.

5 I.Sokolov – Mamedyarov Hoogeveen 2006

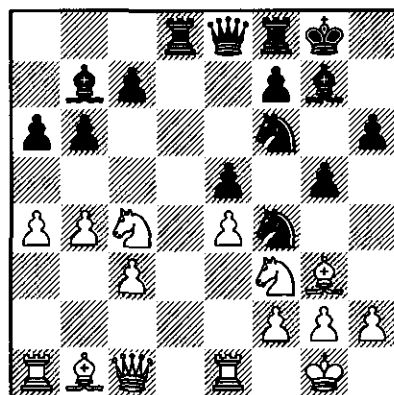
1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♟g7 3.♞f3 d6
 4.c3 ♞f6 5.♟d3 0–0 6.0–0
 ♞bd7 7.♞e1



7...e5 8.♟g5 h6 9.♟h4 b6
 10.a4 a6 11.♞bd2 ♟b7 12.dxe5
 dxe5 13.♞c4 ♞ ♞e8 14.b4 ♞h5
 15.♞e3 ♞f4 16.♟b1 ♞f6 17.♞c4
 ♞d8 18.♞c1

It was more accurate for White to choose 18.♞b3, not letting Mamedyarov enter his favorite wild tactical positions.

18...g5 19.♟g3



19...♞xe4!? 20.♟xe4 ♟xe4
 21.♞xe4 ♞c6

Black exploits his opponent's hanging rook and knight.

22.♞c2 f5 23.♟xf4?!

White could have maintained the balance with 23.♞xe5 ♞xc4 24.♟xf4 ♞xf4 25.♞b3+ ♟h7 26.♞e7=

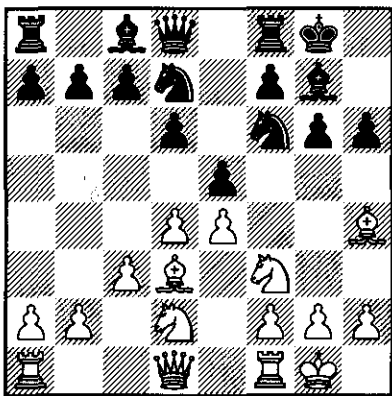
23...fxe4 24.♞fxe5 ♞e6
 25.♟g3 b5 26.axb5 axb5 27.♞xe4?

This looks like the decisive mistake for White. It was more resilient for him to defend with 27.♖e3!? ♗xe5 28.♚xe4 ♜de8 29.♗xe5 ♚xe5 30.♚g6+ ♚g7 31.♚c2 ♜a8 32.♜a5 ♜xa5 33.bxa5 ♚f6 and Black would have only a slight edge.

27...bxc4 28.♚xc4 ♚xc4 29.♖xc4 ♗xc3 30.♜c1 ♜d4 31.♖e3 ♗d2 32.♗e5 ♜e4. White resigned.

6 Bagheri – Bologan Corsico 2005

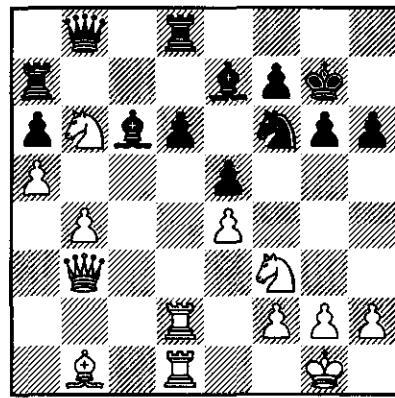
1.d4 d6 2.♖f3 ♖d7 3.e4 ♖gf6 4.♗d3 e5 5.c3 g6 6.0–0 ♗g7 7.♗g5 0–0 8.♖bd2 h6 9.♗h4



9...b6 10.a4 a6 11.♜e1 ♗b7 12.b4 ♚e8 13.a5 b5 14.d5 c6 15.c4 bxc4 16.♖xc4 ♚b8 17.dxc6 ♗xc6 18.♗xf6 ♖xf6 19.♖b6 ♜a7 20.♜c1 ♗b7 21.♚b3 ♜d8 22.♜cd1 ♗f8 23.♗b1 ♖g7 24.♜d2 ♗c6 25.♜ed1 ♗e7

(diagram)

There arose a position with dynamic balance on the board. Black has covered all his weaknesses – the d5-square and the



e6-pawn and he has squeezed in a way his opponent's forces with the protection of the e4-pawn.

26.♗a2?!

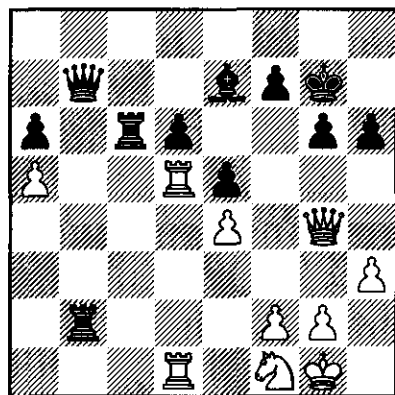
White overestimates his chances. He had better continue with 26.♚e3 and a double-edged position.

26...♗e8 27.♚e3 ♜c7 28.h3?!

This is another careless move, after which Black seizes firmly the initiative.

28...♚b7 29.♗d5 ♖xd5 30.♖xd5 ♜c4 31.♜d3 ♗c6 32.♖d2 ♗xd5 33.♜xd5 ♜xb4 34.♚a3 ♜c8 35.♚d3 ♜c6 36.♖f1 ♜b3 37.♚e2 ♜b2 38.♚g4

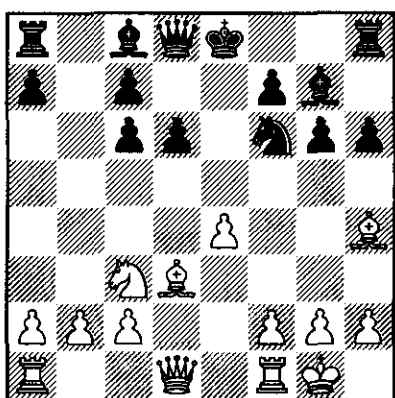
It was preferable for White to defend with 38.♜1d2 ♜xd2 39.♚xd2 ♚c8 40.♚d3. Now, Black doubles decisively his rooks along the seventh rank.



38...♞cc2 39.♟g3 ♞xf2 40. ♟xf2 ♞xf2 41.♙xf2 ♟b4 42.♙f3 f5 43.exf5 gxf5 44.♙f2 ♙f7 45.♗e3 ♙e6 46.g4 f4 47.♗f5 ♗f8 48.♙f3 ♟b3+ 49.♞5d3 ♟b4 50.♞e1 ♟xe1. White resigned.

7 Lautier – Kramnik
Biel 1993

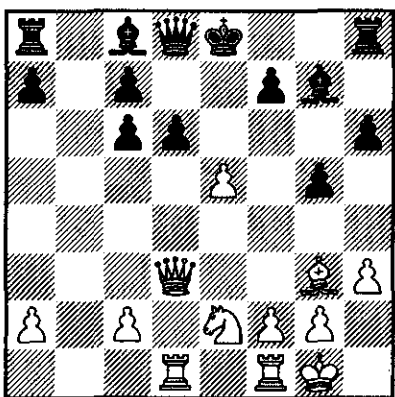
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♗f6 3.♗d3 e5 4.♗f3 exd4 5.♗xd4 g6 6.♗c3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 ♗c6 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.0-0



10...g5! 11.♗g3 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗e5 13.♗e2 ♗xd3 14.♟xd3?

Black is better after 14.cxd3? ♗xb2 15.♞b1 ♗g7 16.f4 0-0

14...♗xb2 15.♞ad1 ♗g7 16.e5



16...0-0

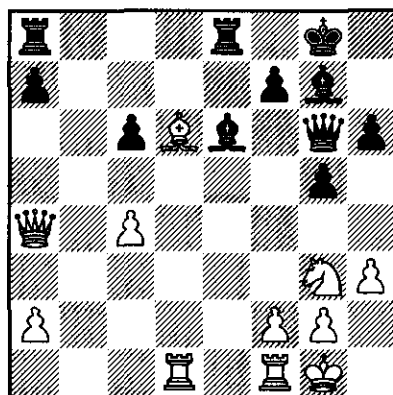
He must give back the extra pawn, because in case of 16...d5?

17.♗d4 ♗d7 18.e6! Black comes under a dangerous attack.

17.exd6 cxd6 18.♗xd6 ♞e8 19.c4 ♟f6! 20.♗g3 ♟g6 21.♟b3

The endgame following 21. ♟xg6 fxc6 22.c5 ♗e6 23.a3 is favourable for Black.

21...♗e6 22.♟a4



22...h5! 23.♞fe1?! h4 24.♗f1 g4! 25.hxg4 ♗xg4 26.♟xc6 ♞ed8! 27.f3 ♞ac8 28.♟e4 ♗f5 29.♟f4 ♗h6 30.♟e5

White loses after 30.♟h2 ♞xc4 31.♗e3 ♗xe3+ 32.♞xe3 ♞c6.

30...♞xc4 31.♗a3 ♞xd1 32. ♞xd1 ♗g7 33.♟e2 ♞c2?

Black has outplayed his opponent, but he makes a mistake at the last moment. He would have maintained an overwhelming advantage after 33...h3 34.♗e3 (34.g3 ♗e6) 34...♗d4!

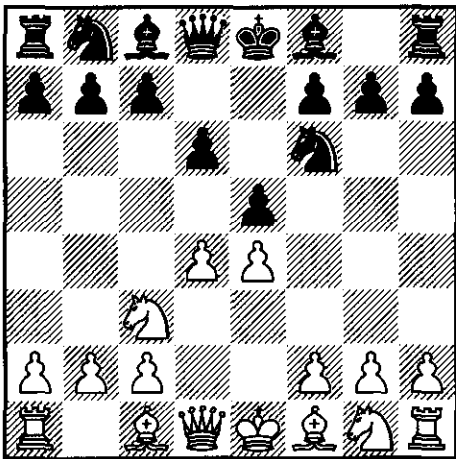
34.♞d2 h3 35.g4 ♞xd2 36. ♗xd2 ♗e6 37.♗e4 f5 38.♗g5 ♗d5 39.♗xh3 fxc6 40.fxc6 ♗d4+

His edge is insufficient to win the game after 40...♟b6+ 41.♗f2! ♟b1+ 42.♙h2 ♟b8+ 43.♙h3.

41.♙h2 ♟e6. Draw.

Quick Repertoire

Finally, we have come to White's most popular move three, but we are still too far from the main line of the Philidor Defence...



In this chapter we will analyze all fourth moves for White except 4.dxe5 (see Chapter 3) and the most popular 4.♗f3 (We devote to it Chapters 4-7.). I think that the most dangerous plan for Black is connected with the development of the knight on e2 in combination with the fianchetto of White's light-squared bishop. He wishes to fortify his centre, to compete calmly his development and to prepare gradually a kingside offensive.

4.♗e2

White can also play 4.h3, which is an ambitious move, in order to advance g2-g4 at once and then to transfer his knight quickly to the g3-square. Black can exploit however, the fact that his opponent's play is too slow with the line: 4... exd4! 5.♙xd4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 g6 7.♗d2 ♗g7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.♙g3 ♖e8 10. f3 ♗e6 11.♗e2 b5! with an excellent counterplay.

He can react in an analogous fashion against the super-solid move 4.f3 – by exchanging in the centre and developing quickly his forces: 4...exd4 5.♙xd4 ♗c6 6.♗b5 ♗d7 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♗e3 g6!? 9.0-0 ♗g7 10.♗e2 0-0 11.♙d2 ♙e7 with a double-edged game.

In case of 4.f4 exd4 5.♙xd4 ♗c6 6.♗b5 ♗d7 7.♙f2 g6 (7...♙e7!? 8.♙e2 a6 9.♗d3 0-0-0) 8.♗f3 ♗g7 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 a6 11.♗xc6 ♗xc6 12. ♖he1 ♖e8, Black obtains a good position as well.

4...♗e7 5.g3 c6 6.♗g2

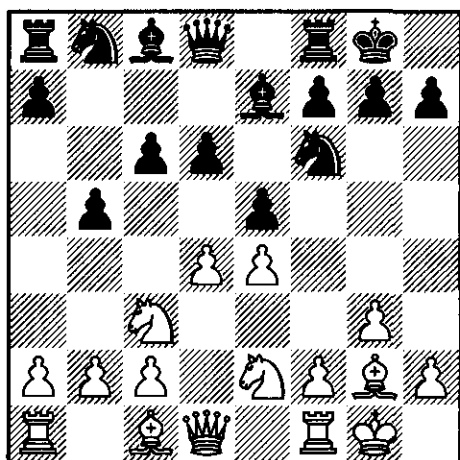
The prophylactic move 6.a4, enables Black to regroup his forces in an original fashion: 6...0-0 7.♗g2 a5 8.h3 ♗a6 9.0-0 ♗b4

(After White has pushed a2-a4, the b4-square has become an excellent outpost for Black's knight.)
 10.♗e3 ♗e6!? (This idea originates from "Rybka" – Black transfers his bishop to the a6-f1 diagonal and prepares counterplay in the centre and on the kingside.)
 11.g4 ♗c4 12.♖d2 h5!? 13.g5 ♘d7
 14.♗fd1 f6⇌

6...b5

Now, he has good counter chances. Black not only occupies space on the queenside, but his light-squared bishop can go to b7, or even to a6.

7.0-0 0-0



8.a3

Black's threat b5-b4, followed by d6-d5, is rather unpleasant for White, so he must lose a tempo for prophylactic.

8...♗bd7 9.h3

The situation is not so dynamic and this is exactly what Black strives for in the Philidor Defence. There arise positions, in which neither side has any particular weaknesses. White has some

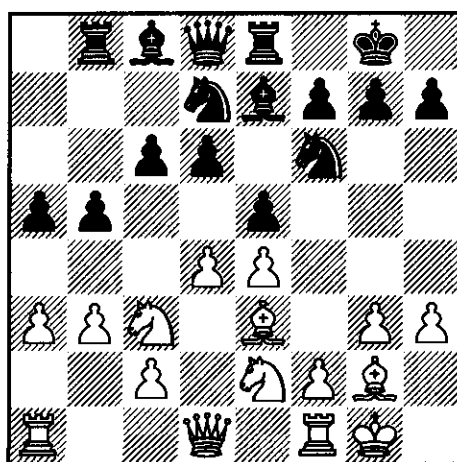
space advantage indeed, but how can he exploit it? If he advances his kingside pawns, Black will have the powerful central counter strike d6-d5 with unpredictable consequences. It might be reasonable to close the centre at first and advance pawns only later, but that can hardly be accomplished. After d4-d5, White must worry about his d5-pawn. Finally, after the exchange on e5, his bishop on g2 will be a bit misplaced.

9...♗b8

After Black has removed his rook from the a-file, he will prepare a7-a5 and b5-b4.

10.♗e3 a5 11.b3 ♗e8

He completes the last preparations for the offensive. One of his possible plans is to exchange on d4 and to create some pressure against his opponent's e4-pawn.

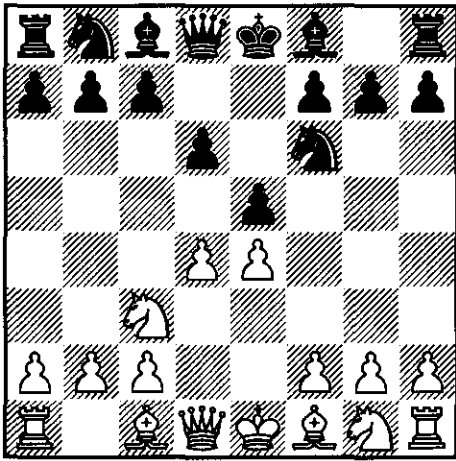


12.g4

Now, the situation on the board becomes considerably sharper.

12...b4 13.axb4 axb4 14.♗a4 d5 15.dxe5 ♗xe4⇌ Anand – Morozevich, Nice 2009.

Step by Step



- A) 4.h3
- B) 4.♗c4
- C) 4.f3
- D) 4.f4
- E) 4.♗ge2

It is bad for White to play 4.d5?! His knight on c3 closes the way forward of the c2-pawn, so Black will easily create pressure against the d5-pawn and he will free his game. For example: 4...c6! 5.♗c4 (5.♗g5 ♗bd7 6.♗c4 ♗e7 7.♖d3 ♗c5 8.♖e3?, Mallios – Katsaros, Athens 2001. White's position was not good anyway, but his last move was simply a blunder. Now, after 8...♗xd5!, Black wins a pawn without any compensation for White.) 5...b5 6.♗d3 b4

7.♗ce2 cxd5 8.exd5 ♗b7 (Naturally, the pawn is untouchable – 8...♗xd5? 9.♗b5+.) 9.c4, Miton – B.Schmidt, Biel 1997, 9...bxc3 10.♗xc3 ♗bd7

The drawback of the move 4.♗g5 is that White defines his plan a bit too early. There might follow: 4...♗e7 5.dxe5 (5.♗f3 ♗bd7 – see 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♗g5 ♗e7) 5...dxe5 6.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 (In this situation, the endgame is harmless for Black, because he has not even lost his castling rights.) 7.♗f3 ♗bd7 8.♗d2 h6 9.♗h4 c6 10.♗c4 ♗c7 11.f3 b5 12.♗e3 ♖b8 13.a4 a6 14.axb5 axb5 15.g4 g6 ♞ Scherer – Schmidt-Schaeffer, Germany 1993.

A) 4.h3

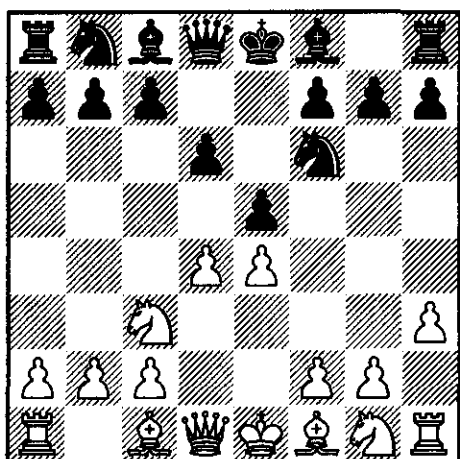
The idea of this attempt is to advance g2-g4 in one move and then to transfer the knight from g1, via e2, to g3 and to begin a kingside offensive. This plan may seem purposeful, but it is too slow.

(diagram)

4...exd4!

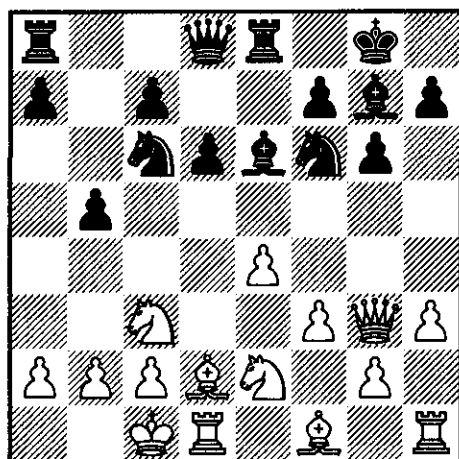
This exchange is necessary for

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5



12.♙xe8 ♙f6 13.c3 ♙e6+ Kivijarvi – Heino, Turku 1998.

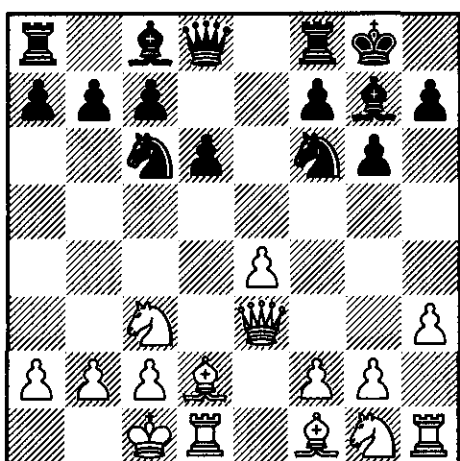
9...♙e8 10.f3 ♙e6 11.♘ge2 b5!



Black in order to obtain a lively and dynamic position.

He played rather passively in the next game and allowed his opponent to realize practically everything he had dreamed about: 4...♙e7 5.♙e3 0–0 6.g4 ♘c6 7.d5 ♘b8 8.♘ge2 c6 9.♘g3 ♙e8 10.g5 ♘fd7 11.h4 ♘f8 12.♘f5 and Black's position was rather unpleasant, Aleksandrov – Komliakov, Spasskoe 1996 – **game 8**.

5.♙xd4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 g6 7.♙d2 ♙g7 8.0–0–0 0–0



9.♙g3

White has no time for abstract moves like 9.g4?!, because of 9...d5! 10.♙f3 ♘xe4 11.♘xe4 dxe4

Black exploits his lead in development and he begins active actions on the side of the board, where the enemy king is trying to find a safe shelter. Naturally, it would be too risky for White to capture the b5-pawn and to open the b-file.

12.♘f4 ♙c4 13.♘xb5?

So, White swallowed the bait at the end...

After 13.♙xc4 bxc4 14.h4 h5 15.♘cd5, the position would have remained double-edged.

13...♙xb5!

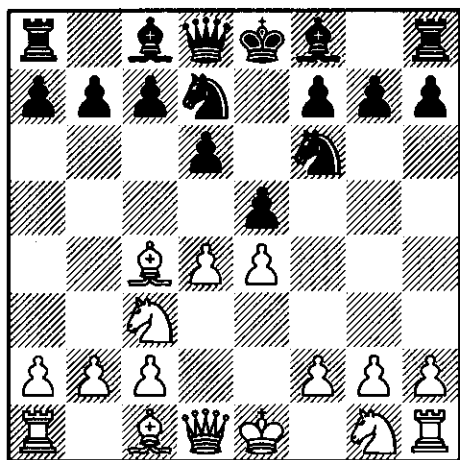
In fact, in the game Ferron – Toledano, Spain 2001, Black's play was not up to the level and after 13...♙xf1, he obtained a slightly inferior position, although at the end he won it.

14.♙xb5 ♙b8! 15.e5

15.♙xc6 ♘xe4!

15...♙xb5 16.exf6 ♙xf6 17.b3 ♘d4 with decisive threats.

B) 4.♖c4 ♘bd7



5.♘ge2

White has developed his bishop to c4 and now he places his knight on a rather modest position, keeping in reserve the aggressive pawn-advance f2-f4, as well as the solid move f2-f3 and the maneuver ♘e2-g3-f5, which may be rather unpleasant for Black.

In case of 5.♘f3, we enter positions, analyzed in the following chapters after the move-order 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.♖c4.

5...c6 6.a4

This is a useful prophylactic move, preventing the opponent from occupying additional space on the queenside with b7-b5.

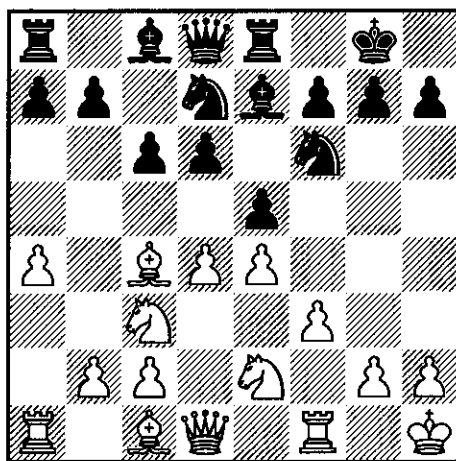
6...♙e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♔h1 ♚e8 9.f3

(diagram)

9...exd4!?

Black provokes interesting complications.

After 9...♛c7 10.♙e3 ♘f8 11.♛d2 a5 12.♞fd1, White was slightly better, Alcaraz – Gagunashvili,



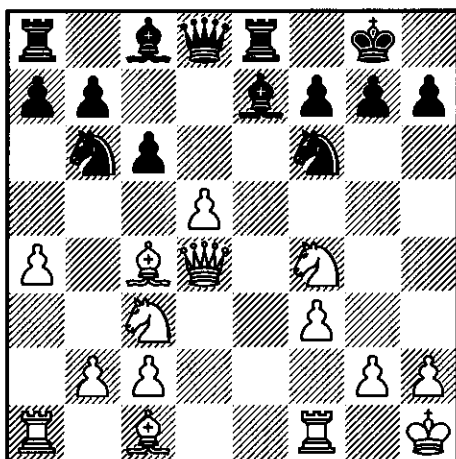
Benidorm 2007, but later he made mistakes in the complex middle game and lost – **game 9**.

10.♛xd4

Black can counter 10.♘xd4 in the same fashion – 10...d5 with an even greater effect.

10...d5 11.exd5 ♘b6 12.♘f4

In the variation 12.♞d1 ♘fxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♙xd5 ♛xd5 15.♛xd5 cxd5 16.♞xd5 ♙f6, Black obtains an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn – two bishops, superior development and queenside pressure.

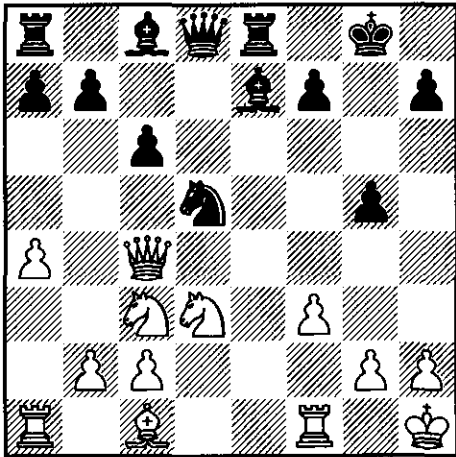


12...g5!?

This is an aggressive move in

the style of the young Danish GM Bent Larsen. Black can afford to play like this, because he has a bishop-pair and controls the centre, leading in development.

13. ♖d3 ♖xc4 14. ♗xc4
♖xd5



15. ♖e4

It is far from simple for White to develop his pieces impeding in the process the opponent to do the same. For example, after 15. ♖d2 ♖e6, it is bad for him to play 16. ♖c5?, because of 16... ♖e3-+

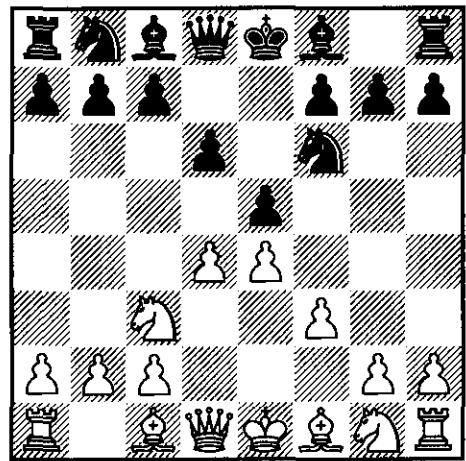
15... f5 16. ♖d2

White cannot achieve much with a knight-sortie on the king-side of the type of – 16. ♖g3 ♖f6 17. ♖h5 ♖h8 18. ♖d2 ♖e6=

16... fxe4 17. fxe4 ♖e6 18. exd5 ♗xd5=

C) 4. f3

This is a super-solid move. We have dealt with similar ideas in our Chapter 1.



4...exd4

Black is trying to obtain a more lively position and to win a tempo by attacking the enemy queen.

5. ♗xd4 ♖c6 6. ♖b5

After 6. ♗f2, he will play immediately 6...d5! and Black simplifies advantageously the position. For example: 7. ♖g5 ♖b4 8. exd5 ♗xd5 9. ♖d2 (9. ♖xf6 gxf6 10. ♖d3 ♖e5 11. ♖e4 ♗d6 12. ♖d1 ♗e7=) 9... ♗e5+ 10. ♗e2 ♖e6 11. a3 ♖a5 12. 0-0-0 0-0-0 13. ♗xe5 ♖xe5= Beshukov – G.Kuzmin, Krasnodar 1998.

6... ♖d7 7. ♖xc6

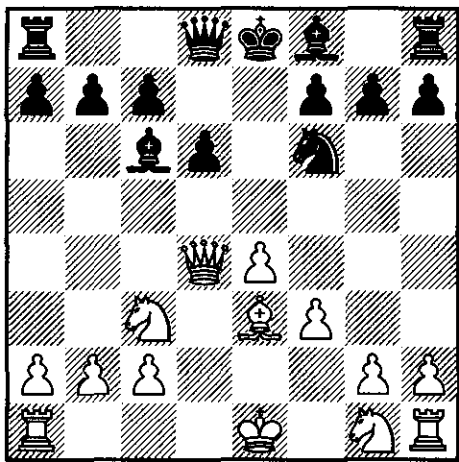
Naturally, White is not forced to present his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but Black's game is simple and easy anyway. He must complete his development and then provoke exchanges. For example: 7. ♗e3 ♖e7 8. ♖ge2 h6 9. b3 0-0 10. ♖b2 ♖b4! 11. ♖d3 ♖h7 12. 0-0 c6 13. a3 ♖xd3 14. cxd3 ♗b6= Hellegaard – Hoiberg, Denmark 1999.

7... ♖xc6 8. ♖e3

This is how the game Borriss

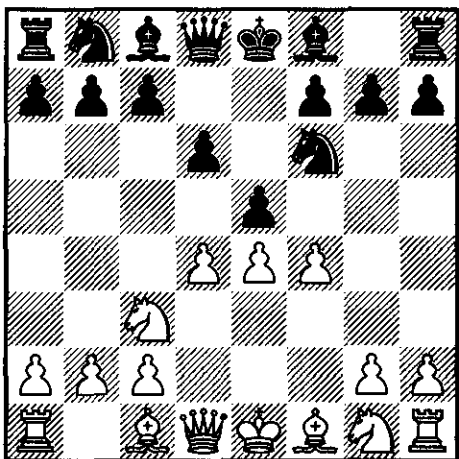
– Malaniuk, Kecskemet 1991 developed.

It is worse for White to play 8.♔g5 ♕e7 9.♖ge2 0–0 10.0–0–0 ♗xc4! 11.♕xe7 ♘xc3 12.♙xc3 ♙xe7 and Black ended up with a solid extra pawn in the game Pirrot – Schmidt-Schaeffer, Germany 1993.



8...g6!? 9.0–0–0 ♔g7 10.♗ge2 0–0 11.♙d2 ♙e7 with a double-edged position. For example, in reply to the rather risky move 12.h4 Black can counter with the powerful strike in the centre 12...d5!

D) 4.f4

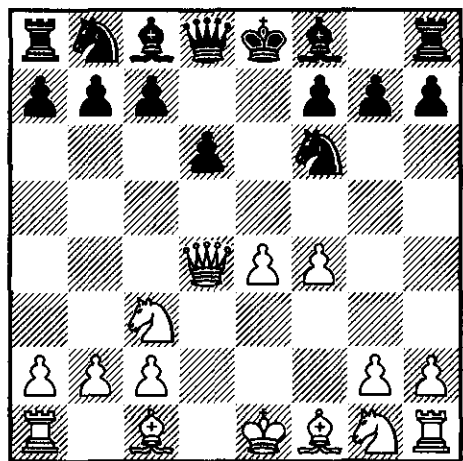


This is a purposeful move. White wishes to obtain a pawn-tandem in the centre (ideally, e4 plus d4-pawns with an open f-file on the side, but even with pawns on e4 and f4, he would be quite satisfied...), which will be opposed only by Black's d6-pawn. The drawback of that plan is typical too – White delays his development and Black can exploit this immediately.

4...exd4

He has an alternative and that is – 4...♔g4 5.♕e2 exd4.

5.♙xd4

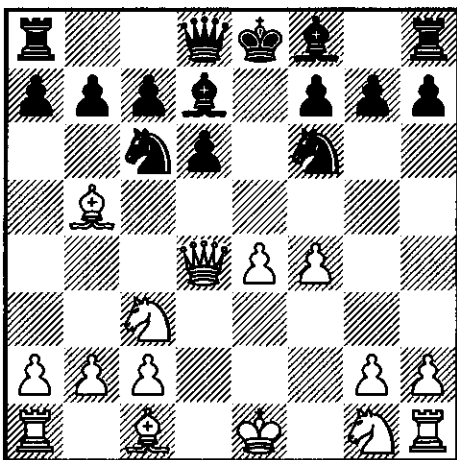


5...♗c6

There are some players, who prefer to castle first and to play ♖b8-c6 only later, repelling White's queen away from the centre: 5...♕e7!? 6.♗f3 0–0. I think the exchange operation ♕f1-b5xc6 is not dangerous for Black. White's queen remains, as if dominant, in the centre indeed, but Black obtains a bishop-pair and exerts pressure against the e4-pawn.

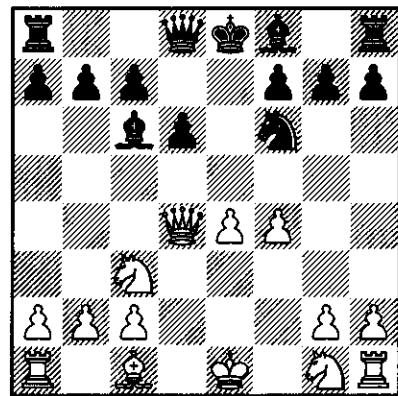
6. ♖b5

White can try another plan too. He retreats with his queen to d2 and prepares the deployment of his dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal. He needs too much time for that however, and Black creates counterplay in the centre and on the queenside. For example: 6. ♖d2 ♖e7 7. ♖d3 (7.b3 a5!? 8. ♖b5 0–0 9. ♖b2 ♖b4! and Black prepares c6 and d5 and his knight will to to c5 via a6 – 10.0–0–0 c6 11. ♖e2 ♖c7 12.a3 ♖a6 13. ♖f3 ♖d8 14. h3 b5 15.g4 b4 16.axb4 axb4 17. ♖a4 d5! and he is ahead of the opponent in the development of his initiative, Amidzic – Shabanov, Krasnodar 1991.) 7... ♖b4 8. ♖f3 ♖xd3+ (Black could have postponed that exchange for a while, by playing at first 8...0–0.) 9. ♖xd3 0–0 10. ♖e3 c6 11.0–0–0 ♖a5 12. ♖d4 ♖g4 13. ♖d2 ♖e6 ♞ Zakic – Cvetkovic, Tivat 1995. Later, he can defend his c6-pawn with his queen's rook and advance b7-b5. His other possible standard plan is connected with d6-d5.

6... ♖d7**7. ♖f2**

Here, contrary to the d2-square, the queen is not covering the diagonal of the bishop on c1, but the move has other drawbacks and in particular White's strongest piece can be attacked with ♖f6-g4 in some variations.

The alternative for White is to exchange on c6, although his queen will not be completely safe on the d4-square either. For example: 7. ♖xc6 ♖xc6



In case of 8. ♖ge2, Black can solve all his opening problems with the help of some tactics: 8... ♖e7! 9. ♖g3 ♖xe4! 10. ♖gxe4 f5 11.0–0 fxe4 12. ♖e1 d5 (He forces additional exchanges. He could have fought for the advantage with the line: 12...0–0–0!? 13. ♖xa7 d5 14. ♖e3 ♖b4, but that would have been a bit risky.) 13. ♖xd5 ♖c5 14. ♖xc5 ♖xc5+ 15. ♖e3 ♖xd5, draw, Barrientos – Argandona, Capdepera 2004.

8. ♖f3 g6 (White's queen is beautifully placed on d4 and Black must try to trouble it there.) 9. ♖d2 ♖g7 10.0–0–0 0–0 11. ♖d3 ♖e8 12. ♖he1 b6 ("Rybka" suggests

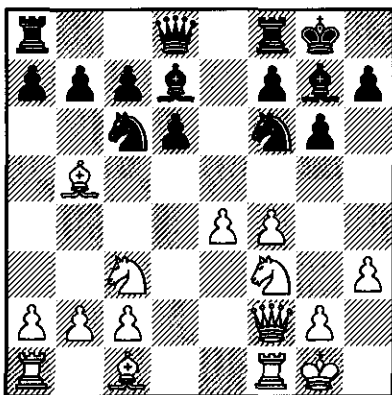
here the move 12...♘d7, with the idea to win the e4-pawn with ♘c5, ♙xc3 and ♙xe4, but this recommendation should better be ignored. The extra pawn would not matter much, while Black might be checkmated on the dark squares. Besides the move in the game, he may try – 12...b5!?) 13.♚c4?! (White provokes his opponent to advance his b6-pawn up to b4. He had to prefer 13.♙b1.) 13...♚d7 14.♘g5 b5 15.♚d3 h6 16.♘h3 b4 and Black seized the initiative in the game Belov – Zablotsky, Kazan 2001 – **game 10**.

7...g6

The computer recommends 7...♚e7!? 8.♚e2 a6 9.♙d3 0–0–0, with the idea g6, ♙g7 and ♜he8, increasing the pressure against White's pawn-centre. Black must however, consider the possible sacrifice of White's bishop on a6, after which he would have at least a perpetual check.

8.♘f3 ♙g7 9.♙d2

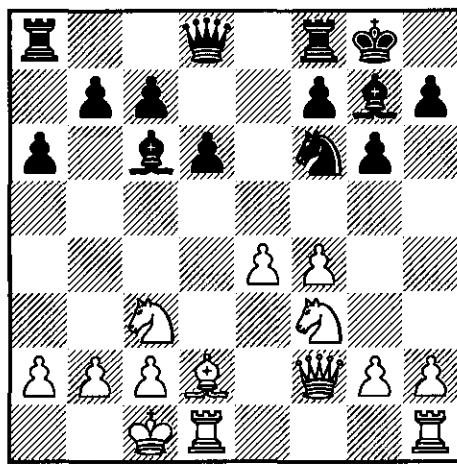
9.0–0 0–0 10.h3



10...♘b4!? It would be useful to remember this resource. Black is trying to trade the light-

squared bishop and he preserves his knight in order to increase his control over the dark squares in the centre. 11.♙xd7 ♚xd7 12.a3 ♘c6 13.♙d2 ♜ae8 14.♜ae1 ♞e7 15.♞e2 ♞fe8 16.♞fe1 a6 with approximately equal chances, Bryzgalin – Zablotsky, Kazan 2001.

9...0–0 10.0–0–0 a6 11.♙xc6 ♙xc6

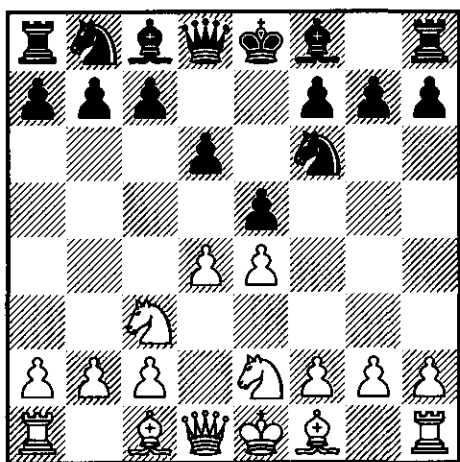


12.♜he1

Or 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘g4 14.♚g3 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♘xe5 16.♙f4 ♚f6 17.♘d5 ♘d3+!? (This is an attractive tactical strike, which seems to be sufficient to maintain the equality. Still, it is even stronger for him to retreat simply his queen – 17...♚e6, for example: 18.♜he1 ♜ad8.) 18.♜xd3 ♚xb2+ 19.♙d2 ♜ad8–+ Hisler – Deglmann, Fuegen 2006.

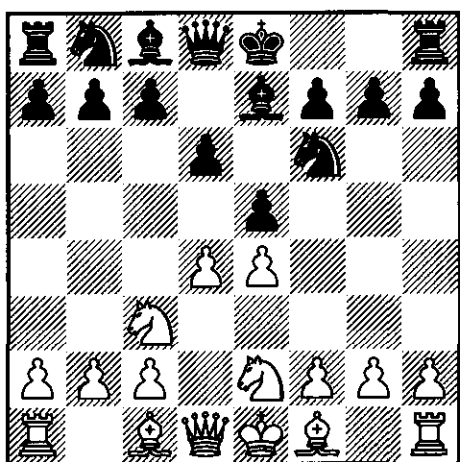
12...♜e8 13.e5 ♘g4 14.♚g3 ♘h6 15.♘e4 ♘f5 16.♚f2 ♙xe4 17.♜xe4 dxe5 18.♙c3, Kotronias – Jansa, Gausdal 1995 and now, the simplest road for Black to equality is **18...♚f6! 19.♜xe5 ♚c6**.

E) 4. ♖ge2



Here, in case of the exchange on d4, White's knight will go to the centre and not his queen. Meanwhile, he has in reserve the possibility to play the undermining move f2-f4. He can also fortify his pawn on e4 with the move f2-f3 and (much rather, or – since the moves f2-f3 and g2-g3 do not combine well with each other...) fianchetto his king's bishop.

4... ♕e7



White must choose between numerous plans, some of them aggressive, some not so much, but I believe that the most unpleasant

for Black is the simple fianchetto of the king's bishop.

E1) 5.h3

E2) 5.f3

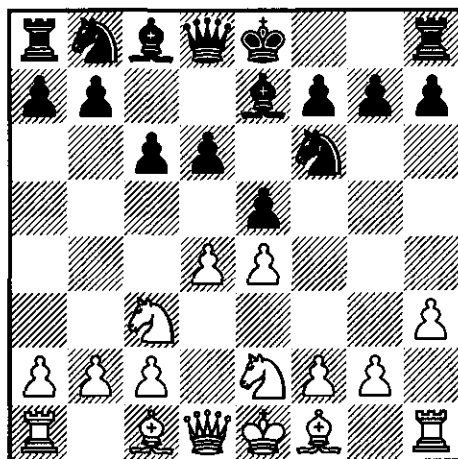
E3) 5.g3

About 5. ♕e3 ♖g4 6. ♕d2 ♖f6 7.f3 0-0 8. ♕e3 – see 5.f3 0-0 6. ♕e3.

E1) 5.h3

As usual, White takes the g4-square under control, ensuring the placement of his bishop on e3 and plans an enlarged fianchetto with g2-g4.

5...c6

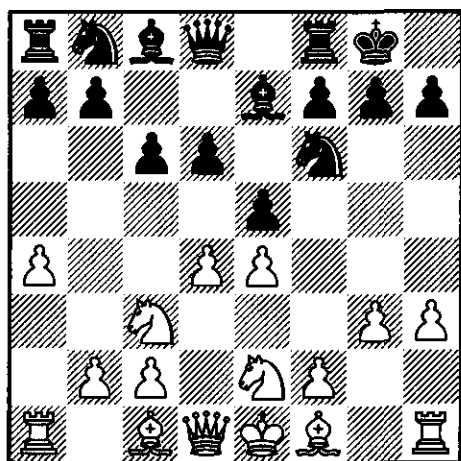


6.a4

The somewhat careless move 6.g4 enables the opponent to begin an offensive on the other side of the board: 6...b5 7.a3 (7. ♖g3 0-0 8. ♕g2 exd4 9. ♖xd4 d5 10.exd5 b4 11. ♖ce4 ♖xd5 12.0-0 ♖b6 13. ♖d1 ♖d8 14. ♖xb6 axb6 15.b3 ♕e6 ♞ Marholev – Maletin, Plovdiv 2008 – **game 11**) 7...h5 8.g5 ♖fd7 9.d5 c5 10. ♖g3 (After

10. ♖xb5 a6 11. ♗bc3 ♙xg5 12. ♖g1 ♙xc1 13. ♗xc1 g6, Black exchanges the dark-squared bishops and he can be quite optimistic about the future.) 10...g6 11. ♙xb5 h4 12. ♗f1 a6!? He is not in a hurry to restore the material balance. Black has fixed the enemy pawn on h3 and if White protects his g5-pawn with ♖g1, then the h3-pawn will be defenceless. It will not be so easy for him to protect his g5-pawn with other pieces. 13. ♙c6 ♖a7 14. b4 ♗f8 15. b5 ♗b6 16. a4 a5 17. ♗f3 (If 17. ♗d2, then 17... ♖h5 and White will fail to hold on to the pawn anyway.) 17... ♙xg5 18. ♖g1 ♗f6 and Black's prospects were not worse at all, L.Milov – V.Georgiev, Pfaeffikon 2003.

6...0–0 7.g3



7...exd4

White has played five moves with his pawns out of the first seven and he lags considerably in development. Black is ready for a simplifying operation in the centre and he will at least equalize with it.

8. ♗xd4

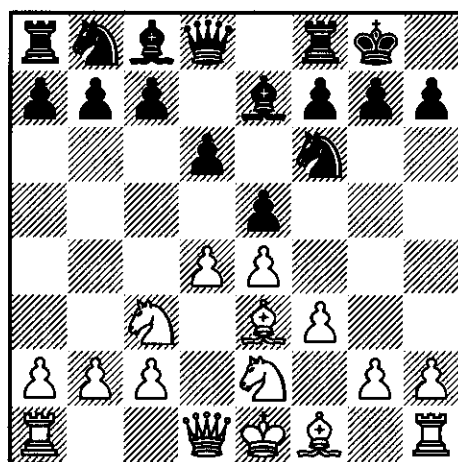
It is dubious for White to play 8. ♗xd4?!, because his queen can be attacked with tempi in the centre of the board: 8...d5 9. exd5 cxd5 10. ♙e3 ♗c6 11. ♗d2 ♗e5 12. ♗d4, Hardicsay – Okhotnik, Budapest 1992, 12... ♙b4 13. f3 ♖e8

8...d5 9.e5 ♗e4 10. ♗xe4 dxe4 11. ♙f4 e3 12. fxe3

12. ♙xe3 ♗a5+ 13. c3 ♗xe5

12... ♗a6 13.h4 ♗b6 and Black's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient, Tisir – Pujos, France 2007.

E2) 5.f3 0–0 6. ♙e3



6...c6

This is an all-purpose useful move. Black can begin an offensive on the queenside with b7-b5, or he can reduce the tension in the centre with d6-d5.

7. ♗d2

White can prevent the move b7-b5, by playing 7.a4, but then he cannot castle long any more and castling short needs a long preparation. There may follow:

7... ♗bd7 8. dxe5 dxe5 9. ♖c1 ♗c5
10. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 11. ♖xd8 ♗xd8 12. a5
♗e6= Tibensky – Jansa, Lazne
Bohdanec 1997.

The transfer into an endgame is harmless for Black, because he has no weaknesses. White has no lead in development, on the contrary, his knight on e2 impedes the activation of the rest of his forces. For example: 7. dxe5 dxe5 8. ♖xd8 ♗xd8 9. ♖c1 ♗e6 10. ♖d3 ♖fd7 11. 0–0–0 ♖a6 12. ♗e2 ♖ac5 13. ♖xc5 ♗xc5 14. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 15. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 16. b4 ♖d7 17. ♗d1 ♖f8= Manca – Laketic, Porto San Giorgio 2005.

It is too early for White to play 7.g4, in view of 7...exd4 8. ♖xd4 (8. ♖xd4 d5 9.g5 ♖e8 10.exd5 ♗xg5) 8...d5 (It would be interesting for Black to try 8...♗bd7!? with the idea to follow with 9.0–0–0 ♖e5 10. ♗g2 c5.) 9.exd5 ♖xd5 10. ♖xd5 ♗h4+ 11. ♖g3 ♖xd5 12.0–0–0 (In case of 12. ♖xd5 cxd5 13.0–0–0 ♗d8, there arises an approximately equal endgame – Black's d5-pawn is vulnerable, but White's entire kingside has been weakened.) 12... ♖xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♗e6 14. ♗d3 ♖d7 15. ♖f5 ♗f6 16. ♗he1, draw, Hoffmann – Miltner, Germany 2006.

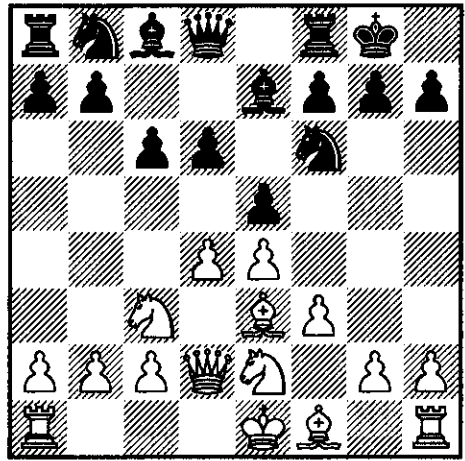
(diagram)

7...b5

Black emphasizes the fact that White's king will not be safe on c1.

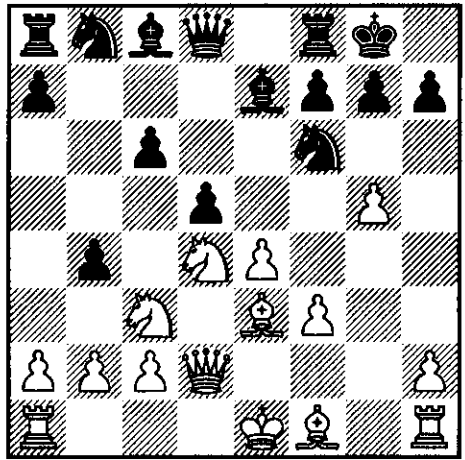
8.g4

8.a3 ♗bd7 9.g4 a5 10. ♖g3 ♗b8
11.g5 ♖e8 12.h4 exd4 13. ♗xd4 ♖e5



14. ♗xe5 dxe5 15. ♖xd8 ♗xd8
Hoffmann – Maiwald, Dresden
1999.

8...exd4 9. ♖xd4 d5 10.g5
b4



11. ♖h5

Black obtains a promising position after 11. ♖xd5!? cxd5 12.gxf6 ♗xf6, because his bishop on the long diagonal will be very useful both in attack and defence.

11... ♖h5 12.exd5 ♖xd5 13.
♗d3?!

It is stronger for White to play 13. ♗g2 with a double-edged position.

13... ♗d8 14. ♗e4 ♖a5 15.b3
c5?

Chapter 2

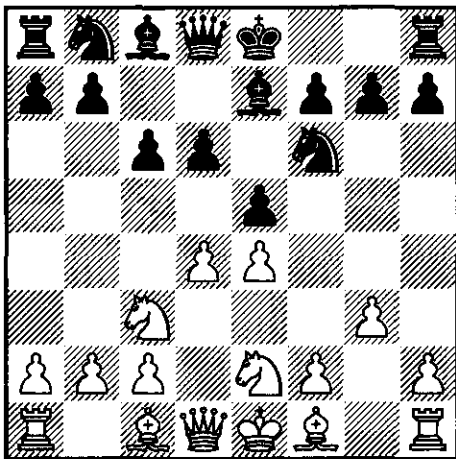
This spectacular idea has an important defect. Black had better opt for 15...f5!, seizing the initiative.

16. ♖xa8?

White did not need to be so greedy. After 16. ♖xc5! ♗xc5 17. ♖xa8 ♖f4 18. ♖d1, Black would have great difficulties to prove that his active pieces can compensate the sacrificed exchange and a pawn.

16...cxd4 17. ♖xd4 ♗xg5 18. ♖f2 ♖e8+ – White seems helpless against Black’s dangerous attack, D.Biryukov – Zablotsky, Novokuznetsk 2007.

E3) 5.g3 c6



E3a) 6.a4

E3b) 6. ♖g2

E3a) 6.a4

This prophylactic move enables Black to accomplish original regrouping of forces and to deploy his queenside light pieces on c4 and b4.

See how this is done:

6...0–0 7. ♖g2 a5 8.h3

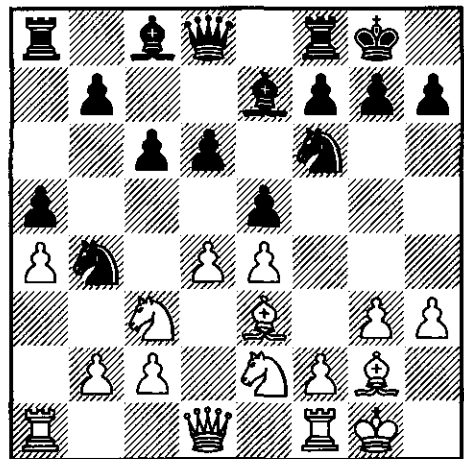
After 8.0–0 ♖a6 9.h3, there arises a transposition.

8...♖a6 9.0–0 ♖b4

This is an excellent square for Black’s knight, because it attacks the c2-pawn and supports the pawn-advance d6-d5. In addition, White has problems repelling it from there after he has played a2-a4.

10. ♗e3

There are interesting complications after 10.g4, Spiegel – M. Pribyl, Boeblingen 1995, 10...h5 11.g5 ♖d7 12.f4 ♖b6 13.♖f2 h4!?! ↗



10...♗e6!?

This move is approved by “Rybka” even at its highest levels of profound analysis and I think it is the best way for Black to equalize outright.

In case of 10...d5 11.dxe5 ♖xe4 12.♖xe4 dxe4, White should not play 13.♖d4, which was tested in the game Karim – Paunovic, Sevilla 2008 and led to an equal position, but 13. ♗xe4! ♗xh3 14. ♖e1 ♖c8 15.c3 ♖d8 16. ♗d4 ♖d5 17. ♖b3 and he maintains an ad-

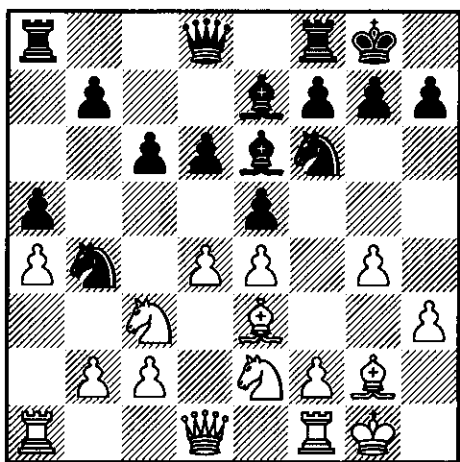
vantage thanks to his centralized pieces.

It deserves attention for Black however, to continue with 10... exd4 11. ♗xd4 (11. ♕xd4 ♖e8 12. ♗f4 ♗d7 13. ♖e1 ♗e5 14. ♖e2 ♗c7 15. b3 ♕d7 16. ♗a2 ♗a6 17. ♖h2 ♕f8 18. ♗d3 ♕e6) Obolenskikh – Yudin, Novokuznetsk 2008) 11...d5, for example: 12.e5 ♗d7 13. ♕f4 (13.e6 ♗e5 14.exf7+ ♗xf7=) 13...g5, Aitbayev – Zablotsky, Tomsk 2009, 14.e6 gxf4 15. ♗g4+ ♖h8 16.exd7 ♕xd7 17. ♗xf4 ♕g5) and his king is vulnerable indeed, but he has two active bishops and a powerful central pawn-formation – b7-c6-d5.

11.g4

This aggressive move forces Black to solve concrete problems.

White cannot harm his opponent with 11.b3 d5! 12.dxe5 ♗xe4 13. ♗xe4 dxe4 14. ♗b1 (14. ♕xe4 ♕xh3 15. ♖e1 f5!) 14...♗c7 15.c3 ♗d5 16. ♗xe4 ♗xe3 17. ♗xe3 ♕xb3) or 11. ♗b1 ♗c8 12.c3 ♗a6 13. ♖h2 d5)



11...♕c4!

White has fianchettoed his light-squared bishop and Black occupies the a6-f1 diagonal. He is not afraid of the move b2-b3, because he will simply retreat his bishop to a6 causing additional trouble to his opponent. White's knight on e2 is pinned and if he wishes to unpin it, he must place his rook on e1, when it would be much more useful on f1. Meanwhile, if he decides to repel the annoying knight away from the b4-square, preparing c2-c3, then it may go to d3 and from there to the f4-square.

12. ♗d2 h5!?

The idea of this undermining move is to organize counterplay on the kingside as well.

13.g5 ♗d7 14. ♖fd1 f6)

Notice that all the pieces and pawns are still present on the board. After opening of the f-file the situation on the board will become even more complicated and tense.

E3b) 6. ♕g2 b5 7. 0–0

About 7.a3 0–0 8. 0–0 ♗bd7 9.h3 – see 7.0–0 0–0 8.a3 ♗bd7 9.h3.

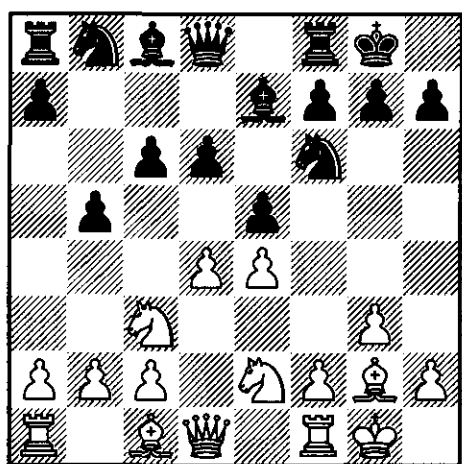
7...0–0

(diagram)

8.a3

8.h3 b4 9. ♗b1 a5 10. ♕e3 ♗bd7 11. ♗d2 ♕a6 12. ♖e1 ♖e8 13.c4 bxc3 14.bxc3 d5) Chadaev – Bocharov, Miass 2007.

8.b3 a5 9. ♕b2 ♕a6 10. ♗d2 b4 11. ♗a4 c5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13. ♖fd1



♟c6 14.c4 ♖c7 ♞ Navara – Sturua, Dubai 2005 – **game 12.**

8...♟bd7 9.h3

9.b3 ♟b7 10.♟b2 ♞e8 11.♞d2 ♞c7 12.h3 a5 13.g4 b4 14.axb4 axb4 15.♞xa8 ♞xa8 16.♟d1 c5 17.d5 ♟a6 18.♞e1 ♟xe2 19.♞xe2 ♟f8 20.♟e3 ♟g6 ♞ Shamkovich – Benjamin, Las Vegas 1995 – **game 13.**

9...♞b8

Black is planning a7-a5 and b5-b4.

He can prepare this maneuver in another fashion, leaving his rook on a8 and developing the bishop to a6: 9...a5!? 10.g4 ♟a6 11.♟g3 (11.b4 ♟b7 12.♞b1 axb4 13.axb4 ♟e8 14.♟g3 g6 15.♟h6 ♟g7 16.♟ce2 ♟b6 ♞ Beliaevsky – Mokry, Haifa 1989) 11...b4 12.♟ce2 12...d5 (The exchange on a3 looks premature for Black, because White's rook may come to the centre, or to the kingside via the third rank, for example: 12...bxa3 13.♞xa3 d5 14.♞e3 dxe4 15.♞e1 ♞c7 16.♟f5 and Black's situation is worrisome, Carlsen – Radjabov, Biel 2007.) 13.exd5 ♟xd5 14.♞e1 bxa3 15.bxa3 ♟f6 16.♟e4 (16.g5

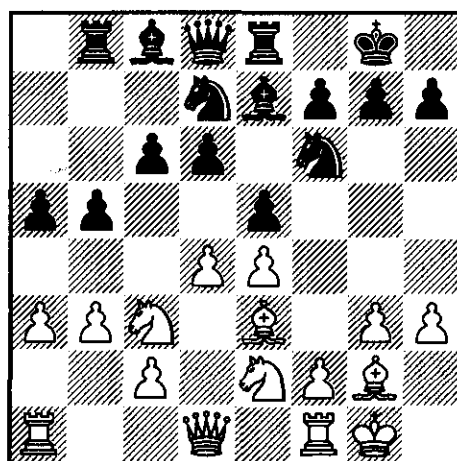
♟xg5 17.dxe5 ♟xc1 18.♞xc1 ♟xe5 19.♟d4 ♟c3 20.♞d2 ♟b5 21.♟gf5 ♟xd4 22.♞xd4 ♞xd4 23.♟xd4 ♞ad8= Papazov – Ruck, Tallinn 1997) 16...♟xe2 17.♞xe2 exd4 18.♟xf6+ ♞xf6 19.g5 ♞f5 20.♞xd4 ♞ae8 with mutual chances, Stisis – Okhotnik, Ajka 1992. White has a bishop-pair, but his pawn-structure is vulnerable, while Black's knights have access to good outposts in the centre.

10.♟e3

10.f4 ♞c7 11.♟e3 ♞e8 12.g4, Saavedra – Chan Peng-Kong, Salonika 1988, 12...h6 13.♞d3 a5 ♞ 10.b3 ♞c7 11.♟b2 a5 12.♞d2 ♞e8, draw, Goritsas – Pantavos, Poros 1998.

10...a5 11.b3 ♞e8

The opponents have practically completed the mobilization of their forces. There will start a fierce fight all over the entire board in just a few moves.

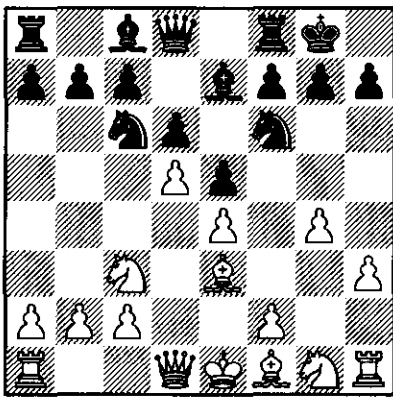


12.g4 b4 13.axb4 axb4 14.♟a4 d5 15.dxe5 ♟xe4 ♞ Anand – Morozevich, Nice 2009 – **game 14.**

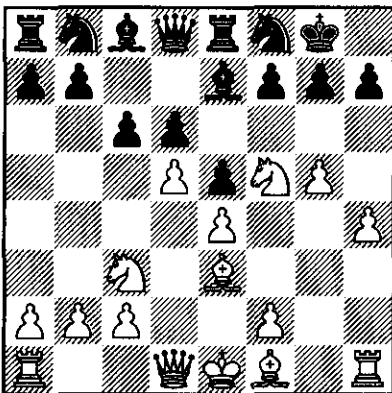
Complete Games

8 A.Aleksandrov–Komliakov
Spasskoe 1996

1.d4 d6 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 e5
4.h3 ♗e7 5.♗e3 0–0 6.g4 ♘c6
7.d5



7...♘b8 8.♘ge2 c6 9.♘g3
♗e8 10.g5 ♘fd7 11.h4 ♘f8
12.♘f5



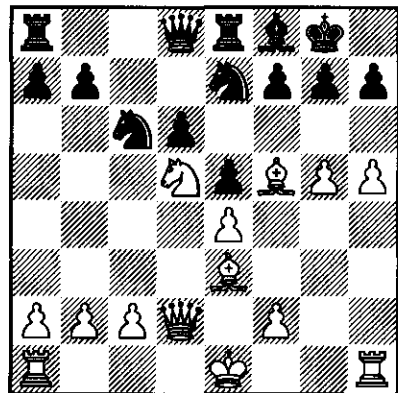
Black's position is rather unpleasant – he lacks space and has difficulties with his development.

White's game is simple and easy – he must castle long and prepare a pawn-offensive on the kingside.

12...♘g6 13.♚d2 ♗f8 14.♗h3
cxd5

I think Black would have more chances after the standard pawn-sacrifice: 14...♘f4!? 15.♗xf4 ♗xf5 16.♗xf5 exf4 17.♚xf4 g6 18.♗g4 ♗g7. His position would not be a bed of roses, but at least his dark-squared bishop would be active and the rook on e8 would have good prospects. The enemy's attack would have lost its momentum as well.

15.♘xd5 ♗xf5 16.♗xf5 ♘c6
17.h5 ♘ge7



18.h6

This is the signal for the beginning of the offensive.

Still, it seems even stronger for White to play 18. ♖xe7+ ♝xe7 (or 18... ♖xe7) 19.g6.

18... ♖xf5

In case of 18...g6 19. ♖f6+ ♔h8, White will not be happy with winning the exchange, since he can gobble a whole rook with 20. ♔d7.

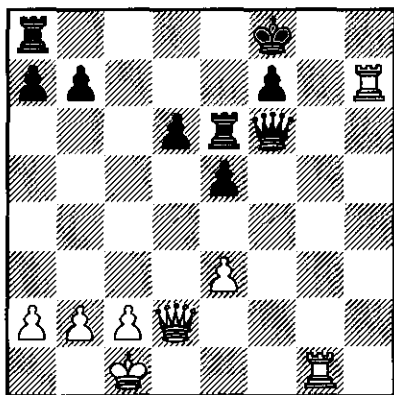
19.hxg7 ♔xg7

Naturally, it is bad for Black to opt for 19... ♖xg7 20. ♖f6+ ♔h8 21. ♝xh7#

20.exf5 ♖d4 21.0-0-0 ♖xf5 22.♝dg1 ♝e6 23. ♖f6+ ♔f8

Maybe Black wanted to sacrifice the exchange with 23... ♝xf6 24.gxf6 ♝xf6, but then he noticed the beautiful reply 25. ♝h6! (if 25... ♝e7, then 26. ♔g5). He would not save the day after 23... ♔xf6 24.gxf6+ ♔h8 25. ♔g5.

24. ♝xh7 ♖xe3 25.fxe3 ♔xf6 26.gxf6 ♝xf6



27. ♝g2!

This double-attack settles the issue.

27... ♝ae8

Otherwise, Black would lose his rook after the check from g8. Now, White's heavy pieces attack

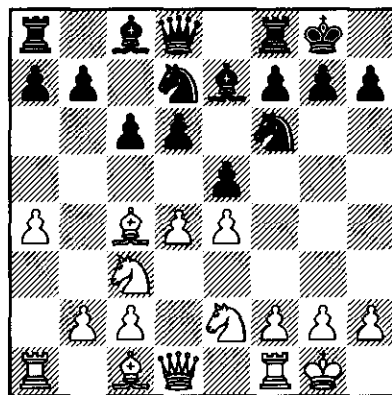
the enemy king from both sides.

28. ♝xb7 a5 29.a4 e4 30. ♝a7 ♝e5 31. ♔b1 ♝f5 32. ♔a2 ♝e6+ 33. ♔a3 ♝f6 34.c3

Black's position is terrible indeed, but he could have offered some more resistance. Still, in the database, the game ends here with 1-0. Black possibly lost on time, or the game was not recorded any more.

9 C.Alcaraz – Gagunashvili
Benidorm 2007

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 ♖bd7 4. ♔c4 e5 5. ♖ge2 c6 6.a4 ♔e7 7.0-0 0-0



8. ♔h1 ♝e8 9.f3 ♝c7 10. ♔e3 ♖f8

The position has been consolidated and now the opponents are bringing closer the last reserves.

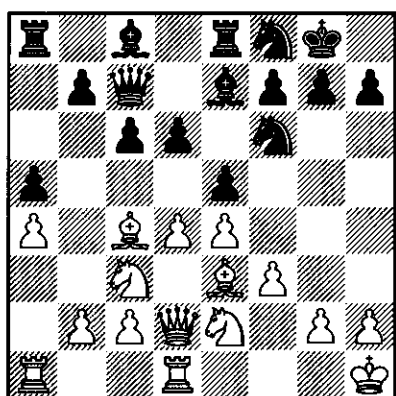
11. ♝d2 a5 12. ♝fd1

(diagram)

12...exd4?!

The grandmaster from Georgia, who was playing with Black, had nearly 600 rating points more than his opponent and he wanted to obtain a sharp and complicated

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5

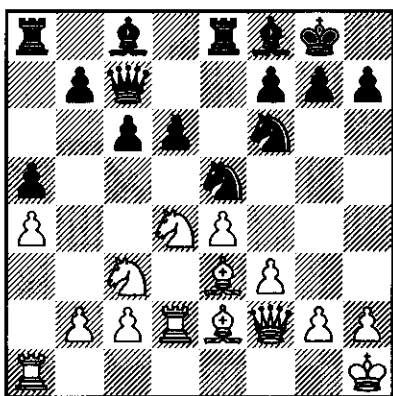


position, relying on his advantage in the class of playing.

From the point of view of “science in the opening” (if it exists, in general...), it would be more reliable for Black to play 12...♗g6, planning h6, ♗h7, ♖g5, or ♗f6-h5-f4. In both cases, he would have a very solid position and good chances of obtaining counterplay.

13.♗xd4 ♗g6 14.♖f2 ♖f8
15.♗d2 ♗e5 16.♗e2?!

It looks like the Spanish amateur was so impressed with the rating of his opponent that he began to defend without any necessity. After the natural move 16.♗a2, White would have a slight edge.



16...♗fd7?!

This is another dubious deci-

sion, but White was obviously confident that he could not be punished. It is objectively stronger for him to play 16...♗d7 with an almost equal game.

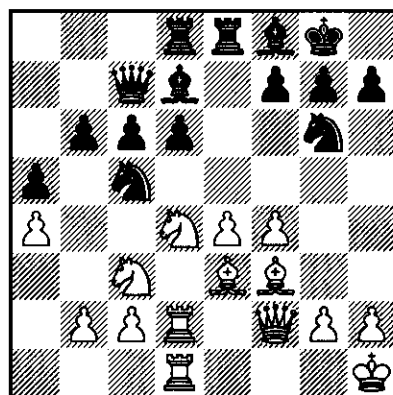
17.♗b3

This is a temporary retreat, because White will soon bring this knight back to the centre. It was also good for him to opt for 17.♗f5!, exerting rather unpleasant pressure against his opponent’s position.

17...b6 18.f4 ♗g6 19.♗ad1
♗c5 20.♗d4 ♖d7 21.♗f3

He has maintained a slight, but stable advantage.

21...♗ad8



22.g4

This is in principle a purposeful move, because White has good prospects on the kingside, but in order to play so aggressively you must be able to control the entire board as well as the computer can do that. The program however, recommends here a more prudent line: 22.h4 h5 23.g3, combining aggression with prophylactic.

22...♗e7 23.♗de2

It deserved attention for White

Chapter 2

to play 23.f5 and if 23...d5, then 24.♖b3!?

23...d5

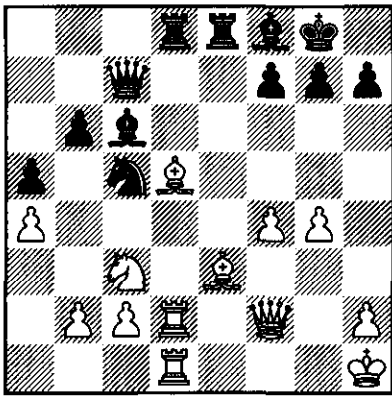
Black will hardly survive for long without this standard counter strike in the centre.

24.exd5 ♖xd5 25.♖xd5 cxd5 26.♖c3!

It is obviously bad for White to play 26.♗xd5? ♗xg4 and if 26.♞xd5 then Black continues 26...♖xa4 with counterplay.

26...♗c6 27.♗xd5

White obviously underestimated his opponent's response. After the correct line: 27.♖xd5 ♗xd5 28.♞xd5 ♞xd5 29.♗xd5 ♖xa4 30.♗c1, his position would be preferable. Naturally, his king remains vulnerable, but his bishop-pair in this open position is very powerful.



27...♞xd5!

This beautiful move is not even a sacrifice, because Black will soon regain the exchange.

28.♞xd5

It was preferable for White to continue with 28.♖xd5 ♖e4 29.♞g2 (HO HE 29.♖xc7? ♖xf2+ 30.♗g1 ♖xd1 31.♖xe8 ♖xe3--)

29...♖xd2 30.♖xc7 ♗xg2+ 31.♗xg2 ♖c4±

28...♖e4 29.♖xe4 ♞xe4 30.b3??

This is a terrible blunder. White has played quite well until now in this tense game and he suddenly crumbles in a simple situation. He had to evacuate immediately his king away from the pin with 30.♗g1 ♗xd5 31.♞xd5 ♞xa4 32.h3!?

30...♞e7!

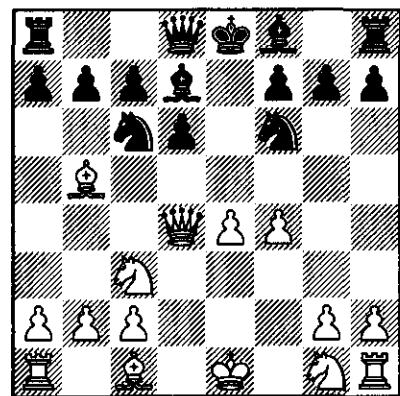
Now, White cannot prevent the penetration of the enemy rook in his camp.

31.♗xb6 ♗xd5 32.♞xd5 ♞e1+ 33.♗g2 ♞e2 34.♞d2 ♞xf2+ 35.♞xf2 ♞d7 36.h3 ♞d5+. White resigned.

10 V.Belov – S.Zablotsky

Kazan 2001

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♖c3 e5 4.f4 exd4 5.♞xd4 ♖c6 6.♗b5 ♗d7



7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♖f3 g6 9.♗d2 ♗g7 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.♞d3 ♞e8 12.♞he1 b6 13.♞c4 ♞d7 14.♖g5 b5 15.♞d3 h6 16.♖h3 b4

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5

17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♙b5

The first part of Black's plan is to transfer the bishop to the c4-square, so that both his bishops can attack directly the enemy king on adjacent diagonals.

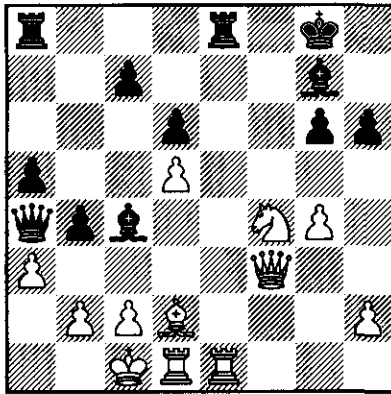
19.♚f3 a5 20.g4 ♙c4 21.f5

In reply to 21.b3, Black will simply retreat his bishop – 21... ♙b5 and then he will open the a-file, thanks to the target on b3. Still, I think White would have more chances of saving the game in that case.

21...♚b5

I believe it was even stronger for Black to play immediately 21...♚a4. Maybe he did not notice the winning combination out-right...

22.fxg6 fxg6 23.♘f4 ♚a4 24.a3



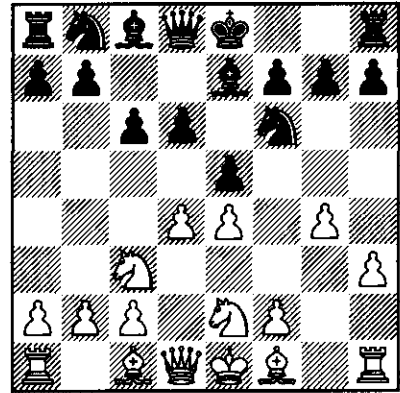
24...♙xb2! 25.♔xb2 bxa3+ 26.♔c1

White would not save the game with 26.♔a1 ♚xc2 27. ♚xa3 ♜xe1 28.♜xe1 ♚xd2 etc.

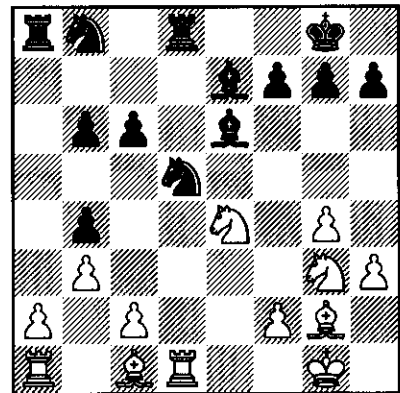
26...a2 27.♜xe8+ ♜xe8 28. ♙c3 a1♜+ 29.♙xa1 ♚xa1+ 30. ♔d2 ♚f6 31.♚g3 ♜e4 32. ♘e6 ♜e2+. White resigned.

11 D.Marholev – P.Maletin Plovdiv 2008

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘ge2 ♙e7 5.h3 c6 6.g4



6...b5 7.♘g3 0-0 8.♙g2 exd4 9.♚xd4 d5 10.exd5 b4 11.♘ce4 ♘xd5 12.0-0 ♚b6 13.♜d1 ♜d8 14.♚xb6 axb6 15.b3 ♙e6



16.♙b2 ♘d7 17.c4

White's attempt to organize an attack on the kingside has failed and he has a weakness on f4, which he had to cover at this moment with the move 17.♘e2.

17...♘f4 18.♘f5?!

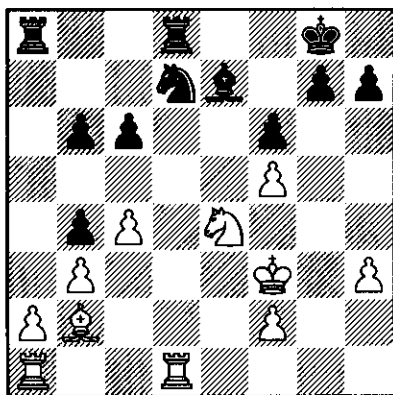
This is another wrong decision for him, because he compromises his pawn-structure.

18...♙xf5 19.gxf5 ♘xg2 20.♔xg2 f6

This is very useful prophylactic for Black, since White could have pushed f6 at some moment, provoking the exchange of some light pieces.

21.♔f3?!

It was better for White to play 21.♙d4!, transferring the bishop to e3.



Now, Black plans to capture his opponent's f5-pawn.

21...♞a5! 22.♔f4 ♖f8 23. ♞xd8 ♙xd8 24.a4 ♙c7+ 25. ♔e3

In case of 25.♔g4 h5+ 26.♔xh5 ♞xf5+ 27.♔g4 ♞f4+, White ends up a piece down.

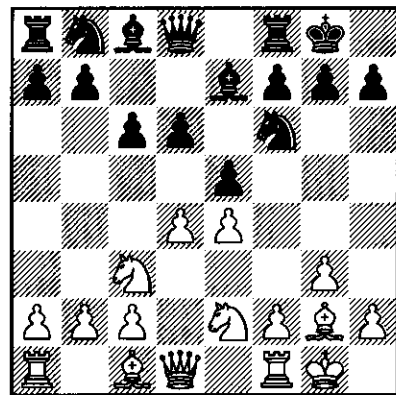
25...♞xf5 26.c5 ♖e6 27.cxb6 ♙xb6+ 28.♔d2 ♖g5 29.♖xg5 ♞xf2+ 30.♔c1 fxc5 31.a5 ♞f1+ 32.♔c2 ♞xa1 33.axb6 ♞a5. White resigned.

12 D.Navara – Z.Sturua
Dubai 2005

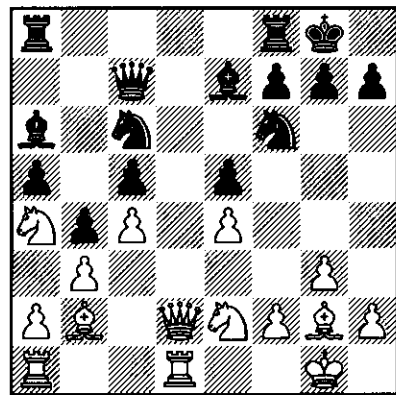
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♖c3 e5 4.♖ge2 ♙e7 5.g3 0–0 6.♙g2 c6 7.0–0

(diagram)

7...b5 8.b3 a5 9.♙b2 ♙a6



10.♞d2 b4 11.♗a4 c5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♞fd1 ♖c6 14.c4 ♞c7



In this position with an almost symmetrical pawn-structure, Black has a slight initiative, since his knight can occupy the important d4-outpost, while White's knight is bound to remain isolated on the a4-square for a long time. Still, he has nothing much to worry about yet.

15.♞c2 ♞ad8 16.♞xd8 ♞xd8 17.♞d1 ♙b7 18.♙c1

The idea of this move is to free the b2-square for the knight.

(diagram)

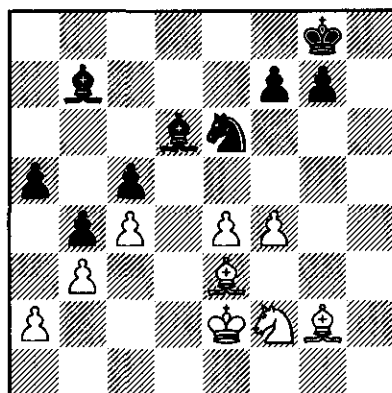
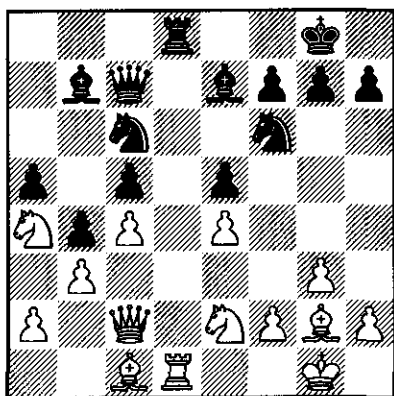
18...♖d7

Black does not achieve much with the line: 18...♖d4 19.♖xd4 cxd4 20.♖b2 ♖d7 21.♖d3. White's knight has occupied an excellent

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♖c3 e5

♗d3 ♘c6 34.♗xc5 ♗f4+ 35.♙xf4
♙xf4 etc.

31...exf4 32.gxf4



32...♙xf4?!

Black would have preserved some winning chances after 32... ♗xf4+! 33.♙xf4 ♙xf4 34.♗d3 ♙h2 35.♗xc5 ♙c8.

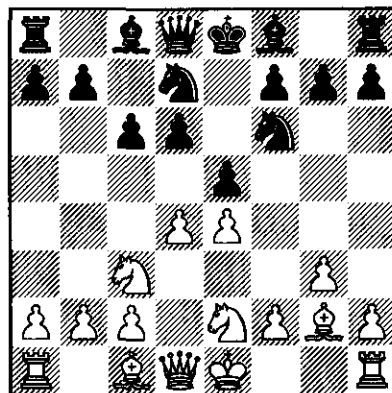
33.♗d3 ♙c7 34.♗xc5 ♗xc5 35.♙xc5 f5 36.♙f3

It was simpler for White to defend with 36.♗f2!? fxe4 37.♗e3 g5 38.♙xe4=

36...fxe4 37.♙g2 ♗f7 38. ♗e3 ♙h2 39.♙xe4 ♙g1+ 40. ♗d2 ♙xc5 41.♙xb7. Draw

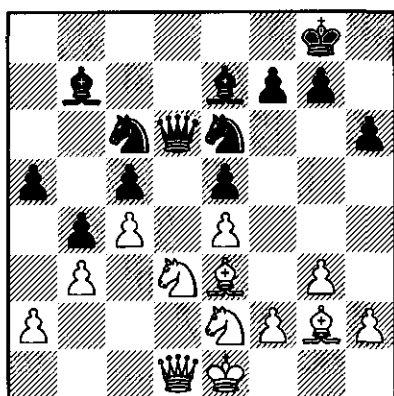
13 Shamkovich – Benjamin Las Vegas 1995

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♗f6 3.♖c3 c6
4.g3 ♗bd7 5.♙g2 e5 6.♗ge2



blocking square and he should not have problems.

19.♗b2 ♗f8 20.♙xd8 ♙xd8
21.♙d1 ♙c7 22.♗d3 ♗e6 23.
♙e3 ♙d6 24.♗f1 h6 25.♗e1



25...h5

Black is trying to break his opponent's defence on the king-side. There will be only unnecessary simplifications after 25... ♗cd4 26.♗xd4 cxd4 27.♙c1 ♗c5 28.♗xc5 ♙xc5 29.♗f1.

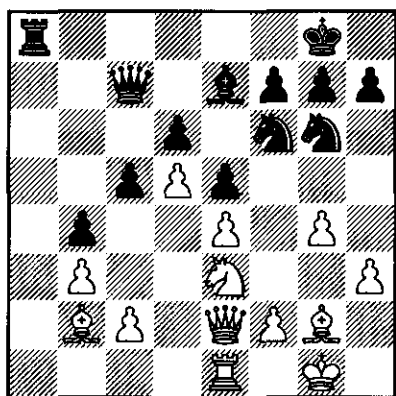
26.f3 h4 27.♗f2 ♗cd4

It looks like this is the only way for Black to improve his position.

28.f4 hxg3 29.hxg3 ♗xe2
30.♙xd6 ♙xd6 31.♗xe2?!

White creates problems for himself. The game would have remained double-edged after 31.fxe5!? ♙xe5 32.♗xe2 ♙xg3 33.

6...b5 7.a3 ♖e7 8.0-0 0-0
 9.b3 ♖b7 10.♗b2 ♞e8 11.♞d2
 ♞c7 12.h3 a5 13.g4 b4 14.axb4
 axb4 15.♞xa8 ♞xa8 16.♗d1 c5
 17.d5 ♖a6 18.♞e1 ♖xe2 19.♞xe2
 ♗f8 20.♗e3 ♗g6



This game is an excellent illustration of the theme “Pawns cannot go back!”. If White could return his g4-pawn to g3, he would have a stable edge, thanks to his space advantage and two bishops. Instead of this, the weakness on f4 hurts him a lot and the enemy light pieces use this square with a decisive effect.

21.♗c4 ♗d7 22.♖f1

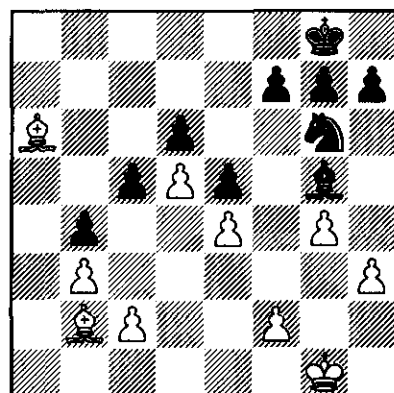
Black will counter 22.♖c1 with 22...h6 with the idea to trade the dark-squared bishop from the g5-square.

22...♗b6 23.♗xb6 ♞xb6
 24.♞a1 ♞xa1 25.♖xa1 ♖g5 26.
 ♖b2 ♞a5 27.♞a6 ♞xa6 28.
 ♖xa6

(diagram)

28...♖d2!

He is clearly better after this move. White’s bishop on b2 is completely isolated. It still remains difficult for Black to break



through these impressive pawn-chains.

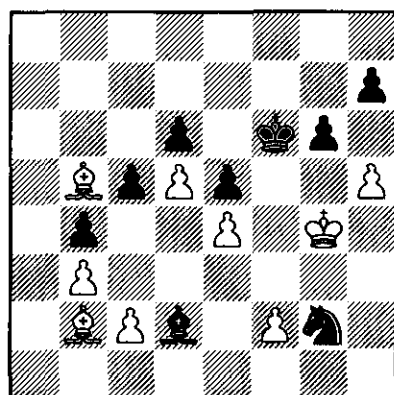
29.♗g2 ♗f4+ 30.♗g3 g6
 31.h4 ♗f8 32.♗f3 ♗e7 33.♖c4
 ♗f6 34.g5+

I think this move was not necessary. White had better keep his pawn on g4.

34...♗g7 35.♗g4 f6 36.♖b5
 ♗f7 37.♖c4 ♗g7 38.♖b5 ♗g2
 39.gxf6+?

This is already a serious mistake, because White had better wait – 39.♖e2 ♗f7 40.♖a1 etc.

39...♗xf6 40.h5



40...♗f4

Black had an easy winning line here: 40...gxf6+ 41.♗xf6 ♗e1! (forcing the enemy bishop to protect the c2-pawn) 42.♖d3 ♗g7 43.♗g4 ♗g6 44.♗h4 ♗xd3 45.cxd3 h5 etc. In fact, this is al-

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5

most a king and pawn ending, except that Black has an outside passed pawn and his bishop takes some part in the actions, which cannot be said about its counterpart on b2.

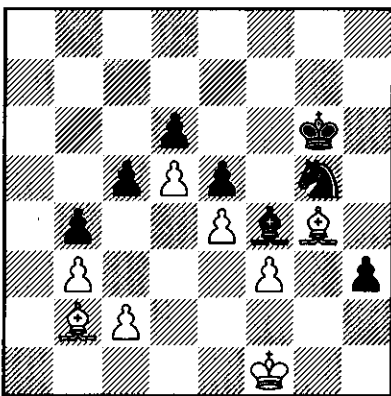
41.hxg6 h5+!

Black has excellent winning chances with his outside passed pawn.

42.♗h4 ♗xg6 43.♙e8+ ♗h6 44.♙f7 ♘g6+ 45.♗g3 ♗g5 46.♗f3 ♘f4 47.♙e8 h4 48.♙b5 ♘h5 49.♙f1 ♘f6 50.♙h3 ♙f4 51.♙e6 ♗h5 52.♙f7+ ♗h6 53.♙e6 ♘h7 54.♙f5 ♘g5+ 55.♗g2 ♙d2 56.f3 ♗g7 57.♙g4 ♗f7 58.♗f2 h3

Black's passed pawn advanced all the way up to the third rank. The end is near.

59.♗g3 ♙f4+ 60.♗f2 ♗g6 61.♗f1



61...♗h6

He had another winning move here – 61...♙e3! Now, White's king and the bishop on b2 have no moves and only his bishop on g4 is mobile, but it must take care of the pawn on f3. Black can transfer calmly his king to b5 and then

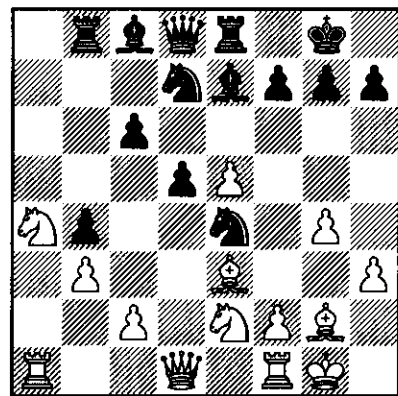
break through on the queenside.

62.♗f2 h2 63.♗g2 ♘h7 64.c4 ♗g5 65.♙f5 ♘f6 66.♙e6 ♗h5 67.♙f5 ♗h4 68.♙e6 ♘h7

This knight is headed along the route g5-h3-f2. If White captures it on h3 (In fact he has nothing better to do.) then Black will play h1♙+ and then his king will capture the bishop on h3, winning the pawns on f3, e4 etc. Therefore White resigned.

14 Anand – Morozevich Nice 2009

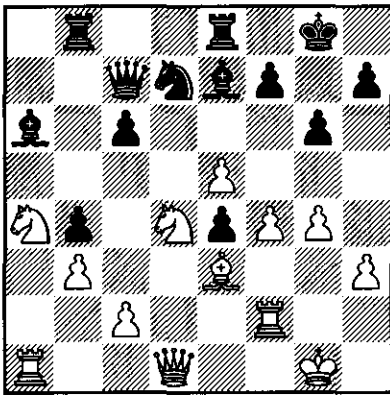
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♘ge2 ♙e7 5.g3 c6 6.♙g2 b5 7.0–0 0–0 8.a3 ♘bd7 9.h3 ♗b8 10.♙e3 a5 11.b3 ♗e8 12.g4 b4 13.axb4 axb4 14.♘a4 d5 15.dxe5 ♘xe4



This is a typical situation for the Philidor Defence – White has occupied space, weakening a bit his king in the process. He can win a pawn at some moment, but he will need to exchange his bishop for Black's knight on e4.

16.f4 ♙a6 17.♙xe4 dxe4

18. ♖d4 ♔c7 19. ♜f2 g6



20. ♖b2?!

Naturally, this knight must be centralized, but White did not choose the right moment for that. He had better play 20. ♜d2 ♜ed8 21. e6 ♖f6 22. exf7+ ♔xf7 with a double edged position.

20... ♜a8 21. ♖e2 ♔h4

Black had to prefer here 21... ♜ed8! 22. ♔c1 and only then 22... ♔h4 23. ♜g2 g5!, inflicting a strike against White's pawn-chain in the centre.

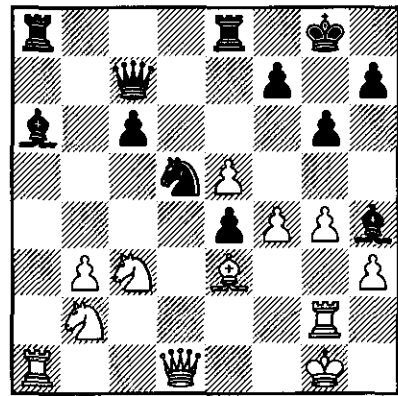
22. ♜g2 ♖b6

It looks like Black could have played here 21... ♜ed8, transposing to the variation, we mentioned before.

23. c4!

This is an excellent resource! If Black does not wish to leave his bishop and knight isolated from the actions, he must capture en passant, but then White's bishop on e2 is activated.

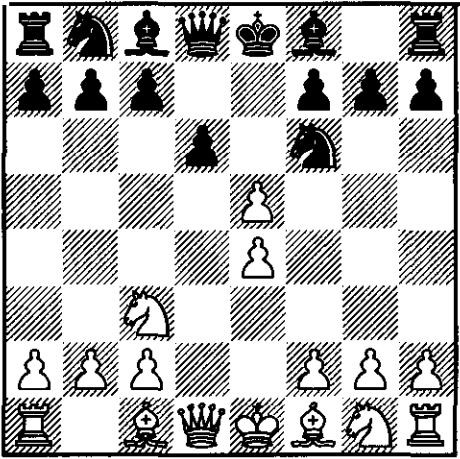
23... bxc3 24. ♖xc3 ♖d5



This game was played in a blind exhibition and here the World Champion had a mishap. He entered in the computer the move

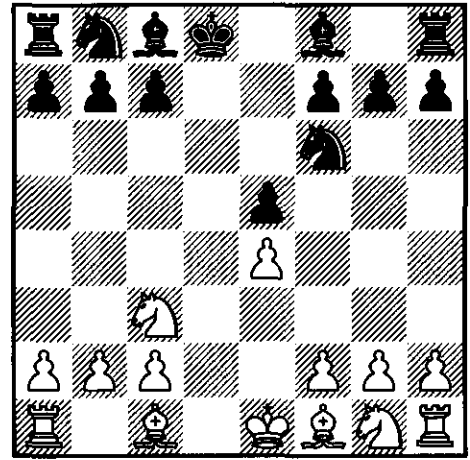
25. ♔xd5?!, forgetting to trade the knights beforehand. Naturally, after 25... cxd5 White had to resign immediately. After the correct line: 25. ♖xd5 cxd5 26. ♔xd5 ♜ed8 27. ♔c5 ♔b7 28. ♔b6, the position would have remained approximately equal.

Quick Repertoire



players at all levels, Black can quickly seize the initiative.

4...dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8



Our third chapter is devoted to the standard endgame, which Black practically cannot avoid if he follows the contemporary order of moves. This is if he wishes to play the Modern Philidor Defence and not some other opening. His only alternative is – 3... ♘bd7 (hoping for 4.♘f3 e5), but then White has the rather unpleasant move 4.f4, as well as the extravagant looking, but very powerful resource – 4.g4!

I believe this “Philidor” ending is not the worst of evils for Black and he has excellent chances of maintaining the balance. In case White overestimates his possibilities, and that happens with chess

So, he has lost his castling rights, it is White to move and he can attack immediately the f7-pawn with ♗c4. He has another attractive plan as well. He pins the knight with the move ♗g5, then castles long (with check) and undermines the e5-pawn with the move f2-f4. Later he can play e4-e5 and if necessary sacrifice a piece or two, checkmating on d8 in the style of the famous game Morphy – consultants! The first prize for the best game of the Chess Informant becomes a sure thing!

At first sight, it might look like White's initiative develops effortlessly and the best that Black can hope for is a draw. Things are far from simple, however...

First of all, we will mention that the trade of queens has reduced White's attacking potential considerably. Black's king has remained stranded in the centre, but that is not so bad in an end-game. If White castles with check and his king goes to c1 (It is rather difficult for him not to be tempted by that!), then later he will lose time centralizing the king.

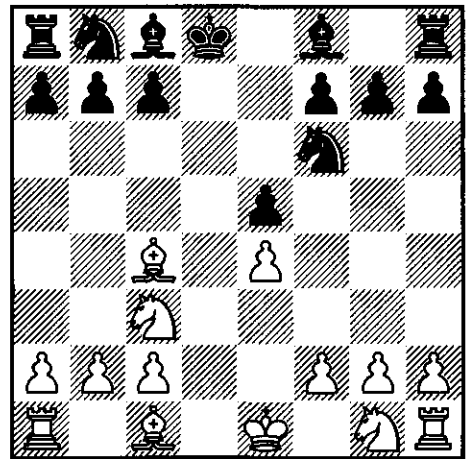
Pay attention to the pawn-structure. It is symmetrical and very elastic (six out of seven pawns have not been moved yet) and Black has no weaknesses at all. White can attack the e5-pawn with f2-f4, but Black can simply protect it with his knight from d7 and the bishop from d6. He can also allow the capture fxe5, with the idea to go with his knight to g4 and to establish a blockade on the e5-square. In the last case, it would be also very good for him to try to exchange the dark-squared bishops. The optimal situation for Black would be if after fxe5, ♖g4, White's bishop is on g5 and Black's bishop on e7 protected by the king.

There is another fine point. The knight on c3 is not attacking anything. It has defensive functions at the moment, protecting the e4-pawn. It would be sufficient

for Black to play c7-c6, so that the knight on c3 becomes passive, since there is no way forward for it, while maneuvers from the back will be long and time-consuming.

So, generally speaking, White has a slight lead in development and has the initiative, but it can quickly evaporate if Black manages to develop his pieces harmoniously. We will discuss later what exchanges of pieces should each side strive for and what pieces should better be left on the board. This will happen when we study concrete variations and comment complete games.

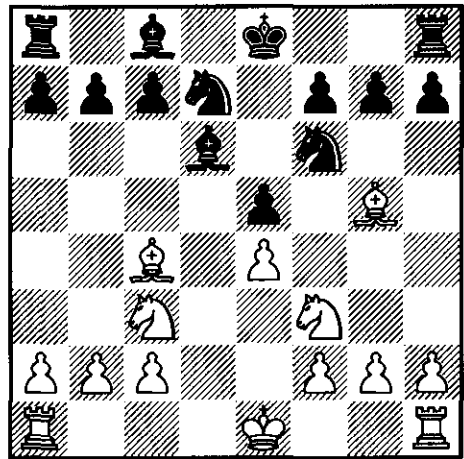
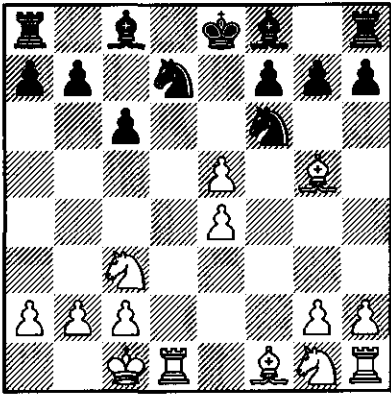
6.♙c4



White asks his opponent how he plans to protect his f7-pawn?

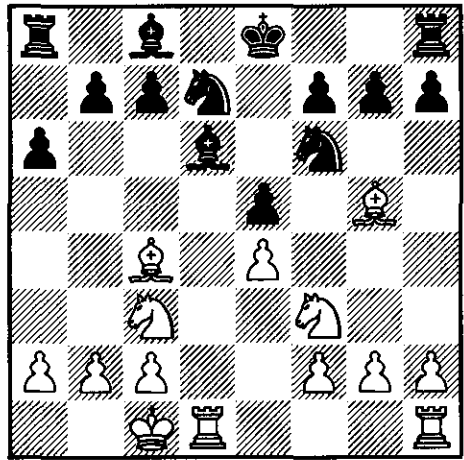
The other popular plan is connected with the move 6.♙g5. In reply, Black must restrict immediately the active possibilities of his opponent's knight on c3 – 6... c6. There may follow: 7.0-0-0+ ♔e8! (Black's king belongs to the centre in order to protect the f7-pawn and to support the dark-

squared bishop after it goes to e7.)
 8. f4 (This is an attempt by White to blitzkrieg.) 8... ♖bd7 9. fxe5



vering game, Black's prospects are not inferior at all.

9...a6



10. ♗he1

White often plays here 10. a4 and after that Black again develops his bishop to the long diagonal – 10... h6 11. ♗h4 b6 and 12... ♗b7. In general, the move b7-b5 is not a dangerous threat for White, since Black occupies space with that move and wins a tempo for development, but on the other hand he weakens a bit his queenside. You should better not play the move b7-b5 automatically. Try to understand in every particular situation what is more im-

9... ♖g4! (We have already mentioned this important maneuver at the beginning of the chapter. The e5-pawn is not running anywhere and Black wishes to preserve a semi-closed type of position.) 10. e6 (White cannot hold on to this pawn and he prefers to create an isolated pawn for his opponent, closing the diagonal of his bishop on c8 in the process.) 10... fxe6 11. ♖h3 ♗e7 12. ♗xe7=

6... ♗e8

This move is played with the same ideas we have already mentioned. Black's king cements the defence in the centre and White can hardly organize any direct attack.

7. ♖f3 ♗d6

Black has protected his e5-pawn and in reply to ♖g5, he will defend the f7-pawn with his rook.

8. ♗g5 ♖bd7

(diagram)

9. 0-0-0

White must find some active idea; otherwise, in a calm maneu-

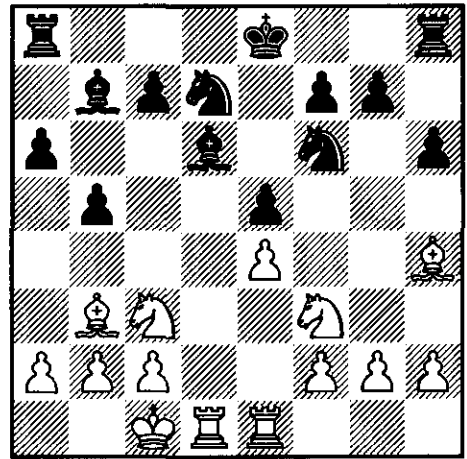
Chapter 3

portant – its pluses, or its minuses.

10...h6 11.♔h4 b5 12.♙b3 ♙b7

(diagram)

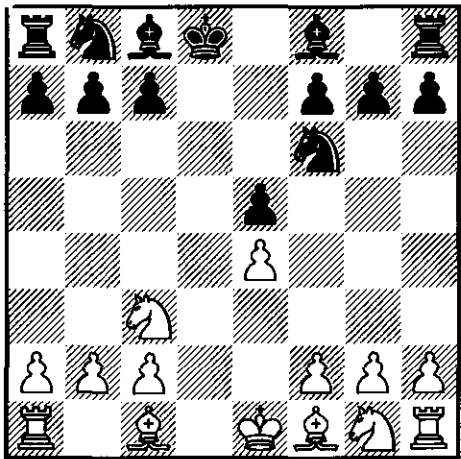
In the game Rozentalis – Damjanovic, Evry 2008, White came to the conclusion that he had not obtained any opening advantage and he forced simplifications with the line: **13.♙xf6 ♖xf6 14.♘d5 ♜d8 15.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♘h4 ♙c8 17.♞d3 ♕e7** with equality.



Chapter 3

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5
dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8

Step by Step



- A) 6.f4
- B) 6.♗f3
- C) 6.♗g5
- D) 6.♗c4

It looks accurate, but not aggressive enough for White to play 6.f3. I think he would not have sufficient arguments after that to prove an advantage. There may follow: 6...♗e6 7.♗e3 ♘bd7 8. 0-0-0 c6 9.g4 (9.g3 ♗b4 10.♗ce2 ♔c7 11.♗h3 ♖he8 12.♗xe6 ♖xe6 13.g4 ♗c5 14.♗d2 a5 and Black's prospects are at least equal, Diaz Leon – Cifuentes Parada, Sauzal 2004.) 9...♗b4 10.♗ge2 ♔e7 11.g5 ♗e8 12.a3 ♗a5 13.♗a4 ♗d6 14.♗g3 g6⇌ Mestrovic – Topalovic, Pula 1998.

The rather timid move 6.♗d2 is not dangerous for Black either, for example: 6...c6 7.♗c4 (7.0-0-0 ♗bd7 8.f3 ♗c5 9.♗ge2 ♔e7 10.g4 a5 11.a4 ♗f8 12.♔b1 h5 13.g5 ♗d7 14.h4 ♗e6 15.♗a2 g6 16.♗ac1 ♗d6⇌ Larino – Strikovic, La Roda 2008) 7...♔e8 8.f4 ♗bd7 9.♗f3 ♗d6 10.0-0 b5 11.♗b3, Gomez Esteban – Vega, Elgoibar 2007, 11...a5 12.a3 h6⇌

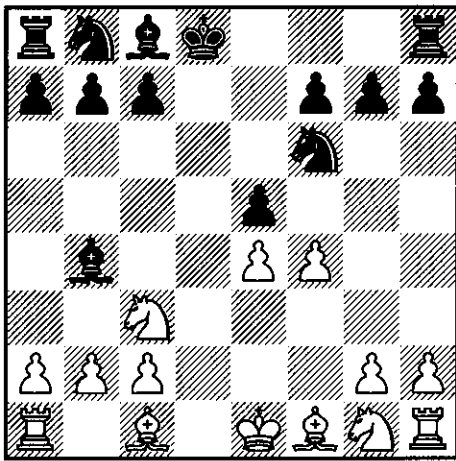
A) 6.f4

Is this move too straightforward? Possibly so, but still it is quite logical. White leads in development and in order to exploit it, he must open maximally the position. Bauer evaluates 6.f4 as “?!” and he asserts that after 6...♗b4, or 6...♗d6, Black is even better. This opinion seems to me to be too optimistic. Black must still fight for equality and he should play precisely.

6...♗b4

(diagram)

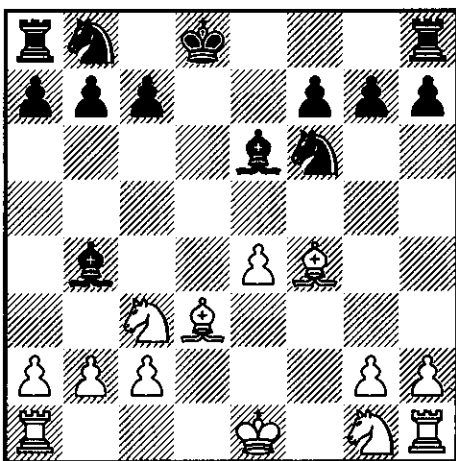
Attack is the best defence! White's e4-pawn is hanging now and Black's king gains access to the e7-square.



7.♙d3

White cannot harm his opponent with 7.♙d2 exf4 8. 0-0-0 ♙g4 9.♘f3, Ambrosi – Crippa, Bratto 2006, 9...♚c8 (In this situation, Black's king is much safer on c8, while on e7 it may come under attack with checks from d5, f5, or g5.) 10.♙d3 ♘bd7 (It would be too risky for him to try to hold on to the pawn with 10...♙xc3?! 11.♙xc3 ♘bd7 12.h3 ♙e6 13.♘g5↑) 11.♙xf4 ♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♘c5↔

7...exf4 8.♙xf4 ♙e6

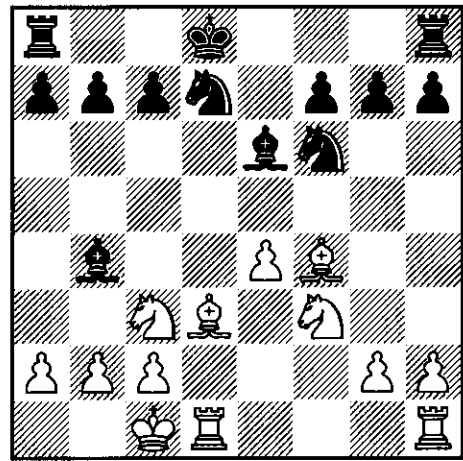


9.♘f3

The move 9.♘ge2?! is dubious, because this knight does not exert pressure against the central

squares from e2. The exchange on c3 is not dangerous for White anyway: 9...♘bd7 10.0-0-0 ♙d6! (Black is trying to fight for the e5-square and to establish a blockade on the dark squares.) 11.♙b5 ♙xf4+ 12.♘xf4 c6 13.♘xe6+ fxe6 14.♙e2 ♚e7 15.♚d2 ♘e5 16.h3 g5 17.♚e3 h5 and he seized the initiative, Afek – Gagunashvili, Groningen 2008 – **game 15**.

9...♘bd7 10.0-0-0



10...♘h5!

Black's attempt to destroy mechanically his opponent's pawn-structure would not be successful for him after 10...♙xc3?! 11.bxc3 ♚c8 (Naturally, the pawn is untouchable, since following 11...♙xa2? 12.c4, Black's bishop is trapped. Now, White's pieces are very active and the defects of his pawn-structure are immaterial.) 12.♘d4 (It is maybe more precise for him to play 12.♘g5, not covering the d-file, because then, in case of 12...♙xa2?!, White has the powerful argument 13.e5! ♘h5 14.♙f5.) 12...♘g4 (It is interest-

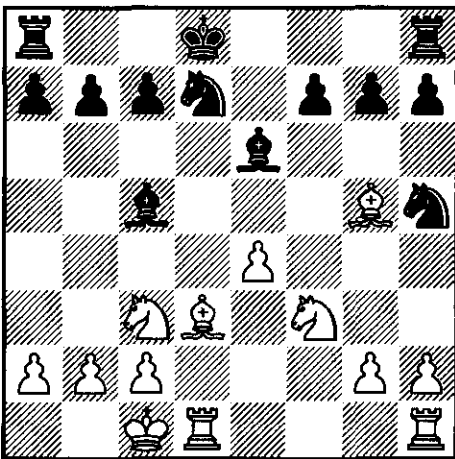
3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♚xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♗f3 ♘d6

ing whether Robert Fischer would have been tempted by the a2-pawn in this position? There is no direct refutation of the move 12... ♘xa2, but after 13. c4 ♗h5 14. g3 – in order to preserve control over the e5-square – 14... ♗b6 15. c5 ♗xf4 16. gxf4 ♗a4 17. c6, White obtains an excellent compensation, because Black can hardly coordinate his forces. See this spectacular variation: 17... ♞d8 18. ♗f5 g6? – The correct move here is 18... a6 – 19. ♘a6!! and White wins.) 13. ♗xe6 fxe6 14. ♘c4 ♞e8 15. ♞hf1± Vorotnikov – A. Sokolovs, Moscow 1992.

11. ♘g5+ ♘e7 12. ♘e3 ♘c5

The exchange of these bishops is in favour of Black, because then the e5 and f4-squares become very weak.

13. ♘g5+



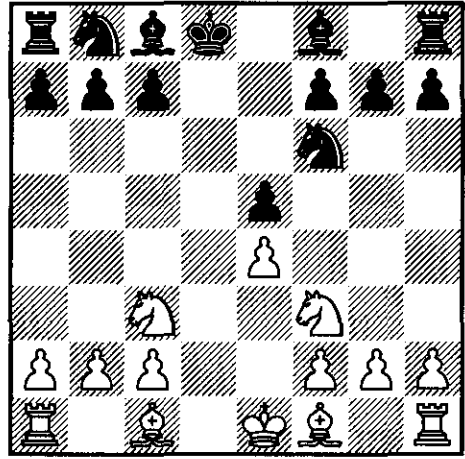
13... ♔c8

Black avoids the repetition of moves, although he has no advantage yet. The position remains double-edged.

14. ♘e2 h6 15. ♘d2 ♗hf6⇌

Karasev – Zemerov, St Petersburg 2002.

B) 6. ♗f3

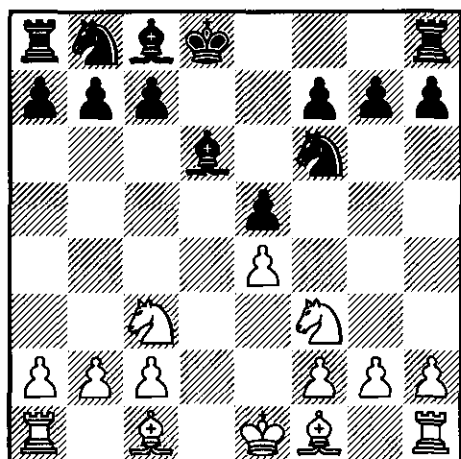


This is a simple looking move, but it is not harmless for Black at all. As great Lasker had recommended, White should develop first the knights and then the bishops. This knight not only attacks the e5-pawn, but it is ready for a sortie of the type ♗g5 at any moment. Meanwhile, there are two other possible routes for it: f3-h4-f5 (After the almost unavoidable exchange on f5, the knight on c3 will have access to the e4-square.) as well as f3-e1-d3 (Here the knight is eyeing the e5-pawn, supporting the pawn-advance c2-c4-c5.). It is essential for White to keep the possibility to go with his bishops to c4, or to g5 and Black must only speculate where his opponent may strike at first.

6... ♘d6

This is no doubt stronger than 6... ♗c6, since symmetry is favourable for the side having the initia-

tive. The move 6...♘bd7 has some drawbacks too and Black does not wish to close his bishop on c8 so early.

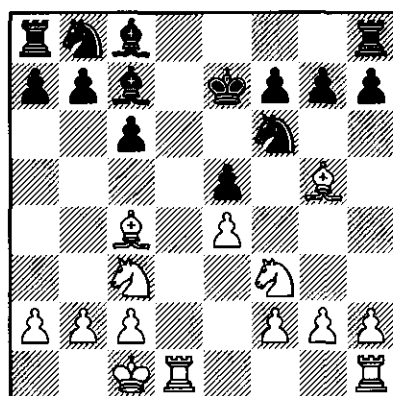


7.♙g5

White would not achieve much with the straightforward assault 7.♘g5 ♖e7 8.♙c4 ♜f8 9.f4 exf4 (His lead in development is not so great, so Black captures calmly the pawn without being afraid of the opening of the central file.) 10.e5 ♙xe5 11.0–0 ♙e6 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♙xf4 ♙xf4 14.♞xf4 ♘bd7 15.♞e1 e5 16.♞h4 c6 and White has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Barua – Juswanto, Bali 2000 – **game 16**.

The set-up 7.h3 ♖e7 8.♙e3 looks very solid and even academic, but White can hardly create any real problems for his opponent by playing so slow. For example: 8...♙e6 9.0–0–0 ♘bd7 (9...c6!?) 10.♘d5+ ♙xd5 11.exd5 a6 12.c4 ♞he8 13.♘d2 ♙c5 14.♙d3 ♙xe3 15.fxe3 g6 16.♞hf1 a5 17.♞f2 ♞f8 18.♞df1 ♘e8 ♞ Brandner – Vaulin, Oberwart 1997 – **game 17**.

In case of 7.♙c4, Black should reply with 7...♖e8 – see 6.♙c4 ♖e8 7.♘f3 ♙d6. It is weaker for him to choose 7...♖e7, because after 8.♙g5, the pin of the knight on f6 may be rather unpleasant for him. For example: 8...c6 (Black parries the threat 9.♘d5+, but now his bishop on d6 is hanging in some lines.) 9.0–0–0 ♙c7 (White was threatening 10.♙xf7, winning a pawn.).



The transfer of White's rook along the third rank is not dangerous for Black: 10.♞d3 h6 11.♙xf6+ ♖xf6 12.♘h4 ♖e7 13.♞g3 g5 14.♞f3 gxh4! (In the game Ljubojevic – Ree, Teeside 1972, White obtained a slight edge after 14...♞f8 15.♘f5+ ♙xf5 16.♞xf5 ♘d7 17.♘e2.) 15.♞xf7+ ♖e8! (15...♖d8 16.♞d1+ ♙d7 17.♙e6 ♖e8 18.♞fxd7 ♘xd7 19.♞xd7 ♙b6 20.♞xb7 ♙xf2 21.♙d7+ ♖f8 22.♙xc6 ♞g8 ♞) 16.♞xc7 ♘d7 17.♞d1 ♞h7 and in connection with the threat ♖d8, White must already think about maintaining the equality: 18.♙a6! bxa6 19.♞xc6 ♞b8 ♞

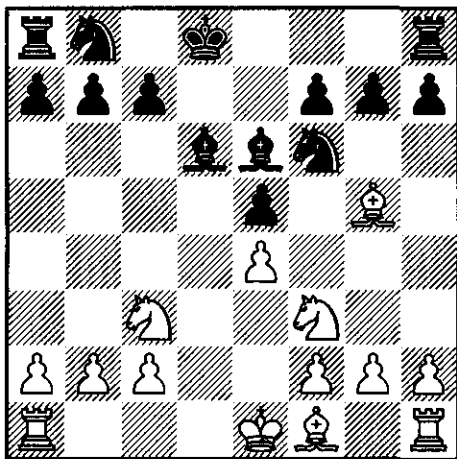
10.♘h4! h6 11.♘f5+ ♙xf5 12.♙xf6+ ♖xf6 13.exf5. After the ex-

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♔xd8+ ♕xd8 6. ♗f3 ♘d6

change on f5, White has freed the e4-square for his knight, which was idle on c3. 13... ♖e7 (It is more resilient for Black to defend with 13... ♖f8, but even then after 14. ♖d3 b5 15. ♘d5! ♘a5 16. ♘e4, White has a slight, but stable advantage. 14... ♖xf5 15. ♖f3+ ♖g6 16. ♘d3+ f5 17. g4±) 14. ♖he1 ♖e8 15. ♗e4 b5 16. ♘b3 ♗a6 17. a4± Gligoric – Llado, Dublin 1957 – **game 18.**

7... ♘e6

Black creates a compact piece-formation in the centre and he is afraid neither of doubling of his f-pawns, nor of the exchange of his bishop on d6 for White's knight on c3.



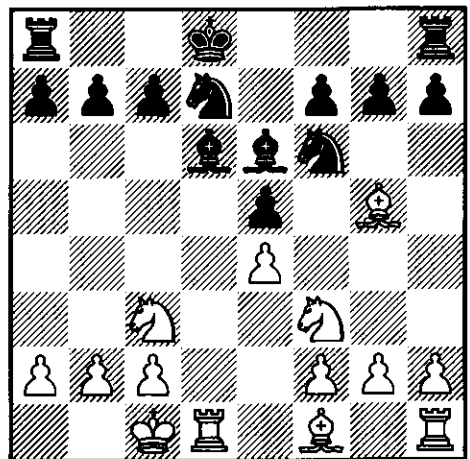
8.0–0–0

About 8. ♘xf6+ gxf6 9.0–0–0 ♗d7 – see 8.0–0–0 ♗bd7 9. ♘xf6+ gxf6.

8. ♗b5 ♗bd7 9. ♗xd6 (Black's knight on d7 has protected the e5-pawn and in case of the insidious move 9. ♗d2, he can avoid the trade of the dark-squared bishops and then prepare a pawn-of-

fensive on the queenside: 9... ♘c5 10. ♗b3 ♘b4+ 11. c3 ♘e7 12. f3 c6 – White's knight has turned out to be a “tempo-loser” – 13. ♗a3 a5±) 9... cxd6 10. ♗d2 ♖c8 11. c3 h6 12. ♘h4 g5 13. ♘g3 ♖e7 14. f3 ♗c5 15. ♘e2 ♗a4 16. ♖b1 a6± Re-witz – S.H.Nielsen, Aarhus 1995. His bishops are restricted in their movement by pawns and White can hardly exploit the vulnerability of the d5-square, while Black has good chances of organizing an offensive on the queenside.

8... ♗bd7



9. ♘b5!?

This aggressive bishop-sortie forces Black to solve concrete tactical problems.

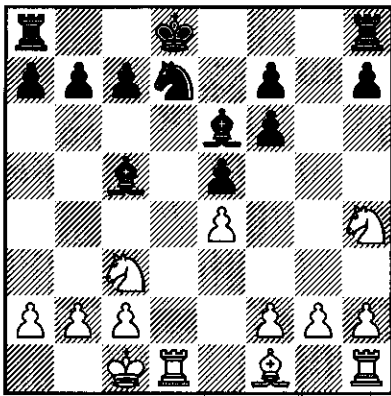
We will have a look at some alternatives for White.

1) 9. a3 ♖c8 10. h3 h6 11. ♘e3 ♘c5 12. ♖d2 ♘xe3+ 13. ♖xe3 c6 14. ♗e2 ♖c7 15. ♖d2 b5 and Black seized the initiative, Lau – Degraeve, Germany 2000.

2) We have studied the maneuver 9. ♗b5 in our notes to the previous move. This slight trans-

position does not influence the evaluation of the situation: 9... ♖e7 10. ♘xd6 (10. ♘d2 h6 11. ♗h4 ♜hc8 12. f3 ♗c5 13. ♗c4 c6 14. ♗xe6 ♖xe6 15. ♘c3 b5 16. ♖b1 a5 17. g4 a4 ♞ Zrinscak – Wolter, Cologne 1992) 10... cxd6 11. ♘d2 h6 12. ♗h4 ♜hc8 13. ♖b1 ♞c7 14. f3 ♞ac8 15. c3 ♘c5 16. ♗f2 d5 (This is a standard Sicilian undermining move.) 17. exd5 ♘xd5 and Black solved all his problems in the opening, Thibault – Grigore, Creon 2006.

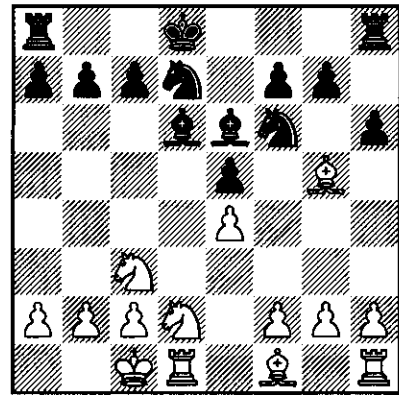
3) White's plan to occupy the f5-outpost is not effective at all: 9. ♗xf6+ gxf6 10. ♘h4 ♗c5



11. f3 (He must do something, since Black has a promising plan to improve his position: 11. ♞d2 c6 12. ♘a4 ♗f8 13. ♖b1 ♖c7 14. ♗e2 b5 15. ♘c3 ♗b4 and White had serious problems in the game Inkirov – Spasov, Sofia 1996.) 11... c6 12. ♘f5 (After 12. a3 ♖c7 13. ♘f5 ♞ad8 14. ♘g7, White has understood that his knight on f5 is doing nothing, so he exchanges it for the enemy bishop on e6. As a result, there remain bishops of opposite colours on the board and Black covers reliably all the weaknesses

in his camp. 14... ♘b6 15. ♘xe6+ fxe6 16. ♞xd8 ♖xd8 17. ♗d3 ♖e7 18. ♖d2 ♞g8 19. g4 ♘d7 20. ♘e2 ♘f8 and the opponents agreed to a draw, Gurgenedze – Shabanov, Elista 2002.) 12... ♖c7 13. ♘g7 (This is another knight-sortie, but this time the effect is not so good for White.) 13... ♗d4 14. ♘xe6+ fxe6 15. ♘e2 ♗e3+ 16. ♖b1 h5 and Black seized the initiative, Fernandez Garcia – Franco Ocampos, Santa Cruz de la Palma 1995 – **game 19.**

4) 9. ♘d2 h6

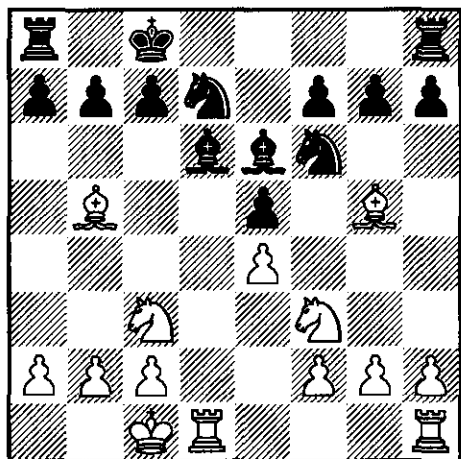


10. ♗xf6+ (The drawback of the move 10. ♗h4 is that the bishop may remain stuck on g3 and Black will have the possibility to exchange it at some moment for his knight. For example: 10... ♗b4 11. ♘d5 ♗xd5 12. exd5 ♗xd2+ 13. ♞xd2 g5 14. ♗g3 ♘e4 15. ♞d1 ♘xg3 16. hxg3 ♖e7 ♞) 10... gxf6 11. ♘c4 ♖e7 12. ♘e3 (If the light-squared bishops are removed from the board, White will naturally have a great advantage. This is easier said than done, however! Black covers the d5-square with his next move and he complies

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♕g5 c6

with the exchange of the light-squared bishop only on the e6-square in order to cover the weakness on f5.) 12...c6 13. ♕c4 ♕c5 14. ♕xe6 ♕xe3+! (It is useful for Black to include this exchange, because now White's pawn-structure loses its elasticity.) 15. fxe3 fxe6 16. ♖hf1 ♖hg8 17. ♖f2 b5 18. a3 a5 – Black has the initiative and he is ready to prepare an offensive on both sides of the board, Privara – Novak, Novy Smokovec 1971.

9... ♔c8



Black's king avoids with this move all possible pins.

10. ♕xf6

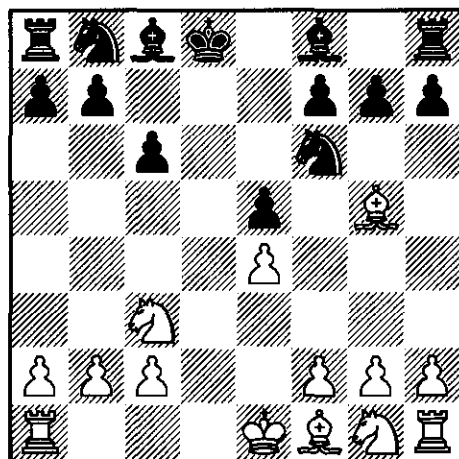
In case of the slow move 10. ♖he1, Black's pieces gradually spring to active actions: 10... a6 11. ♕a4 (11. ♕f1 h6 12. ♕h4 b5 13. ♕g3 ♕g4 14. ♖d5 ♖xd5 15. ♖xd5 ♕xf3 16. gxf3 ♖b6 17. ♖d2 f6= Forgacs – Eismont, Veszprem 1996) 11... ♖c5 12. ♕xf6 gxf6 13. ♕b3 ♖xb3+ 14. axb3 ♖g8 15. ♖h4 ♕c5 16. ♖d2 c6 17. g3 ♔c7= Andriasian – Hasangatin, Internet 2006.

10... ♖xf6 11. ♖g5 a6 12. ♕a4

12. ♕e2 ♖f8 13. ♖xe6 fxe6 14. f3 ♖d7 15. ♖d3 ♔e7 16. ♖d1 ♖d7 17. ♖e3 b5 18. h4 ♖f6 19. h5 ♖ad8= Bjornsson – Rausis, Cappelle la Grande 1993 – game 20.

12... ♕c4!? 13. ♕b3 ♕xb3 14. axb3 ♖f8 15. ♖d5 ♖xd5 16. ♖xd5 f6 17. ♖f3 ♖d7 18. ♖d2 c6 19. ♖d3 ♔e6, draw, Moiseenko – Malaniuk, Ordzhonikidze 2001.

C) 6. ♕g5 c6



C1) 7. f4

C2) 7. ♖f3

C3) 7. ♕c4

C4) 7. 0–0–0

C1) 7. f4

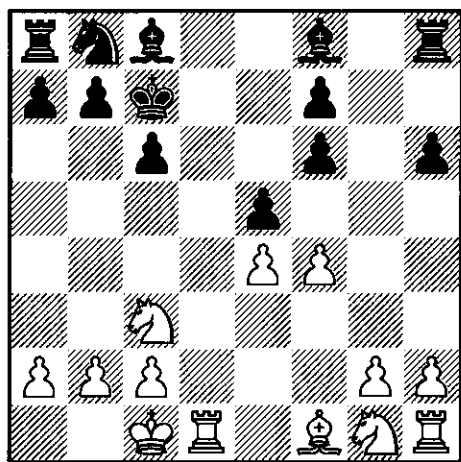
This seemingly energetic move is completely harmless for Black. At first he forces the exchange on f6 and then White's e5-pawn becomes defenceless.

7... h6 8. 0–0–0+

8. ♕xf6+ gxf6 9. ♕c4 ♕e6 10. 0–0–0+ ♖d7 11. ♕xe6 fxe6 12. fxe5 fxe5 13. ♖ge2 ♖g8 14. ♖hf1 ♕e7 15. g3 ♔e8 (All possible outposts in the centre of the board as well

as the squares for penetration on the f-file are reliably covered by Black.) 16.a4 h5⇌ Petr – Sebenik, Szeged 2007.

8...♔c7 9.♙xf6 gxf6



10.f5

10.fxe5 fxe5 11.♙c4 f6 (It is also possible for Black to play 11...♙e6, but he refrains from the exchange, hoping to exploit the power of his bishop-pair in this open position.) 12.♞f1 b5 13.♙f7 ♖d7 14.♜f3 b4 15.♜d1 ♙a6 16.♞e1 ♜c5⇌ Gorin – Vorotnikov, Moscow 1998.

10...♙b4 11.♞d3 b6 12.a3 ♙f8 13.♞h3 a5 14.a4 ♙a6. Black has found a good square for his bishop without touching his c6-pawn, which restricts White's knight on c3.

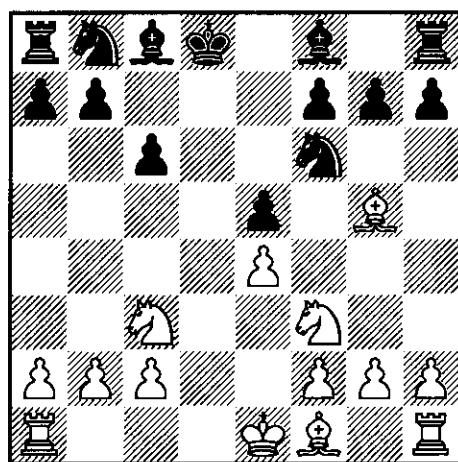
15.♜f3 ♙xf1 16.♞xf1 ♜a6⇌ Fletcher – Richmond, Cardiff 1995.

C2) 7.♜f3

(diagram)

7...♜bd7

It is inferior for Black to play 7...♙d6?!, because with a pawn on



c6, the bishop on d6 will be hanging, for example: 8.0-0-0 ♔c7 9.♙c4 ♞f8 10.♞xd6! (White sacrifices the exchange for a pawn and he advances his central pawns.) 10...♔xd6 11.♞d1+ ♔c7 12.♜xe5 ♙e6 13.♙e2 ♞d8 14.♜d3±. His advantage may not be so great, but his position is much easier to play.

8.0-0-0

8.♙c4 ♔e8 9.0-0-0 ♙e7 10.♙h4 (The bishop is headed for the g3-square in order to attack the e5-pawn.) 10...♙d8 (It is also possible for Black to play 10...♜h5!?, but then he will need to consider the maneuver 11.♙xe7 ♔xe7 12.♜g5 f6 13.♜f7 ♞f8 14.♜d6.) 11.♙g3 ♙c7 12.a3 b5 13.♙a2 h6 14.h3 ♔e7 15.♜e1 a5 16.♜d3 ♞e8 17.f3 ♔f8⇌ Naumann – Markowski, Dresden 2007.

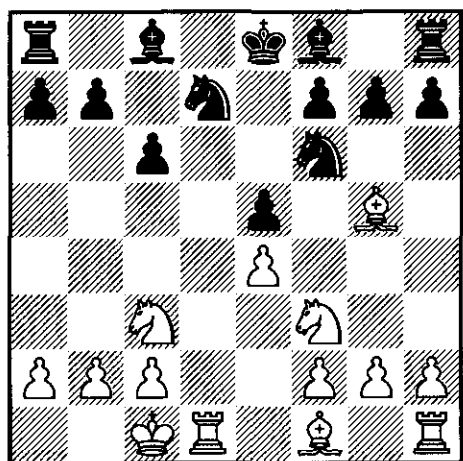
8...♔e8

(diagram)

9.♙h4

White achieves nothing with 9.♙xf6 gxf6 10.♜h4 a5 11.♞d3, because Black can exchange favourably the dark-squared bishops

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♔xd8+ ♕xd8 6. ♗g5 c6



be placed anyway. Now, he has the possibility to play b7-b5 with tempo.

7... ♕e8 8. 0-0-0

8.f3 ♖bd7 9.a4 (About 9. ♖ge2 b5 10. ♗d3 ♖c5 11. ♗xf6 gxf6 12. ♖g3 ♖xd3+ 13. cxd3 ♖g8 14. ♖d1 ♗e6 15. ♕e2 ♗c5= A. Sokolovs – Bologan, Yurmala 1991 – see **game 21**; 9.0-0-0 h6 – see 8.0-0-0 ♖bd7 9.f3 h6.) 9...a5 10. ♖ge2 ♖b6 (White has prevented b7-b5, but now Black win a tempo in another fashion.) 11. ♗b3 ♖fd7 12. ♖d1 f6 13. ♗e3 ♗c5! 14. ♕f2 ♗xe3+ 15. ♕xe3 ♖c5= Deter – V.Georgiev, Halkidiki 2002. It turned out the White's bishop is not better placed on b3 than on c4.

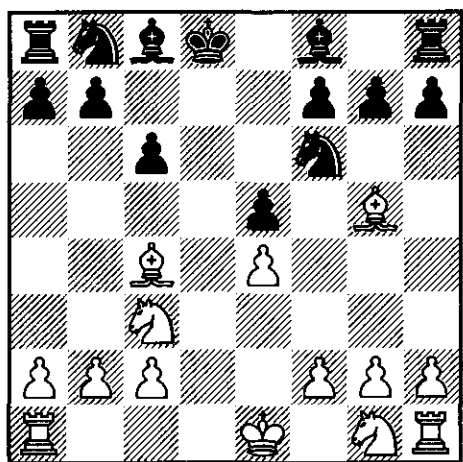
with the help of a nice maneuver: 11... ♖c5 12. ♖f3 ♗h6+ 13. ♕b1 ♗d2! 14. ♗d3 ♗xc3 15. bxc3 ♕e7 16. ♖f1 ♖g8 17.g3 b5= Soltis – Schoeneberg, Dresden 1969.

9... ♗c5

But not 9... ♗e7? 10. ♗g3 and White wins a pawn.

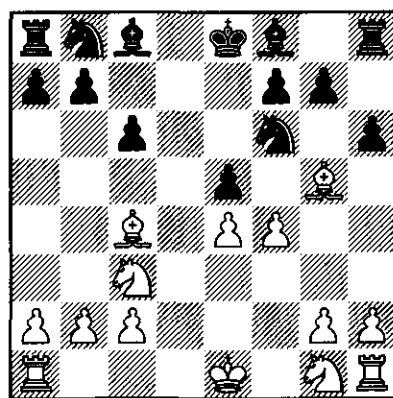
10.h3 ♗b6 11. ♗c4 ♗c7 12. a4 ♖f8 13. ♖g5 ♖e6 14. ♖xe6 ♗xe6 15. ♗xe6 and the opponents agreed to a draw, Vaissier – Moskalenko, Isla de Fuerteventura 1992.

C3) 7. ♗c4



This attacking move only helps Black's king to go where it had to

8.f4 (I think this moves combines much better with castling long then the bishop-sortie to c4. In fact, in this game White accomplished another plan. He opened the f-file, castled short and tried to attack the f7-square. Black found sufficient counter chances, though...) 8...h6



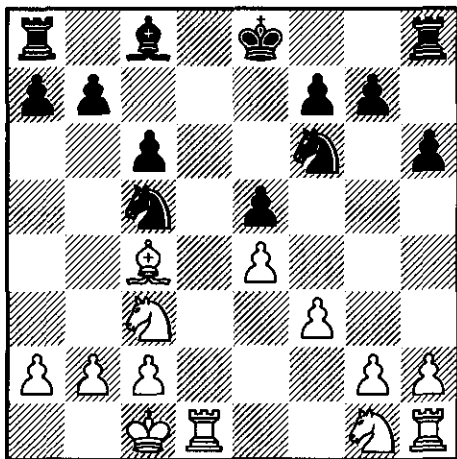
9. ♗xf6 (After 9. ♗h4 exf4 10. ♗xf6 gxf6 11. ♖ge2 ♗d6 12.0-0

♠d7 13.♠xf4 ♘e7 14.♠h1 ♙e5 15. ♠d1 – the opponents agreed to a draw although Black’s prospects were already preferable, A.Popovic – Marinovic, Belgrade 2005.) 9...gxf6 10.fxe5 fxe5 11.♠f3 ♠d7 12.0–0 b5 13.♙b3 a5 14.a4 b4 15.♠d1 ♙a6 16.♞e1 (White’s rook must leave the f-file; otherwise, he would lose the exchange.) 16... ♙c5+ 17.♠e3, Kujovic – Klemanic, Slovakia 2003, 17...♞d8↗

8...♠bd7 9.f3

About 9.♠f3 ♙e7 – see 7.♠f3 ♠bd7 8.♙c4 ♘e8 9.0–0–0 ♙e7 (variation C2).

9...h6 10.♙e3 ♙c5 11.♙xc5 ♠xc5



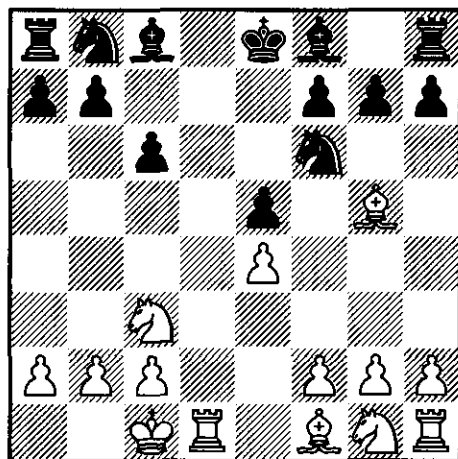
Black has no problems after the trade of the dark-squared bishops.

12.b4

12.a3 a5 13.♠ge2 ♘e7 14.♞d2 b5 15.♙a2 ♙e6 16.♙xe6 ♠xe6 17.♞hd1 ♞hd8↗ Matko – Jovanovic, Bizovac 2006.

12...♙e6 13.♙xe6 ♠xe6 14. ♠ge2 ♘e7= Seifert – Cherepov, Tarnowskie Gory 2006.

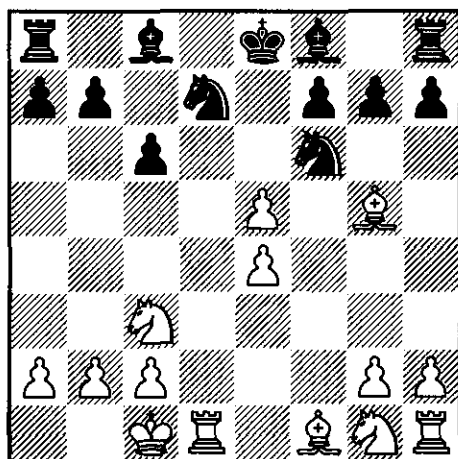
C4) 7.0–0–0+ ♘e8



8.f4

There arise transpositions to variations we have already analyzed after 8.♠f3 ♠bd7, or 8.♙c4 ♠bd7.

8...♠bd7 9.fxe5



9...♠g4!

In case of 9...♠xe5? White has the powerful argument 10.♠f3.

10.e6

We will see now several alternatives for him:

10.♠h3 ♙e7 11.♙f4 ♠dxe5 12. ♙e2 ♙e6 13.♞hf1 ♠g6 14.♠b1 h5↗ Murawski – Jagodzinski, Poland 2003;

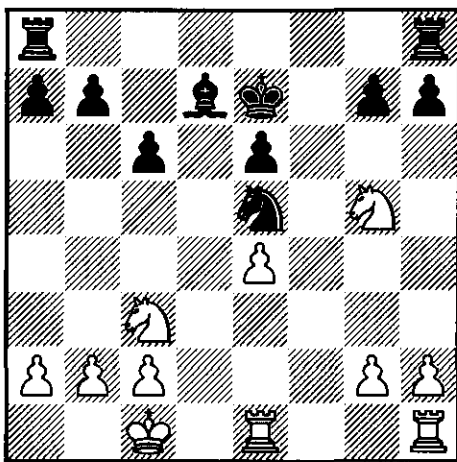
3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♗xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♕c4 ♖e8

10. ♖d2, Buchnicek – Orsag, Czech Republic 1999, 10... ♖gxe5
11. ♖f3 f6 12. ♕e3 ♕b4!?

10... fxe6 11. ♖h3 ♕e7 12. ♕xe7

White would not change much with 12. ♖d2 ♖f8 13. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 14. ♕e2 ♖de5 15. ♖g5 h6 16. ♖f3 ♖xf3 17. ♕xf3 ♖e5= Rudolf – Mietzner, Germany 2006.

12... ♖xe7 13. ♕e2 ♖de5 14. ♕xg4 ♖xg4 15. ♖de1 ♕d7 16. ♖g5 ♖e5

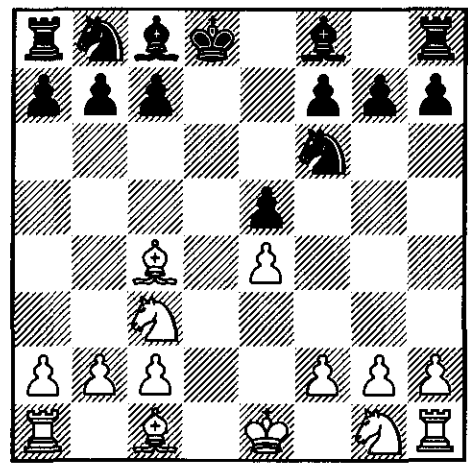


17. ♖f3?!

White came under the false impression that Black's bishop was very bad. He had better play instead 17. ♖e3 h6 18. ♖f3 ♖xf3 19. ♖xf3 ♖af8= with an approximately equal position.

17... ♖xf3 18. gxf3 ♖hf8 19. ♖hf1 e5 Medvedev – M. Fominikh, Dagomys 2004. White's f3-pawn is weak and his knight on c3 has no useful squares to go to just like before.

D) 6. ♕c4



6... ♖e8

Theory considered here the move 6... ♕e6 as obligatory for a long time, but lately 6... ♕b4 is becoming more and more popular. Black should try to stick to the same plan as against 6. ♕g5.

7. ♖f3

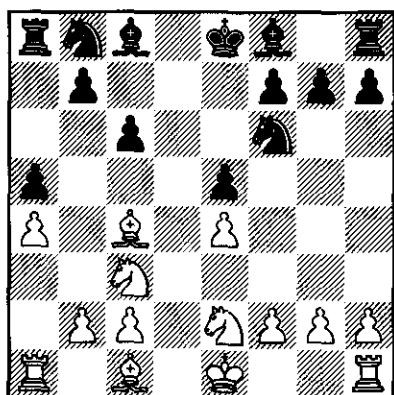
7.f4 ♕b4 8. ♕d2 exf4 9. ♖ge2 ♖bd7 10. ♖xf4 ♖e5 11. ♕b3 c6 12. 0-0-0, Looijmans – Mitkov, Sitges 2003, 12... ♕g4 13. ♖df1 ♖d8 14. h3 ♕c8

7.f3 c6 8. ♕e3 (8.a4 a5 9. ♖ge2 h5) 8... b5 9. ♕b3 ♖bd7 10. a4 b4 11. ♖b1 ♕c5 12. ♖f2 ♕xe3+ 13. ♖xe3 ♖c5 14. ♕c4 a5 15. ♖d2 ♖fd7 16. ♖e2 ♖b6 Buchnicek – Ruckschloss, Slovakia 2003.

7. ♖ge2 c6 8. a4 (8. ♖g3 b5 9. ♕e2 ♖a6 10. ♕g5 ♖d7 11. 0-0 g6 12. ♕g4 ♕e7 13. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 14. ♖fd1 ♖b6 15. ♕xc8 ♖hxc8 16. a3 ♖c5 17. f3 a5 and Black seized the initiative, Bucher – V. Georgiev, Nice 2003.) 8... a5

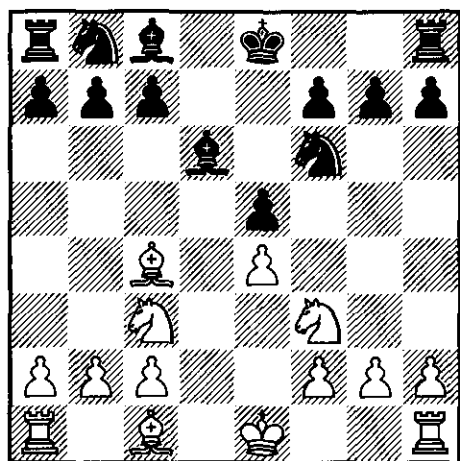
(diagram)

9. f3 (9. ♕g5 ♕e7 10. 0-0 ♖bd7 11. ♖g3 g6 12. ♖ad1 ♖c5 13. f4?! ♖g4! Panchanathan – Izoria,



Richardson 2007) 9...h5 (Having played a7-a5 and h7-h5, Black is trying to squeeze his opponent's position from both sides of the board and he prevents his possible pawn-offensives on both flanks.) 10.h4 ♖c5 11.♗d2 ♜bd7 12.♞c1, Nguyen Ngoc Truongson – Bologan, Moscow 2007 – **game 22**, 12...♗d4 13.♞d3 ♞c5 14.0-0-0 ♞xd3+ 15.♗xd3 ♞d7

7...♗d6



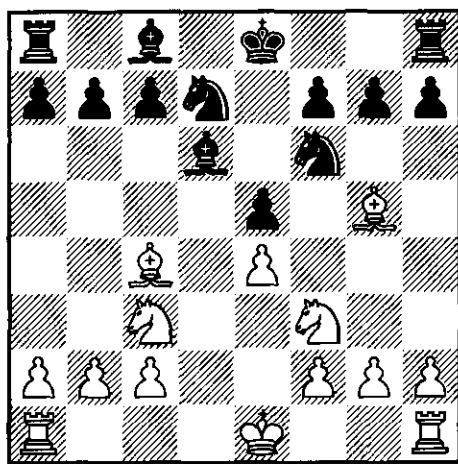
Black has protected his e5-pawn and in answer to ♞g5, he will defend the f7-pawn with his rook.

8.♗g5

8.♗e3 ♜bd7 (It is also good for Black to play 8...a6 9.a4 ♜bd7!? 10.0-0-0 h6 11.h3 g6 12.g4,

draw, Held – Mirschinka, Germany 1997; 9...♞c6 10.0-0-0 h6 – 10...♗e6 – 11.h3 ♞a5 12.♗a2 ♗d7 Kett – Mitkov, Plovdiv 2003.) 9.0-0-0 a6 10.♞g5 (10.a4 b6 11.♞h4 g6 12.f3 ♗b7) 10...♞f8 11.f3 h6 12.♞h3 b5 13.♗d5 ♞xd5 14.♞xd5 ♗b7 Salcedo – Pannonovic, San Sebastian 2007.

8...♞bd7



9.0-0-0

The following examples illustrate that in a calm maneuvering game Black's prospects are not inferior at all:

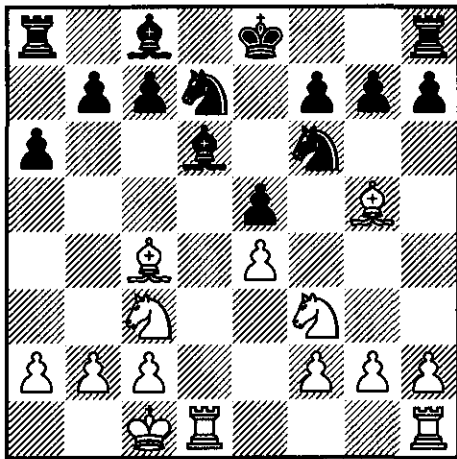
9.♞d2 h6 10.♗h4 a6 11.a4 ♞h5 12.♞d5 c6 13.♞e3 ♞c5 14.f3 ♞f4 15.♗g3 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 ♞cxe6 Malbran – Toloza, Cordoba 1998;

9.0-0 h6 10.♗e3 (10.♗h4 c6 11.♞ad1 ♗c7 12.♞d2 ♞e7 13.♗g3 ♞h5 14.♗h4+ f6 15.♞d1 g5 16.♗g3 b5 17.♗d3 ♗b6 Misailovic – Tadic, Vrnjacka Banja 2006) 10... a6 11.a4, Boidman – Markowski, Deizisau 2006, 11...♞f8 12.♞ad1 ♗g4 and Black will soon equalize.

9.h3 h6 10.♗e3 (10.♗d2 ♞c5 11.0-0-0 ♞fxe4 12.♞xe4 ♞xe4

13. ♖xe5, Chudinovskikh – Markowski, Plovdiv 2008, 13... ♖xd2! 14. ♖xd2 ♕xe5 15. ♖e1 f6 16. f4 ♕e6! 17. ♕xe6 ♕xf4-+; 14. ♖xf7 ♖xc4 15. ♖xh8 ♕f5-+; 14. ♕xf7+ ♖e7 15. ♖g6+ ♖xf7 16. ♖xh8+ ♖f6 17. ♖xd2 ♕d7+; 14. ♖xd2 ♕xe5 15. ♖he1 f6 16. f4 ♕e6! 17. ♕xe6 ♕xf4+ 18. ♖c3 ♕e5+ 10... ♕b4 11. 0-0-0 ♕xc3 12. bxc3 ♖xe4 13. ♖he1 ♖d6 14. ♕b3 g5 15. h4, Illescas – Azmaiparashvili, Dos Hermanas 2001, 15... f6 and it may turn out that White's compensation for the pawn is insufficient. For example, the fearless computer programme "Rybka" asserts that White's attack along the h-file is harmless for Black: 16. hxg5 hxg5 17. ♖h1 ♖xh1 18. ♖xh1 ♖f8 19. ♖h8 ♕f5+

9... a6



D1) 10. ♖he1

D2) 10. a4

The pawn-advance b7-b5 does not look like a dangerous threat, since Black occupies space, but there appear numerous weaknesses in his camp as well. It will

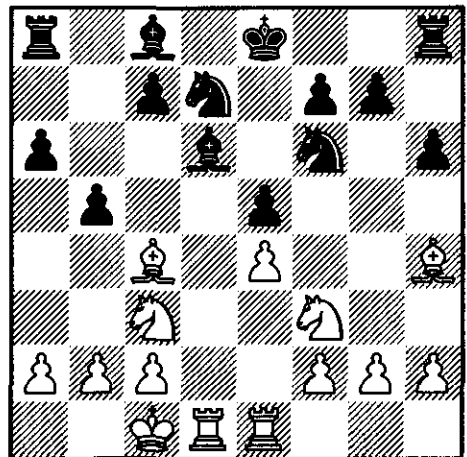
hardly be so easy for White to exploit this and the evaluation of the position is approximately equal after that. For example:

10. h3 h6 11. ♕e3 b5 12. ♕d5 ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♕b7 14. g4 ♖d8 15. ♖d2 c6, draw, Bluvshstein – Fridman, Kapuskasing 2004;

10. a3 ♖b8 11. ♖he1 b5 12. ♕a2 h6 13. ♕h4 ♕b7 14. h3 ♖f8 15. ♕g3 ♖e8, draw, Vuckovic – Pikula, Pancevo 2006;

10. ♖h4 h6 11. ♕e3 g6 12. f3 b5 13. ♕b3 ♕b7 14. ♖d5 ♖d8 15. g3 c6 16. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 17. ♖d2 ♕e7 18. ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 19. ♖d1 ♕e7 20. ♕b6 ♕c8 21. ♕c7 ♖d7 22. ♖g2 ♖h7!? 23. ♖e3 h5 24. h4 f6 – Black has brought his rook into the actions along the seventh rank and he has equalized, Buckley – Shaw, England 2007 – game 23.

D1) 10. ♖he1 h6 11. ♕h4 b5

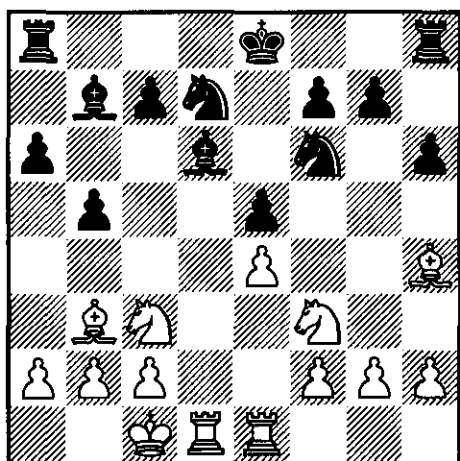


12. ♕b3

12. ♕d5 ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5 (13. exd5 f6 14. ♖d4 ♖f7 15. ♖c6 ♖e8 16. f3 ♖b6 17. ♕f2 ♕d7. The paratrooper on c6 seems impressive, but it is

isolated in the enemy camp and is hanging in some variations. White must consider all the time the possibility dxd5 and xc6 . Therefore, he decided to provoke simplifications and end the game in a draw: 18. de4 dxd5 19. dxd6+ cxd6 20. exd5 xc6 21. exd6 e6 , draw, Wall – Pribyl, Germany 2002.) 13... f6 14. g3 f7 15. h4 h5 16. d2 c6 17. de3 c7 18. df3 g6 19. ed3 a5 – White's light pieces were stranded on the kingside and Black seized firmly the initiative in the game, Inkiov – Carrier, France 2007.

12... xb7



13. xf6

13. d5 dxd5 14. exd5 (14. exd5 exd5 15. exd5 f6 16. d2 , draw, Peterson – Klemanic, Slovakia 2005) 14... f6 15. d4 dxc5 16. f4 f7 17. fxe5 xe5 18. g3 xg3 19. hxg3 , Hebden – Shaw, Liverpool 2007 and here Black could have forced a transition into a favourable rook and pawn ending with 19... dxb3+ 20. axb3 (After 20. dxb3? hd8 , Black wins a sol-

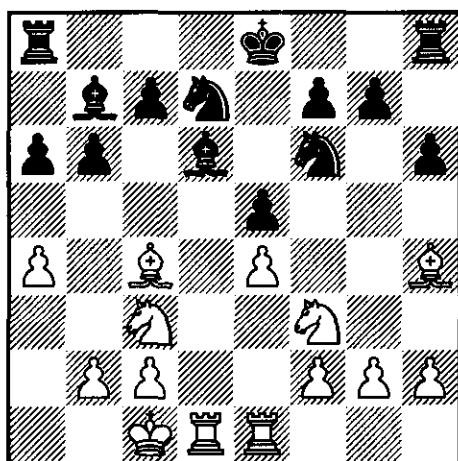
id extra pawn.) 20... xd5 21. dxb5 axb5 22. exd5 hd8 23. exd8 (23. dxb5? a1#) 23... exd8 – His advantage will hardly be sufficient to win the game, but White will have great problems to the end of the game for sure.

13... dxf6 14. d5 ed8 15. dxf6+ gxf6 16. d4 c8 17. ed3 e7= Rozentalis – Damljanovic, Evry 2008.

D2) 10. a4 h6 11. h4 b6 12. ghe1

The attractive occupation of the d5-square for White will lead to numerous exchanges: 12. d5 dxd5 13. exd5 eb8 14. c6 (14. d2 b5 15. axb5 axb5 16. d1 db6= Bok – Al Sayed, Caleta 2009) 14... f6 15. d2 xb7 16. xb7 xb7 17. d4 e7 18. f3 d5 19. b3 d6 20. b2 ed8 21. f2 bb8= Kotronias – Eljanov, France 2007.

12... xb7



13. b1

In the game Asrian – Bocharov, Moscow 2007, in reply to the prophylactic move 13. h3 , Black

played the rather risky move – 13...g5?! (It deserved attention for him to opt for 13...♔f8!?, with the idea g7-g6 and ♔g7, completing his development and covering in the process all possible squares for penetration. For example: 14. ♕xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖d5 ♕xd5 16. ♕xd5 ♖b8 17. ♖e3 g6=.) 14. ♕g3 ♔e7 15. ♖e2 ♖he8 16. ♖h2! This knight is headed for the f5-square along a rather unusual route. 16...♖ad8 17. ♖f1 ♖c5 18. f3 ♖h5 19. ♕f2 ♖f4 20. ♖ed2 ♖ce6 21. ♖e3 ♕b4 22. ♖f5+ ♔f8 23. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 24. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 and here Black would need to solve difficult problems if White had chosen to enter the complications after 25. ♖d5!

White can also opt for a straightforward move, which has not been tested in practice yet – 13. ♕xf6 ♖xf6 14. ♖d5. Black should better avoid exchanges; otherwise, he may end up in a very unpleasant endgame with a bad bishop against a knight: 14... ♖d7! 15. ♖h4 ♖c8 (White's aggressive intentions can be best illustrated in the variation 15... g6 16. ♖xc7+! ♕xc7 17. ♕xf7+! ♔e7 18. ♖xg6+ ♔xf7 19. ♖xh8+ ♔e6 20. ♖g6, although even then it looks like Black can still make a draw.) 16. ♖f5 (16. ♖e3 g6) 16... ♕f8 17. ♖c3 g6⇌ He has repelled his opponent's pieces from their active squares and he develops gradually his forces equalizing.

13... ♖b8

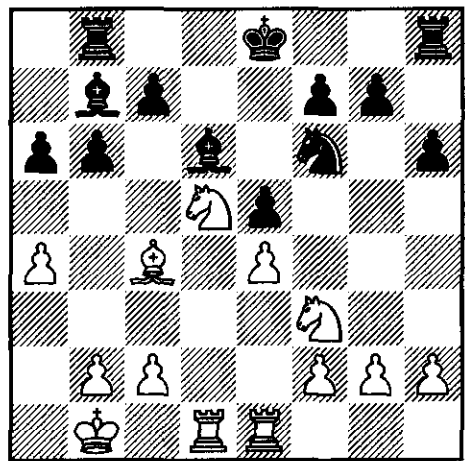
The idea behind this mysteri-

ous rook-move will become clear a bit later.

14. ♕xf6

In case White maneuvers calmly 14. h3 g6 15. ♕b3, Black can prepare the pawn-advance b6-b5: 15... ♕a8 (This is where the move ♖a8-b8 turns out to be very useful, although it is also good for Black to play 15... ♔f8!?) 16. ♖d2 g5 17. ♕g3 b5 18. axb5 axb5⇌ Karjakin – McShane, Tiayuan 2005.

14... ♖xf6 15. ♖d5



15... ♖xd5

If Black wishes to enter more complicated positions, he can avoid the exchange of knights: 15... ♖d7!? 16. ♖e3 g6 17. ♕d5 b5⇌ (The bishop on b7 is protected and that is also a consequence of Black's move 13.)

16. exd5 (White would not achieve much with 16. ♕xd5 ♔e7 17. ♖e3 ♖hd8 18. ♕xb7 ♖xb7=) **16... f6 17. ♖h4** (After 17. ♖d4 ♔f7 18. ♖e6 ♖hc8 19. c3 b5!, Black obtains counter chances.) **17... ♔f7=** Kotronias – Efimenko, Vrnjacka Banja 2005 – **game 24.**

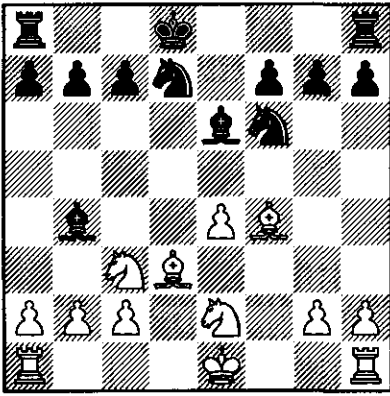
Chapter 3

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5
dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8

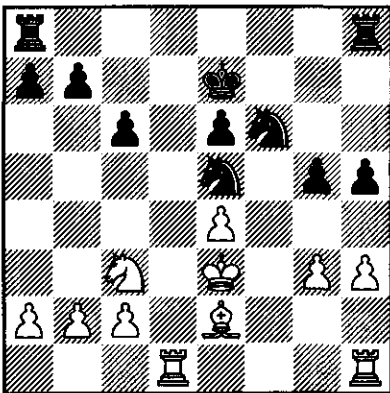
Complete Games

15 Y.Afek – Gagunashvili Groningen 2008

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5
4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♔xd8
6.f4 ♖b4 7.♗d3 exf4 8.♗xf4
♗e6 9.♘ge2 ♘bd7



10.0-0-0 ♗d6 11.♗b5
♗xf4+ 12.♘xf4 c6 13.♘xe6+
fxe6 14.♗e2 ♔e7 15.♔d2 ♘e5
16.h3 g5 17.♔e3 h5 18.g3



18...h4!

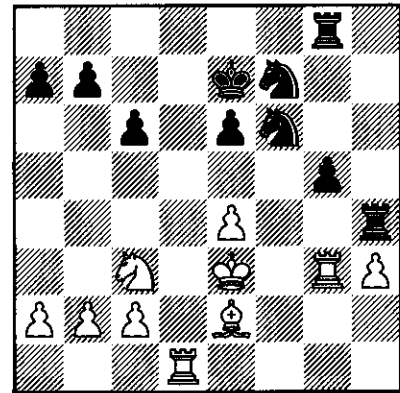
Black fixes another pawn on the same colour as his bishop and in that fashion he creates a second weakness.

19.♗hg1 ♗ag8 20.gxh4?

White had better keep to waiting tactics – 20.♔d4 ♘fd7 21.♔e3 etc. Now, Black obtains sufficient time to regroup his forces.

20...♗xh4 21.♗g3 ♘f7!

He protects his g5-pawn and frees the rook on g8, which will join in the attack against White's h3-pawn.



22.♗d4 ♗gh8 23.♗f1

In case of 23.♗g4, Black's knight can go to the centre – 23... ♘e5 and White will fail to protect his pawn anyway.

23...♘h5 24.♗g1 ♘f4 25.♗a4
♘xh3 26.♗g3 a6

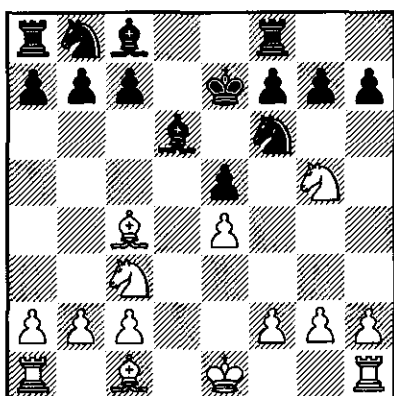
3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♙xd8+ ♔xd8

Black can easily parry the attacks against his queenside pawns even without any additional defenders.

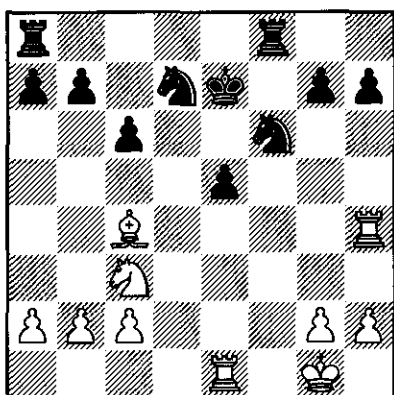
27. ♖a3 ♖f4 28. ♖b3 b5 29. a4 ♖h1 30. ♗d3 ♖8h3 31. ♖xh3 ♖xh3+ 32. ♔d4 g4 33. axb5 axb5 34. ♖a3 g3 35. ♖a7+ ♔f8 36. ♗f1 ♖h8. White resigned.

16 D.Barua - D.Juswanto
Bali 2000

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5. ♙xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♖f3 ♗d6 7. ♖g5 ♔e7 8. ♗c4 ♖f8



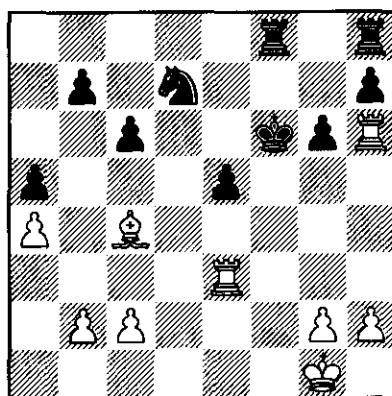
9.f4 exf4 10.e5 ♗xe5 11. 0-0 ♗e6 12. ♖xe6 fxe6 13. ♗xf4 ♗xf4 14. ♖xf4 ♖bd7 15. ♖e1 e5 16. ♖h4 c6



This is a standard move restricting the mobility of White's

knight on c3. His pieces are still a bit more active and he wishes to provoke the appearance of some pawn-weakness in Black's camp.

17. ♖e4 ♖xe4 18. ♖exe4 ♖h8 19. ♖eg4 g6 20. a4 a5 21. ♖g3 ♖af8 22. ♖h6 ♔f6 23. ♖e3



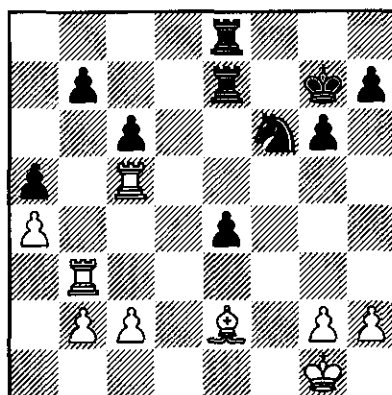
23... ♔g7

It was much more energetic for Black to play 23... ♖c5 24. b3 e4, advancing immediately his passed pawn.

24. ♖h4 ♖e8 25. ♗e2 ♖e7 26. ♖c4 ♖d8 27. ♗f3 ♖de8

It was preferable for Black to play here 27... ♖b6 28. ♖ce4 ♔f6, consolidating his position. The way he is playing – he gradually enables White to obtain a really effective counterplay.

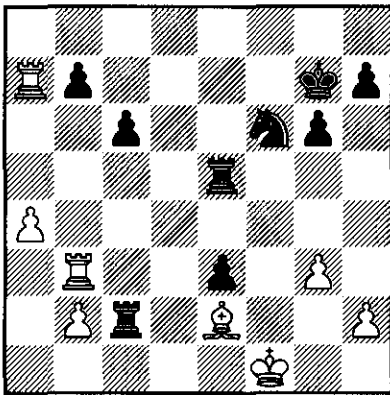
28. ♖b3 ♖f6 29. ♖c5 e4 30. ♗e2



30...♟d8?

After this imprecise move, White could have saved half a point. Black had simply protect his pawn with 30...♟a8, maintaining a slight advantage. He relied on the power of his passed pawn, but things were not so simple after all.

31.♟xa5 ♟d2 32.♔f1 ♟xc2 33.♟a7 e3 34.g3 ♟e5



35.♟xb7+?

The Indian grandmaster was obviously too excited at that moment and he decided to try to attack the enemy king. Instead, he had to play 35.♟xb7+! ♔h6 36.♟d3, keeping an eye on the e3-pawn, which is Black's main trump-card.

35...♔h6 36.g4 ♟e4 37.h4 ♟f4+ 38.♔e1

Unfortunately for White, he did not have much of a choice any more, because after 38.♔g1 ♟c1+ Black would checkmate him in a few moves, for example: 39.♔g2 ♟f2+ 40.♔h3 ♟h1+ 41.♔g3 ♔e4#!

38...♟c1+ 39.♔d1 ♟xg4

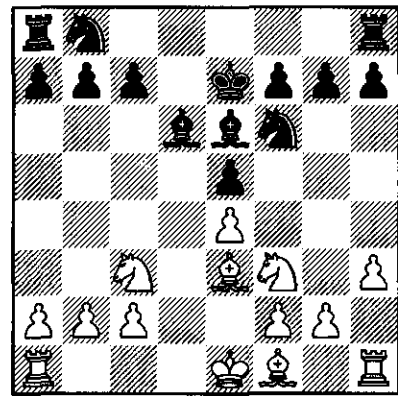
After the loss of this pawn, White cannot create any danger-

ous threats.

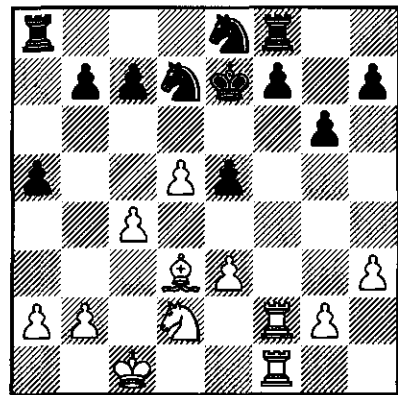
40.♔e2 ♟g2+ 41.♔f3 ♟xd1 42.♔xg2 e2 43.♟e7 e1♟ 44.♟xe1 ♟xe1 45.♟b7 ♟e4 46.a5 ♟a4. White resigned.

17 Brandner – Vaulin Oberwart 1997

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♟xd8+ ♔xd8 6.♘f3 ♔d6 7.h3 ♔e7 8.♔e3 ♔e6



9.0-0-0 ♘bd7 10.♘d5+ ♔xd5 11.exd5 a6 12.c4 ♟he8 13.♘d2 ♔c5 14.♔d3 ♔xe3 15.fxe3 g6 16.♟hf1 a5 17.♟f2 ♟f8 18.♟df1 ♔e8

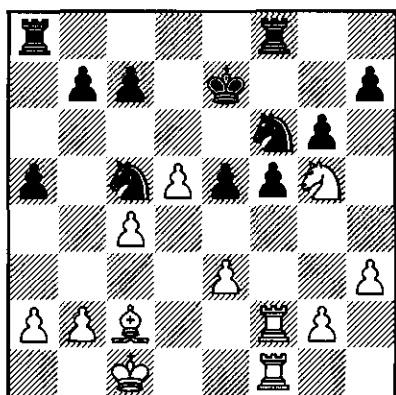


19.♘e4?!

It looks like White feels obliged to play maximally sharply, keep-

ing in mind that he had a huge lead in development just a few moves before. The situation on the board has changed, however. Black has consolidated his position and White's central pawns have been maimed on the same colour as his bishop and Black is threatening to deploy his knights on the blocking outposts c5 and d6. White should better prevent the advance of his opponent's f-pawn with 19.g4 and after 19...f6 20. ♖e4 ♖d6 the position would have remained double-edged.

19...f5 20. ♖g5 ♖c5 21. ♗c2 ♖f6



22.g4?!

This is another very risky move. After the prudent line: 22. ♖f3 ♖ce4 23. ♗xe4 ♖xe4 24. ♖c2 ♕d6 25. ♗d1 ♖ae8, Black is slightly better, but White should manage to hold this position.

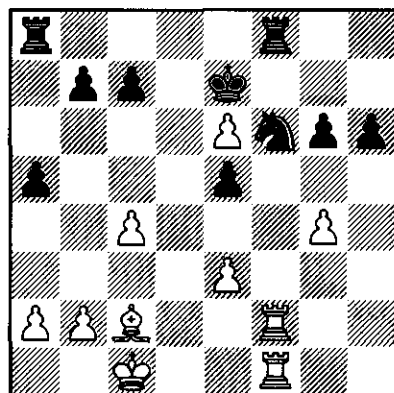
22...fxg4 23.hxg4 h6

The situation clarifies after this calm move.

It is difficult to believe that White relied on the variation 23... ♖xg4? 24.d6+! cxd6 25. ♖f7+ ♖xf7 26. ♖xf7+ ♕e8 27. ♖xh7 with an

obvious advantage for him?

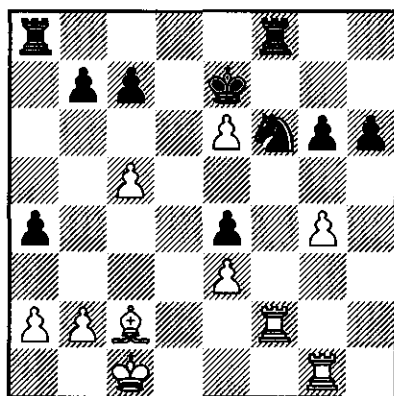
24. ♖e6 ♖xe6 25.dxe6



25...e4!

This is an excellent move, played with the idea of restricting the mobility of the enemy bishop. The computer recommends 25... ♖xg4, but then White's pieces come to life, for example: 26. ♖f7+ ♖xf7 27. ♖xf7+ ♕xe6 28. ♖xc7 ♖xe3 29. ♗xg6 ♗d8 30.b3. Black has won a pawn, but I still think White preserves good chances of saving a draw.

26.c5 a4 27. ♖g1



27...g5

You can compare this move with 18...h4 in game 15: Black fixes the enemy pawn on a same colour as his bishop.

28.b3 axb3 29. ♗xb3 ♖a5

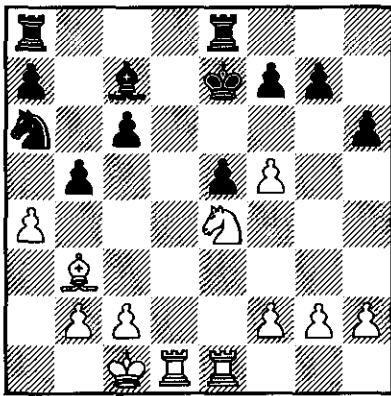
30. ♖f5 b6 31. cxb6 ♜xf5 32. gxf5 cxb6 33. ♔b2 ♝c8 34. ♗d1 g4!

Black has already blocked his opponent's passed pawns and now he forces the advance of his own pawns with the help of a nice tactical trick. White sacrifices his bishop in sheer desperation, but naturally his compensation is insufficient by far.

35. ♗xg4 ♜g8 36. ♝c1 ♖xg4 37. ♝c7+ ♔f6 38. ♖f7+ ♔e5 39. e7 ♝e8. White resigned.

18 Gligoric – Llado
Dublin 1957

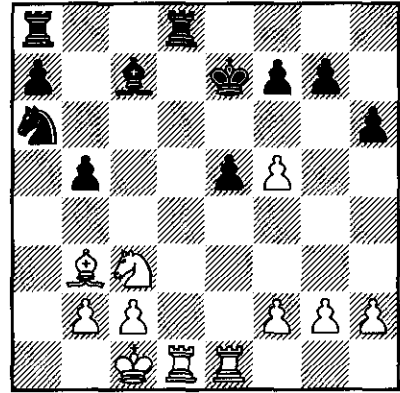
1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♗xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♖f3 ♗d6 7. ♗c4 ♔e7?! 8. ♗g5 c6 9. 0-0-0 ♗c7 10. ♖h4 h6 11. ♖f5+ ♗xf5 12. ♗xf6+ ♔xf6 13. exf5 ♔e7 14. ♜he1 ♝e8 15. ♖e4 b5 16. ♗b3 ♖a6 17. a4



White's advantage is evident; it would be enough to compare the activity of the light pieces of the opponents. After the exchange on f5, White's knight, which is usually restricted by the pawn on c6, has gained access to an excel-

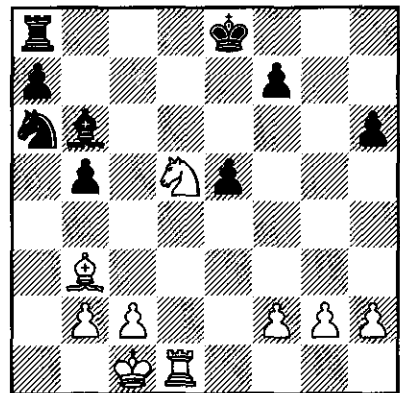
lent outpost in the centre of the board. Black's bishop has only defensive functions (protecting the e5-pawn) and his knight has joined the group of the unfortunate jobless...

17... ♝ed8 18. axb5 cxb5 19. ♖c3



After the trade of the c6-pawn, this knight is headed for the d5-square, an outpost that White could have only dreamed about before. Black's position deteriorates quickly.

19... ♝xd1+ 20. ♝xd1 ♗b6 21. ♖d5+ ♔e8 22. f6 gxf6 23. ♖xf6+ ♔e7 24. ♖d5+ ♔e8



25. ♖xb6

This is the simplest reaction. You probably know the joke that even the most powerful knight

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♚xd8+ ♔xd8

is inferior to the worst possible bishop... Meanwhile, White wins a pawn too...

25...axb6 26. ♖d6 ♘c5 27. ♖xb6 ♖a1+ 28. ♔d2 f6

Black would have more chances for a draw, entering a rook and pawn ending with the line: 28... ♘xb3+ 29. cxb3 ♖b1 30. ♔c3 ♖g1 31. g3 ♖g2 etc.

29. ♙d5

Naturally, the pawn is untouchable – 29. ♖xf6? ♘e4+.

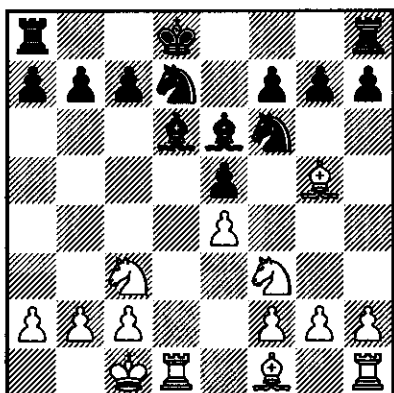
29...♔e7 30. b4 ♘a6 31. ♔c3 ♖f1 32. f3 ♘c7 33. ♙b3 ♖f2 34. ♖g6 ♘e8 35. h4 ♖f1 36. h5 ♖h1 37. h6 ♔f8 38. ♖g8+ ♔e7 39. ♖g7+! ♔d8

Or 39...♔f8 40. ♖f7+ ♔g8 41. ♖xf6+.

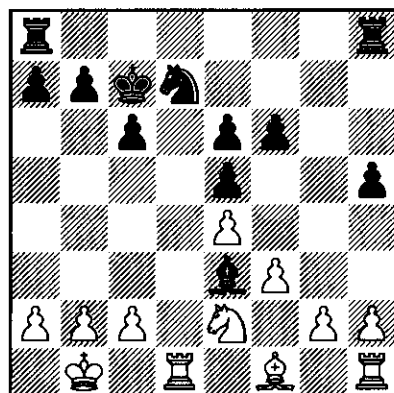
40. ♙g8 ♘d6 41. h7. Black resigned.

19 J.L.Fernandez Garcia – Franco Ocampos
Santa Cruz de la Palma 1995

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♚xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♘f3 ♙d6 7. ♙g5 ♙e6 8. 0-0-0 ♘bd7

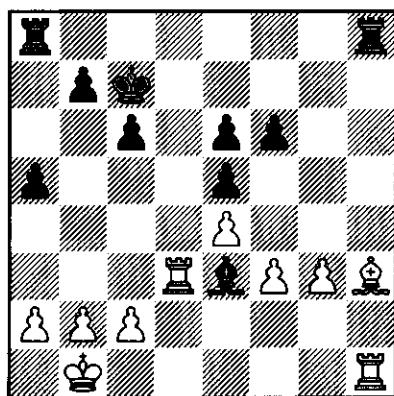


9. ♙xf6+ gxf6 10. ♘h4 ♙c5 11. f3 c6 12. ♘f5 ♔c7 13. ♘g7 ♙d4 14. ♘xe6+ fxe6 15. ♘e2 ♙e3+ 16. ♔b1 h5



White has totally misplayed the opening and now Black has achieved everything he could have dreamed about. He has a powerful pawn-centre, a lead in development and the possibility to organize an offensive on both sides of the board. Still, despite all imprecise moves, White's position remains solid enough.

17. g3 a5 18. ♙h3 ♘c5 19. ♘c1 h4 20. ♘d3 ♘xd3 21. ♖xd3 hxg3 22. hxg3

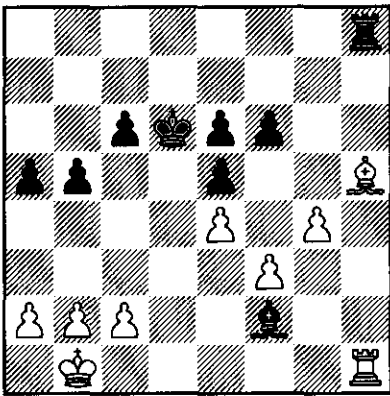


22...♙f2

It was stronger for Black to choose 22...♖ag8! In case of 23. ♖xe3 ♖xg3, he regains his piece

ending up with an extra pawn, while after 23.g4 ♔g5, White's bishop remains isolated from the actions.

**23.♖dd1 ♖ae8 24.♗g4 ♖xh1
25.♖xh1 ♔d6 26.♗h5 ♖h8
27.g4 b5**



White has manoeuvred skilfully and activated his bishop, but it is still idle. He preserves good chances for a draw, due to the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board.

28.c3 c5 29.♔c2 c4 30.♖d1+ ♔e7 31.a4?

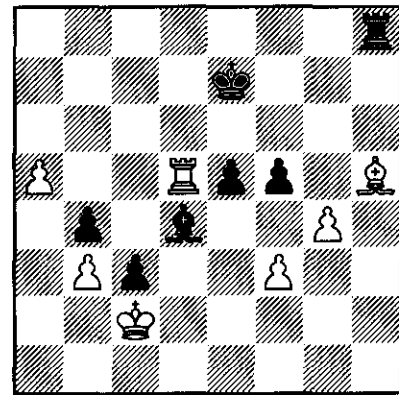
The computer also likes this move for some strange reason. In fact, it only compromises White's defensive set-up.

He had better consolidate the position a bit with 31.a3, with the idea to exchange as many pawns as possible.

31...b4 32.cxb4 axb4 33.b3 c3

This protected passed pawn is very dangerous and now Black only needs to penetrate with his rooks into the enemy camp.

34.a5 f5 35.exf5 exf5 36.♖d5 ♗d4



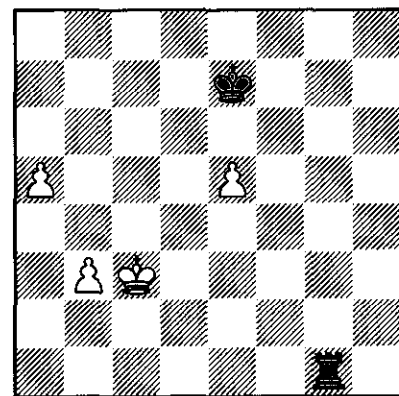
37.f4

White already takes desperate measures. It was more resilient for him to opt for 37.♖b5, although even then after for example: 37...fxg4 38.fxg4 ♖f8 39.♗g6 ♖f2+ 40.♔d1 ♖d2+ 41.♔c1 ♖g2 42.♗f5 ♔d6, Black's advantage is doubtless.

37...fxg4 38.fxe5 ♖xh5 39.♖xd4 ♖h2+ 40.♔c1

White's king must retreat to the first rank, because after 40.♔d3, Black can finish the game off immediately with 40...♖d2+.

40...g3 41.♖xb4 g2 42.♖g4 ♖h1+ 43.♔c2 g1♖ 44.♖xg1 ♖xg1 45.♔xc3



45...♖g4!

He demonstrates very good technique, cutting off White's king along the rank and then

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♙xd8+ ♔xd8

marching with his king towards the connected passed pawns. His rook will take care easily of the enemy e-pawn.

46. b4 ♕d7 47. b5 ♖a4 48. a6 ♕c7 49. ♕d3 ♕b6 50. e6 ♜h4

Black will counter 51. e7 with ♜h8-e8xh7. White resigned.

The arising position is approximately equal. There are bishops of opposite colours on the board and White can hardly exploit the weakness of the doubled pawns. It looks like he overestimates his chances.

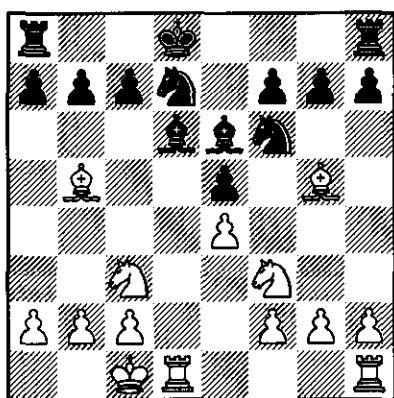
20. ♜h4 ♑d7 21. ♗g4 ♑f6

White has made two pseudo-active moves in a row. Now what?

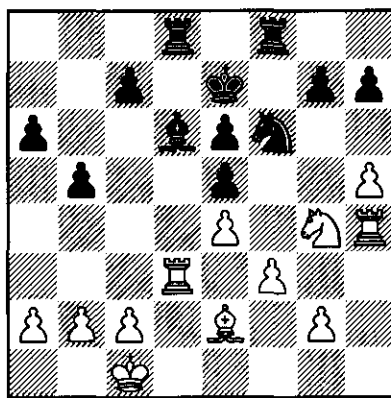
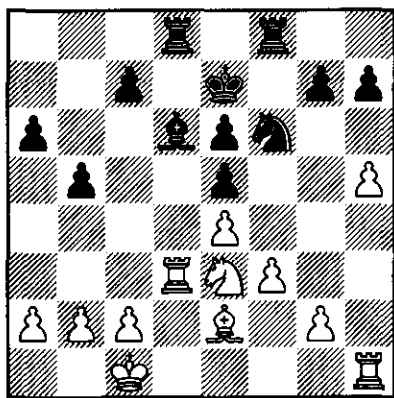
20 Bjornsson – Rausis

Cappelle la Grande 1993

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♑f6 3. ♖c3 e5
4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♙xd8+ ♔xd8
6. ♗g5 ♗e6 7. 0-0-0+ ♑bd7
8. ♑f3 ♗d6 9. ♗b5



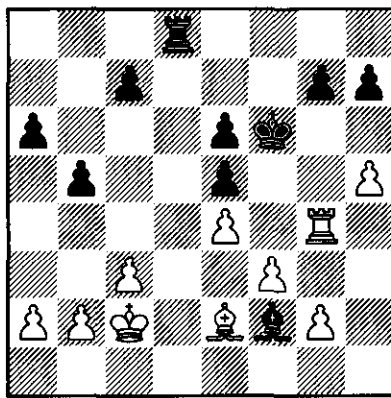
9... ♕c8 10. ♗xf6 ♑xf6 11. ♑g5 a6 12. ♗e2 ♜f8 13. ♑xe6 fxe6 14. f3 ♕d7 15. ♗d3 ♕e7 16. ♑d1 ♑d7 17. ♑e3 b5 18. h4 ♑f6 19. h5 ♜ad8



22. ♗d1?

This is a principled mistake. After the trade of the knights, Black's e5-pawn will not be weak at all, since it cannot be attacked and his bishop will be much more active than its counterpart. In addition, White's rook has occupied a very dubious positions...

22... ♑xg4 23. ♜xg4 ♕f6 24. c3 ♗c5 25. ♕c2 ♜xd1 26. ♕xd1 ♜d8+ 27. ♕c2 ♗f2



Chapter 3

The material ratio is the same as in the previous game. Now, White's bishop is better placed indeed, but his rook is in a much worse situation. White had to take care of it urgently, but he makes another pseudo-active move.

28.f4? ♖e3! 29.fxe5+ ♜xe5 30.♗d3

It is understandable that the line: 30.♞xg7? ♞d2+ would not work.

After White's unsuccessful operations, Black has got rid of his doubled pawns improving considerably the placement of his king.

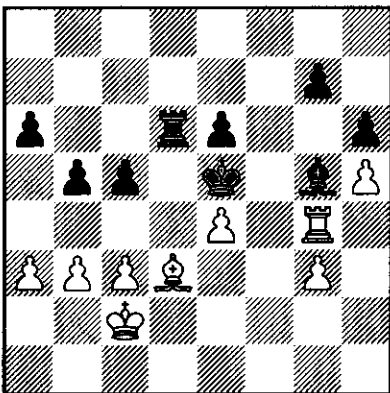
30...♞d7 31.♞g3 ♗f4 32.♞f3 c5 33.g3 ♗g5 34.b3 ♗f6 35.♞f4 ♞d6 36.♞g4 h6

This is useful prophylactic and also a nice positional trap.

37.a3?

White makes the fatal mistake in this game. He had to play 37.♞f4.

37...♗g5!



This is an amusing position. White's rook on g4 is in a trap!

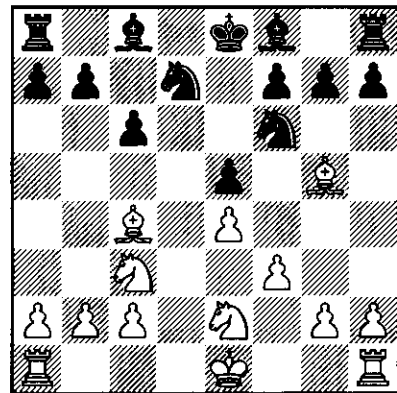
38.c4 b4 39.axb4

After 39.a4 a5, he ends up in a zugzwang.

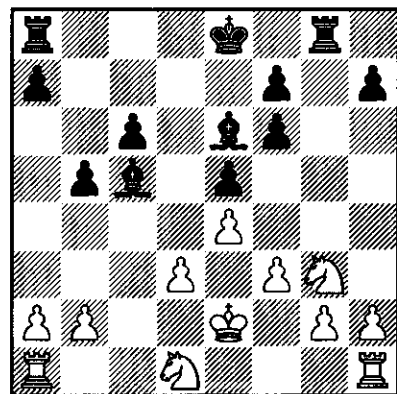
39...cxb4 40.c5 ♞c6 41.♗c4 ♞xc5. White resigned.

21 A.Sokolovs – Bologan Yurmala 1991

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♗c3 c6 4.f3 e5 5.dxe5 dxe5 6.♞xd8+ ♜xd8 7.♗c4 ♜e8 8.♗g5 ♖bd7 9.♗ge2



9...b5 10.♗d3 ♖c5 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♗g3 ♖xd3+ 13.cxd3 ♞g8 14.♗d1 ♗e6 15.♜e2 ♗c5



Black has two active bishops and he exerts pressure along the g-file. White can only brag about one nice outpost for his two knights (the f5-square), but he can hardly occupy it without losing his g2-pawn. Later, he played

3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♔xd8+ ♕xd8

very passively and his position became hopeless rather quickly.

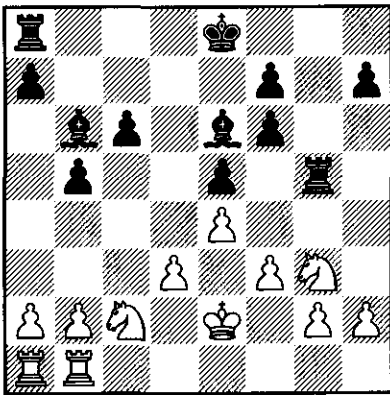
16. ♖e3

White had better play 16. ♖c1 ♗b6 17. ♖xc6, although even then after 17... ♕d7 18. ♖c1 h5, Black would have maintained his initiative, regaining his pawn at any opportune moment.

16... ♕d4 17. ♖hb1?!

White continues “packing” his own pieces. It was more tenacious for him to defend with 17. ♖ac1 ♕d7 18. b3.

17... ♖g5 18. ♖c2 ♗b6



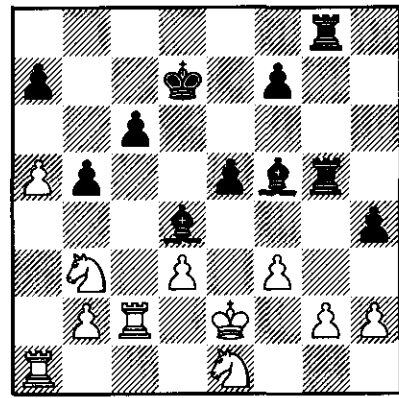
19. ♖c1

White had to find a moment to free his knight on g3 from the protection of his g2-pawn. For example: 19. ♖e3 h5 20. ♖gf1, although even then after 20... h4 21. g3 hxg3 22. hxg3 ♖h5, Black would be clearly better.

19... ♕d7 20. a4 h5 21. a5 ♗c5 22. ♖e1 ♗d4 23. ♖c2 h4 24. ♖f1 f5 25. exf5 ♗xf5 26. ♖d2 ♖ag8 27. ♖b3

(diagram)

This is a mistake, but in a very difficult position. Now, Black has the possibility to make a small



combination on the theme of a “penetrating strike”.

27... ♗xb2! 28. ♖a2

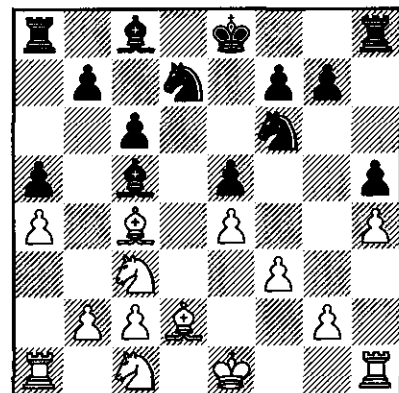
White’s position is hopeless too after 28. ♖xb2 ♖xg2+ 29. ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 30. ♕e3 ♖xb2.

28... ♗d4 29. ♖xd4 exd4 30. ♖ab2 ♕d6 31. ♖b4 ♕d5 32. ♖b1 ♖xg2+!

Black finally did it! It is easy to understand that after the exchange on g2, White loses one of his rooks, so he resigned.

22 Nguyen Ngoc – Bologan Moscow 2007

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e5
4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♔xd8+ ♕xd8
6. ♗c4 ♕e8 7. f3 c6 8. a4 a5
9. ♖ge2 h5 10. h4 ♗c5 11. ♗d2
♖bd7 12. ♖c1



12...♔d6

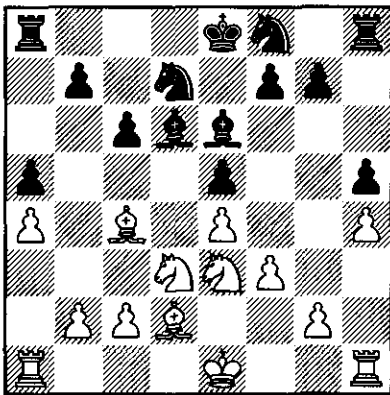
We have already mentioned in the theoretical part of this chapter that Black should better play here 12...♔d4 13.♗d3 ♗c5 14.0-0-0 ♗xd3+ 15.♔xd3 ♗d7 with a double-edged position.

13.♗d3 ♗f8

He had to prefer 13...♗c5, in order to change a pair of knights. It looks like Black had underestimated the next maneuver of his opponent.

14.♗d1! ♔e6 15.♗e3 ♗6d7

Now, he cannot exchange the bishops, because of the loss of the e5-pawn. For the same reason it is bad for him to opt for 15...g6 – 16.♔xe6 ♗xe6 17.♗c4. Black is lost because of a minute detail – his c-pawn is not on its initial square and the bishop on d6 is not protected.



16.♗f5!

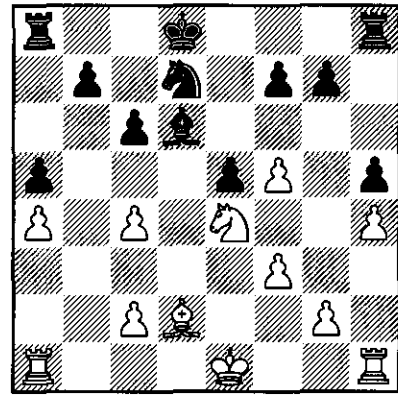
White exploits the same motif – the defencelessness of the enemy bishop on d6.

16...♔xf5 17.exf5 ♗b6 18.♗b3

The Vietnamese player is playing without any prejudice! In case

of 18.♔b3, Black has the powerful resource 18...c5 and White will have to close his bishop with the move 19.c4.

18...♗fd7 19.♗f2 ♗xc4 20.♗xc4 ♔d8 21.♗e4

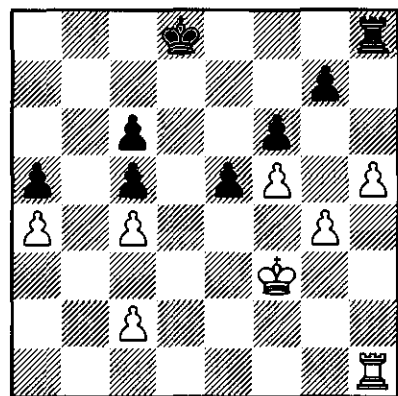


Now, just like in game 18, White's knight has occupied a dominating position in the centre of the board. Black has practically no counter chances and he is forced to defend passively, while White can increase patiently his kingside pressure.

21...♔e7 22.♔g5 ♔f6 23.♔e3 ♗c7 24.♗e2 ♗b6 25.g4 ♔c5 26.♔ag1 hxg4 27.fxg4 ♔h7 28.h5 ♔xe3 29.♗xe3 ♔ah8 30.♔d1 ♗c5 31.♗xc5 ♗xc5 32.♔d3 ♔d8

This move is forced; otherwise, White will occupy the d-file.

33.♔xd8 ♗xd8 34.♗f3 ♔h8



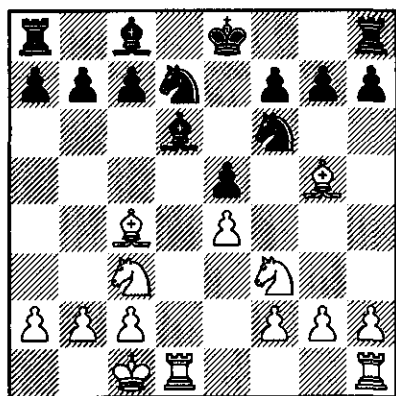
35. g5! fxe5 36. ♔g4 ♕e7

The passive defence would not have saved Black either: 36... ♔c7 (in order to cover the squares for penetration on both open files) 37. ♔xg5 ♖h6 38. ♖g1 ♖f6 39. ♔h4 ♖f7 40. f6! (This is the decisive breakthrough!) 40... gxf6 41. h6 ♖f8 42. ♔h5 ♖h8 43. ♖f1 and White wins.

37. ♔xg5 ♕f7 38. ♖d1 ♖e8 39. ♖d6 ♖e7 40. h6 gxe6+ 41. ♖xe6 e4 42. ♖h7+. Black resigned.

23 Buckley – Shaw
England 2007

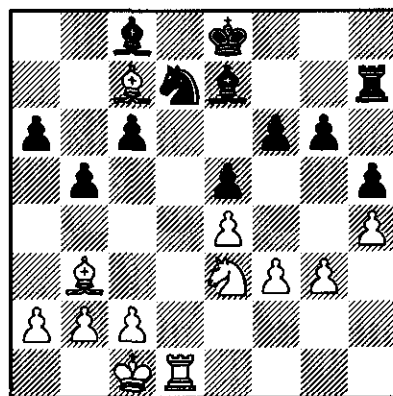
1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♚xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♖c4 ♕e8 7. ♖f3 ♖d6 8. ♖g5 ♖bd7 9. 0-0-0



9... a6 10. ♖h4 h6 11. ♖e3 g6 12. f3 b5 13. ♖b3 ♖b7 14. ♖d5 ♖d8 15. g3 c6 16. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 17. ♖d2 ♖e7 18. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19. ♖d1 ♖e7 20. ♖b6 ♖c8 21. ♖c7 ♖d7 22. ♖g2 ♖h7 23. ♖e3 h5 24. h4 f6

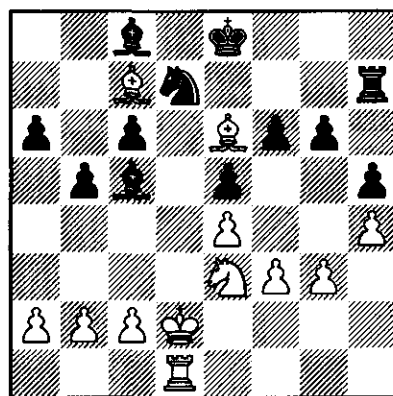
(diagram)

We have reached this position in the theoretical part, evaluating



it as approximately equal. Indeed, Black has managed to complete his development without creating any real weaknesses in his camp, preserving an almost symmetrical pawn-structure. Notice the placement of White's knight on e3. It cannot go forward to create any threats. White continued carelessly to play on small tricks.

25. ♖e6 ♖c5 26. ♔d2



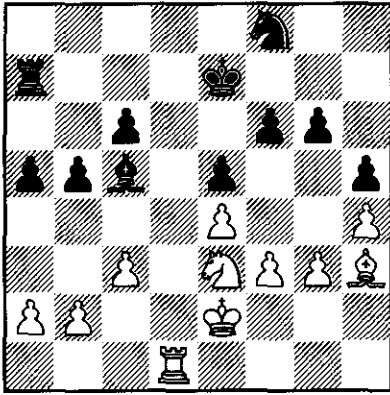
26... ♖f8!

This is an attractive simplifying maneuver, thanks to which Black's rook finally "wakes up"...

27. ♖xc8 ♖xc7 28. ♖h3

White cannot afford to gobble the pawn: 28. ♖xa6?! ♖e6, since his bishop might never come back from the a6-square.

28... ♕e7 29. ♕e2 ♖a7 30. c3 a5

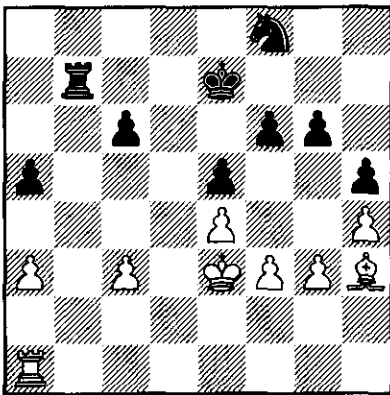


31.a4?!

The classical rule “Do not advance pawns where you are weaker!” is still valid... Is it not?

White had better create some tension in the centre with 31.f4.

31...bxa4 32.♠a1 a3! 33. bxa3 ♗xe3 34.♔xe3 ♜b7



This is Black’s first real achievement – he has occupied the open file.

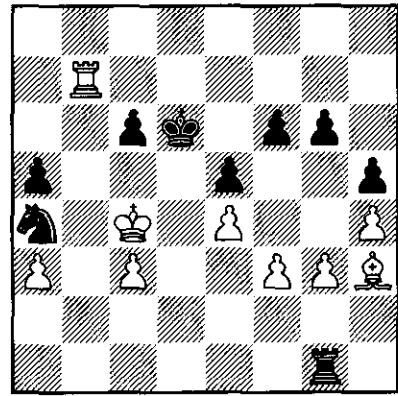
35.♠a2 ♜b1 36.♔d3 ♠g1 37.♗g2

It is worse for White to play 37.♠g2, because of 37...♠f1 (deflecting the enemy king away from the queenside) 38.♔e3 ♠h1 39.♗c8 ♔d8 (bringing, on the contrary, his own king closer to the weak pawns there) 40.♗a6 ♠a1 and Black wins a pawn.

37...♗e6

Black’s wish to bring the knight closer to the actions is understandably human, if we have in mind that White’s bishop has retreated and is incapable of exchanging it. Still, according to the computer, it is stronger for Black to play 37...g5 immediately.

38.♜b2 ♗c5+ 39.♔c4 ♗a4 40.♜b7+ ♔d6 41.♗h3



White is threatening a checkmate in one as if nothing is happening. Black must have anticipated that, however...

41...f5! 42.♠g7

After 42.exf5 ♠xg3, Black regains his material with an interest.

42...♗b6+ 43.♔b3 ♠xg3 44. ♗xf5 ♠xf3 45.♠xg6+ ♔c5 46. a4 ♠f2

Now, he has created the powerful threat ♗c4 and ♠b2#

47.♗e6 ♠f4 48.♠h6 ♠xh4

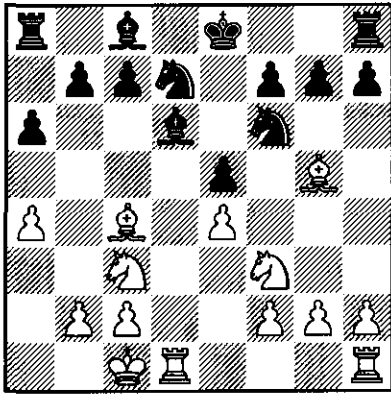
Black’s efforts are being crowned!

49.♗f7 ♗c8 50.♠e6 ♠xe4 51.♗xh5 ♗d6 52.♠e7 ♠e3 53. ♠a7 ♔b6 54.♠e7 ♗e4 55.♗e8 ♗xc3 56.♠e6 ♗b5+ 57.♔b2 ♗d4. White resigned.

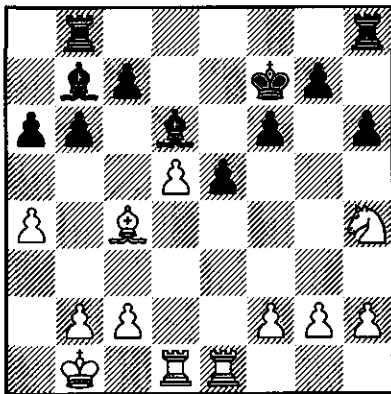
3.♟c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♚xd8+ ♔xd8

24 Kotronias – Efimenko
Vrnjacka Banja 2005

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♟c3 e5
4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♚xd8+ ♔xd8
6.♙c4 ♕e8 7.♞f3 ♙d6 8.♙g5
♞bd7 9.0-0-0 a6 10.a4

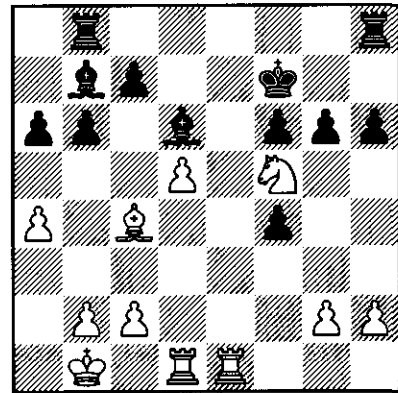


10...h6 11.♙h4 b6 12.♞he1
♙b7 13.♕b1 ♜b8 14.♙xf6 ♞xf6
15.♞d5 ♞xd5 16.exd5 f6 17.
♞h4 ♕f7



Black has solved all his opening problems and in perspective he can rely on obtaining an advantage thanks to his powerful bishop-pair. White should possibly comply with this and try to force simplifications with 18.♞f5 g6 19.♞xd6+ cxd6 20.♞e3 ♞hc8 21.♙f1 ♞c5 22.c4 with a probable draw. Kotronias decided to show valour -

18.f4?! exf4 19.♞f5 g6



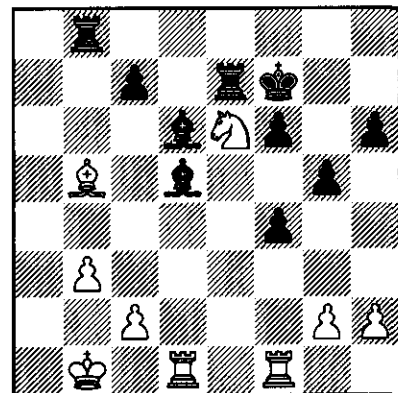
20.♞d4

Now, White has difficulties regaining his pawn, for example: 20.♞xd6+ cxd6 21.♞e6 ♞hd8 etc.

20...♞he8 21.♞e6 ♞e7 22.
♞f1 g5 23.b3 b5

This move is logical, but it is a bit premature. Black had better improve his position first with the move 23...♞be8.

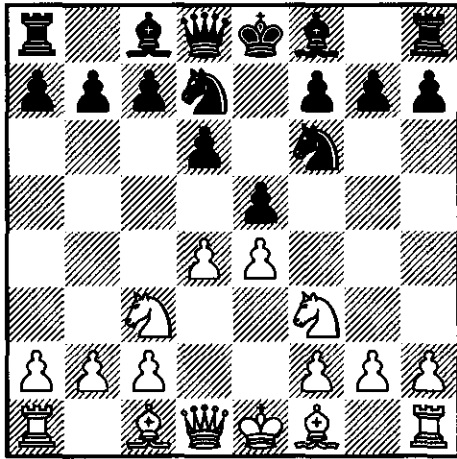
24.axb5 axb5 25.♙xb5
♙xd5



The text of the game in the Mega database ends at this moment with the result 0-1.

It is not so easy to understand why, because after 26.♞xg5+! hxg5 27.♞xd5 ♙e5 (This move seems to be the best.) Black has only a slight advantage.

Quick Repertoire



So, we have finally come to the basic position of the Philidor Defence.

White's main line here is – 5.♗c4, continuing with the development and eyeing the f7-square. We devote to this move our Chapters 5-7. In Chapter 4, we will deal mainly with the original gambit – 5.g4!?

It is less logical for White to play 5.g3. If he wishes to fianchetto his bishop, then he should better develop his knight to e2, not blocking the f2-pawn. (We analyze this scheme in Chapter 3). With a white knight on f3, there may follow: 5...♗e7 6.♗g2 0–0 7.0–0 c6 8.a4 (This is useful prophylactic. If Black advances effortlessly b7-b5, he will create sufficient counter chances.) 8...a5 9.h3 ♖e8 10.♗e3 ♚c7 11.♖e1 ♗f8 12.♗d2 ♗e6 – he has regrouped comfortably his forces, obtaining a good position.

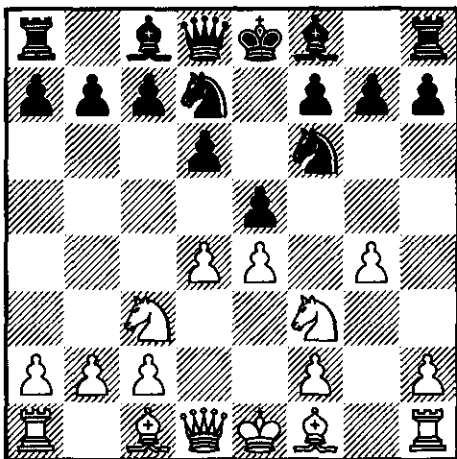
So – **5.g4!?**

This is one of the few systems in the Modern Philidor Defence, in which the fight becomes very sharp immediately move by move. This is what C.Bauer thinks about

“Pawns ahead, pieces behind!” – Philidor's teachings were a revelation at the time! The contemporary treatment of the opening accepts the exchange 4...exd4, but the great French player advised not to break the pawn-chain without necessity. Black should better protect his e5-pawn from the d7-square, since his knight cannot be attacked there. The move 4...♗c6?! can be countered by White with 5.♗b5 and there arises a position from the Ruy Lopez, a variation, which is not so favourable for Black. (The Steinitz Defence; in addition, it is also good for White to play 5.d5!?). Naturally, with a black knight on d7, the pin ♗b5 is absolutely senseless, because of the reply c7-c6.

all this – “The gambit 5.g4, tried several times by Shirov, looks basically unsound to me. It artificially livens up the game, but analysis has shown that Black can achieve a good position by declining the challenge, with 5...h6, and also with the principled 5...♖xg4. The idea of 5...g6, on the other hand, doesn’t seem suitable and rather justifies White’s play.”

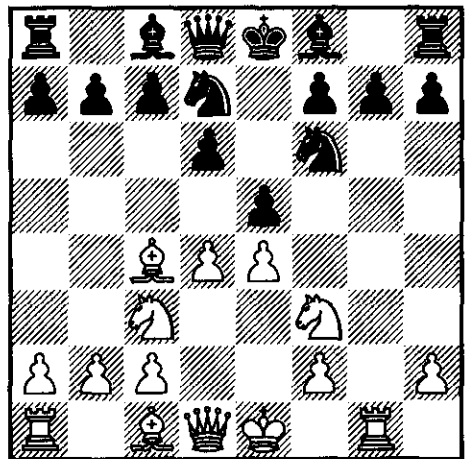
In general, I agree with the opinion of this renowned grandmaster that 5...♖xg4 is the best move for Black, but I think he can also play 5...g6. There arise original and not so well-analyzed positions and the evaluation of some of the variations will be clarified in the future. We will analyze mainly accepting the gambit, but we will have the move 5...g6 as our “reserve airfield”. If you do not feel like entering a complicated and wild position at any given day, then you can enter a slightly worse position, which will be solid enough and quite playable.



5... ♖xg4

I would like to outline for you the contours of Black’s main defensive line after 5...g6 – 6.g5 (White occupies space and repels the enemy knight to the edge of the board.) 6...♖h5 7. ♕e3 ♕g7 8. ♖d2 0–0 9. 0–0–0 c6! 10.dxe5!? ♖xe5 11. ♖xe5 ♕xe5 12. ♕e2 ♖a5 13. ♕xh5 gxh5. Naturally, Black’s king shelter is half destroyed, but he has a very powerful counterplay on the queenside.

6. ♖g1 ♖g6 7. ♕c4



7...h6

He must cover the g5-square, since it would be too dangerous for him to play 7...♖b6?! 8. ♕xf7+! ♖xf7 9.dxe5 ♖fd7 (9...♖g4 10. e6+!) 10. ♕g5 with a powerful attack for White.

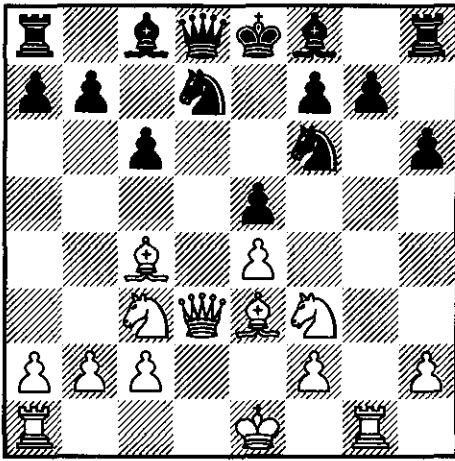
8. ♕e3 c6 9.dxe5 dxex5 10. ♖d3

(diagram)

10...b5!

This is an important move, thanks to which Black takes the c4-square under control.

After 10...♖c7?, White can play 11. ♕xf7+! ♖xf7 12. ♖c4+ ♖e7 13.



tained a rook, a knight and a bishop for a queen and a pawn and what is more important – he has excellent chances of stabilizing the position and ending up with an advantage.

11... ♖a5 12. 0-0-0 ♗a6

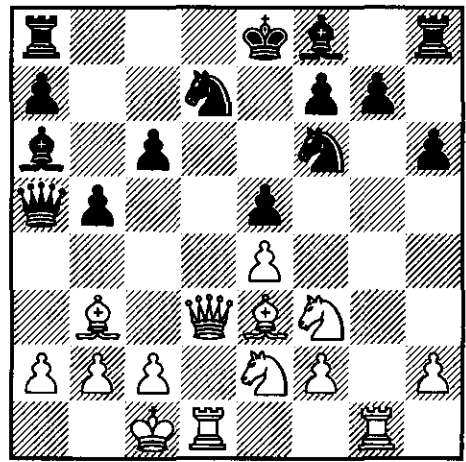
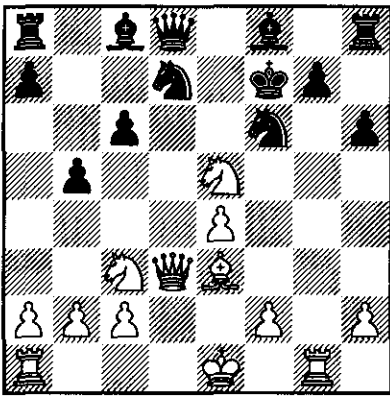
Black creates the threat b5-b4.

13. ♘e2

♘h4 with an advantage.

11. ♗b3

Now, the line: 11. ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12. ♘xe5+ would not be good for him any more, because of the beautiful counter sacrifice –



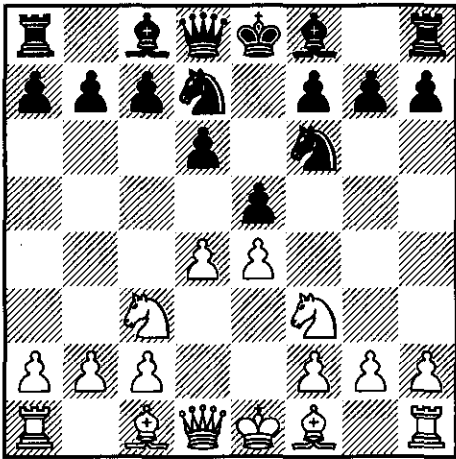
12... ♘xe5! 13. ♖xd8 ♘f3+ 14. ♔d1 (In case of 14. ♔e2 ♘xg1+ 15. ♙xg1?, White's queen comes under the discovered strike – 15... ♗g4+!) 14... ♘xg1. Black has ob-

Now, Black is faced with a choice – he can enter wild complications after 13...b4 14. ♗xf7+!? ♔xf7 15. ♖b3+ ♔e7 16. ♘ed4 (16. ♘g3!?), or continue in a calmer fashion: 13...c5!? 14. ♗d2 (Black is better after 14.c4 bxc4 15. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16. ♖xc4 ♖b4.) 14...b4 15.c4 ♗b7 16. ♘g3 ♖c7 with somewhat superior prospects.

Chapter 4

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♗bd7

Step by Step



- A) 5.h3
- B) 5.g3
- C) 5.g4

Whenever the knight on c3 has blocked the way forward of the pawn on c2, occupying of additional space with the move 5.d5 is seldom advantageous for White, because Black can easily create pressure against the pawn on d5. For example: 5...♗e7 6.♗d3 0–0 7.0–0 c6 8.♗d2, Jovanovic – Kostic, Dimitrovgrad 2003, 8...cxd5 9.exd5 a6 10.a4 ♗b6 11.♗c4 ♗bxd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14.♗xd5 ♖g8

Simplifying of the position is harmless for Black: 5.dxe5 dxe5 6. ♗c4 ♗b4 7.0–0 c6 8.♗e2

(8.♗g5 0–0 9.♗e2 h6 10.♗h4 ♗e7 11.♗d1 b5 12.c3 ♗d6 13.♗d3 ♗c5 14.♗c2 ♗e6) Stokes – E.Levin, Balatonlelle 2006) 8...0–0 9.♗d2 ♗c7 10.a3 ♗e7 11.♗h4 ♗c5 12.♗f5 ♗xf5 13.exf5 b5 14.♗a2 a5 15.♗g5 e4) Velikhanli – Gelashvili, Dubai 2006. The “melancholic” move 5.♗e2 enables Black to deploy his pieces the way he pleases: 5...c6 6.a4 a5 7.0–0 ♗e7 8.h3 0–0 9.♗e3 ♗c7 10.♗d2 (10.♗d2 ♗e8 11.f4 exd4 12.♗xd4, Sanz – Beltran, Oviedo 1991, 12...b6 13.♗e1 ♗c5; 10.d5 h6 11.♗d2 ♗b6) 10... ♗e8 11.♗ad1 ♗f8 12.♗c4, Khaetsky – T.Mamedov, Tallinn 1997, 12...h6 13.♗fe1 ♗d7)

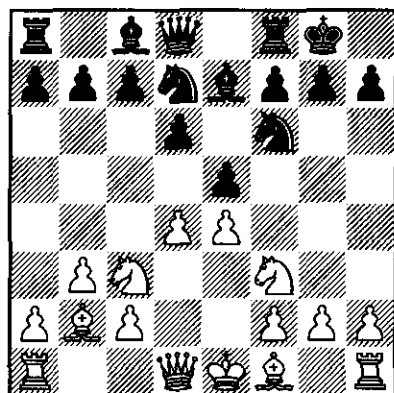
White’s natural, non-forcing development of the type of 5.♗e3 ♗e7 6.h3 allows Black to develop his forces comfortably: 6...0–0 7.♗e2 c6 8.0–0 b5 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♗d2 ♗c7 11.a4 b4 12.♗a2 ♗b8 13.♗c1 ♗c5 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6= Paljusaj – Kazhgaleyev, Sibenik 2007.

5.♗g5 (The g5-square is only seldom good for White’s bishop. Black has in response the idea ♗e7 and ♗h5, offering the trade of

the dark-squared bishops and in addition, he can win a tempo with the move h7-h6.) 5...♙e7 6.♙e2 (6.♚d2 c6 7.a4 ♚a5 8.♙d3 h6 9.♙e3 ♘g4 10.0-0 ♘xe3 11.fxe3 ♘f6 12.h3 ♙e6 13.♚f2 0-0⇌ Sagalchik – Benjamin, Long Island 1995) 6...0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.a4 b6 9.♚e1 a6 10.♙f1 ♙b7 11.♘h4 g6 12.♘f3 b5⇌ Castro – Matamoros, Guayaquil 2005.

I will pay tribute to the memory of the first Russian World Champion by quoting the following game, which was played nearly one hundred years ago: 5.♙d3 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♙g5 (See now a contemporary example: 7.♚e1 c6 8.b3 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c5 10.♙f1 a5 11.a4 ♚e8 12.♙b2 ♙f8⇌ Romero Holmes – Del Rey, Barbera del Valles 2009.) 7...c6 8.♚e2 ♚c7 9.♚ad1 b5 10.♘h4 exd4 11.♘f5 ♘c5⇌ Veliikhov – Alekhine, Moscow 1916. White had to capture here the d4-pawn with an acceptable position. Alekhine's opponent retreated for some reason with his knight to b1 and did not offer any meaningful resistance later.

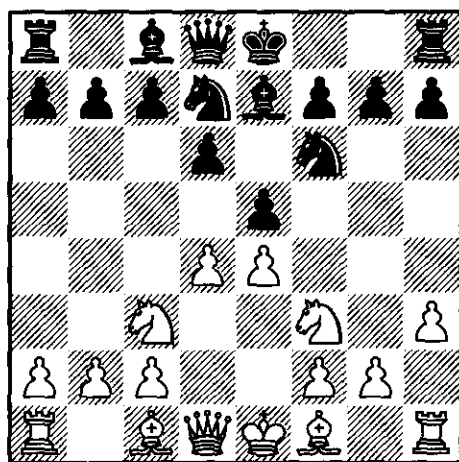
The queenside fianchetto with 5.b3 is not dangerous for Black either. White shows his plan too early and his bishop is not so aggressively placed on b2. Black can calmly complete his development according to the standard scheme (♙e7, 0-0, ♚e8, c6, or b6, ♙b7) and then he can try to clarify the situation in the centre. There may follow: 5...♙e7 6.♙b2 0-0



7.♙d3 (If Black succumbs under the tension and exchanges on d4 at some moment, then White's two bishops, pointed at Black's king castling position, will become tremendously powerful force. It is difficult for White however, to make his opponent go for this exchange. He would not achieve much in case of 7.♙e2 ♚e8 8.0-0 ♙f8 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘d2?! c6 11.a4 ♚c7 12.♙f3 ♘c5 13.h3 ♘e6, Jovanovic – Drozdov, Arandjelovac 1993. Black has manoeuvred perfectly with his knight and he is close to seizing the initiative.) 7...♚e8 8.0-0 ♙f8 9.♚d2 b6! (This is a very purposeful move. It is not advantageous for White to play d4-d5, because then his bishop on b2 will be isolated from the actions. If he leaves that pawn on its place, or exchanges on e5, then Black's bishop on b7 will have excellent prospects.) 10.♚ad1 ♙b7 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♚e2 c6 (It is useful for him to keep the d5-square covered to prevent the penetration of the enemy knight.) 14.♙a6 ♚c8 15.♙xb7 ♚xb7 16.♚d3 ♚ad8 17.♚fd1 ♚c8= Berg –

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. h3 ♙e7

A) 5. h3 ♙e7



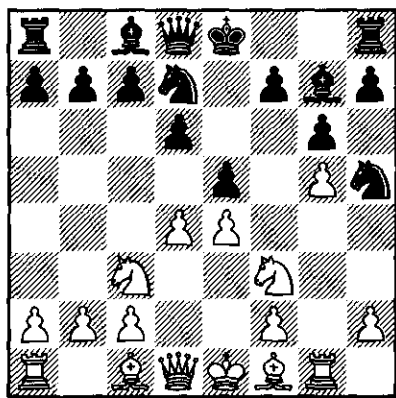
6. g4

We will analyze in details the plan with the development of the bishop to c4 in our next chapters. Now, I will quote two examples, which illustrate that h3 and ♙e3 is by far not White's most ambitious set-up. Black completes effortlessly his development and at least equalizes. For example: 6. ♙c4 0-0 7. ♙e3 c6 8. a4 b6 9. 0-0 a6 10. ♖e2 ♙b7 11. dxe5 (11. ♙d3 ♖e8 12. ♖ad1 ♖c7 13. ♘h4 exd4 14. ♙xd4 c5 15. ♙e3 ♙f8 16. f3 ♘e5 17. b3 g6 18. ♖d2 d5 and he seized the initiative, Kuzuev – Svetushkin, Moscow 1996 – **game 25.**) 11...dxe5 12. ♖fd1 b5 13. ♙b3 ♖c7 14. ♘h4 ♘c5 15. ♙xc5 ♙xc5 16. ♖d3 g6 ♞ Nazarov – Malaniuk, Elista 1998.

It would be too sophisticated for White to try 6.g3. He cannot break his opponent's defence by playing only with pawns and Black should manage to obtain a good position is several different ways. See one of them: 6...0-0 7. ♙g2

Nguyen Ngoc Truongson, Turin 2006.

5. ♖g1!? (I do know exactly, but some great player like Vadim Zvjaginzev, or Vasily Ivanchuk, or somebody else, played that mysterious rook-move and since then it has been tested in numerous openings. White's idea is simple – he wishes to play g2-g4, but Black should not be so much afraid of that. Meanwhile, he has a tempo in reserve in order to counter it.) 5...g6 (This is the simplest reaction. His bishop will be placed on g7, exerting pressure against the enemy centre and his knight, after g2-g4-g5, will have a protected square on h5 to go to.) 6. g4 ♙g7 7. g5 ♘h5



This knight prevents the straightforward pawn-offensive h4-h5 and is headed for the f4-square at an opportune moment. 8. ♙e3 0-0 9. ♙e2 (9. ♖d2 c6 10. 0-0-0 ♖e8 11. ♘b1 ♖e7 12. ♙e2 ♘f8 13. h4 b5 ♞ Nanu – Hoffman, Ourense 2006) 9...c6 10. ♖d2 ♖a5 11. a3 ♖e8 12. 0-0-0 ♘f8 13. d5 c5 14. ♘b1 a6 ♞ Lopez Martinez – Eljanov, Merida 2005.

c6 8.a4 b6 9.0-0 ♔b7 10.b3 ♚e8 11.♗b2 ♚c7 12.♚d2 ♚ad8 13.♚ad1 ♗f8 14.♚c1 a6 15.♚fe1 g6↗ Lanka – Kosten, Cannes 1992. It seems to me that White has no more useful moves and how he is supposed to improve his position remains rather unclear.

6.♗e3 0-0 7.♚d2 c6 8.g4 b5 9.♗d3 b4 10.♗e2 d5 (This timely counterstrike in the centre enables Black to reduce the tension and equalize.) 11.♗g3 dxe4 12.♗xe4 exd4 13.♗xd4 ♗e5↗ Solak – Ivanisevic, Yugoslavia 1994 – **game 26.**

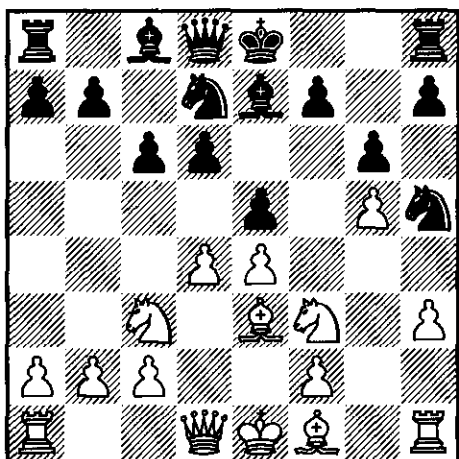
6...c6

As usual, he seeks counter chances on the queenside and in the centre.

7.g5

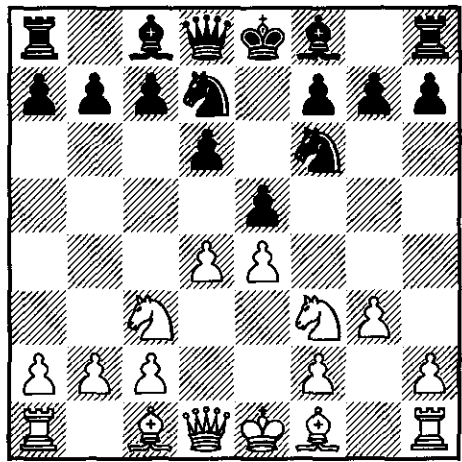
7.♗g2 h5!?! (This is a standard resource for Black. He maims the enemy pawn to g5 in order to open later the f-file with the help of the move f7-f6.) 8.g5 ♗h7 9.h4 ♗hf8 10.♗e3 ♗g6 11.♚d2 ♗df8 12.♗e2 ♗g4 13.♗fg1 f6 14.f3 ♗e6↗ Klinger – Wahls, Bad Woerishofen 1988.

7...♗h5 8.♗e3 g6



9.♚d2 0-0 10.d5 c5 11.h4 a6 12.♗e2. This knight is headed for the g3-square to eliminate the blocker on h5. In reply, Black organizes counterplay along the f-file with 12...f5!↗ J.Dominguez – Alvarado, Los Inmortales 2004.

B) 5.g3



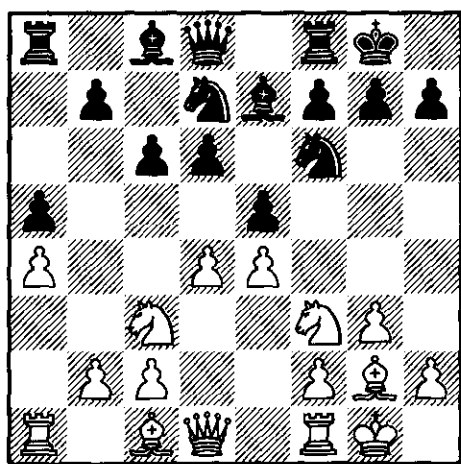
It seems to me that the fianchetto of White’s king bishop combines better with developing the knight to e2, because then White has in reserve the plan with f2-f4. By the way, this set-up is reasonable too.

5...♗e7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.a4

If White allows his opponent to play b7-b5, then Black will have an easy game with excellent chances of seizing the initiative. For example: 8.h3 b5 9.a3 a5 10.♗e3 ♗b7 11.♗h2 b4 12.♗e2 ♚e8 13.♚e1 ♗f8 14.f3 d5 15.exd5 ♗xd5 16.♗f2 c5 17.dxe5 ♗xe5↗ Provoorov – Yudin, Miass 2007.

8...a5

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. g3 ♕e7

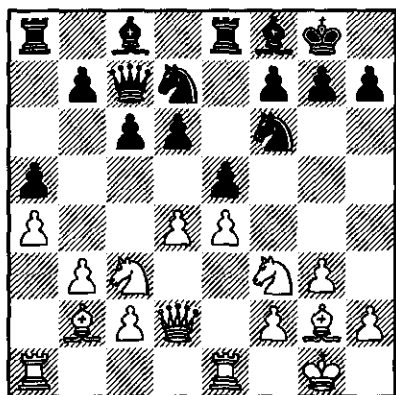


9.h3

White would not achieve much with a knight-sortie on the king-side: 9. ♗h4 exd4 10. ♖xd4 ♗c5 11. h3 ♖e8 12. ♕e3 ♗b6 13. ♗f5, draw, Rashkovsky – Peregudov, Ekaterinburg 1996.

In general, the exchange on d4, followed by exerting pressure against the e4-pawn, is an important resource in Black's arsenal in this variation, for example: 9. ♖e2 exd4 10. ♗xd4 ♖e8 11. ♖e1 ♗c5 12. h3 ♗b6! (Now, White's centralized knight is hanging.) 13. ♖d2 ♕f8 14. b3 ♕d7 15. ♕b2 ♖ad8 ♞ Telljohann – Buecker, Muenster 1989.

9. ♖e1 ♖e8 10. b3 ♗c7 11. ♕b2 ♕f8 12. ♖d2



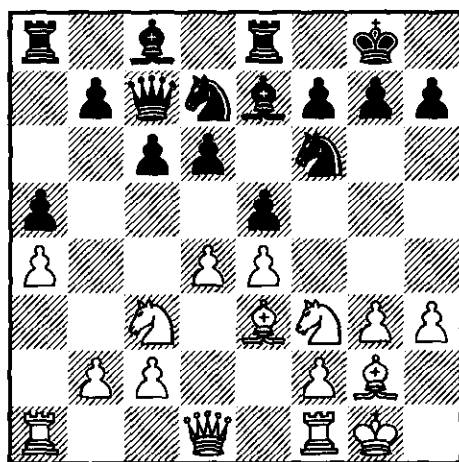
11. ♖e1

White must lose some time in order to prepare f2-f4: 11. ♗d2 ♗f8 12. f4 ♗e6 13. ♗f3 exf4 14. gxf4 d5 15. e5 ♗h5 16. ♗e2 g6 ♞ Castaignet – Plane, France 2003.

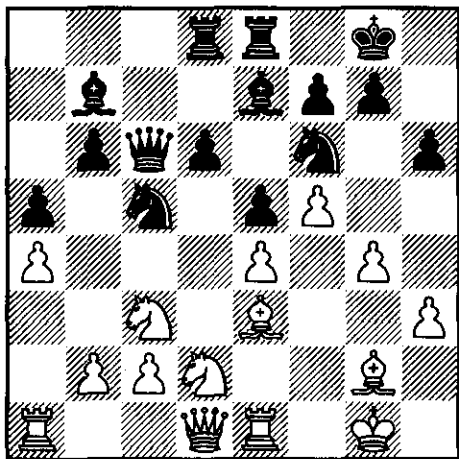
11... ♗f8 12. ♗d2 ♗e6 13. ♗b3 b6 14. d5 ♗c5 15. dxc6 ♗xc6 16. ♗d2 h6 17. f4 ♕b7 18. f5

White has deployed his forces beautifully and harmoniously, but he can hardly improve his position. Black has less space, but he has no weak squares, therefore he can easily maneuver at the back. 12... ♗b8!? (This knight is headed for the b4-square.) 13. h3 ♗a6 14. ♗h4 ♗b4 15. ♗e2 g6 16. ♖ad1 (White can attack the enemy knight with c2-c3, but then he will restrict his own dark-squared bishop.) 16... ♖b8 17. f4 exf4 18. ♗xf4 ♕g7, Sveshnikov – Ionescu, Sochi 1986 – **game 27**. This dynamic position resembles the fianchetto system of the King's Indian Defence and Black has good counter chances in it.

9... ♖e8 10. ♕e3 ♗c7

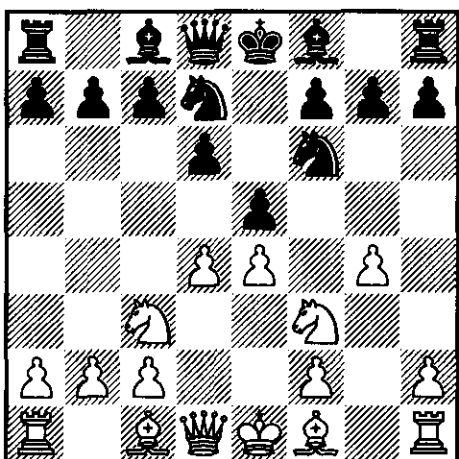


♠ad8 19.g4, draw, L.Milov – Lobzhanidze, Frankfurt 2006.



Strangely enough, this game ended at the most interesting possible moment, but in general, with a knight on d2, White's chances of a successful attack are just minimal. His knight should have been on the g3-square and it had to be developed first to e2 and not to f3.

C) 5.g4!?



C1) 5...g6

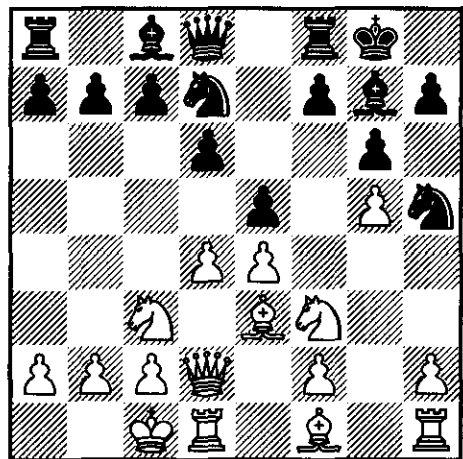
C2) 5...♠xg4

C1) 5...g6 6.g5

Black has not made any frivolous moves in the opening, so White can hardly refute his set-up just like this: 6.♠c4 exd4 7.♞xd4 ♠g7 8.♠xf7+? (It was better for him to choose 8.g5 ♠h5 9.♞e3 0-0) 8...♠xf7 9.♠g5+, Roth – Weiss, Hartberg 2004, 9...♠e8 10.♠d5 ♠b6-+

The move 6.h3?! looks like a loss of time, because Black had allowed his opponent to push g2-g4 at once, even without any preparation. So, if White so wishes, he should push that brave pawn further and not protect it. 6... ♠g7 7.♠g2 0-0 8.0-0 c6 9.♠e3 ♠e8 10.♞d2 ♞c7 11.♞fe1 b5 12.a3 ♠b8 13.♠ad1 a5 ♞ D.Fernandez – Scarella, Vicente Lopez 2005.

6...♠h5 7.♠e3 ♠g7 8.♞d2 0-0 9.0-0-0



9...c6!

In some rare cases a move like 9...♠b6 works well, for example if Black can play it with tempo and follow that quickly with d6-d5. This is not the case here however, White will restrict the en-

emy knight with b2-b3 and it will be misplaced on b6: 10. ♖g1 ♗e6 11. b3! (This pawn restricts the mobility of two enemy pieces at once!) 11... a5 12. a4 ♖e7 13. ♖b1 f5 14. d5 ♗d7 15. ♖e1 fxe4 16. ♗d2 ♗f4 17. ♗dxe4± Leon Hoyos – Suuronen, Salou 2008.

10. dxe5!?

This is the most uncompromising move for White.

In case of 10. ♗e2, Black succeeds in creating counterplay on the queenside, for example: 10... ♖a5 11. h4 b5 12. dxe5, Mikheeva – Kharashuta, Angarsk 2007, 12... b4 13. ♗b1 dxe5 14. a3 ♖b8 15. axb4 ♖xb4 and his pressure along the open a and b-files compensates the defects of his pawn-structure. See the possible developments in this exemplary variation: 16. ♖d6!? ♗f4 17. ♗f1 ♖xe4 18. ♗fd2 ♖b4 19. ♗b3 ♖xb3 20. cxb3 ♗d5±

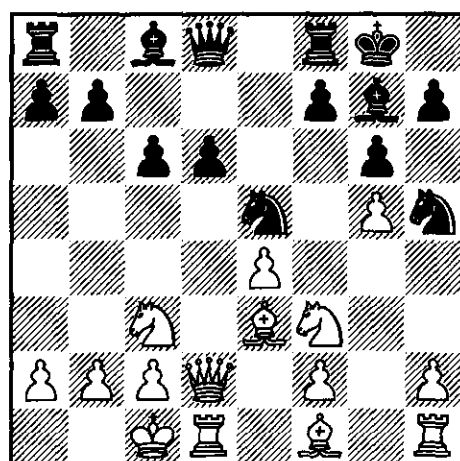
10... ♗xe5

This is the only move.

In case of 10... dxe5?, White has the resource 11. ♖d6! and the power of his queen squeezes Black's forces. After 11... ♖a5, White follows with 12. ♗d2!±, starting a chase after the enemy queen.

(diagram)

This position seems very attractive for White, but the following short analysis will show you that Black's resources should not be underestimated. He has an excellent dark-squared bishop and his other bishop can join in the ac-



tions quickly and effectively too.

11. ♗xe5

White can also try here 11. ♗e2!? ♗g4 (11... ♖a5 12. ♗d4 ♗g4 13. ♖hg1 f5 14. gxf6 ♗hxf6 15. f4±) 12. ♗d4 ♗xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♗xf2 14. ♗xh5 ♗xh1 15. ♗f3 ♗f2 (15... f6 16. gxf6 ♖xf6 17. ♖xh1 ♗d7 18. ♗e2 ♖f4±) 16. ♖xf2 ♖xg5+ 17. ♖b1±

11... ♗xe5 12. ♗e2

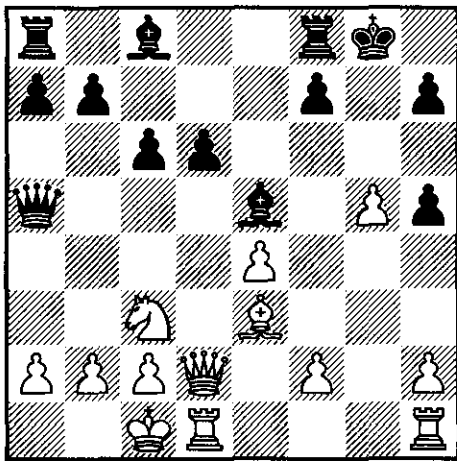
The defect of the aggressive move 12. f4 is that White weakens his e4-pawn and Black can start attacking it: 12... ♗xc3! (Naturally, Black should be reluctant to part with this bishop, but the lead in development is even more important.) 13. ♖xc3 ♗g4 14. ♖d2 (Black's forces will become very active after 14. ♖d4 ♗f3 15. ♖g1 ♖e7 16. ♗d3 d5.) 14... ♗f3 15. ♗g2 ♗xg2 16. ♖xg2 ♖e8 – White will most probably lose his e4-pawn and whether his compensation for it would be sufficient remains highly questionable.

12... ♖a5 13. ♗xh5

There arises a favourable endgame for him following 13. f4 ♗xc3 14. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 (It would be tre-

mendously risky for Black to play 14...♚xa2? 15.b3±) 15.bxc3. It is now bad for him to opt for 15...d5?, in view of 16.exd5! ♜e8 17.♞he1 ♞xe3 18.♙xh5 ♞xe1 19.♞xe1 and Black cannot capture the bishop – 19...gxf5? 20.♞e8+ ♔g7 21.d6 and White wins. Instead of 15...d5, the correct move for Black is 15...♙h3!, for example: 16.♙xh5 (or 16.♞xd6 ♙g2 17.♞e1 ♙xe4) 16...gxf5 17.♞xd6 ♙g2 18.♞e1 ♙xe4 19.♙d4± and I think this position is quite defensible for him.

13...gxf5



14.f3

The position remains double-edged after 14.♙d4 ♙g4 15.♞de1 b5±

The prophylactic move 14.f3 (with the idea to protect the g4-square) is refuted by the computer in an amazing fashion:

14...♙e6 15.♙d4 ♙xa2! 16.f4 ♙e6!

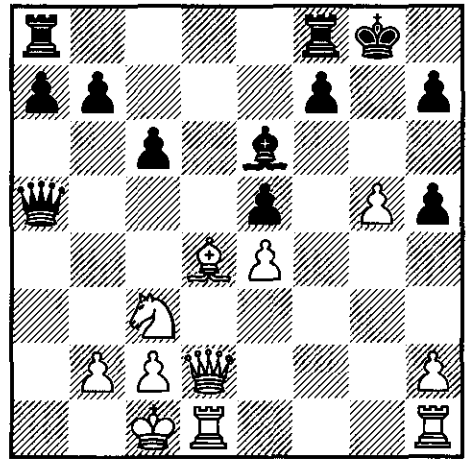
The machine has nerves of steel!

17.fxe5

There arise wild complica-

tions after 17.♔b1 ♞ad8±. This problematic position can be an interesting subject for a thorough home-analysis.

17...dxe5



18.g6!

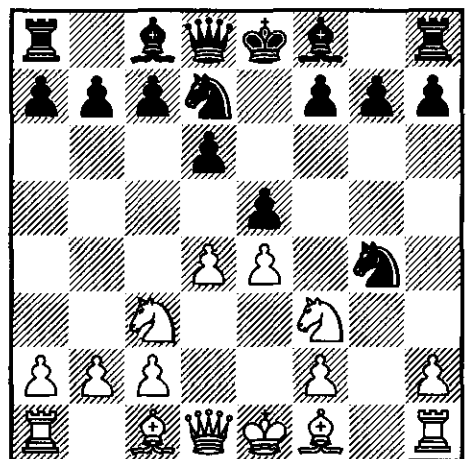
White would have been lost without this resource.

18...exd4

But not 18...hxf6? 19.♚g5!± and White pins the e5-pawn, freeing the d2-square for his king.

19.gxf7+ ♙xf7 20.♚xd4 ♞ad8± Both kings are vulnerable in this position, but Black has an extra pawn after all...

C2) 5...♘xg4



3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. g4 ♗xg4 6. ♖g1 ♗gf6 7. ♙c4 h6 8. ♙e3 c6

6. ♖g1

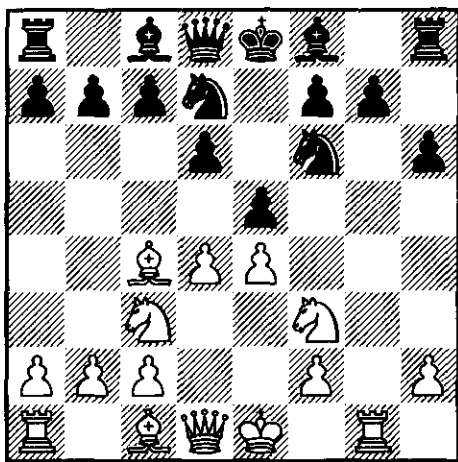
He should not be afraid of 6. ♙c4, because of 6...exd4 7. ♖xd4 (7. ♙g5, Sanchez Dolado – Galzadorri, Erandio 2003, 7...f6 8. ♗xd4 ♗de5 9. ♗e6 ♙xe6 10. ♙xe6 ♗xf2! 11. ♗xf2 fxg5–+; 7. ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 8. ♗g5+ ♗g8 9. ♖xg4 ♗f6–+) 7...c6 8. h3 ♗de5

6... ♗gf6 7. ♙c4

White should better attack immediately the f7-square, because later he may not have that possibility at all: 7. ♙e3 c6 8. ♖d2 (He had better play here 8. ♖d3 b5 9. 0–0–0, I. Popov – Zablotsky, Voronezh 2009, 9...♖c7! 10. ♗b1 g6∞) 8...b5 9. a3, Priyadharshan – Al Sayed, Subic Bay 2009, 9...♖c7! 10. ♙d3 (or 10. 0–0–0 a5) 10...a5

7... h6

Black must take care of the g5-square, because after 7... ♗b6?!, White can play 8. ♙xf7+! ♗xf7 9. dxe5 ♗fd7 (9... ♗g4 10. e6+!) 10. ♙g5, organizing a dangerous attack.



This gambit has not been stud-

ied extensively yet, so what we supply you with are some analyses, which do not exhaust the possibilities and do not attempt to give a definite evaluation. We still hope they will be interesting for you, though...

8. ♙e3

In case of 8. ♖d3 c6 9. dxe5 dxe5 10. ♙e3, we are back to the main line.

Let us see the exchange on e5 in combination with the development of White's queen to e2: 8. dxe5 dxe5 9. ♖e2 (About 9. ♙e3 – see the main line.) 9...c6 10. a4 ♖e7! (It would be useful for you to remember this maneuver – Black protects his f7-pawn with his queen, so that the sacrifice ♙xf7+, followed by the check with the queen from c4, never works and then regroups his forces after ♗c5 and ♙g4.) 11. ♙e3 (11. a5 ♗c5 12. b4 ♗e6) 11... ♗c5 12. 0–0–0 (12. ♗d2 ♙e6 13. ♙xc5 ♖xc5 14. ♙xe6 fxe6 15. ♗b3 ♖d6 16. ♖d1 ♖c7 17. ♖c4 ♗f7) 12... ♙g4 13. ♖xg4 (13. ♙a2 13... ♙h5 14. ♖c4 a6 15. a5 ♗cd7) 13... ♗xg4 14. ♗d5!? (14. ♗g5? hxg5 15. ♖xg4 ♖h4) 14... ♖d8 15. ♗f4 ♖c7 16. ♙xc5 ♙xc5

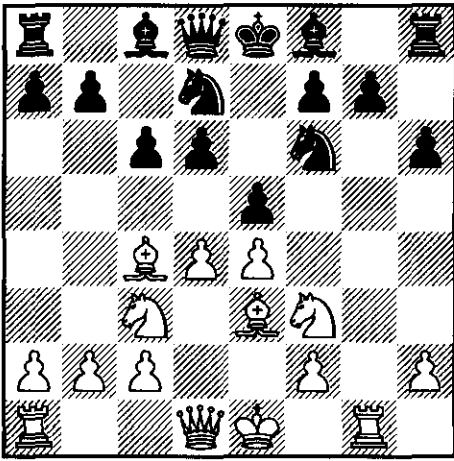
8... c6

(diagram)

C2a) 9. ♖d3

C2b) 9. dxe5

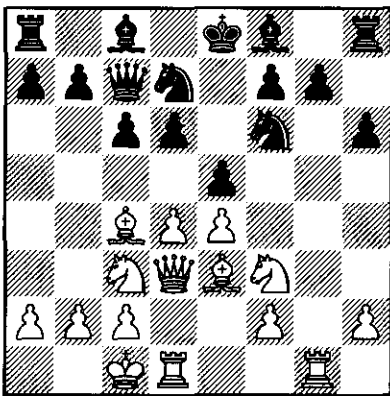
The move 9. ♖e2 does not promise White much even in this version (without the exchange on



e5), for example: 9...b5 10.♖b3 ♗a5 11.d5 (About 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.0-0-0 ♕a6♞ – see variation **C2a**.) 11...b4! 12.dxc6 bxc3 13.cxd7+ ♕xd7 14.0-0-0 ♝c8♞ Balogh – Gyimesi, Budapest 2004.

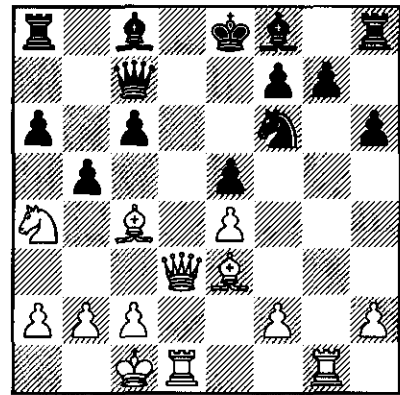
C2a) 9.♞d3 b5!

Black has no time to fortify his position with 9...♞c7?!, because of 10.0-0-0



10...a6 (In case of 10...b5?!, White can sacrifice his bishop on b5, in a typical “Sicilian” fashion, and he wins an all-important tempo, exploiting the misplacement of the enemy queen on the c7-square: 11.♕xb5 cxb5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♗xb5 ♗a5 14.♞c4 ♝b8

15.a4 ♞b4 16.♗xe5 ♞xc4 17.♗xc4 a6 18.♗bd6+ ♕xd6 19.♗xd6+ ♖f8 20.f4 ♕b7 21.e5 ♗e8, Shirov – Azmaiparashvili, Plovdiv 2003 – **game 28**, 22.♕a7! ♕f3 23. ♗xf7 ♕xd1 24.♗xh8±) 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 (11...dxe5? 12.♕xf7+ ♖xf7 13.♞c4+ ♖e7 14.♗h4+-) 12.♗xe5 dxe5 13. ♗a4 b5 (Or 13...c5? 14.♞b3 b5 15.♕xf7+ ♞xf7 16.♝d8+ ♖xd8 17.♞xf7 bxa4 18.f4 and Black resigned, Perez Luis – Moldovan, Pontevedra 2004.)



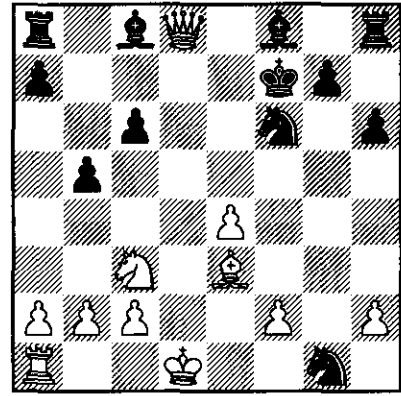
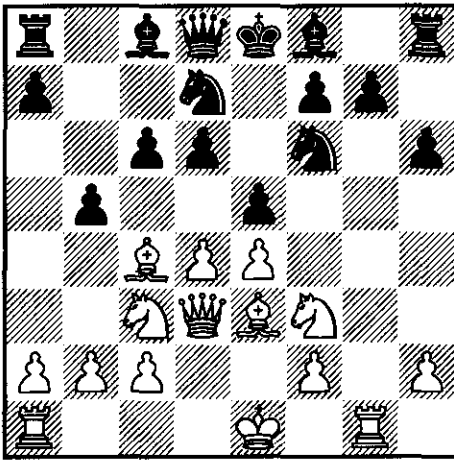
14.♕b6! (The misplacement of Black’s queen once again leads to his demise – White penetrates to the eighth rank with tempo.) 14...♞e7 (It would be hopeless for Black to opt for 14...bxc4 15. ♞e3 ♞e7 16.♝d8+ ♞xd8 17.♕xd8 ♖xd8 18.♞b6+.) 15. ♞d8+ ♞xd8 16.♝xd8+ ♖e7 17.♝gd1 ♗xe4 (17... ♗d7 18.♝1xd7+) 18.f3 ♗g5 19.♕c5+ ♖f6 20.♕xf8 bxa4 21.♕e7+ ♖xe7 22.♝xh8±

(diagram)

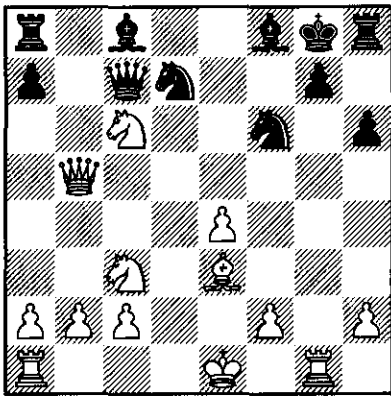
10.♕b3

Black can counter the seemingly attractive bishop-sacrifice 10.♕xf7+ with the powerful counter argument – 10...♖xf7 11.dxe5

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. g4 ♗xg4 6. ♞g1 ♗gf6 7. ♕c4 h6 8. ♔e3 c6



dxe5 12. ♗xe5+ ♗xe5! (12... ♔g8?!, Voicu – Kirillova, Kharkov 2006, 13. ♗xc6 ♞c7 14. ♞xb5



There has arisen material equality on the board in a way (three pawns for a bishop), but I think White's play is much easier in this position. His plan is easily understandable. He must advance his central pawns and impede his opponent to complete his development. Black's king is so unsafe that he will need to be on the alert practically on every move.) 13. ♞xd8 ♗f3+ 14. ♔d1 (14. ♔e2 ♗xg1+ 15. ♞xg1? ♔g4+) 14... ♗xg1

(diagram)

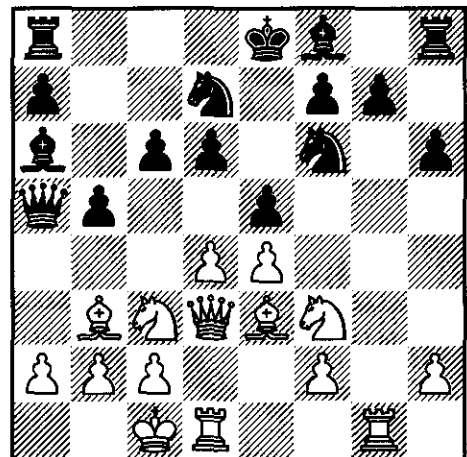
Black has a material advantage – a rook, a knight and a bishop for

a queen and a pawn. Both kings are roaming all over the board. I think Black should be able to consolidate his position fast enough and then he will have a clear advantage. For example: 15. ♔c1, Kostin – Yatsenko, Sochi 2008 (15. ♞c7+ ♔e7 16. ♔c5 ♞e8), 15... b4 (15... ♔e7!? 16. ♞c7 ♔g4) 16. ♗a4 ♗e2+ 17. ♔b1 (17. ♔d2 ♗xe4+) 17... ♔e7 18. ♞xh8 (18. ♞d3 ♗g1) 18... ♔b7 19. ♞xa8 ♔xa8

10... ♞a5

Black has some other possible set-ups, for example: ♞c7 and a5, but we will prefer not to study additional variations, sticking to the already approved scheme with a queen on a5 and a bishop on a6.

11. 0–0–0 ♔a6

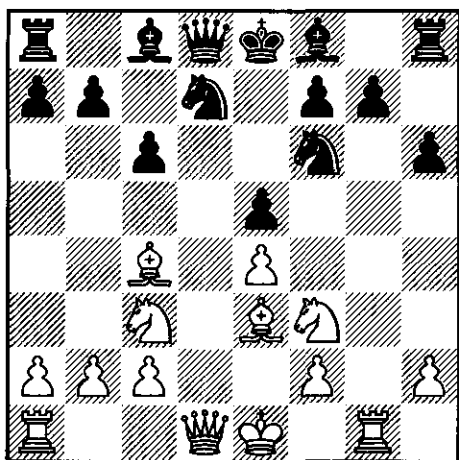


12. ♖b1?!

This move is rather slow and it enables Black to advance c6-c5, seizing the initiative. White had better open the centre with 12. dxe5 and after 12...dxe5, there would have arisen a position analyzed below in variation **C2b2** (after the move-order 9.dxe5 dxe5 10. ♖d3 b5 11. ♗b3 ♖a5 12. 0-0-0 ♗a6).

12...c5 13.dxc5 dxc5 14. ♗d2 ♖c7 15.c4 b4 16. ♗e3 0-0-0 17. ♗a4 ♗b7 A.Gara – Srebrnic, Sibenik 2008.

C2b) 9.dxe5 dxe5



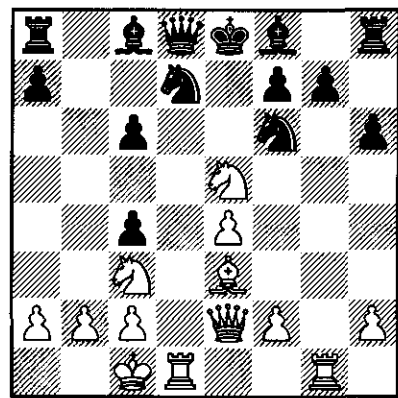
C2b1) 10. ♖e2

C2b2) 10. ♖d3

C2b1) 10. ♖e2 b5 11. ♗b3

White should try to test in practice the piece-sacrifice after 11. 0-0-0!? bxc4 12. ♖xe5 (diagram)

Indeed, after 12... ♖c7 (It is rather dubious for Black to opt for 12... ♗a6 13. ♖xc6 ♖c7 14.e5 ♖xc6, because of 15.exf6 gxf6



16. ♗f4+ ♖e6 17. ♖f3 ♖c8 18. ♗ge1 ♖e5 19. ♖g3.) White must sacrifice in addition his knight too – 13. ♖xf7!, but his attack is very dangerous and he has practically a guaranteed draw. For example: 13... ♖xf7 14. ♖xc4+ ♖e8 15. ♖e6+ ♖d8 16.e5 ♖d5 (It seems too passive for Black to defend with 16... ♖e8!?, but it is still acceptable.) 17. ♖xd5 cxd5 18. ♖xd5 ♗b7 19. ♖f7 ♖c8 20. e6 (20. ♖e8=) 20... ♖f6 21. ♖d7! (This is a spectacular tactical strike, but it leads only to a perpetual check. White can make a draw in another fashion too: 21.e7 ♖xe7 22. ♖c4+ ♖c7 23. ♖e6+ ♖b8 24. ♖d8+, or 24. ♖g4!? g5 25. ♖c4.) 21... ♖xd7 22. ♖e8+ ♖d8 23.exd7+ ♖c7 24. ♗f4+ ♗d6 25. ♗xd6+ ♖xd6 26. ♖g6+ ♖c7 27. ♖e5+ ♖xd7 28. ♖xg7+ ♖c8=

11... ♖a5

It is also good for Black to play 11... ♖e7!? 12. 0-0-0 ♖c5 13. ♗xc5 ♖xc5∞

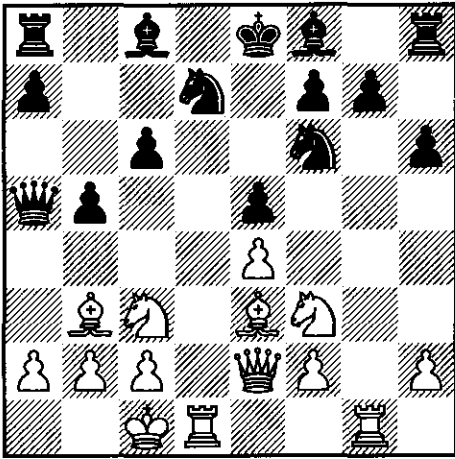
12. 0-0-0

(diagram)

12... ♗a6!

This is a standard method for Black to create counterplay – his queen goes to a5 and the bishop to

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. g4 ♗xg4 6. ♖g1 ♗gf6 7. ♕c4 h6 8. ♕e3 c6



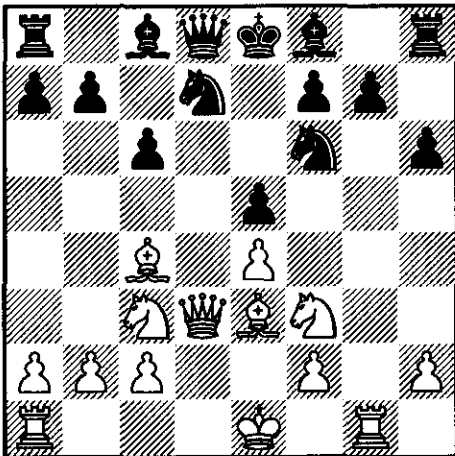
a6. Then he can evacuate quickly his king to the queenside and he will have the threat – b5-b4.

13. ♖e1

White's queen is placed clearly worse on the d2-square: 13. ♖d2 b4 14. ♗e2 c5 15. ♕d5 ♖d8 16. ♗g3 c4 17. ♖b1 c3 18. ♖c1 ♗xd5 19. ♖xd5 ♖c7 20. ♗h4 ♕c4 ♠ R.Quinn – Gonzalez De La Torre, San Sebastian 2008.

13...b4 14. ♗b1 ♖c7 15.a3 ♖b8 16. ♗h4 bxa3 17. ♗xa3, A.Hunt – Scalcione, Rome 2007, 17...c5 18. ♕c4 ♖b7 19. b3 ♗b6 ♠

C2b2) 10. ♖d3



10...b5!

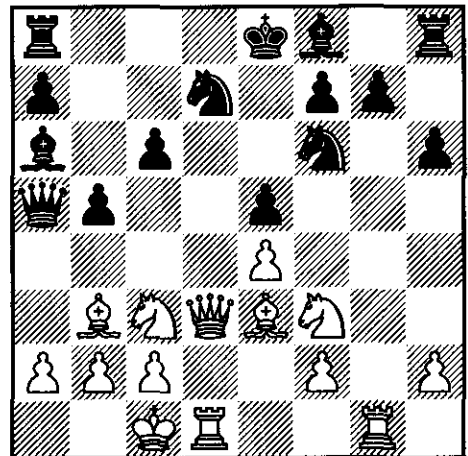
10... ♖c7? 11. ♕xf7+! ♖xf7 12. ♖c4+ ♖e7 13. ♗h4±

11. ♕b3

About 11. ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 12. ♗xe5+ – see 9. ♖d3 b5 10. ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 11. dxe5 dxe5 12. ♗xe5+.

11... ♖a5 12. 0–0–0

White's attempts to begin counter actions on the queenside fail after 12. a4 ♕a6 13. axb5 (Black has no problems at all after 13. ♖a2 b4 14. ♗b5 0–0–0 ♠. If you analyze this position at home, try not to overlook sacrifices of the type – 13. axb5; otherwise, you may become the co-author of some spectacular miniature. Here, a similar sacrifice of the rook would not work.) 13... ♖xa1+ 14. ♖e2 ♕xb5 15. ♗xb5 ♖a5 16. ♗d6+ ♕xd6 17. ♖xd6 ♖a6+ 18. ♖e1 0–0–0 ♠



12... ♕a6

Black is threatening b5-b4. We must analyze all possible retreats of White's knight on c3 to keep a clear conscience.

13. ♗e2

13. ♗d5 cxd5 14. ♕xd5 0–0–0+ ♠

13. ♖b1!? c5 (13...0-0-0 14. ♗xf7 g5 15. ♗e6 b4∞; 13...b4? 14. ♗xf7+! ♗xf7 15. ♖b3+ ♗e7 16. ♖h4±) 14. c4 b4 (14...bxc4?! 15. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16. ♖xc4 ♖b4 17. ♖bd2 ♖xc4+ 18. ♖xc4 ♖xe4 19. ♖fxe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖xe5 ♗d6 21. ♖c4±) 15. ♖c2 (15. ♖h4 ♗b7 16. f4 0-0-0) 15...0-0 16. ♖bd2 ♗b7 17. ♖h4 ♗c6 18. f3 ♖h5⌘ Arribas Lopez – Garcia Fernandez, Galapagar 2006.

13. a4 bxa4 14. ♗c4 a3 15. b3 (15. ♗xa6 axb2+) 15...♗xc4 16. ♖xc4 ♗c8 17. ♗b1 g6 18. ♗xg6 ffg6 19. ♖e6+ ♗e7-+

13...b4

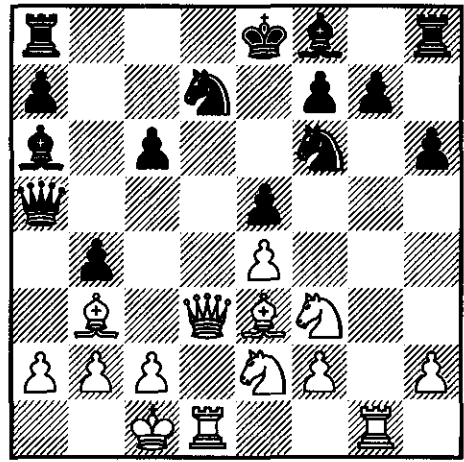
It was maybe worth for Black not to allow the sacrifice on f7 and continue calmly with: 13...c5!? 14. ♗d2 (14. c4 bxc4 15. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16. ♖xc4 ♖b4⌘) 14...b4 15. c4 ♗b7 16. ♖g3 ♖c7 17. ♗a4 0-0-0 18. ♗e3 g6⌘ Narayanan – Koshy, Mumbai 2009.

(diagram)

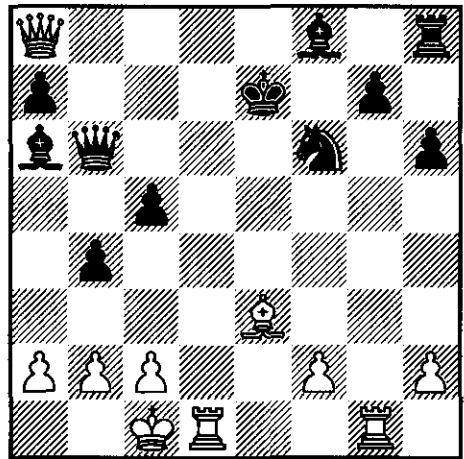
14. ♗xf7+!?

14. ♗c4 ♗xc4 15. ♖xc4 ♖b5 16. ♖xb5 cxb5 17. ♖g3 g6 18. h3 a5 19. ♗b1 ♗c8⌘ Charochkina – Girya, Dagomys 2009.

14...♗xf7 15. ♖b3+ ♗e7 16. ♖ed4 (16. ♖g3!?) 16...exd4 17. ♖xd4 ♗c8 18. ♖e6+ ♗d8 19. e5



c5 20. ♖c6+, Li Chao – Ponkratov, Moscow 2009, 20...♗xc6 21. ♖xc6 ♖b6 22. ♖a8+ ♗e7 23. exf6+ ♖xf6.



No doubt, White has a good compensation for his minute material deficit, but still I think that Black should manage to neutralize gradually his opponent's initiative and obtain an advantage.

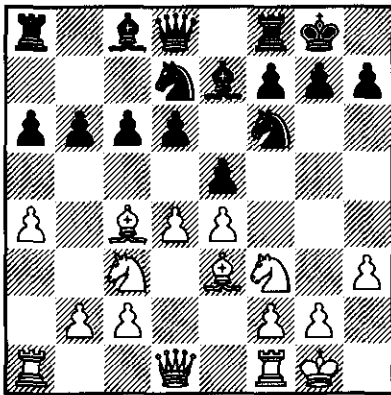
Chapter 4

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♘bd7

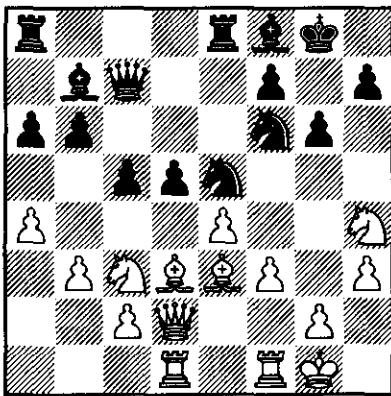
Complete Games

25 Kuzuev – Svetushkin
Moscow 1996

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5
4.♗f3 ♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0–0
0–0 7.h3 c6 8.a4 b6 9.♙e3
a6



10.♚e2 ♙b7 11.♙d3 ♜e8
12.♞ad1 ♞c7 13.♘h4 exd4 14.
♙xd4 c5 15.♙e3 ♙f8 16.f3 ♘e5
17.b3 ♙g6 18.♞d2 d5



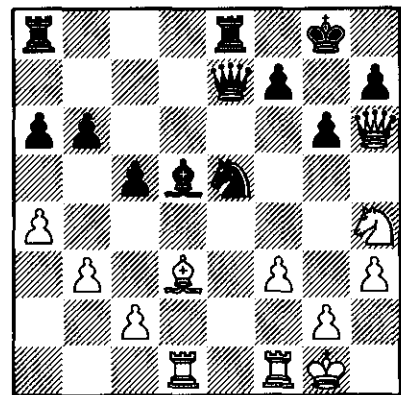
White's knight on h4 is isolat-

ed from the actions and his bishop on e3 is hanging in some lines.

19.♙g5

It was preferable for him to play 19.exd5, although after 19... ♘xd5 20.♘xd5 ♙xd5 21.♙xa6 ♙xb3 22.cxb3 ♞xa6, Black would have an edge anyway.

19...♙e7 20.exd5 ♘xd5 21. ♘xd5 ♙xd5 22.♙xe7 ♞xe7 23. ♞h6?!



This move is bit “emotional”, since White cannot do anything dangerous on the kingside. Now, Black can compromise his opponent's pawn-structure.

23...c4! 24.bxc4

In case of 24.♙e4 ♙xe4 25.fxe4 ♞ad8, Black is again better.

24...♙xc4 25.f4 ♘xd3 26. cxd3 ♙b3 27.♞a1 ♞ad8 28.♞f3

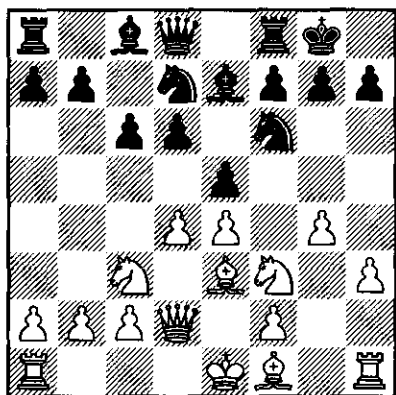
♠d4 29.♠af1 ♚f6 30.g3 ♜d5

White will suffer unavoidable material losses.

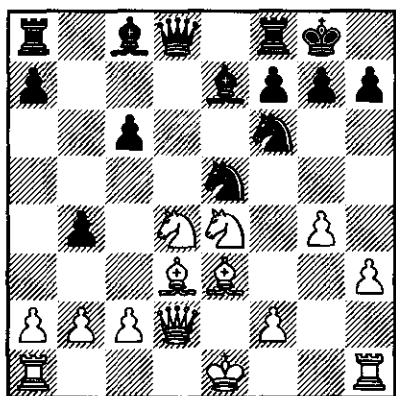
31.♠3f2 ♠xd3 32.♚h2 ♠ee3 33.♠g1 ♚c3 34.♚g5 ♠d2 35.♠gf1 ♜c4. White resigned.

26 Solak – Ivanisevic
Yugoslavia 1994

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.h3 ♜e7 6.♜e3 0-0 7.♚d2 c6 8.g4



8...b5 9.♜d3 b4 10.♘e2 d5 11.♘g3 dxe4 12.♘xe4 exd4 13.♘xd4 ♘e5



14.♘xf6+?!

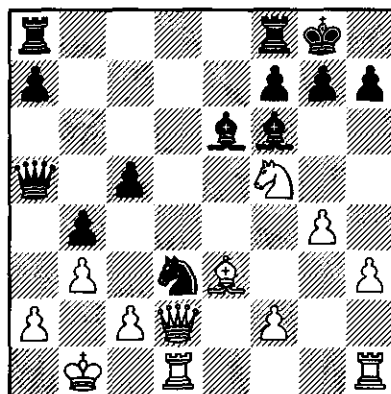
White's main problem here is that his king is in the centre. It is evident that castling short is risky and after the exchange on f6 castling long will not be safe either.

He had to continue with **14.g5 ♘xd3+ 15.cxd3 ♘xe4 (15...♘d5 16.♘xc6) 16.dxe4 ♚c7 17.♚c2** with mutual chances.

14...♜xf6 15.0-0-0?

Now, Black's attack is running effortlessly.

15...c5 16.♘f5 ♚a5 17.♚b1 ♜e6 18.b3 ♘xd3



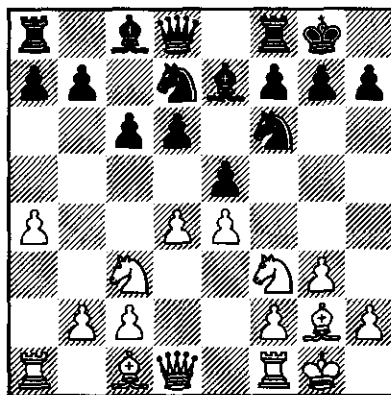
19.cxd3

White probably decided not to suffer for too long. He could have offered more tenacious resistance with **19.♚xd3 c4 20.bxc4 ♠ac8.**

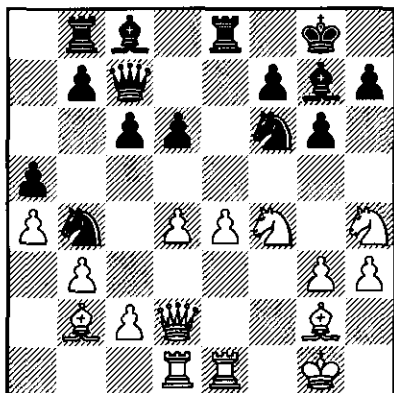
19...♜xb3! 20.♠c1 ♜c3 21.♚e2 ♜e6 22.♜d2(?) ♚xa2#

27 Sveshnikov – C.Ionescu
Sochi 1986

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘bd7 5.g3 ♜e7 6.♜g2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.a4



8...a5 9. ♖e1 ♖e8 10. b3 ♗c7
 11. ♗b2 ♗f8 12. ♗d2 ♗b8 13. h3
 ♗a6 14. ♗h4 ♗b4 15. ♗e2 g6
 16. ♖ad1 ♖b8 17. f4 exf4 18.
 ♗xf4 ♗g7



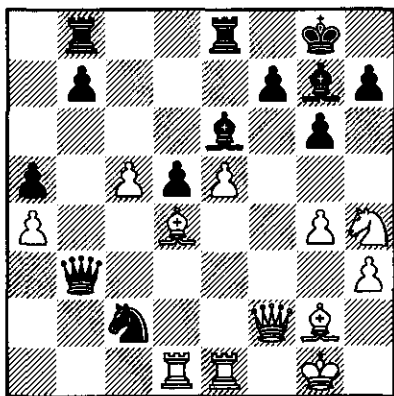
19. c3 ♗a6 20. c4?!

White is playing too straight-forwardly. It was preferable for him to opt for 20. ♗a3, preserving slight pressure.

20... ♗b6 21. c5?!

He is trying to justify his previous actions, but loses a pawn and his position becomes difficult.

21... dxc5 22. e5 ♗d5 23.
 ♗xd5 cxd5 24. ♗f2 ♗xb3 25.
 dxc5 ♗b4 26. ♗d4 ♗e6 27. g4
 ♗c2



28. ♗f5!?

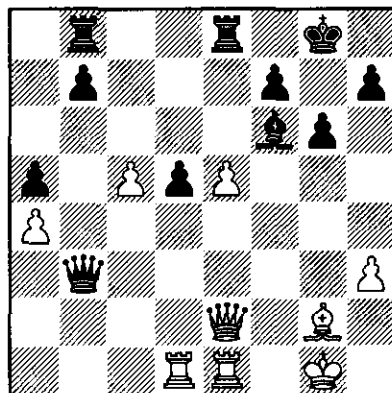
This sacrifice is sheer desperation, because White's knight on

h4 was useless anyway.

28... ♗xf5 29. gxf5 ♗xd4
 30. f6 ♗e2+?!

Black was winning by force with the line: 30... ♖xe5! 31. ♗xd4 (31. ♖xe5 ♗xd1+; 31. fxc7 ♖be8) 31... ♗xf6 32. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 33. ♗xd5 ♗e3+ etc.

31. ♗xe2 ♗xf6



32. ♖xd5?!

White overlooks his chance.

After 32. ♗f2! ♗xe5 33. ♗xd5 ♗g3+ 34. ♗xg3 ♗xg3, Black would have great problems realizing his extra pawn in an endgame with bishops of opposite colours.

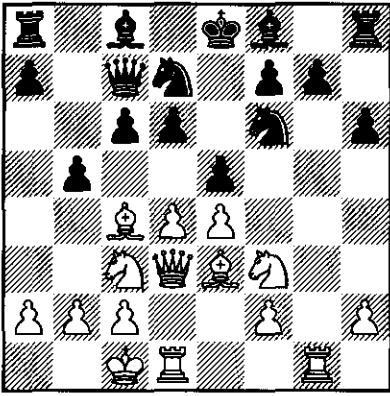
32... ♗xa4 33. ♗f3 ♖xe5 34.
 ♖dxe5 ♗xe5 35. ♖e4 ♗a1+ 36.
 ♗f1 ♖d8 37. ♗g2 ♖d2+ 38. ♗e2
 ♗d4 39. h4 ♗xc5 40. ♗f4 ♗g1+
 41. ♗h3 ♗h1+. White resigned.

28 Shirov – Azmaiparashvili Plovdiv 2003

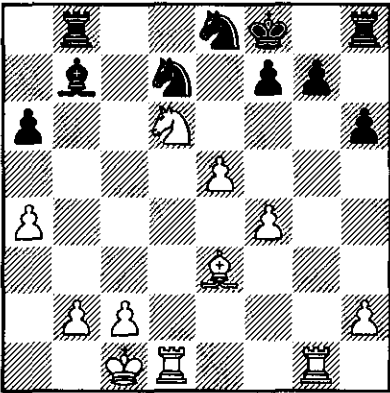
1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 e5
 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. g4 ♗xg4 6. ♖g1 ♗
 ♗gf6 7. ♗c4 h6 8. ♗e3 c6 9. ♗d3
 ♗c7 10. 0-0-0 b5

(diagram)

11. ♗xb5 cxb5 12. dxe5 dxe5



13. ♖xb5 ♔a5 14. ♔c4 ♖b8 15. a4 ♔b4 16. ♖xe5 ♔xc4 17. ♖xc4 a6 18. ♖bd6+ ♕xd6 19. ♖xd6+ ♔f8 20. f4 ♕b7 21. e5 ♖e8



22. ♖xe8

We have already mentioned in the theoretical part of this book that the best move for White is 22. ♕a7! with an advantage for him.

22... ♔xe8 23. ♖xg7 ♕c8?!

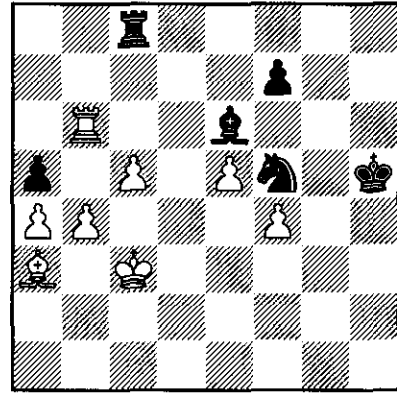
Black had to choose here 23... ♔e7! 24. ♕f2 ♕c6 25. ♖d6 ♖hc8 with mutual chances.

24. ♖d6 ♔f8 25. ♖g1?!

White overlooks a beautiful tactical possibility: 25. e6! ♔xg7 26. exd7 ♖d8 27. dxc8 ♔ ♖bxc8 28. ♖xa6± – and as a result of this Black gradually stabilizes his po-

sition seizing the initiative.

25... ♖g8 26. ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 27. ♖xh6 ♖f8 28. ♖d6 ♖a8 29. c4 ♕e6 30. b3 ♔g7 31. ♔b2 ♔g6 32. h4 ♔h5 33. ♔c3 ♖g6 34. b4 ♖xh4 35. ♕c1 ♖c8 36. c5 a5 37. ♖b6 ♖f5 38. ♕a3



38... ♖e3?

Here, he could have obtained a clear advantage after 38... axb4+! 39. ♔xb4 ♖e3 40. a5 ♖c2+.

39. bxa5 ♖d5+ 40. ♔d3 ♖xb6 41. axb6 ♕d5 42. a5 ♖a8 43. ♔d4 ♕c6 44. ♕b4 ♔g6 45. e6 f6

Black had another easy road to equality – 45... ♔f6 46. exf7 ♔xf7 47. ♔e5 ♖d8=

46. f5+

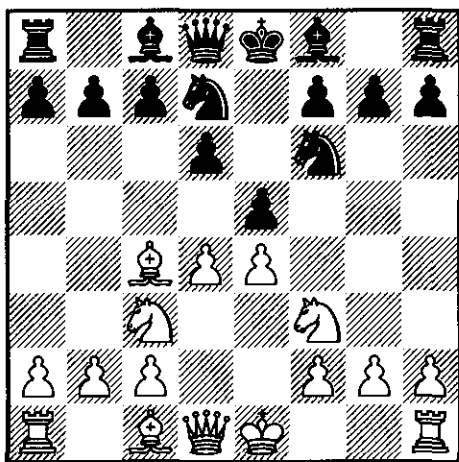
Maybe his defensive task would have been more difficult after 46. ♔c4, but even then Black should be able to make a draw, for example: 46... ♔f5 47. e7 ♔e6 48. a6 ♔xe7 49. b7 ♖b8 50. ♔c3 ♔d7 51. a7 ♔c7 52. axb8= ♔+ ♔xb8=

46... ♔xf5 47. e7 ♔e6 48. a6 ♔xe7 49. b7 ♖d8+ 50. ♔c4 ♔d7 51. ♕c3 ♖f8 52. ♕xf6. Draw

Chapter 5

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♘bd7 5.♗c4

Quick Repertoire

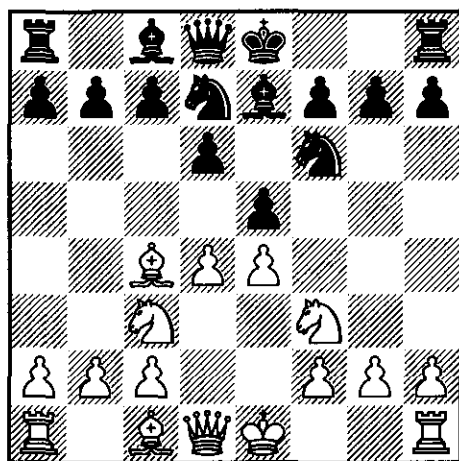


very accurately and precisely in order not to fall into different possible traps. Therefore, our survey will be quite concrete. We encounter a relatively rare case for the Philidor Defence in which it would not be sufficient to apply only common sense and you should learn some sharp and forced variations.

5...♗e7

This is no doubt not only the most popular move for White, but also the best. He continues with his development and brings his bishop to an active position, from where it attacks the most vulnerable spot in his opponent's camp – the f7-square. Black lags a bit in development at the moment and in addition his knight on d7 has covered the way forward of the bishop on c8. There arises the question whether White can exploit the favourable circumstances and settle the issue in his favour right now?

In chapter five we will see several scripts for a potential blitzkrieg – i.e. sacrifices on f7 in different versions. Black must play



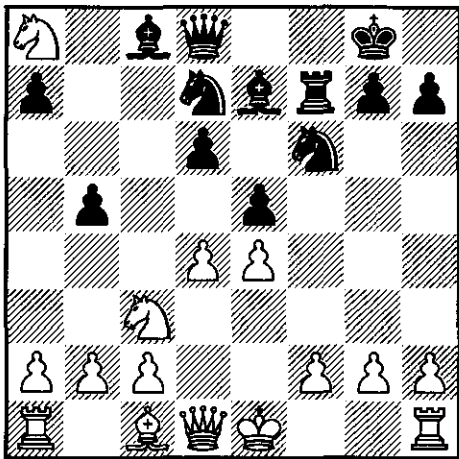
B) 6.♗g5

C) 6.dxe5

The direct attack with 6. ♗xf7+?! ♔xf7 7.♗g5+, would not be successful, because of the line: 7...♔g8! 8.♗e6 ♕e8 9.♗xc7 ♕g6! (Black should not try to hold on to

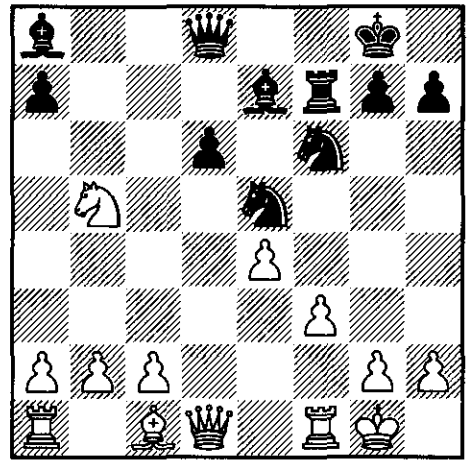
material and he starts a counter attack.) 10. ♖xa8? (It is better for him to continue with 10. 0-0 ♜b8 11. f4 ♜xe4 – Black has the advantage, but the position remains very sharp.) 10... ♝xg2 11. ♞f1 exd4! (He frees the e5-square for his knight in this fashion.) 12. ♝xd4 ♜e5. Black has seized the initiative and you can get acquainted with the details in the part “Step by Step”.

B) 6. ♜g5 0-0 7. ♙xf7+ ♞xf7 8. ♜e6 ♜e8 9. ♜xc7 ♜d8 10. ♜xa8 b5!



His task is not only to capture the knight on a8, but to strive to open as many diagonals and files as possible in order to enable his light pieces to be maximally active. On the contrary, White will try to obtain a static semi-closed position. The move b7-b5, in comparison to b7-b6?!, has the advantage that it complicates the situation even more.

11. dxe5 ♜xe5 12. 0-0 ♙b7 13. ♜xb5 ♙xa8 14. f3

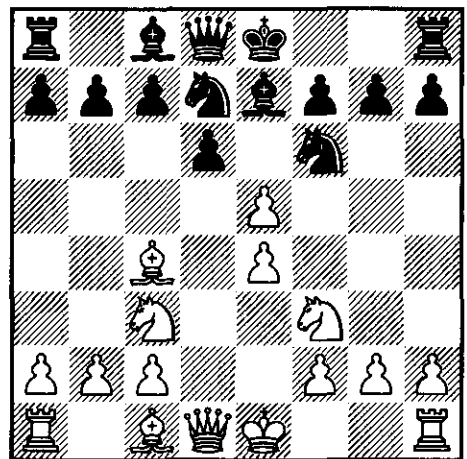


14...d5!

This move is tremendously useful for Black, since it prolongs the diagonal for his light-squared bishop and frees the way to the c5-square for his other bishop, while the knight on f6 gains access to new outposts in the centre of the board.

15. exd5 ♙c5+ 16. ♜d4?!, Huber – Schmidt-Schaeffer, Germany 1997. White has a material advantage in a way – a rook and three (temporarily even four) pawns for a bishop and a knight, but the activity of Black's pieces at least balances the prospects.

C) 6. dxe5



3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7

6...dxe5

It is also possible for Black to play 6...♘xe5, reducing the tension immediately and avoiding the sharp variation 6.dxe5 dxe5 7.♕xf7+. He will need after that to defend the slightly inferior endgame following 7.♘xe5 dxe5 8.♚xd8+ ♕xd8 9.f3.

7.0-0

In case of 7.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 8.♘g5+, Black plays 8...♔g6!, because the open d-file forces White to consider seriously Black's possible counterplay. There may follow: 9.f4 exf4 10.♘e6 ♚g8 11.♘xf4+ (White can win the enemy queen for three pieces – 11.♘d5 ♕d6 12.♘exc7 ♕xc7 13.♘e7+ ♔f7 14. ♘xg8 ♚xg8 15.♚d3, Mione – Scalcione, Corsico 2007, but after 15...♘c5 16.♚c4+ ♘e6 17.0-0 g5, Black's prospects are preferable.) 11...♔f7 12.0-0 ♚d8 13.♘d3, Segger – Miltner, Gladenbach 1997, 13...♘c5! and he regains his piece beginning an offensive.

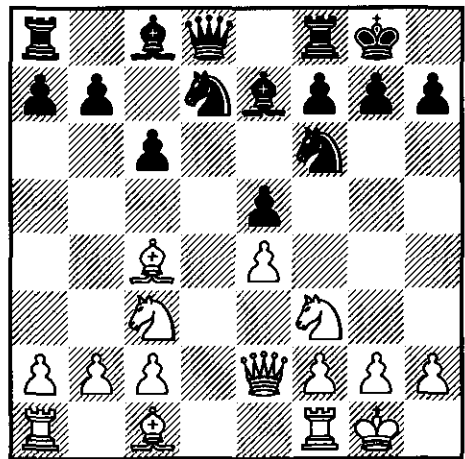
7...0-0 8.♚e2

The bishop-sortie – 8.♕g5 is not dangerous for Black. On the contrary, it becomes even simpler for him to prepare the favourable trade of the dark-squared bishops. He only needs to remove his knight from the f6-square at an opportune moment – for example to h5.

8...c6

(diagram)

9.a4

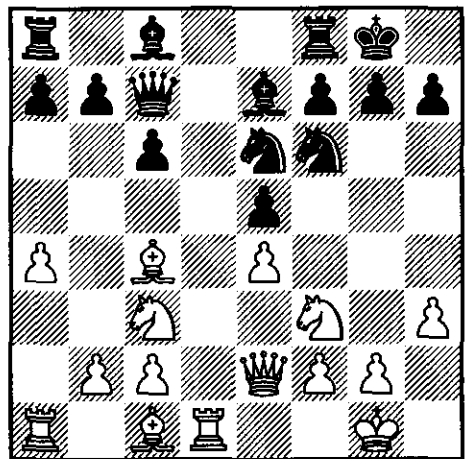


White prevents the move b7-b5, after which Black can organize active actions on the queenside.

9...♚c7 10.h3

White's choice of active plans is not so great in this position. For example, he would not achieve much with 10.♘h4 ♘c5 11.♘f5 ♕xf5 12.exf5 ♚fd8, or 10.a5 ♕b4 11.♘g5 b5!? 12.axb6 ♘xb6

10...♘c5 11.♚d1 ♘e6

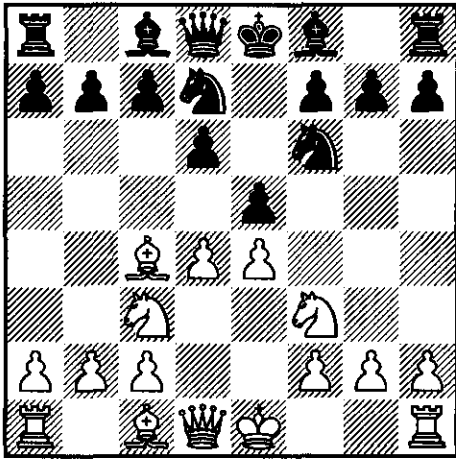


Black has a very comfortable position. For example, his knight on e6 can soon go to d4, or f4. It would be difficult for White to activate his knight on c3, since it is restricted by Black's pawn on c6.

Chapter 5

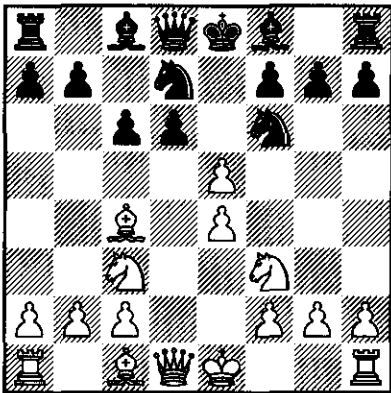
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
 ♘bd7 5.♙c4

Step by Step



5...♙e7

It is well known that after 5...c6? 6.dxe5!, Black loses at least a pawn.



For example:

6...♗xe4 7.♗xe4 d5 8.♙xd5
 ♗a5+ 9.♗c3 cxd5 10.♗xd5+- Hall
 – Hookham, Adelaide 1887;

6...dxe5 7.♗g5 ♙b4 8.♗xf7 ♗a5
 9.♙d2 (It is also good for White
 to play 9.♗xh8 ♙xc3+ 10.♙f1.)

9...♗f8 10.a3 ♙xc3 11.♙xc3 ♗c7
 12.♗d6+ ♙d8 13.♗d2 – He has an
 extra pawn and an overwhelming
 advantage, Devcic – Sevo, Zagreb
 1998;

6...♗xe5 7.♗xe5 dxe5 8.♙xf7+
 (This is a standard combination
 on the theme of deflection.) 8...
 ♙e7 9.♗xd8+ ♙xd8 10.f3 ♙c5 11.
 ♗a4 ♙d6 12.♙e3+ Naiditsch –
 Klyuner, Germany 2001.

It looks like the tentative
 move 5...h6 cannot be refuted by
 force, for example: 6.dxe5 dxe5
 7.♙xf7+?! ♙xf7 8.♗xe5+ ♙g8 9.
 ♗g6 ♗h7 10.0–0 ♗e8 11.♗xf8
 ♗xf8 12.♙f4 g5 13.♙g3 ♙e6 14.♗d4
 ♗h5+ Zhizmer – Semenova, Kiev
 1999. Still, on move six, White
 can simply castle, transposing to
 the main lines (We analyze them
 in Chapters 6-7.) and there the
 move h7-h6 often turns out to be
 unnecessary and even harmful for
 Black.

A) 6.♙xf7+

B) 6.♗g5

C) 6.dxe5

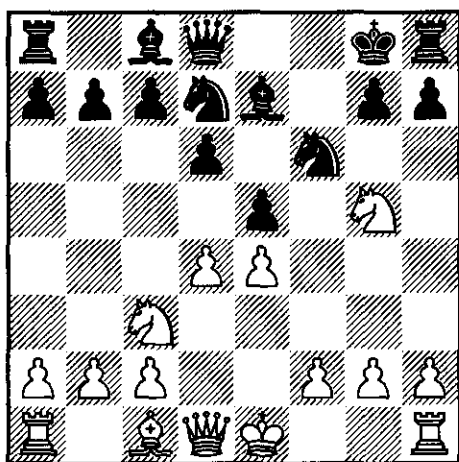
A) We will begin our analyses

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. ♙xf7+ ♔xf7 7. ♗g5+ ♔g8

with the direct attack:

6. ♙xf7+?! ♔xf7 7. ♗g5+ ♔g8!

All the attempts to show valour should be thoroughly tested by a computer nowadays. For example, in case of 7... ♔g6? 8.h4! h5 9.f4 exf4 10. ♗e2, Black's king is a great trouble, Kiss – Varga, Zalakaros 1995.



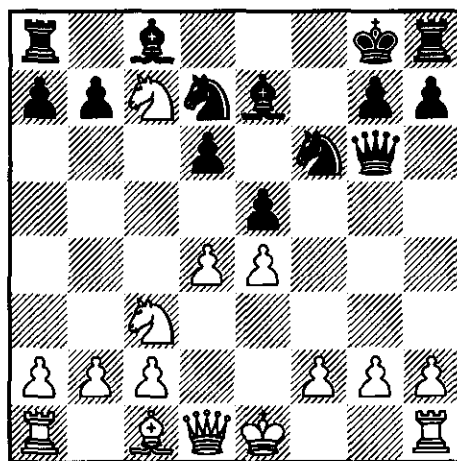
8. ♗e6

This is the fine point behind White's idea. Black's knight on d7 has left the e6-square without sufficient protection and his queen is stuck on the last rank. All this enables White's knight to maneuver all over the board, winning tempi in the process, and to capture the rook on a8. Its way back however, is cut off and at the end Black will have two light pieces for a rook and several pawns. The material ratio will be approximately even, but in the middle game, as a rule, two pieces are superior to a rook with pawns.

8... ♙e8 9. ♗xc7 ♙g6!

It is much more sensible for

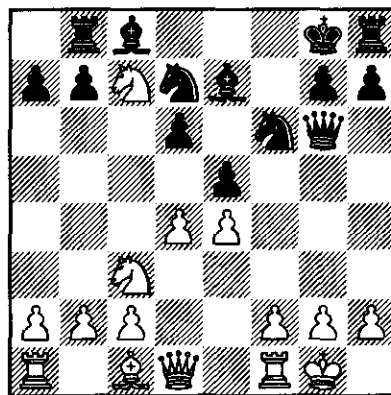
Black to rely on a counter attack than to go back with his queen – 9... ♙d8?!, with the idea not to let the knight on a8 run away and to capture it as quickly as possible.



10. ♗xa8?

White's greediness will not end up well either.

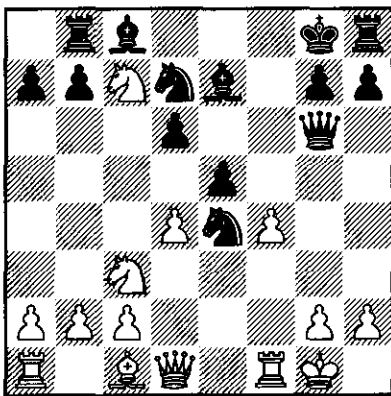
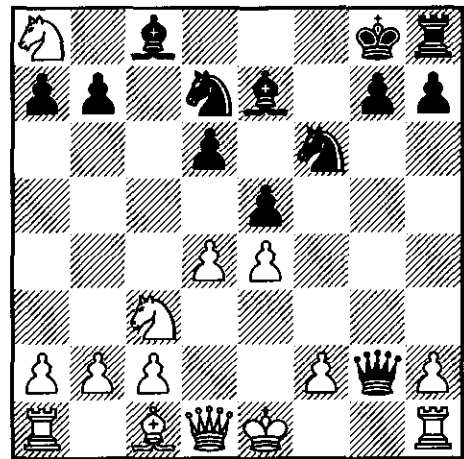
It is stronger for him to choose 10.0–0, with the idea to exploit the lead in development to create threats against his opponent's king. Black's material advantage is not great – he has a piece for two pawns, but his king is in the centre and both his rooks are stuck at the corners of the board. There may follow: 10... ♗b8



11.f4 (This move at least

seems to be the most aggressive for White. Black should not be afraid of half-measures: 11. ♖e2 ♘b6 12. dxe5 dxe5 13. ♕e3, Born – Izquierdo, Villa Martelli 2006, 13... ♗h3 14. f3 ♖c8; 11. dxe5 dxe5 12. f4 ♗c5+ 13. ♔h1, Villanueva – Llanos, Buenos Aires 1999, 13... ♗h5 14. ♗d3 h6; 11. ♗d3 ♘b6 12. f4, Torres – Lelchuk, Germany 1998, 12... exd4 13. ♗xd4 ♗h3 14. ♖f2 ♗d7 15. a4 ♗f7 16. a5 ♗c4) 11... ♘xe4. He must capture this pawn.

14. ♖xf8+! ♔xf8 15. ♗f3+ ♘df6 16. dxe5±) 13. f5 ♗f7 14. ♘e6 ♗b6
10... ♗xg2



Both White's knights may occupy the d5-outpost on the next move. It is essential to understand and remember where Black must retreat with his bishop on e7 in the different cases:

1) 12. ♘7d5 ♗f8 (12... ♗d8? 13. ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14. dxe5 dxe5 15. fxe5) 13. fxe5 ♘xc3 14. ♗f3 h6 15. ♗xc3 dxe5 16. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 17. ♗a3+ ♔f7 18. ♗f3+ ♘f6 19. dxe5 ♗h5;

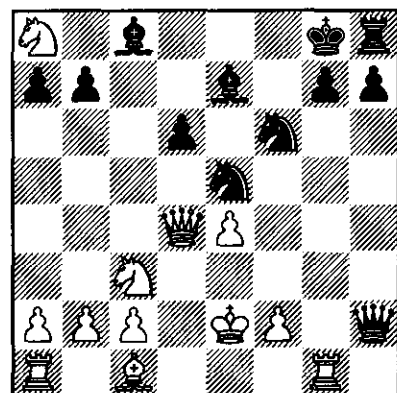
2) 12. ♘3d5, Nigl – Konetzke, Germany 1997, 12... ♗d8! (Here, the wrong retreat of the bishop may lead to terrible consequences for Black: 12... ♗f8? 13. fxe5 dxe5

Black's queen is the first to enter the real conflict and later his light pieces will come to offer a helping hand. His offensive develops according to the following scheme: at first he ensures the e5-square for his knight (by playing e5xd4), then the knight is centralized opening the diagonal for his bishop on c8.

The events are developing tremendously fast, for example:

11. ♖f1

White's alternative here is – 11. ♔e2 exd4 12. ♖g1 (but not 12. ♗xd4 ♘e5--+) 12... ♗xh2 13. ♗xd4 ♘e5

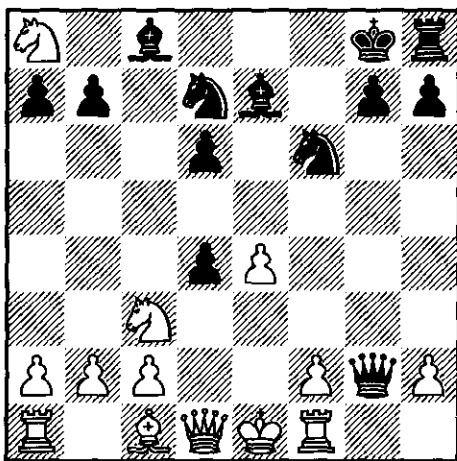


3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 7. ♘g5+ ♚g8

1) 14. ♖g3 ♘h5 15. ♖f3 (This move should warn Black that he may also have problems with his king. He should not be in a hurry to regain the sacrificed exchange, because that would be a trade of pieces of different value at the moment. Black's knight on e5 is tremendously powerful! Notice that White would not achieve anything with 15. ♙d5+ ♚f8.) 15...h6 16. ♘d5 ♙g4 17. ♘xe7 ♚h7-+ Bauer.

2) 14. ♙e3, Von Reth – Kwosek, Neuwied 1993, 14...♙e6 15. ♖af1 ♘f3! (Naturally, the computer "sees" this move in a flash, but a human player should be able to find it as well. It is evident that the position is ripe for a tactical solution, because the concentration of Black's forces around the enemy king is overwhelming.) 16. ♚xf3 (16. ♙xa7 ♘xg1-+) 16... ♙h5+ 17. ♚f4 ♙h4+ 18. ♚f3 ♙g4+ 19. ♚f4 g5#

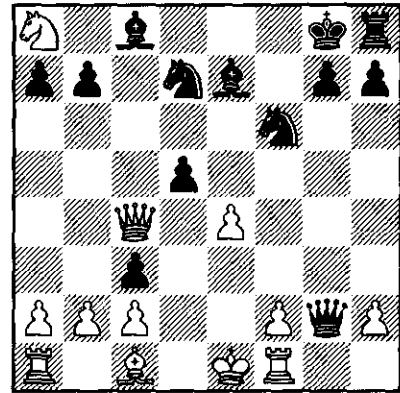
11...exd4!



This is a familiar motif. Black must free the e5-square for his knight.

12. ♙xd4

White's attempt to begin a counter attack with 12. ♙e2 will only enable Black to demonstrate his tactical ingenuity: 12...dxc3 13. ♙c4+ d5

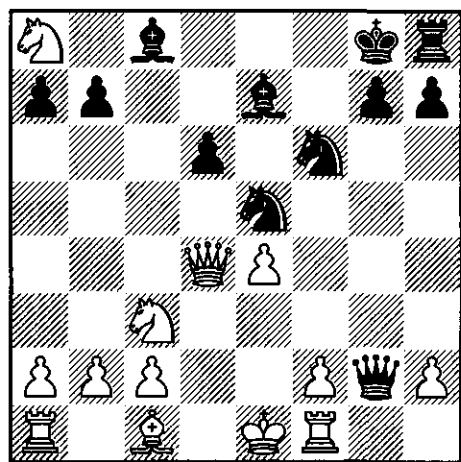


1) After 14. exd5, the best reaction for Black is the fearless move 14...♚f7! and it turns out that the discovered check is harmless for him, for example: 15. d6+ ♘d5 16. ♙f4 (In case of 16. dxe7 ♘e5, Black's cavalry, with the support of his queen, dominates over the board and if necessary his rook and bishop may join in the actions in a flash.) 16...b5 17. ♙xb5 cxb2 18. ♖d1 ♙f6 19. ♘c7 ♙e4+ and White resigned, Cawdery – Kobese, Kempton Park 2003.

2) 14. ♙xc8+ ♚f7. About one hundred years ago, Black's play would have inspired admiration, while presently the sacrifice of the two rooks is a standard technical resource. In addition, the computer has pronounced a final verdict – White's position is hopeless. 15. ♙xc3 (This is his most resilient defence, although without much of a hope. It would be a disaster

for him to opt for 15. ♖xh8 ♜xe4+ 16. ♔d1 ♞d4+ 17. ♔e2, Oliveira – Hileyan, France 2004, 17... ♞c4+ 18. ♔e1 cxb2 19. ♙xb2 ♙b4+ 20. c3 ♙xc3+ 21. ♙xc3 ♞xc3+ 22. ♔e2 ♘e5 23. ♞fd1 ♞c4+ 24. ♔e3 ♘fg4+ 25. ♔d2 ♘f3#, or 15. ♞xb7 ♞xe4+ 16. ♙e3 ♞b8 – Black can also play 16... ♘c5! 17. ♞xa7 cxb2 18. ♞b1 d4 – 17. ♞xa7 cxb2 18. ♔d2 ♞b4+ 19. c3 ♘e4+ 20. ♔e2 ♘xc3+ 21. ♔f3 ♞e4+ 22. ♔g3 ♘e2+ 23. ♔h3 ♞f3# I. Rabinovich – Ilyin-Zhenevsky, Moscow 1922.) 15... ♞xe4+ 16. ♔d1 ♞xa8 17. ♞e3 ♙c5 18. ♞xe4 ♘xe4 19. ♙e3 d4 20. ♙f4 ♘df6 ♣ Dovzik – Sutorikhin, Gyongyos 1994.

12... ♘e5



13. f4?

This is the most consistent move for White, but he should better start thinking about saving the game: 13. f3 ♘fg4! (It is possibly even stronger for Black to play 13... ♙h3.) 14. ♞d5+ ♘f7 15. ♞c4 ♙h4+ 16. ♔d1 ♙e6 17. ♞e2 ♘f2+ 18. ♞xf2 ♙xf2 ♣. White has returned the extra exchange and now he will probably have to give

back another one (19. ♙f4 ♞g1+ 20. ♔d2 ♞xa1 21. ♞xf2), obtaining some chances for a draw.

13... ♘fg4 14. ♞d5+

14. ♘e2 ♙h4+ 15. ♘g3 ♘xh2 16. ♞d5+ ♘f7 –+

14... ♘f7 15. ♞c4

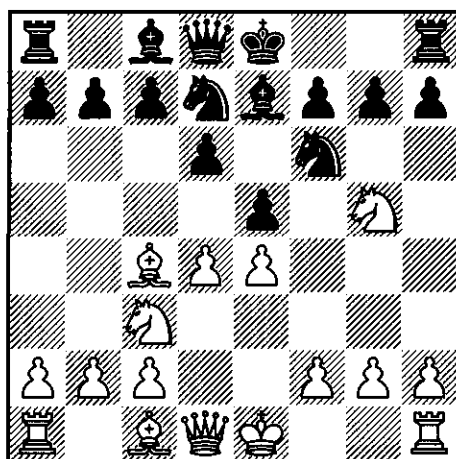
15. ♞b5 ♙h4+ 16. ♔d1 ♙d7 17. ♞e2 ♘f2+ 18. ♞xf2 ♙xf2 –+ – With a pawn on f3, White could have still defended, while now Black brings his bishop into the actions via the g4-square with a decisive affect.

15... ♙h4+ 16. ♔d1 ♙d7!

The move 16... ♙e6 is also good and it was played in several games, but the quiet move with the same bishop is even stronger. Black has so many threats that White is incapable of protecting his king.

17. ♞e2 (17. h3 ♘h2 18. ♞e2 ♞xf1+ 19. ♞xf1 ♘xf1 –+) 17... ♘f2+ 18. ♞xf2 (18. ♔d2 ♙g4 –+) 18... ♙xf2 19. f5 ♞g1 20. ♔d2 ♘e5 –+

B) 6. ♘g5



6... 0–0 7. ♙xf7+

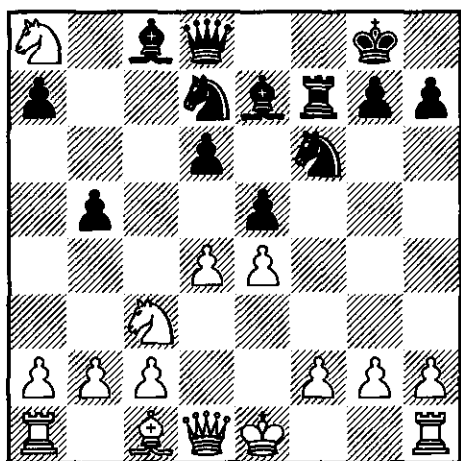
White would not achieve much

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. ♗g5 0-0 7. ♕xf7+ ♜xf7 8. ♗e6

if he opens in advance the f-file: 7.f4 c6 (ensuring a leeway for the queen) 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.0-0 h6 10.♗xf7 (10.♗f3 ♖c7) 10... ♜xf7 11.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 12.fxe5 ♗xe5 and he fails to regain his piece, because after 13.♖h5+, Bojovic – S.Nikolic, Vrnjacka Banja 2006, 13...♔g8! 14.♖xe5 ♕d6, White's queen is trapped in the very centre of the board: 15.♖d4 ♕xh2+.

The move 7.♕e3 is harmless for Black in view of 7...♗b6 8.♕e2 exd4 9.♖xd4 ♗g4 and White must part with one of his bishops.

7...♜xf7 8.♗e6 ♖e8 9.♗xc7 ♖d8 10.♗xa8 b5!



In the part "Quick Repertoire", I have already explained to you the advantages of this move in comparison to b7-b6?!

11.dxe5

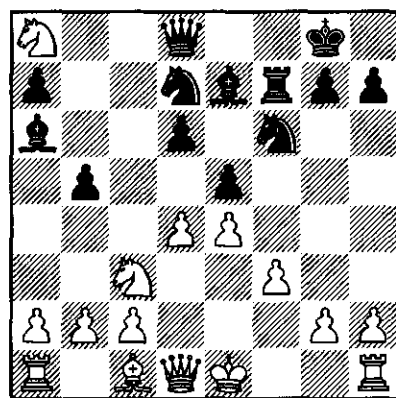
In case of 11.a3 ♕b7 12.d5, Jackson – Rellstab, London 1979, 12...♖xa8 13.0-0 ♗b6, Black succeeds in creating counterplay on the queenside.

It is very bad for White to

capture the pawn immediately: 11.♗xb5? ♖a5+ 12.♗c3 ♗xe4 13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♕b7 15.♖g4 ♗f6 16.♖e6 ♕xa8 M.Fominykh, Smolensk 2001 – **game 29**.

He can try to take the pawn in another fashion – 11.0-0 ♕b7 12.♗xb5 ♕xa8 13.f3, Stojanas – Lebedev, Frydek-Mistek 2005 (13.d5 ♗xe4 14.♗xa7 ♖c7), but then Black opens the centre and seizes the initiative: 13...♖b6 14.a4 a6 15.♗a3 (15.♗c3 exd4 16.a5 ♖a7 17.♗a4 d5) 15...d5 16.exd5 ♕xd5=

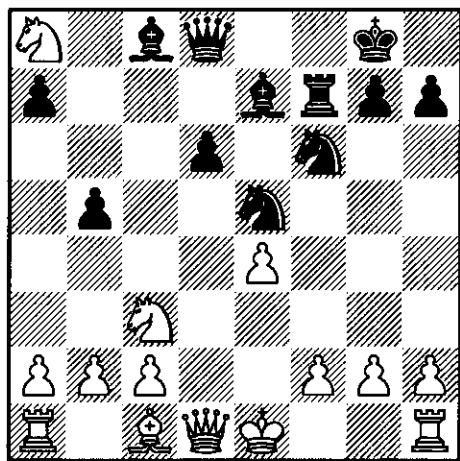
White can play a very insidious move here – 11.f3, after which Black must be tremendously careful: 11...♕a6! (It is worse for him to opt for 11...♕b7?!, because of 12.♗xb5 ♕xa8 13.d5! and White maintains a stable advantage. There may follow 13...♖b6 14.♖e2 a6 15.♗a3 ♗xd5!? 16.exd5 ♕h4+ 17.g3 ♕xd5 18.♜f1 ♕d8 19.c4 ♕c6 20.♗c2± Ericson – Schoenmann, corr. 1964 – **game 30**.)



12.dxe5 (Naturally, this exchange is a concession to Black, but what is White supposed to do

instead? With a bishop on a6, he cannot capture the b5-pawn just like this. Maybe he can occupy that square with his knight after 12.a4 b4 13.♞b5, but it would not be stable there and Black preserves sufficient resources to organize counterplay. For example: 13...♞xa8 14.♞c7 ♞c6 15.♞xa6 ♞xa6=, or 14.d5 ♞b8 15.♞e3 ♞c5♯, and White must consider the possible strikes both on a4 as well as on e4.) 12...♞xe5 13.♞d5 (13.f4 ♞xa8! 14.fxe5 ♞xe4♯; his king is stranded in the centre and it will soon come under attack.) 13...♞xd5 14.♞xd5 ♞h4+ 15.♞d1 ♞b7 16.♞xb5 ♞c6 17.♞b3 d5! (White's knight on a8 is running nowhere, while his king may find a safe haven on the queenside.) 18.♞e3 dxe4+ 19.♞c1 ♞xa8♯ Canneva – Leignel, France 2003.

11...♞xe5



12.0–0

He has tried here some other moves too, but without any success.

For example: 12.f4?! ♞g4 13.

♞d2 ♞c4 14.♞d3 ♞xa8♯ Herzog – Bezold, Austria 2000.

12.♞f4 ♞d7! 13.♞d4 ♞xa8 14.♞g3 ♞c6 15.f3 ♞fd7♯ Irure – Martin Alvarez, Azkoitia 2004.

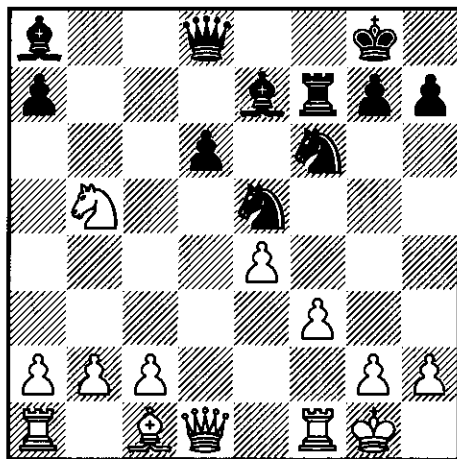
12.♞d5 ♞xd5 13.♞xd5 ♞d7 14.0–0 ♞b7 15.♞d4 ♞xa8 – Black has a very comfortable game and White's risky move 16.f4?! can be countered with 16...♞d8♯ Goodwin – McEwan, Great Britain 1990.

12.♞xb5 ♞a5+ 13.♞c3 ♞xe4 14.♞d5 ♞c5∞ D.Fricke – Velker, corr. 1990.

12...♞b7 13.♞xb5

White lags behind with the development of his queenside, so he should better avoid playing too enterprisingly: 13.f4 ♞ed7 14.♞xb5 (14.e5 dxe5 15.fxe5, Drozdovskij – Volianiuk, Ukraine 1998, 15...♞c5+ 16.♞h1 ♞xa8 17.♞e2 ♞e7–+) 14...♞xa8 15.♞e3 ♞b8! 16.c4 a6 17.♞c3 ♞xe4♯ Pilnik – Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1941 – game 31.

13...♞xa8 14.f3



14...d5!

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. dxe5 ♗xe5

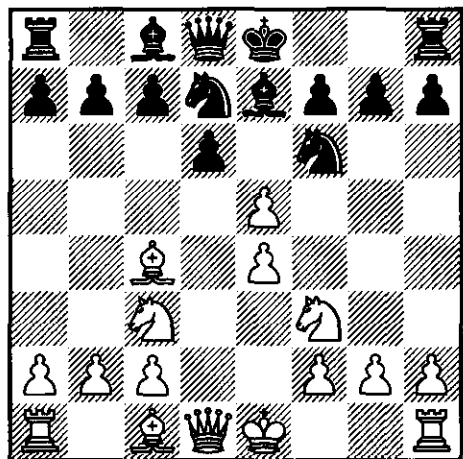
Black solves outright several critical problems with this move. He prolongs the diagonal of his light-squared bishop, opens the c5-square for his other bishop and his knight on f6 will have access to new promising squares in the centre of the board.

15. exd5 ♕c5+ 16. ♗d4?!, Huber – Schmidt-Schaeffer, Germany 1997.

The activity of his pieces at least compensates his minimal material deficit. After the first imprecise move, White surrenders the initiative to his opponent. He had to continue with 16. ♖h1 ♗xd5 17. ♗c3 ♕b6±

16... ♕xd5 17. ♕e3 ♗c4 18. ♕f2 ♗xb2±

C) 6. dxe5



C1) 6... ♗xe5

C2) 6... dxe5

C1) 6... ♗xe5

Black reduces the tension in the centre with this move and avoids the sharp variation 6. dxe5

dxe5 7. ♕xf7+. Indeed, he will have to defend a slightly inferior end-game after that.

7. ♗xe5

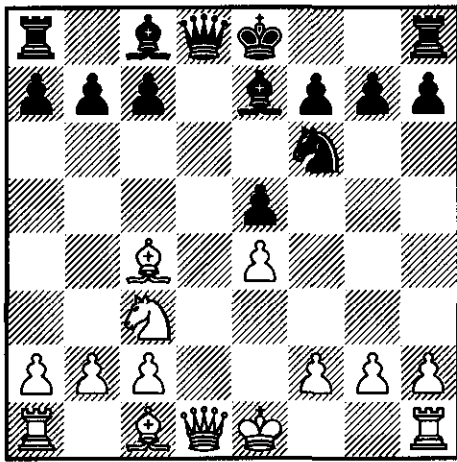
The retreat of the bishop 7. ♕e2, enables Black to complete effortlessly his development and to regroup his forces: 7... 0–0 8. ♗d4 (About 8.0–0 – see 6.0–0 0–0 7. dxe5 ♗xe5 8. ♕e2; 8. ♕f4 ♗ed7 9.0–0 ♗c5 – Black attacks the e4-pawn and forces his opponent's pieces to occupy defensive positions – 10. ♗d2 ♖e8 11. ♖e1 ♕f8 12. ♕f3 h6 13. h3 a5± Prie – Paunovic, Elgoibar 2007 – **game 32.**) 8... ♖e8 9. f4 ♗g6 10.0–0 ♕d7 (White has occupied plenty of space, but he lags in development and Black's pressure along the semi-open e-file does not allow him to begin a pawn-offensive on the kingside.) 11. ♖d3 (In case of 11. ♖h1 ♕f8 12. ♕f3 c5!, Black has an important resource, because here after the active move 13. ♗f5, he will inflict a counter strike in the centre with d6-d5, either immediately, or after the preliminary ♕c6 and ♖d7 – 13. ♗de2 ♕c6 14. f5 ♗e5± Stromer – Sandmeier, Germany 1993.) 11... ♕f8 12. a4 c5! 13. ♗f3 (13. ♗f5? ♗xe4±) 13... ♖e7 14. ♖e1 ♕c6 15. ♕f1 ♖ad8±

7... dxe5

(diagram)

8. ♖xd8+

White's chances are not so promising even with queens present on the board, because the pawn-structure is absolutely sym-



metrical and Black has problems neither with any weaknesses, nor with his development: 8.♖e2 c6 9.a4 (The plan with castling long seems rather dubious for White: 9.♔d2 0–0 10.0–0–0 ♖c7 11.♙e3 b5 12.♙d3 ♗a5⚡ Walther – Eisenhauer, Worms 2001.) 9...0–0 10.0–0 a5 11.♞d1 ♗b6 12.♙e3 ♙c5 13.♙xc5 ♗xc5 14.h3 ♗b4 15.♙b3 ♙e6 16.♞d3, draw, Hernandez – Argandona, San Sebastian 2006. It looks like White’s draw offer was quite timely, because after the exchange on b3, only Black can fight for the advantage.

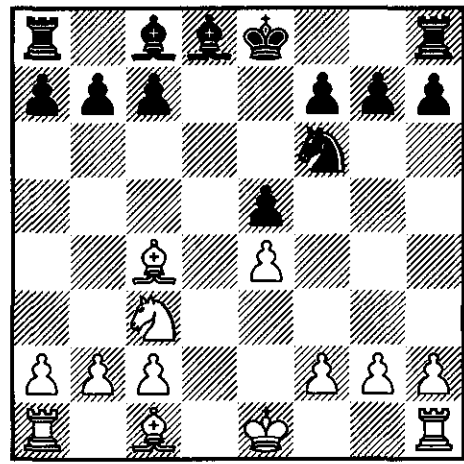
8...♙xd8

White’s light-squared bishop is more actively deployed and he can bring the rest of his pieces into the actions much easier than his opponent. These are all his achievements, however. It is obvious that Black should not have problems maintaining equality.

(diagram)

9.f3

9.♙g5 c6 10.0–0–0 ♙e7 11.f3 ♘d7, draw, Honfi – Benko, Budapest 1956.



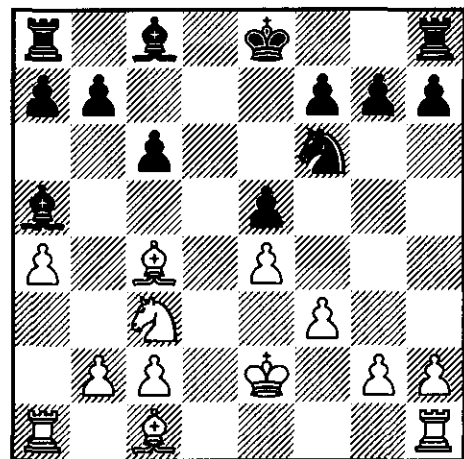
9.♙e3 c6 10.a4 ♘g4 11.♙c5 ♙b6 12.♙xb6 axb6 13.♙e2 ♙e7= Zemtsov – Yudin, Novosibirsk 2007.

9...c6 10.a4 ♙a5

This is a multi-purpose move. Black develops his bishop to an active position and prevents the advance of White’s queenside pawns.

11.♙e2

11.♙d2 ♘d7 12.♘e2 ♙xd2+ 13.♙xd2 a5 14.♞hd1 ♙e7 15.♙e3 ♘c5 16.♘c1 f6= Magyar – Varga, Hungary 2002.



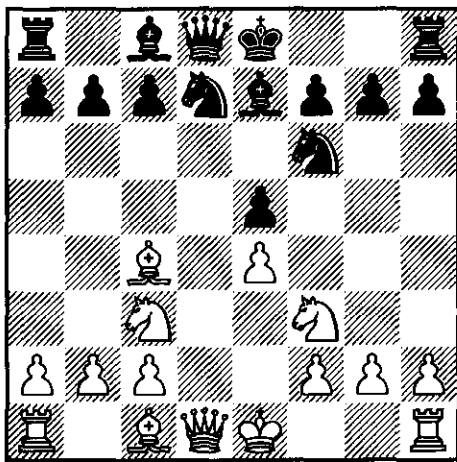
11...♘d7

Black’s knight did not have any promising prospects on f6, since

it was restricted there by White's e4-pawn. At first, it is headed for the f8-square in order to enable the bishop on c8 to be activated.

12. ♙e3 ♘f8 13. ♘a2 ♙e6 14. ♙d3 ♘d7 15. b4 ♙b6 16. a5 ♙xe3 17. ♘xe3 ♘e7 = Pokorna – Hausner, Czech Republic 2000. White has occupied space on the queenside, but it is quite unclear how he can organize an offensive, because he does not have any good outposts for his pieces and Black has no weaknesses.

C2) 6...dxe5



C2a) 7. ♙xf7+

C2b) 7. 0-0

In case of 7. ♘g5 0-0 8. ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 9. ♘e6 ♙e8 10. ♘xc7 ♙d8 11. ♘xa8, the game develops in the same fashion as in the variation with 6. ♘g5, except that, besides 11...b5, Black has the additional interesting possibility – 11... ♙b4!?

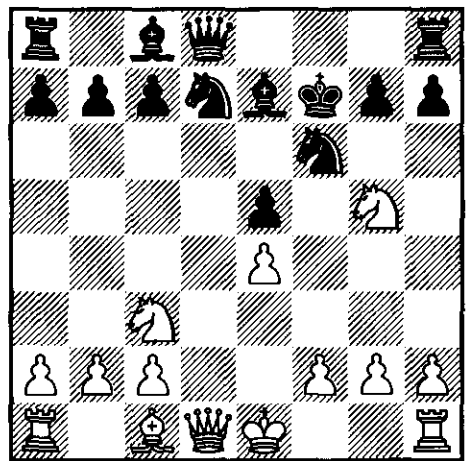
It would be too risky for White to evacuate his king to the queenside, because Black can easily ad-

vance his pawns there and trouble his opponent's monarch. For example:

1) 7. ♙e2 0-0 8. ♙g5 c6 9. 0-0-0 ♙c7 10. h3 b5 11. ♙d3 ♘c5 12. g4 ♙e6 13. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14. g5 ♙e7 15. h4 b4 16. ♘b1 ♙xa2 = Blum – Carl, Schonach 1979. White's pawns have only advanced half-way towards his opponent's king fortress, while Black's pieces are attacking fiercely White's fortifications;

2) 7. ♙g5 0-0 8. ♙d2 c6 9. 0-0-0 ♙c7 10. h4 b5 11. ♙d3 ♘c5 12. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13. ♙e3 ♙e7 14. ♘e2 ♙e6 = Nitelea – Yagiz Yasin, Aviles 2005.

C2a) 7. ♙xf7+ ♘xf7 8. ♘g5+



8...♘g6!

Black has more chances of obtaining an active counterplay thanks to the open d-file, therefore his king can relatively safely roam over the board.

On the contrary, in case of 8... ♘g8 9. ♘e6 ♙e8 10. ♘xc7 ♙g6 11. ♘xa8 ♙xg2 12. ♙f1 ♘c5, White

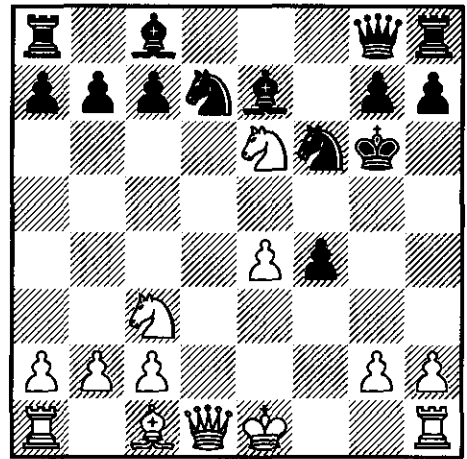
can choose immediately between several attractive possibilities: 13.♖e2, 13.♗e3, 13.f3 and 13.♗c7. There arises a very tense position, in which the outcome of the fight remains completely unclear.

9.f4

The inclusion of the moves 9.h4 h5 is advantageous for Black: 10.f4 exf4 11.♗e6 (White can win his opponent's queen, but he must pay a too dear price for that: 11.♗e2 ♗d6 12.e5 ♗xe5 13.♗xf4+ ♖h6 14.♗f7+ ♗xf7 15.♗e6+ ♖h7 16.♖d3+ g6 17.♗xd8 ♗xd8— Ter Haar – Licher, Leeuwarden 1977. It is not only the fact that in general three light pieces are usually superior to a queen, but in addition Black has an overwhelming lead in development, while White's king is stranded in the centre.) 11...♖g8 12.♗xc7 (12.♗d5 ♗d6 13.♗exc7 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♖e6—) 12...♗c5! (Initiative is much more important than material in positions of this type!) 13.♗xa8 ♗g4 14.♖d4 ♖xa8

White cannot achieve much with 9.♗e6 ♖g8 10.f4 (10.♗xc7 ♖b8 11.♗3d5 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♖d8) 10...h6! (This is stronger than 10...exf4, transposing to variation 9.f4 exf4 10.♗e6 ♖g8 etc.) 11.♗xc7 ♖b8 (Here, it would not be so convincing for Black to choose 11...♗c5?, because of the intermediate check 12.f5+ and his bishop ends up stuck on the c8-square.) 12.♗3d5 ♖f7 13.♗e3 b6 14.0–0 ♖h7

9...exf4 10.♗e6 ♖g8



11.♗xf4+

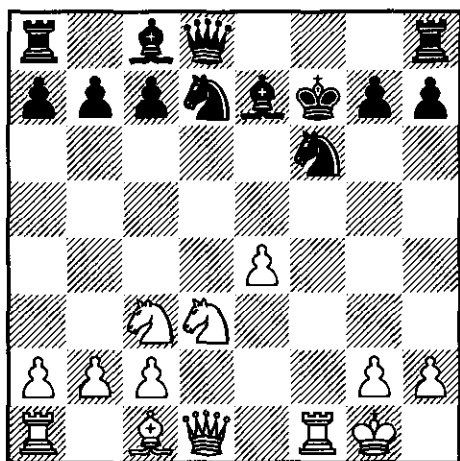
This is probably the correct solution of the problems for White. He gives up the idea to capture the enemy rook and tries to exploit his lead in development and the unsafe situation of his opponent's king. His initiative is powerful indeed, but he has paid a dear price for it, having sacrificed a bishop for a pawn.

He can win Black's queen for three pieces in another way too: 11.♗d5 ♗d6 12.♗exc7 ♗xc7 13.♗e7+ ♖f7 14.♗xg8 ♖xg8 15.♖d3, Mione – Scalcione, Corsico 2007, but after 15...♗c5 16.♖c4+ ♗e6 17.0–0 g5, Black's prospects are preferable. He controls the centre and his pieces enter the actions faster at a moment, in which his king is quite comfortably placed on f7 under the cover of his pawns and cavalry. In this variation, it deserves attention for White to try 15.♖d4 ♗f8 16.♖c4+ ♗e6 with a rather unclear position.

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. dxe5 dxe5

We will analyze too 11. ♗xc7, Andrews – Holley, USA 1978, 11... ♗e5! (You do not count rooks when you are trying to checkmate your opponent's king!) 12. ♗xa8 ♕g4 13. ♖d4 ♗c6 14. ♖a4 (14. ♖f2 ♖c4! ♢) 14... ♕b4 15. 0-0 ♖c4 16. ♕xf4 (16. ♗c7 ♕c5+ 17. ♖h1 ♖xf1#) 16... ♕e2 17. ♖fe1 ♗xe4 18. ♗xe4 ♖xe4 19. ♖h1 ♖f8 ♢. Black's attack is tremendously powerful, while White's queen and knight are isolated from the actions.

11... ♖f7 12. 0-0 ♖d8 13. ♗d3, Seger – Miltner, Gladenbach 1997



13... ♗c5!

This is a reasonable approach. Black returns the piece, starting a counter offensive.

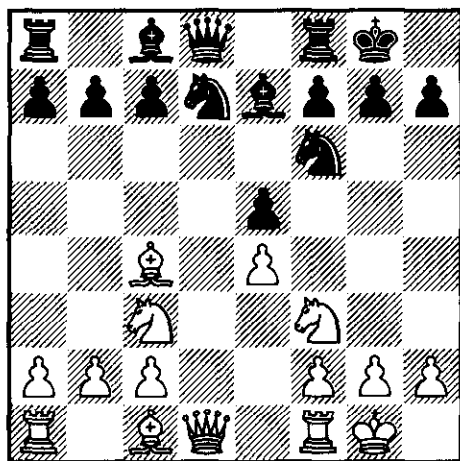
In case of 13... ♕d6 14. ♕f4 ♕xf4 15. ♖xf4 ♖e7 16. ♗d5 ♖d6 17. ♗xf6 gxf6 18. ♖h5+ ♖e7 19. ♖af1 ♢, White obtains a good compensation for the piece, because Black has problems completing his development and ensuring the safety of his king.

14. e5 ♖d4+ 15. ♖h1 ♗xd3

16. exf6 ♗f2+ 17. ♖xf2 ♖xf2 18. fxe7 ♕g4 19. ♖d5+ ♕e6 20. ♖h5+ ♖xe7 21. ♕g5+ ♖f8 ♢

White's checks are over and in the meantime Black has won the exchange. The position is still very tense indeed, because he needs to take care of his king and bring the rook on h8 into the actions, but both these tasks seem to be not so hard to accomplish after all.

Cb2) 7. 0-0 0-0



8. ♖e2

In similar pawn-structures, as a rule, White's dark-squared bishop has nothing to do on the g5-square, because it does not pin the enemy knight on f6 and is not threatening to capture it. On the contrary, if Black removes the knight, for example to h5, the trade of the dark-squared bishops would be favourable for him. See how easy the future World FIDE Champion solved the problems with Black: 8. ♕g5 c6 9. a4 ♖c7 10. ♖e2 ♗c5 11. ♖ad1 ♕e6 12. ♕xf6

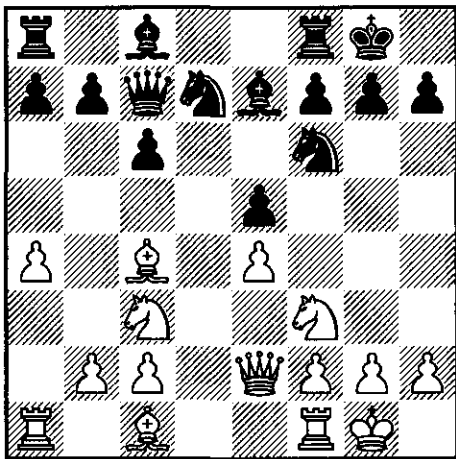
♙xf6 13.♙xe6 ♘xe6 14.♚c4 ♜fd8 15.g3 g6 16.♞xd8+ ♞xd8, draw, Langheinrich – Ponomarev, Verdun 1995.

8...c6 9.a4

White prevents Black's possible queenside activity. There arises a much more interesting and double-edged position after 9.♞d1 ♚c7 10.♙g5 b5 11.♙b3 ♘c5 12.♘d2 ♘e6 13.♙e3 ♘d4 14.♚e1 ♙g4 15.f3 ♙e6 16.♚f2 ♘d7♞ Salgado – Fernandez Saavedra, Burgos 2001.

9...♚c7

This is the most popular move for Black, although he can follow with 9...a5, or 9...b6, preventing the advance of White's rook-pawn.



10.h3

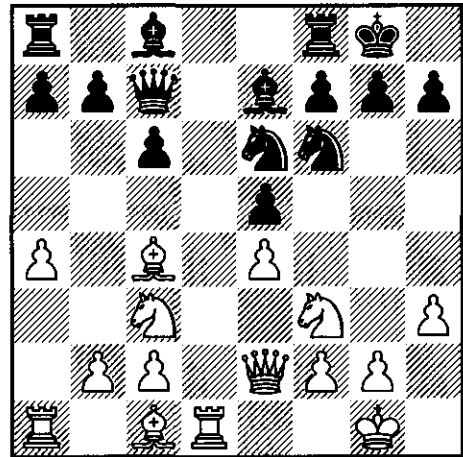
The penetration of White's knight to f5 would not create any serious problems for Black: 10.♘h4 ♘c5 11.♘f5 ♙xf5 12.exf5 ♜fd8 13.♙e3 ♘d5 14.♙xd5 cxd5 15.♙xc5 ♙xc5♞ Sevillano – Saidy, Las Vegas 2005.

He can counter 10.a5 with 10...♙b4 11.♘g5 b5!?. (Black is ready

to compromise slightly his pawn-structure for the sake of active piece play.) 12.axb6 ♘xb6 13.♙a6 h6 14.♙xc8 ♚xc8 15.♘f3 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 ♚e6 17.♞a5 ♘fd7♞ Bertazzo – Laketic, Milan 2000.

In general, in the arising symmetrical pawn-structure, which is a bit dull indeed, White does not have too many active plans. If he does not try to maneuver his knight to f5 and does not touch his a4-pawn, then Black will gradually regroup his forces and advance his queenside pawns. It will not be easy for him to break White's solid position either.

10...♘c5 11.♞d1 ♘e6



Black's knight is eyeing the vulnerable d4 and f4-squares from here. Notice the favourable placement of his pawn on c6, which restricts the active possibilities of White's knight on c3.

12.♙e3 ♞e8 13.♘g5 ♙b4 14.♞d3 a6 15.♞ad1 h6 16.♘xe6 ♙xe6 17.♙xe6 ♞xe6 18.f3 b5♞ Shlegin – Bocharov, Novokuznetsk 2007.

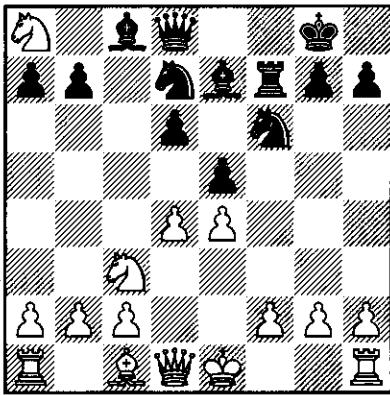
Chapter 5

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7

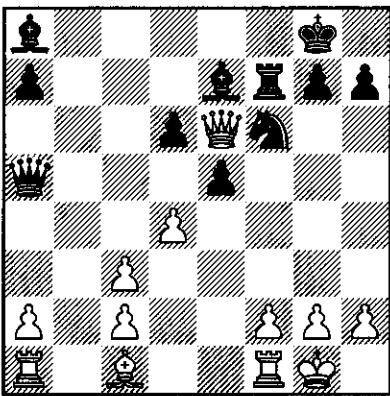
Complete Games

29 Gounina – M.Fominykh
Smolensk 2001

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5
4.♗f3 ♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.♗g5
0–0 7.♙xf7+ ♜xf7 8.♗e6 ♚e8
9.♗xc7 ♚d8 10.♗xa8



10...b5 11.♗xb5 ♚a5+ 12.
♗c3 ♗xe4 13.0–0 ♗xc3 14.
♗xc3 ♙b7 15.♚g4 ♗f6 16.♚e6
♙xa8



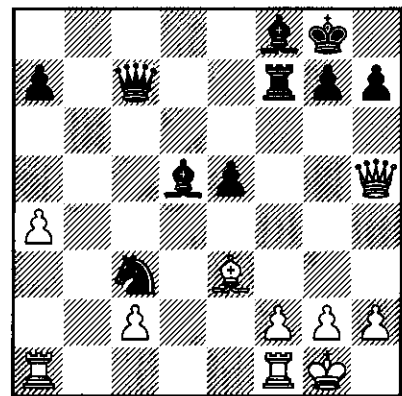
17.♜b1

White has played the opening badly and he had better seek salvation in the endgame after: 17.♚c8+ ♚d8 18.♚xd8+ ♙xd8 19. dxe5 dxe5 20.♜b1 etc.

17...♚c7 18.dxe5 ♙d5!

This is an important intermediate move, thanks to which White's queen is repelled from its powerful placement in the centre.

19.♚h3 dxe5 20.♙g5 ♙c5
21.♙e3 ♙f8 22.a4 ♗e4 23.♜a1
♗xc3 24.♚h5



24...♜f6

It is even stronger for Black to choose 24...g6 and it turns out that White's queen does not have too many free squares to go to. For example: 25.♚h4 (25.♚g4 h5! 26.♚g5 ♗e4) 25...♗e2+ 26.♗h1 ♚c6 27.♚g4 ♚xc2–+

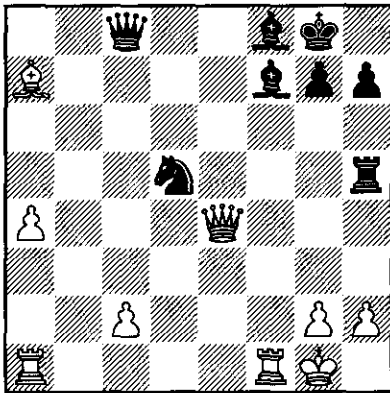
25.♠fe1 ♖g6 26.f3 e4

Black was winning even faster after 26...♗d6! 27.♞h3 ♗e6 28.♞h4 ♘d5.

27.f4 ♗f7 28.♞h4 ♘d5 29.f5 ♠f6 30.♞xe4 ♞c8

He complicates his task in the time-trouble. It was more precise for him to opt for 30...♘xe3! 31.♠xe3 ♠c6 (creating the threat 32...♗c5, which would not have worked on move 31, because of the reply 32.♞a8+) 32.♔h1 ♠xc2 etc.

31.♗xa7 ♠xf5 32.♠f1 ♠h5



33.♠xf7?

This is a risky attempt by White to seize the initiative. After the calm move 33.h3, Black will need to work hard to realize his advantage.

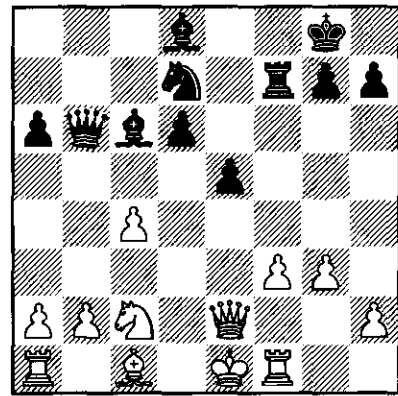
33...♔xf7 34.g4 ♘f6! 35.♠f1 ♠g5

35...♠h4! 36.♞d5+ ♞e6 37.♞xe6+ ♔xe6-+

36.h3 ♗c5+ 37.♗xc5 ♞xc5+ 38.♔h1 ♠e5 39.♞b7+ ♔g6 40.h4 ♞xc2 41.g5 ♠e4 42.h5+ ♔xh5 43.♞f7+ g6. White resigned.

30 Ericson – Schoenmann
corr. 1964

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘bd7 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.♘g5 0-0 7.♗xf7+ ♠xf7 8.♘e6 ♞e8 9.♘xc7 ♞d8 10.♘xa8 b5 11.f3 ♗b7 12.♘xb5 ♗xa8 13.d5 ♞b6 14.♞e2 a6 15.♘a3 ♘xd5 16.exd5 ♗h4+ 17.g3 ♗xd5 18.♠f1 ♗d8 19.c4 ♗c6 20.♘c2



There arose a typical conflicting situation on the theme “What is more important – material advantage, or the initiative?” It is much easier to parry threats in a correspondence game than in a tournament, right over the board.

20...♞b7 21.f4 e4

It was better for Black to play 21...♗g2! 22.♠f2 ♗e4 and thanks to the threat ♘c5-d3+ he would have good chances of equalizing.

22.b4! ♗f6 23.♠b1 ♘c5 24.♔f2!

White’s king runs away from the danger zone, finding a safe haven on g1.

24...♘d3+ 25.♔g1 d5 26.cxd5 ♗xd5 27.♘e3 ♗d4 28.♔g2 ♗c6 29.♗d2

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7

He has stabilized the situation and completed his development, maintaining the material advantage. Still, Black preserves his counter chances – active bishops and a powerful knight on d3.

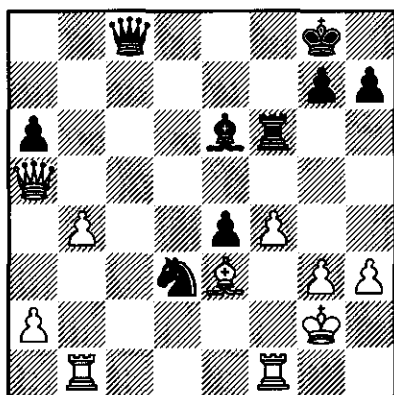
29... ♙b5 30. ♚g4 ♜f6?!

After 30... ♚b6, it looks like White would have to give back the exchange: 31. ♜fc1 ♘xc1 (but not 31... ♙xe3? 32. ♜c8+ ♜f8 33. ♙xe3 ♚xe3 34. ♚e6+) 32. ♜xc1 h6±

31. h3 ♙d7 32. ♚g5 ♙e6 33. ♚a5 ♙xe3?

Black should not have parted with this bishop. It was stronger for him to continue with 33... ♙b6 34. ♚a4 ♙d7 35. ♚b3+ ♙e6 36. ♚c2 ♚d7±

34. ♙xe3 ♚c8



35. f5!

White sacrifices a pawn, bringing his rook into the actions and this is much more important.

35... ♜xf5

It was hardly any better for Black to choose 35... ♙xf5 36. ♘g1 ♙h3 37. ♜xf6 gxf6 38. ♚d5+ ♚e6 39. ♚xe6+ ♙xe6 40. a4 etc.

36. ♜xf5 ♙xf5 37. ♘g1 h6 38. ♚d5+ ♘h8 39. b5 ♙e6 40. ♚c6

White could have captured here an important pawn – 40. ♚xe4.

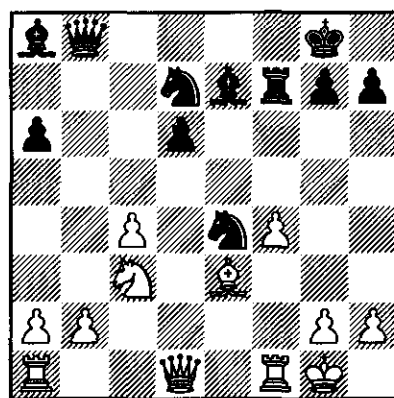
40... ♙xb5 41. ♚xc8+ ♙xc8 42. ♜xb5 ♘h7 43. ♜b8 ♙d7 44. ♜b7 ♙c6

It is difficult to understand why Black avoids so stubbornly capturing the pawn on h3, but he would not have saved the game anyway.

45. ♜c7 ♙b5 46. ♙d4 ♘g6 47. g4 ♘g5 48. ♘h2. Black resigned.

31 Pilnik – Najdorf Buenos Aires 1941

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 ♘f6 4. ♖c3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. ♘g5 0–0 7. ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 8. ♘e6 ♚e8 9. ♘xc7 ♚d8 10. ♘xa8 b5 11. dxe5 ♘xe5 12. 0–0 ♙b7 13. f4 ♘ed7 14. ♘xb5 ♙xa8 15. ♙e3 ♚b8 16. c4 a6 17. ♖c3 ♘xe4

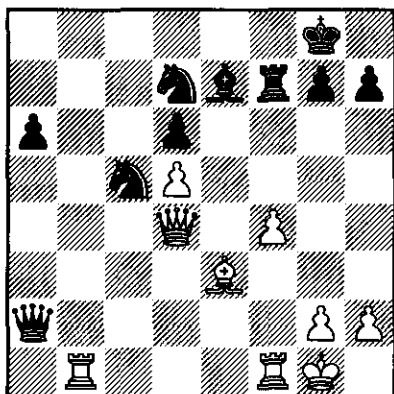


18. ♘d5?!

White does not wish to defend patiently a worse position, so he sacrifices two pawns, but this is all futile. He had to play 18. ♘xe4 ♙xe4 19. ♚e2 d5 20. ♜ac1

♖b7 – Black has the initiative, but White's position remains still defensible.

18...♖xb2 19.♖b1 ♖xa2 20. ♖d4 ♗xd5! 21.cxd5 ♘ec5



After the exchange of his opponent's centralized knight,

Black has consolidated his position and begins the regrouping of his forces in order to start an assault later.

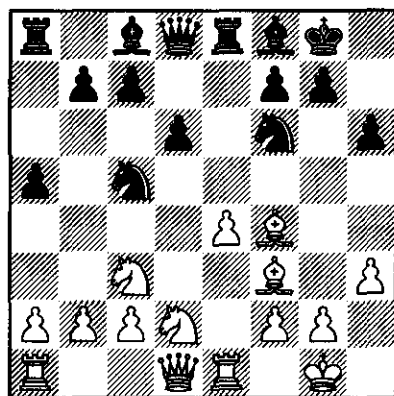
22.♖a1 ♖e2 23.♖ae1 ♖h5 24.♖d2 ♖f5 25.h3 h5 26.♖a2 ♗h4 27.♗f2 ♗xf2+ 28.♖xf2 ♘f6

His knights occupy slowly but reliably all the key-squares in the centre of the board.

29.♖f3 ♘h7 30.♖c4 a5 31. ♘h2 a4 32.♖e2 ♖b7 33.♖e1 ♖b3 34.♖xb3 axb3 35.♖e2 ♘xd5. White resigned.

32 Prie – Paunovic Elgoibar 2007

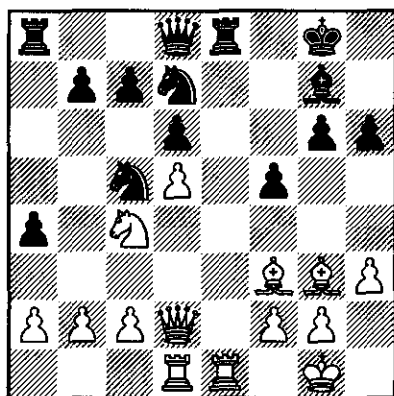
1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.dxe5 ♘xe5 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗f4 ♘ed7 9.0-0 ♘c5 10. ♘d2 ♖e8 11.♖e1 ♗f8 12.♗f3 h6 13.h3 a5



14.♗g3 a4 15.♘c4 ♗e6 16. ♖d4 ♘fd7 17.♖ad1 g6 18.♘d5

The most principled move for White is 18.e5, but after 18...♗g7 19.♗d5 ♖g5, Black holds the position. White has no other possibilities to break through.

18...♗g7 19.♖d2 ♗xd5 20. exd5 f5



21.♗f4

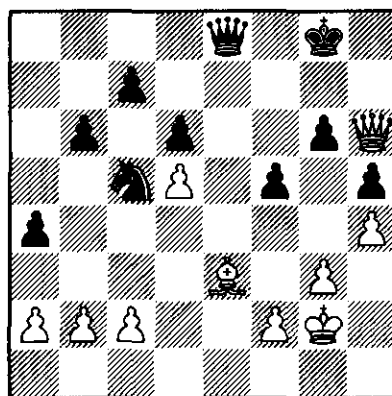
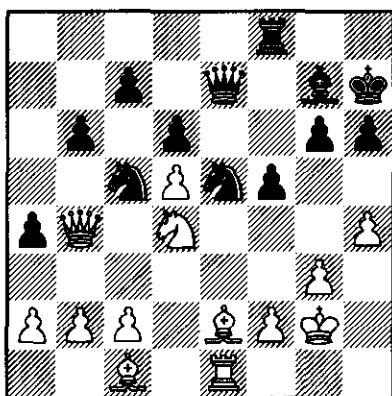
Black could have played g5 and f4, so White avoids prudently that trap with his bishop.

21...♘h7 22.g3 ♘f6 23.h4 ♖d7 24.♖b4 ♖f7 25.♗e3

He is trying to compromise Black's position on the queen-side.

25...b6 26.♘a3 ♘fe4 27. ♘b5 ♖e7 28.♗c1 ♖f8 29.♘g2 ♘f6 30.♖xe7 ♖xe7 31.♘d4 ♘g4 32.♖e1 ♘e5 33.♗e2

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♜bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7



White has a space advantage and a bishop-pair, so he maintains some initiative, but Black's knights are perfectly placed in the centre and he has built a well-fortified defensive line.

33... ♖f7 34. ♙c4 ♜xc4 35. ♖xc4 ♙xd4 36. ♖xd4 ♞e8

The opponents were probably in a time-trouble, so Black's wish to simplify maximally the position is quite understandable. In this position however, despite the well-familiar rule, queen and bishop combine much better together than queen and knight. (This is probably, because the knight is placed near the edge of the board, forced to protect the pawn.). Accordingly, Black has some difficulties defending.

37. ♞xe8 ♖xe8 38. ♖d2 h5

In case of 38... ♖f8, White has the powerful resource – 39. b3 ♖g7 40. f3, after which he occupies the e-file, repelling the enemy knight from the c5-outpost.

39. ♖h6+ ♜g8 40. ♙e3
(diagram)

40... ♜e4??

This was the last move of the time-control! Black had better play

40... ♜d7! 41. f3 (41. ♙d4? ♖e4+) 41... ♜f6, holding the position. For example: 42. c4 b5! 43. ♙d4 ♜f7 44. ♙xf6 ♖e2+ 45. ♜g1 ♖e1+ with a perpetual check.

41. ♜f1??

White must have been in a time-trouble as well, because he fails to punish his opponent. He was winning with the simple move 41. ♙d4. Black would not have the check from the e4-square, so he loses his g7-pawn, after which his defence crumbles quickly: 41... ♖d7 42. ♖xg6+ ♜f8 43. f3 etc.

41... ♜f6 42. ♙d4 ♜f7 43. c4 ♖e4 44. ♖e3 ♖xe3 45. ♙xe3 b5

This brave move is forced; otherwise, White's king comes to b4, capturing the a4-pawn.

46. cxb5 ♜xd5 47. ♙d2 ♜e6 48. ♜e2 ♜b6 49. ♜d3 ♜d5

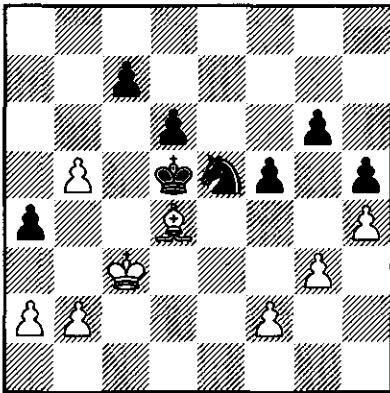
Naturally, in an open position, when there remain pawns on both sides of the board, the bishop is usually much superior to the knight. Black's king is more active in this position, so this balances the prospects.

50. ♙e3 ♜c4 51. ♙d4 ♜e5+

He overestimates his chances. He had to keep his knight on

the queenside – 51...♖b6 and if 52.♗c3, then 52...♗e4 53.a3 f4

52.♗c3



52...♖g4

This looks like a serious mistake. Black had a very interesting possibility to create some counter-play: 52...f4!? 53.gxf4 ♖f3 54.♗f6 ♗c5 55.♗d3 ♗xb5 56.♗e4 ♖d2+ (It seems too risky for him to opt for 56...♖h2 57.f5, although even then after 57...♖g4, Black may hold the position.) 57.♗d5 ♖f3 58.♗e6 ♗c4 59.♗f7 d5 60.♗xg6 d4 61.♗xd4 (61.♗xh5? d3 62.♗c3 a3!-+) 61...♗xd4 62.♗xh5 a3=

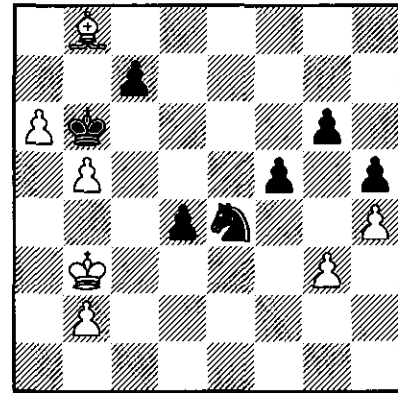
53.♗a7! ♗e4

In case of 53...♖e5 54.b3 axb3 55.♗xb3, White creates a passed pawn on the rook file and Black's knight will be in the most unpleasant situation in order to stop it 55...c5 56.a4 ♖c4 57.♗c3 ♖a3 58.♗b8 ♖b1+ 59.♗c2 ♖a3+ 60.♗b2 ♖c4+ 61.♗c3 with great problems for him.

54.♗b4 d5 55.♗xa4 d4 56.♗b3 ♖xf2 57.a4 ♗d5 58.♗b8?

White was winning after 58.a5 ♖e4 59. a6 ♖d6 60.♗xd4 ♖xb5 61.a7 ♖xa7 62.♗xa7.

58...♖e4 59.a5 ♗c5 60.a6 ♗b6



61.♗c4?

This is the last mistake in this rather tense game. White could have still won with the line: 61.a7 ♗b7 62.♗c4 ♖d6+ (62...d3 63.♗xd3 g5 64.♗d4) 63.♗xd4 ♖xb5+ 64.♗e5.

61...♖d6+ 62.♗xd4 ♖xb5+ 63.♗e5 ♗xa6 64.♗f6 ♗b7

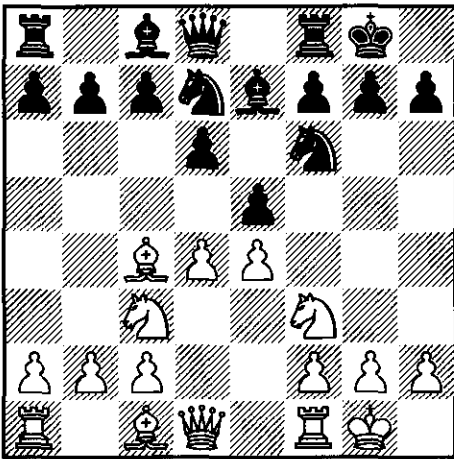
White's bishop could have become the real hero in this game, but now it is trapped, so he should seek a favourable outcome at the end.

65.♗xc7 ♗xc7 66.♗xg6 ♖d6 67.♗xh5 ♖e4 68.♗g6 ♖xg3 69.♗g5 ♗d6 70.♗f4 ♖h5+. Draw

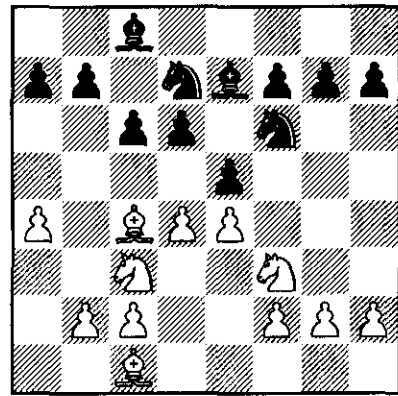
Chapter 6

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♜bd7 5.♙c4 ♚e7 6.0-0 0-0

Quick Repertoire



and the light pieces of White and Black.



Finally, we can feel happy and proud with the fact that we have come to the main tabia of the Hanham Variation of Philidor Defence. White has a space advantage and more actively placed pieces, but Black's pawn-chain is covering his camp in a way and denies access to any squares for penetration. These possible outposts for White can be – d5, f5 and sometimes the d6-square.

His main line in this position is 7.♙e1 and we will devote to it our final Chapter 7. Now, we will analyze some other possible set-ups for White. It will be easy to understand the basic plans of both sides if we look at the diagram, on which we have left only the pawns

White has more space and his pieces are active. Black's knights and bishops are squeezed and seem to be good enough only for defence. There is some pawn-tension in the centre and it looks like both sides are reluctant to reduce it. For example, after the exchange on e5, there arises a symmetrical pawn-structure (sometimes he exchanges a couple of knights on e5 too) and Black's dark-squared bishop gains access to the c5 and b4-squares. His pawn on c6 restricts his opponent's knight on c3 and if White fails to penetrate to the f5, or d6-squares the position usually becomes equal rather quickly.

Black, in his stead, is reluctant to exchange on d4, because his d6-pawn may become a potential weakness. White increases his space advantage and he can think about organizing an offensive on the kingside, for example, if he captures on d4 with his knight, it can go later directly to f5. Black must do something then and he should bring his bishop on c8 into the actions as well as the rook on a8. One of his possible plans is the fianchetto of his light-squared bishop, but the moment he makes a move with his b-pawn, White can play d4-d5, with the idea to exploit the weakening of the light squares in his opponent's camp.

Let us go back to the schematic position on the diagram. Imagine, it is Black to move. Then, he can make the simplifying combination ♞xe4! and after $\text{♞xe4} - \text{d5}$, regaining his piece and reducing the tension in the centre. Maybe it would be even more precise for him to have exchanged previously on d4. In addition, in that case, he would have the possibility to play d5 immediately and after exd5 , to reply with ♞b6 . White's attacked bishop will have to retreat and then Black will capture on d5 with his knight equalizing.

You can already see that one of Black's main tasks is to reduce the tension in the centre. White usually retreats with his bishop from c4 to a2, or b3, so that it cannot be attacked with tempo. Both re-

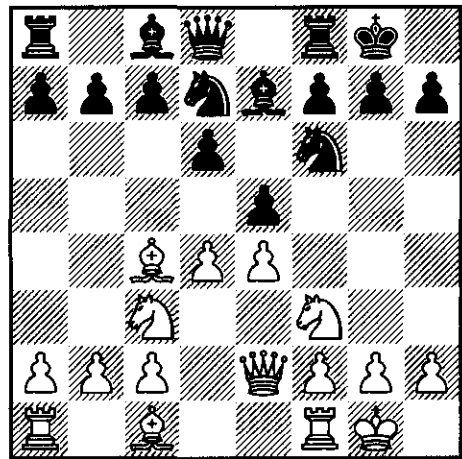
treats have certain drawbacks, though.

C) 7. ♖e2

D) 7. a4

White does not have time for abstract prophylactic of the type – 7.h3, due to 7...c6 8.a4 ♞xe4! (This is the exchange operation, which we have already mentioned, in its purest form.) 9. ♞xe4 d5 10. ♞xe5 ♞xe5 11. dxe5 dxe4 12. ♞f4 ♞f5 13. ♖e2 ♞c5 14. ♞h1 ♖h4 15. ♞g3 ♖g5 ↷ Babrikowski – Lorenz, Germany 1992.

C) 7. ♖e2



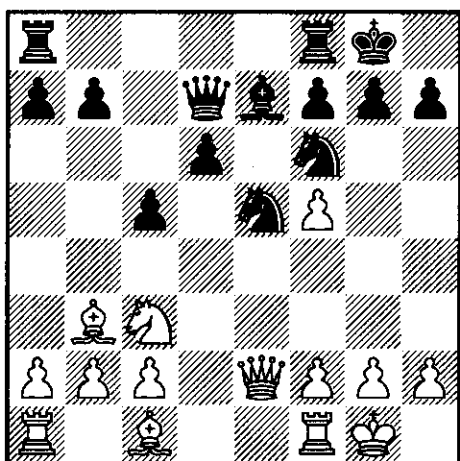
This is a rather popular plan. Judit Polgar played like that against Alexander Morozevich at the World Championship in San Luis in the year 2005. White's idea is simple and understandable. He supports his e4-pawn with the queen and his rook (It is not so clear yet – which one?) will go to d1 in a juxtaposition with Black's queen on d8. This idea is logical,

but its drawback is that Black can create the same rook-queen juxtaposition along the e-file.

7...exd4

He gives up the centre and this involves some strategical risk. If White manages to consolidate his position and pushes f2-f4, then he will maintain a stable advantage. Black must play energetically and quite concretely in order to prevent that.

8. ♖xd4 ♖e5 9. ♕b3 c5 10. ♗f5 ♕xf5 11. exf5 ♖d7

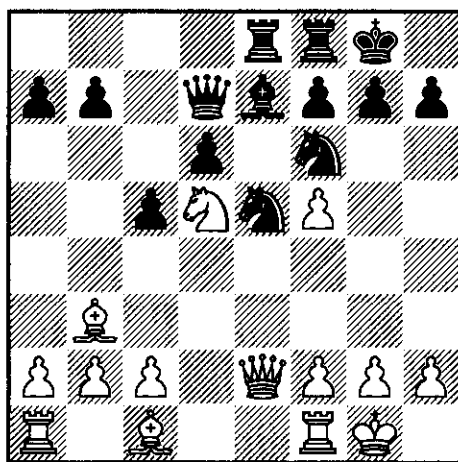


which will be the best square for it. Meanwhile, White has hardly any other reasonable plan except advancing his kingside pawns, so there will be a very tense fight in the middle game.

12. ♗d5

In case of 12.f4 ♖c6 13.g4, Black has a very promising piece-sacrifice: 13...d5!? 14.g5 c4 15.gxf6 ♕xf6! 16. ♕a4 ♖xf5. White will have great difficulties to develop his dark-squared bishop and to join with his other bishop into the actions.

12...♜ae8



This is a key-position. White has obtained a pair of bishops and he controls the important d5-outpost. Black leads in development, has a powerful knight on e5 and exerts pressure against his opponent's f5-pawn. White can repel the enemy knight with f2-f4 and he can protect his f5-pawn with g2-g4, but all this will not only weaken his own king, but will restrict the scope of action of the bishop on c1. Black's knight on e5 may go to the d4-outpost via c6, although it is still unclear

This is multi-purpose move. Black has protected his bishop on e7 and he is again threatening the white pawn on f5, having created a juxtaposition of his rook against the enemy queen along the open e-file.

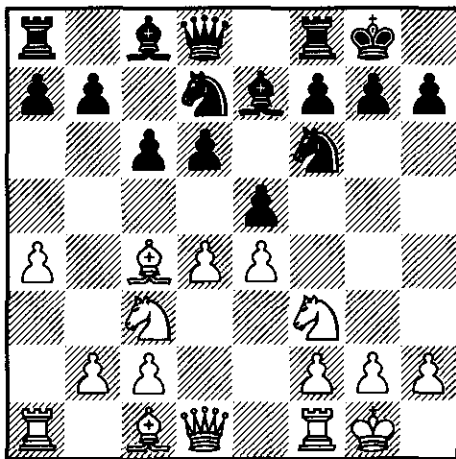
13. ♜d1 ♕d8 14. ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 15. ♕e3

This is a silent offer by White to trade two weaknesses. He relies on maintaining a small plus, thanks to his bishop-pair, but

Black succeeds in exchanging one of the bishops equalizing completely.

15...♖xf5 16.♗xd6 ♘g4 17. ♗d5 ♖g6 18.c3 ♘xe3 19.fxe3 ♙g5 20.♗d7 ♙xe3+ 21.♕h1 ♕h8, draw, Espig – Dr. Braun, Suhl 1979.

D) 7.a4 c6



White's bishop on c4 is not so stable, so it would be logical for him to retreat it along the a2-g8 diagonal, preserving his control over the important d5, e6 and f7-squares.

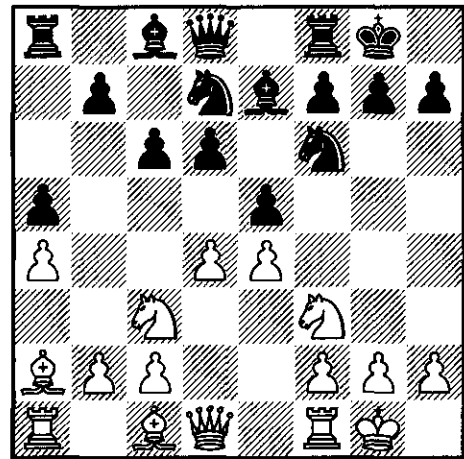
8.♙a2

The retreat of the bishop one square backwards – 8.♙b3 is not effective, because of the line: 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘c5 (This is a double-attack against the bishop and the e4-pawn.) 10.♗e1 ♘xb3 11.♘xb3 ♘d7 12.♙f4 ♘e5 13.♘d4 ♙f6 14.b3 ♗e8⇌ Rymysky – Zavgorodniy, Odessa 2007.

In reply to 8.♖e2, Black organizes his counterplay in the same

fashion as against 7.♖e2. White obtains an extra tempo in some variations, because his pawn is already on a4, but this is immaterial. So: 8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘e5 10.♙b3 c5 11.♘f5 ♙xf5 12.exf5 ♖d7 13.♘d5 ♗ae8 14.♖b5!?! (In the line with 7.♖e2, White did not have that possibility.) 14...♖c8 15.c3 a6 16.♖b6 c4!?! 17.♘xe7+ ♗xe7 18.♖xd6 ♗fe8 19.♙c2 ♗d7 20.♖a3 ♖c7∞ – Black has obtained an excellent compensation for the pawn, because his opponent can hardly coordinate his pieces, Saavedra – Hsu Li-Yang, Istanbul 2000.

8...a5



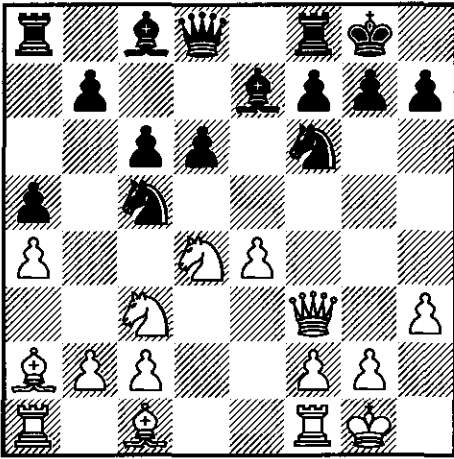
He is showing his trump cards. Black has indicated with his last move that he plans to exchange soon on d4 and place his knight on c5, without being afraid of b2-b4. It will be also useful for him to attack the enemy e4-pawn.

9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 11.♖f3

(diagram)

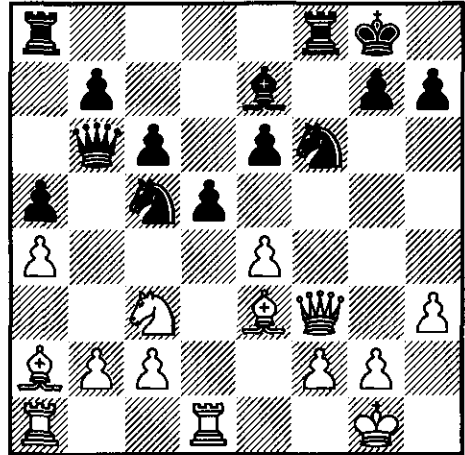
We have already seen that

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0



12. ♗f5 ♕xf5 13. ♖xf5, because of 13... ♖ae8 14. ♖e1 ♕d8 15. ♖e2 ♗e6! with mutual chances, Gomez Baillo – Oratovsky, Albacete 2005.

12... ♕e6 13. ♗xe6 fxe6 14. ♕e3 d5=



Black should not be afraid of the knight-sortie to f5, if after he captures that knight, his opponent will have to recapture with a pawn. Therefore, White it trying to be tricky and he plans to capture on f5 with his queen, in order to keep his pawn on e4. This plan is not so dangerous for Black either and in addition it is too difficult for White to accomplish it.

11... ♖b6 12. ♖d1

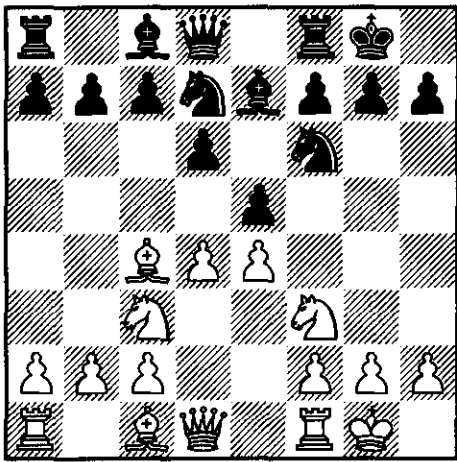
Black should not fear the line:

Black has built a pawn-barrier along the a2-g8 diagonal and thus he has isolated his opponent's light-squared bishop from the actions, Rogulj – Nevednichy, Bled 1992.

Chapter 6

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0

Step by Step



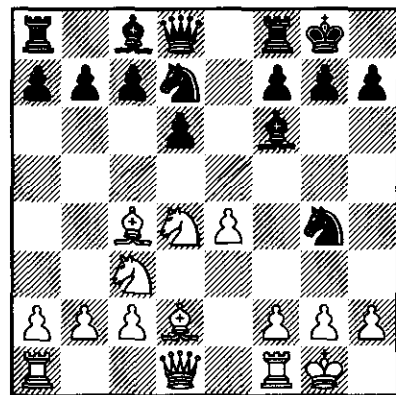
- A) 7.♙g5
- B) 7.h3
- C) 7.♞e2
- D) 7.a4

About 7.♞e1 – see Chapter 7.

After the inclusion of castling for both sides, the exchange on e5 is not so reasonable, because White will have no chance of an advantage in the endgame. For example: 7.dxe5 ♗xe5 8.♗xe5 (The opponents agreed quickly to a draw after 8.♙e2 ♞e8 9.h3 h6 10.♙f4 ♗g6 11.♙h2 ♙f8 12.♞d3 ♙d7 13.♞fe1, draw, Schmittziel – Cifuentes Parada, Leeuwarden 1993; it is obviously bad for White to play 8.♙b3? ♙g4 9.♙f4, Imbierowicz – Rothkugel, Germany

2007, 9...♗fd7 10.♞e2 c6.) 8... dxe5 9.♞e2 (9.♞xd8 ♞xd8 10.♙g5 c6 11.♞ad1 ♙g4 12.♙e2 ♙xe2 13. ♗xe2 h6 14.♙h4 ♗f8= D.Kirsanova – Grechkina, Dagomys 2004) 9...c6 10.a4 ♙b4 11.♞d1 ♞e7 12.f3 ♙e6 13.♙e3 ♗d7 14.♗h1 ♗b6 15. ♙d3 ♙c5 16.a5 ♗d7 17.♗a4 ♙xe3 18.♞xe3 ♞fb8 ♞ Cubas – Schweber, Villa Ballester 2000.

Black should not be afraid of 7.♙e3, because of 7...♗g4 and later he continues with a simplifying operation in the centre – 8.♙d2 exd4 9.♗xd4 ♙f6

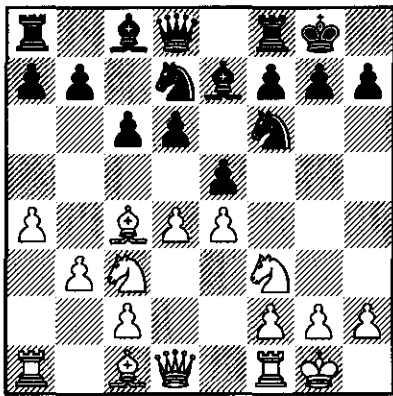


10.♗f5 (White wishes to preserve his active knight, since in case of 10.♞xg4 ♙xd4 11.♞g3 ♗b6 12.♙b3 ♙e6=, Black has no problems.) 10...♗ge5 11.♙b3 ♗c5 ♞ Siegbert Tarrasch would

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0

have probably offered a draw in this position. The great German grandmaster would hardly imagine life possible without the light-squared bishop. On the contrary, “Rybka” appreciates highly the knight on c5 and is not so eager to trade it for the bishop on b3. I think the position is about equal and both sides have their trumps.

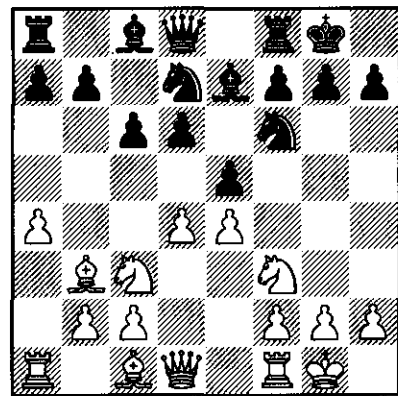
In case of 7.b3, the game transposes to the main line with 7.♞e1. For example: 7...c6 8.a4 (Naturally, White can allow his opponent to push b7-b5 and that would not be so disastrous for him, but he can hardly obtain an advantage: 8.♙b2 b5 9.♙d3 ♖b6 10.♘e2 d5 11.dxe5 ♘xe4♞. I can recommend to the fans of beautiful pre-arranged draws the following variation: 10.h3 – instead of 10.♘e2 – 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♖xd4 12.♘a4 ♖b4 13.♙c3 ♖a3 14.♙b2.)



8...a5 (The immediate counter strike in the centre does not equalize completely for Black: 8...d5?! 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♘xd5 ♘xd5 11.♙xd5 ♘b6 12.♙e4! f5 13. ♙d3 e4 14.a5±. Therefore, he should first block the a4-pawn.) 9.♙b2 (9.♙a3

♖c7 10.♖d2 ♘b6 11.♙e2 ♙g4 12. ♖e3 ♞fe8 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7 15.♘h4 ♙e6 16.♞ad1, draw, Mellado Trivino – Garcia Castro, Sabadell 2007. After 9.♞e1 – the game transposes to the main line with 7.♞e1.) 9...h6 10.♞e1 – again a transposition to 7.♞e1.

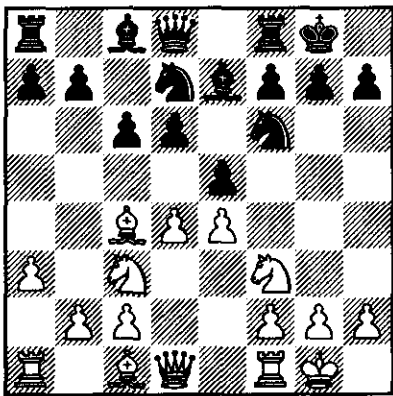
The prophylactic move 7. ♙b3 is too straightforward. White should try to be more tricky and keep in reserve where this bishop may go to later – to e2, b3, or even to e2 (sometimes even this passive retreat may be useful). 7...c6 8.a4



8...exd4 (After this exchange, Black gains access to the c5-square and his knight will go there with tempo.) 9.♘xd4 (In case of 9.♖xd4 ♘c5 10.♙a2 ♙g4, it turns out that White’s knight is not so well-placed on f3. He must protect it and Black can use this time to regroup his forces: 11.♖e3 a5 12.♘d4 ♞e8 13.f3, Chaichi – Abbasifar, Teheran 2002, 13...♙e6 14.♘xe6 ♘xe6 15.♖d3 ♘d7 16.♙e3 ♘dc5♞) 9...♘c5 10.♞e1 (10.♖e2 a5 11.f3 ♙e6 12.♙xe6 fxe6 13.♙e3 ♖c7 14.♘h1 d5♞ Smit – Lobzhanidze, Bad Homburg 2004.) 10...♘xb3

11. ♖xb3 ♜g4 12. h3 ♜e5 13. f4 ♜g6 14. g4 (White is playing very aggressively, although the position hardly requires similar resolute approach.) 14... ♗h4 15. ♖f1 ♗f6 16. ♗f3 ♗e6 ♞ Kirszenstein – Rawicz-Galinski, Wojewodztwo Pomorskie 2007.

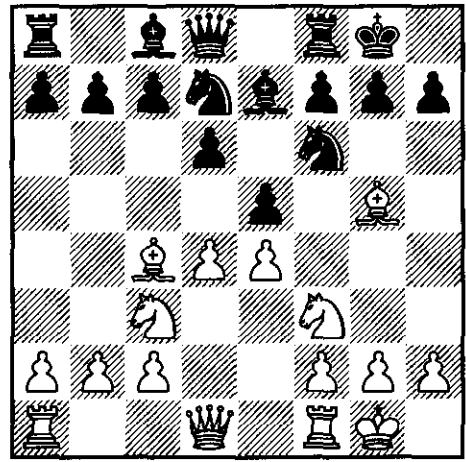
It would be interesting for him to try the not so well studied move 7.a3. White's bishop on c4 is unstable and it can be attacked with d6-d5, or with ♜d7-b6, so it would be sensible for him to retreat it to a2. In that case, contrary to 7.a4, White does not weaken the b4-square and later he may even play b2-b4 at an opportune moment. Black will push now b7-b5, so what? He must prepare the further advance of that pawn, while White will have the threat d4-d5 and Black's pawn on b5 may be hanging. 7...c6



8. ♗a2 (It seems rather awkward for White to opt for 8.b4, for example: 8...b5 9. ♗a2 a6 10. ♗b2 ♗c7 11. ♗e2 ♗b7 12. ♖fd1 h6 13. h3 ♖fe8 14. ♗h1 exd4 15. ♜xd4 ♗f8 16. f3 c5 17. ♜f5 c4 ♞ Gavrjuchenkova – Ambartsumova, Moscow

2008 and White's bishop on a2 was isolated from the actions.) 8... b5 9. ♗g5 a6 10. ♗e2 h6 11. ♗e3 ♜g4 12. ♗d2 ♗b7 13. ♖ad1, Ganguly – Sareen, Nagpur 2002, Black must try to organize some queenside counterplay here – 13...a5 14. h3 ♜gf6 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. ♜h4 ♗a6 ♞

A) 7. ♗g5



This move is harmless for Black. The pin is not dangerous, on the contrary – he has an excellent plan including the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

7...h6 8. ♗h4

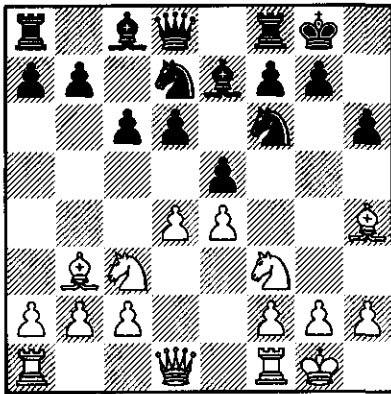
In case of 8. ♗e3, it is sensible for Black to clarify the situation in the centre with 8...exd4 9. ♜xd4 (9. ♗xd4 ♜b6 10. ♗b3 c5 11. ♗e3 ♜g4 ♞; 9. ♗xd4?! ♜g4 10. ♗d2 ♗f6 11. ♗d3 ♜c5 12. ♗e2 ♖e8 ♞) 9... ♜e5 10. ♗e2 c5 11. ♜f5 ♗xf5 12. exf5 d5 ♞. White's bishops are not active at all, while Black's pawn centre may advance at any moment.

8...c6 9. a4

It deserves attention for White to play 9. ♗b3 with the idea to

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. h3

provoke the pawn-advance b7-b5. Then, he will push quickly d4-d5, beginning the fight for the d5-outpost, as it happens in the Sicilian Defence. In that case, the bishop on h4 may turn out to be well placed.

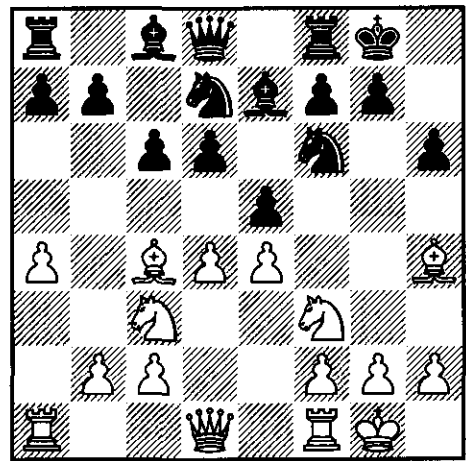


Black is not forced to play b7-b5, however. 9... ♖c7 10. a4 a5 11. h3 ♖e8 (After he has protected his bishop on e7, he has the positional threat ♗h5. White prevents this maneuver with his next move.) 12. ♕g3 ♕f8 (Now, it is bad for Black to try 12... ♗h5?, because of 13. ♗xe5! ♗xg3 14. ♕xf7+ ♔f8 15. fxg3 dxe5 16. ♖h5+-) 13. ♖e1 exd4 14. ♖xd4 ♗e5 15. ♖e3 ♕e6 16. ♕xe6 ♖xe6 17. ♗d4 ♖ee8 18. ♖ad1 ♖b6 19. b3 ♖ad8 ↷ Wang Yu – Safin, Calcutta 2001 – **game 33**. White has slightly more space, but Black has covered all possible squares for penetration, while the juxtaposition of the rook on e8 and the queen on e3 is rather unpleasant for White.

(diagram)

9... ♗h5!

I have already mentioned that the trade of the dark-squared



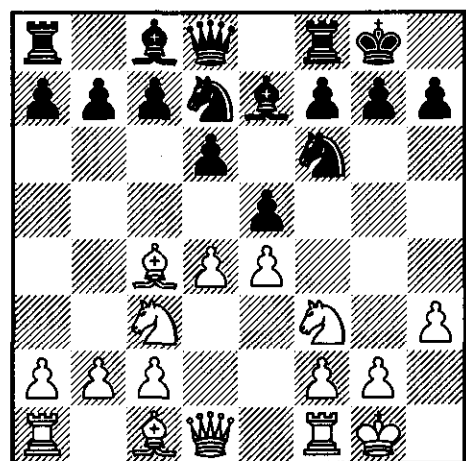
bishops is in favour of Black. He begins the fight for the central f4 and d4-squares in the process.

10. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 11. ♖e1 ♖d8 12. g3

White has covered the f4-square, but he has weakened his king.

12... ♗f8 13. ♗h4 ♗f6 14. ♕b3 exd4 15. ♖xd4 ♗e6 ↷ Kupreichik – Hartoch, Leeuwarden 1993 – **game 34**.

B) 7. h3



In general, this is a useful move, but this position is so tense that White has no time for such abstract prophylactic.

7...c6 8.a4

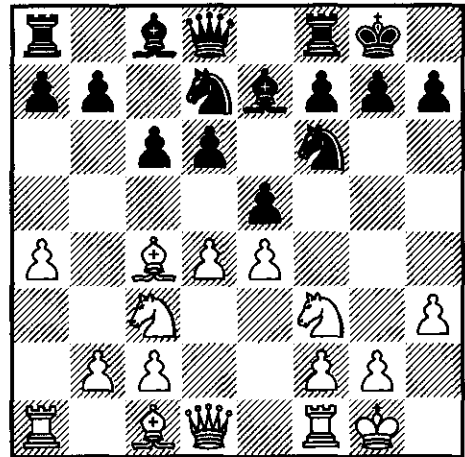
Let us see his alternatives:

1) 8.♙e3 b5 9.♙d3 (White must play this ugly move; otherwise, Black will continue with b5-b4, winning the central e4-pawn.) 9... ♙b7 10.♘e2 a6 11.c3 ♙c7 12.♞c1 d5! 13.♘d2, Hesse – Matthey, St. Ingbert 1998. White has chosen a super-passive defence and Black could have emphasized the drawbacks of his opponent's set-up with the energetic line: 13...c5! 14.♘g3 ♞fe8;

2) In case of 8.dxe5, the simplest reaction for Black is to capture with his knight: 8...♘xe5 9. ♙b3 b5 10.a3, Postler – Baier, Germany 2000 (World Champion number five obtained an excellent position after 10.♘xe5 dxe5 11.♙f3 ♘d7 12.♙e3 ♘c5 13.♞fd1 ♙c7 14. ♙xc5 ♙xc5 15.♘e2 a5 16.a3 ♙e6 17.♘g3, Van Den Berg – Euwe, Amsterdam 1941 and here, it would have been very good for him to have chosen 17...a4 18.♙a2 ♞ad8) 10...♙c7 11.♘d4 a5 12.♞e1 ♞e8;

3) Following 8.♙b3, Black should at first provoke a2-a4 and then he deploys his knight to the c5-outpost (after the trade on d4, of course): 8...a5 9.a4 exd4 10.♙xd4 (It is worse for White to play 10.♘xd4, because Black can attack effectively his opponent's e4-pawn: 10...♘c5 11.♙e2 ♞e8 12.♞e1 ♙f8 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♞ad1 d5 16.e5 ♙g6) Terzic – Runic, Bihac 1999.) 10... ♘c5 11.♙a2 ♙e6 12.♙xe6 (White's

bishop has made already three moves in the opening and at the end it was exchanged for its counterpart.) 12...♘xe6 13.♙c4 ♙b6 14.♙e2 ♞fe8, draw, Porsch – B.Bauer, Rostock 2006.

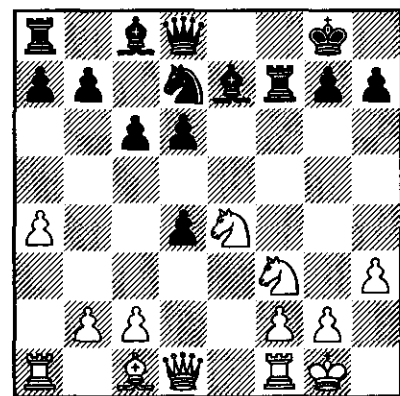


8...♘xe4!

White has lost a tempo for the useless move h2-h3 and now Black's typical exchange combination is made under the most favourable circumstances.

9.♘xe4

It has been well-known for more than 100 years that the strike on f7 is harmless for Black – 9.♙xf7+ ♞xf7 10.♘xe4 exd4

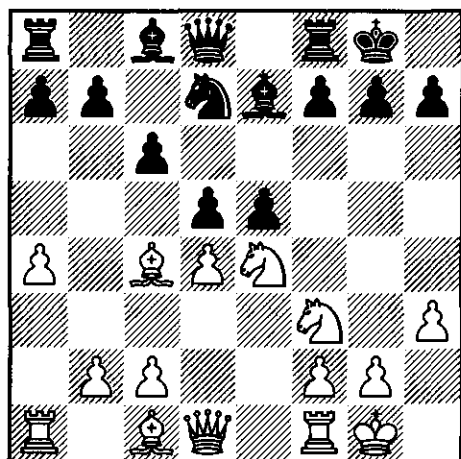


11.♘fg5 (In case of 11.♙xd4, Black can seize the initiative in

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♛e2

an interesting fashion: 11... ♖xf3!? 12. gxf3 ♗e5 13. ♛e3?! – White could have defended more tenaciously with 13. ♖a3 ♕xh3 14. ♖e1 d5 15. ♛xe5 ♕xa3 16. bxa3 dxe4 17. fxe4 ♛d7 – 13... ♕xh3 14. ♖d1 ♛f8 15. f4 ♕g4 16. ♖f1 ♗f3+ 17. ♔g2 d5 – Black has organized a powerful attack in a position with approximate material balance, Helaszek – Kurlenda, Poland 1994.) 11... ♕xg5 12. ♗xg5 ♖f6 13. ♛xd4 d5 14. ♖a3 h6 15. ♗f3 ♗f8 – Schlechter – Burn, Ostend 1907. All Black's pieces will be in action in just a few moves.

9...d5



Now, there arise similar positions, with pawns behind each other, (white on e5 and black on e4) in two variations. I believe, Black has problems in neither of them.

10. ♗xe5

About 10. ♕b3 dxe4 11. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12. dxe5 ♕f5 13. ♕f4 ♕c5 14. ♛h5 ♕e6!? (This is a very purposeful move. Black will have doubled pawns indeed, but his rook will

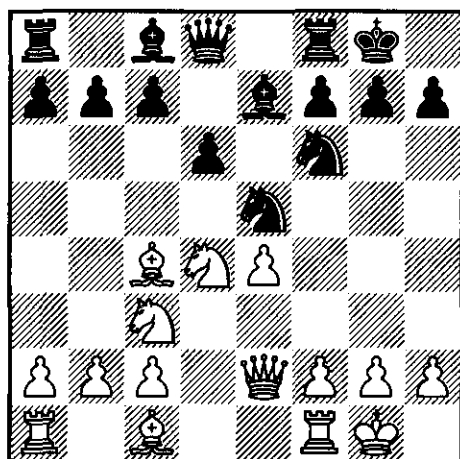
be active and he will obtain counterplay, connected with an attack against the pawn on e5.) 15. ♕xe6 fxe6 16. ♛g4 ♖f5 17. ♖ad1 ♛e7 – Murshed – Mokry, Brno 1991 – see **game 35**.

10... ♗xe5 11. dxe5 dxe4 12. ♕f4 ♕f5

Here, the difference with the variation, analyzed in our notes to move 10, is that White has not retreated with his bishop to b3.

13. ♛e2 ♕c5 14. ♔h1 ♛h4 15. ♕g3 ♛g5 – Babrikowski – Lorenz, Germany 1992.

C) 7. ♛e2 exd4 8. ♗xd4 ♗e5



9. ♕b3

I think every other move by White would deserve a question mark. At first, Black's position is cramped, so exchanges are definitely in his favour. What is even more important, White's light-squared bishop is too powerful, so he should not part with it just like this.

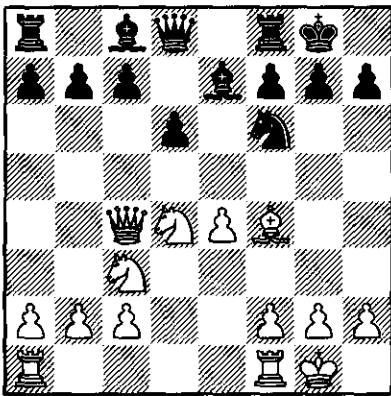
9. h3 ♗xc4 10. ♛xc4 ♗xe4 (This is a standard combination of the

Chapter 6

type – “temporary sacrifice” and then “a fork”.) 11. ♖xe4 d5 12. ♕e2 dxe4 13. ♕xe4 ♙f6 14. ♖f5, Bruehl – Stewart, Kettig 1994, 14... ♗e8 15. ♕f3 ♙e5

9. ♗d1 ♖xc4 10. ♕xc4 ♖xe4 (Repeat, repeat and learn it!) 11. ♖xe4 d5 12. ♕e2 dxe4 13. ♙f4 (13. ♖e6 ♕xd1+ 14. ♕xd1 ♙xe6 15. ♕e2 f5) 13... ♕d5 14. c4 ♕c5 15. ♖b5 ♕f5 16. ♙xc7 a6 17. ♖c3 ♙e6 Rittner – Staal, corr. 1980.

9. ♙f4 ♖xc4 10. ♕xc4



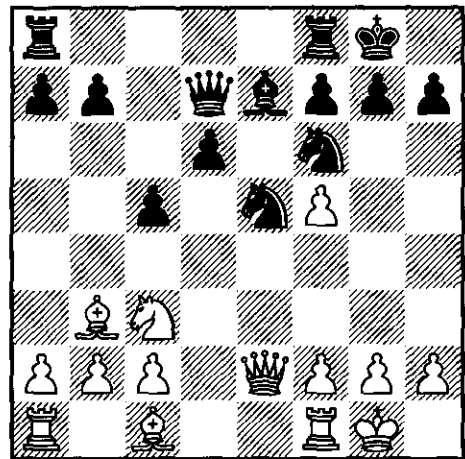
10...c5 (Now, the attack against the e4-pawn is not so effective for Black, because with a white bishop on f4, Black’s c7-pawn is hanging, but he finds a very good alternative.) 11. ♖de2 ♙e6 12. ♕d3 d5! (He gets rid of his backward pawn and activates his bishops.) 13. exd5 (In case of 13. e5 ♖h5 14. ♗ad1 d4, Black’s powerful central pawn, supported by the queen and the bishops, cramps White’s position considerably, for example: 15. ♖e4 h6 16. ♖4g3, Caposciutti – Dussol, France 2005, 16... ♖xg3 17. ♖xg3 ♕d5 18. b3 ♗ad8) 13... ♖xd5 14. ♕f3 ♕d7 15. ♗ad1 ♗ad8 16. ♕g3 ♖xc3 (With the help of

some tactics, Black avoids the pin and simplifies the game.) 17. ♖xc3 ♕c6 18. ♙c7 ♗xd1 19. ♗xd1 ♗e8 Barlov – Rivas Pastor, Mesa 1992.

9...c5 10. ♖f5

He can counter 10. ♖f3?! with the powerful resource 10... ♙g4, destroying White’s king-side pawn-structure: 11. ♙f4 ♙xf3 12. gxf3 ♖h5 13. ♙g3 ♙g5 14. ♖d5 ♖g6 15. ♖h1 ♖hf4 L.B.Hansen – Alkaersig, Aarhus 1993.

10... ♙xf5 11. exf5 ♕d7



C1) 12.f4

C2) 12. ♖d5

C1) In case of the immediate 12.f4 ♖c6 13.g4 Black can play 13...d5!?

White is better after the straightforward response 13... ♖d4 14. ♕g2 ♗ae8 15. ♙e3 ♖xb3 16. axb3 ♙d8 17. ♙f2 ♕c6 18. g5 ♖h5 19. ♖d5± Jepson – Furhoff, Helsingborg 1991.

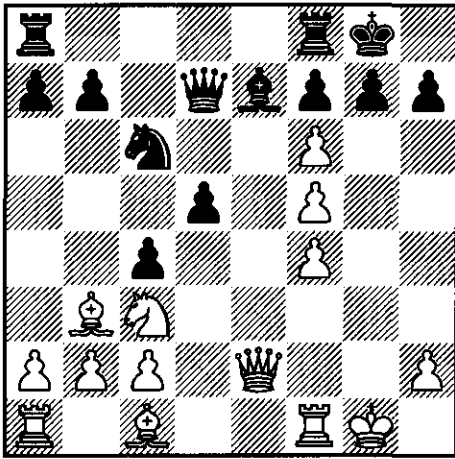
14.g5

He is in trouble following 14. ♕g2 c4 15. ♙a4 ♙c5+ 16. ♖h1

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♜bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♚e2

♜fe8 ♠ Goldenberg – Gueci, Internet 2000.

14...c4 15.gxf6

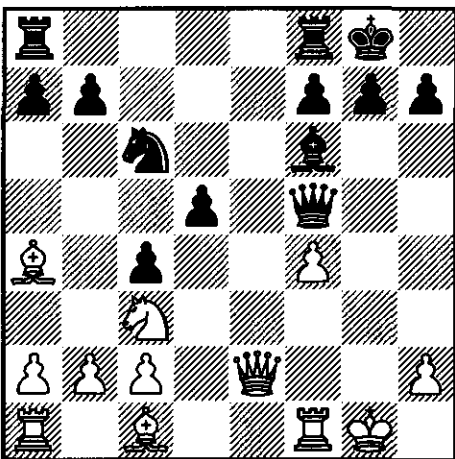


15...♙xf6!

The essence of Black's idea is that he sacrifices a piece, obtaining as compensation two pawns and initiative, since White's king is bare and needs protection.

Naturally, Black can refrain from sacrificing material, but then White ends up with a stable positional advantage: 15...♙c5+? 16. ♖h1 cxb3, Pneumonidis – Plante, Montreal 1999, 17. ♚g2! g6 18.fxg6 fxg6 19.axb3 ♜xf6 20. ♚xd5+ ♚xd5+ 21. ♗xd5±

16. ♙a4 ♚xf5



If now White exchanges naively on c6, Black will obtain a powerful pawn-centre, exerting pressure along the b-file. White will have then great difficulties mobilizing his queenside forces.

17. ♚g2

In case of 17. ♗d1?, Black can fork his opponent's bishop on a4 with the line: 17...b5! 18. ♗e3, Braeuning – Braun, Bielefeld 1992 (18. ♙xb5 ♗d4) 18...♚g6+ 19. ♖h1 ♚e4+ 20. ♚g2 ♚xg2+ 21. ♖xg2 bxa4 22. ♗xd5 ♙d4 23.c3 ♜ad8♠

He obtains an attractive position, with initiative after 17. ♙xc6 bxc6 18. ♗d1 ♜fe8 19. ♗e3 ♙d4 20. c3 ♙b6 21. ♜f3 ♜e4♠ Bibko – Zemerov, Novosibirsk 1998.

In answer to 17. ♚f3, Nisipeanu – Miltner, Germany 1997, Black can start again a chase after his opponent's isolated bishop with 17...a6 18. ♚xd5 (White can preserve his extra material with 18. ♙xc6 bxc6, but after 19. ♜f2 ♜fe8♠, Black's prospects are at least equal.) 18...♚g6+ 19. ♖h1 ♙xc3 20.bxc3 b5 21. ♜g1 ♚f6=

17...♗e7

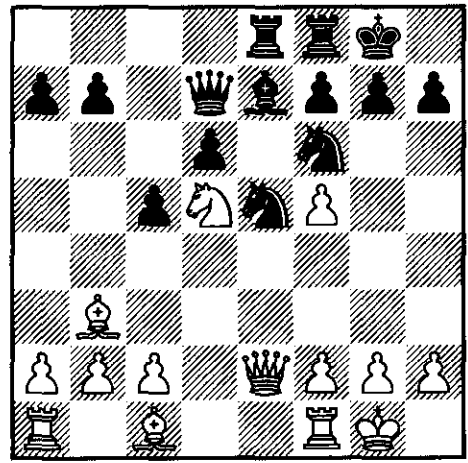
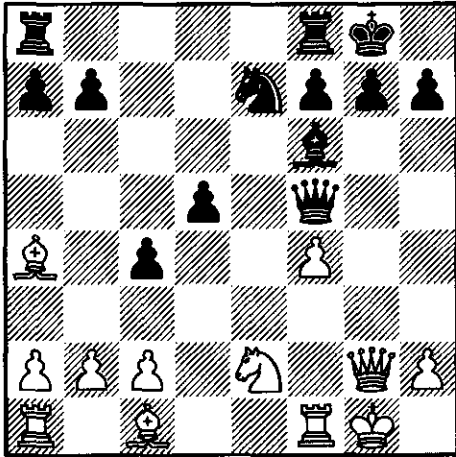
He protects reliably his d5-pawn and creates the threat a7-a6 and b7-b5.

18. ♗e2

White wishes to play c2-c3 and retreat his bishop backwards.

It would be worse for him to choose with the same idea the move 18. ♗d1, because of Black's immediate reaction 18...b5! 19. ♙xb5 ♜ab8 20.a4 (White cannot

remedy the situation with the line: 20.♙a4 ♖b4 21.♘e3 ♜c8 22.♘g4 ♙d4+ 23.♔h1 ♖xa4 24.c3 ♙c5♯ Jepson – Johansson, Borlange 1992.) 20...♜c8 21.♙e3 (21.♘e3 a6♯) 21...a6 22.♙a7 ♖a8♯ and Black restores the material balance maintaining powerful pressure.



After 13.♘e3, Black seizes the initiative on the queenside: 13... ♙d8 14.♖d1 (White misplayed the position completely in the next game: 14.♜d1 b5 15.c4 a6 16.cxb5 axb5 17.a4 c4 18.♙c2 d5♯ Theissen – Dr. Braun, Dortmund 1992.) 14...b5 15.c3 c4 16.♙c2 ♙b6 17.a4 a6 18.h3 ♜c6♯ Pariente – Campora, Cordoba 1994.

18...b5!

This is an already familiar motif! Black cannot regain his piece indeed, but he enters a favourable endgame.

19.♙xb5 ♜xc2 20.♘c3 ♜xg2+ 21.♔xg2 ♖fd8 22.♙a4 ♖ab8 23.♙d1 g6 24.a4 ♘f5♯ – White has problems completing his development and coordinating his forces, Kristiansen – Pedersen, Aalborg 1995 – **game 36**.

C2) 12.♘d5

White should better block his opponent's backward d6-pawn.

12...♖ae8

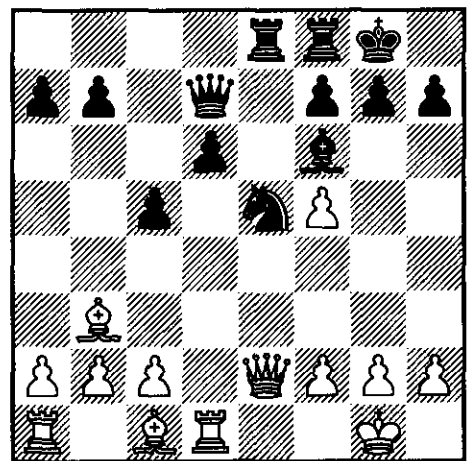
(diagram)

13.♖d1

This is an accurate defensive move.

The rather naive and too optimistic offensive – 13.f4 ♘c6 14.g4, Kuehn – Schmider, Germany 1997, can be countered energetically by Black with the line: 14... h5!? 15.gxh5 (15.g5 ♘xd5 16.♙xd5 ♙xg5 17.♜xh5 ♙f6♯) 15...♜xf5 16.♘e3 ♜h3♯

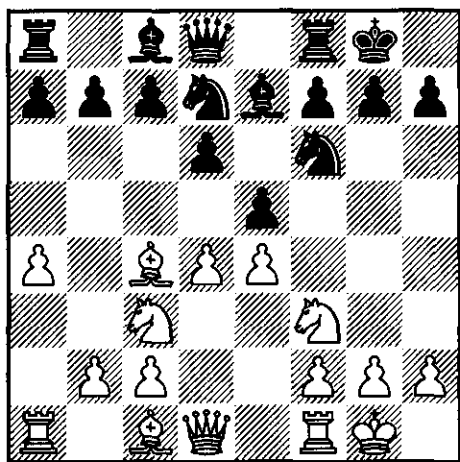
13...♙d8 14.♘xf6+ ♙xf6



3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♜bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 exd4

15. ♙e3 (White has also tried in practice here 15. ♙d5 ♜c6 16. ♗g4 ♜d4, draw, Unzicker – Har-toch, Amsterdam 1994.) **15... ♗xf5 16. ♗xd6 ♜g4 17. ♗d5 ♗g6 18. c3 ♜xe3 19. fxe3 ♙g5 20. ♗d7 ♙xe3+ 21. ♖h1 ♖h8**, draw, Espig – Dr. Braun, Suhl 1979.

D) 7.a4



D1) 7...exd4

D2) 7...c6

D1) I can recommend to the fans of experimenting the not so well-familiar idea of Alexander Morozevich:

7...exd4!? 8. ♗xd4

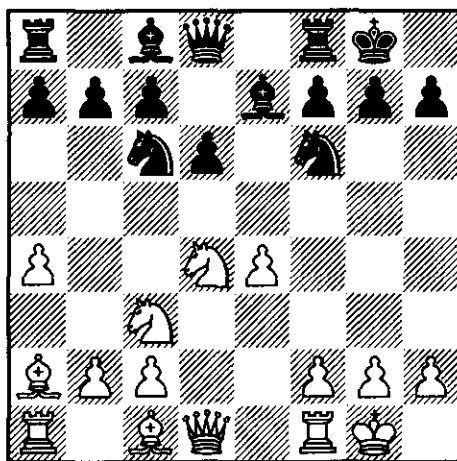
Black has nothing to worry about after 8. ♗xd4 ♜c5 9. h3 ♙e6 10. ♙e3, Bernard – Dr. Braun, Rostock 1978, 10... ♗fd7 11. ♙xe6 fxe6 12. ♗ad1 ♗e8↗

8... ♗e5 9. ♙a2

If White removes his bishop from the a2-g8 diagonal, Black's task becomes much simpler: 9. ♙e2 c5 10. ♗f3 ♜c6 11. h3 ♜b4 12. ♗e1 ♙e6 (He is preparing the

pawn-advance d6-d5 equalizing completely. Notice the placement of Black's queen knight. After White has played a2-a4, the knight will be comfortably placed on b4.) 13. ♗g5 ♙d7 14. ♙b5 h6 15. ♙xd7 ♗xd7 16. ♗f3 ♗fe8 17. ♜b1 (It looked like Black's knight on b4 was annoying White so much that he decided to play that awkward move!) 17... ♗ad8 18. c3, draw, Roesch – Dr. Braun, Germany 1992.

9... ♗c6



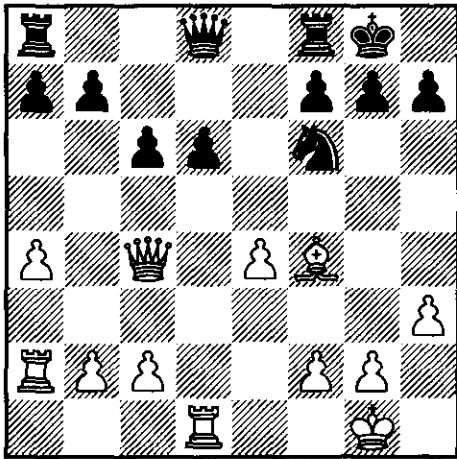
This is the essence of Black's idea. He has activated his knight, transferring it with tempo from d7 to c6 and it may go even further – to the b4-square (again with tempo!). White is reluctant to exchange on c6, because then the opponent will cover the d5-square with his pawn, exerting pressure along the b-file. White does not have so many constructive plans, though...

10.h3

In fact, this move is equal to passing.

In case of the active attempt – 10. ♖f5 ♙xf5! 11. exf5 ♘b4 12. ♗b3 d5∞, Black has nothing to worry about. His knight is perfectly placed on b4 and his d5-pawn isolates from the actions both White's bishop on b3 and his knight on c3.

10... ♘xd4 11. ♖xd4 ♙e6 12. ♙f4 ♙xa2 13. ♗xa2 ♘d7 14. ♘d5 ♙f6 15. ♖c4 c6 16. ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 17. ♗d1



17...d5

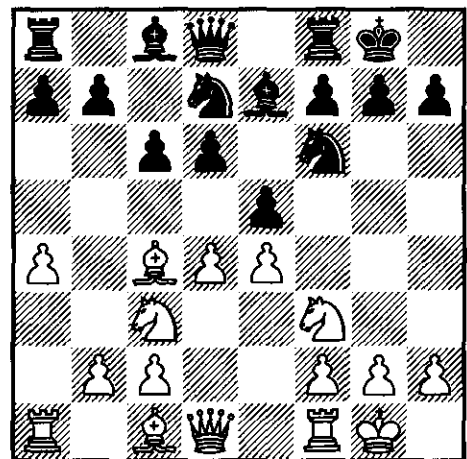
After the numerous exchanges the position has become a bit dull and now Black gets rid of his only weakness.

18. exd5 ♘xd5= Tkachiev – Morozevich, Moscow (blitz) 2006.

D2) 7...c6

This is a thematic move. We are already convinced that White's bishop on c4 is unstable, so Black creates the prerequisites for different tactical strikes connected with d6-d5. For example, a knight sacrifice on e4, followed by the fork d6-d5, regaining his piece,

or the immediate d6-d5 and after exd5 – ♘b6 (played with tempo, because of the attack against the bishop on c4) and ♘xd5, equalizing. White is reluctant to exchange on e5, so he must follow with another logical idea – to retreat the bishop to a2, or b3. Naturally, the bishop should remain on the a2-g8 diagonal, since it controls the important squares d5, e6 and f7.



D2a) 8.a5

D2b) 8. ♖e2

D2c) 8. ♗b3

D2d) 8. ♙a2

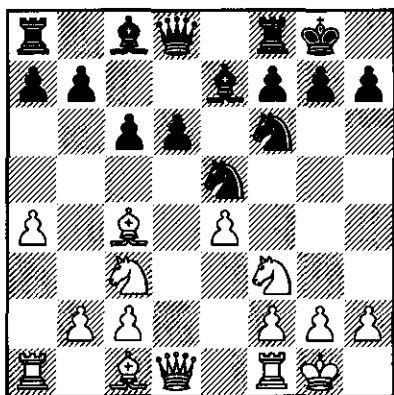
About 8. ♗e1 – see 7. ♗e1 c6 8.a4; as for 8.b3 – see 7.b3 c6 8.a4.

The rather slow move 8.h3 presents Black with an important tempo for the organization of his counterplay. His most energetic reply is 8... ♖a5!?. For example: 9. ♙a2 exd4 10. ♘xd4 ♘c5 11. ♗e1, Herrera – Llanes, San Sebastian de los Reyes 2004 (11. ♘b3 ♘xb3 12. ♙xb3 ♙e6 13. ♙xe6 fxe6 14. ♖e2 ♗ae8 15. ♙d2 ♖h5 16. ♖e3 a6= Zel-

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6

ic – Dizdarevic, Jahorina 2003 –
game 37) 11... ♖e8 12. ♙f4 ♚b4 ♘

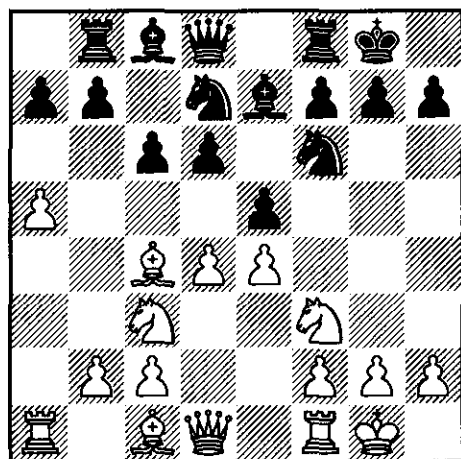
Now, just like on the previous moves, Black would not have any serious problems after the exchange on e5: 8. dxe5 ♘xe5



D2a) 8.a5

White occupies space on the queenside and he prevents in the process one of his opponent's threats – d6-d5 followed by ♘b6.

8... ♖b8



9. ♘xe5 (The retreat of the bishop 9. ♙e2, with the idea to prevent the pin of the knight on f3, enables Black to create pressure against the e4-pawn: 9... ♖e8 10. ♙e3 ♙f8 11. ♘xe5 ♖xe5 12. f4 ♖e8 13. ♙f3, Bouhallel – Beikert, Cappelle la Grande 1995, 13... ♙f5! 14. ♚d3 ♚e7 15. exf5 ♚xe3+ 16. ♚xe3 ♖xe3 ♘) 9... dxe5 10. ♚e2 (The queen protects the bishop on c4 from this square. It is very bad for White to opt for 10. ♚f3 ♚d4 11. ♙b3 ♙g4 12. ♚g3 ♘xe4 13. ♘xe4 ♚xe4 14. ♙d2 ♚g6 ♘ Gunsberger – Barendregt, Hamburg 1965.) 10... b6 11. ♙e3 ♚c7 12. h3 ♘d7 13. ♖ad1 a6 (Black prepares methodically his queenside offensive.) 14. f4 b5 15. ♙a2 ♙c5 (After the trade of the dark-squared bishops, Black can create a reliable outpost on e5 for his pieces.) 16. ♘h1 ♙xe3 17. ♚xe3 exf4 18. ♖xf4 ♘e5 ♘ Pablo Marin – Gavin Roche, Salamanca 1998.

Now, Black has another possibility. He plans b7-b5 and after capturing en passant, he can recapture, depending on circumstances, with his knight, or his pawn.

9. ♚e2

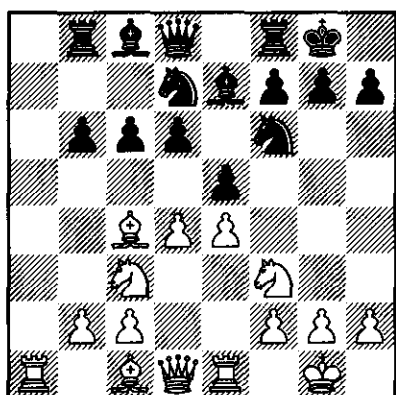
It would not be convincing for White to choose 9. d5, because he fails to create an outpost on d5 for his pieces: 9... b5 10. axb6 ♘xb6 11. ♙b3 cxd5 12. exd5 a6 13. h3 ♚c7 14. ♚e2 ♘fd7 15. ♖a3 ♘c5 16. ♙a2 ♘bd7 ♘ Sakaev – Del Rio, Ubeda 2001.

The rather academic move 9. ♖e1, enables Black to act in the same non-forcing manner: 9... b5 10. axb6 axb6

(diagram)

Here, White has tried in practice:

11. h3 b5 12. ♙b3 ♚c7 13. dxe5



dxe5 14. ♖g5 ♘c5 and Black seized the initiative, Osman – I. Ionescu, Bucharest 2000;

11. d5 b5 12. ♖f1 b4 13. dxc6 (After the careless move 13. ♘a4, Black is better: 13...cxd5 14.exd5 ♖a5 15. ♖g5 ♖xd5 16. ♗xd5 ♘xd5 17. ♖ad1 ♖xg5 18. ♘xg5 ♘7f6 19. ♖c4 ♖b7+ Mohrlock – Miltner, Germany 1995.) 13...bxc3 14.cxd7 cxb2 15. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 16.dxc8 ♗ ♗xc8 17. ♖d3 ♗c5 ♞ Velicka – Berезjuk, Bratislava 1992;

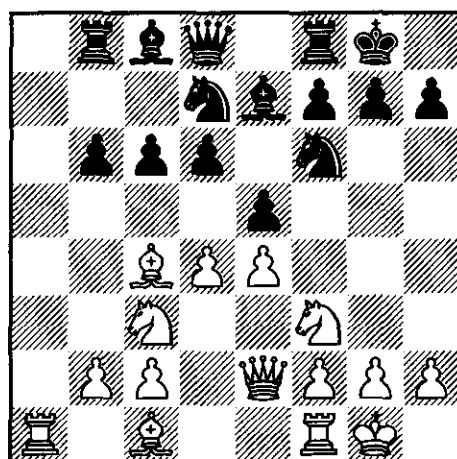
11. ♖g5 b5 12. ♖b3 h6 13. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 14.d5 c5 15. ♘e2 c4 16. ♖a2 ♘c5 ♞ I. Semenova – Kirillova, Voronezh 2004;

11. ♖f1 ♖b7 12. b3 ♖a8 13. ♖b2 b5 14.g3 ♖e8 15. ♖g2 ♖f8 16. ♖xa8 ♗xa8 17.dxe5 dxe5 18. ♗e2 ♖c5 19. ♖d1 ♗a7 ♞ Evelev – Suleimanov, Kolontaevo 1998;

11. b3 b5 12. ♖f1 ♖e8 13. ♖b2 (White's actions were a bit too sophisticated in the following game: 13. ♘b1 ♗c7 14. ♘bd2 exd4 15. ♘xd4 ♖f8 16. ♘f5 ♘c5 17. ♘g3 g6 ♞ Shytaj – Borgo, Bratto 2005.) 13...♖f8 14. ♖d3 ♗c7 15. ♗d2 ♖b7 16. ♘e2 c5! (Black clarifies the situation in the centre in that fashion.) 17.dxe5 dxe5 18. ♘c3 ♖c6

19. ♖f1 b4 20. ♘d5 ♖xd5 21.exd5 e4 22. ♘h4 ♖d6 ♞ Schmaltz – A. Sokolovs, Viernheim 1992.

9...b5 10.axb6 axb6



11.d5

This is an attempt by White to compromise the light squares in Black's camp. If he postpones this move a bit, Black will solve his opening problems even easier: 11. ♖d1 ♗c7 12.d5 b5 13. ♖b3 b4 14.dxc6 bxc3 15.cxd7 ♖xd7 16.bxc3 ♗xc3= Simacek – Orsag, Pribram 1998.

11...cxd5 12. ♘xd5

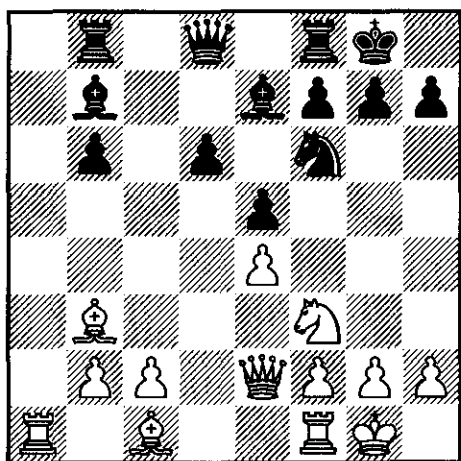
12.exd5 ♖b7 13. ♖a7, Sutovsky – Azmaiparashvili, Pune 2004, 13...♗c8 14. ♖e3 ♖a8 15. ♖fa1 ♖xa7 16. ♖xa7 ♗b8 17. ♖a3 ♖c8 ♞

12...♘xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♘f6 14. ♖b3 ♖b7

(diagram)

Now, Black has created a weakness on d5 in his camp. White must transfer his knight from f3 to d5 in order to exploit that, but he needs four moves to accomplish it. In the meantime, Black will have his hands free for

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6



be in favour of White, because he would have an extra tempo if Black acts in an analogous fashion. We will soon see however, that a2-a4 is not such a great achievement for White. This move has some advantages, but has drawbacks too. The same can be said about the move c7-c6 as well.

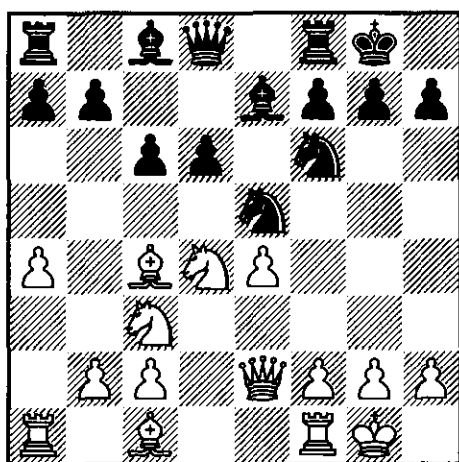
8...exd4 9. ♗xd4 ♗e5

actions and not just watch how his opponent improves the position of his pieces.

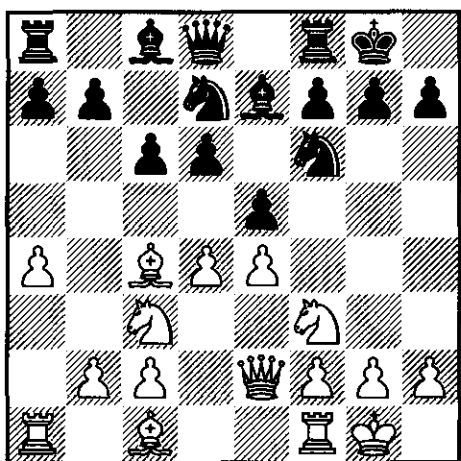
15. ♗d2 b5 16. f3 ♗d7 17. ♗b1 ♗c5 18. ♕a2 b4

This is a nice nuance. White's knight is denied an access to the c3-square.

19. ♕c4 ♖c7⇒ Bartel – Markowski, Krakow 2006.



D2b) 8. ♖e2



I should remind you that in response to 7. ♖e2, Black must organize his counterplay according to the scheme: 7...exd4 8. ♗xd4 ♗e5 9. ♕b3 c5! etc. The inclusion of the moves a4 and c6, seems to

10. ♕b3

10. ♖d1 ♖e8 (In this particular case, the exchange operation – 10... ♗xc4 11. ♖xc4 ♗xe4 12. ♗xe4 d5 does not work and this is because of Black's pawn on c6: 13. ♖e2 dxe4 14. ♗xc6! with an advantage for White.) 11. h3 ♕f8 12. ♕b3 a5 (He has a bit more space in this dynamic position, which is not so well analyzed yet. White must still complete the development of his queenside and find some place in the actions for his rook on a1. Black's defence is very solid and White will have great problems breaking it.) 13. ♗f3 (It deserves attention for White to choose 13. ♕e3, keeping all his

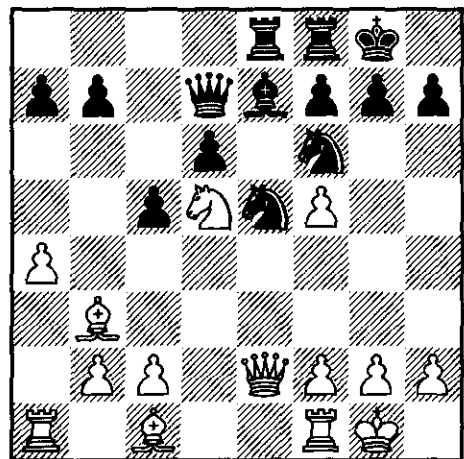
options.) 13...♖c7 14.♗xe5 dxe5 15.♙g5 ♕e7 16.♞d3 h6 17.♙h4 b6! (Black has failed to find a square for his bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal, but it will be very comfortable on the a6-square.) 18.♞f3 ♕a6 19.♖e3, Ricardi – Hoffman, Villa Martelli 1998, 19...♗h7! (Here, in the game, Black overlooked a very powerful tactical strike – 19...♞ad8? 20.♙xf6 ♙xf6 21.♞xf6! gxf6 22.♖xh6 ♖e7 23.♞e1 and White’s attack was overwhelming.) 20.♞d1 (Naturally, the f7-pawn is untouchable – 20.♙xf7? ♙c5.) 20...♞ad8=

10.♙a2 c5 11.♗f5 (White’s knight-maneuver “around the globe” – d4-b5-a3-c4-e3 is amusing, but not more than that: 11.♗db5 a6 12.♗a3 ♕e6 13.♗c4 ♗c6 14.♗e3 ♗d4 15.♖d3 b5 16.♗cd5 bxa4 17.♗xf6+, draw, Kountz – Hauke, Zell 1993.) 11...♙xf5 12.exf5 ♖d7 13.f4 (In case of 13.♗d5, Tokmachev – Rodchenkov, Rybinsk 2001, Black must play 13...♞ae8. The bishop on e7 is protected and that means White’s f5-pawn is hanging again. If now 14.♗e3, then 14...d5! 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♖xe5 ♗b4 – this is where the drawback of the position of White’s bishop on a2, and not on b3, is telling! – 17.♙b3 ♙d6 18.♖c3 ♖xf5= – Black has restored the material balance with an excellent position.) 13...♗c6 14.g4 ♗d4♞ Kindermann – Miltner, Dudweiler 1996 (14...♞ae8!?).

10...c5 11.♗f5

Now again, the flank maneuvers of White’s knight are not so promising for him: 11.♗db5 a6 12.♗a3 ♕e6 13.♗c4 ♗c6 14.♙e3 (It is essential to cover the d4-square. Black is better after 14.♞d1 ♗d4 15.♖d3 ♖c7 16.♙a2 d5 17.♗xd5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♙f5 19.♖f1 ♙xc2♣ Chatziioakimidis – Blauert, Dortmund 1995.) 14...♞b8 (14...♗d4!?) 15.♗d2 ♗a5 16.♙xe6 fxe6 17.e5!? dxe5 18.♗de4 ♖b6 19.b3 ♗d5♞ – he has an extra pawn after all, despite its being doubled and in addition Black’s knights have good outposts along the d and f-files, Behnk – Keck, Germany 1990.

11...♙xf5 12.exf5 ♖d7 13.♗d5 ♞ae8



14.♖b5?!

This queen-sortie on the queenside has become possible thanks to the pawn on a4 (in variation C2, the pawn is on a2), but White cannot achieve much with it. He had better opt for 14.♗e3 ♗c6 with mutual chances.

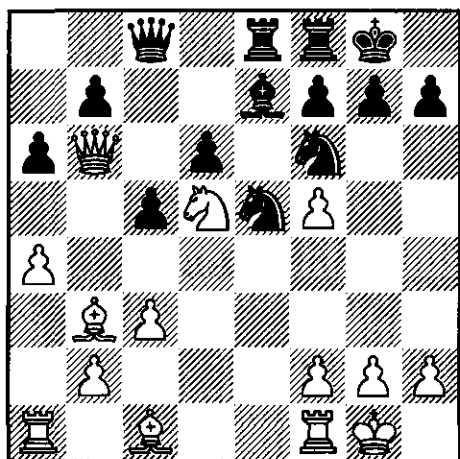
14...♖c8

Naturally, it is not advanta-

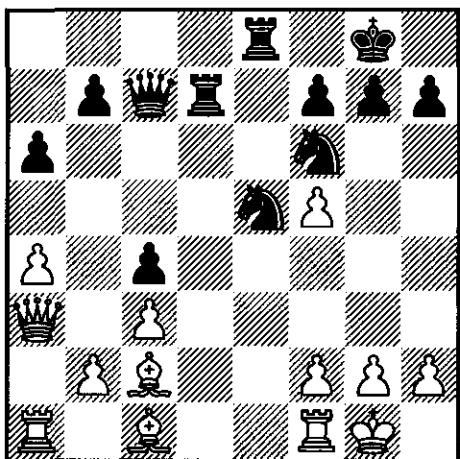
3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6

geous for Black to enter an end-game, or to trade his b7-pawn for his opponent's f5-pawn. He wishes either to capture the enemy pawn for free, or to force White to retreat his knight from d5. It was also good for Black to try 14... ♗c6, because after 15. c3 ♗xd5 16. ♕xd5 ♖xf5 17. ♕xc6 bxc6 18. ♖xc6 d5, he would have a comfortable position.

15. c3 a6 16. ♖b6

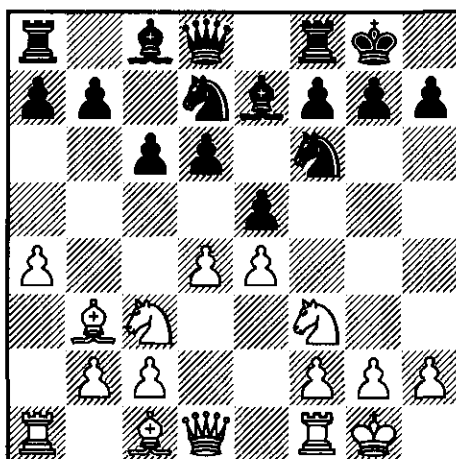


16...c4! (This pawn-sacrifice is very promising.) 17. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 18. ♖xd6 ♗fe8 19. ♕c2 ♗d7 20. ♖a3 (White is forced to isolate his queen.) 20... ♖c7= Saavedra – Hsu Li-Yang, Istanbul 2000.



Black has a good compensation for the sacrificed pawn thanks to his control over the central files. White has problems coordinating his pieces and he will hardly manage to keep his f5-pawn. Black will cover the diagonal of the enemy bishop on c2 with the move ♗d3 and then he will attack the helpless f5-pawn with his heavy pieces.

D2c) 8. ♕b3



White's bishop has retreated a square backwards, but it has remained in the scope of actions of Black's knight on d7.

8...exd4 9. ♗xd4

The only, but very essential, drawback of this move is that White's e4-pawn is not sufficiently protected.

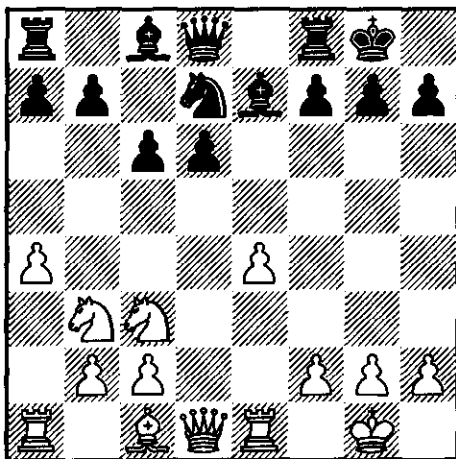
If he captures on d4 with his queen, then his knight on f3 will be misplaced: 9. ♖xd4 ♗c5 10. ♕a2 a5 11. ♕e3 ♕e6 12. ♕xe6 ♗xe6 13. ♖d3 ♖c7 14. ♗h4 ♗g4! (This is an excellent idea. Black is attacking not only the bishop on e3, but

the h2-square as well.) 15.♘f5 d5 16.♘xe7+ ♔h8! (Thanks to the checkmating threat, Black manages to reduce the tension in the centre, equalizing.) 17.g3 dxe4 18.♚xe4 ♘xe3 19.♚xe3 ♚xe7 20.♞ad1 ♞ad8 21.♞fe1 ♚b4, draw, Frolyanov – Yudin, Tomsk 2002.

9...♘c5 10.♞e1

It is amazing, but in one of the games after 10.♚e2, Black did not even try to exchange the bishop on b3 and he found another way to solve his problems in the opening: 10...a5 11.f3 ♞e6!? (His idea was very simple. If White captures on e6, Black will fortify his pawn-centre; otherwise, he would exchange bishops on b3 himself.) 12.♞xe6 fxe6 13.♞e3 ♚c7 14.♔h1 d5 ♞ Smit – Lobzhanidze, Bad Homburg 2004.

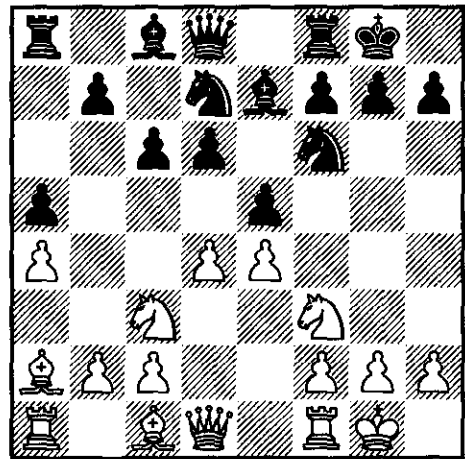
10...♘xb3 11.♘xb3 ♘d7



This knight will go to the centre, freeing in the process the f6-square for the bishop.

12.♞f4 ♘e5 13.♘d4 ♞f6 14.♔b3 ♞e8 ♞ Rymysky – Zavgorodniy, Odessa 2007.

D2d) 8.♞a2 a5



Black plans to exchange on d4 in the next few moves and to deploy his knight on e5, without being afraid of b2-b4. It is also reasonable for him to block the enemy pawn on a4, because then his queen can go comfortably to b6, attacking his opponent's b2-pawn. In some lines, the maneuver ♚b6-b4!? might be also unpleasant for White.

9.h3

This move is a clever pass. White takes under control the g4-square just in case.

See how the game may develop after the alternatives for him:

9.♞g5 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 11.♞e1 h6 12.♞f4 ♚b6 13.h3 ♞e8 14.♚f3 ♚b4 15.♞ed1 ♞d7 16.e5 dxe5 17.♞xe5 ♞ad8 18.♘f5 ♞xf5 19.♚xf5, Sharapov – Sevostianov, Evpatoria 2007, 19...♞xd1+ 20.♞xd1 ♚xb2 21.♘d5 ♚xa2 22.♘xe7+ ♞xe7 23.♞xf6 ♞d7 24.♞xd7 ♘xd7 25.♚xd7 gxf6 26.♚c8+ ♔g7 27.♚g4=

9.♚e2 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 11.h3

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6

(After 11. ♖f3 ♗b6 12. ♖b3 ♖a6 13. ♕e3 ♗c7 14. ♖d2 ♖b4 15. ♕b3 ♕e6 16. ♖ac1 d5, Black has accomplished the standard pawn-break in the centre and he has at least equalized, Kaminski – Cifuentes Parada, Polanica Zdroj 1992 – **game 38.**) 11... ♖e8 12. ♖f3 ♗b6 13. ♗f5 ♕xf5 14. exf5 d5 15. g4 ♗fe4̄, ничья, Krockenberger – Berning, Schwabisch Gmund 2001.

9... exd4 10. ♖xd4 ♖c5 11. ♖f3

We have analyzed the position after 11. ♖e1 ♗b6, in Chapter 7 (variation A3).

11... ♗b6 12. ♖d1

After some careful analysis, it becomes clear that White's planned line: 12. ♗f5 ♕xf5 13. ♖xf5 would not bring him any particular dividends. Black's pressure against the b2-pawn impedes the natural development of the dark-squared bishop on c1 and in addition, he will attack White's e4-pawn. 13... ♖ae8 14. ♖e1 (14. ♖d1 ♕d8 15. ♖xd6 ♗fxe4 16. ♖d1 ♕f6 17. ♖b1 ♗b4̄ Franco Ocampos – Seret, Pamplona 1994) 14... ♕d8 15. ♖e2 ♖e6! 16. ♕xe6 (This is forced in view of the threat ♖d4.) 16... ♖xe6 17. ♖f3 ♖fe8 18. b3 ♗d4 19. ♕b2 ♖xe4 20. ♖d1 ♖g5 21. ♖xd4 ♗xf3+ 22. gxf3 ♖xe2 23. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 24. ♖xd6 ♕h4̄ Gomez Baillo – Oratovsky, Albacete 2005.

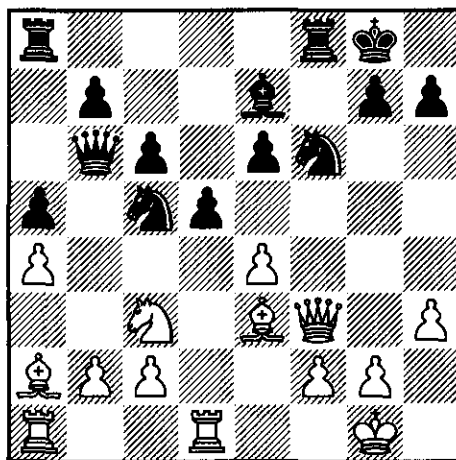
12... ♕e6 13. ♖xe6

It is obvious that White can achieve something meaningful only after 13. g4, but this move is double edged and Black obtains excellent counter chances after 13... ♖ae8 14. g5 ♗fd7 15. ♖g2 ♕xa2 16. ♖xa2 g6̄ Gavrikov – Costa, Bern 1991.

13... ♖xe6 14. ♕e3

Or 14. ♖e2 ♖ae8 15. ♕e3 d5 16. ♕d4, draw, Inkirov – Strikovic, La Roda 2004.

14... d5



Black has built a pawn-barrier along the a2-g8 diagonal, isolating in that fashion his opponent's light-squared bishop.

15. exd5 exd5 16. ♕d4

White protects indirectly his pawn on b2, planning to exchange at some moment on f6 and to follow that with a sacrifice on d5.

16... ♖h8 17. ♖g3 ♗d8 18. ♖e3 ♗d6= Rogulj – Nevednichy, Bled 1992 – **game 39.**

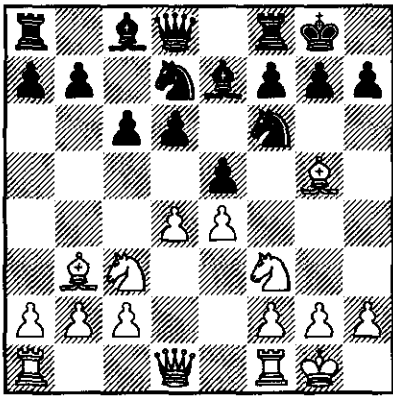
Chapter 6

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3
♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0

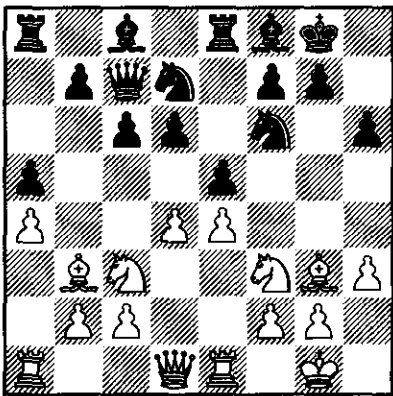
Complete Games

33 Wang Yu – Safin
Calcutta 2001

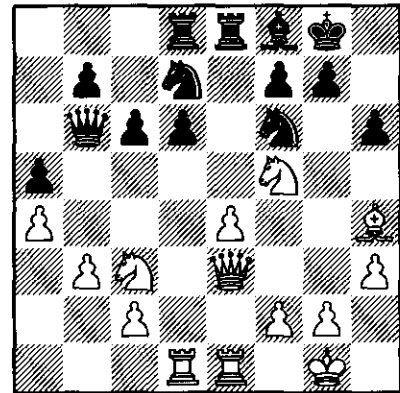
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♙g5 d6 3.♘c3
♘bd7 4.e4 e5 5.♘f3 ♙e7 6.♙c4
c6 7.♙b3 0-0 8.0-0



8...h6 9.♙h4 ♗c7 10.a4 a5
11.h3 ♞e8 12.♙g3 ♙f8 13.♞e1



13...exd4 14.♗xd4 ♘e5 15.
♗e3 ♙e6 16.♙xe6 ♞xe6 17.♘d4
♞e8 18.♞ad1 ♗b6 19.b3 ♞ad8
20.g4 ♘ed7 21.♘f5



21...♗b4

Black does not wish to enter an endgame yet. He needs his queen not only to protect the d6-pawn, but mostly because he wants to maintain the tension on the flank and in the centre and to attack White's knight on c3 and the pawn on e4.

22.♗f3 g6 23.♙xf6?!

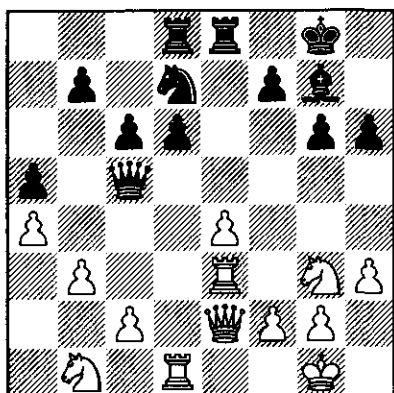
This is a questionable decision. White had better preserve that bishop and simply retreat with his knight to d4.

23...♘xf6 24.♘g3 ♙g7

He is suddenly in trouble. Black exerts rather unpleasant pressure on the dark squares (his bishop on g7 has no opponent!) and White's e4-pawn will soon come under attack.

25.♞e3 ♘d7 26.♘b1 ♗c5 27.♗e2

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♖bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0



27...h5

This is a useful move. White's knight on g3 is not at ease any more and Black's bishop can go to h6 if necessary.

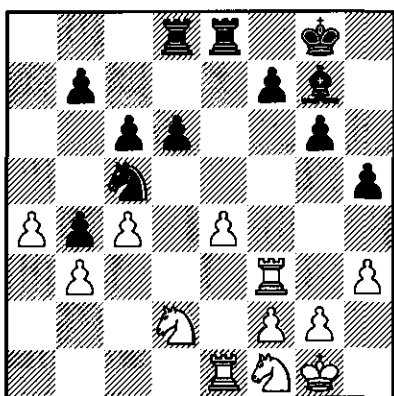
28. ♖e1 ♗e5?!

Black could have won a pawn here with the line: 28... ♕h6 29. ♖d3 d5 30. ♗d1 h4 31. ♗e2 ♖xe4

29. c4 ♗b4 30. ♗c2 ♗d7 31. ♗f1 ♗c5 32. ♖bd2 ♗e6

He does not wish to force the issue yet and he continues the "cat and mouse" game. The dark squares in White's camp are hopelessly weak and he must only wait for the decisive strike – from d4, h6, or some other place.

33. ♗d3 ♕h6 34. ♖f3 ♗c5 35. ♗c3 ♕g7 36. ♗xb4 axb4



It is understandable that Black is eager to enter an end-

game of this type! White's e4 and b3-pawns are very weak and his pieces occupy purely defensive positions.

37. ♖fe3 ♖e6 38. g3 ♖de8 39. ♖g2 ♕d4 40. ♖3e2 f5 41. f3 ♕c3

Black had a very powerful move here – 41...h4! and if 42.g4, then 42...fxg4 43.fxg4 ♗d3 winning the exchange.

42. ♖d1 d5

White's e4-pawn is doomed.

43. cxd5 cxd5 44. ♗b1 dxe4 45. fxe4 ♕g7 46. ♗bd2 fxe4 47. ♗c4

Black was threatening e4-e3 and White decides to give up voluntarily a second pawn, with the hope of creating something like a blockade.

47... ♗xb3 48. ♗fe3 ♗c5 49. ♗d5 ♖c8 50. ♗xb4 ♗xa4 51. ♗e3

In case of 51. ♖d6 ♖xc4 52. ♖xe6 ♖xb4, White's position can hardly be saved.

51... ♗c3 52. ♖c2 ♖f8 53. ♖d7 ♖f7 54. ♖d8+ ♗h7 55. ♖c8 ♖b6 56. ♖c4 ♖f3 57. ♗ed5 ♗xd5 58. ♗xd5 ♖bb3

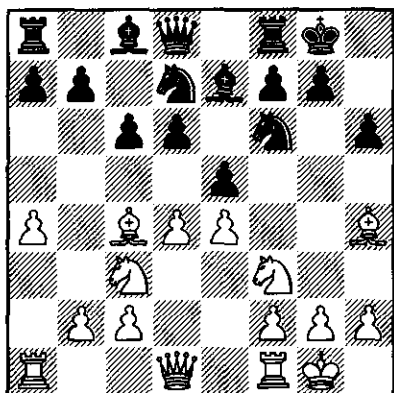
In addition to all his troubles, White's king comes under attack.

59. ♖xe4 ♖xg3+ 60. ♗f2 ♖bf3+ 61. ♗e2 ♖f7 62. ♗e3 ♕h6 63. ♖c8 ♖xh3 64. ♗d5 ♕g7 65. ♗f4 ♖h4. White resigned.

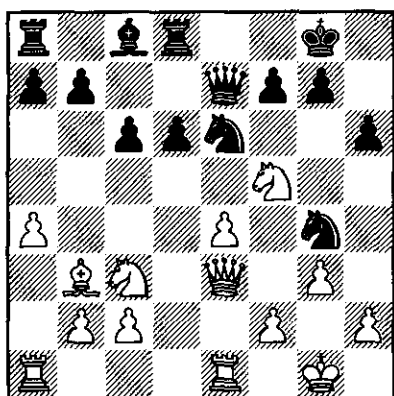
34 Kupreichik – R.Hartoch
Leeuwarden 1993

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 e5 4. ♕g5 ♕e7 5. ♗f3 ♖bd7 6. ♕c4

0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.a4 h6 9.♔h4



9...♘h5 10.♔xe7 ♚xe7 11. ♔e1 ♔d8 12.g3 ♘f8 13.♘h4 ♘f6 14.♔b3 exd4 15.♚xd4 ♘e6 16.♚e3 ♘g4 17.♘f5



There begins a small tactical conflict. It still seems harmless, because the position is not sharp at all.

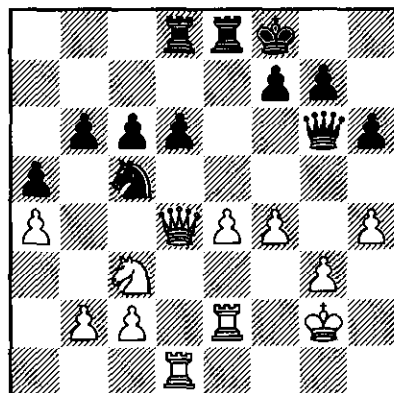
17...♚g5 18.♚e2 ♘c5 19.h4 ♚h5 20.♘e7+ ♔f8 21.♘xc8 ♔axc8

Most probably, in case of 21... ♘xb3 22.cxb3 ♔axc8, Black was afraid of the “minority attack” with 23.b4, although his position would have been quite acceptable in that case.

22.♔c4 a5 23.♔ad1 ♚g6 24. ♔g2 ♔e8 25.f3 ♘e5 26.f4 ♘xc4 27.♚xc4 b6

He provides additional protection of his knight, in order not to fear the possible pawn-break e4-e5.

28.♚d4 ♔cd8 29.♔e2



29...f5

The position would be more complicated after 29...d5 30.e5 ♔g8 and White would need to play very precisely not to face serious difficulties. It looks like the player with Black was only thinking about maintaining equality.

30.♔de1 fxe4 31.♘xe4 ♘xe4 32.♔xe4 ♔xe4 33.♔xe4 ♔e8 34.f5!

White boosts his initiative with this move.

34...♔xe4

34...♚xf5? 35.♔f4.

35.♚xe4 ♚h5 36.♚xc6

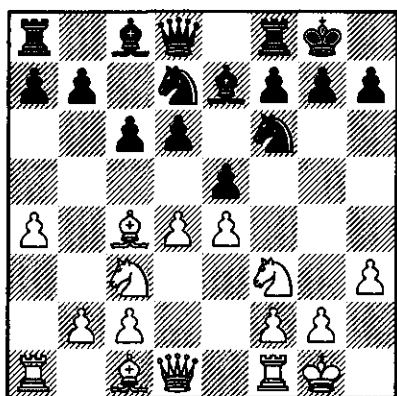
White’s king is bare and this minimizes his winning chances.

36...♚e2+ 37.♔h3 ♚f1+ 38. ♔g4 ♚e2+ 39.♔f4 ♚e5+ 40. ♔f3 ♚xf5+ 41.♔g2 ♔e7 42. ♚c7+ ♔e6 43.♚c8+ ♔e5 44. ♚c3+ ♔e6 45.♚c4+ ♔e5 46. ♚b5+ ♔f6 47.♚c6 ♔e7 48.♚c3 ♔e6 49.♚e3+ ♔d5 50.♚d2+ ♔e5. Draw.

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0

35 Murshed – Mokry
Brno 1991

1. d4 d6 2. e4 ♗f6 3. ♖c3 c6
4. h3 ♗bd7 5. ♗f3 e5 6. a4 ♙e7
7. ♙c4 0-0 8. 0-0



simply defended his pawn with 24...g6.

25. ♖xf5 ♖xf5

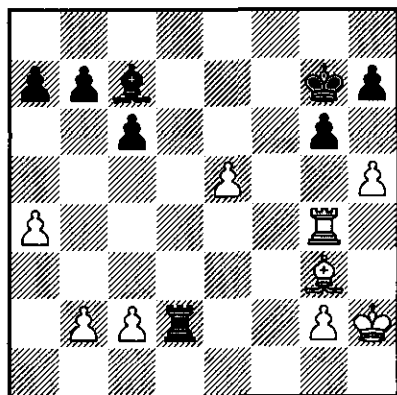
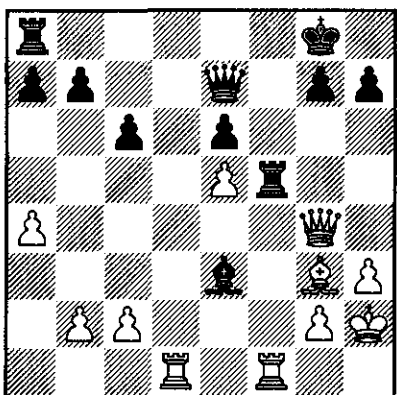
Here, Black had a clear road to equality with the line: 25... ♙d4 26. ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 27. ♗e1 ♙xb2 28. ♗b1 ♙xe5 29. ♗xb7 a5=

26. ♗xf5 ♙c7?

This is third imprecision in a row, after which Black begins having problems. He had to continue with 26...g6 27. ♗f3 ♙d4, restoring the material balance.

27. h4 g6 28. ♗g5 ♖g7 29. h5 ♗d8 30. ♗g4 ♗d2

8... ♗xe4 9. ♗xe4 d5 10. ♙b3 dxe4 11. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12. dxe5 ♙f5 13. ♙f4 ♙c5 14. ♖h5 ♙e6 15. ♙xe6 fxe6 16. ♖g4 ♗f5 17. ♗ad1 ♖e7 18. ♙g3 e3 19. fxe3 ♙xe3+ 20. ♖h2



31. b3?

White overlooks his chance. After 31. ♗b4 b6 32. h6+!, Black would have suddenly been in a big trouble, for example: 32... ♖g8 (32... ♖f7? 33. e6+ ♖xe6 34. ♙xc7; 32... ♖xh6? 33. ♙f4+) 33. e6 ♙d8 (or 33... ♙xg3+ 34. ♖xg3 ♗e2 35. ♗d4) 34. ♗f4 ♙g5 35. ♗c4 c5 36. ♙f4 and it would be highly questionable whether he would manage to save the game or not.

31... a5 32. ♖h3 ♗e2 33. hg hg 34. ♗d4 ♙xe5 35. ♙xe5+ ♗xe5 36. ♗d7+ ♖f6 37. ♗xb7 ♗e2 38. c4 ♗b2 39. g3 ♖e5 40. ♖g4 ♖d4

20... ♖f7

It is more reliable for Black to choose here 20... ♗af8 21. ♗xf5 ♗xf5, but he probably had started already thinking about seizing the initiative.

21. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 22. ♖f3 ♙b6 23. ♖f4 ♗e8 24. ♗f1 ♖e6

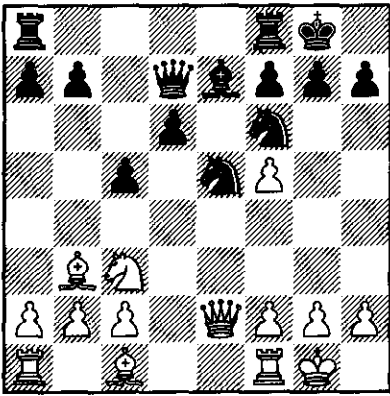
This decision is not easy to understand, since he could have

Black's king is very active now and that helps him to survive.

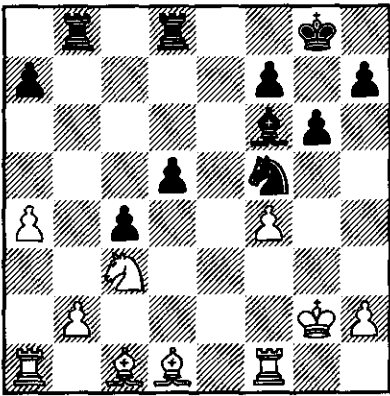
41.♔g5 ♕c3 42.c5 ♖xb3 43. ♗b6 ♕c4 44.g4 ♗b4 45.♞xc6 ♞xa4 46.♞c8 ♕b5 47.c6. Draw.

36 Kristiansen – S.Pedersen
Aalborg 1995

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e2 exd4 8.♗xd4 ♗e5 9.♙b3 c5 10.♗f5 ♙xf5 11.exf5 ♞d7



12.f4 ♗c6 13.g4 d5 14.g5 c4 15.gxf6 ♙xf6 16.♙a4 ♞xf5 17.♞g2 ♗e7 18.♗e2 b5 19.♙xb5 ♞xc2 20.♗c3 ♞xg2+ 21.♔xg2 ♞fd8 22.♙a4 ♞ab8 23.♙d1 g6 24.a4 ♗f5



25.a5

This is a very useful move, because three white pieces can occupy the freed a4-square. His attempt to try some active actions on the kingside would have backfired after: 25.♙g4 ♗h4+ 26.♔g3 h5 27.♙f3 (But not 27.♙h3?, in view of 27...d4 28.♗e4 ♞b3+.) 27...♗f5+ 28.♔h3 ♞b3 29.♙d1 ♞bb8 and White must either repeat moves, or he would need to go back to the plan with a4-a5, but with the loss of some tempi.

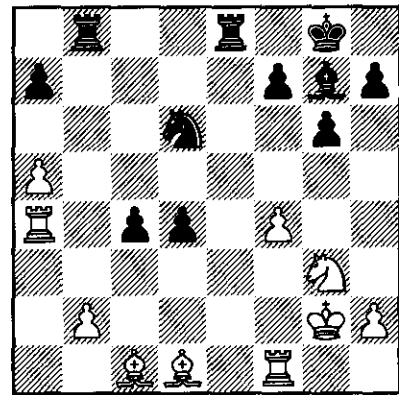
25...d4 26.♗e4 ♙g7 27.♞a4

This is a reasonable decision, because the rook was idle on the a1-square.

27...♞e8 28.♗g3

White fails to preserve his knight on its dominant position in the centre of the board: 28.♙f3? ♗h4+ 29.♔g3 ♗xf3 30.♔xf3 ♞b3+ and he loses a piece.

28...♗d6



29.♙f3

It deserved attention for him to play 29.f5, in order to liven up a bit his bishop on c1.

29...d3

Black forces his opponent's pieces to take care of the protec-

As could be expected, White failed to find the brilliant resource 39.♖e4! – he would not only prevent the move d3-d2, but would protect his c3-pawn in the process. Black cannot win: 39...♗e3+ (After 39...fxe4 40.♗xe4 – the d3-pawn is pinned and White will capture it on the next move.) 40.♖d2 ♗f1+ 41.♖d1 fxe4 42.♗xe4 ♗xc3 43.♗xd3 ♗e3+ 44.♖e2 ♗xc1 45.♖xe3=

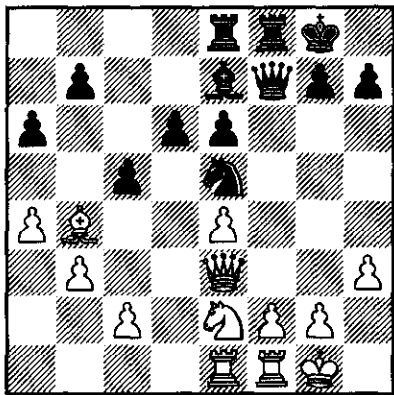
39...♗xc3

It is finished now – Black's pieces are all over the enemy king.

40.♗d5 ♗b2+. White resigned.

37 Zelic – Dizdarevic
Jahorina 2003

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e5
4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.0-0
c6 7.a4 ♖a5 8.♗a2 0-0 9.h3
exd4 10.♗xd4 ♗c5 11.♗b3
♗xb3 12.♗xb3 ♗e6 13.♗xe6
fxe6 14.♖e2 ♗ae8 15.♗d2 ♖h5
16.♖e3 a6 17.♗ae1 ♗d7 18.♗e2
♖f7 19.♗b4 ♗e5 20.b3 c5!?



Black demonstrates that he is

a fighting mood. He avoids simplifications and tries to seize the initiative in the centre. White is practically forced to begin active actions on the kingside; otherwise, he would end up as the defending side.

21.♗d2 ♗c6 22.f4 d5 23.c3
♗d6 24.e5 ♗b8 25.♗g3?!

He overlooks Black's threats. White could have maintained the balance with 25.♖d3 ♗a7 26.♗e3.

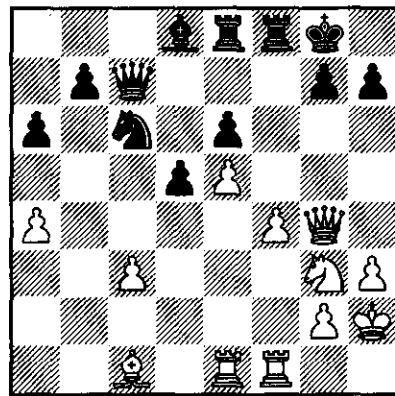
25...c4! 26.bxc4 ♗a7 27.c5

White was forced to compromise his pawn-structure in order to save his queen from the pin. Naturally, Black will regain easily his sacrificed pawn.

27...♖e7

It was probably worth for him to improve at first the placement of his knight: 27...♗a5!? 28.♖f2 ♗c4.

28.♖h2 ♗xc5 29.♖d3 ♖c7
30.♖e2 ♗e7 31.♖g4 ♗d8 32.
♗c1



32...♗f7?!

This move was a part of Black's plan, but it was connected with a tactical mistake. He could have maintained a slight, but stable

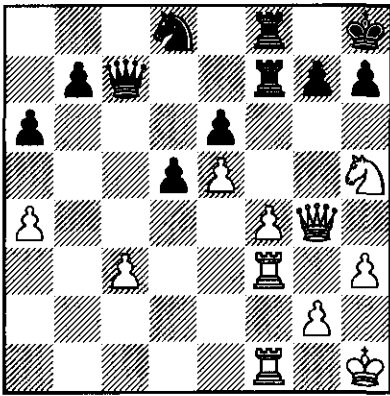
3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♖bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0

edge with the line: 32... ♖h8!?
33. ♗d1 ♗a5.

33. ♙a3?!

White misses his chance. After 33.c4! dxc4 34. ♗e4, he would have got rid of his weak pawn, seizing the initiative (restoring the material balance then would have been just a matter of time).

33... ♙e7 34. ♙xe7 ♗exe7 35. ♖h1 ♗f8 36. ♗h5 ♖h8 37. ♗g3 ♗ee8 38. ♗h5 ♗d8 39. ♗f3 ♗f7 40. ♗ef1 ♗ef8



Several times in a row (for example on moves 37, or 39), White could have pushed f4-f5, equalizing, but he was reluctant to enter complications, maybe, because of a time-trouble. Now, Black has prevented this breakthrough and wishes at last to deal seriously with his opponent's vulnerable queenside pawns.

41. ♗h4 ♗c4 42. a5 ♗c6 43. ♗g3

White is threatening again f4-f5.

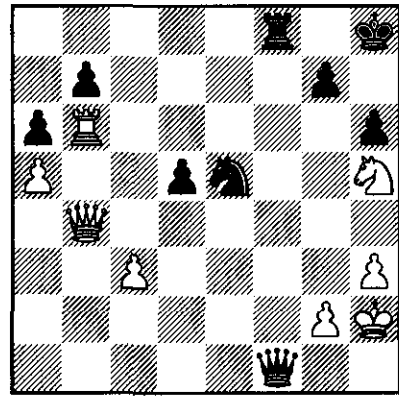
43... ♗e7 44. ♗b1 ♗c5 45. ♗b6 ♗c6 46. f5 exf5 47. ♗xf5 ♗e7 48. ♗xf7 ♗xf7 49. ♗g5 h6 50. ♗h4 ♗xe5

Black has finally parried all his opponent's threats on the king-side and has won a pawn.

51. ♗b4?

This move loses immediately. It was more resilient for him to defend with 51. ♗b1 ♗c6 52. ♗a1 ♗f5 53. ♗e1.

51... ♗f1+ 52. ♖h2



52... ♗f3+!

White resigned, because he would be checkmated in a few moves (53.gxf3 ♗f2+ 54. ♖h1 ♗xf3+ 55. ♖h2 ♗e2+ 56. ♖g3 ♗e3+ etc.).

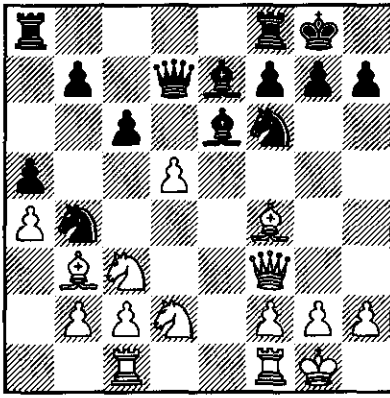
38 Kaminski–CifuentesParada Polanica Zdroj 1992

1.e4 e5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. d4 ♗f6 4. ♖c3 ♖bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6 8. ♗e2 exd4 9. ♗xd4 ♗c5 10. ♙a2 a5 11. ♗f3 ♗b6 12. ♗b3 ♗a6 13. ♙e3 ♗c7 14. ♗d2 ♗b4 15. ♙b3 ♙e6 16. ♗ac1 d5 17. ♙f4 ♗d7 18. exd5

(diagram)

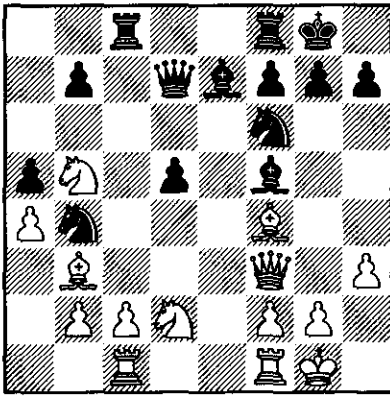
18... cxd5

Capturing with the knight would have led to complete equality – 18... ♗bxd5 19. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♗c4. Black is trying to restrict



his opponent's bishop on b3 and avoids simplifying lines several times in a row. All that could have ended very badly for him.

19.h3 ♖ac8 20.♗b5 ♙f5



21.♗d6

This is a nice simplifying operation.

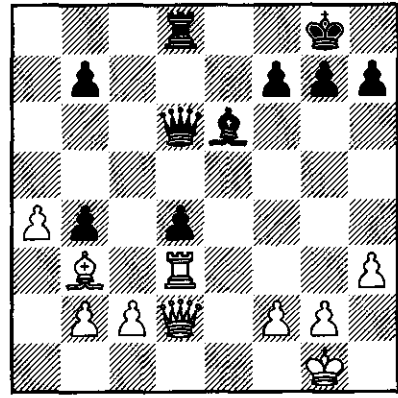
21...♙xd6 22.♙xd6 ♖fe8 23. ♙xb4 axb4 24.♗f4 ♗e4 25. ♗xe4 ♖xe4 26.♗d2 ♙e6 27. ♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♗d6 29.♖e3?!

After 29.♖e4!, White could have won a pawn without any compensation for Black.

29...d4 30.♖d3 ♖d8
(diagram)

31.♙xe6?!

He could have still won a pawn, but he needed to find the variation 31.c3! bxc3 32.bxc3 ♙xb3 33.♖xd4 ♙d5 34.c4 etc.

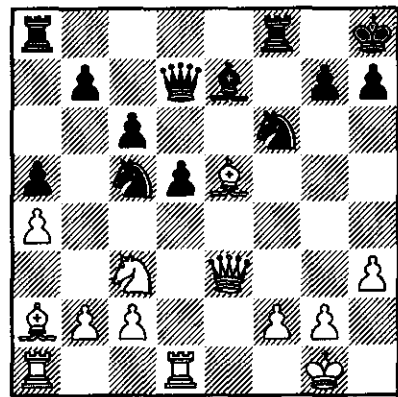


31...fxe6 32.♖b3 ♖c8 33. ♗xb4 ♗xb4 34.♖xb4 ♖xc2 35.♖xd4

Now, White would not have changed much with 35.♖xb7 d3 36. ♖d7 d2 37.♗f1 ♖xb2 38.♗e2 ♖a2= 35...♖xb2 36.♖d7 ♖b4. Draw.

39 Rogulj – Nevednichy
Bled 1992

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.a4 c6 8.♙a2 a5 9.h3 exd4 10.♗xd4 ♗c5 11.♗f3 ♗b6 12.♖d1 ♙e6 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14. ♙e3 d5 15.exd5 exd5 16.♙d4 ♗h8 17.♗g3 ♗d8 18.♗e3 ♗d6 19.♙e5 ♗d7



20.♙c4

White overlooks the possibility to enter advantageous complica-

tions with 20. ♕xf6! gxf6 (Black cannot capture with the bishop, because he loses his knight on c5 and taking with the rook – 20... ♖xf6 would be countered by his opponent with 21. ♕xd5! cxd5 22. ♖xd5 ♖c7 23. ♖e5 ♕f8 24. ♗d5 ♖c6 25. ♗xf6 gxf6 26. ♖f5±) 21. ♗e2 ♗xa4 22. c4 ♗xb2 23. ♖d2 ♗a4 24. cxd5 and White has an excellent compensation for the pawn – Black’s king is bare and there are bishops of opposite colours on the board.

20... ♖ac8 21. ♕xf6 ♖xf6 22. ♗xd5?

Now, this combination is not correct. White had to retreat simply with his bishop – 22. ♕e2 and his position would be worse, but quite defensible.

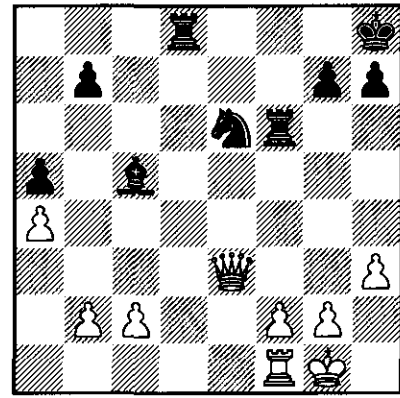
22... cxd5 23. ♖xd5 ♖e6?!

Black, in his turn, makes a mistake too. It was obviously bad for him to play 23... ♖e8? 24. ♖e5 ♖c7 25. ♖e1 – White regains his bishop, ending up with two extra pawns, but after 23... ♖c7, his compensation for the piece would have been insufficient.

24. ♖d8+?

The enemy queen was a very juicy bait and it was not easy for White to refrain from biting it. Meanwhile, he could have equalized completely with the line: 24. ♖xc5! ♕xc5 25. ♕xe6 ♕xe3 26. ♕xc8 ♖xf2 27. ♖h1 ♖xc2 28. ♖e1 ♖c1 29. ♖xc1 ♕xc1 30. ♕xb7 ♕xb2.

24... ♖xd8 25. ♕xe6 ♗xe6 26. ♖f1 ♕c5



The material ratio is approximately equal from the point of view of mathematics. White has a queen and two pawns, while Black has a rook, a bishop and a knight. His pieces are much more active however, and he is already attacking the f2-square.

27. ♖e5

This is mistake. White had to play 27. ♖e1.

27... h6

Black could have finished his opponent off immediately with the beautiful tactical strike 27... ♖xf2! 28. ♖xf2 (28. ♖xe6 ♖e2+) 28... ♖d1+ 29. ♖h2 ♕d6. White’s defence remains very difficult, though...

28. ♖e4 b6 29. c3 ♗g5 30. ♖b7 ♖e8 31. ♖h1 ♗e4 32. ♖d7 ♗g3+

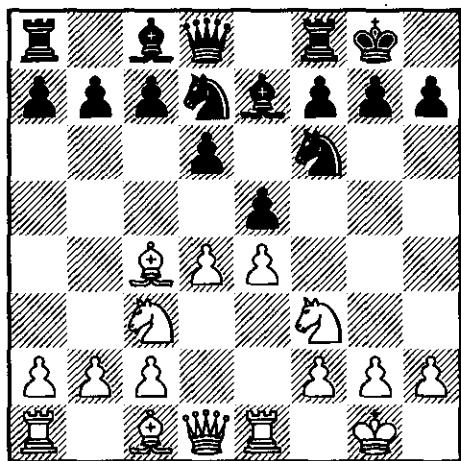
This is a good move too, but it was even more precise for Black to choose 32... ♗xf2+ 33. ♖h2 (33. ♖xf2 ♖e1+ 34. ♖h2 ♕d6+ 35. g3 ♖xf2#) 33... ♕d6+ 34. ♖g1 ♗xh3+ 35. ♖xh3 ♕c5+.

33. ♖g1 ♖ef8 34. ♖d1 ♕xf2+ 35. ♖h2 ♗e2 36. h4 ♕g3+ 37. ♖h3 ♖g6 38. ♖d4 ♗g1#

Chapter 7

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e1

Quick Repertoire



This is the most popular move for White. His rook on e1 is well-placed in practically all the variations and it not only protects additionally the pawn on e4, but impedes Black's typical simplifying operations in the centre. Meanwhile, White's bishop on c4 has another possible square to retreat to – f1 and from there it can go later to g2.

7...c6

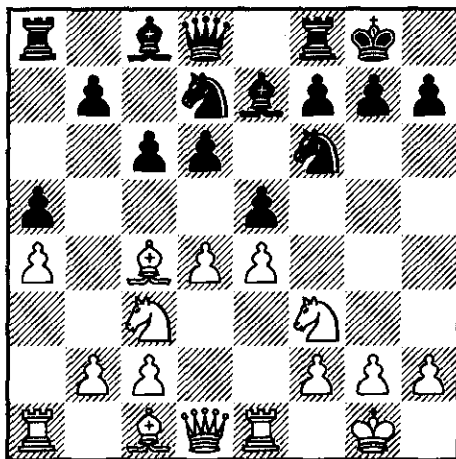
As usual in similar positions, Black can hardly continue the game without this move. He restricts the mobility of the enemy knight on c3 and the bishop on c4 and opens the way for his queen to the queenside.

8.a4

There follows a semi-forced play in a way. In about 2-3% of the games, White allowed his opponent to play b7-b5, in order to create a target for the undermining moves a2-a4, or d4-d5, but the attack against Black's advancing queenside pawns seemed to me to be ineffective for White.

8...a5

Black must prevent the move a4-a5, in order to have access to the b6-square for his pieces (queen and knight).



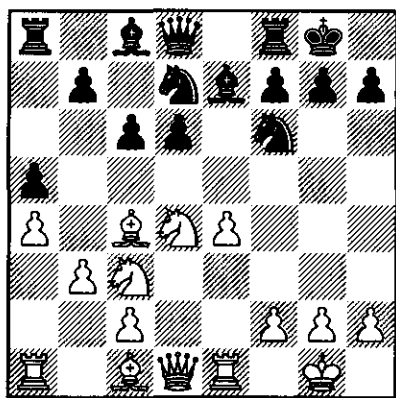
9.h3

We already know the maneuver 9.♙a2 from the previous chapter. White's bishop runs away from the possible strikes in the

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6

centre, but it becomes much less mobile. Black can create counterplay in a standard fashion: 9... exd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗c5 11. ♕f4 ♞b6 12. ♞d2 ♕e6! 13. ♗xe6 fxe6 14. e5 dxe5 15. ♕xe5 ♖h8. His active piece-play and the powerful outposts in the centre compensate the defects of his pawn-structure.

White's attempt to fianchetto to his dark-squared bishop after 9.b3, leads to the reduction of the mobility of its colleague on c4 and Black can exploit this with 9...exd4 10. ♗xd4 (In case of 10. ♞xd4, Black equalizes with the help of some small tactical operation – 10...♗e5! and it is bad for White to continue with 11. ♗xe5 dxe5 12. ♞xe5, because of 12...♗g4 13. ♞f4 – 13. ♞g3? ♕h4 – 13...♕d6 14. e5 ♗xe5, while following 11. ♕e2 ♗fg4 12. h3 12...♗xf3+ 13. ♕xf3 ♗e5 14. ♕e2 f5!?) Black obtains an excellent position.)



10... ♗b6 (He is preparing d6-d5 and the attack against the enemy bishop enables him to win an important tempo.) 11. ♕d3 d5 12. e5 ♗e8 13. ♞h5 g6 14. ♞h6 ♗g7 – Black has built a solid de-

fensive line in the centre and on the kingside.

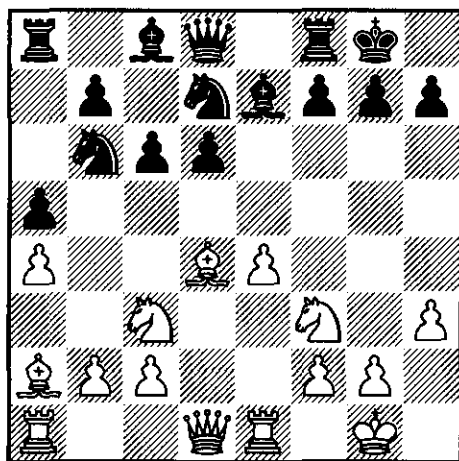
9... ♗b6

This is a relatively new move, which has become very popular lately mostly because of the efforts of Victor Bologan. Its idea is to prepare the pawn-advance d6-d5. Now, contrary to the variation with b2-b3, White's bishop on c4 can remain on the important a2-g8 diagonal and this is in his favour. Black has sufficient resources however, to maintain the tension.

10. ♕a2 ♗fd7

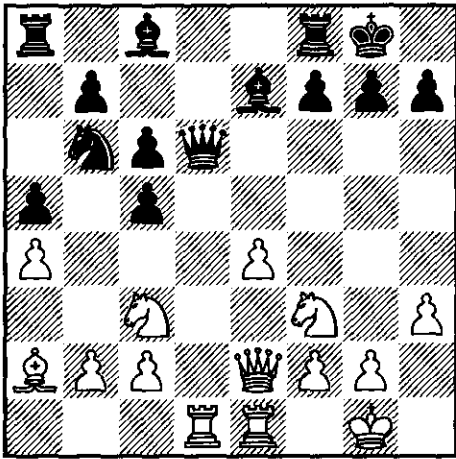
The immediate exchange 10... exd4 11. ♞xd4 ♗fd7 12. ♕f4 ♗c5 13. ♞ad1, enables White to win his opponent's weak d6-pawn.

11. ♕e3 exd4 12. ♕xd4!?



This is the most unpleasant move for Black. White is ready to present his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but he obtains an extra pawn in the centre and good attacking prospects (mostly thanks to the powerful bishop on a2).

12...♖c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.
♔e2 ♖d6 15.♗ad1



15...♔g6!?

Black creates the threat to capture on h3 and forces his opponent's king to go from g1 to a less safe square.

In case of 15...♔h6 16.♖d2! ♗e6 17.♗xe6 ♔xe6 18.f4, White seizes the initiative, Bacrot – Pelletier, Biel 2008.

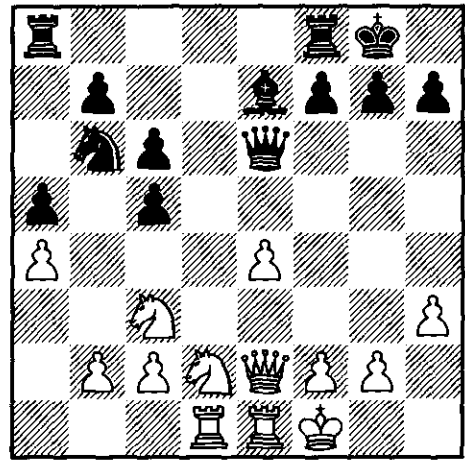
16.♔f1

He would not achieve much with 16.♖e5 ♔g5 and White's knight will have to go back, while in case of 16.♔h1 ♔h5, he will need to consider all the time the tactical strike ♗xh3!?

16...♔h6 17.♖d2

Black should not fear the line: 17.e5 ♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♔xe6 19.b3 ♗ad8.

17...♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♔xe6 ↗

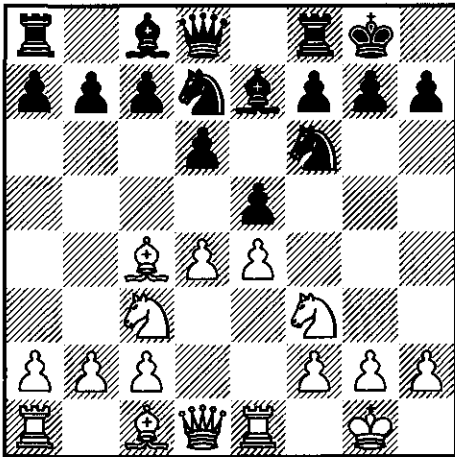


Now, contrary to the game Bacrot – Pelletier, White cannot play 19.f4?, because of the loss of the exchange – 19...♗h4. So, since he cannot organize unopposed an offensive on the kingside, Black will have additional time to complete his development and to create counterplay. It looks very good for him to follow with the maneuver ♗a8-d8-d4, increasing the pressure along the open d-file.

Chapter 7

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e1

Step by Step



This is the main tabia of the Modern Philidor Defence. The move with the rook to e1 is useful in the overwhelming majority of the variations, so White should better not postpone it.

7...c6 8.a4

It is not good for him to let the enemy b-pawn advance to b5, because this will be the beginning of an all-out queenside pawn-offensive by Black.

8.b3 b5 9.♙f1 ♙b7 10.♙b2 ♞e8
11.a3 ♙f8 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♗a2
♞b6 14.b4 c5 ♣ Boros – Zvjaginsev, Győr 1991.

8.♙g5 b5 9.♙b3 a6 10.a4 ♞b8
11.♞e2 ♞c7 12.♞ad1 ♞e8 13.axb5
draw, Popovic – Markus, Subotica 2001.

Black should not be afraid of the pawn-advance 8.d5 while his pawn is still on b7: 8...♗b6 9.♙f1 (9.♙b3 ♙g4 10.♞d3 cxd5 11.♗xd5 ♗bxd5 12.♙xd5 ♗xd5 13.♞xd5 ♞c8 14.♞b3 ♞c6 ♣ Ellingsen – Adnoy, Bergen 2001) 9...cxd5 10. exd5 ♞e8 11.a4, Zimmerman – Berczes, Budapest 2001, 11...a5 12.♙b5 ♙d7 ♣

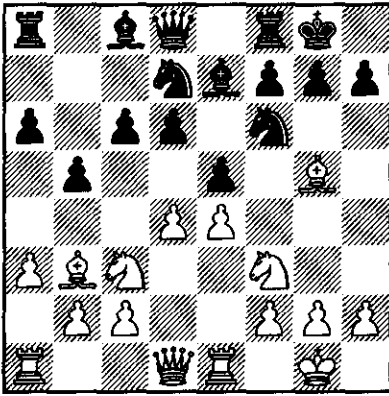
8.a3 b5 9.♙a2 (It is difficult to say whether the bishop is better placed on a2, in comparison to the b3-square, in the variation 8.♙b3 b5 9.a5. Black should not have too many problems to equalize.) 9... ♙b7 10.d5 a6 11.dxc6 ♙xc6 12.♗d5 ♞c8 13.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14.♞d3 h6 ♣ Sekulic – Dizdarevic, Neum 2002 – **game 40**.

In reply to 8.dxe5, Black should try to simplify the position with 8...♗xe5 9.♙e2 (9.♗xe5 dxe5 10.♞e2 b5 11.♙b3 a6 12.a4 ♙b7 13.♞d1 ♞c7 = Leventic – Fajdetic, Croatia 1992. He needs to keep his pawn on c6 for a while, controlling the d5-square, but later the pawn-advance c6-c5-c4, either immediately, or after the preliminary b5-b4, may become a threat.) 9...♞e8

Chapter 7

10.♖d4 ♜c7 11.♙f4 ♘g6 12.♙g3 ♘h5 13.♞ad1 ♘xg3 14.hxg3 b5 15. ♘h2 a6± Schmittdiel – Bezold, Austria 2007.

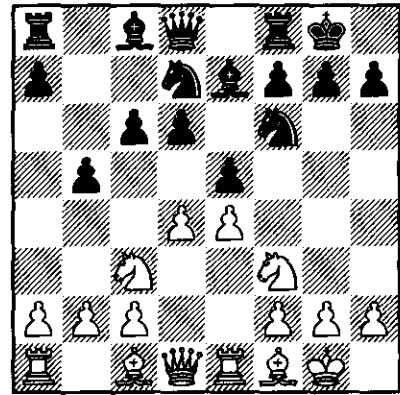
8.♙b3 b5 9.a3 (White must restrict the enemy pawn at least on the b5-square. The position may become more complicated, but still favourable for Black after 9.d5 b4 10.dxc6 bxc3 11.cxd7 ♙b7! – his bishop occupies outright an excellent diagonal, while White's pawn on d7 is running nowhere – 12.♖d3 cxb2 13.♙xb2 ♖xd7 14.♞ad1 ♖c6 15.♘d2 ♞ac8± Dujardin – Dussol, France 2005.) 9...a6 (Now, the move d4-d5 is no more a threat.) 10.♙g5



10...h6! (In general, this quiet move does not deserve any exclamation marks, but still it is very important. Black is forcing the enemy bishop to define its intentions. If White wishes to preserve the pin, then he would not have the maneuver ♘f3-h4-f5, which enabled him to obtain an advantage in the following game: 10... ♜c7 11.♖d2 ♙b7 12.♞ad1 ♞ad8 13.♘h4 ♞fe8 14.♘f5± Holzberg – Roth, Germany 1993.) 11.♙h4 ♜c7

12.♖d2 ♙b7±. In this position of the Ruy Lopez type, Black has several promising plans. He can try ♞fe8 and ♘h5, with the idea to trade the dark-squared bishops, as well as d6-d5, or c6-c5, planning to isolate his opponent's bishop on b3 from the actions. Notice that in the Ruy Lopez White usually has a pawn on c3, so his light-squared bishop can maneuver easily on the queenside. In this case his knight on c3 impedes that and it turns out to be not so well-placed there.

8.♙f1 b5

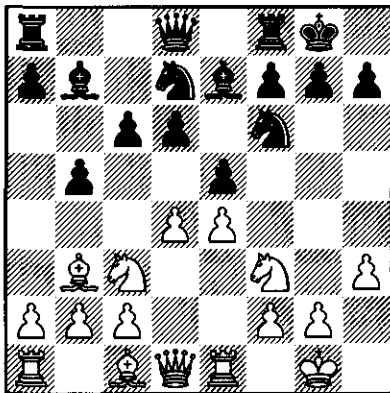


9.a4 (This move is at least consequent. The rather timid 9.a3 enables Black not only to develop his forces comfortably, but to fight for the initiative too, for example: 9...♙b7 10. g3 ♞e8 11.♙g5 a6 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♞e2 ♜c7 14.♖e1 h6 15.♙d2, Borngaesser – Seret, Ostend 1975, 15...a5±. Naturally, White's play was very far from perfect (He deployed his pieces very awkwardly!), but Black would not have any problems anyway.) 9... b4 10.♘b1 ♜c7 11.♙g5 ♞e8 (I think he had to attack the enemy bishop

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 a5

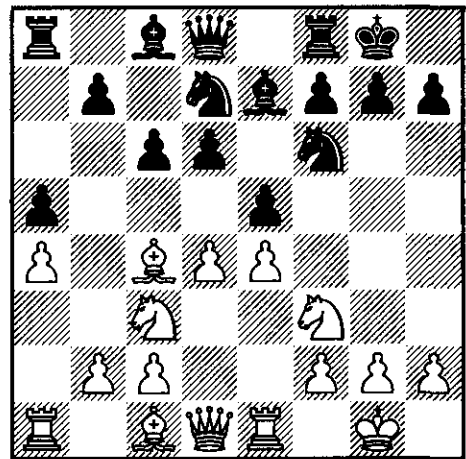
immediately with 11...h6!? 12. ♕h4 c5 13. d5 c4 ♞) 12. ♗bd2 ♗f8 13. h3 ♗e6 14. ♕e3 ♕f8 15. c3 ♖b8 ♞ Jo-
vanovic – Solak, Petrovac 2004.

The careless move 8.h3 enables Black to achieve everything he dreams about – 8...b5 9. ♕b3 (In case of 9. ♕f1 ♕b7 10. a3 a5, Black can try to seize the initiative outright, but White's position is very solid, he has not made any obvious mistakes, so he should not be worse – 11. b3 ♖e8 12. ♕b2 b4 13. axb4 axb4 14. ♖xa8 ♕xa8 15. ♗a4 exd4 16. ♗xd4 ♕f8 17. ♗f5 ♖c7 ♞ Radziewicz – M. Socko, Sopot 1998.) 9... ♕b7



15. ♕a2 ♖c7, Black's compensation for the pawn is more than sufficient, because White's bishop on a2 will remain out of action for long.) 14... ♗xd5 15. ♗xd5, Fier – Matsuura, Sao Paulo 2005, 15... f5!? ♞ – Black has a bishop-pair, so he should try to open the position.

8...a5



- A) 9. ♕a2
- B) 9. b3
- C) 9. h3

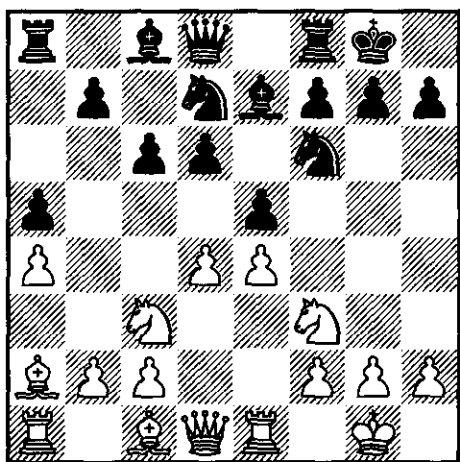
Chess is not tennis and you can hardly win a game if you play only from the back line: 9. ♕f1 exd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗c5 11. h3 (11. ♕f4, Bogut – Topalovic, Kastav 2002, 11... ♖e8 12. f3 ♖b6 13. ♖d2 g6 ♞) 11... ♖b6 12. b3 ♕d7 13. ♕b2 ♖ae8 14. ♖f3 ♗a6!? (Black is starting to advance “up to the net”, reminding his opponent that he has some weaknesses as well.) 15. ♖ad1 ♗b4 16. ♖d2 ♖c5 ♞ Pinheiro – V. Georgiev, Loures 2001.

In answer to 9. ♕g5, Black should better react to an already

10. a3 (The complications are in favour of Black after 10. d5 ♗c5! 11. dxc6 ♕xc6 12. ♕d5 ♕xd5 13. ♗xd5 ♗cxe4 14. ♖d3 ♗xd5 15. ♖xd5, Ramirez – Campora, Decameron 2003, 15... ♗c5 16. ♕e3 ♗e6 ♞) 10... a6 11. ♕g5 c5 12. dxe5 dxe5 13. ♕xf6 (White has failed to find any useful application of his queen bishop, so he decides to exchange it. It is possible that he simply underestimated his opponent's response.) 13... ♗xf6! 14. ♕d5 (Now, it turns out that after 14. ♗xe5 c4

familiar scheme – at first he must clarify the intentions of the enemy dark-squared bishop and then try to exchange it: 9...h6 10.♔h4 (But not 10.♔e3?! ♖g4 11.♔c1 ♜b6 and Black seizes the initiative.) 10...♗h5 11.♔xe7 ♜xe7 12.♜d2 (12.♗xe5?! dxe5 13.♜xh5 exd4; 12.♔f1 ♜d8 13.g3 ♗f8 14.♗xe5 dxe5 15.♜xh5 exd4 16.♗d1 ♜g5; Hassan – Barua, Moscow 1994) 12...♗f4 13.♜ad1 ♗b6 14.♔b3 ♔g4 15.♜e3 ♜f6; Rasmussen – Bentzen, Norresundby 1992. Black has deployed comfortably his forces and he exerts pressure on the kingside.

A) 9.♔a2

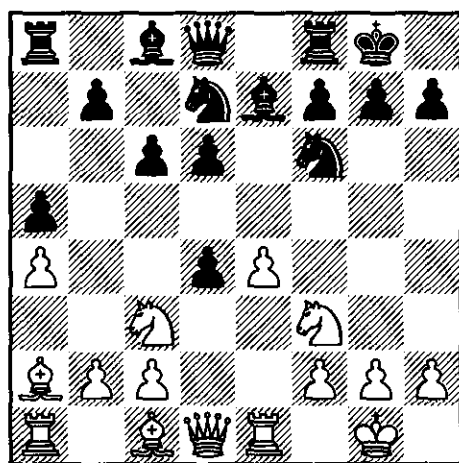


We are already familiar with this maneuver. White retreats his bishop immediately and he is not obliged any more to calculate on every move Black's possible counter strikes in the centre. On the other hand, his bishop is less mobile now and if necessary (for example if Black pushes d6-d5 and keeps his pawn on d5), it

may have problems to leave the queenside.

9...exd4

Black is trying to obtain a lively and dynamic position. He has ensured the c5-outpost for his knight and from there it will attack the pawns on a4 and e4. Later, he wishes to place his bishop on e6. In case of an exchange on this square, he will obtain a powerful pawn-centre. We have already seen a similar plan in our previous chapter.



10.♗xd4

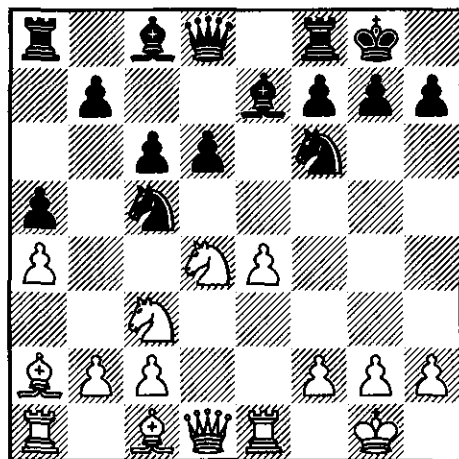
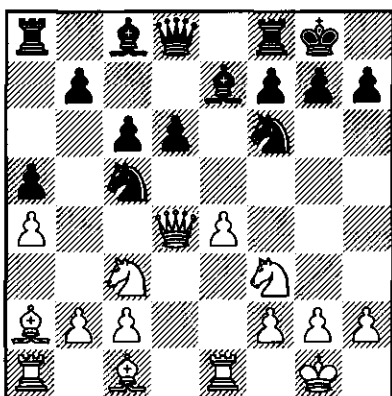
This is the most logical move. White frees the way forward of his f-pawn and his knight may go to f5. He plays only seldom in practice 10.♜xd4. This is easily understandable. He can hardly win the weak d6-pawn and the queen is not so well placed on d4, because it may come under attacks there. Meanwhile, the knight on f3 is misplaced too. After 10...♗c5

(diagram)

there may follow:

11.♔f4 ♔g4 12.♜ad1 ♔xf3 (It

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 a5



would be interesting for Black to try the pawn-sacrifice – 12... ♗b6!? 13. ♙xd6 ♙xd6 14. ♗xd6 ♖ad8∞ and thanks to the activity of his pieces, he has an excellent compensation for the minimal material deficit.) 13.gxf3 ♗e8 14. ♙g3 ♗b6⇌ I.Almasi – Tyomkin, Internet 2000.

White cannot harm his opponent with 11.h3 ♙e6 12. ♙xe6 ♗xe6 (It is worse for Black to play 12... fxe6?!, because of 13.e5; in fact, he has a good game even without a powerful pawn-centre, since he has excellent outposts for his knights and his bishop will go to the long diagonal.) 13. ♗c4 ♗d7 14. ♙e3 ♗e5 (White's hopes for an advantage are thawing like snow in April after every exchange.) 15. ♗e2 ♗xf3+ 16. ♗xf3 ♙f6⇌ Sermek – Stojanovski, Bled 2002 – **game 41**.

10... ♗c5

(diagram)

This position has been the subject of numerous discussions during the last several years. White has tried many different moves, but he has failed to demonstrate any convincing way to obtain an advantage.

A1) 11. ♗f3

A2) 11. ♙f4

A3) 11.h3

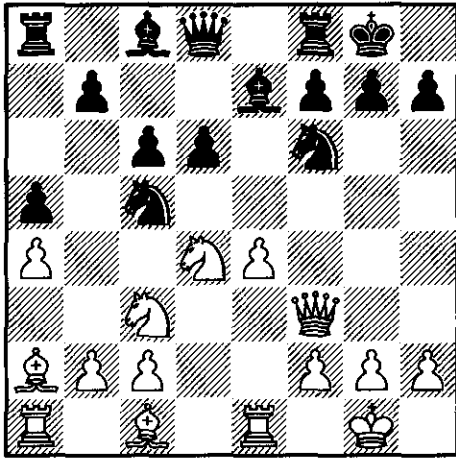
11.f3 – This is a solid move, but it is not aggressive and Black can regroup comfortably his pieces: 11... ♗b6 12. ♗h1, Janev – Miltner, France 2007, 12... ♖e8 13. ♗b3 ♗fd7⇌

The bishop-sortie 11. ♙g5 is completely harmless for Black: 11... ♗b6 12. ♗d2 ♙d7 13. ♗b3 ♗xb3 14. ♙xb3 ♙e6 15. ♖e3 ♙xb3 16. cxb3 ♖fe8 17. ♖d3 ♖ad8⇌ Kaminski – Tischbierek, Germany 1992.

We may have different attitude towards what doctor Tarasch had said about counting tempi in the opening and determining who had the advantage because of that, but wasting time in the opening cannot be recommended at all: 11. ♙c4 (This bishop was here a couple of moves before.) 11... ♗b6 12.h3 ♙e6 13. ♗e2? (The position would have been equal after 13. ♗d5! cxd5 14.exd5 ♗xd5 15. ♙xd5 ♖ae8⇌) 13... ♙xc4 14. ♗xc4 ♗b4! 15.b3 ♗xc4 16.bxc4

♠fd7 ♣ Dzhumaev – Lazic, Genova 2006.

A1) 11. ♖f3



No doubt, White must seek his chances on the kingside. The moment his queen leaves the centre, Black begins an offensive on the other side of the board.

11... ♜b6 12. ♗g5

If White takes care of his b2-pawn – 12. ♗b3, then the position is simplified considerably after 12... ♗xb3 13. ♗xb3 ♗e6 14. ♗e3 ♜c7 15. ♗a2 ♗xa2 16. ♞xa2 ♗d7 17. ♜e2 ♗f6 ♞ Slobodjan – Oratovsky, Fuerth 1998 – **game 42**. In fact, at one moment (after a mistake by White), the events in this game developed very fast.

12... ♗h8

Black loses following 12... ♜xb2?, because of 13. ♞ab1 ♜a3 14. ♗d5 ♜xf3 15. ♗xe7+ (check!). After he evacuates his king to the centre, he is again threatening to capture on b2. Besides the move in the game, it deserved attention for him to opt for 12... ♜b4!?, for

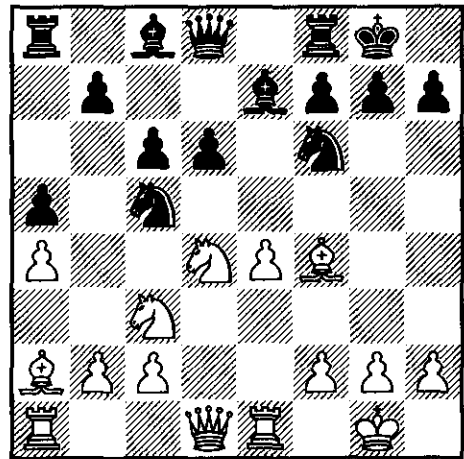
example: 13. ♗f5 (13. ♞ad1? ♗g4) 13... ♗xf5 14. exf5 ♞fe8 ♞

13.e5?!

This aggression was not necessary at all. White could maintain equality with 13. ♞ab1=

13... dxe5 14. ♞xe5 ♗g4 15. ♜f4 ♗e6 16. ♗xe6 fxe6 ♞ Teran Alvarez – Oratovsky, Mancha 2000 – game 43.

A2) 11. ♗f4



11... ♜b6 12. ♜d2

Black has no problems at all in case of 12.e5 dxe5 13. ♗xe5 ♗g4 14. ♜d2 ♞ad8 ♞

12... ♗e6!

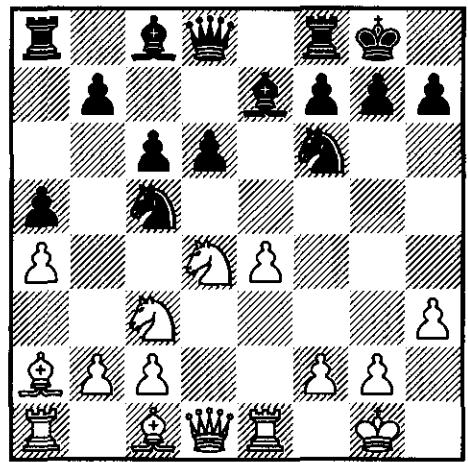
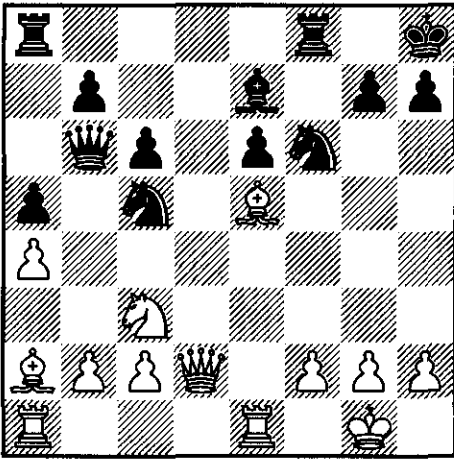
His tentative play after 12... ♞e8 13.h3 ♗d7 would enable White to seize the initiative on the kingside after 14.e5 dxe5 15. ♗xe5 ♜b4, Berg – Hamdouchi, Calvia 2007, 16. ♜g5!?

13. ♗xe6

There arises a tremendously complicated position after 13. ♗e3 ♜b4∞

13... fxe6 14.e5 dxe5 15. ♗xe5 ♗h8 ♞

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 a5



If we evaluate this position ignoring dynamics, then White should be clearly better, because he has a bishop-pair and Black's pawn-structure is hopelessly compromised. The thorough analysis shows however, that things are far from simple. White's bishop on a2 is out of action (This will become particularly obvious after Black deploys his knight on d5.), while Black exerts powerful pressure along the b and f-files. In addition, he has excellent outposts for his knights on c5 and d5. Therefore, in the final position of this variation, I consider Black's position as at least equal.

A3) 11.h3

(diagram)

11... ♖b6

After this queenside activity, Black obtains good counter chances.

12. ♗b3

White has tried some other moves too, but without any success:

12. ♗f5 ♙xf5 13. exf5 ♖fe8 14. b3 (White is treating his own bishop

in a really cruel fashion...) 14...d5 15. ♖f3 d4 16. ♗e2 ♗ce4 – Ankerst – Stanciu, Bled 1992;

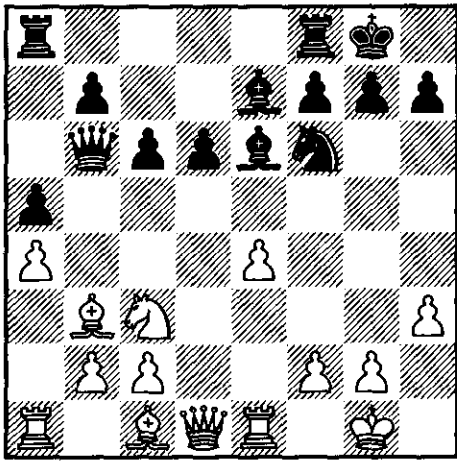
12. ♙g5 ♙d8 13. ♙f4 ♙c7 14. ♖d2 ♖e8 15. f3 ♙e6 16. ♙e3 ♖ad8 17. ♗xe6 fxe6 18. ♖f2 ♗fd7 19. f4 ♗h8 – Mkrтчian – Demina, Fuegen 2006;

12. ♗h1 ♙d7 13. f4 ♖ad8 14. ♖f3, Minsky – Prokopchuk, Briansk 1995, 14... ♗cxe4!? 15. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 16. ♖xe4 ♙f6 17. ♗f3 d5 with mutual chances. Black's d5-pawn has restricted considerably the activity of White's knight and particularly the bishop;

12. ♖f3 ♙e6 13. ♗f5 (13. ♙f4 ♖b4 14. ♖ed1 ♖ad8 15. ♖e3, Podlesnik – Topalovic, Pula 2002, 15... ♖fe8 16. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 17. ♙g3 ♗c5 –) 13... ♙xf5 14. ♖xf5 ♖ae8 15. ♖e3 ♖b4 16. ♖f3 ♙d8 and Black's prospects were even better, because of his pressure against the pawns on e4, a4 and b2, Rogulj – Topalovic, Opatija 2002.

12... ♗xb3 13. ♙xb3 ♙e6

It is becoming quite obvious that Black has solved all his problems in the opening.



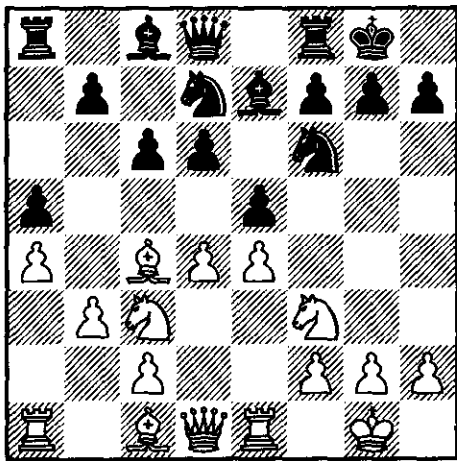
14. ♘e3

14. ♘e3 fxe6 15. ♖e2 ♜ae8 16. ♜a3 d5 17. ♞b3 ♚c7 18. ♘e3 ♙b4 19. exd5 exd5 ♞ Schulze – Miltner, Germany 2002.

14. ♘d5 cxd5 15. exd5 ♘xd5 16. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 17. ♚xd5 ♜ae8 18. ♞b1 ♙f6 19. ♘e3 ♚c6 20. ♚xc6 bxc6 21. b3 ♞e6 – White’s position is slightly preferable, but Black should be able to make a draw without too much of an effort, Lemmers – Grigore, Bucharest 2003.

14... ♚c7 15. ♘xe6 fxe6 16. ♚e2 d5 17. ♙d2 ♙c5 18. ♘h1 ♚f7 ♞ Ye Jiangchuan – Hamdouchi, Cannes 2001 – game 44.

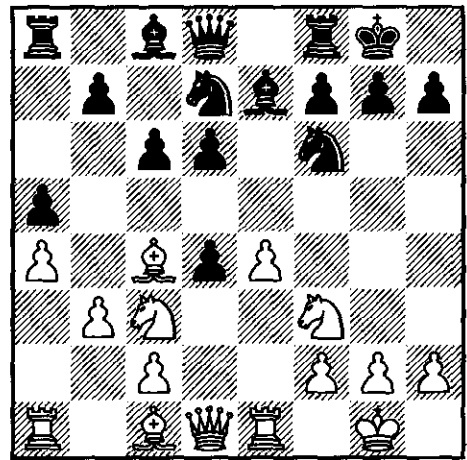
B) 9.b3



One of White’s basic problems in the Philidor Defence is what to do with his dark-squared bishop. We have already been convinced, that it is doing nothing on the g5-square. It can be developed on e3, after the preliminary h2-h3, but whether this would be reasonable is questionable. On c1 it does not impede the rook to protect the e4-pawn, while on e3...what? It looks like it should better be developed to b2, or even to a3.

So, from this point of view the move b2-b3 looks good, but taking care about the future of one of his bishops, White ignores the other one. Now, his light-squared bishop will hardly manage to remain on the important a2-g8 diagonal.

9...exd4



B1) 10. ♚xd4

B2) 10. ♘xd4

B1) 10. ♚xd4

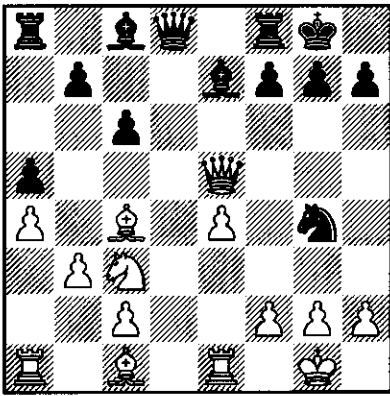
After this move Black equalizes in a tactical fashion, exploiting

3.♖c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e1 c6 8.a4 a5

the temporary vulnerability of the long diagonal.

10...♘e5! 11.♙e2

It is bad for White to win a pawn here: 11.♘xe5 dxe5 12.♞xe5 (Black is better after 12.♞e3 ♘g4 13.♞f3 ♙c5 14.♘d1, Khamrakulov – Accattato, Logrono 2007, 14...♘xh2! 15.♙xh2 ♞h4+ 16.♙g1 ♙g4 and White's queen does not have a single good square to retreat to: 17.♞d3 ♞ad8; 17.♞c3 ♙d4; 17.g3 ♞h5 18.♞g2 ♙xd1⌘) 12...♘g4



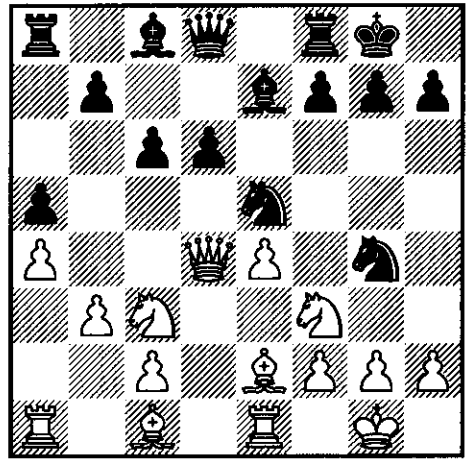
13.♞f4 (but not 13.♞g3? ♙h4) 13...♙d6 and in order to avoid the worst, White must return the pawn: 14.e5 ♘xe5 15.♙a3 (15.♞xe5? ♞c7) 15...♙xa3 16.♞xe5 ♙d6=

It is not so simple for White to organize pressure against the enemy d6-pawn: 11.♙a3 ♘xc4 12.♞xc4 ♙e6 13.♞d3 ♞c7 (but not 13...d5?! 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7 15.exd5 ♞ad8 16.♘g5 cxd5 17.♞e2± Jones – Roos, Cork 2005) 14.♞ad1 ♞ad8 15.h3 ♞fe8⇌

11...♘fg4

(diagram)

After the exchange of a pair of knights, Black wishes to deploy

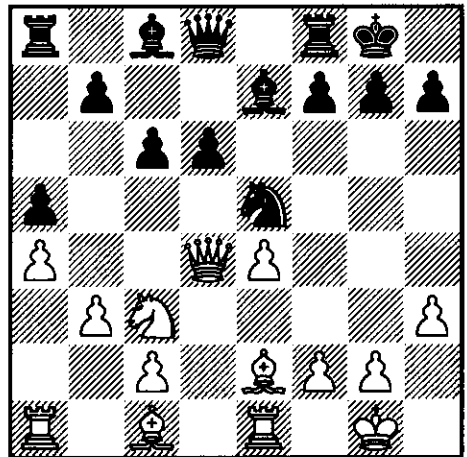


immediately his other knight to e5.

12.h3

12.♙b2 ♙f6 13.♞d2 ♞b6 14.♞f1 ♞d8 15.h3 ♘xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♘e5 17.♙e2 ♙e6 18.♙h1 d5= Glavina – Oratovsky, Aragon 2004. Black gets rid of his backward d6-pawn and equalizes.

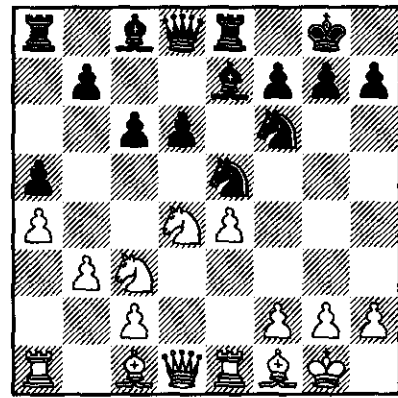
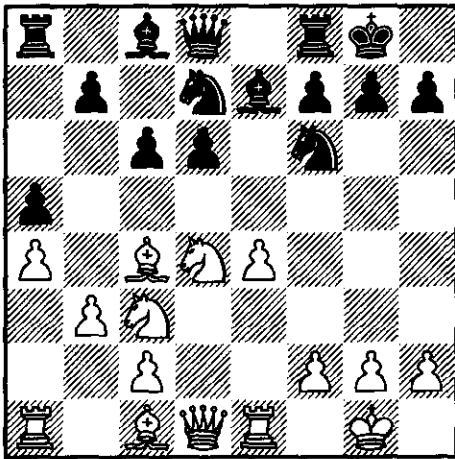
12...♘xf3+ 13.♙xf3 ♘e5 14.♙e2



14...f5!?

He brings into the actions at once both his rook and the bishop on c8. 15.exf5 ♙xf5 16.♘e4 d5 17.♘g3 ♙g6 18.♙e3 ♙f6 19.♞d2 ♘f7⇌ Degraeve – Mitkov, Bled 2002 – game 45.

B2) 10. ♖xd4



10... ♖b6

Naturally, the b6-square is not the best for Black's knight, but it will support d6-d5 from there. In addition, he wins an important tempo attacking White's bishop.

This is the main line for Black, but it also deserves attention for him to try the not so well-tested move 10... ♖e5!? This first impression is that White maintains some pressure after this: 11. ♖f1 ♖e8 (11... ♗b6 12. ♖e3±; 11... d5 12. exd5!? ♖b4 13. ♖b2 ♖xd5 14. ♖xe5 ♖xc3 15. ♗d3 ♗f6 16. ♖e3 ♖d5 17. ♖f3 ♗g6 18. c4±; 12. ♖b2 c5, Bauduin – Mauquoy, Belgium 1996, 13. ♖db5 d4 14. ♖d5±, or 12... ♖b4!? 13. exd5, transposing to the variation we mentioned above.),

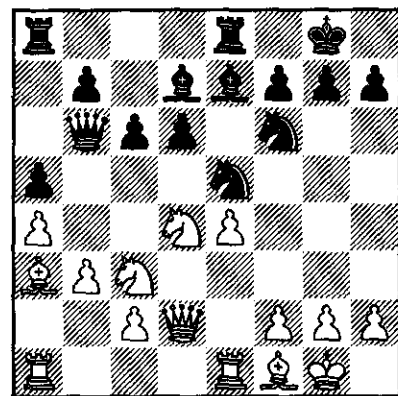
(diagram)

and later:

12. h3 h6 (12... ♖f8 13. ♖g5 h6 14. ♖h4 ♖g6 15. ♖g3 d5 16. exd5 ♖xe1 17. ♗xe1 ♖b4 18. ♗e3 cxd5 19. ♖cb5± Krjukova – Kabanov, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007) 13. ♖b2 ♗b6±;

12. ♖b2 ♖f8 13. h3 ♗b6 14. ♖h1 ♖g6 15. ♗d2 ♖d7 16. ♖ad1 (16.g3 d5 17. exd5 cxd5 18. ♖g2 ♖b4 19. f3 ♗c5 20. ♖ad1 ♖xe1+ 21. ♖xe1 ♖c8 22. ♖e3 ♖f8± Gundersen – Hoen, Kirkenes 1981) 16... ♖ad8 17. f4 d5 18. f5 ♖e5 19. exd5 cxd5 20. ♗f4 ♖c4 21. ♖a1 ♖d6 22. ♖d3 ♖xe1+ 23. ♖xe1 ♖e8 24. ♖xe8, draw, Iordachescu – Grigore, Bucharest 2003;

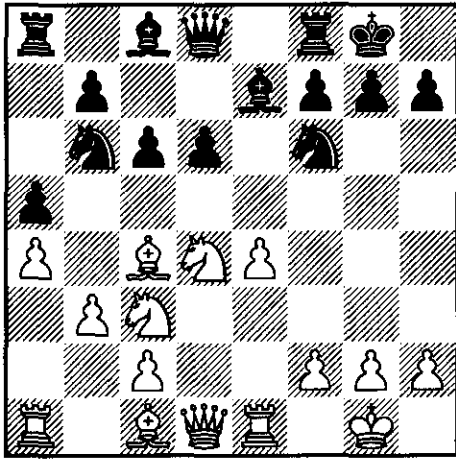
12. ♖a3!? (This move has not been tested in practice yet, but it seems to me to be the most promising for White. The weak d6-pawn squeezes Black's forces and he has no active counterplay, while White will gradually bring his pieces closer to the centre.) 12... ♗b6 (or 12... ♖f8 13. ♗d2 ♗c7 14. ♖ad1 h6 15. h3±) 13. ♗d2 ♖d7



14. ♖ad1 (White must play

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6 8. a4 a5

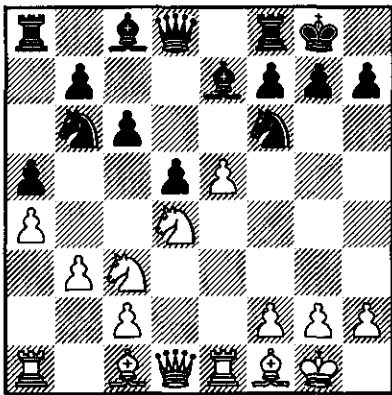
carefully: 14.h3? ♙xh3! 15.gxh3 ♜xd4 16. ♜xd4 ♘f3+.) 14... ♙g4 15. ♙e2 (Here, it is again bad for him to play 15.f3? ♙xf3!) 15... ♙xe2 16. ♞xe2 g6 17.h3±



11. ♙d3

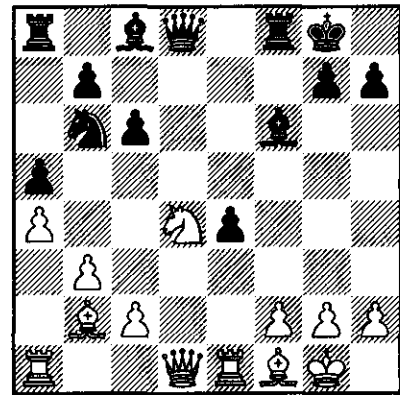
This is evidently the best move for White. He points his bishop towards the enemy kingside in anticipation of the move d6-d5.

After the rather academic move 11. ♙f1, Black has good possibilities to organize counterplay: 11... d5 12.e5 (Black has nothing to fear after 12.exd5 ♘bxd5 13. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14. ♙a3 ♙xa3 15. ♞xa3 ♜f6= Djukic – Damljanovic, Tivat 2002 – **game 46.**)



12... ♘e4!? (It is also reliable

for him to try the other retreat – 12... ♘e8. Still, after for example: 13. ♙d3 g6 14. ♙h6 ♘g7 15. ♘ce2 ♞e8 16.c3 ♘d7 17.f4 ♘c5 18. ♙c2±; 16... ♙g5 17. ♙xg5 ♜xg5 18.f4±, White maintains the initiative, Moreno Carnero – Bologan, Pamplona 2001.) 13. ♘xe4 dxe4 14. ♙b2 (Black has no problems at all after 14.c3 f5! 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16. ♙a3 ♞e8±; 14. ♞xe4? c5+ 14... f5! 15.exf6 ♙xf6



16. ♞b1 (He must be able to hold the endgame after 16.c3 ♙xd4 17. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 18.cxd4 ♙f5 19. ♞ac1 ♞fe8 20. ♙a3 ♘d5=; it is worse for him to opt for 16... ♞e8?! 17. ♜c2 ♙xd4 18. ♞ad1 ♙xf2+ 19. ♜xf2 ♜c7 20. ♙a3± Spraggett – Cifuentes Parada, San Sebastian 2008 and Black has serious problems despite his extra pawn. White is threatening for example 21. ♞xe4.) 16... ♞e8 17.g3 ♘d5 18. ♙g2 e3 19. ♙xd5+ (It would be too risky for him to choose 19.f4?!, Quezada – Maiwald, Havana 2004, 19... ♘b4! and in connection with the threat c6-c5, his position would be very unpleasant.) 19... ♜xd5 20.fxe3 ♙g5 21. ♜d3

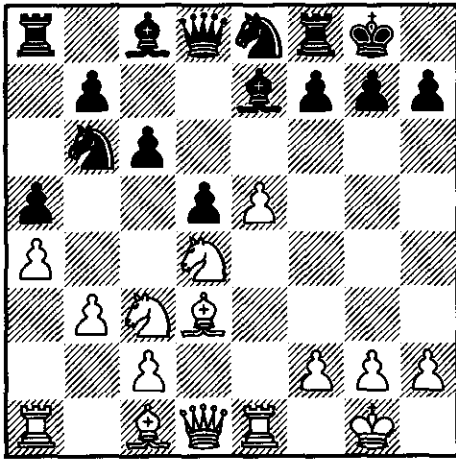
Chapter 7

♙h3 22.e4 ♖c5∞ Flear – Paunovic, San Sebastian 2005. White's king on g1 is vulnerable and Black has an excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

11...d5

This move is absolutely necessary for Black; otherwise his previous play would be completely senseless.

12.e5 ♖e8



13.♖h5

13.♙d2 g6 14.♖ce2 ♖g7 15.♖f4 c5 16.♖b5 ♙e6 17.♖xe6 fxe6 18.♖g4 c4∞ Kindermann – Maiwald, Austria 2005.

13.♙b2 g6 14.♙h1 ♖g7 15.f4 ♙c5 16.♖ce2 ♙g4 17.♖d2 ♖c8 18.♖g3 ♖e7∞ Zaragatski – Papa, Deizisau 2003.

13.f4 ♙b4 14.♙d2, Muhren – Bosboom-Lanchava, Wijk aan Zee 2005, 14...♙c5 15.♖ce2 f6∞

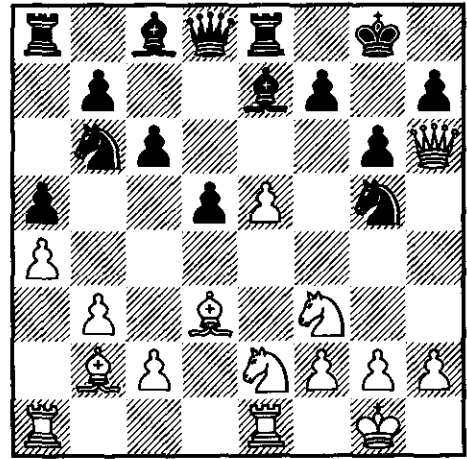
13...g6 14.♖h6 ♖g7

The fianchetto of the knight has some idea too. Now, it will be more difficult for White to advance f4-f5.

15.♖f3

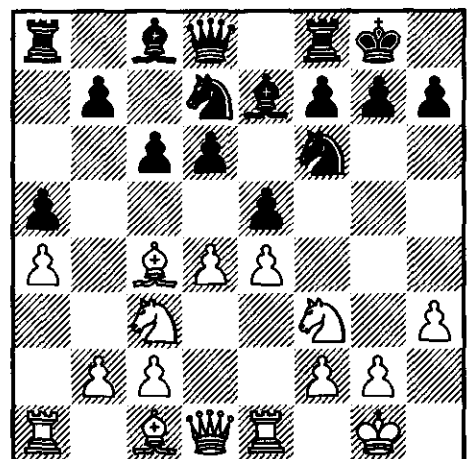
15.♖ce2 ♙e8 16.♖g3 ♙f8 17.♙g5 ♖c7∞ Felgaer – Strikovic, Bajada de la Virgen 2005 – **game 47.**

15...♖e6 16.♖e2 ♙e8 17.♙b2 ♖g5∞ Van Den Heever – Solomon, Johannesburg 2005.



The exchanges will reduce the tension in this position and later Black will transfer his knight on b6 to e6 via d7 and c5 (or f8).

C) 9.h3



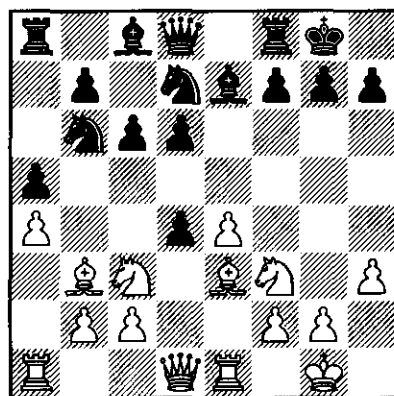
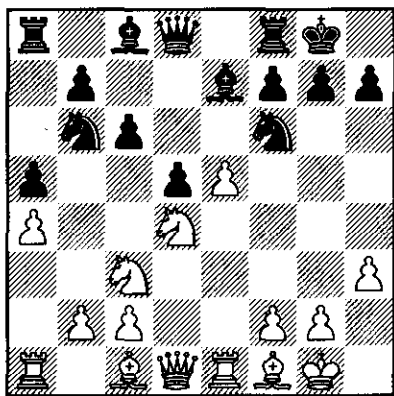
9...♖b6

I have already mentioned that the idea behind this move is to prepare d6-d5.

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♜bd7 5. ♙c4 ♚e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6 8. a4 a5

10. ♙a2

White creates less problems for his opponent after the other retreat, back to the rear: 10. ♙f1 exd4!? 11. ♗xd4 (11. ♞xd4 d5 12. e5 ♗fd7 13. ♞e3 ♗c5⇌) 11...d5 12. e5



12... ♗e8 (Until now, the plan with 12... ♗e4 13. ♗xe4 dxe4 has not been tested in this position.) 13. ♗ce2 g6 14. ♙h6 ♗g7 15. ♗g3 ♙g5 16. ♙xg5 ♞xg5 17. ♗f3, Efimenko – Bologan, Poikovsky 2009 – **game 48**, 17... ♞e7⇌

The drawback of the move 10. ♙b3 is that after Black transfers his knight from g6 to c5 (This maneuver is an integral part of his plan anyway.), he will win a tempo thanks to the attack against the bishop. Naturally, White can comply with its exchange, but he can hardly fight for the advantage without this important piece: 10... ♗fd7 11. ♙e3 exd4

(diagram)

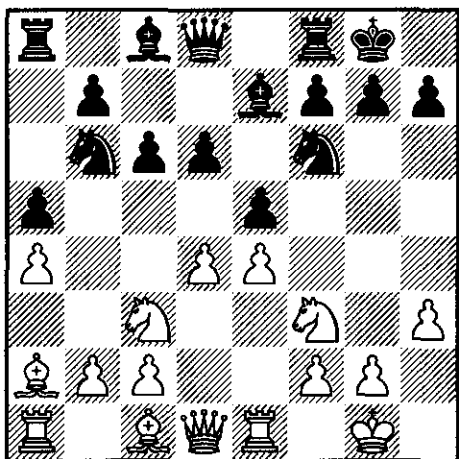
12. ♗xd4!? ♗c5 13. ♞f3 (White can try to continue the game without covering the way forward of his f-pawn: 13. ♞e2 ♗xb3 14. cxb3 ♞e8 15. ♞ad1 ♙f8 16. f4 ♞c7 17. ♗f3 ♗d7∞. Black's knight will go to c5

in order to attack the pawns on b3 and e4. White has preserved a slight space advantage, but it remains unclear where and how he should proceed with some active actions.) 13... ♗xb3 14. cxb3 ♗d7 15. ♞ad1 ♗e5 (It is bad for Black to play 15... ♗c5? 16. ♗xc6 bxc6 17. ♙xc5, while after 15... ♞c7, White has the powerful argument – 16. ♗f5.) 16. ♞e2, Rublevsky – Bologan, Tomsk 2006, 16... ♙f6!? 17. f4 ♗g6 18. e5 ♙h4 19. ♞f1 d5⇌. After provoking successfully his opponent, Black has stabilized the situation in the centre. White can hardly continue with his offensive on the kingside.

It is worth considering another plan for him – to give up his dark-squared bishop and to preserve the other one: 12. ♙xd4 ♗c5 13. ♙xc5 dxc5 14. ♞e2 (Black has nothing to fear in the endgame after 14. ♞xd8 ♙xd8 15. ♗d2 ♙g5 16. ♗c4 ♗xc4 17. ♙xc4 ♙f4 18. e5 ♙f5⇌, because his bishop-pair provides him with sufficient counter chances.) 14... ♞d6 15. ♞ad1 ♞h6 (It is possibly preferable for Black to play here 15... ♞g6!? and we will discuss this moment in

details, when we analyze the main line. There arises the same position with the only exception that White's bishop is on a2 and not on b3.) 16. ♖d2 ♕e6, draw, Emms – Maiwald, Germany 2002.

It is not logical for White to play here 10. ♕d3, because the bishop is as vulnerable on this square as on b3, but it is considerably less active. There may follow: 10... ♖fd7 11. ♖e2 (11. ♕e3 ♜e8 12. ♛d2, Baramidze – Bezold, Pulvermuehle 2006, 12... exd4 13. ♖xd4 ♖c5 14. ♕f1 ♕f6) 11... exd4 12. ♖exd4 ♖c5 13. b3 d5 14. e5 ♖e4 15. ♕b2 (White cannot win a pawn: 15. ♕xe4? dxe4 16. ♜xe4 c5.) 15... f5! (This is an important move after which Black creates counterplay on the kingside.) 16. exf6 ♕xf6 ♞ Nataf – Bologan, France 2007 – **game 49.**



10... ♖fd7

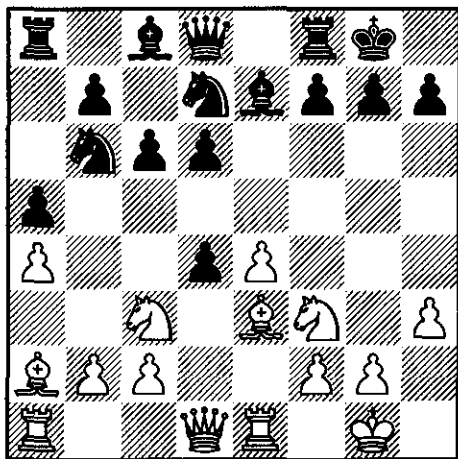
The exchange operation in the centre needs some preparation, because the immediate 10... exd4 11. ♛xd4 ♖fd7 12. ♕f4 ♖c5 13. ♜ad1, enables White to win his oppo-

nent's weak d6-pawn. Black obtains some compensation for it indeed, but it is insufficient for equality: 13... ♕e6 14. ♕xd6 ♛xd6 15. ♛xd6 ♕xd6 16. ♕xe6 ♜ad8 17. ♕b3±

11. ♕e3

The exchange on e5 provides for White some initiative, but Black can gradually parry it: 11. dxe5 dxe5 12. ♕e3 ♛c7 13. ♖g5 ♕xg5 (White's two-bishop advantage is just symbolic here, since his bishop on a2 and the knight on c3 are both rather misplaced.) 14. ♕xg5 ♖c5 15. ♛h5 ♕e6 16. ♕e3 ♖bd7 17. ♕xe6 ♖xe6 18. ♜ad1 (18. ♖e2 ♖dc5 19. ♖g3 ♜fd8 20. ♜a3 f6 21. ♛e2 ♛f7) Korneev – Vega Gutierrez, Elgoibar 2007) 18... ♜ad8 19. ♛e2 ♖dc5 20. ♛c4 ♖a6 21. ♖a2 (White prevents the enemy knight to come to the b4-square, but isolates his own knight.) 21... h6) The-

11... exd4



12. ♕xd4!?

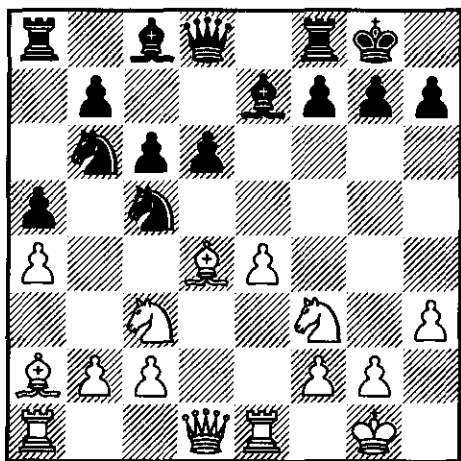
This seems to me to be the most unpleasant line for Black.

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♜e1 c6 8. a4 a5

He has a comfortable game after 12. ♜xd4 ♗c5 13. ♞ad1 ♕e6 14. ♕xe6 fxe6 15. e5 d5 16. ♜g4 ♜e8, for example: 17. b3 (17. ♗d4 ♜f7 18. b3 (18. ♗xe6? h5) 18... ♗bd7 19. f4, Ganguly – Berkes, Paks 2009, 19... ♞ae8 20. ♞f1 ♕d8) 17... ♗bd7 18. ♕xc5 (18. ♗e2 h5 19. ♜g3 ♗e4 20. ♜h2 h4 21. ♗fd4 ♜f7 22. f3 ♗ec5 23. ♜f4, draw, Hnydiuk – Urban, Opole 2006.) 18... ♕xc5 19. ♞e2 ♞f5 20. ♗a2 ♜e7, draw, Hou Yifan – Boros, Budapest 2008.

It looks like White has never tested in practice yet the line: 12. ♗xd4 ♗c5 13. ♜d2 ♗bxa4 14. ♗xa4 ♗xa4 15. ♕xf7+ ♞xf7 16. ♞xa4. Black is faced with a choice between the immediate 16... c5 and the preparatory move 16... ♕d7, with an approximately equal position in both cases.

12... ♗c5



13. ♕xc5

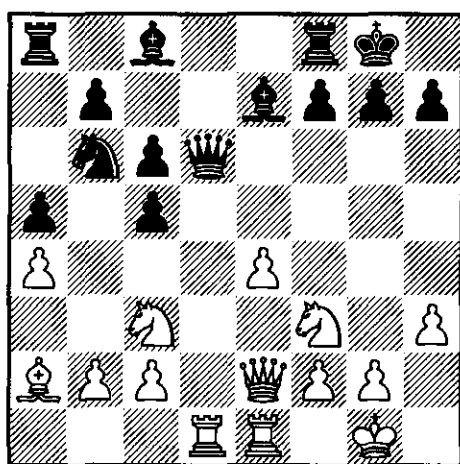
White would not achieve much with 13. ♜e2 ♗bxa4 14. ♗xa4 ♗xa4 15. ♕xf7+ (The pawn-sacrifice 15. ♞ed1 ♗b6 16. ♜e3 ♗d7) does not

look promising for White.) 15... ♞xf7 16. ♞xa4 b5 17. ♞aa1 ♕e6. Black has a bishop-pair and pawn-majority on the queenside and whether White will manage to organize an attack against the enemy king remains highly questionable.

13... dxc5 14. ♜e2 ♜d6

Black transfers his queen to g6, or h6, with the idea to create some threats against White's monarch.

15. ♞ad1



I think Black's best move in this critical position is

15... ♜g6!?, threatening to capture on h3.

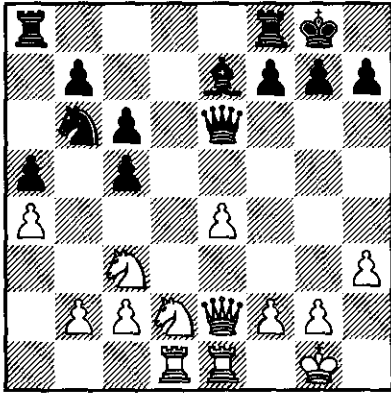
He has tried in practice until now only the move 15... ♜h6:

16. e5 ♕e6 17. ♕xe6 ♜xe6 18. b3 ♞ad8 19. ♗e4 ♞xd1 20. ♜xd1 ♞d8 21. ♜b1 ♗d5 22. c4 ♗f4) Korneev – Paunovic, Elgoibar 2005;

16. ♜d2 ♜xd2 17. ♗xd2 ♞d8 18. ♗c4 ♗xc4 19. ♕xc4 ♕d7 20. ♞d3 ♕e8 21. e5 ♞d4 22. b3 ♞b8 23. ♞dd1 b5) Parligras – Bologan, Moscow 2008 – **game 50**;

16. ♗d2! (White wishes to cre-

ate a pawn tandem in the centre.)
 16...♙e6 (Black does not prevent that idea. It seems to me that he had better play 16...♚g5 17.♔h1 ♙e6!?) 18.♙xe6 ♜xe6. His pawn-structure has been compromised, but he has activated his pieces.)
 17.♙xe6 ♚xe6



18.f4 f5 (Black fails to equalize after 18...♞fd8 19.♔h2 ♚f6 20.g3±) 19.exf5 ♚xe2 20.♞xe2 ♙f6 21.♞de4 ♙d4+ 22.♔h2 ♞xf5 23.g3± Bacrot – Pelletier, Biel 2008.

16.♔f1

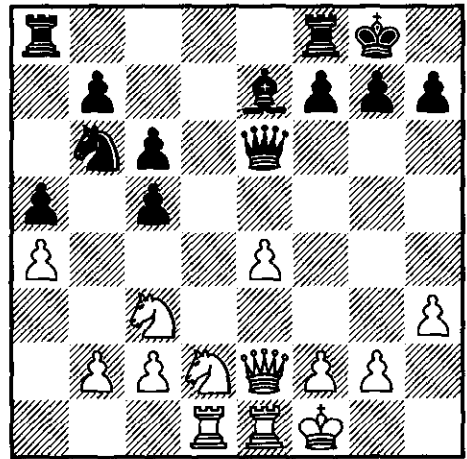
After 16.♞e5 ♚g5, White's knight will have to go back. In case

of 16.♔h1 ♚h5, Black is threatening ♙xh3.

16...♚h6 17.♞d2

He should not fear the line: 17.e5 ♙e6 18.♙xe6 ♚xe6 19.b3 ♞ad8.

17...♙e6 18.♙xe6 ♚xe6



Now, contrary to the game Bacrot – Pelletier, White cannot play 19.f4?, because of the loss of the exchange – 19...♙h4. Accordingly, Black will have enough time to bring his queen rook into the action and organize counterplay on the open d-file.

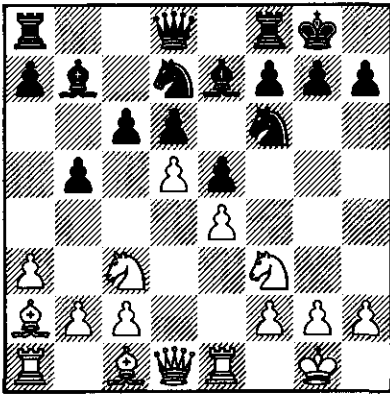
Chapter 7

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3
 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e1

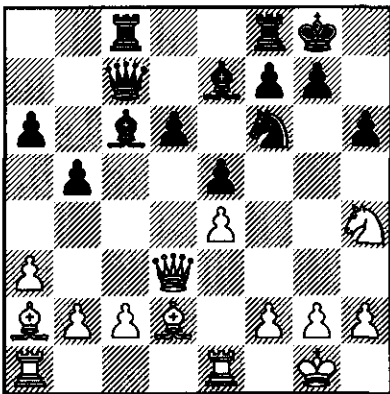
Complete Games

40 Sekulic – Dizdarevic
 Neum 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5
 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0
 0-0 7.a3 c6 8.♙a2 b5 9.♞e1
 ♙b7 10.d5



10...a6 11.dxc6 ♙xc6 12.
 ♗d5 ♞c8 13.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14.
 ♞d3 h6 15.♙d2 ♞c7 16.♗h4?



This is not the right time for
 White to transfer his knight to the

f5-square.

16...♗xe4?!

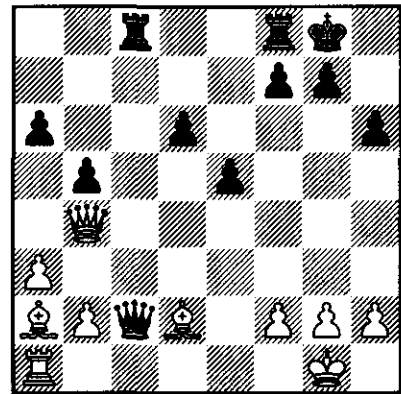
This is the right idea, but in the
 wrong execution. It was correct
 for Black to have started with 16...
 ♙xe4 – 17.♞xe4 ♗xe4, because
 White would lose after 18.♗g6
 and 18...♗xd2.

17.♞xe4?!

He overlooks an excellent
 chance. After 17.♗g6! ♗xd2 18.
 ♗xf8 ♗f3+ 19.gxf3 ♞xf8 20.♞ad1♞,
 he would have saved the day.

17...♙xe4 18.♞xe4 ♙xh4 19.
 ♞xh4 ♞xc2 20.♞b4

White was losing too after
 20.♙c3 ♞xc3 21.bxc3 ♞b2. His rel-
 atively best chance was 20.♙xh6
 gxxh6 21.♞xh6 ♞f5+



20...a5! 21.♙b3

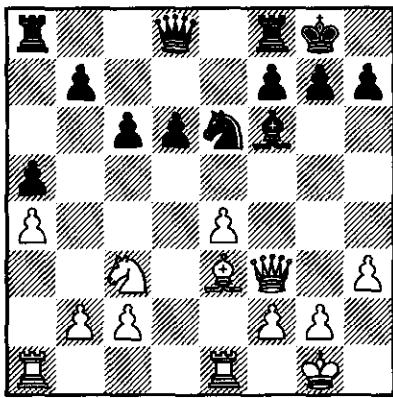
Or 21.♞xa5 ♞xb2 and Black

wins a piece.

21...axb4 22.♙xc2 ♖xc2 23. ♙xb4 ♖fc8. White resigned.

41 Sermek – Stojanovski
Bled 2002

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♞e1 c6 8.a4 a5 9.h3 exd4 10.♞xd4 ♗c5 11.♙a2 ♙e6 12.♙xe6 ♗xe6 13.♞c4 ♗d7 14.♙e3 ♗e5 15.♞e2 ♗xf3+ 16.♞xf3 ♙f6



17.♞ad1

Black has a weak d6-pawn, but White can hardly attack anything else.

17...♞c7 18.♞g3 ♞ad8 19. ♞d3 b6 20.♞ed1 ♙e5 21.f4 ♙f6 22.e5!? dxe5 23.♗e4 ♙e7 24.fxe5 ♞xd3 25.♞xd3 b5!

Black begins his queenside counterplay just in time.

26.b3 bxa4 27.bxa4 ♞d8 28.♗d6 ♙f8 29.♖h1 c5 30. ♞g4?!

White sets a trap for his opponent, but Black could have fallen into it without fear.

30...♞c6

Naturally, after 30...♙xd6 31. exd6 ♞xd6? 32.♙f4, White wins, but in case of 31...♞c6! he would need to fight hard for equality (it is bad for him to play 32.♙f4 ♞xa4).

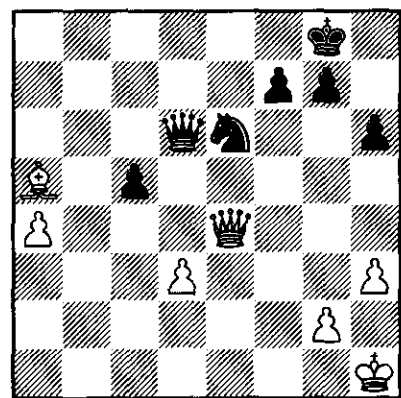
31.♞f3 ♞c7 32.♞e4 h6

Now, the exchange on d6 leads almost by force to an equal end-game: 32...♙xd6 33.exd6 ♞xd6 34.♞xd6 (34.♙f4 ♞c6!) 34...♞xd6 35.♞a8+ ♞d8 36.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 37.♙xc5 ♗b7 38.♙b6 ♖f8. Black centralizes his king before his opponent does and would have nothing to worry about.

33.♗b5 ♞b8 34.♙d2 ♞xd3

He could have solved all his problems with the line: 34... c4! 35.♞xd8 (35.♞xc4 ♞c8) 35... ♞xd8.

35.cxd3 ♞d8 36.♗d6 ♙xd6 37.exd6 ♞xd6 38.♙xa5



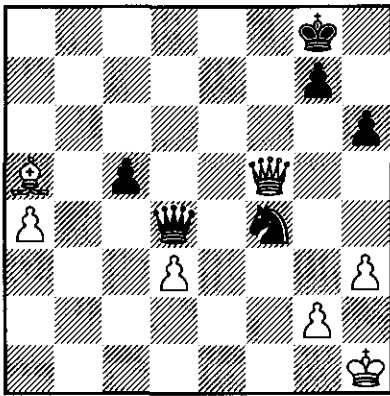
38...♗f4

Black missed already several advantageous variations and as a result White created a dangerous outside passed pawn. The bishop is much superior to the knight in similar endgames and in addition, as it is well-known, the knight

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6

has greatest problems fighting particularly against rook-pawns. Still, even in this situation, Black could have obtained sufficient counterplay, because of the good coordination of his queen with the knight. He only needed to find a not so obvious maneuver, with the help of which his queen would have penetrated to the opponent's first rank: 38... ♖b8! 39. ♕e1 (39. ♕c3 ♖b3) 39... ♖b1 40. a5 (40. ♖h2 c4) 40... c4!

39. ♖e8+ ♖h7 40. ♖xf7 ♖d4 41. ♖f5+ ♖g8



42. ♖e4?

Now, Black can suddenly save the game. White would have preserved excellent winning chances after the natural line: 42. ♕c7 ♗xd3 43. a5 etc.

42... ♗xd3 43. ♖xd4 cxd4 44. ♕b6 ♗b2 45. ♕xd4

It becomes clear now that after 45. a5 d3 46. ♕e3 ♗c4 47. a6 ♗xe3 48. a7 d2 49. a8 ♖+ ♖h7 50. ♖e4+ ♖g8, White cannot capture the d2-pawn and he must comply with the draw.

45... ♗xa4 46. ♖g1 ♖f7 47. ♖f2 g6 48. ♖e3 ♖e6 49. ♖e4

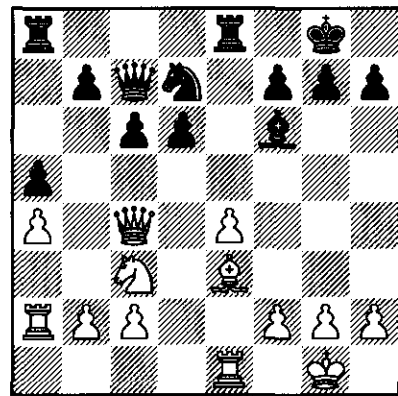
♖d6 50. g3 ♖e6 51. h4 h5 52. ♖f4 ♖d5 53. ♖g5

Black saves the day as well in the variation 53. ♕a7 ♗c3 54. ♖g5 ♖e4 55. ♖xg6 ♖f3 56. ♖xh5 ♖xg3 57. ♕b8+ ♖h3.

53... ♖xd4 54. ♖xg6 ♖e5 55. ♖xh5 ♖f6 56. ♖h6 ♗c5 57. g4 ♗e6 58. g5+ ♖f7. Draw.

42 Slobodjan – Oratovsky Fuerth 1998

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 ♗bd7 4. ♗f3 e5 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 exd4 9. ♗xd4 ♗c5 10. ♕a2 a5 11. ♖f3 ♖b6 12. ♗b3 ♗xb3 13. ♕xb3 ♕e6 14. ♕e3 ♖c7 15. ♕a2 ♕xa2 16. ♖xa2 ♗d7 17. ♖e2 ♕f6 18. ♖c4 ♖fe8



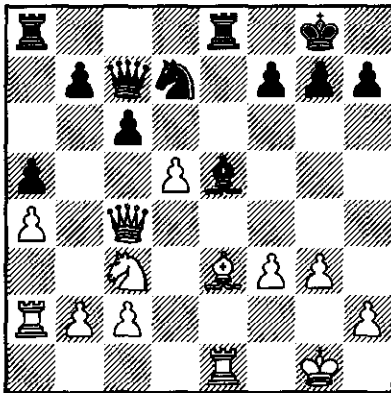
19. f3?!

This move is inaccurate and Black seizes the initiative after it. It looks like White has forgotten that his rook on a2 is temporarily out of action.

19... ♕e5! 20. g3?

This is almost a decisive mistake! He had to continue with 20. h3 d5 21. exd5 ♗b6 22. ♖d3

(22. ♖xb6? ♙h2+ 23. ♕f1 ♜xe1+ 24. ♕xe1 ♚xb6+) 22... ♜ad8+
20...d5 21.exd5



21... ♖xg3! 22. ♜e2

This is the only move for White, because it would be a disaster for him to play 22.hxg3 ♚xg3+ 23. ♕f1 ♚xf3+ 24. ♙f2 ♚h1+ 25. ♙g1 ♚h3+ 26. ♕f2 ♚f5+ 27. ♕g3 ♜xe1.

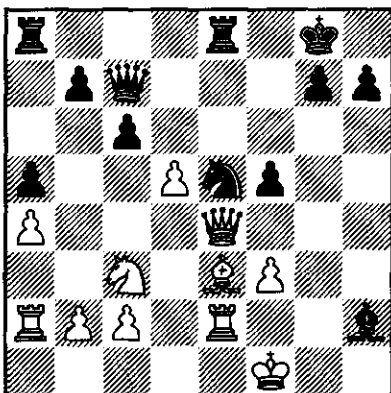
22... ♙xh2+ 23. ♕f1

After 23. ♜xh2 ♜xe3, Black's attack is crushing.

23... ♘e5

This is an attractive move indeed – Black centralizes his knight with tempo, but it was even stronger for him to have played 23... ♘f6 24. ♚h4 ♙e5.

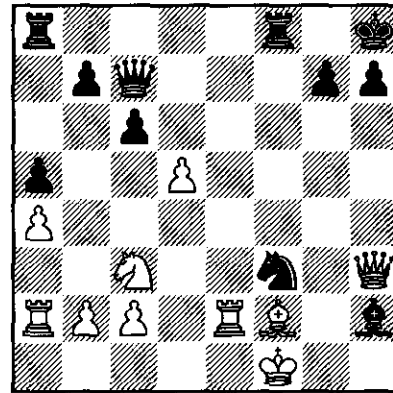
24. ♚e4?! f5!



He opens another file for attack. White has no time to bring

his rook on a2 into the actions.

25. ♚xf5 ♘xf3! 26. ♙f2 ♜f8
27. ♚e6+ ♕h8 28. ♚h3



28...cxd5

Black could have won immediately with the exquisite knight-sortie 28... ♘g1!

29. ♘xd5 ♚c4 30. ♘e7 ♜ae8

He could have defended against the check on g6 with the simple move 30... ♜a6! and if 31. ♜a3, then he would win again with the move 31... ♘g1.

31.b3 ♚f7 32. ♚e6 ♚xe6

The best move here for Black is 32... ♚h5 with very powerful threats, but he obviously decided to play safely and complied with the trade of queens.

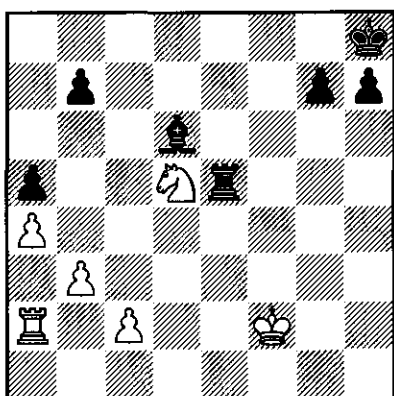
33. ♜xe6 ♘g5 34. ♜e2 ♙d6
35. ♘d5 ♘e4 36. ♕g2 ♘xf2

He could have played 36... ♜e6, beginning a dangerous attack in the endgame.

37. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 38. ♕xf2 ♜e5
 (diagram)

Black made so many mistakes (maybe because of a time-trouble) and still he maintained a decisive advantage in that endgame. Naturally, White was not obliged to

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6

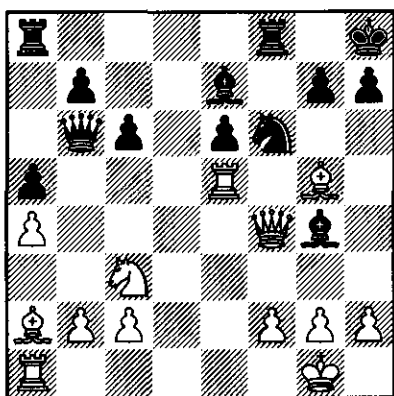


lose so quickly anyway.

39. c4 ♙c5+ 40. ♖f3 g6 41. ♞d2 b6 42. ♗f4 ♞e3+ 43. ♖g4 h5+ 44. ♖g5 ♖g7. White resigned.

43 Teran Alvarez – Oratovsky Mancha 2000

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♖c3 ♗bd7 4. ♗f3 e5 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. a4 c6 8. ♞e1 a5 9. ♙a2 exd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗c5 11. ♞f3 ♞b6 12. ♙g5 ♖h8 13. e5 dxe5 14. ♞xe5 ♙g4 15. ♞f4 ♗e6 16. ♗xe6 fxe6



17. ♞c1

White's initiative has reached its dead end and he must start retreating. As it often happens, the far-advanced pieces, which have been taking an active part in

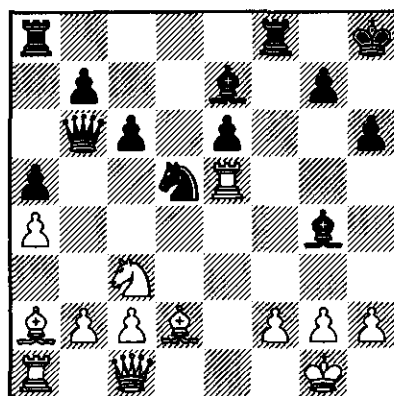
the offensive, become awkwardly placed in defence, lose their mobility and come under different counter attacking strikes.

Notice that White cannot win the enemy bishop on g4: 17. ♙xf6? ♙xf6 18. ♞e3 ♙h4 with decisive material gains for Black.

17...h6 18. ♙d2

It would be more resilient for White to defend with 18. ♙e3 ♞c7 19. ♙d4 ♙d6 20. ♞e3!? and he obtains some positional compensation for the exchange thanks to the control over the dark squares.

18...♗d5!



19. ♙xh6!?

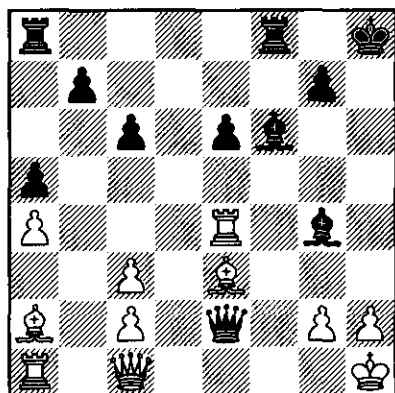
This is an attempt by White to complicate matters. It would be bad for him to try 19. ♞e1 ♙c5, as well as 19. ♙e3 ♗xe3 20. fxe3 (20. ♞xe3 ♞xb2) 20...♙d6 21. ♞e4 ♙f5 22. ♞c4 ♙c5.

19...♞xf2+ 20. ♖h1 ♗xc3?!

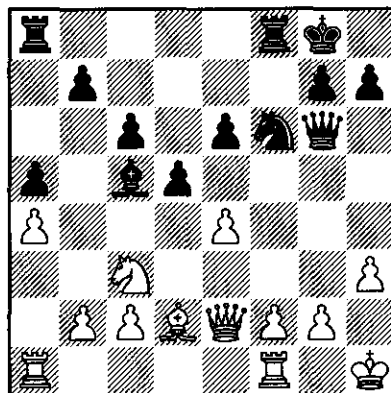
Black loses most of his advantage with this mistake. His position would have been much superior after 20...♙f6 21. ♗e4 ♞d4 22. ♗xf6 ♞xf6 23. ♞xd5 exd5.

21. bxc3 ♙f6 22. ♙e3 ♞e2 23. ♞e4?

White was already very close to saving the game and suddenly he lost it in one move. He had to play 23.♖c5 and Black would have only a slight edge.



12.♖b3 ♖xb3 13.♗xb3 ♗e6
14.♗e3 ♖c7 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.
♖e2 d5 17.♗d2 ♗c5 18.♔h1
♖f7 19.♗f1 ♖h5 20.♖g4 ♖f6
21.♖e2 ♖g6



23...♗f3! 24.gxf3 ♖xf3+ 25.
♔g1 ♖xe4 26.♖d2 ♗ad8 27.
♖e2 ♗xc3 28.♗b1 ♗d4 29.♗e1
♗xe3+ 30.♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 31.♗xe3
♗d1+ 32.♔g2 ♗d2+ 33.♔g1 ♗f6
34.♗b3 ♗d1+ 35.♔g2 ♗d2+ 36.
♔g3 ♗d6 37.♗e4 ♔g8. White re-
signed.

Naturally, Black must avoid the repetition of moves. He has a powerful centre and the possibility to exert pressure against his opponent's kingside.

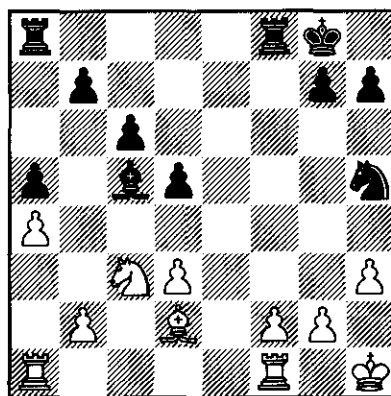
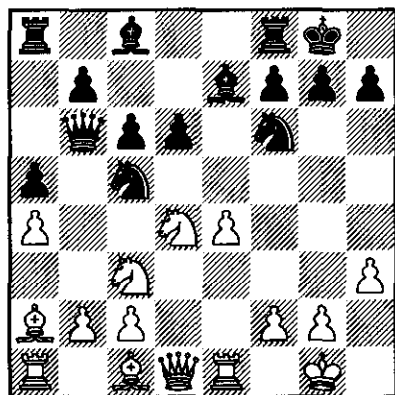
22.exd5?

White was hoping to facilitate his defence with the trade of queens, but it became clear that the endgame would be tremendously difficult for him. He had better maintain the tension in the centre with 22.♗ae1 ♖h5 23.♔h2.

22...exd5 23.♖d3 ♖xd3 24.
cxd3 ♖h5

44 YeJiangchuan–Hamdouchi Cannes 2001

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♖c3 e5
4.♖f3 ♖bd7 5.♗c4 ♗e7 6.0-0
0-0 7.a4 c6 8.♗e1 a5 9.h3
exd4 10.♖xd4 ♖c5 11.♗a2
♖b6

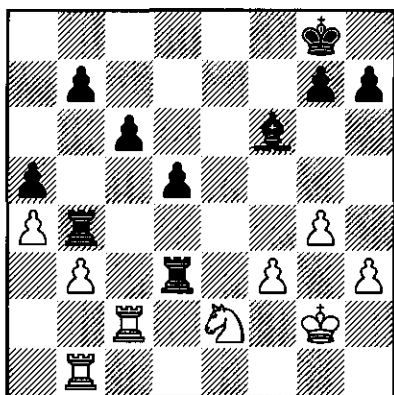


25.g4

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6

This is the only move for White which does not lose a pawn at once. It was bad for him to opt for 25. ♖g1 ♗g3, or 25. ♙e1, because of the same move 25... ♗g3+.

25... ♗f4 26. ♙xf4 ♞xf4 27. ♖g2 ♞af8 28. f3 ♞b4 29. ♞ab1 ♙d4 30. ♞fc1 ♞e8 31. b3 ♞e3 32. ♞c2 ♞xd3 33. ♗e2 ♙f6



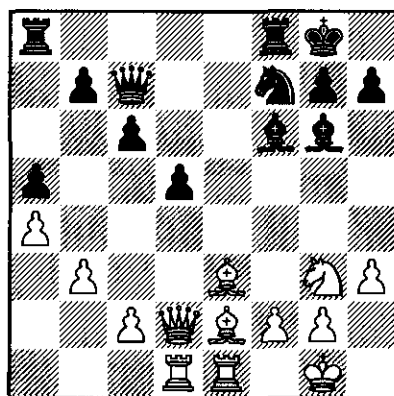
White's position is completely hopeless. The game continues maybe only because it was played with a rapid time-control.

34. ♞c5 ♞bxb3 35. ♞xb3 ♞xb3 36. ♗f4 ♞b2+ 37. ♖f1 ♞b4 38. ♗h5 ♞xa4 39. ♞c2 ♖f7 40. ♖e2 ♙e5 41. f4 ♙xf4 42. ♞b2 b5 43. ♞c2 ♙e5 44. ♞xc6 g6 45. ♞c5 gxf4 46. ♞xd5 ♖e6 47. ♞xb5 hxf4 48. hxf4 ♞a1 49. ♞b7 a4 50. ♞xh7 a3 51. ♞a7 a2 52. ♞a6+ ♖f7 53. ♞a7+ ♖g6 54. ♞a6+ ♙f6 55. g5 ♖xg5. White resigned.

45 J.-M. Degraeve – Mitkov
Bled 2002

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6 8. a4 a5 9. b3

exd4 10. ♞xd4 ♗e5 11. ♙e2 ♗fg4 12. h3 ♗xf3+ 13. ♙xf3 ♗e5 14. ♙e2 f5 15. exf5 ♙xf5 16. ♗e4 d5 17. ♗g3 ♙g6 18. ♙e3 ♙f6 19. ♞d2 ♗f7 20. ♞ad1 ♞c7



21. ♙d3

It was better for White to play here 21. ♙h5!?, with the idea to come with the knight immediately to h5, closer to the enemy king.

21... ♙xd3 22. ♞xd3 ♗e5 23. ♞d2 ♗g6 24. ♙c5 ♞fe8

Black had better exchange the bishops – 24... ♙e7 25. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 with a practically equal position.

25. ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 26. ♞e1

The trade of rooks is in favour of White, because then he can attack easier Black's only weakness – his a5-pawn.

26... ♞xe1+ 27. ♞xe1 h6 28. ♞e3 ♞f4?!

It looks like Black had underestimated his opponent's response.

It was correct for him to choose 28... ♙g5 29. ♞e6+ ♖h7, deflecting White's attention away from the a5-pawn.

29. ♗h5! ♞f5

After 29... ♞xe3 30. ♗xf6+ ♖f7 31. ♙xe3 ♖xf6 32. ♙d4+ ♖f7 33.

♙b6, Black had to defend a very difficult endgame with a pawn down and a clumsy knight against a very powerful bishop.

30. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 31. ♙b6

His a5-pawn is doomed. Black's only hope is to create some counterplay on the kingside.

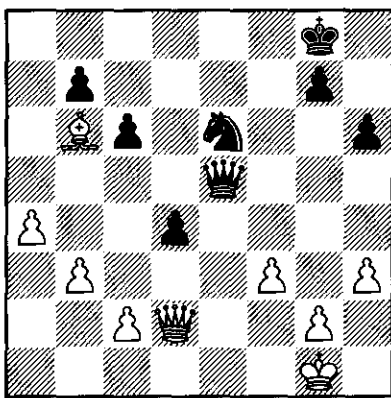
31... ♜f5

He should better avoid 31... ♜a1+ 32. ♔h2 ♜d1, in view of 33. ♜e6+ ♔h7 34. ♜f5 and in order to unpin his knight, Black would have to comply with the exchange of queens: 34... ♜d2 35. h4 ♜f4+ 36. ♜xf4 ♖xf4 37. ♔g3 ♖e6 38. ♔g4+

32. ♜d2 ♖f4 33. ♙c7!

White avoids the insidious trap 33. ♙xa5? ♖b6! (deflecting the bishop from the protection of the queen) 34. ♙c3 ♖d4! 35. ♙xd4 ♜g5 and Black wins the enemy queen.

33... ♖e6 34. ♙xa5 ♖d4 35. ♙b6 ♜e4 36. ♖f3 ♜e5



37. ♔f2?

White stumbles half a step before winning the game.

After 37. ♔f1, Black cannot do anything against 37... ♜h2 38. ♙xd4.

37... ♜h2!

Now, he can demonstrate the power of the tandem “queen and knight”.

38. ♙xd4 ♖f4 39. ♜e3

Black can counter 39. ♔f1 simply with 39... ♖xh3.

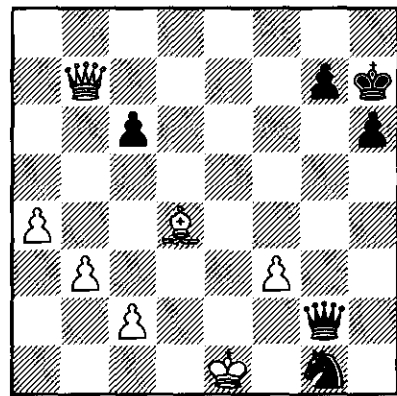
39... ♜xg2+

Black had another road to equality – 39... ♖xh3+ 40. ♔e1 ♜h1+ 41. ♔d2 ♜xg2+ 42. ♔c3 ♖g5. The move in the game is sufficient for a draw as well.

40. ♔e1 ♖xh3 41. ♜e8+

White would have more winning chances after 41. ♜e6+ ♔h7 42. ♜f5+ ♔g8 43. ♜c8+ ♔h7 44. ♜xb7. He was obviously afraid of the move 44... ♖g1, after which Black would have some dangerous threats and he should not have great problems to hold the queen and pawn ending.

White has however, an interesting resource – a piece-sacrifice:



45. ♜xg7+!? ♜xg7 **46. ♙xg7 ♔xg7 47. ♔f2 ♖h3+ 48. ♔g3.** His passed a4-pawn is tremendously dangerous, but Black's knight succeeds in holding it by a mira-

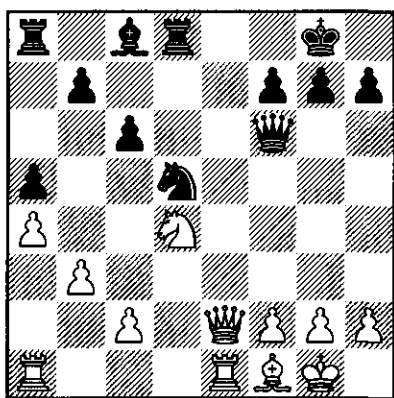
3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♞e1 c6

cle: 48... ♗g1! 49. a5 ♗e2+ 50. ♔g4 ♗d4 51. a6 ♗b5 52. c4 ♗a7=

41... ♗h7 42. ♞e4+ ♗g8 43. ♞e8+ ♗h7. Draw.

46 N.Djukic – Damljanovic
Tivat 2002

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♖c3 e5
4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0
0-0 7. ♞e1 c6 8. a4 a5 9. b3
exd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗b6 11. ♕f1 d5
12. exd5 ♗bxd5 13. ♗xd5 ♗xd5
14. ♕a3 ♕xa3 15. ♞xa3 ♞f6 16.
♞a1 ♞d8 17. ♞e2



17...g6

It is understandable that Black cannot capture the knight, because of the checkmate on the last rank, but he could play 17... ♕d7, preparing the exchange of the heavy pieces on the e-file. For example: 18. ♞e5 ♞xe5 19. ♞xe5 ♞e8 20. ♞ae1 ♗f8 21. ♕c4 ♗b6 22. ♕d3 ♞xe5 23. ♞xe5 ♞e8 24. ♞xe8+ ♗xe8= Sadilek – Schneider-Zinner, Aschach 2009.

18. ♞e5?!

White probably thought that he could make a draw the way he pleased and he did not pay attention to some of the intricacies of

the position. He could have equalized with 18. ♞c4 ♞d6 19. ♞ad1.

18... ♞xe5 19. ♞xe5 ♗b4

Black would have seized the initiative following 19... ♖c3! 20. ♗f3 ♕g4.

20. c3 ♗d5 21. ♞ae1 ♕d7 22. ♞c1 ♕e8 23. g3 ♞d6 24. ♕g2?

This is a mistake. After 24. ♗f3, White did not need to worry about anything.

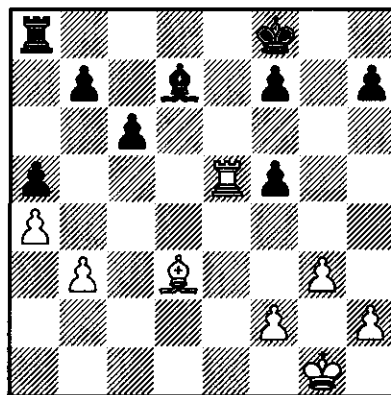
24... ♗xc3 25. ♗f5

Unfortunately for him, recapturing of the pawn would not work, because of the vulnerability of his first rank: 25. ♗xc6 ♕xc6 26. ♞xc3 ♞d1+ 27. ♕f1 ♞ad8+

25... gxf5 26. ♞xc3 ♞d1+ 27. ♕f1 ♕d7 28. ♞d3

It is understandable that White wishes to eliminate his opponent's active rook, but I think he had to avoid exchanges and try to deploy maximally actively his own pieces: 28. ♔g2 ♔g7 29. ♕c4 ♗f6 30. ♞ce3 with good chances for a draw.

28... ♞xd3 29. ♕xd3 ♗f8



30. ♕xf5?

After this mistake White is beyond salvation. It was more resil-

ient for him to defend with 30.♙c4 b6 31.♖e1 ♖e8 32.♞d1.

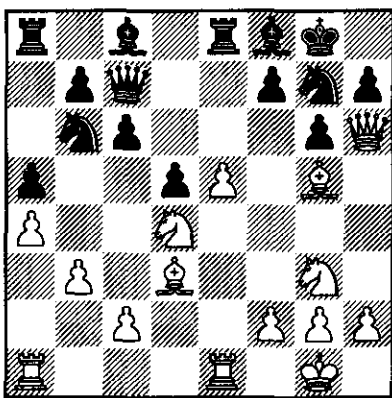
30...f6 31.♙c5 b6

His rook cannot remain on the fifth rank any more, so White loses the exchange.

32.♙xd7 bxc5 33.♙xc6 ♞d8 34.♙b5 ♞d2 35.♙g2 ♙e7 36.♙f3 ♙d6 37.♙c4 ♙e5 38.♙e3 ♞d1 39.f4+ ♙d6 40.♙e4 ♖e1+ 41.♙f3 f5 42.♙f2 ♖c1 43.h4 ♖c2+ 44.♙f3 ♙e7 45.♙e3 ♙f6 46.♙f3 ♙g6 47.♙e3 ♙h5 48.♙f3 ♖c3+ 49.♙g2. White resigned.

47 Felgaer – Strikovic
Bajada de la Virgen 2005

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0–0 0–0 7.♖e1 c6 8.a4 a5 9.b3 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘b6 11.♙d3 d5 12.e5 ♘e8 13.♙h5 g6 14.♙h6 ♘g7 15.♘ce2 ♖e8 16.♘g3 ♙f8 17.♙g5 ♙c7



18.♙h4!?

White's kingside attack has reached its dead end, so Black will start thinking about attacking the e5-pawn, which is about to become White's basic source of

trouble. The following variation is quite indicative about this – 18.♙f6 ♘h5 19.♙g5 ♘xf6 20.exf6 ♖xe1+ 21.♖xe1 h6 22.♙h4 ♙d7 and Black will capture the f6-pawn sooner or later. Felgaer solves the problem in a radical fashion, giving up the pawn and activating his forces.

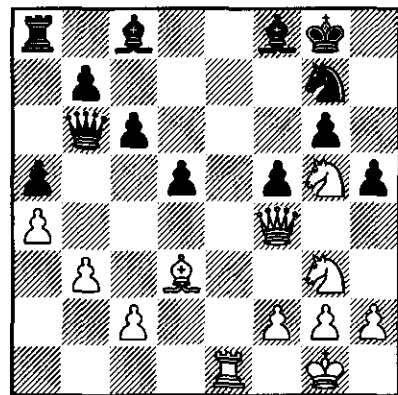
18...♖xe5 19.♙d8 ♖xe1+ 20.♖xe1 ♙d6 21.♙xb6 ♙b4

This double-attack is what Black's play is based on.

22.♘f3!

It is worse for White to play 22.♙xa5 ♙xa5 23.♖e3 ♙b4 and despite the material equality his position is not satisfactory at all.

22...♙xb6 23.♘g5 h5 24.♙f4 f5



25.♘e2?!

It was preferable for him to choose 25.♘f3 and if 25...♘e6, then 26.♖xe6! ♙xe6 27.♙g5 ♙f7 28.♘h5 and it would look like a likely draw: 28...♙b4 29.♘f6+ ♙g7 30.♘h4 ♙e1+ 31.♙f1 ♙e6 32.♘h5+ ♙h7 33.♘f6+ etc. with a perpetual check.

25...♙b4 26.c3 ♙d6 27.c4 ♘e6 28.♘xe6 ♙xe6 29.♙g5 ♙f7

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6

30. cxd5 ♖e8 31. ♖f1 cxd5

Black has an overwhelming advantage, since he has a bishop-pair in a relatively calm situation.

32. ♗f4 ♕e7 33. ♖g3 h4 34. ♖f3 ♕g5 35. ♗e2 ♖b4 36. ♕b5 ♖c8 37. ♖d1 ♖e4

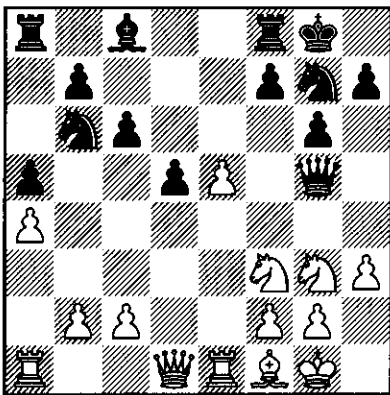
His pieces occupy gradually all the open files and strategically important outposts.

38. ♖d3 ♖c2 39. ♗d4 ♖xd3 40. ♕xd3 ♖c3 41. ♕b5 ♕f6 42. ♗f1 h3 43. gxf3

The record of the game ends here. White was possibly bored with the defence of his hopeless position and he resigned.

48 Efimenko – Bologan
Poikovsky 2009

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 e5 4. ♗f3 ♗bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 a5 9. h3 ♗b6 10. ♕f1 exd4 11. ♗xd4 d5 12. e5 ♗e8 13. ♗ce2 g6 14. ♕h6 ♗g7 15. ♗g3 ♕g5 16. ♕xg5 ♖xg5 17. ♗f3



17... ♖f4

We have mentioned in the theoretical part of the book that it is better for Black to play 17...

♖e7, not presenting the opponent with several tempi to transfer his knight into the centre.

18. ♗e2 ♖h6

The evaluation of the position would not be changed with the line: 18... ♖b4 19. c3 ♖e7 20. ♗ed4±

19. ♗ed4 ♕e6 20. c3 ♗d7 21. b4

It also deserves attention for White to try 21. ♖b3!? ♖fb8 22. ♖ad1, in order to prepare c3-c4 after a while. Black will have a serious problem to bring his queen back into the actions.

21... ♖fe8 22. ♖b3 axb4 23. cxb4 ♗f5 24. a5 ♖f4 25. ♖c3 ♗xd4 26. ♖xd4 ♖h6

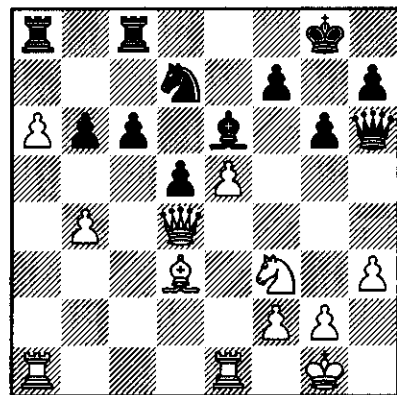
He considers quite reasonably that he would have more chances of creating active counterplay with queens present on the board.

27. ♕d3 ♖ec8 28. a6

This is a very responsible move, since it presents Black with a chance of forming a pawn-tandem in the centre of the board.

28... b6

Naturally, after the exchange on a6, his pawn-structure will be hopelessly compromised.



29. ♖e3?!

White did not understand the fact that after the 28th move, the situation on the board had changed radically and Black was not obliged to avoid an endgame. White could have maintained a slight edge with 29. ♖b2 ♖f4 30. ♘d4±

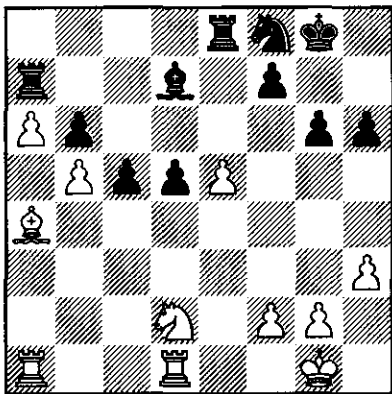
29... ♖xe3! 30. ♖xe3 c5! 31. b5

It is enjoyable for White to create a protected passed pawn indeed, but it is going nowhere, while Black's pawn-tandem is about to begin its victorious march forward.

31... h6

This is prophylactic against ♘g5 and f4.

32. ♖e1 ♖a7 33. ♙c2 ♘f8 34. ♖ed1 ♖e8 35. ♘d2 ♙d7 36. ♙a4



36... ♘e6

Black is not tempted by winning a pawn, because after 36... ♖xe5 37. ♘f3 ♖f5 38. ♖e1, his rook on f5 remains isolated, while White's passed a-pawn may be supported by actions along the e-file.

37. ♘b1 ♘f4 38. ♘c3 d4

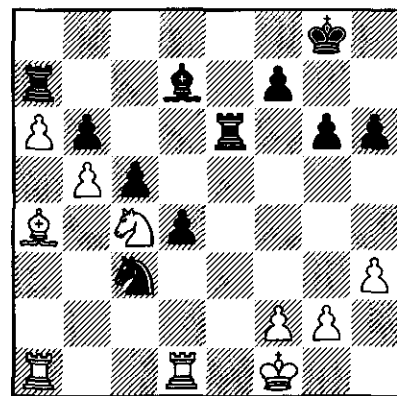
Black postpones again the win

of a pawn. In case of 38... ♖xe5 39. ♖e1 ♖g5 40. g3 ♘xh3+ 41. ♔f1, two of his pieces remain away from the actions and the price he must pay for that – two pawns, does not seem to be justifying it.

39. ♘e4 ♖xe5

In general, Black has done what he was supposed to do and he only needs to parry his opponent's slight initiative.

40. ♘d6 ♖e6 41. ♘c4 ♘e2+ 42. ♔f1 ♘c3



Now, White must give up either the exchange, or his important b5-pawn.

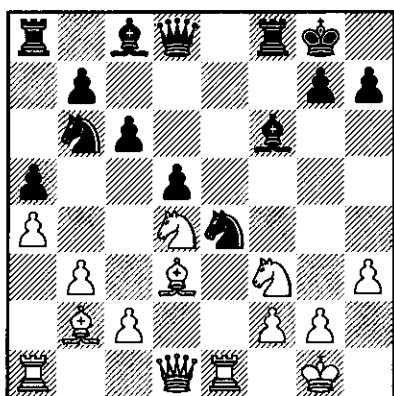
43. ♖db1 ♘xb1 44. ♖xb1 ♔f8 45. f4 ♔e7 46. ♔f2 ♔d8 47. ♘e5 f6 48. ♘c4 ♔c7 49. ♙d1 ♖e4 50. ♙c2 ♖xf4+ 51. ♔e2 ♙e6 52. ♘a5 ♙d5 53. ♙xg6 ♙xg2 54. ♘c4 ♙xh3 55. ♖h1 ♙e6 56. ♙d3 ♙xc4 57. ♙xc4 ♔d6 58. ♖xh6 ♖e7+ 59. ♔d1 d3 60. ♙xd3 c4 61. ♙g6 ♔c5 62. ♖h5+ ♔b4 63. ♖d5 ♖f1+ 64. ♔d2 c3+. White resigned.

49 Nataf – Bologan
France 2007

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0–0

3. ♖c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♙c4 ♙e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖e1 c6

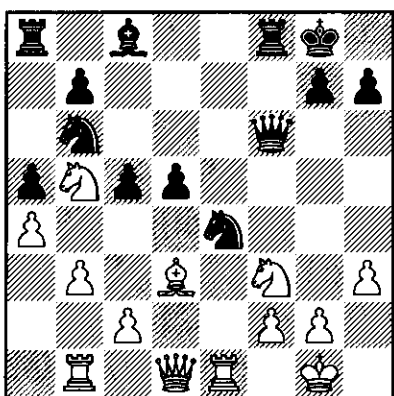
0-0 7. ♖e1 c6 8. a4 a5 9. h3
 ♘b6 10. ♙d3 ♘fd7 11. ♘e2 exd4
 12. ♘exd4 ♘c5 13. b3 d5 14. e5
 ♘e4 15. ♙b2 f5 16. exf6 ♙xf6



17. ♖b1?!

White did not have to allow the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, because the enemy queen would occupy a very powerful position on the f6-square. It was better for him to choose 17. c3!? c5 18. ♘b5 ♙f5 19. ♖c2 ♖c8 with mutual chances.

17...c5 18. ♘b5 ♙xb2 19. ♖xb2 ♖f6 20. ♖b1



20...♙d7

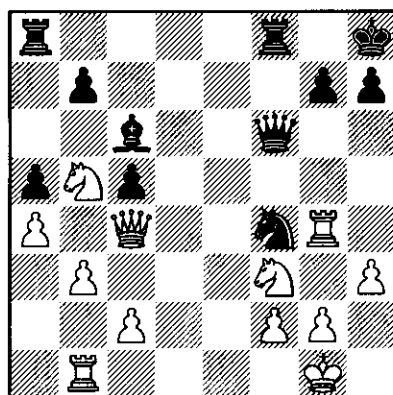
The game would have ended in a draw after the attractive combination – 20...♙xh3 21. gxh3 ♖g6+ (21...♖xf3 22. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 23. ♘c7⇒)

22. ♔f1 ♘g3+ 23. ♔g1 (but not 23. fxf3? ♖xf3 24. ♙e2 ♖ae8 with a dangerous attack for Black) 23... ♘e4+ and a perpetual check.

21. ♙xe4 dxe4 22. ♖xe4 ♙c6
 23. ♖g4 ♘d5

It was also interesting for Black to opt for 23...♖ad8 24. ♖e2 ♖fe8 25. ♖f1 ♙xf3 26. gxf3 ♖xf3, but he obviously wanted more from the position, so he was bringing quickly his knight to the focus of the actions.

24. ♖f1 ♘f4 25. ♖c4+ ♔h8



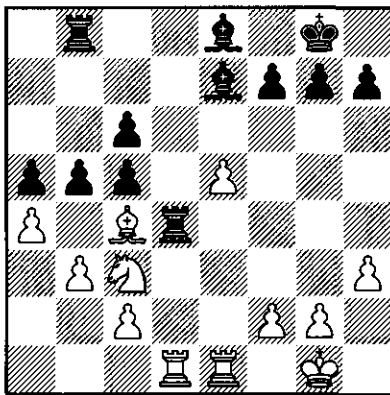
26. ♖xf4

White offers a tougher resistance with this exchange-sacrifice, but he fails to save the game anyway. Meanwhile, even in case of 26. ♖xc5 ♙xf3 27. gxf3 ♖ac8 28. ♖e3 ♖xc2 29. ♘d4 ♖a2, his position is not to be envied at all.

26...♖xf4 27. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 28. ♘e5 ♙xb5 29. axb5 ♖b4 30. ♖d1 ♖xb5 31. ♖d7 ♖b4 32. ♖c7 b5 33. ♘c6 a4 34. ♘xb4 cxb4 35. ♖d7 a3 36. ♖d1 ♖c8 37. ♖c1 a2 38. g3 ♖xc2 39. ♖e1 ♔g8 40. ♔g2 ♔f7 41. ♖a1 ♖b2 42. h4 ♔e6. White resigned.

50 Parligras – Bologan
Moscow 2008

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5
4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♙c4 ♙e7 6.0–0
0–0 7.♞e1 c6 8.a4 a5 9.h3
♗b6 10.♙a2 ♗fd7 11.♙e3 exd4
12.♙xd4 ♗c5 13.♙xc5 dxc5 14.
♞e2 ♞d6 15.♞ad1 ♞h6 16.♞d2
♞xd2 17.♗xd2 ♞d8 18.♗c4 ♗xc4
19.♙xc4 ♙d7 20.♞d3 ♙e8 21.
e5 ♞d4 22.b3 ♞b8 23.♞dd1 b5



Black begins advancing his queenside pawns with the support of his bishops and he soon seizes the initiative.

24.♙f1 ♗f8 25.g3 ♞xd1 26. ♞xd1 c4

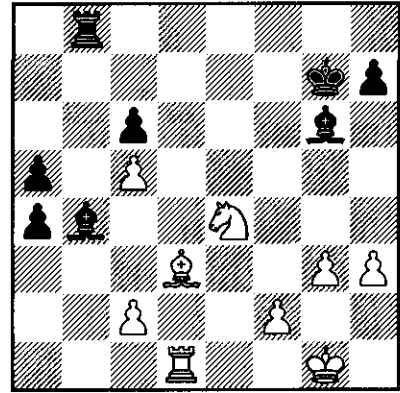
It was possibly preferable for him to eliminate at first the e5-pawn, so that the bishop on e7 could become more active: 26...f6 27.exf6 ♙xf6 28.♗e4 ♙e7 29.♞a1 ♙g6 30.♙g2 c4. Black has the initiative, but White should be able to hold.

27.bxc4 ♙b4 28.♗e4 bxa4 29.c5?!

It seems to me that White could have maintained the balance simpler with the line: 29.♞a1

f5 30.exf6 ♙g6 31.♙d3 a3 32.♗f1, or 29.c3 ♙a3 30.♞a1 ♞b3 31.c5 f5 32.exf6 ♙g6 33.fxc7+ ♗xc7 34.♙g2 ♙xe4 35.♙xe4 ♞xc3 36.♗f1.

29...f5! 30.exf6 ♙g6 31. fxc7+ ♗xc7 32.♙d3



32...♙xe4

Now, the position is simplified quickly.

It was stronger for Black to choose 32...a3 33.♞a1 and only now, after White's rook had only defensive functions, to exchange on e4: 33...♙xe4 34.♙xe4 ♞d8 35. ♞a2 ♙xc5 36.♗f1 (36.c3 ♞f8) 36... ♞d2 37.♗e1 ♞xf2 38.♞xa3 ♞h2. Black maintains a slight edge, but still the game is most likely to end in a draw.

33.♙xe4 ♙c3

In the variation 33...a3 34. ♙xc6 ♙xc5 35.♗g2 ♞b2 36.♙a4 ♞b4 37.♙b3 a4 38.♙d5 ♞b2, White can even give up his bishop – 39.♙e4 a2 40.♞a1 ♙d4 41.♙d5 ♞b5 42.♞xa2 ♞xd5 43.♞xa4 with a draw. Naturally, these spectacular variations are not forced at all.

34.♙xc6 a3 35.♞d7+ ♗f6. Draw.

The book, which you are holding in your hands, consists of seven chapters, dealing with different move-orders.

Each chapter comprises of a **"Quick Repertoire"**, then a thorough theoretical study in the part **"Step by Step"** and **"Complete Games"**.

In order to include a system in your opening repertoire, it would be sufficient for you to read the review and see the games and this should not take too much of your time. After this, you can start playing this opening in friendly games at your club, or on the Internet. After you have amassed a certain degree of experience in the Philidor Defence, you should better study the part "Step by Step" and compare your actions with the recommendations of the author and possibly you might like to correct your playing a bit. The Philidor Defence will become then a wonderful weapon in your chess openings armour.



Vladimir Barsky is an international chess master, journalist and coaching second of A.Morozevich in numerous international competitions, including two World championships. He is the author of a variety of books about chess and chess players, including *The Scotch Game for White*.



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