

Jonathan Hilton

Dean Ippolito

WOJO'S WEAPONS

WINNING
WITH
WHITE

Volume 2



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Jonathan Hilton and Dean Ippolito

Wojo's Weapons



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Volume II



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This book is dedicated to Jerry Hanken (1934-2009), a true friend whose spirit continues to shape the course of my life.

Jonathan Hilton

For my children, Maria and Joseph.

Dean Ippolito

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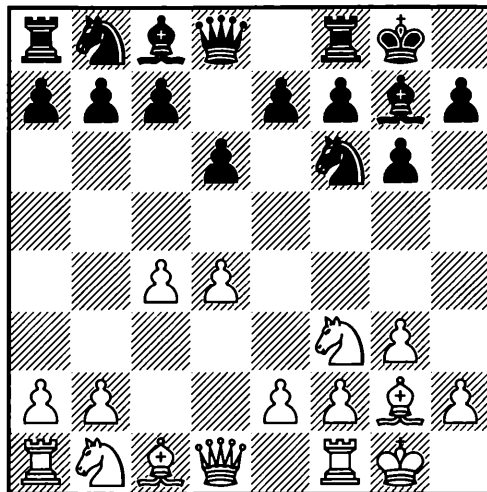
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Additional material was made available to the authors by those who knew Aleksander Wojtkiewicz. In particular, the authors would like to thank Michael Atkins for providing them with a database of never-before-seen Wojo games from Swiss-system events in the U.S.

Introduction

In Volume I of this series, we began our project of analyzing the late GM Aleksander Wojtkiewicz's opening repertoire with White by investigating 1.♘f3 d5 2.d4. We discussed the key principles behind the opening play of "Wojo," as he was commonly known, which functioned to create a system designed to generate the highest possible winning percentage with the least effort necessary – in other words, an efficient repertoire for defeating club players and masters with the white pieces. By employing sound positional lines to bring his less-experienced opponents into unfamiliar territory, Wojo was able to outplay them swiftly, often luring even masters into committing serious errors early on.

Against the King's Indian Defense, Wojo played the Fianchetto Variation via the move order 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0. The position after White's move 6 is the starting point for this volume:



From the position in the diagram, Wojo was able to achieve a stunning winning percentage of 80.2% over the course of 91 sample games found in the ChessBase database. This percentage would be even higher if we added in those games not catalogued in the databases (generally against weaker opponents), some of which are presented in this book. Note that, after 1.♘f3 d5 2.d4, as covered in the previous volume, Wojo only managed a 63.4% score out of 154 sample games. Thus, we can say with confidence that if the Catalan positions explored in the last book formed the "heart" of the Wojo repertoire, the Fianchetto King's Indian really represents where the "big money" was. Wojo's brutal efficiency in defeating the King's Indian Defense game after game made the difference when it came to turning out the kinds of scores needed to win weekend Swisses. The Fianchetto King's Indian was a staple of the Wojo repertoire and was fundamental to his success. For this reason, we have devoted an entire volume to scrutinizing Wojo's ideas in the Fianchetto King's Indian.

Given the fierce reputation of the King's Indian as a fighting defense, it may surprise some readers that the lines presented in this book are considerably less sharp than those which we presented in Volume I. As it turns out, White's fianchetto formation on the kingside does such a good job of taking the sting out of Black's ambitions on that flank that, generally speaking, a Fianchetto King's Indian middlegame should be less tactical in nature than, say, a line from the Early Open Catalan with 1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.g3 dxc4. Even Black's most aggressive lines – such as the Gallagher Variation, explored in Chapter 3 – do not generate the kinds of intense complications found in Part II of the previous volume. Thus, the idea is that, after studying this book, players of White should be able to emulate Wojo's strategies for blunting Black's activity and generating a significant space advantage. When played correctly, Wojo's ideas allow White to achieve a tremendous winning percentage; thus, players of White should look forward to facing the King's Indian Defense rather than fearing it. Our aim here is to make Wojo's 80% score against the King's Indian Defense accessible to our readers.

We have tried to keep the structure of this book similar to that of the previous one. Part I of this volume shares many features with Part I of the previous volume: both are designed to examine the critical ideas and concepts that form the real centerpiece of the repertoire presented. After reading Part I of this book, most readers should be able to begin employing the Fianchetto King's Indian in their own games to good effect, particularly at club level. We begin in Chapter 1 by covering the ideas developed in GM David Bronstein's *Zürich International Chess Tournament, 1953*, which has long been considered an important primer for anyone undertaking a serious study of the King's Indian. At the time that *Zürich 1953* was written, these ideas were the latest theory, but in this book, we can examine them with the benefit of hindsight. Wojo's games represent a significant contribution to the debate surrounding these ideas, which we consider has mostly been resolved in White's favor. Even when Black is surviving theoretically (which it is never completely clear that he is), White walks away with a tremendous "plus" score in practice – and it is this high winning percentage that we are most concerned with. Meanwhile, Chapter 2 continues to develop the key set of ideas that form the bulk of the basic knowledge a player of White needs to play against the King's Indian. Chapters 3 and 4 begin a more theoretical investigation into some of Black's most aggressive early tries, and Chapter 5 sums everything up and allows us to assemble a complete repertoire against Black's lines with ...♗b8-d7 based on the material already covered.

Part II, just as in the first volume, covers the most critical modern lines. These variations involve Black's bringing his queen's knight to c6 instead of d7. Here, Chapters 6 and 7 are the most important for club players to read and understand because they continue to develop ideas that are fundamental to Wojo's entire approach to handling the King's Indian – namely, achieving and following up on the c4-c5 break after White locks the center with d4-d5. From the standpoint of modern theory, however, the most significant section of Part II is Chapter 8

INTRODUCTION

on the Panno. This mega-chapter covers a wide berth of ideas in the 8.b3 Panno over the course of nine heavily annotated games. We have sought to examine enough approaches for White here against Black's most testing lines. Our readers should be able to select whichever line will work best for the occasion, from the surprise weapon that guarantees a slight advantage for White to the mainstream theoretical lines that look to keep the game double-edged.

Finally, Part III wraps up the book by covering all of Black's less common tries. In this sense, it is similar to Part IV of the previous volume. White can count on getting a nice advantage against the Kavalek and Larsen systems (covered in Chapters 11 and 12, respectively) and also against any of Black's other miscellaneous tries. Against the Yugoslav lines with 6...c5, however, we examine just one sideline for White out of a rich body of theory that we could have presented. Our reason for this was simple: White doesn't score well in the main lines of the Yugoslav, as these sharp variations tend to give Black everything the second player wants. Our Wojo sideline with 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♖e5!? ought to be enough to give White just a slight pull from a theoretical standpoint. From a practical standpoint, considering this line's surprise value, White can aim for an 80% target score here just as in all the other chapters of this book.

It is our hope that this volume will prove a valuable contribution to chess theory and will help to preserve the games and ideas of our friend Aleksander Wojtkiewicz. Several people volunteered their time to review and improve this work. The authors would especially like to thank FM Tyler Hughes for his contributions to Chapters 3 and 4 and tournament director Michael Atkins for supplying us with several never-before-seen Wojo games for use in this book. We would also like to thank the countless numbers of players who, since the release of Volume I, have taken an interest in Wojo's legacy and have inspired us to include even more of his games in Volume II.

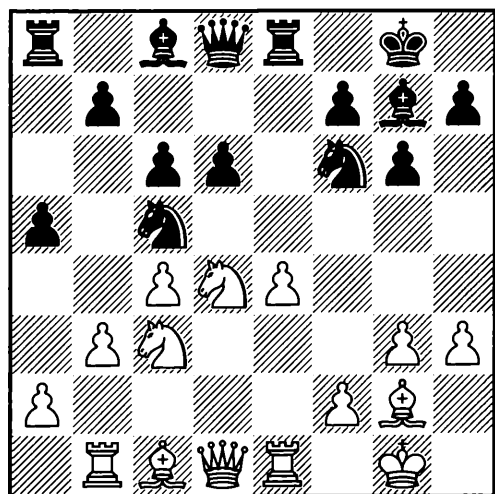
Part I



The Classical Fianchetto King's Indian with ...bd7

Chapter 1

The “Zürich 1953” Defense – Black Plays ...♞b8-d7, ...e7-e5xd4, and ...a7-a5



1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♠bd7 7.♠c3 e5
8.e4 c6 9.♝b1 a5 10.h3 ♝e8 11.♝e1
exd4 12.♠xd4 ♠c5 13.b3 (give or
take)

In Volume I of *Wojo’s Weapons*, we dedicated the first part of the book to examining the Closed Catalan. The reasons for this were twofold: first, the Closed Catalan is the opening readers are most likely to face at the club level after 1.♠f3 d5; and second, the Closed Catalan was also the most thematic of the openings we presented, meaning that it could be readily be broken down into separate themes. In Volume II, we seek to do the same thing with the most common club-level responses to the King’s Indian – those that feature the move ...♞b8-d7 early on from Black.

This chapter focuses on what happens when Black attempts to counter White’s dynamic Fianchetto King’s Indian setup with ...♞b8-d7, ...e7-e5, and ...exd4 (without following up with ...a7-a6, as in the Gallagher Variation, which we cover in Chapter 3). Those readers who have played over the games presented in David Bronstein’s classic *Zürich 1953* tournament book will undoubtedly remember the stubborn, resistant position that Black tries to organize along the last three ranks in this variation. The following oft-quoted passage has served for decades as the definitive description of Black’s strategy here:

Characteristically, the King’s Indian Defense features a tense battle waged on all fronts simultaneously. The system used here secures White considerable territory, not only in the center, but on the kingside as well.

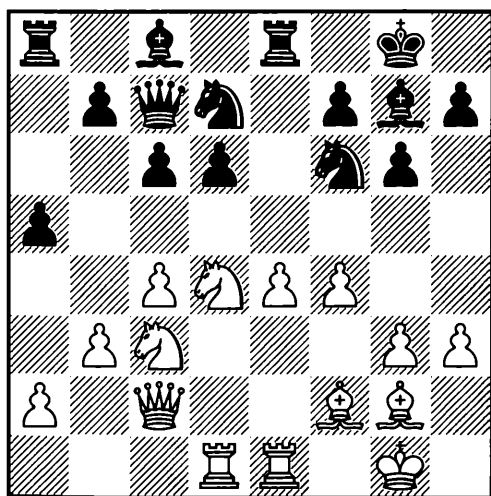
I do not wish to leave the reader the false impression that White’s further task, which is to transform his sizeable spatial plus into a material advantage, will be an easy one. The secret of the King’s Indian’s hardihood is that, while

conceding space, Black builds a few small but weighty details into his configuration. Foremost among these are his long-range bishops at g7 and c8, his firmly entrenched knight at c5 and the rook at e8, which maintain constant watch on the e-pawn. Nor ought we to forget his pawns. The “weak” pawn on d6 is just waiting for the chance to push to d5, so White must continually keep an eye on that... [The black a-pawn] also has an important role: the threat to advance it... can upset his opponent’s plans for that sector at any time, so White must take extra precautions regarding the defense of c3 and c4.

Much has changed since the 1950s, however. This chapter is devoted entirely to demonstrating how Wojo did indeed convert his “sizeable spatial plus” into something more concrete, either in the form of material or an attack. Let’s begin by examining the most obvious way that White can turn his space into material: winning the d6-pawn.

Black’s Pawn on d6 Falls

There are two common ways by which Black’s d6-pawn, during the course of the middlegame, may fall into White’s hands. The first is that Black simply overlooks something and ends up hanging it. This is surprisingly common even at the master level. Defending the d6-pawn becomes a challenge for Black at times, and if he makes some slight inaccuracies, the d-pawn dies a miserable death. Consider the following position, taken from Wojtkiewicz-Souleidis, Duisburg 1999:



Although Souleidis would go on to earn the title of International Master

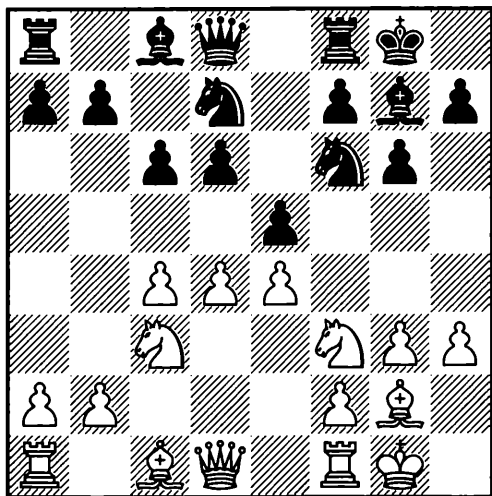
that same year, defending the d6-pawn proved too difficult for him from this cramped position. He went astray with **22...♘f8?!**, which, among other things, takes the f8 square away from Black’s bishop on g7. After **23.♙d2 ♕d7 24.♘f3**, Black found himself unable to stop White from crashing through on d6. He soon resigned after **24...♖ad8 25.♙xd6 ♜c8 26.♘b6 ♘h3 27.♘xd8 ♜g4 28.♘xf6 ♜xg3 29.♖d2 ♘xf6 30.e5 1-0**.

The second way that the d6-pawn can fall is that, as Black is slowly squeezed against the edge of the board by White’s impending space advantage, he finds himself incapable of defending it. We illustrate this in the third game in this chapter, Wojtkiewicz-Shulman, after showing two games featuring tactical themes allowing White to crack the d6-pawn early on. Finally, the last game presented in this section shows Black’s d-pawn falling for a combination of the two reasons.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2460) Garkov, Mitko (2415)

[E69] Warsaw 1989

1.♟f3 g6 2.d4 ♞g7 3.g3 d6 4.♞g2
♜f6 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 ♜bd7 7.♜c3 e5
8.e4 c6 9.h3



Preventing ...♜f6-g4, one of Black's common tricks, before placing the dark-squared bishop on e3. Upon coming to the United States, Wojo would begin to use the more subtle move order 9.♞b1 in order to prevent the possibility mentioned in the note to Black's next move. The move 9.♞b1 is featured in the next game.

9...♞e7

This is too passive. The more ambitious 9...♞b6 is Black's best attempt, after which White can choose from among 10.♞e1 (Wojo's usual choice), 10.d5, and the crazy 10.c5. In Chapter 5, which goes over various move orders, we also examine one of Dean's favorite lines here, 10.♞b1!?

10.♞e3

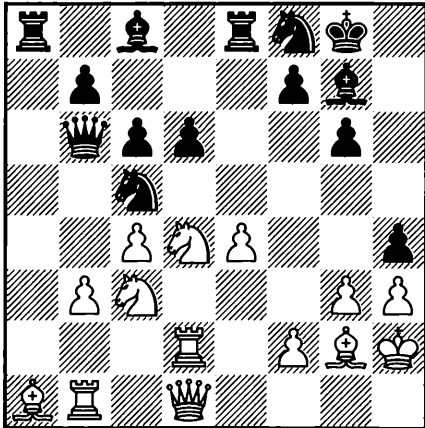
It is worth noting at this point that there exists a huge misconception among club players that White's dark-

squared bishop belongs on the long diagonal and that he should fianchetto it with b2-b3 and ♞c1-b2. Although such a plan is still occasionally employed at grandmaster level, it is not White's best idea in this position. Black is aiming to play ...exd4 and open the center, so White should be seeking to neutralize Black's control of the a1-h8 diagonal by stepping off it – not by adding pieces to it for Black's g7-bishop to attack. From the position in the previous diagram, the e3 square is almost always the best one for White's own dark-squared bishop. From there, it eyes the queenside (particularly the vulnerable b6 square) and discourages skirmishes such as ...♞d8-b6-b4. Furthermore, should Black become ambitious and try ...h7-h5-h4 to take a potshot at White's kingside, it would help to be able to post the clergyman to the g5 square. Wojo sometimes developed the bishop to f4 in order to provoke Black into wasting time (such as with ...♜f6-h5), but ultimately the bishop was usually relocated to e3.

It is hard to say exactly why so many players choose to fianchetto the dark-squared bishop as White in these structures, but perhaps it has to do with a psychological defect of some sort. White players take comfort in developing both bishops to their respective long diagonals, and feel they are "countering" Black's dark-squared bishop on g7 by placing their own on b2. One look at Bronstein and Neat's 1999 work *Play the King's Indian* ought to cure any player of White of this attitude. The authors pick games featuring White's dark-squared bishop developing to b2 in order to demonstrate the potential of Black's position – for instance, in one

THE “ZÜRICH 1953” DEFENSE

game (L.Pachman-Bronstein, Prague 1946), Black even managed an effective ...♖a8x(♗)a1 exchange sacrifice:



20...♖xa1! 21.♖xa1 ♗xd4 22.♖xd4 ♟xb3 23.♖xd6 ♞xf2! (Bronstein gives 23...♟xa1 24.♟d5 ♞xf2 25.♟f6+ and 26.♟xe8) 24.♖a2 ♞xg3+ 25.♟h1 ♞xc3 26.♖a3 ♗xh3 27.♖xb3 ♗xg2+ 28.♟xg2 ♞xc4 29.♖d4 ♞e6 30.♖xb7 ♖a8 31.♞e2 h3+ 0-1.

Of course, this doesn't mean that White should never develop his dark-squared bishop to b2 in the Fianchetto King's Indian. There are plenty of situations where b3 and ♗b2 are appropriate. In general, however, they occur only in variations such as the Panno (with an early ...♟c6, ...a6, and ...♖b8 from Black), when the second player isn't particularly aiming for a quick ...e7-e5xd4. And with that, let's return to the game.

10...♖e8 11.♞c2

Reinforcing the e4-pawn and connecting White's rooks.

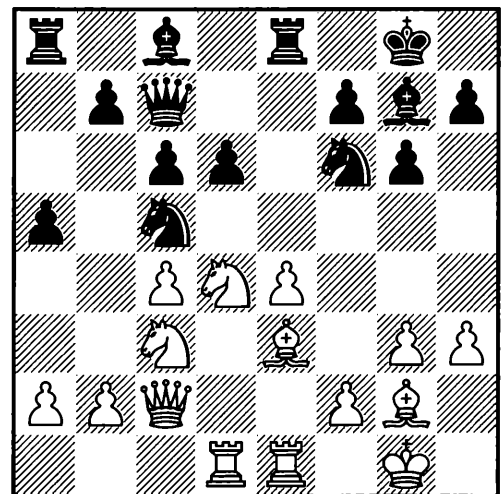
11...exd4 12.♟xd4 ♟c5 13.♖fe1

White defends the pawn on e4 indirectly. This is better than 13.f3, which would weaken White's pawn formation unnecessarily.

13...a5

Securing space on the queenside and preventing any ideas of b2-b4 from White. Grabbing the pawn with 13...♟fxe4 would have been inadvisable, as 14.♗xe4 (better than 14.♟xe4 ♟xe4 15.♗xe4 c5!, equalizing in A.Obhukov-V.Tseshkovsky, Belorechensk 1993) 14...♞xe4 16.♗d2 forces Black to give up his queen: 16...♞xe1+ 17.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 18.♗xe1 ♗xd4 19.♗c3 ♗xc3 20.♞xc3 ♗xh3 21.♞b4 and White's queen outmaneuvered Black's rook and bishop to mop up the queenside pawns in L.Shamkovich-C.Baljon, Amsterdam 1979; Ippolito-M.Fitzko, New York 1993; and Ippolito-J.Wheat, Bloomington 1997.

14.♖ad1 ♞c7?!



Black “corrects” the placement of his queen, but this is a tactical error. Better is the more common 14...♟fd7, with the idea of playing ...♟c5-a6 and ...♟d7-c5, perhaps with an eye toward the ...f7-f5 strike.

15.♟db5!

A pseudo-sacrifice to break through on d6.

15...cxb5 16.♖xb5 ♕e7

Of course not 16...♕b6?? 17.♖xd6, trapping the queen.

17.♖xd6

Black's knight on c5 is now hanging. White will get a rook and two strong pawns for his two knights, which in this case proves decisive.

17...♖e6 18.e5 ♖d7 19.♖xe8 ♕xe8 20.f4

Black's bishops are boxed in and he is still low on space. To ensure victory, White just needs to take control of the dark squares and break through along the d-file and on the kingside.

20...♗f8 21.g4

Threatening f4-f5.

21...♖g7

Or 21...♗c5 22.♕f2 with the continued threat of f4-f5.

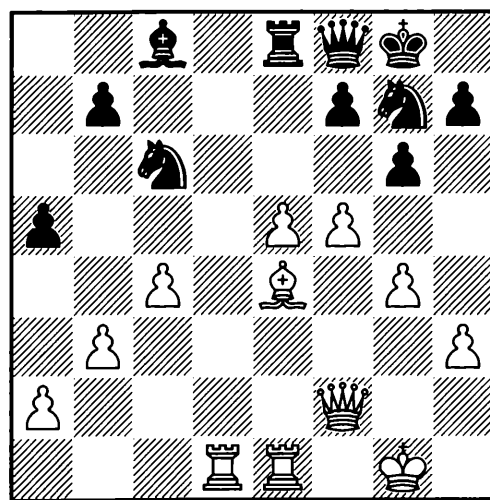
22.♕f2 ♖b8

Black is attempting to play ...♖b8-c6 to shield his b7-pawn from the bishop on g2.

23.♗c5

The most straightforward way to penetrate the dark squares is to exchange bishops.

23...♖c6 24.♗d6 ♗e6 25.b3 ♕c8 26.♗xf8 ♕xf8 27.♗e4 ♖e8 28.f5 ♗c8



29.e6!

White has been building up for this breakthrough.

29...fxe6?

Stiffer resistance would have been put up by 29...gxf5 30.gxf5 fxe6 31.f6 ♖h5 (not 31...♖f5? 32.♗xf5 exf5 33.♕g3+ ♖f7 34.♖xe8 ♖xe8 35.♕c7, when White is winning) 32.♖f1 ♕f7, when White still has a large advantage thanks to his superior mobility but is by no means completely winning.

30.f6 1-0

The black knight on g7 is trapped.

It didn't take many inaccuracies from Black in this game for him to find himself in trouble. Wojo's 15.♖db5! illustrates an important tactical theme that players of both White and Black should remember.

In the next game, we see the same motif of a knight landing on b5.

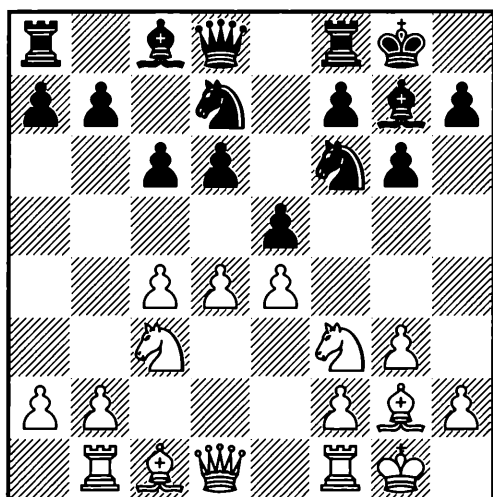
**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2565)
Bauer, Christian (2505)**

[E69] Metz 1997

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 d6 3.d4 g6 4.g3

THE “ZÜRICH 1953” DEFENSE

♠g7 5.♠g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♠bd7 7.♠c3
e5 8.e4 c6 9.♠b1



A “Wojo Weapon” that allows White to get the kind of positional game that he is looking for, without stepping into a sea of complications. Placing the rook on b1 takes the sting out of Black’s tactical shots early on: his rook is off the a1-h8 diagonal, and his b-pawn is defended against any ...♞d8-b6 sortie. Meanwhile, the rook is useful on b1 because it helps prepare the gradual b2-b3-b4 push later in the middle-game. The disadvantage of this move is that it may not be useful for White if Black doesn’t concede the center with 9...exd4 and instead goes about preparing the ...b7-b5 punch with something like 9...a6. We look at this type of approach for Black in Chapter 4.

9...exd4 10.♠xd4 ♠e8 11.h3 ♠c5

Black can try to take advantage of White’s “slow” move 9 with 11...♠b6!? 12.b3 d5, a break in the center which has been tried a handful of times. After 13.exd5 cxd5 14.c5, White retains his edge: 14...♠bd7 15.b4 a5 16.a3 gave White the upper hand in F.Sage-C. Vasile, corr. 2004, while 14...♠e4!? 15.♠xe4 dxe4 16.♠b5 gives White a large initiative.

12.♠e1 a5 13.b3

This patient approach is the best one. White prevents any attempt at ...a5-a4 from Black: he can now simply push past with b3-b4, dislodging Black’s knight from c5. White is also slowly removing his pieces from the a1-h8 diagonal.

13...♠fd7

Black prepares for some maneuvering. 13...h6, a waiting move, has also been tried. White usually piles up on the d6-pawn with 14.♠f4, after which he has a comfortable game.

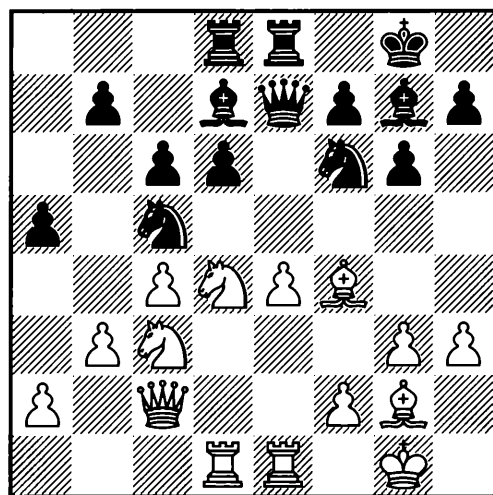
14.♠e3 ♠f6?!

Now it becomes apparent that Black is just going back and forth. More common is 14...♠e5 15.♞c2 ♞e7 16.♠bd1 ♠ed7 17.f4 and so on, when again it seems like Black isn’t making any progress.

15.♞c2 ♞e7 16.♠bd1 ♠d7 17.♠f4

White is fully developed, so he decides to turn the screws on d6. Black, who has lost two moves by playing ...♠f6-d7 and back again, will be hard-pressed to find an adequate defense.

17...♠ad8



18.♟db5!

Using the same tactical theme we saw in the previous game.

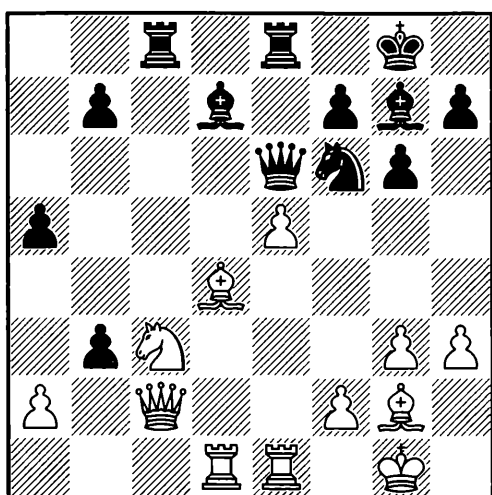
18...cxb5 19.♙xd6 ♖e6 20.♙xc5

White has, for the moment, won a pawn. Amazingly, this exact position has occurred at least twice in practice.

20...♞c8 21.♙d4

White prepares e4-e5. The reasonable 21.♙d6 was attempted in M.Luch-M.Stolz, Czech Republic 2004, but after 21...bxc4, White blundered with 22.b4!? ♞c6 23.e5?? (23.♟b5 instead, threatening ♟b5-c7, would have left Black in trouble), when after 23...♞xd6 24.exd6 ♖xe1+ 25.♞xe1 ♞xe1+ 26.♙h2 axb4 27.♟d5 ♟xd5 28.♙xd5 c3 it was Black who had all the play and who went on to win.

21...bxc4 22.e5 cxb3



22...♟h5 23.♞d2! would likely have done little to change the result.

23.♞d2!

White covers the f4 square in preparation for trapping Black's knight.

23...♟h5 24.g4

White now wins material – and with it, the game.

24...♙c6 25.axb3

A clean conversion. There was nothing wrong with 25.gxh5 ♙xg2 26.♙xg2 bxa2 and so on, but Wojo prefers the least messy solution.

25...♙xg2 26.♙xg2 ♞xc3

26...♞c6+ 27.♙g1 f6 is suggested by the computers as a last-ditch attempt to save Black, but after 28.e6 (28.gxh5? fxe5 would let Black back in the game) 28...f5 29.♙xg7 ♟xg7 30.♟d5, White's position is overpowering.

27.♙xc3 ♞c6+ 28.♙g1 ♟f4 29.♞xf4 ♞xc3 30.e6 fxe6 31.♞xe6

A final tactical finesse.

31...♞f8 32.♞e3 ♞xe3 33.fxe3 b5 34.♞d5 ♞b8 35.♞a6 ♙c3 36.♞ad6 ♟f7 37.♞d8 ♞b6 38.♞5d6 1-0

After White forces the trade of rooks, it's all over.

White's prophylactic 9.♞b1 avoids many of the tactical ideas players of the black pieces like to employ. Even though the rook had to move again with 16.♞bd1 in order to come to the center, this slight loss of time didn't mean much compared to the time Black lost with the ill-fated ... ♟f6-d7-f6 shuffle. In this game, White slowly gained the upper hand just by putting his pieces on good squares and eyeing the d6-pawn. Once again, the tactical shot ♟d4-b5 arose, ruining Black's position.

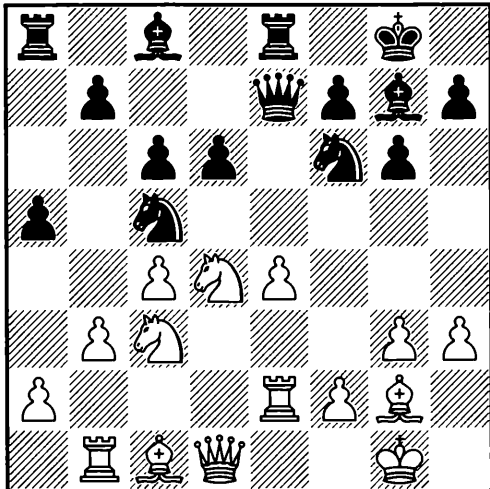
THE “ZÜRICH 1953” DEFENSE

In the next game, Wojo must slowly force his grandmaster opponent back by taking space on both sides of the board before he is allowed to harvest the d6-pawn. This game was first annotated in Jonathan Hilton’s original “How Wojo Won” series for *Chess Life Online* (see Part III, published April 2007), and it reappears here with the notes significantly revised.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2530)
Shulman, Yuri (2490)

[E69] Katowice 1995

1.♟f3 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♟g7
 4.♟g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♞bd7
 7.♞c3 e5 8.e4 c6 9.♞b1 a5 10.h3
 ♞e8 11.♞e1 exd4 12.♞xd4 ♞c5 13.b3
 ♞e7 14.♞e2



A useful waiting move, preparing to put pressure on the d-pawn with an eventual ♟c1-f4 and ♞e2-d2. Note that Black was lining up along the e-file. With 14.♞e2, White places his rook on a square where it is defended by his two knights, preventing any tactical ideas from Black involving ...d6-d5. 14.♟f4 first is somewhat more common, when only after 14...♞fd7 is 15.♞e2 played. Then 15...♞e5 16.♟e3! allows White to

hit Black’s knight back with f2-f4 followed by ♟e3-f2.

14...♟d7 15.♟f4 ♞h5 16.♟e3

White has succeeded in luring Black’s knight out to the awkward h5 square.

**16...♞ad8 17.♞d2 ♞f8 18.♞d1
 ♟c8 19.♞c2**

Overprotecting the e4-pawn will be important in the struggle for control of the kingside.

**19...h6 20.♞h2 ♞f6 21.♞g1 ♞h5
 22.♞ee1 ♞h7 23.a3**

Black has maneuvered all of his pieces to the kingside, so Wojo turns his attention to the queenside. The absence of Black’s knight on h5 from the activity in the center, along with his rook being on d8 (rather than on a8) and his queen on f8 (rather than c7) will make it hard for him to defend against White’s impending b3-b4-b5 expansion.

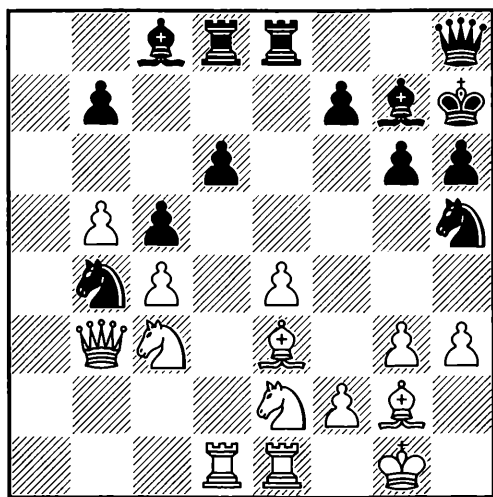
23...♞h8

Black begins an interesting attempt to generate counterplay. Anticipating White’s idea of advancing to b4 and b5, Black exerts pressure on the queenside dark squares, which White must leave behind in order to carry on with his plans.

24.b4 axb4 25.axb4 ♞a6 26.b5

White begins to break down Black’s position by undermining the d5 square.

26...♞b4 27.♞b3 c5 28.♞de2



28...f5

Black has succeeded in plugging up the queenside, stymying White's attack there. Now, he seeks counterplay on the kingside to relieve his cramped position. His d6-pawn remains weak, however. As White continues to push for more space, Black will find it harder and harder to hold his backward d-pawn. Wojo begins by doubling on the d-file.

29.♖d2 ♜f6 30.♖ed1 ♜f8 31.exf5 ♜xf5 32.g4

White continues to gain space. Having forced Black to defend d6, White switches his attention to slowly advancing on the kingside. One of his main ideas is the knight maneuver ♞e2-f4, further controlling d5.

32...♞e4 33.♞f4 ♜xg2 34.♔xg2

Black's position has seemed more or less defensible up to this point, but now Black struggles with the pressure on his position. How can he defend both his g6-pawn (against White's upcoming ♜b3-b1) and his d6-pawn (against White's powerful doubled rooks)? Unfortunately, at this point there is no good answer. For instance,

on 34...♞e4 Black has to face possible tactics involving ♞f4xg6, followed by a pin along the b1-h7 diagonal.

34...g5

Frustrated, Black lashes out. Now White simply regroups and takes advantage of the newly created outposts on f5 and h5.

35.♞fe2 ♜e7 36.♞g3 ♜e5 37.♞f5

White is getting closer and closer to his goal of winning the d6-pawn.

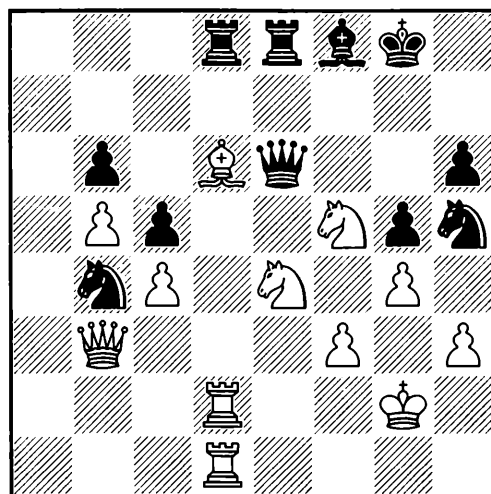
37...♜f8 38.f3

White methodically prepares to put his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal.

38...b6 39.♜g1 ♜e6 40.♜h2 ♜g8

There was nothing better. The d6-pawn could not be saved.

41.♜xd6 ♞h5 42.♞e4



Following the collapse of the d-pawn, White lays waste to Black's entire position. The rest is a mopup operation on the kingside.

42...♜xd6 43.♖xd6 ♞f4+ 44.♔f1

THE "ZÜRICH 1953" DEFENSE

**♙xd6 45.♙xd6 ♖e5 46.♚d1 ♜e6
47.♙d7 ♜h8 48.♜xh6 ♚h2 49.♜f7+
♜g7 50.♜fxg5+ ♜g6 51.♜xe6
♚xh3+ 52.♜g1 ♙xe6 53.♚b1 ♚h6
54.♜d6+ 1-0**

White's cautious play in the early middlegame paid off. Although some of his maneuvers shuffling back and forth may have seemed a little eccentric, his 23.a3 and 24.b4 ultimately caught Black off-guard. With space-taking moves like 26.b5 and 32.g4, White was able to push Black back. Eventually, Black had too little maneuvering room to adequately defend his backward d-pawn. As is par for the course, the fall of this pawn meant Black's rapid demise.

Depending on the amount of resistance Black puts up, White may not have to wait all the way to move 41 to see the black d-pawn fall. When Black is an amateur rather than a grandmaster, his position can deteriorate far more quickly. In the last game of this section, we admire the speed with which Black's fortress crumbles in the hands of a non-master.

**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2540)
Werner, Lennart**

[E69] Stockholm 1991

**1.♜f3 d6 2.d4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
♜f6 5.c4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♜c3 ♚c7**

It is somewhat unusual for Black to commit his queen to this square so early. Normally, Black tries to stay more flexible with the Lady.

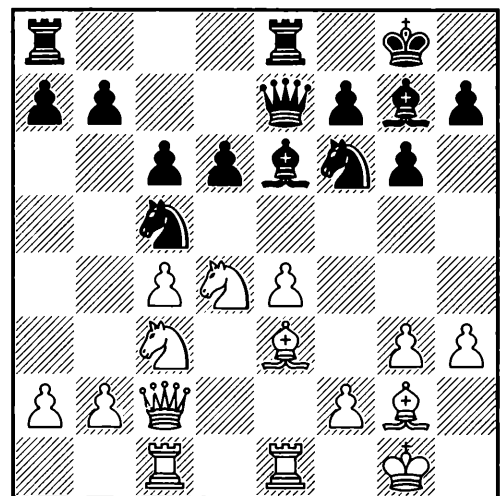
**8.h3 ♜bd7 9.e4 e5 10.♙e3 ♙e8
11.♙c1**

Because Black has already showed his hand by bringing the queen to c7 and not b6, White can comfortably slide the rook over to c1 instead.

**11...exd4 12.♜xd4 ♜c5 13.♚c2
♚e7**

Note that Black seems unsure as to the placement of his queen. More to the point was 13...a5.

14.♙fe1 ♙e6



This, too, seems overly committal. Better was to stay flexible with 14...a5, not committing to any particular piece configuration.

15.b3 ♙ad8 16.♙cd1

Preparing the traditional assault in the center.

16...a5 17.f4 ♙c8

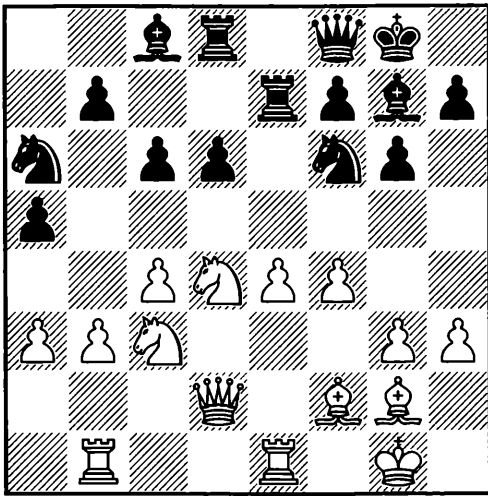
Although this configuration with the bishop on c8 and the queen's rook on d8 is tempting, Black will suffer from the inability of his pieces to defend the queenside.

18.♙f2 ♚f8 19.a3 ♜a6

Anticipating b3-b4.

20.♖b1 ♜e7 21.♔d2

22.♟c2



White targets the loose a5-pawn.

21...♟c7

Black reroutes his knight, but no one can say to where.

Preparing for a possible ♟f2-b6. Black can do embarrassingly little to defend his b6 square.

22...♜ed7 23.♟a4

White has too many threats. The a5-pawn is even hanging.

23...b5 24.♟b6 ♜e7 25.♟xc8 ♜xc8 26.♔xd6

Taking the d6-pawn and thus putting an end to its misery.

26...♔e8 27.e5 ♜e6 28.♔d2 ♟d7 29.♟d4 1-0

In Wojtkiewicz-Werner, White had no trouble gaining the advantage. Black found himself forced to play ...♜a8-d8 and ...♟d7-c8 in order to defend the d6-pawn, a maneuver which left his queenside vulnerable. After 23.♟a4, Black's position collapsed.

Conclusion: In all four of the above games, something went dreadfully wrong for Black. Either he made an inaccuracy or two that allowed White to crash through on d6, or he was slowly pushed off the board and forced to cede the d-pawn, or both. With patience and a keen eye for penetrating weaknesses in Black's position, Wojo was able to convert his space advantage into something more tangible.

White Breaks Through on the Kingside

When Black successfully finds a way to defend his d6-pawn, White must create – as the old saying goes – a “second weakness.” Often, weaknesses on the queenside – such as the a5-pawn or the b6 square – prove sufficient for White to penetrate Black's position. But when Black proves solid, White often begins expanding on the kingside (much as in Wojtkiewicz-Shulman above, only earlier in the middlegame) as a way to

increase his influence over the board.

Wojo's formula for victory using such an approach was straightforward: first, tie Black to the defense of the d6-pawn; then, advance the pawns on the kingside. In order to accomplish the first goal, he would bring his queen's rook to d1 and then, after shoring up his e4-pawn by way of ♜f1-e1, f2-f4, and ♟e3-f2, gently slide his queen over from c2 to d2. From there, all that

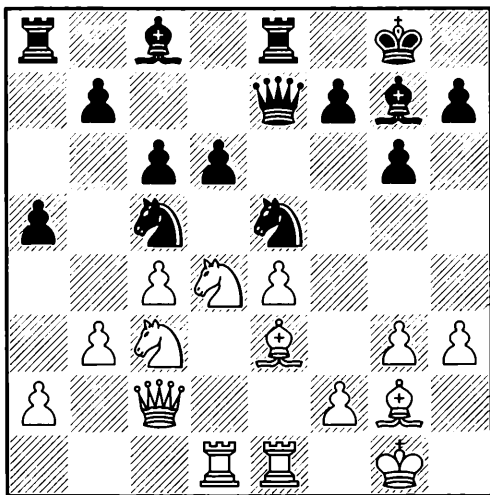
THE "ZÜRICH 1953" DEFENSE

remained was to remove the knight from d4 in order to unleash White's buildup along the d-file. In order to defend, Black would either have to play ...♙c8-d7, ...♖a8-d8, and ...♙d7-c8 again (which, as we know from Wojtkiewicz-Werner above, weakens the a5-pawn) or tie himself down by putting his active king's bishop on either f8 or e7. If Black chose the latter, Wojo had the "all clear" to begin an orderly assault on the kingside. Let's begin with a typical example.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2460)
Burger, Karl (2315)

[E69] New York 1989

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♞bd7
 7.♞c3 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♞e8 10.♙e3
 exd4 11.♞xd4 ♞c5 12.♚c2 a5
 13.♞ad1 ♞fd7 14.b3 ♚e7 15.♞fe1



15...♞e5

The provocative ...♞d7-e5, essentially begging for White to play f2-f4, is extremely common in practice. It is not good, however. Black is wasting time: 15...♞f8, 15...♞a6 (preparing ...♞d7-c5 and even ...♞a6-b4, and the space-gaining 15...h5 were all preferable.

16.f4 ♞ed7 17.♙f2

The standard maneuver begins.

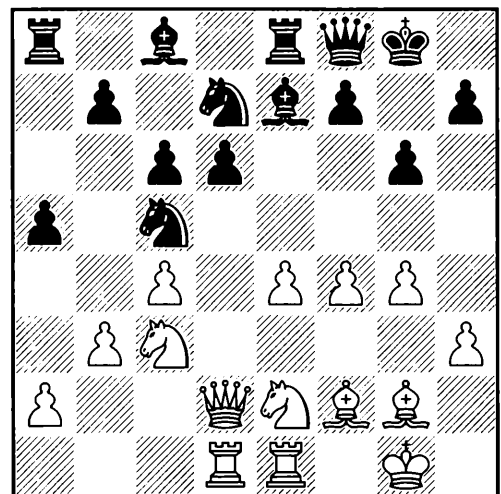
17...♞f8

Black begins anticipating White's assault on the d-pawn and seeks to defend it.

18.♞de2 ♙f6 19.♚d2 ♙e7

Black has succeeded in holding on to his d-pawn, but his position is far from auspicious. With his best pieces caught in a miserable tangle, there is little that Black can do to stop White's impending kingside assault.

20.g4



White, in accordance with his plan, begins the assault. His knight on e2 can come to g3, and the idea of h3-h4-h5 to open the h-file is in the works.

20...f6 21.♞g3 ♞f7

Black eyes the c4-pawn. His idea is to break with ...a5-a4, making White's queenside pawns a target.

22.♙f1

Cautious defense of c4. White need not take any chances.

22...b6

22...a4? would now of course be met by 23.b4 ♖a6 24.♗xa4, winning for White.

23.♗e3 ♗b7 24.♗g2

White decides it is more important that the bishop remain on the h1-a8 diagonal.

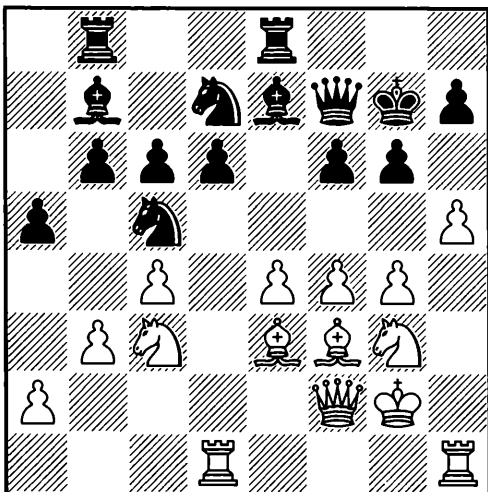
24...♗ad8

Wojo likely saw that he could meet 24...a4 with 25.b4 ♖a6 26.a3!, when 26...♛xc4 27.♗d5! shows off White's well-coordinated pieces. If 27...cxd5, White wins the black queen with 28.♗c1 ♛b3 (or 28...♛b5 29.♗f1) 29.♗c3. Should White have failed to see all this, the alternative 26.b5 cxb5 27.♗xb5 ♛xc4 28.♗f1 ♛f7 29.♗xd6 would probably also give White a slight advantage.

25.♛f2 ♗b8 26.♗f3 ♖h8 27.♖g2

White is preparing for a kingside assault.

27...♗a8 28.h4 ♗b7 29.h5 ♖g7 30.♗h1



Black, who has nothing better to do than twiddle his thumbs, cannot generate any real counterplay to White's steady buildup.

30...♗h8 31.♛b2 ♗bg8 32.a3

Now that Black has dedicated his entire army to resisting on the kingside, White simply prepares the standard queenside breakthrough.

32...♗a8 33.♛c2

White guards the a4 and c4 squares in preparation for b3-b4. Note White's patience. Now Black cracks under pressure.

33...a4?!

This pawn push is the beginning of the end. Black's defensive setup soon crumbles on all fronts.

34.b4 ♗b3 35.♗e2!?

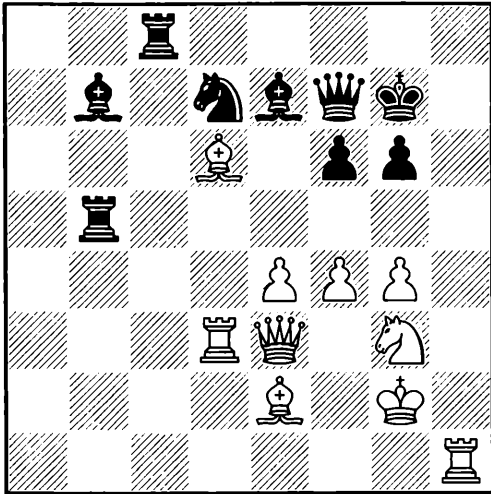
35.h6+ ♖f8 36.♗xa4 ♗xa4 37.♛xb3 would have ended matters immediately, as Black's rook is stuck on h8 and cannot get to the queenside. Instead, Wojo continues his slow grind, not yet willing to give up on the idea of opening the h-file. From here on out, Black does succeed in mobilizing his forces somewhat, allowing him to obtain a degree of counterplay.

35...♗hc8 36.♗xa4 ♗xa4 37.♛xb3 ♗ca8 38.♗c1 b5 39.♛c3 c5

Black finally launches an attack in the center in an attempt for counterplay, but White already has a decisive upper hand.

THE "ZÜRICH 1953" DEFENSE

40.hxg6 hxg6 41.cxb5 ♖c8
42.♞e3 cxb4 43.axb4 ♖xb4 44.♙a3
♖b3 45.♖d3 ♖xb5 46.♙xd6



White has emerged up a pawn – and, not surprisingly, it was Black’s d6-pawn that ultimately fell. To his credit, however, Black has finally succeeded in developing all of his pieces. White does win, but converting his pawn advantage requires strong technique.

46...♖b2 47.♖hd1 ♘c5 48.♙xc5
♖xc5 49.♖1d2 ♖cc2 50.♖xc2 ♖xc2
51.♖d7 ♙c6 52.♖a7 ♖a2 53.♖c7 ♙b5?

By removing his bishop from the h1-a8 diagonal, Black allows White to make a decisive central strike.

54.e5!

Ending Black’s resistance.

54...♙xe2 55.exf6+ ♔g8

There was nothing better.

56.♘xe2 ♞d5+

Black squirms to get out of the seventh-rank pin, but White has already won too many pawns.

57.♔f2 ♙f8 58.♖c8 ♖a6

Or 58...♞f7 59.♞e7!.

59.♖xf8+ 1-0

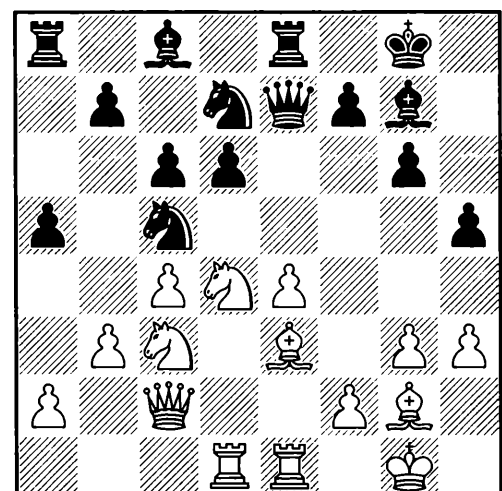
This game is a typical example of how Wojto would use an effective kingside pawn storm to wear Black down in this line. He began by tying Black down to the d6-pawn, but after that, he expanded with g3-g4, ♞e2-g3, ♙g2-f3, ♔g1-g2, and h3-h4-h5. Black cracked under the pressure and went down a pawn. Then, in the end, White broke through to Black’s king in any case, eventually securing mate with 59.♖xf8+.

The following game reiterates these themes. Black’s defense is somewhat less stubborn and White’s attack comes more quickly, however.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2555)
Rogers, Norman (2290)

[E69] New York 1994

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7
7.♘c3 e5 8.e4 c6 9.♖b1 a5 10.h3
exd4 11.♘xd4 ♖e8 12.b3 ♘c5
13.♖e1 ♘fd7 14.♙e3 h5 15.♞c2 ♞e7
16.♖bd1



16...♟e5

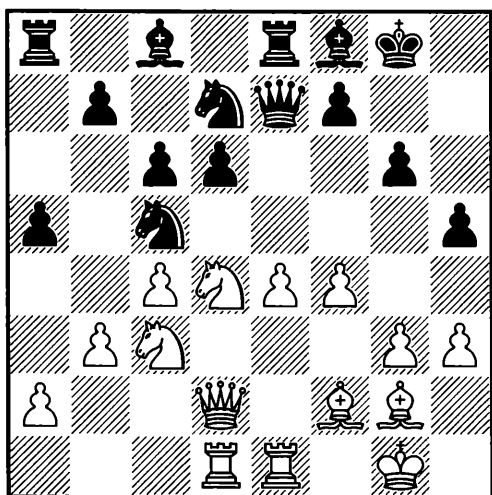
The most common option for Black, but certainly not the most logical. Instead, 16...♟a6 with the idea of...♟d7-c5 (and even...♟a6-b4) seems reasonable. White reacted in M.Zafirovski-M. Vlahović, Yugoslavia 1995, by simply piling up on the d-pawn: 17.♞d2 ♟dc5 18.♟de2 a4 (18...♟b4 is met comfortably by 19.f4, with the idea of continuing with ♞d1-b1 and a2-a3) 19.♞b1 axb3 20.axb3 ♟b4 21.♞ed1 and so on. The d-pawn fell after 21...♟cd3 22.♟f4 ♟e5? (22...♟xf4 23.♞xf4 ♞e5 would have held) 23.♟a4 ♟a6 24.♟b6 ♞b8 25.♞xd6, and White went on to win.

Meanwhile, 16...♟f8 with the idea of...♟f8-e6 can be met with 17.f4 ♟fe6 18.♞d2, once again piling up on the d-pawn. In I.Piven-K.Neumeier, Werfen 1995, White had a clear advantage after 18...h4 19.g4 ♟xd4 20.♞xd4 ♞xd4+ 21.♞xd4 ♟e6 22.♞d2. Black's pawns on d6 and h4 are weak.

17.f4 ♟ed7 18.♞f2 ♞f6 19.♟de2 ♞e7 20.♞d2

Over the past four moves, White has beautifully executed a simple, standard maneuver. Black finds himself forced to bend over backwards to defend d6.

20...♞f8 21.♟d4



21...a4

Black lashes out, but this doesn't help matters much.

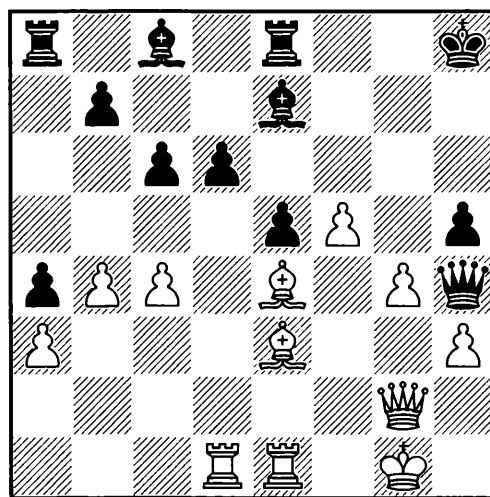
22.b4 ♟e6 23.♟xe6 fxe6

Black must weaken his pawn shield on the kingside, as 23...♞xe6 would be met by 24.♟d5!, penetrating to c7.

24.a3 e5 25.f5 gxf5 26.exf5 ♟f6 27.♟e4 ♟xe4 28.♞xe4

The pawn cover around Black's king has been fully removed; now White just needs to break through on that side.

28...♞f6 29.g4 ♞e7 30.♞e3 ♞h4 31.♞g2 ♟h8



32.♞f2?!

Wojo begins to falter. The transition he is planning into a slightly better endgame for White is not his best option. 32.g5, continuing to push on the kingside, was the correct way to continue the attack. Then 32...♞g8 33.g6, with the idea of ♞e3-h6, is uncomfortable for Black. Perhaps White was worried about 32...d5!? instead, but then 33.cxd5 cxd5 34.♞xd5 ♞xf5

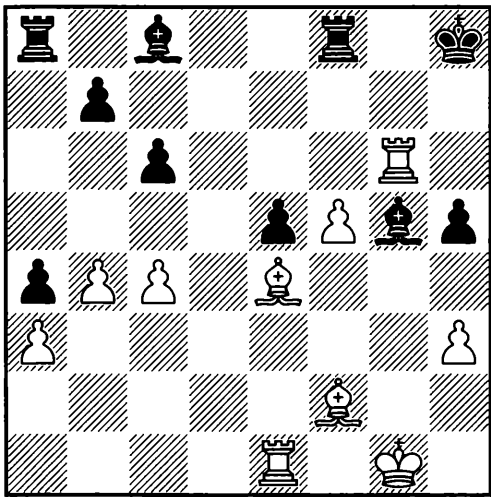
THE "ZÜRICH 1953" DEFENSE

35.♔f2 ♖xh3 (not 35...♖xg5 36.♗xe5)
36.♖xh3 ♕xh3 37.♗xe5 ♔f8 38.♗xe8
♗xe8 39.♕xb7 would leave White up
a pawn.

32...♖f6 33.g5

White's idea. The endgame that
follows is indeed better for White, but
not necessarily by much.

**33...♖xg5 34.♖xg5 ♕xg5
35.♗xd6 ♗f8 36.♗g6**



36...♗g8?!

Black can maintain the balance
with 36..♕f4, when White's f5-pawn is
in trouble. Then 37.f6 ♕e6 (37...♕xh3
38.♕e3! breaks down Black's piece
coordination) 38.♕e3, continuing to
crack open the kingside, leaves White
with just a tiny pull.

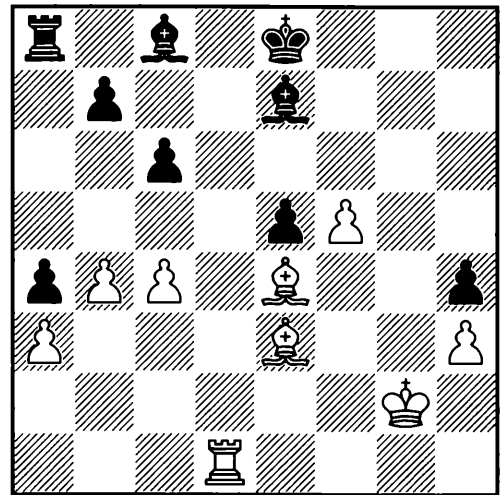
37.♗xg8+ ♕xg8 38.♗d1

White prevents Black from develop-
ing with ...♕c8-d7. Once again, White
will go back to penetrating on the king-
side shortly: with Black paralyzed for
the meantime, White intends ♕g1-h1
and ♗d1-g1.

38...♕f7 39.♕h1 ♕e7

39...♕f6 40.♗d6+ instead looks
dismal.

**40.♕e3 h4 41.♕h2 ♕e8 42.♗g1
♕f7 43.♗d1 ♕e8 44.♕g2**



White is toying with his prey.

44...♕f7 45.♕f3 ♕f6 46.♗g1 ♕d7

There is now finally a clear route to
victory. Black is helpless to prevent the
kingside penetration.

**47.♕g5+ ♕f7 48.♕xe7 ♕xe7
49.♗g7+ ♕d6 50.c5+ ♕c7 51.f6 ♗f8
52.♕f5 ♗xf6 53.♗xd7+ 1-0**

In this game, White's well organized forces tied Black down to the defense of the d-pawn early on. The standard maneuver f2-f4, ♕e3-f2, ♖d4-e2, and ♖c2-d2 was executed by White without any serious opposition from Black. White was able to convert his pressure (by way of moves such as 23.♖xe6 and 25.f5) into a promising kingside attack, which he botched by backing down from 32.g5. In the endgame, Black had some chances to defend, but ultimately White's continued kingside pressure (and Black's lack of queenside development) allowed White to break through to the last three ranks.

Conclusion: When Black is chained to the defense of his d-pawn, White often has the possibility of expanding on the kingside. After completing development, players of White should be looking for kingside pawn storm ideas. Ultimately, however, White should remember that his power comes from his control of the center and his extra space on both sides of the board. A timely a2-a3 and b3-b4 thrust can do just as much to disrupt Black's defenses as running down the white h-pawn.

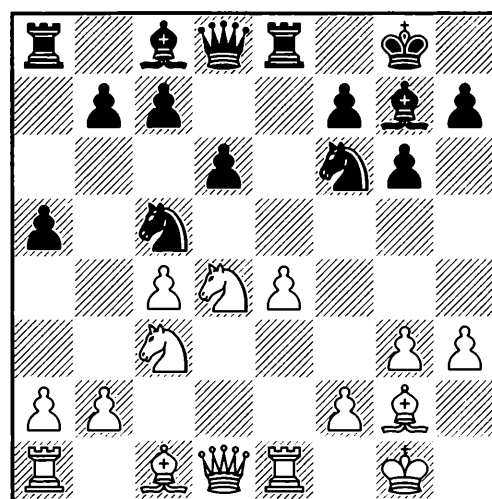
A Classic Revisited

Despite the apparent simplicity of White's formula for tying Black down to d6, by the time Wojo actually employed it beginning in the 1980s and '90s, it was already several decades in the making. It is worth briefly revisiting the classic game Ståhlberg-Boleslavsky from the Zürich Candidates' Tournament of 1953, to see how much players of White have learned since the old days. The following game – which was phenomenally annotated by Bronstein in the *Zürich 1953* tournament book (perhaps the first great work written “about” the King's Indian Defense) – had a profound impact on the entire line with ...♖b8-d7, ...e7-e5, and ...e5xd4, so much so that we have dubbed Black's setup here the “Zürich 1953 Defense” for the purposes of this book. In it, we see White struggling with uncomfortable pressure on the queenside.

Ståhlberg, Gideon
Boleslavsky, Isaak

[E69] Candidates' Tournament,
 Zürich 1953

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e5
 8.e4 ♗e8 9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5
 11.♗e1 a5

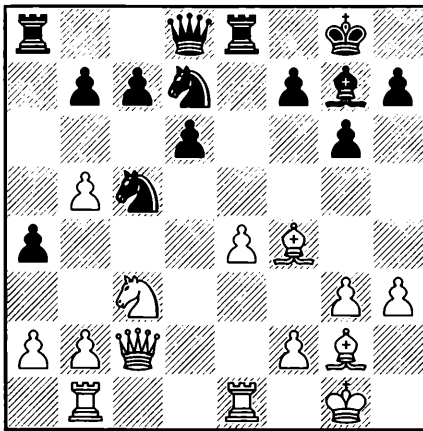


12.♙c2

It is worth mentioning that this does not hang the e4-pawn to 12... ♘fxe4, as 13.♘xe4 ♙xd4 14.♙g5 ♗d7 (not 14...f6? 15.♙xf6) 15.♘f6+ ♙xf6 16.♙xf6 ♗e6 17.♙c3 is known to give White excellent compensation on the dark squares.

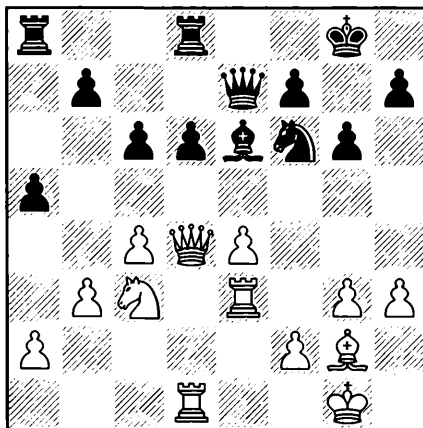
Although the text move remained the main line for many years, it has the drawback of allowing Black to play the space-gaining ...a5-a4. Wojo would simply play the more modern 12.♗b1 instead, when 12...a4 could be met by 13.♘db5 ♙d7 14.♙f4 with pressure. For instance, T.Markowski-A.Miśta, Warsaw 2004, went 14...♙xb5 15.cxb5! ♘fd7 16.♙c2, when White had the two bishops, more space, and a slightly more active game.

THE "ZÜRICH 1953" DEFENSE



The game continued 16...a3!? 17.b4 dxe6 18.e3 c5 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.fed1, with an advantage for White.

Meanwhile, if Black misses his opportunity to play ...a5-a4 and plays the meek 12...c6, White can consolidate with 13.b3, as in Wojtkiewicz-J. Böhm, Wichern 1995. Black did not last long: 13...e7 14.f4 h5 15.e3 de6 16.d2 dxd4 17.exd4 exd4 18.fxd4 e6 19.fbd1 fed8 20.e3 df6:



21.d5! cxd5 22.exd5 de8 23.dxe6 f6 24.b6 fdb8 25.c5 1-0.

Let's return to the game.

12...a4 13.e3 c6 14.fad1

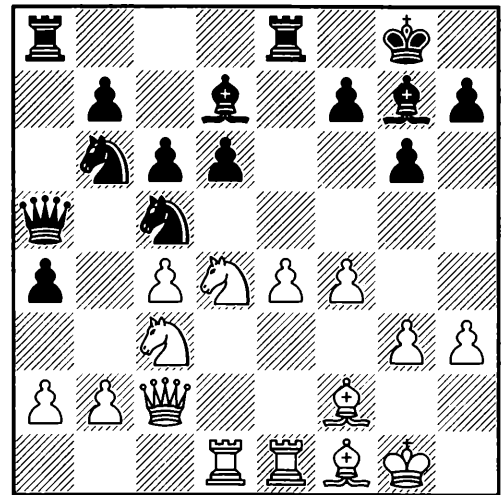
In modern times, 14.fab1 instead tends to be favored. Then, 14...a5?! can be met comfortably by 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3, for instance 16...b4 17.d2 b6 18.de2. Thus, Black generally selects something like 14...e7 – at which point White switches up his act and plays 15.fad1, content that Black's

queen has opted against taking residence on a5.

14...d7 15.f4 a5 16.f2 b6

16...b4 17.f1 b6 18.a3 a5 simply loses a tempo for Black.

17.f1 d7



Note Black's powerful buildup on the queenside.

18.a3

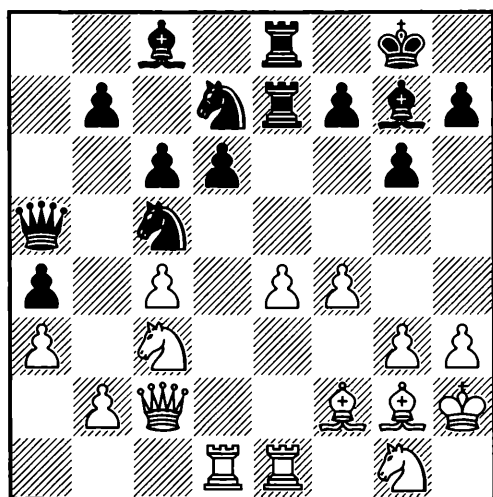
Bronstein writes, "Ståhlberg decides to rid his position once and for all of the threat of a black pawn advance to a3. This move deprives the square b3 of pawn protection, but it also strengthens the position of the pawn at b2 and generally of the whole constellation of a3-b2-c3." The great annotator is right. It would have been better for White to get in the move b2-b3 while he still could rather than to allow Black's play on the queenside to progress this far.

18...ad8 19.h2 c8 20.a2 d7 21.g2 f6 22.c3 d7 23.f3

Bronstein explains the d4-knight's maneuver thus: "...Black concentrates

maximum firepower against the pawn at e4, an assault which White tries to divert by threatening to take on d6. It is entirely characteristic that, in order to carry out this idea, White can find no better retreat square for his centralized knight at d4, the price of his position, than back to its original square g1, since all other retreat squares would interfere, in one way or another, with the coordination between his pieces.” Note that in practice, Wojo was able simply to bring his knight back with ♞d4-e2 . Never did he feel the need for such extravagant maneuvers as we see from Ståhlberg here.

23...♜de7 24.♞g1 ♞fd7



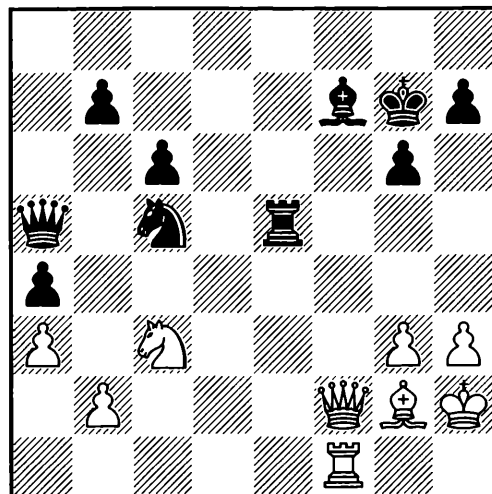
25.♞d4?!

25.♜xd6 immediately was called for here. Bronstein cautions against it in view of 25...♞b6, but here White could simply retreat with 26.♞b1, saving the c4-pawn. After the text move, Black has the upper hand on the queenside and should not be any worse.

25...♞b6 26.♞xg7 ♞xg7 27.♜xd6 ♞xc4 28.♜dd1 ♞e6 29.♞f2 f6 30.♞f3

Preparing for the e4-e5 break.

30...♞f7 31.e5 fxe5 32.♞xe5 ♞xe5 33.♜xe5 ♜xe5 34.fxe5 ♜xe5 35.♜f1



35...♜f5?

No doubt the product of time pressure before the time control at move 40. The better 35...♞c7, as pointed out by Bronstein, leaves Black at least equal. After the text move, Black is close to losing.

36.♞d4+ ♞g8 37.♜xf5 gxf5 38.♞e5 ♞b6 39.♞xf5 ♞g6 40.♞e5 ♞d3 41.♞e6+ ♞g7

Bronstein gives this a question mark, concluding that it was better to play 41...♞f7. Here he only suggests the possibility of 42.♞g4+, but instead 42.♞d6! with the idea of ♞c3-e4-f6 would have led Black dangerously close to falling into a brutal mating net. Thus, either way, White has a promising king hunt.

42.♞e7+

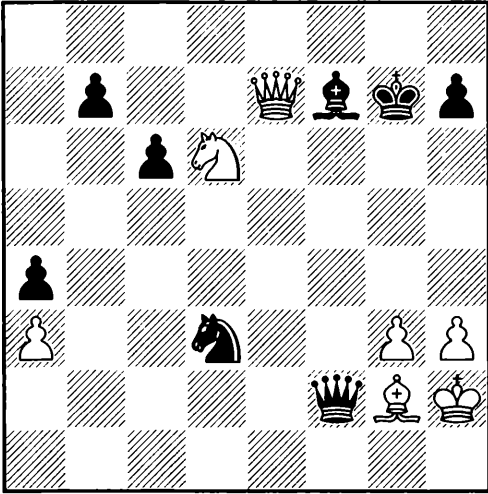
An accurate stroke. 42.♞d5? ♞xb2, as Bronstein points out, gives White perpetual check at best.

42...♞f7

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42...♔g8 43.♘d5!, also Bronstein’s analysis, would lose for Black.

43.♘e4 ♖xb2 44.♘d6 ♖f2



45.♘e8+?

Botching the win. 45.h4!., incredibly

enough, would have left Black helpless. The idea is that White’s king can then come to h3, allowing him to unpin his g2-bishop and bring it into the attack. Some sample lines:

a) 45...♔g8 46.♘xf7 ♖xf7 47.♖d8+ wins the knight.

b) 45...h6 46.♔h3! ♘e1 47.♘e8+ ♔g8 48.♘f6+ ♔g7 49.♘h5+ ♔g6 50.♙e4+ ♔xh5 51.g4 is mate.

c) 45...h5 46.♘e8+ ♔g8 47.♘f6+ ♔g7 48.♘h5+ and so on.

45...♔g8 46.♘f6+ ♔g7 47.♘h5+ ♔g6 48.g4 ♘c5 1/2-1/2

Unfortunately, White’s attack has fizzled.

In this classic game, we saw that White was able to generate play against Black’s king even though he lost the battle for queenside space early on. For some time, Black was a pawn to the good, but this didn’t ever put White in serious jeopardy. A serious inaccuracy from Black on move 35 was almost enough to change the result of the game from a draw to a win for White.

Conclusion: Players of White have come a long way since Bronstein’s *Zürich 1953* was written. Generally speaking, White nowadays tries to prevent his opponent from taking so much space on the queenside. The extravagant knight maneuvers to clear the d-file, such as Ståhlberg’s awkward ♘d4-f3-g1, have largely been replaced with Wojo’s graceful ♘d4-e2. If White knows the modern treatments of these setups, rarely does he need to do anything special to maintain control over the center and the queenside.

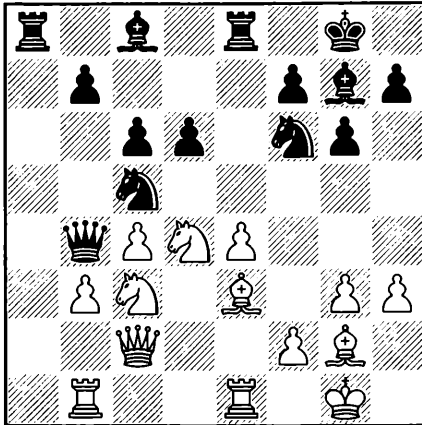
Black’s Early Queen Sorties: When Black Loses Material

Quite commonly, players of Black will try to avoid getting strangled slowly by White by attempting to generate counterplay on the queenside with something along the lines of...♖d8-b6-b4. This is tempting for Black because it looks aggressive, but in most cases it is simply unjustified and ends in a loss

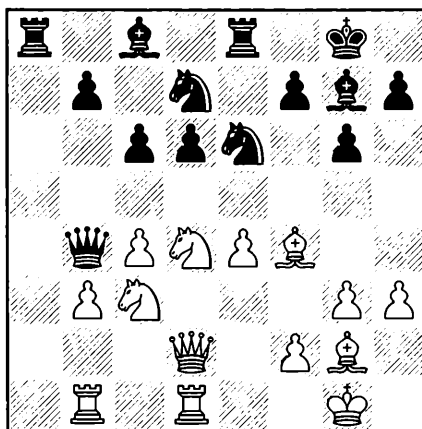
of material for the second player. More often than not, Black’s queen comes close to being trapped.

One typical case in point occurs after 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.c4 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♖e8 10.h3 ♘c5 11.♙e1 a5

12.♖c2 c6 13.♙e3 a4 14.♜ab1 ♗a5 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3 ♗b4, which we analyzed briefly in the note to move 14 of the previous game:



Here, Black – in a position by no means unknown to theory – lost material in short order in A.Kveinys-B. Okuniewski, Poland 1997. Although we preferred retreating White’s bishop to d2 here, there was certainly nothing wrong with Kveinys’s 17.♜ed1. Then, 17...♜a3?! 18.♙c1 ♜a8 19.♙d2 ♗b6 20.♙e3 ♗b4?! 21.♗d2 ♖fd7 22.♙f4 ♖e6 set Black up for a tactical disaster:



23.♖xe6!, giving up the white queen, won after 23...♙xc3 24.♖c7 ♙xd2 25.♙xd2 ♗b6 26.♖xe8 ♜a3 27.♙e3 ♗d8 28.♖xd6 ♗f8 29.♜d2 ♜a8 30.♜bd1 h5 31.♖xc8 ♜xc8 32.♜xd7, and so on.

We’ll start our discussion of Black’s woes with a quick miniature from one

of the authors. Black became overly ambitious in his attempt to wreak havoc on White’s queenside pawns, allowing for some thematic tactical tricks by White. Another version of these notes appeared in the July 2009 issue of *Chess Life*.

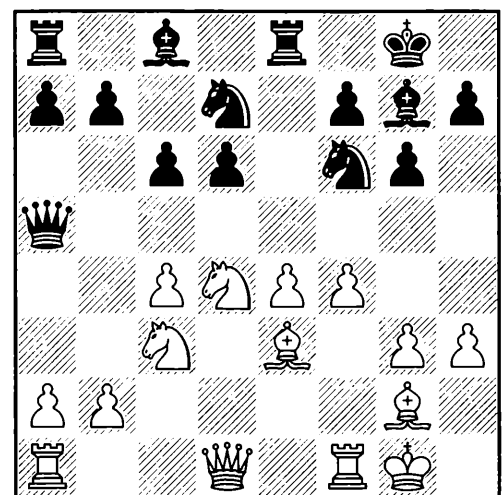
Hilton, Jonathan (2194)
Zlotnikov, Mikhail (2327)

Foxwoods 2009

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♖c3 ♗a5 8.h3

Later on in the book, we recommend the direct 8.e4 against this early 7...♗a5 system.

8...e5 9.e4 ♜e8 10.♙e3 exd4 11.♖xd4 ♖bd7 12.f4!?



A novelty found over the board. White seizes the opportunity to gain space. The downside of this aggressive thrust is that it leaves White’s queenside pawns slightly exposed. Among other moves, the obvious 12.♗c2 had been played previously.

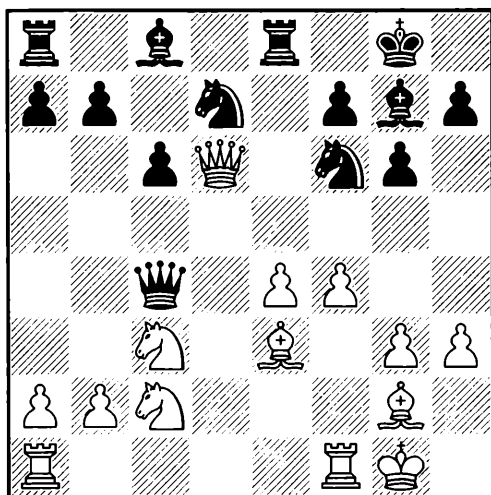
12...♗b4!?

The ambitious queen sortie in all its glory, forking the b2- and c4-pawns. Another idea was 12...♖b6!?, after which White is better with 13.♗d3. White has little to fear here, for instance 13...♗h5!? 14.g4 ♕xg4 15.hxg4 ♖xg4 16.♖f3 ♗h2+ 17.♔f1 ♖xe3+ 18.♗xe3 ♖xc4 19.♗f2 and so on.

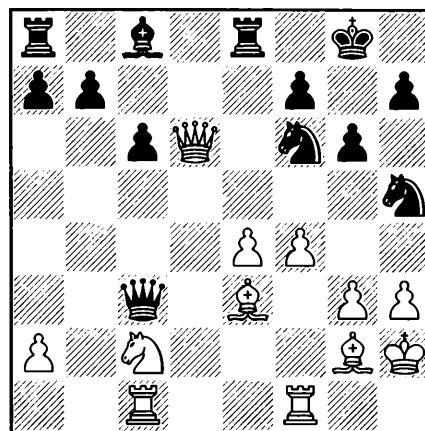
13.♖c2!

The point of 12.f4. Black cannot take on b2 because 14.♖a4 traps the queen, so his next move is forced.

13...♗xc4 14.♗xd6



White now has a strong initiative, but his position is still slightly vulnerable. Black now fell into a long think looking at the many possible lines. He may have considered 14...♖h5, Black's most obvious attempt at counterplay. Then 15.♔h2 (15.♕f2?! is inadequate after 15...♕xc3 16.bxc3 ♖xg3! 17.♕xg3 ♗xc3 18.♗a3 ♗xc2 with good prospects for Black to defend and keep his material, but possible is 15.♖a3!? ♗a6 16.♕f2 ♕f8 17.♗d2 ♕xa3 18.bxa3 ♗xa3 19.♖ad1 with compensation) 15...♕xc3 16.bxc3 ♗xc3 17.♖ac1 appears to give White strong compensation. For instance, consider the position after 17...♖df6:



Here, best is probably 18.e5 (also possible is 18.♖fe1 ♖xe4 19.♕xe4 ♖xe4 20.♗d8+ ♔g7 21.♕d4+ ♖xd4 22.♗xd4+ ♗xd4 23.♖xd4, with good prospects for White to convert his endgame advantage) 18...♕f5 19.♗b4! ♗xb4 20.♖xb4, when White has more than full compensation thanks to Black's tactical problems. Black's kingside pieces are in disarray.

On move 14, Black might also try 14...♖xe4!? instead. This is intended to be a tactical solution to the e4-e5 problem, though 15.♕xe4 ♖xe4 16.♖xe4 ♗xe4 17.♖f2 ♕xb2 18.♖e1 gives White a strong initiative. After probably not being satisfied with either of those options, Black hit upon another idea.

14...♖d5?? 15.exd5 1-0

Black thought he now had 15...♕f8 trapping the queen, but had overlooked that the removal of the d5-knight allows 16.♗c7. White is now up a clear piece, so Black resigned.

This game is intended to illustrate some of the tactical methods that White can employ against Black's queen sorties on the queenside. The knight maneuver with 13.♖c2! (and ♖c3-a4, trapping the queen) is particularly common. In this instance, Black's queen sortie did gain him some counterplay, but the complications

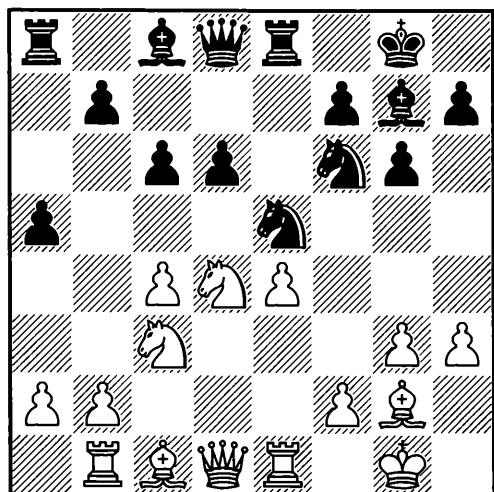
proved too much for him to navigate and he blundered. Tactically, White's position is almost always easier to play than Black's here.

The next game is also intended to demonstrate some of the tactical methods White can use against Black's queen. Wojo commits several uncharacteristic oversights in the middle-game, allowing us to see how many different ways he could have either trapped his opponent's queen or won a significant amount of material between moves 17 and 19. Overall, this game is perhaps of just as poor quality as the last one; both sides commit several errors. (As our editor points out, the game was played in Indonesia – perhaps Wojo was jetlagged.) However, it is important to realize that this is fairly typical of the games presented in this section. Both sides make mistakes, but it is only Black who ends up losing massive amounts of material.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2563) Kasmiran (2315)

[E69] Bali 2000

1. ♖f3 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♗g7
4. ♗g2 0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 ♘bd7
7. ♘c3 e5 8. e4 c6 9. ♖b1 ♗e8 10. h3
exd4 11. ♘xd4 a5 12. ♗e1 ♘e5!?



Unusually early. 12... ♘c5 13. b3 ♘fd7, as we have seen before, is normal.

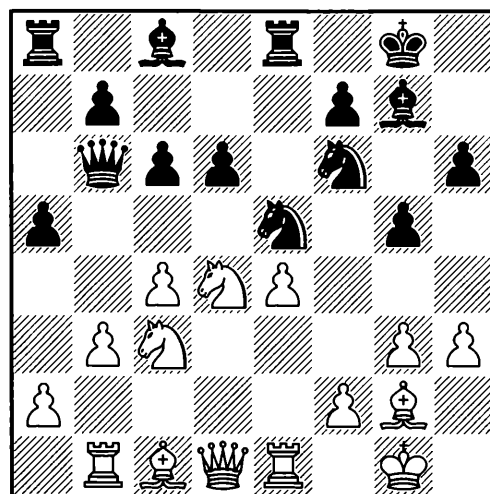
13. b3 h6 14. ♗f4!?

Moving the bishop all the way out to f4 is somewhat provocative. White encourages Black to either waste time with ... ♘f6-h5 or else weaken his pawn structure with ... g6-g5. In this case, Black opts for the latter. Alternatively, White could have opted for 14. ♗e3 followed by f2-f4, ♖d1-d2, and so on, for instance, 14... ♖e7 15. f4 ♘ed7 16. ♖d2 ♘c5 17. ♗f2 with the standard advantage.

14... g5 15. ♗c1

White, having provoked Black into loosening the kingside, tucks the bishop safely back on c1. It is hard to evaluate how much good (or harm) the move ... g6-g5 has done the second player. On the one hand, he can try for the strike ... g5-g4, opening up the kingside. On the other hand, White has gained the f5 square for his knight on d4.

15... ♖b6?!



The beginning of an ill-fated plan. Black maneuvers his queen to the wrong sector of the board in his search

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for counterplay. It would have made more sense to try to make use out of the ...g7-g5 advance by focusing on the kingside. 15...g4!? 16.hxg4 (16.h4 instead likely just leaves White inflexible on the kingside) 16...♙xg4 17.f3 ♙d7 18.♙e3 was better for Black than the game line, even though it does leave White with the better prospects on the kingside thanks to his more stable pawn structure. 18...♞h7 19.♚d2 ♚f6 20.♞f1 ♚g6 21.♞de2, White is solid but Black has counterplay.

16.♙e3

White has no problem with returning his bishop to e3.

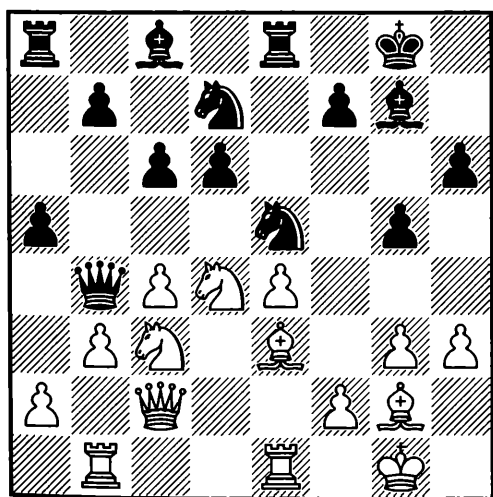
16...♚b4?

The "thematic" maneuver which always seems to lose Black material.

17.♚c2?!

A reasonable move, but not the best one by far. White misses his first clear shot at victory here. 17.♞a4!, threatening ♞d4-c2, was winning. For instance, 17...♚a3 18.♞c2 ♚xa2 19.♞c3 traps the queen.

17...♞fd7?



Black needed to make good use of his time with either 17...a4! 18.♞xa4 ♞xc4 or 17...g4 here. Black's play is too passive, giving White another shot.

18.♞ed1?!

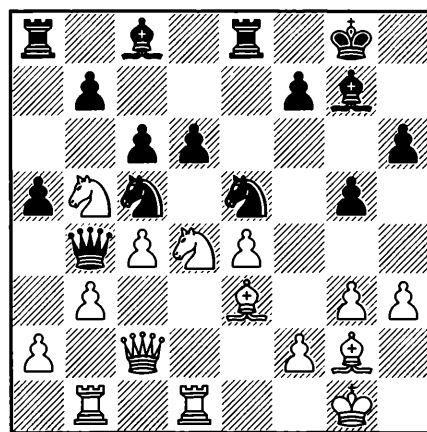
18.♞db5! would have done a number on the hapless black queen once again after 18...cxb5 19.♞d5, when 19...♚a3 20.♞c7 wins for White.

18...♞c5?

Boxing in the black queen further. 18...g4 or some other attempt at real counterplay was absolutely necessary.

19.♞ce2?!

White prepares to push Black backward, but he misses another chance to win. This time, 19.♞cb5! was the way to finish Black off:

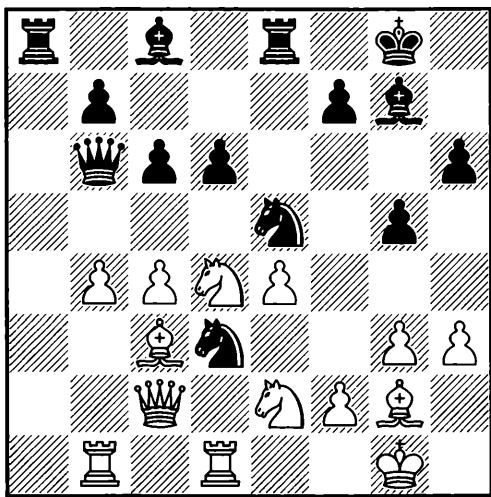


19...cxb5 20.♙d2 ♚a3 21.♞xb5 traps the luckless Lady.

19...a4 20.♙d2 axb3 21.axb3 ♚b6 22.b4 ♞cd3!?

So many of Black's pieces are hanging that he should, eventually, lose material somehow.

23.♙c3



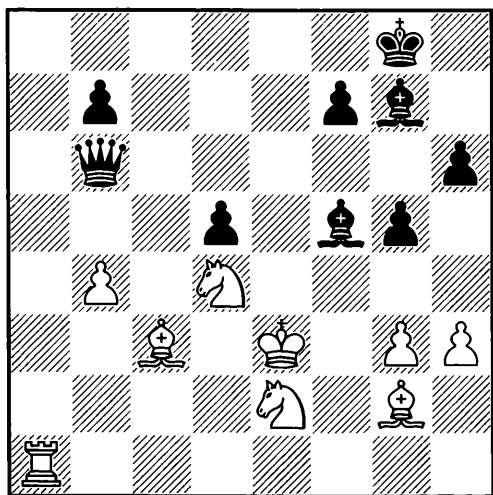
23...dxf2

Otherwise, White could just play Rd1xd3 , winning two knights for his rook. The sacrifice of the knight for two pawns is a better chance for Black due to the exposed nature of White's king.

24. cxf2 dxc4 25. Ra1 Rxa1 26. Rxa1 d5 27. exd5 de3 28. Qd3 Qf5 29. Qxe3

The correct decision. In order to successfully navigate the storm of threats from Black, White trades off the attacking forces. Ironically, it is White, rather than Black, who was forced to part with his queen in this game.

29...Rxe3 30. cxe3 cxd5



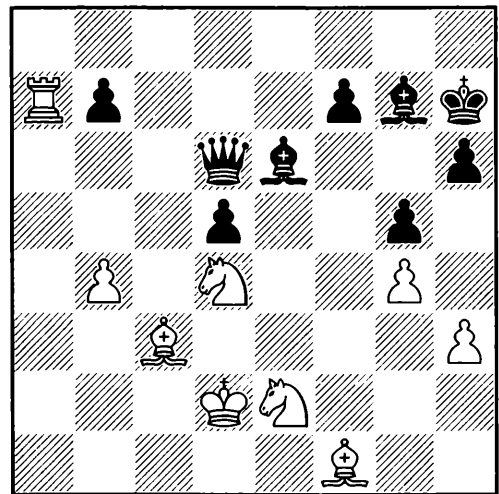
White has a rook and two knights against a queen and two pawns. This

material balance should favor White slightly, particularly considering the excellent coordination of his four minor pieces. Black, on the other hand, will be looking to make things as challenging for White as possible by using his queen in all kinds of annoying ways.

31.g4?!

31. Ra8+ h7 32. Qxd5 was more accurate. Then 32... Qxh3 33. Rb8 would allow White to gain the upper hand in the pawn-grabbing war while still maintaining control over the board. After the text move, Black is able to hold on to his d5-pawn.

31...Qe6 32. Qd2 Qd6 33. Qf1 h7 34. Ra7



34...Qb8?!

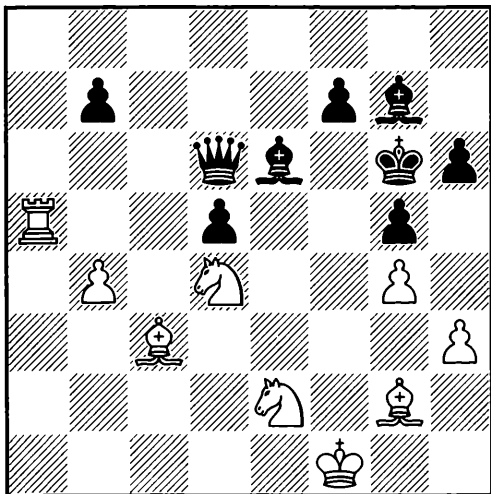
Black misses an important opportunity to get a perpetual check: 34... Qxd4 35. Qxd4 Qf4+ 36. Qe2 (not 36. Qe1 Qe3+) 36... Qxg4+! 37. hxg4 Qxg4+ would have led to a draw. White can do nothing to escape the checks after 38. Qf2 Qh4+ 39. Qg2 (39. Qe2 Qg4+ repeats, whereas 39. Qg1?? Qg3+ drops the bishop on c3) 39... Qg4+ 40. Qh2 Qh4+ and so on.

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**35.♖a5 ♜h2 36.♔e3 ♜e5+
37.♕f2 ♜d6 38.♙g2**

White’s king position is more secure now than it was a few moves ago.

38...♕g6 39.♕f1?



39.♖b5, defending the b4-pawn and continuing the pressure against b7, would have kept an edge for White.

39...♕h7?!

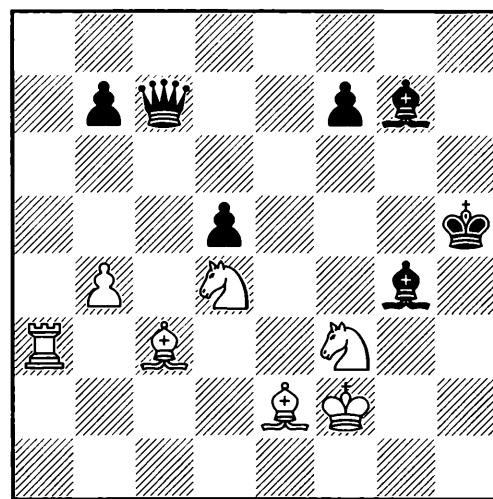
39...♙xd4! 40.♘xd4 ♜f4+ would have allowed Black to penetrate White’s position. The black queen is coming to g3. After the text move, White once again has the upper hand.

40.♖a8 ♜e7 41.♕f2 h5

Black strikes. Having failed at penetrating with the queen, this pawn lever constitutes a “Plan B” for Black.

**42.gxh5 ♜d7 43.♘g1 ♜c7 44.♖a3
♕h6 45.♘gf3 ♕xh5 46.♙f1 g4
47.hxg4+ ♙xg4 48.♙e2**

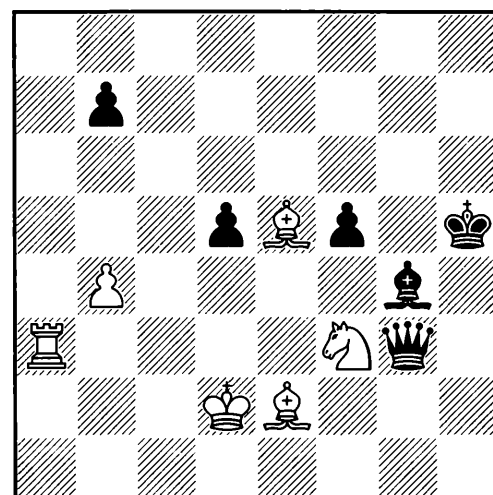
White’s pieces are still well coordinated, but Black, who has traded off some of the pawns, is not necessarily in any trouble.



**48...f5 49.♙b2 ♙f6 50.♖a5
♙h4+ 51.♘xh4 ♕xh4 52.♖a3 ♜h2+
53.♕e1 ♜g1+ 54.♕d2 ♜f2?!**

The first of two “decisive” mistakes. 54...♜b1, not letting up the pressure, would have maintained the balance.

**55.♘f3+ ♕h5 56.♙d4 ♜g3
57.♙e5 ♜g2?**



The final decisive mistake. 57...♜f2, not putting the queen on the g-file, was the only chance. 58.♖a8?? would then simply be met by 58...♙xf3, winning for Black.

58.♖a8! ♜f2

58...♙xf3 59.♖h8+ ♕g4 60.♖g8+
♕h3 61.♖xg2 ♕xg2 62.♙xf3+ ♕xf3
63.♕d3 would have left White winning.

After the text move, White constructs a mating net around the black king.

59.♙d4 ♖g3 60.♖h8+ ♕g6
61.♗e5+ ♕g5

Black fares no better after 61...♗g7
62.♗xg4+ ♕f7 63.♗h6+ ♕e6 (63...♗e7
64.♗xf5+) 64.♖e8+ ♕d7 65.♙b5+ ♕c7
66.♙e5+.

62.♖g8+ ♕h6 63.♗xg4+ fxg4
64.♖xg4 ♖h2 65.♙e3+ ♕h7 66.♙f4
♖f2 67.♙g3 ♖g2 68.b5

68.♙e1, forcing the black queen onto the h-file, is faster.

68...d4 69.♙e5 ♖d5 70.♙d3+
♕h6 71.♙f4+ 1-0

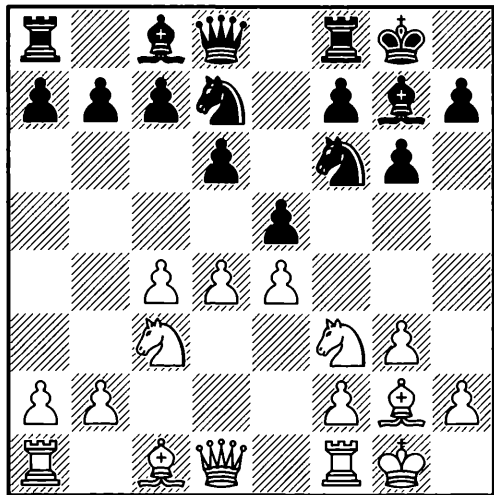
In this error-filled game, Wojo missed several opportunities to win material between moves 17 and 19. Players of White should remember thematic blows like 17.♗a4!, 18.♗db5!, and 19.♗cb5!, all of which would have sent Black home early. Although Black did eventually lose material in any case, he was certainly doing fine at some points thanks to White's inaccuracies. Ultimately, Wojo managed to come back and outplay his opponent deep in the ending.

Conclusion: When Black attempts to play his queen in to b4, White should be on the lookout for various tactical devices. More often than not, Black will lose either time or material by handling the position this way.

In this first chapter, we have sought to provide the reader with a suitable background for handling what we've dubbed the "Zürich 1953 Defense" for Black. We have gone over the key maneuvers, strategic outcomes, and tactical themes that Wojo employed in his system. Players attempting to master this system as White should be encouraged by Wojo's high rate of wins in these lines and aspire to duplicate his success. Later in Part I, in Chapter 5, we will begin to look at specific theoretical lines and go over our primary recommendations. Yet, for now, most club players should have all the knowledge they will need to know about the King's Indian with ...♗b8-d7 and ...e5xd4 to start winning a high percentage of those games at local events. In the next chapter, we will continue to focus on important strategic themes in Fianchetto King's Indian positions.

Chapter 2

White's d4-d5 Push



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5
8.e4

In the previous chapter, we examined the structures resulting from ...♘b8-d7, ...e7-e5, ...c7-c6, and eventually ...e5xd4. Often, however, Black chooses simply to build his position, rather than to take on d4 and concede the center to White. He will play waiting moves such as ...♖f8-e8, ...a7-a6, ...b7-b6, ...♙d8-c7, ...♘d7-f8, or any number of things to delay the capture on d4. White does not want to wait around forever for ...e5xd4, however, so at some point he needs to decide to make the d4-d5 push. This chapter evaluates the possible resulting structures and gives players of White a general idea of how long to wait before committing to d4-d5. It contains games featuring both locked and semi-locked structures, each of which features White's strong pawn on d5 as a key player in determining the course of the middlegame (or even the endgame).

Black Weakens the Queenside: d4-d5 as Positional Punishment

Occasionally, players of Black will make a waiting move on the queenside that compromises their structure on that side of the board. The most common example of this occurs when Black plays ...b7-b6, aiming to fianchetto the light-squared bishop on c8, without having first played ...c7-c6. In this case, White should play d4-d5 to secure an

advantage on the queenside. In the middlegame, he will aim to penetrate Black's weaknesses on that sector of the board. His first step is to expand with a2-a3 and b2-b4.

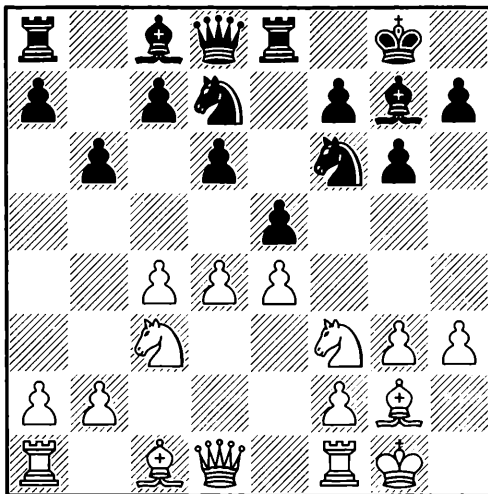
The following two games demonstrate White's path to an advantage against an early, voluntary weakening of the black queenside pawn structure

by the second player. Wojo's opponent blunders a piece early in the first game; the second game features a more protracted struggle.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2550)
Brooks, Michael (2460)

[E67] Manhattan 1990

1.♖f3 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.d4 d6 4.g3
 ♜f6 5.♗g2 0-0 6.♖c3 ♜bd7 7.0-0
 e5 8.h3 ♞e8 9.e4 b6?!



This move is generally a poor choice for Black. When White decides to play d4-d5, Black's bishop on b7 will be misplaced. Additionally, the text weakens the c6 square, increasing the effect of White's eventual c4-c5(-c6) pawn push. Given this move's poor record, it is surprising that a player of Black's strength would attempt it in a tournament game. The early ...b7-b6 is, however, one of Black's most popular errors at club level.

10.♗g5

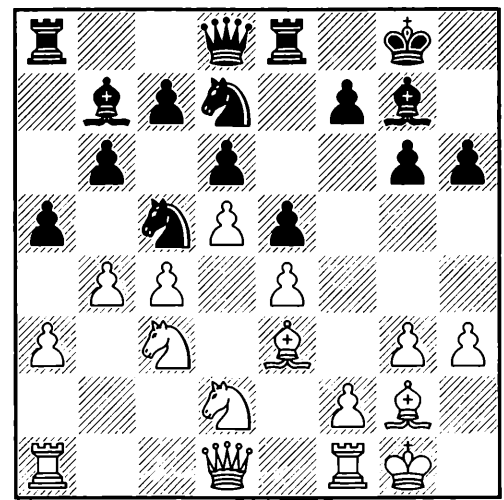
Provoking a slight weakening of Black's kingside. This is not really necessary, but it doesn't hurt White to do a bit of probing, either. 10.d5 immediately is also entirely reasonable

here. White waits a couple of moves before locking the center.

10...h6 11.♗e3 ♗b7 12.d5

The correct decision. White locks in Black's bishop on b7 and prepares to launch a pawn storm on the queenside.

12...♜c5 13.♖d2 a5 14.a3 ♜fd7 15.b4



15...♜d3?

A grave miscalculation. The knight on d3 will simply get trapped here. 15...axb4 16.axb4 ♞xa1 17.♞xa1 ♜a6 was more solid, but White already has a tremendous initiative on the queenside in any case.

16.♞b3 axb4 17.axb4 c5

Black is already desperate. 17...f5 18.♜b5 f4 19.♞xd3 fxe3 20.♞xe3 would leave White up a pawn.

18.dxc6 ♞xa1 19.♞xa1 ♗xc6 20.♖e2

Effectively ending the game.

20...♜f4 21.gxf4 exf4 22.♗d4

Perhaps this is what Black missed. Regardless, intuition should have been enough to warn him against playing his rash move 15.

22...♙xd4 23.♜xd4 ♖f6 24.♚c3 g5 25.♜a3

Also possible was 25.e5!? ♜xe5 26.♜xc6 ♜f3+ 27.♚xf3 ♚xa1+ 28.♙h2, leaving White up even more material. The text is less complicated. The rest needs no comment.

25...♙b7 26.♜f5 ♜e5 27.♚d4 ♜d8 28.♚xb6 ♙c8 29.♜a8 ♙h7 30.♜f3 ♜xc4 31.♚c7 1-0

Black's 9...b6?! was a positional error. Wojo waited a few moves to clarify Black's intentions before committing to the 12.d5 push. This was not absolutely necessary, as d4-d5 could have been played immediately, but waiting a move or two certainly didn't hurt the first player at all. White then made progress with a2-a3 and b2-b4 on the queenside. Black, unable to take the pressure, erred with 15...♜d3?, losing a piece.

In the next game, White's opponent puts up a more stubborn defense. The story is similar, however, in that Black must eventually concede material to avoid simply being overrun on the queenside.

**Hilton, Jonathan (2249 USCF)
Sturt, Raven (2211 USCF)**

[E68] Parsippany (New Jersey) 2009

1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 ♙g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d4 ♜bd7 8.e4 b6?!

This move is, again, a poor choice.

9.♚c2

This is not necessarily the most accurate response, as White's queen does not do anything particularly more useful on c2 than it did on d1. In the previous game, Wojo played d4-d5, b2-b4, and ♚d1-b3 instead. Regardless, this natural move can hardly be thought of as a mistake, particularly in comparison to Black's last move.

9...♙b7 10.♜e1

10.d5, as played by Rubinstein against Réti immediately, was perfectly logical. White is hoping to play the structure that would result after 10...exd4, examined in the note to Black's next move.

10...♜e8

It would have been better for Black to go into a rather warped "Zürich 1953" structure with 10...exd4 11.♜xd4, when 11...♜g4 (not 11...♜xe4?? 12.♙xe4, winning material) 12.♜d1 ♜e8 13.h3 ♜ge5 14.♜d5 gives White the slightly better game, but Black has a decent amount of activity.

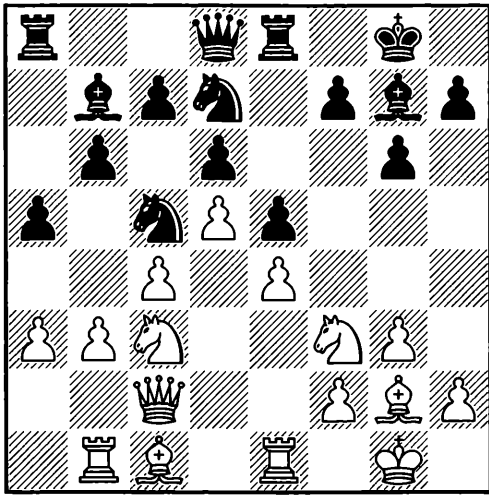
11.d5

White finally commits, seeing that Black has wasted a move with ...♜f8-e8. Black will have to move the rook back to f8 in order to break with ...f7-f5.

11...a5 12.♜b1 ♜c5 13.b3

Slowly preparing for b3-b4.

13...♜fd7 14.a3



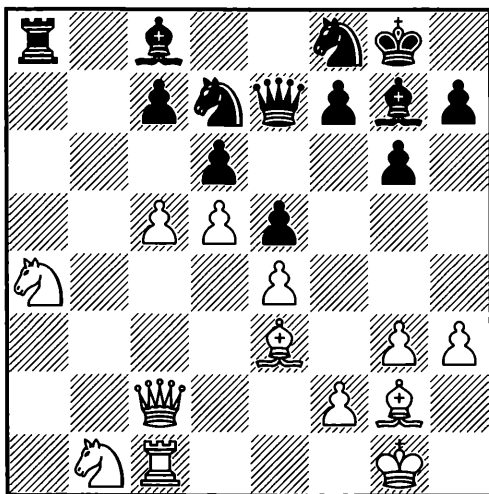
14...f5

Black is playing passively. He should have at least tried 14...f8 15.b4 axb4 16.axb4 a6 17.e3 h6 18.d2 f5, though after the solid 19.f3 it is hard to believe Black has much real counterplay.

15.b4 axb4 16.axb4 cd7 17.e3 c8 18.ec1 a6 19.d2 e7 20.a4

This is probably stronger than 20.a1 followed by doubling on the a-file. It makes more sense to keep the rooks on the board.

20...eb8 21.h3 c8 22.c5 bxc5 23.bxc5 xb1 24.xb1!?



24.xb1 was more logical. White is attempting the maneuver b1-c3-b5.

24...f5 would then not be possible due to 25.cxd6 xd6 (or 25...cxd6 26.c6 a6 27.xc8 xa4 28.exf5 gxf5 29.c2) 26.c3, followed by c3-b5.

24...f5

Taking advantage of White's oversight. Unfortunately for Black, this break does not change that much in the position, though. He has no real counterplay behind this kingside thrust.

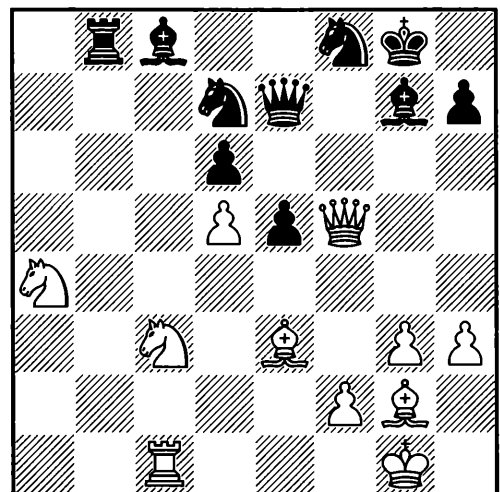
25.b3

25.exf5 gxf5 26.cxd6 cxd6 27.c6 can now be met by 27...b8! 28.a7 b4, taking the sting out of White's initiative.

25...b8

25...fxe4 26.xe4 leads to the collapse of Black's position, so the second player contemplates going down a pawn. A better way to go about it might have been 25...f4 26.gxf4 exf4 27.xf4, giving Black the e5 square, but this would likely not have changed the result of the game.

26.cxd6 cxd6 27.exf5 gxf5 28.xf5



WHITE'S d4-d5 PUSH

White is up a clear pawn, so the rest is technique.

28...♟f6 29.♞d3 ♟8d7 30.♞b1 ♞xb1+ 31.♞xb1 ♟a6 32.♟b6 ♟xb6 33.♞xb6 ♟d3 34.♞b8+ ♟f7 35.♟a4 ♟f5

35...e4!? was an attempt at counter-play, but after 36.♟b6, Black can make no further progress. Meanwhile, White threatens ♟b6-c8 or ♟e3-f4.

36.♞b4 ♟e8 37.♟c3 ♟f6 38.♟g5

White is slowly working to take control of the e4 square.

38...♞d7 39.♟h2 h6 40.♟e3 ♟g6 41.♟f1

This would have been a good time for 41.f4, when 41...exf4 (not 41...♟h5? 42.g4 ♟xg4 43.hxg4 ♞xg4 44.f5+) 42.♟xf4 would have increased the pressure on d6.

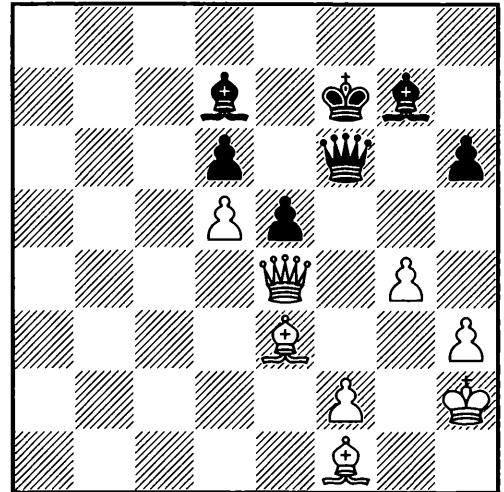
41...♞e7 42.g4 ♟d7 43.♟g2 ♟f7 44.♟e4

White finally occupies this key square.

44...♟xe4 45.♞xe4 ♞f6 46.♟f1

Over the next several moves, White

repositions his pieces and prepares to penetrate on the kingside.



46...♟e7 47.♟g3 ♟f7 48.♟d3 ♟f8 49.h4 ♞f7 50.♞h1 ♟e7 51.♟e4 h5

This hastens the end.

52.gxh5

52.g5 should also give White a decisive advantage.

52...♞xh5 53.♞f3 ♞xf3+ 54.♟xf3 ♟h8 55.♟h7

55.h5 immediately was more direct.

55...♟f7 56.♟d3 ♟e7 57.♟g3 ♟f6 58.♟g5+ ♟f7 59.♟e2 ♟f5 60.♟h5+ ♟f8 61.♟g4 1-0

Black, tired of delaying the inevitable, resigns.

Black's 8...b6?! fared no better in this example. White, following Wojo's model, also delayed playing d4-d5 for a few moves. In the end, however, 11.d5 proved strong. Black could do little to stop White's steady queenside progress with b2-b3, a2-a3, b3-b4, and eventually c4-c5. Black should undoubtedly have tried for counterplay on the kingside with ...f7-f5 earlier than he did, but it would likely not have amounted to much in any case. White won a pawn on move 28 and slowly converted his advantage.

Conclusion: When Black’s waiting strategy includes moves that weaken his queenside pawn structure – most notably, an early ...b7-b6 without having played ...c7-c6 first – the move d4-d5 from White can be played as a way to punish the second player for his negligence. Black has problems on the queenside and rarely gets counterplay.

Black Reacts to d4-d5 by Locking the Center with ...c6-c5

Of course, rather than the weakening ...b7-b6, Black should play the more cautious ...c7-c6 first. Then, when White plays d4-d5, Black has two main ways to react: either he plays ...c6-c5, pushing past, or else he plays ...c6xd5, allowing White to open the c-file with c4xd5. (He can also wait some more and see what White does, but usually, sooner or later, Black has to clarify the situation on d5 in order not to get completely run over on the queenside.) This section specifically covers how White should handle the move ...c6-c5 from Black.

The ...c6-c5 push is a rare guest in grandmaster games because, compared to previous generations, today’s top players place a strong emphasis on playing dynamically – that is, they tend to favor piece play and flexible pawn structures over positions that are locked across the board. Players that might be classified by some as having a “positional” style – such as Wojo, when playing the white pieces – are perhaps better described as “dynamic.” Dynamic play, of course, is also the home field of tacticians; hence, the vast majority of today’s strong players are “dynamic.” So, given the dynamic temperament of most modern grandmasters, it’s no wonder that they normally respond to White’s d4-d5 by playing ...♖d7-c5, ...a7-a5, and eventually ...c6xd5 – or, perhaps even more frequently, by just entering the “Zürich 1953” structure

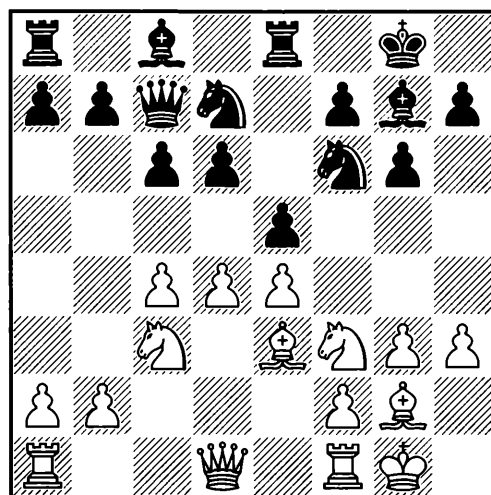
with ...e5xd4 without giving White the opportunity to close the position with d4-d5 in the first place.

In the past, however, playing ...c6-c5 as a reaction to White’s d4-d5 would not have seemed nearly so conspicuous. As we’ll see in this section, even Bobby Fischer played it as Black *en route* to winning his eighth and last U.S. Championship in 1966. Chess theory has come a long way since the 1960’s, though, so let’s start off with a perfect example of how White should handle the ...c6-c5 push – provided, of course, by Wojo.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2540) Liavanes, R.

[E69] Manila 1991

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♖c3 ♖bd7
7.0-0 c6 8.e4 e5 9.h3 ♜e8 10.♗e3
♞c7



11.♖c1!?

Black's queen has stepped on the c-file, so White decides to put his rook opposite of it. The merits of this move can be debated, as White could just as well play the immediate 11.d5 here. Now 11...c5 was seen in the game G.Kasparov-P.Capitelli, simultaneous exhibition 1991, where the then-world champion played 12.♘e1 a6 13.a4 b6 14.♘d3 and proceeded to secure an advantage on both sides of the board, first with g3-g4 on the kingside, then with b2-b4 on the queenside.

Meanwhile, 11...a5 12.♘e1 ♘c5 13.♘d3 ♘xd3 14.♙xd3 saw Wojo losing on the black side in E.Kengis-A. Wojtkiewicz, Germany 1996. 14...♙d7 15.dxc6! bxc6 16.♗fd1 left Black under considerable pressure in the center, where his d6-pawn eventually fell.

11...b6

Black's last several moves have been delaying the capture ...e5xd4, signaling his intention to wait as long as possible to play it, if he ever does at all. Eventually, Black would like to develop on the queenside and organize ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5.

12.♗e1 ♘f8

This maneuver of ...♘d7-f8-e6 is fairly common at the club and master level, but is a less frequent guest in grandmaster practice. 12...♙b7 13.d5 c5 14.a3 has been tried a few times, and is similar to the game.

13.d5

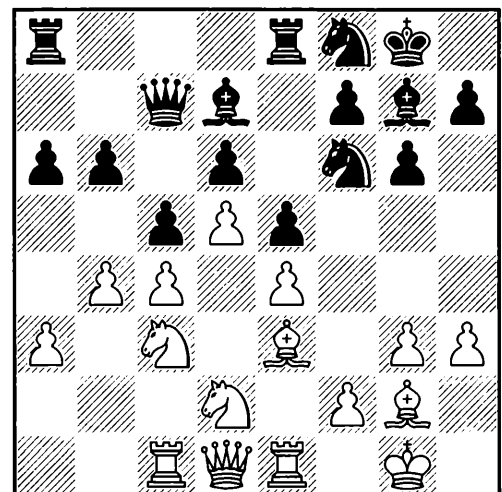
White decides it is finally time to lock the center. He will continue by

expanding on the queenside with a2-a3 and b2-b4. 13.♙d2, delaying the d4-d5 advance for just one more move, would have taken away the d2 square from White's knight on f3.

13...c5

This push defines the pawn structure for the rest of the middlegame. Given that Black had already played the weakening ...b7-b6, however, it would not have made sense to take on d5 or to allow White to play d5xc6 at some point.

14.a3 ♙d7 15.♘d2 a6 16.b4



White is assured a sizeable space advantage on the queenside. As he continues his buildup on that side of the board, he makes a few cursory plays on the kingside as well to keep the black pieces – which are not particularly well organized for any type of assault – at bay.

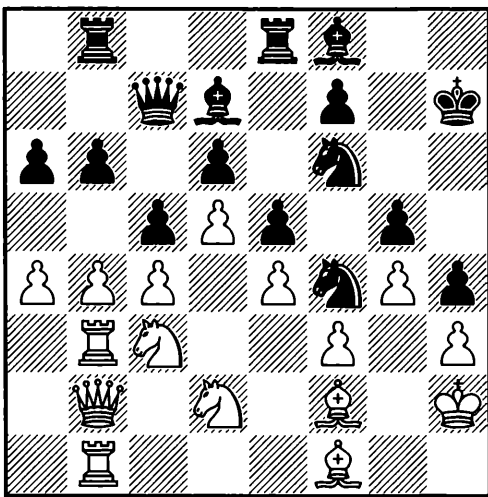
16...h6 17.♔h2 g5 18.♗b1 ♘g6 19.f3 ♘h5 20.♙f2

White's past three moves have been efforts to shore up his kingside. Now, he returns to focusing on the b-file.

20...♖h7 21.a4

An important move by White, who plans to run the a-pawn all the way to a5. Note that Black would be ill-advised to ever play ...c5xb4, giving White a free hand to pile up on the unfortunate b6-pawn.

22...♞ab8 22.♞b3 ♘f6 23.♞c2 h5 24.♞eb1 h4 25.g4 ♙f8 26.♞b2 ♘f4 27.♙f1



Black's progress on the kingside has been minimal.

27...♞a8 28.a5!

The resistance of the black army on the queen's wing now collapses.

28...cxb4 29.♞xb4 bxa5 30.♞b7 ♞c8 31.♞b6 ♖g7 32.♞xa5 ♞d8 33.♙b6 ♞e7 34.c5 dxc5 35.♘c4

White has successfully penetrated, and there was absolutely nothing that Black could have done over the past several moves to stop him.

35...♞ec8 36.♙c7 ♙b5 37.♘d6 ♞d7 38.♘xc8

Black can resign.

38...♞xc8 39.♙xb5 axb5 40.♞xb5 ♘g6 41.♞b8 ♞a6 42.♞xa8 ♞xa8 43.♞a5 1-0

Black reacted to White's d4-d5 by closing the queenside with ...c6-c5. White was able to expand on the queenside and come behind the b4-pawn with his major pieces, tripling on the file. The moves 21.a4 and 28.a5! were key to his success in breaking down Black's queenside pawn structure. Meanwhile, Black's play on the kingside was never threatening. White played a few good moves to shore up his position on that sector before finishing Black off on the queenside.

Black's play in the previous game can be improved upon tremendously, however. Not surprisingly, Bobby Fischer proved to have a much better understanding of this King's Indian pawn structure when he played it for Black against IM James Sherwin. Rather than concentrate on fruitless kingside efforts, Fischer buckled down on the queenside and resisted White's attempts to break through on the b-file. The following game has served as a model for many amateurs who, being Fischer buffs, play the King's Indian.

**Sherwin, James T.
Fischer, Robert James**

[E69] New York 1966

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.0-0 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.c4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5 8.e4 c6 9.a3

An uncommon move order, but opening theory was not so well developed in the 1960s.

9...♚b6 10.♞e1 ♞e8 11.d5

The push makes sense, as it is White's most straightforward way to make progress here. He shuts down the pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal and prevents Black from opening the e-file for his rook.

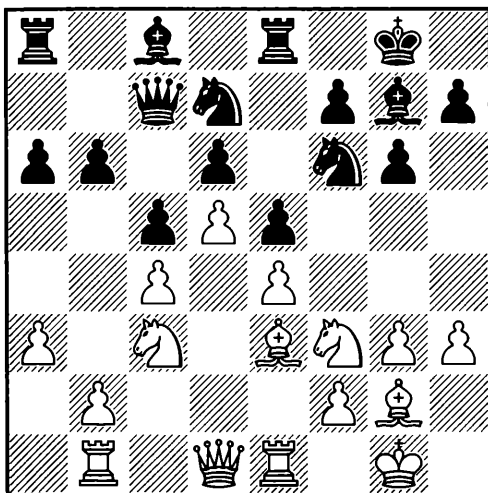
11...c5

The alternative is 11...a5 12.♞b1, and so forth.

12.h3

This is logical. White is taking some space on the kingside in preparation for the normal development of the dark-squared bishop to e3.

12...a6 13.♞b1 ♚c7 14.♙e3 b6



15.♙f1

15.♘d2 instead seems somewhat less artificial. The white bishop serves no real purpose on f1 other than to defend the c4-pawn.

15...♘f8 16.b4 ♙d7 17.♚h2 ♞eb8

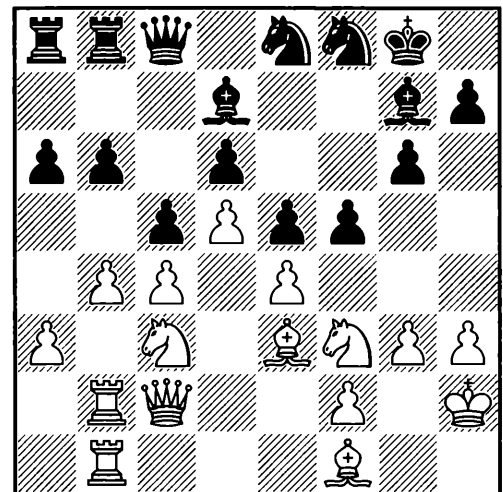
A good idea. Rather than make progress on the kingside, Black cor-

rectly decides to weather the storm on the queenside first. This prevents White from getting an easy victory, as in the previous game. The next thing White does here is to double on the b-file. Meanwhile, Black gets to take space with ...f7-f5.

18.♚c2 ♘e8 19.♞b2

White proceeds with too much caution. 19.♞b3, so as to leave room for the white queen on b2, looks more promising.

19...f5 20.♞eb1 ♚c8



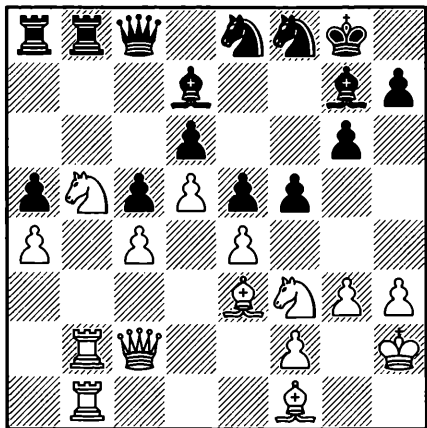
21.bxc5?!

White has no real hope of penetrating effectively on the b-file: Black's pieces do too good a job covering the squares b5 through b8. 21.a4, with the idea of a4-a5, looks a bit more awkward here than in the previous game, but it should have been tried regardless. Two sample lines:

a) 21...♘f6 22.bxc5 bxc5 23.♞b6 ♞xb6 24.♞xb6 ♚c7 25.a5 is an improvement on the game, as White's penetration means something here: he gets to keep the b6 square. For instance, play might continue 25...♙c8 (preparing ...♘f8-d7) 26.♞c6 ♚e7 27.exf5! gxf5 (or

27...♙xf5 28.♚b3) 28.♘h4 f4 29.♙c1, when White has both the initiative and a nice positional edge in a sharp game.

b) 21...a5!? 22.bxa5 bxa5 23.♘b5, with ♙e3-d2, ♜b2-b3, and ♚c2-b2 to follow, looks great for White:



23...♜b6 (23...♙xb5 24.♜xb5 ♜xb5 25.cxb5 followed by ♘f3-d2-c4 would likely bring about the collapse of Black's position) 24.♜b3 threatens ♘b5-a7, winning material, so Black has difficulties countering White's control of the b-file.

21...bxc5 22.♜b6

White penetrates with this move, but the invasion lacks real bite. 22.a4 might still have been a good idea here, but Black would at least have had 22...♚c7, stopping the pawn's march. But 22.♘d2 followed by f2-f3, to shore up the kingside, would likely have been a slight improvement.

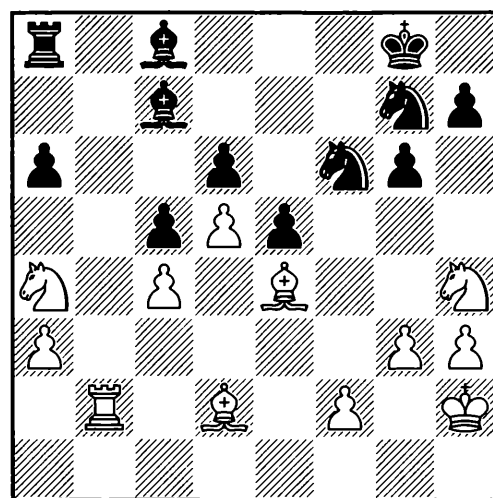
22...♜xb6 23.♜xb6 ♙f6

Taking the bishop on a journey to the queenside. Black has successfully covered all of his weak points in that sector, so White lethargically heads home.

24.♜b2 ♘g7 25.♙d2 ♙d8 26.♚b3 ♙c7 27.♚b7

Unable to come up with a plan, White begs for a trade of queens. The ensuing endgame isn't necessarily bad for White, but it does seem that White is making it clear that he is playing for a draw.

27...♙a5 28.♚xc8 ♙xc8 29.♙d3 ♘d7 30.♘a4 ♙c7 31.♘h4 fxe4 32.♙xe4 ♘f6



33.f3?!

Giving up the bishop pair for nothing and saddling White with an inflexible pawn structure. 33.♙d3, preserving White's light-squared bishop and the integrity of his pawn structure, would have kept the game level or perhaps even given a slight pull to White.

33...♘xe4 34.fxe4 ♘e8

Black immediately repositions his knight, taking advantage of White's newly created weakness on e4.

35.♘c3 ♙a5 36.g4?

A major oversight. Incredibly, this loses a pawn.

36...♘f6 37.♘b1 ♙d8!

WHITE'S d4-d5 PUSH

Black suddenly has a double attack against e4 and g4. White saves the lesser of the two pawns.

38.♖c3 ♜xg4+ 39.hxg4 ♙xh4 40.g5

This threatens ♜b2-b6, but White's counterplay comes to naught.

40...♙g4 41.♙e3

41.♜b6 ♜f8! would have left White's king subject to a brutal assault down the f-file.

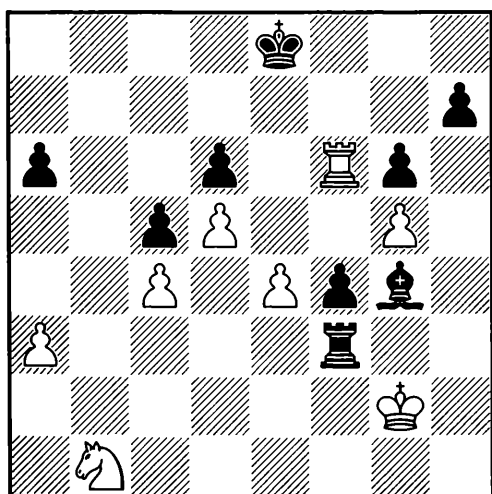
41...♜f8 42.♖b1 ♜f3 43.♜b3 ♙g3+ 44.♖g2 ♙f4 45.♜b8+ ♖f7 46.♙xf4

Alternatively, 46.♜b7+ ♖e8 47.♙xf4 exf4 48.♜xh7? ♜b3 49.♖d2 ♜b2 wins a piece for Black.

46...exf4 47.♜b7+ ♖e8 48.♜b8+ ♖d7 49.♜b7+ ♖d8 50.♜f7

50.♜xh7 again runs into 50...♜b3.

50...♖e8 51.♜f6



51...♖e7?!

A slight slip, but an important one.

51...♜b3! would have ended White's resistance faster. 52.♜xf4 (or 52.♖d2 ♜b2, winning for Black) 52...♜b2+ 53.♖g3 ♙d1! 54.♖c3 ♜b3 and the knight is lost.

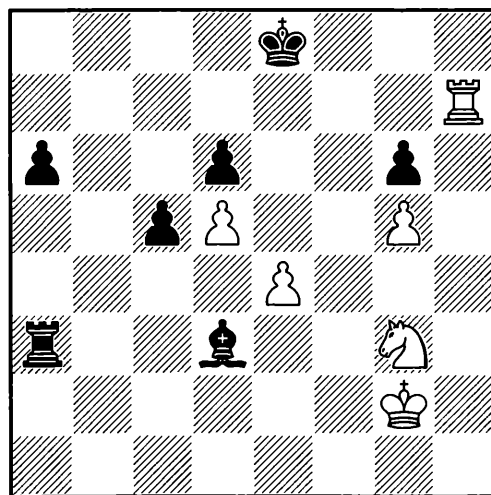
52.♜e6+

52.♖d2 ♜d3 is unpleasant for White.

52...♖d7

Of course not 52...♙xe6? 53.♖xf3 with a winning position for White. But after the text, White gets his first taste of real drawing chances.

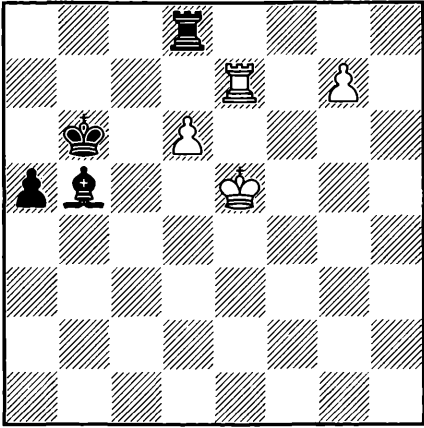
53.♜f6 ♙h5 54.♖d2 ♜g3+ 55.♖f2 ♜d3 56.♖f1 ♜f3+ 57.♖g2 ♜xa3 58.♜xf4 ♙e2 59.♖g3 ♙xc4 60.♜f7+ ♖e8 61.♜xh7 ♙d3



62.♜h8+

White begins checking the black king. After 62.♜g7!? things get interesting with 62...c4 63.♜xg6 c3 64.♜e6+ ♖d7 65.♖f5 ♖c7 (better than 65...c2 66.♜xd6+ ♖c7 67.♜c6+) 66.♜e7+ (but now not 66.♜xd6?? ♙xe4+) 66...♖b6 67.♖e3 c2 68.♖xc2 ♜a2 69.♖f3 ♜xc2, when White has some drawing chances,

e.g., 70.g6 ♖c8 71.g7 ♖g8 72.♔e3 ♙b5 73.e5 dxe5 74.♔e4 a5 75.d6 ♖d8 (75... ♔c6 76.d7! ♙c4 77.♖e8 ♔xd7 78.♖xg8 ♙xg8 79.♔xe5 and White draws, as Black's bishop is on the wrong color to promote his a-pawn) 76.♔xe5, when it seems difficult to find a win for Black:



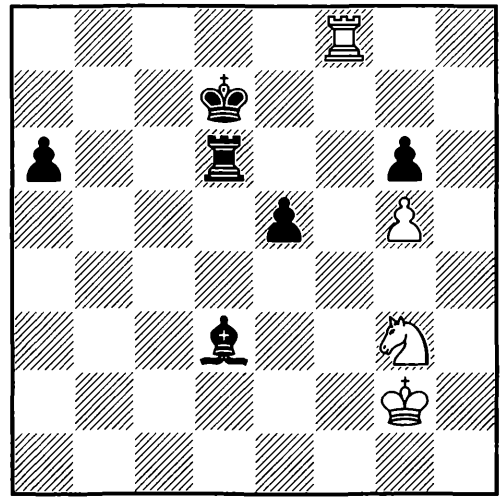
Now 76...a4 (76...♙c4 77.♔d4 ♙g8 78.d7 ♔c6 79.♔c3 will allow White to trade rooks with ♖e7-e8, achieving a draw) 77.♔d5 ♖a8 78.♖e3! holds for White.

62...♔e7 63.♖h7+ ♔f8 64.♖h8+ ♔g7 65.♖c8 ♔f7 66.♖c7+ ♔e8 67.e5?

The losing move. Under pressure, White decides to simplify into a lost ending. 67.♖g7 c4 68.♖xg6 c3 69.♖e6+ ♔d7 70.♔f5, transposing to the previous note, was necessary. After the text, Black is guaranteed the full point.

67...dxe5 68.♖xc5 ♔d7 69.♖c6 ♖a5 70.♖f6 ♖xd5 71.♖f8 ♖d6

Over the next several moves, Black slowly works to advance his a-pawn. The rest needs no comment.



72.♖f7+ ♔e6 73.♖a7 ♔d5 74.♔f3 ♔e6 75.♖a8 ♙b5 76.♖f8 ♔e7 77.♖g8 ♔f7 78.♖b8 ♖d3+ 79.♔f2 ♙c6 80.♖b6 ♖f3+ 81.♔g2 ♖c3+ 82.♔f2 a5 83.♖a6 a4 84.♔e2 ♖c4 85.♔g3 ♔e6 86.♔f1 ♖c3 87.♖b6 ♖xg3 88.♖xc6+ ♔f5 89.♖a6 ♖a3 90.♖a5 ♖a2 91.♔g1 a3 92.♔f1 ♔f4 93.♔g1 e4 94.♔f1 ♔f3 95.♔g1 e3 96.♖e5 ♖g2+ 97.♔h1 a2 98.♖a5 ♖b2 99.♖e5 a1 ♖# 0-1

An unfortunate end for White, but this game can hardly be taken as representative of all Fianchetto King's Indian games featuring ...c6-c5 by Black in response to d4-d5. Although Sherwin did beat a young Fischer in a 1957 game, he then had a miserable streak of losses against him that gave him a lifetime result of one victory, one draw, and seven defeats. It did seem as if, throughout the entire game above, Sherwin was slowly being outplayed by his very strong opponent. Given Fischer's strength, it is remarkable that White had to commit so many errors for Black to garner the full point. Even after the exchange of queens, White may have had a slight pull.

After Black's 11...c5, White played for a2-a3 and b2-b4 and began the typical buildup of forces on the queenside. Somewhere along the line, however, he lost the thread of the attack and played a premature 21.bxc5?!, ensuring that Black was able to successfully hold the queenside by controlling the squares on his half of the board along the b-file. White would have been better off playing for the a3-a4-a5 break, similar to the way Wojo handled the position earlier in this section. White was doing fine in the ending until he played 33.f3?! and 36.g4?, giving Black a winning game. Fischer mishandled the position slightly and so White might have had drawing chances with 62.♖g7!?. Instead, White fell apart after his 67.e5?.

Conclusion: When Black locks down the center with ...c6-c5, White must look to slowly build up on both sides of the board. His breakthrough will likely come on the queenside with b2-b4 and a2-(a3-)a4-a5, but he should be sure to safeguard the kingside as well. Maneuvers such as h2-h3 and ♖g1-h2, ♗f3-d2 and f2-f3, and ♕e3-f2 are common. Had Sherwin played more cautiously on the kingside against Fischer, he would likely not have suffered from such a powerful invasion in that area of the board in the endgame.

Black Plays ...c6xd5 in Response to White's d4-d5

Generally speaking, Black's best response to White's d4-d5 push is to play the exchange ...c6xd5. White retakes with the pawn on c4, thus opening the c-file. The resulting structure gives White a considerable space advantage and the possibility to achieve dominance on the queenside, but if Black can play dynamically – that is, if he can generate enough piece activity – he can avoid falling into a clearly worse position. In some cases, when White is careless, Black may even take the initiative.

Often, the debate around whether or not White should even carry out the d4-d5 push in a given position revolves around how much piece play Black will be able to generate should he play ...c6xd5. A good rule of thumb is that it makes sense for White to close the center if Black plays ...♖f8-e8, wasting time. Then, Black will likely

have to move the rook to f8 again in order to play...f7-f5. In the following game, White plays d4-d5 somewhat early. This permits Black several opportunities in the opening to generate sufficient piece play based around the ...f7-f5 push.

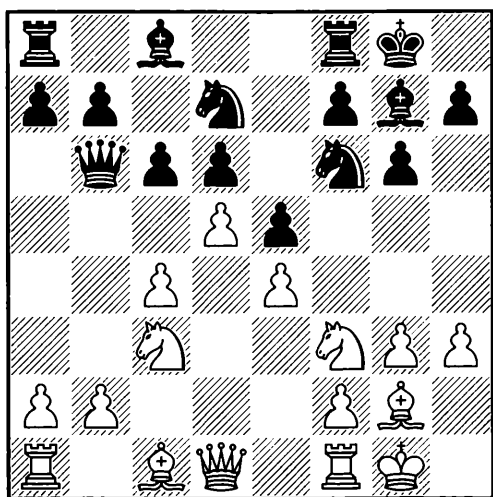
**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2495)
Nikolaïdis, Konstantinos (2230)**

[E69] Crete 1992

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7
4.♕g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♗bd7
7.♗c3 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖b6

This aggressive move is common against the early h2-h3 by White. Later Wojo would switch to the move order 8.e4 c6 9.♖b1, as seen in many of the games from Chapter 1, to avoid it.

10.d5!?



According to theory, White cannot count on getting an edge with d4-d5 at this early stage. The resulting pawn structure does indeed favor White, but Black is able to develop his pieces on the queenside smoothly. With ambitious play, Black should be able to create sufficient counterchances.

The interesting 10. ♖b1!? instead is one of our suggestions for White, which we examine in Chapter 5. Otherwise, 10. c5!? dxc5 11. dxe5 ♖e8 12. e6 is another frequently tried option, but it leads to positions that give Black interesting chances and which are not in the spirit of Wojo's White repertoire.

10...cxd5

A slight inaccuracy, as it is better for Black to wait a move or two before making this exchange. One of the reasons is for this is that Black would like to keep the option of ... ♖b6-a6 open as a response to White's ♖d1-e2. The main line here is 10... ♖c5, which occurs in the next game.

11.cxd5 ♖c5 12. ♖e1

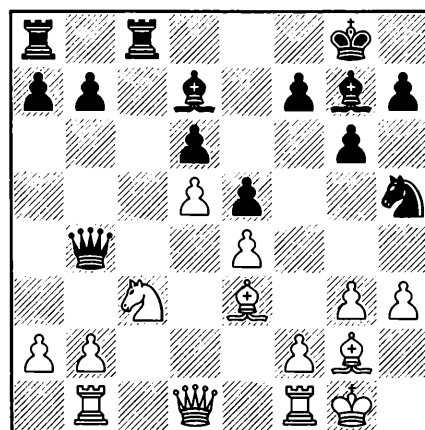
This is not a bad try for the advantage, but Janjgava's suggestion of 12. ♖d2 looks somewhat more convincing. Then 12... ♖d7 13. ♖b3 ♖xb3 (or 13... ♖a4 14. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 15. ♖e3 ♖b5

16. ♖d2) 14. ♖xb3 ♖xb3 15. axb3 ♖fc8 16. ♖e3 a6 17. ♖fc1 ♖h5 18. ♖a4 led to an edge for White in I.Lempert-O.Tuzan, Moscow 1990.

As mentioned in the previous note, by playing 10...cxd5 early, Black also forfeits the possibility of playing ... ♖b6-a6 in some lines. For instance, Black would also fall short of equality after 12. ♖e2 ♖d7 13. ♖e3 ♖fc8 14. ♖fc1 ♖a6!? 15. ♖xa6 bxa6 16. ♖e1, when White scores well in practice.

12...♖h5

A good move, aiming to create counterplay on the kingside with ...f7-f5. Black also has ideas of ... ♖h5xg3, taking advantage of tactics along the g1-a7 diagonal. Wojo took the Black side of this position once in K.Pańczyk-Wojtkiewicz, Poland 1992, and played instead 12... ♖d7 13. ♖d3 ♖xd3 14. ♖xd3 ♖fc8 15. ♖b1 ♖h5. White got a slight advantage after 16. ♖e3 ♖b4 17. ♖d1! (an improvement on the frequently cited World Championship game Botvinnik-Tal, Moscow 1960, which saw 17. ♖e2), when White stepped out of the line of fire along the f1-a6 diagonal and targeted Black's knight on h5:



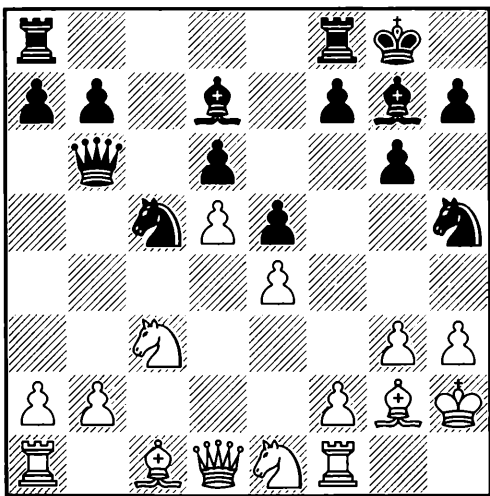
The game continued 17... ♖c4 (White is also better after 17...f5 18. exf5 ♖xf5 19. a3 ♖a5 20. ♖c1, with the threat of g3-g4) 18. ♖h2 ♖ac8 19. ♖f3 ♖f6 20. a3

♖a5 21.♚b3. Thus, we see the point of the mysterious queen retreat on move 17 – White's queen first controls and then occupies the important b3 square. After 17...b5 22.♙e2, Black, under pressure, unsuccessfully sacrificed the exchange with 22...♖xc3 23.bxc3 ♜xe4 24.♙xb5. He went on to lose.

13.♙h2

White errs on the side of caution, but he can do without this move. The superior 13.♜d3! ♜xd3 14.♚xd3 was played in P.Amigo Román-D.Veganzonéz Rojo, Valladolid 1997. White was better after 14...f5 15.exf5 gxf5 16.♙h2 (not 16.♚e2?? ♜xg3) 16...♚d8!? 17.♚e2 ♜f6 18.♙d2, followed by expansion on the queenside with a2-a4 and b2-b4. White's queenside pressure won him the game.

13...♙d7



14.♙f3

This move isn't useful, as White isn't really threatening to take on h5, as discussed in the note to Black's next move. 14.♜d3 here was still good enough for an edge: 14...♜xd3 15.♚xd3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 (or 16...♙xf5 17.♚e2 17.♚e2 ♙e8 18.♙g5 gave White a more

active game in M.Filip-E.Geller, Curaçao 1962.

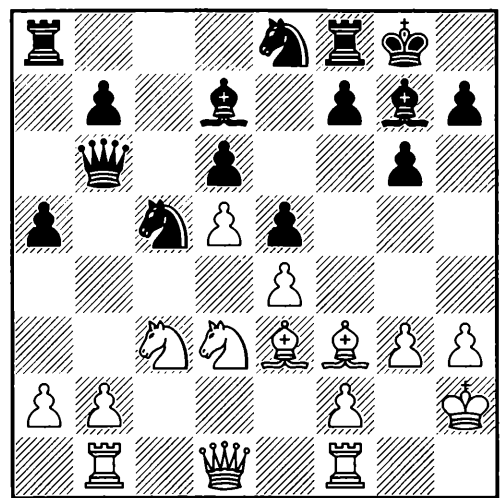
14...♜f6

Conceding the initiative back to White. Black should have simply continued with 14...♖ac8, when now 15.♙xh5?! gxf5 16.♚xh5 f5 17.exf5 ♖a6! 18.♙g1 ♖xf5 gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn, as his two bishops and active game will make White's life difficult. Black even has ideas of ...♜c5-b3 here.

15.♖b1 a5 16.♙e3 ♜e8

16...♚c7, stepping out of the pin, was better. 17.♜d3 b6 18.♚d2 would have kept the game approximately level.

17.♜d3



17...f5?

Black, whose development is disrupted by the poor placement of his knight on e8, is in no position to open the game. 17...♚c7 18.♜xc5 dxc5 19.d6!? ♜xd6 20.♜d5 would have given White the initiative, but 17...♚a7!? followed by ...b7-b6 would have limited White to just a slight advantage.

18.♟xc5 dxc5 19.d6!

White rips open the board, clearing the d5 square for his c3-knight. Soon he will unleash his powerful light-squared bishop upon the h1-a8 diagonal. The d6-pawn, advanced as it is, cannot be captured.

19...♞f6

19...♞xd6? 20.♞d5+ ♔h8 21.♙xc5 wins outright. Also bad for Black is 19...♞xd6? 20.♞xd6 ♞xd6 21.♞fd1 ♞a6 22.♙xc5 and so on.

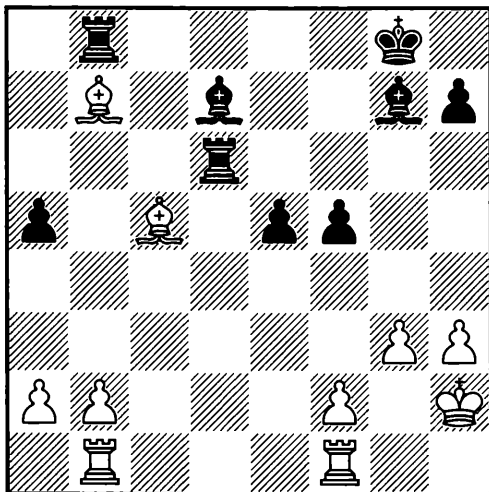
20.exf5 gxf5 21.♞d5

White immediately simplifies into a winning endgame. 21.♞a4 ♙xa4 22.♞xa4, winning the two bishops, is also strong, but the text move wins a pawn.

21...♞xd6

Of course 21...♞xd5 22.♞xd5+ would be a disaster for Black.

22.♞xf6+ ♞xf6 23.♙xb7 ♞b8 24.♞xd6 ♞xd6 25.♙xc5



The point of 21.♞d5. White wins material with a gain of time.

25...♞d2 26.♙e3 ♞e2

26...♞d6 might have held on for Black longer, but White is still winning, for instance 27.♙g2 a4 28.b3 axb3 29.♞xb3 and so on. Wojo displays confidence in his ability to convert any such pawn-up ending.

27.♙d5+ ♔f8 28.b3 ♞xa2?!

Losing instantly.

29.♞a1

This is White's simplest solution. 29.b4, attacking Black's rook on a2, was also strong: 29...♞a4 30.bxa5 ♞xb1 31.♙c5+! ♔e8 32.♞xb1 ♞xa5 33.♞b8+ wins.

29...♞b2

29...♞xa1 30.♞xa1 ♞b5 31.♙c4 is no better.

30.♞xa5 ♔e8 31.♞d1 ♙f8 32.♙f3 e4 33.♙h5+ 1-0

Black is faced with the prospect of ♞a5-a7 from White next move, so he throws in the towel.

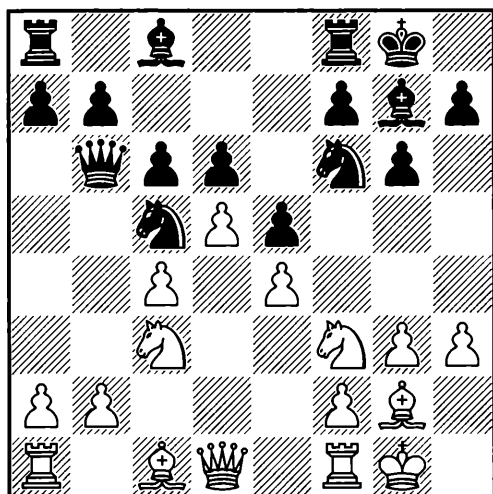
White's early 10.d5!? is not considered dangerous by modern theory. White did gain some opportunities for a slight advantage in this game, however, since Black played the early 10...cxd5. After 14.♙f3, Black should have continued aggressively rather than falling into passivity. He lost so much time with his king's knight that by the time he finally played 17...f5?, opening the position could only help White. This allowed White to win a pawn, and with it the game.

The next game also features passive play by Black – only this time, Black's quiet acquiescence, allowing White to dominate the queenside, is more difficult to spot. Black develops on the queenside but doesn't pursue action on that wing vigorously enough early on, so White's space advantage eventually allows the first player to penetrate.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2460)
Le Siège, Alexandre (2235)

[E69] Philadelphia 1989

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♘c3 ♘bd7
 7.0-0 e5 8.h3 c6 9.e4 ♚b6 10.d5!?
 ♘c5



Black reacts correctly, resisting the temptation to simplify on d5 immediately.

11.♚c2!?

White is attempting to play solidly, but this move is likely not best. The problem is that White will lose time moving the queen again when the c-file opens.

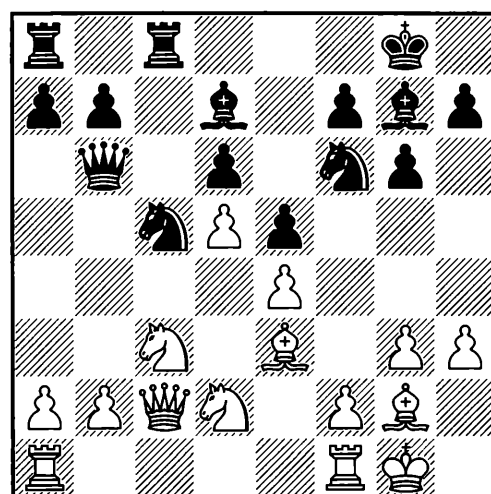
The normal 11.♚e2 is met by 11...♚a6, putting pressure on White's c4-d5-e4-pawn chain. Best now is

12.♙g5 h6 (or 12...♘a4 13.♘xa4 ♚xa4 with near equality for Black, as in R.Hübner-A.Shirov, Bundesliga 1992) 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.♚d2 ♙g7 15.dxc6 ♚xc6, when Black's two bishops compensated him for his structural weakness on d6 in D.Amorim-R.Rain, correspondence 2000. The position is dynamically equal, or at best very slightly better for White.

11...cxd5

Once again, releasing the tension so early is not Black's strongest idea in this position. One of the problems that White might encounter here is 11...♚b4!?, when here 12.♘d2 a5 13.a3 ♚b6 14.b3 leaves White's a- and b-pawns slightly misplaced. Black has space and pressure on the queenside, leaving him fine in I.Krupenski-O.Sepp, Estonia 1999, after 14...♙d7 15.♚b1 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♚fc8. Black even took the initiative down the c-file after 17.♚e1 ♚c7 18.♙b2 b5.

12.cxd5 ♙d7 13.♙e3 ♚fc8 14.♘d2



14...♚a6

14...♚d8, simply tucking the queen away and preparing to play ...a7-a5, gaining space, has been preferred by

stronger players in the past. After the game move, Black will have to waste time repositioning his queen.

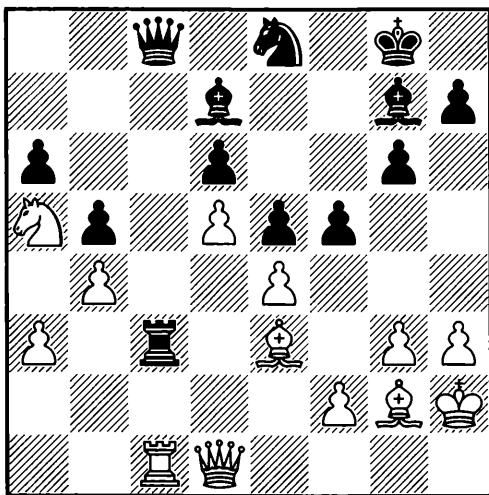
15.♟fc1 b5 16.a3 ♞b7 17.b4

Black's loss of time on move 14 has allowed his opponent to secure a slight advantage. White has more space and a comfortable game.

17...♞a4 18.♞b3 ♞xc3 19.♟xc3 ♟xc3 20.♞xc3 ♟c8 21.♞d3 ♟c7 22.♞b3 ♞c8

Black's play along the c-file will not mean much. White makes no immediate efforts to stop Black's feigned penetration as he is busy building up his advantage on the queenside.

23.♞h2 ♟c3 24.♞d1 a6 25.♟c1 ♞e8 26.♞a5 f5



This obvious move was bound to be played at some point. It does surprisingly little to change the position, however.

27.♞c6!

Strong. White reestablishes his authority over the c-file.

27...♟xc1 28.♞xc1 ♞h8

28...♞xc6? 29.♞xc6 ♞xc6 30.dxc6 would leave Black helpless against the wrath of White's powerful passed c-pawn, fully supported by the bishop pair.

29.exf5

29.f3 was a quiet alternative, but White's approach is better. He is playing dynamically to increase the scope of his pieces.

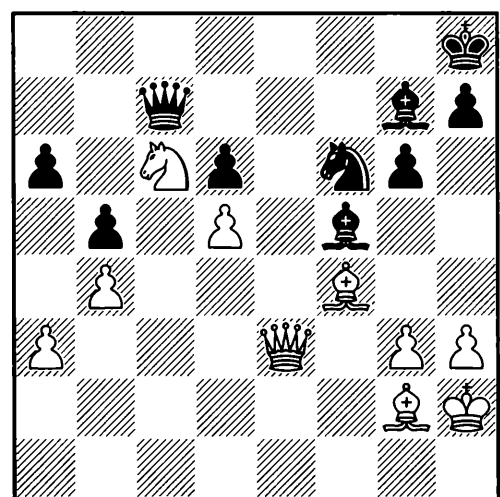
29...♞xf5

29...gxf5!? was also possible, but Black is trying to prove that he can hold a draw by keeping the pawn structure symmetrical. In any case, 30.♞g5 with an eye to penetrating on e7 or d8 (with either the bishop or the knight, as the case may be) would keep White's upper hand.

30.f4

White correctly strikes against Black's pawn center. He will eventually be targeting the weak d6-pawn.

30...exf4 31.♞xf4 ♞c7 32.♞e3 ♞f6 33.♞d4!



Heading for e6.

WHITE'S d4-d5 PUSH

33...♙c8 34.♘c6

34.♘e6 was correct here. White could then focus on penetrating to b6 with his queen.

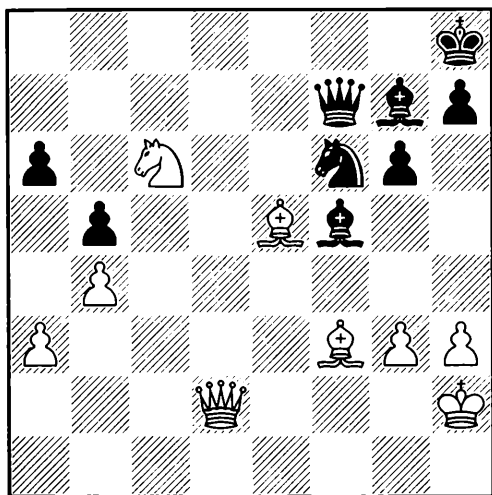
34...♙f5 35.♙f3

35.♘d4 ♙c8 36.♘e6 as still possible.

35...♚f7 36.♙xd6!?

Perhaps this is too impatient. 36.g4 ♙d7 37.♚d2 would have kept a slight plus for White. Note that this is probably better than 37.♘d8!? ♚f8 (Black must keep his eye on f4, as 37...♚e8? 38.♘e6 ♙xe6 39.♚xe6 should win for White) 38.♘e6 ♙xe6 39.dxe6 ♚e7 40.♚b6 ♚xe6 41.♚xa6 h5! 42.♚xb5 hxc4 43.hxc4 ♘xc4+, when Black can probably find a perpetual check somewhere down the road.

36...♘xd5 37.♚d2 ♘f6 38.♙e5



White has a pull here, but much of his structural advantage has dissipated.

38...h6 39.g4 ♙e6 40.♚d4 ♖h7 41.♖g3 ♙c4 42.♚d6

White slowly creeps forward. The a6-pawn is being targeted here.

42...♙e2!

Taking advantage of the momentary placement of White's king and queen.

43.♙g2

Worthless is 43.♙xf6, when 43...♙xf3 44.♙xg7 ♙xc6 45.♚xc6 ♚xg7 equalizes for Black. If Black wants to get fancy, also possible is 43...♙xf6!? 44.g5! (not 44.♙xe2 ♙h4+!) 44...♙xg5 45.♙xe2 ♙h4+! 46.♖xh4 ♚f2+ 47.♖g4 h5+ 48.♖g5 ♚f5+ 49.♖h4 ♚f2+ with a draw by perpetual check.

43...♚b3+?

Likely the product of last-round fatigue or poor nerves. 43...♙f1! was correct here. Then 44.♙f3 ♙e2 successfully repeats the position.

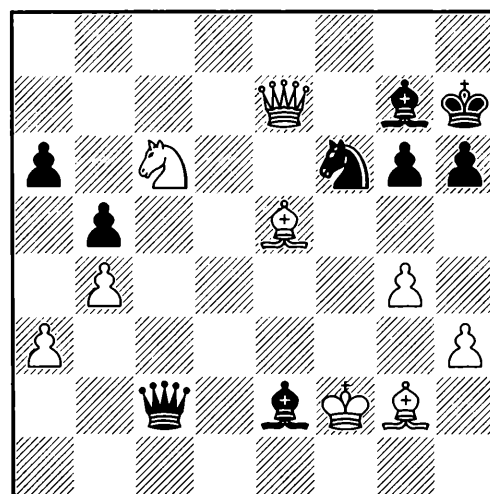
44.♖f2

Now Black has two pieces hanging, his bishop on e2 and his knight on f6.

44...♚d1 45.♚e7

Pinning Black's bishop on g7.

45...♚c2



46. ♖xf6?

White sees the opportunity to “win” a piece, and he takes it. 46. ♖d4 followed by taking on e2 would have won instantly.

46... ♖f3+!

Black’s miraculous save. White emerges with only a slight advantage, one that proves insufficient to convert.

47. ♖xf3 ♖xc6+ 48. ♖e3 ♖xf6 49. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 50. ♖d3 ♖b2 51. ♖b7 ♖xa3 52. ♖c3 ♖g7 53. ♖xa6 ♖f6 54. ♖xb5

White is a pawn up, but this opposite-colored-bishop ending is a dead draw.

54... ♖e7 55. ♖d3 g5 56. ♖b3 ♖c1 57. ♖c4 ♖d7 58. ♖d5 ♖c7 59. ♖e4 ♖b6 60. ♖f5 ♖a3 61. b5 ♖c5 62. ♖g6 ♖f2 63. ♖xh6

A second pawn falls, but this is of little use to White.

63... ♖h4 64. ♖f1 ♖c5 65. ♖g6 ♖b6 66. ♖f5 ♖c5 67. ♖e5 ♖b6 1/2-1/2

Black’s play in the opening was, once again, somewhat passive. With 11... ♖b4!? he could have obtained fair chances. After 11... cxd5 instead, White was able to push Black out of the queenside with a2-a3 and b2-b4. Black got control of the c-file, but his penetration to c3 was short-lived. Around move 34, White had a clear advantage. It dissipated somewhat after the mutual captures of the white and black d-pawns – the source of

White’s superiority – but after Black’s blunder with 43... ♖b3+, White still had a clear shot to win with 46. ♖d4.

Our final game in this section – a battle that took place at the 2008 U.S. High School Championship – was critical to the formation of co-author Jonathan Hilton’s understanding of these types of positions. He is outplayed by an up-and-coming Matthew Michaelides, a promising junior who would gain some recognition a year later after upsetting GM Alexander Lenderman with Black in the 2009 U.S. Open.

Throughout the following game, Black has chances for counterplay that would have either equalized or come close to doing so. He misses them, however, allowing White to capitalize on Black’s vulnerable light squares. White’s powerful central pawn chain eventually does the second player in.

Michaelides, Matthew (USCF 1945)

Hilton, Jonathan (USCF 2246)

[E68] Atlanta 2008

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♖f3 ♖g7 4. g3 0-0 5. ♖g2 d6 6. 0-0 ♖bd7 7. ♖c3 e5 8. e4 c6 9. ♖b1 ♖e8 10. d5!?

10. h3 and 10. ♖e1 are more common here, but the text also scores well for White. Considering that Black has spent a move on ... ♖f8-e8, this push makes sense here. Black’s attempts for counterplay over the next several moves will be limited to the queenside; only later will he have time for ... ♖e8-f8 and ... f7-f5. In the end, however, he

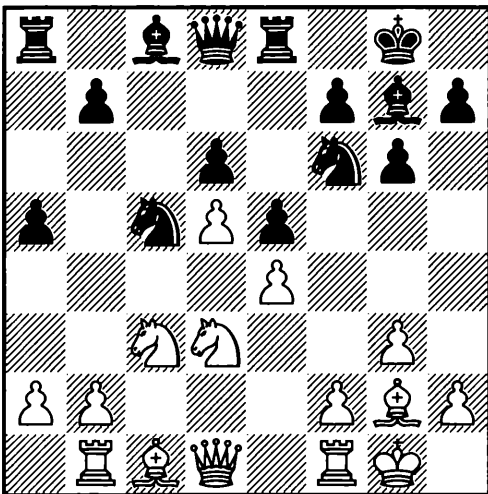
WHITE'S d4-d5 PUSH

does come close to creating sufficient counterplay. For this reason, Wojo preferred the line with 10.h3, which is slightly more flexible.

10...♖c5 11.♗e1 cxd5

11...a5 12.♗d3 ♖a6!? was played in L.Lenič-D.Sengupta, Turkey 2008. After 13.a3 ♗d7 14.♗d2 cxd5 15.cxd5 b5 16.b4 a4 17.♞e2 ♞b8 18.♞fc1, Black was stuck defending his b5-pawn for the rest of the middlegame.

12.cxd5 a5 13.♗d3



13...♗fd7

Black plans on playing ...b7-b6 and ...♗c8-a6, so it might have made more sense for him to play for this plan immediately. Regardless, White gets the advantage after 13...b6 14.♞e1 (to prevent problems along the f1-a6 diagonal and prepare ♗g2-f1) 14...♗xd3 15.♞xd3 ♗a6 16.♞d1, when here either 16...♞c7 17.♗e3 ♗d7 18.♗f1 ♗xf1 19.♞xf1, with a slight space advantage, or 16...b5!? 17.b4 axb4 18.♞xb4 ♞a5 19.♞b3 ♗d7 20.♗f1 ♗c5 21.♞b1 ♞ec8 22.♗d2, with pressure against b5, are good for White.

14.♗e3 b6 15.♞e1 ♗a6

15...♗xd3 16.♞xd3 ♗c5 17.♞d2 ♗a6 18.♗f1 once again leaves White slightly better.

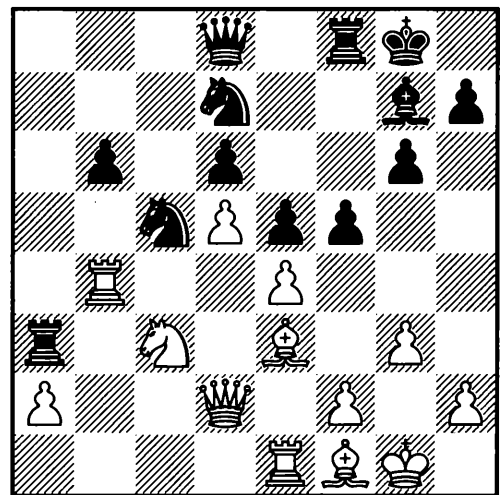
16.♗f1 ♞f8

Black, unable to make further progress on the queenside, turns back to the kingside.

17.b4

Clearing the way for White to pressure the b6-pawn. Also good was 17.a3, for instance 17...♞e7 18.b4 ♗xd3 19.♗xd3 ♗xd3 20.♞xd3 axb4 21.axb4, with the possibility of penetrating the weak light-square complex on the queenside after the rooks come off.

17...♗xd3 18.♗xd3 axb4 19.♞xb4 ♞a3 20.♞d2 f5 21.♗f1



21...f4!?

Black loses patience. The pawn push is premature here, as Black should first improve his position on the queenside. Better here was 21...♞a8, putting additional pressure on the a2-pawn and preparing to maneuver the black queen into the struggle. Now 22.♗c4, bolstering a2, would be answered by 22...♞a5 23.♞eb1 f4 24.♗xc5 ♞xc5!, when

Black's pieces are well coordinated: 25.♖a4?! here would be met by 25...♗d4! with advantage to Black.

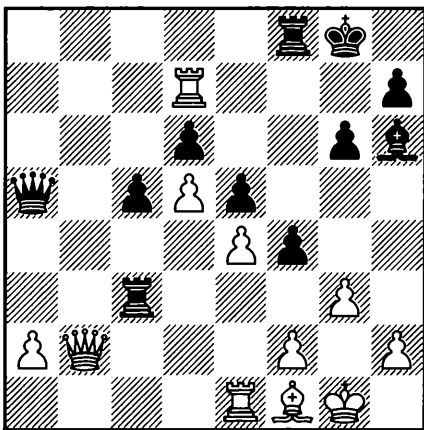
Alternatively, 22.♗e1 f4 (22...♗a5 is also possible, but White has interesting ideas of ♖c3-b5, hitting d6) 23.♙xc5 ♖xc5! leaves Black okay, since 24.♗xb6 is met by 24...♗a5 25.♗6b4 fxg3 26.hxg3 ♗f3 with counterplay.

22.♙xc5 bxc5

22...♖xc5 23.♗b2 is unpleasant for Black.

23.♗b7 fxg3?

Black cracks under the strain of White's queenside pressure. He needed to play 23...♙h6, threatening tactical ideas of ...f4xg3. Then 24.♗b2 ♗a5! 25.♗xd7 ♗xc3 holds Black's position together:



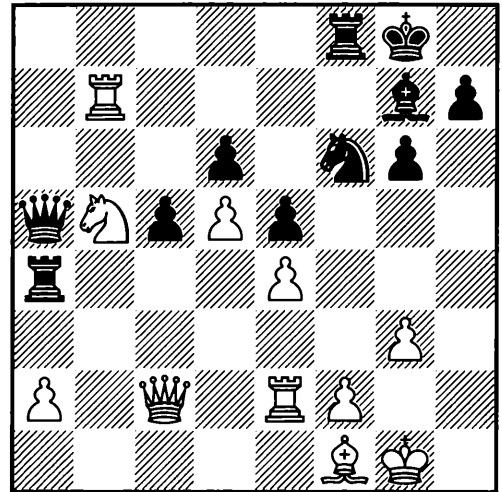
Black is thinking of ...f4xg3 and ...♗c3-f3. And 26.♗xd6? would backfire miserably for White: 26...fxg3, with the idea of 27.hxg3? ♗xg3+ 28.fxg3 ♗xe1, wins for Black.

24.hxg3 ♖f6

Now 24...♗a5 could be met by 25.♗xd7 ♗xc3 26.♗e3!, taking advantage of Black's mistake on his move 23. Carrying the analysis slightly

further, 26...♗a3 27.♗xa5 ♗xa5 28.a3 ♗f6 29.♗b3 should leave White with a winning ending.

25.♖b5 ♗a4 26.♗c2 ♗a5 27.♗e2



27...♗a8

Black's position crumbles. Everywhere Black looks, he is losing material. 27...♗d8 would run into 28.♗a7 ♗xa7 29.♖xa7 ♗xa7, with a clear advantage for White. Meanwhile, the piece sacrifice 27...♖xe4!? isn't promising after 28.♗xe4 ♗xa2 29.♗c3 ♗xc3 30.♖xc3 ♗axf2 31.♙e2. Nonetheless, either of these options was probably preferable to the game.

28.♖xd6

Now Black is lost.

28...♗xa2 29.♗xa2 ♗xa2 30.♗xa2 ♗xa2 31.♙h3 h5 32.♙e6+ ♖h7 33.♗c7 ♗a6 34.♗c6 ♗a4 35.f3

The strength of White's strong central pawn chain, in the end, is what finally does Black in.

35...♗a1+ 36.♖g2 ♗a2+ 37.♖h3 ♗a3 38.♖f7 ♙f8 39.♖xe5 ♖h6 40.♙f7 1-0

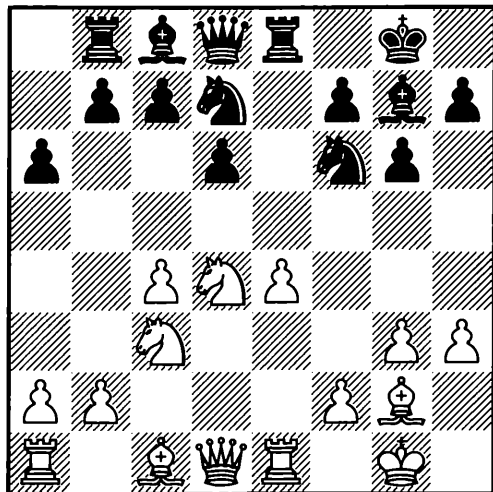
WHITE'S d4-d5 PUSH

After Black's time-wasting 10...♖e8, White's 10.d5!? is likely strong enough to promise White some advantage. In this game, however, Black managed to create counterplay by generating activity on the queenside. With either 21...♜a8 or 23...♙h6, he could have maintained the game in equilibrium. Unfortunately for Black, though, after the d6-pawn fell, the game was essentially over.

Conclusion: If Black has the option of meeting d4-d5 with an eventual ...c6xd5, White should be on the lookout for Black's possible tries for counterplay. Black can try ...f7-f5 on the kingside, as we saw was possible in the notes to Wojtkiewicz-Nikolaidis, or try to make progress on the queenside, as we saw in the last two games. White's structural advantage should give him good prospects, but White should be confident that he can weather the storm of Black's piece activity before playing the d4-d5 push.

Chapter 3

The Gallagher Variation



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5
8.e4 ♜e8 9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 a6
11.♜e1 ♜b8

The Gallagher Variation – named after former British champion GM Joseph Gallagher – is one of Black’s strongest attempts to “mix things up” when facing the Fianchetto King’s Indian. He aims to quickly throw out ...c7-c5 and ...b7-b5 before White has time to consolidate his space advantage, thereby avoiding the dismal positions we saw Black trying to defend in Chapter 1. Black doesn’t mind giving himself a backward pawn at d6 or ceding control of the d5 square to White: he remembers Black’s woes in the “Zürich 1953” positions and opts for dynamic counterplay in place of passive defense. After committing to the exchange on d4, Black’s d-pawn will be weak anyway – so why not try to get counterplay with the active ...c7-c5?

This “bombs away” approach proved liberating for a young Joe Gallagher, who, in 1988, began to analyze the variation in earnest. Gallagher, a lifelong King’s Indian Defense enthusiast, had always hated to play against the Fianchetto Variation. In his book *Play the King’s Indian*, he describes his formulation of his namesake variation in the following manner:

In my early King’s Indian days, I suffered horribly in this line [i.e., the Fianchetto]. Things got so bad that I just felt like resigning when I saw my opponent reaching for his g-pawn. These problems continued for many years until I discovered a way to create chaos on the board. In order to create this chaos Black has to take great positional risks but these risks seemed justifiable against the sort of player who plays the Fianchetto Variation. Above all these players want to control the game and they begin to feel uncomfortable when they feel this control slipping away. Make them dance to your tune and they won’t like it – even if the position is objectively in their favour.

In this chapter, we contend that White really has only two possible approaches against the Gallagher Variation – either he can allow his perception of “control” to slip away, sacrificing it in order to gain the upper hand tactically; or, he can expend time preventing this chaos from erupting, which may mean allowing Black more chances to equalize. This balance between chaos and control comes up at some point in nearly every game played in the Gallagher Variation.

In Wojo’s games from the 1990s, he generally tried White’s most forceful counter to the Gallagher, 12.♔e3 (from the diagram above). White ignores Black’s queenside intentions for the time being, convinced that Black’s explosive plan of ...c7-c5 and ...b7-b5 will prove unsound. He hopes that Black will be in a hurry to generate active piece play at any price, and thus will wind up – as the old saying goes – hoisted on his own petard. (Otherwise, White will play for a positional bind using the d5 square.) We start off this chapter by looking at this approach for White, which is convincing in theory but doesn’t always bring about the best results in practice. We then move on to investigate the more subtle 12.♗b1, which has the plan of b2-b3 and a2-a4 with a queenside bind. Wojo switched to this approach later on, preferring to frustrate and strangle his opponents rather than to blow them out of the water. Both 12.♔e3 and 12.♗b1 are main lines in the Gallagher, so we ultimately leave the choice of which to pursue up to the reader. We include the latest word in modern theory on both lines – and add in our own ideas and preparation, too.

Chaos on the Queenside: White Allows Black’s ...b7-b5

Black’s queenside counterplay tends to come hard and fast in the Gallagher, and the more interesting attempts at an advantage for White get sharp quickly. Although White has little say as to whether or not Black chooses to play the committal ...c7-c5, he can take certain measures to prevent ...b7-b5, however. In this section – which covers what happens when White puts his bishop on e3 on either move 11 or move 12 – we’ll get a feel for the structures that result from White permitting the ...b7-b5 thrust. In the games Ippolito-Bates and Ippolito-Aramil below, the second player is destroyed by his own eagerness to play this thrust before he is really ready. We will begin, however, by looking at an example of Black’s pulling off the ...b7-b5 thrust, even getting

to push the pawn all the way to b4. The battle occurs between none other than Dean Ippolito and Aleksander Wojtkiewicz, with Wojo taking the black pieces in this instance.

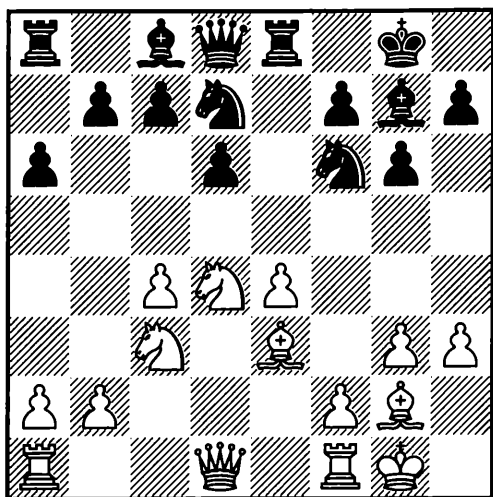
Ippolito, Dean (2414)
Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2554)

[E68] San Diego 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♔g7 4.g3
 0-0 5.♔g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3
 e5 8.e4 exd4

8...♗e8 is another move order commonly used to reach the Gallagher Variation. The idea is that 9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 a6 11.♔e3 transposes back into the game.

9.♟xd4 ♖e8 10.h3 a6 11.♙e3



This is an ambitious treatment of the Gallagher line for White, who continues with his development without taking precautions against Black's queenside play. We'll examine a more conservative handling of this position from the White side, 11.♖e1 ♖b8 12.♖b1, much later in this chapter.

Note that White can also play 11.♖e1 ♖b8 12.♙e3, transposing back to the game. If White is planning to play his bishop to e3, it doesn't make much difference whether he puts it there on move 11 or move 12.

11...♖b8

Black is preparing for ...c7-c5 and ...b7-b5. It makes little sense for Black to spend additional time preparing the ...b7-b5 break with the slow ...c7-c6. For instance, 11...c6 12.♙c2 ♖b8 13.♖ad1 ♙e7 14.a4 left White with a bind on the queenside in A.Wojtkiewicz-J.Becerra, New York 2004: 14...♟e5 15.b3 c5 16.♟de2 ♟c6 17.♙d2 and Black was tied down.

11...♟e5!? is somewhat more reasonable, but then 12.b3 ♖b8 13.a4 again gives White a queenside bind. Note that when White has the opportunity to prevent Black's ...b7-b5 break with

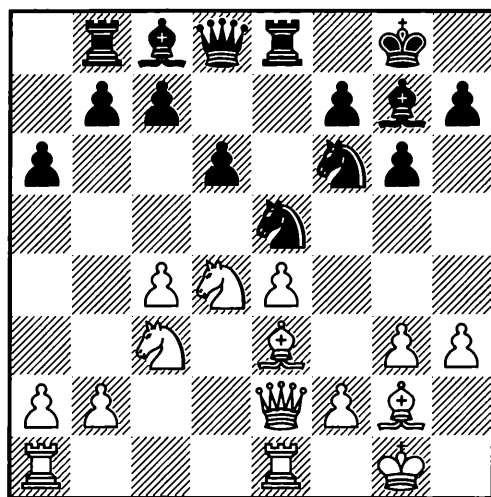
a2-a4, it is usually a good idea for him to do so. Black has based his entire setup with ...a7-a6 and ...♖a8-b8 on the prospect of queenside counterplay along the b-file, so White should relish the opportunity to shut him down.

Finally, 11...♟c5 is playable but not very much in the spirit of this variation. 12.♙c2 followed by ♖ad1 simply leaves White better, as in the positions from Chapter 1.

12.♖e1 ♟e5

Black's "solid option," if anything in this line can be so called. The hairy 12...c5!? 13.♟c2 b5 is examined in the next game.

13.♙e2



We believe this to be an improvement for White over the normal 13.b3, when 13...c5 14.♟de2 (14.♟c2 may be better) 14...b5 leads to immense complications after 15.f4 ♟ed7 16.♙xd6 b4 17.e5. With the text, White refuses to open the a1-h8 diagonal. Now his threat is to simply play f2-f4, forcing Black back, so the second player must work to seize the initiative at once.

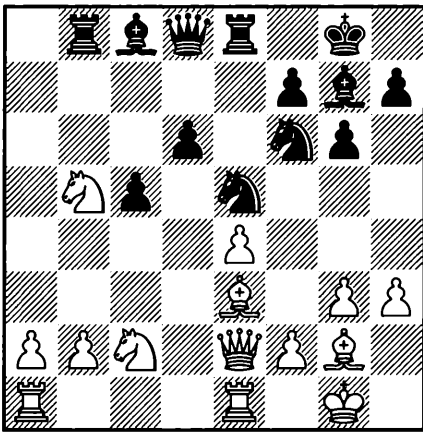
13...c5

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The passive 13...♔d7 gives White an advantage after 14.f4 ♖c6 (or 14...c5!? 15.♖c2 ♖c6 16.♗ad1 with ♔d2 to follow) 15.♗ad1.

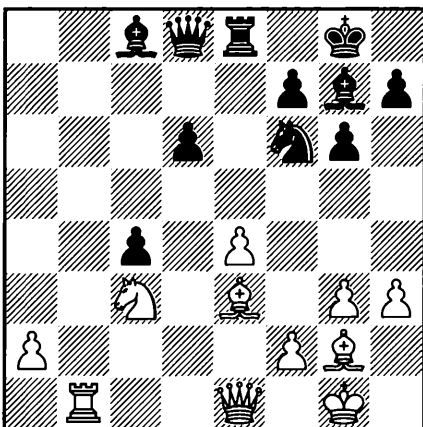
14.♖c2 ♔e6

This is Black's most solid idea, as 14...b5!? here would just allow White to play 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♖xb5:



Now 16...♔e6 17.♖ca3 consolidated White's pawn advantage in P.Pčola-Z. Hagarová, Prešov 1999, while 16...♔a6 17.a4 ♔d7 18.♖ca3 did the same in M.Uribe-S.Bekker Jensen, Menorca 1996.

From the analysis diagram, what Black needs is something more active. 16...c4! with ideas of ...♗xb5 or ...♖d3 provides just that. Then 17.♖c3 ♗xb2 (17...♖d3 18.♗eb1 planning ♖c2-e1 is unclear, as Black has play for the pawn) 18.♗ab1 ♗xb1 19.♗xb1 ♖d3 20.♖e1 ♖xe1 21.♗xe1 leaves White just a tad better:

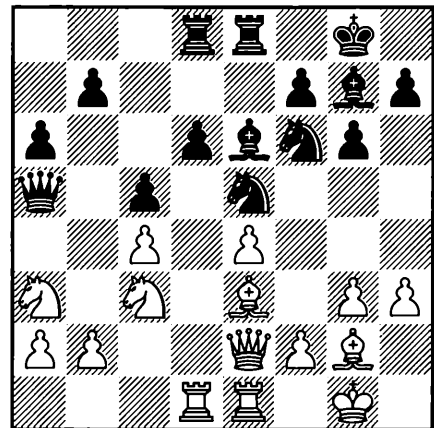


White should be able to use the d4 square to good effect. He plans ♗b1-b4 and either ♖c3-b5-d4 or ♗e1-d2 and ♔e3-d4.

15.b3?!

The label of "dubious" might be a bit of a stretch for this natural move, but now Black gets exactly the type of game he wants.

Instead, 15.♖a3 is more accurate. White would then be able to prevent Black's ...b7-b5 push, allowing him to simply concentrate on piling up on Black's d6-pawn. Then 15...♗a5 (after 15...♗d7 16.♗ad1! the threat of ♔xc5 was awkward for Black in E.Cekro-J. Gallagher, Bled 2002) 16.♗ad1 ♗bd8 would then leave the position approximately balanced.



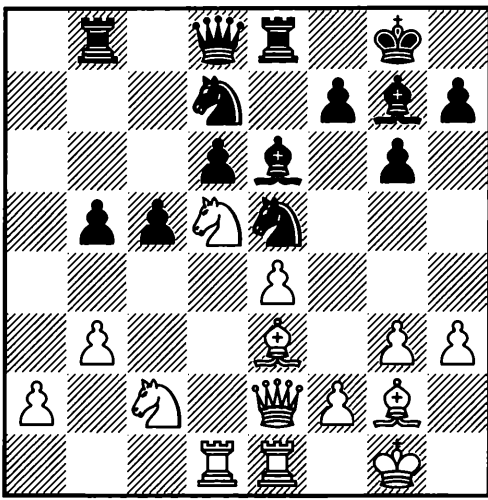
White is the aggressor here, as he can choose from among ideas such as the g3-g4 or f2-f4 pushes and the ♖c3-d5 hop. It is more difficult to see how Black can attempt to improve his position – only ...♗a5-b4 readily comes to mind. But on the other hand, Black has no major problems with his development. Notwithstanding the backward d6-pawn, he is reasonably comfortable.

15...♖fd7

15...b5 immediately is an improvement. 16.f4 ♖ed7 (the pseudo-sacrifice

16...♟xc4!? 17.bxc4 ♔xc4 18.♞f2 b4, played in P.Horváth-I.Semenova, Hungary 1997, isn't bad for Black either: 19.♞ad1 bxc3 20.♔xc5 ♞a5 21.♔xd6 ♞b2 22.e5 ♟d5 left Black with active play) 17.cxb5 ♞a5! 18.♔d2 axb5 19.♟d5 ♞a7 gave Black strong piece coordination in I.Duzhakov-A.Shimanov, Russia 2009.

16.♟d5 b5 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♞ad1



A typical position for the Gallagher Variation, one which is dynamically equal. Black has pressure down the a-file and all of his minor pieces point toward the queenside. Meanwhile, however, White has control over the d5 square and pressure against Black's d6-pawn. He will be able to expand on the kingside with f2-f4, and a timely e4-e5 break might catch Black off his guard. If White can destroy Black's queenside pawn chain with such a blow, the black forces will be thrown into chaos. Essentially, what we have here is an example of a position in which both sides have tremendous potential energy bottled up in their respective armies. The struggle will be over who can deliver the most effective strike.

18...b4

Locking down White's a2-pawn. 18...♞a5 19.a3 was the obvious alternative. After the text, Black has ample space on the queenside, giving him excellent prospects to penetrate there later with moves like ...♔g7-c3. To counter Black's intentions, White spends the next couple of moves focusing on creating play in the center.

19.♟f4 ♞c7 20.♞d2

One computer-found line here is 20.♟xe6 fxe6 (or 20...♞xe6 21.f4 ♟c6 22.♞d3, with some prospects for pressure) 21.f4 ♟f7 22.♞f1!, when White can then meet 22...♞a8 with 23.♟e1. White succeeds in defending his a-pawn and regrouping for kingside play in a single set of maneuvers. He will be able to defend the a2-pawn by placing a rook along the second rank; then, he will look to stir up trouble on the kingside.

20...♞b6

Defending the d6-pawn was not strictly necessary, as counterattacking the a2-pawn with 20...♞a8! would have sufficed. In general, when Black has the opportunity to play actively, he should take it. After the text, White is able to regain the upper hand.

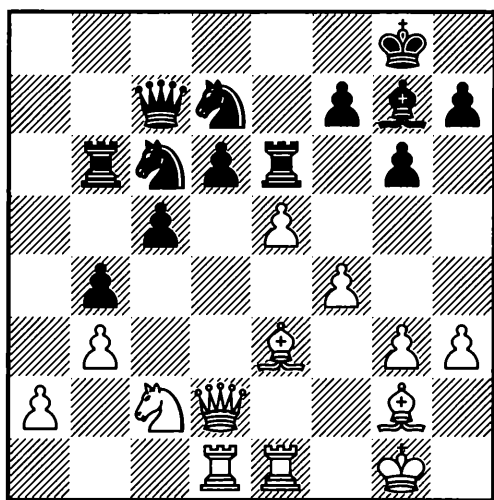
21.♟xe6 ♞xe6

21...fxe6 with the idea of dropping the knight back to f7 was somewhat more flexible.

22.f4 ♟c6 23.e5!

Now, White takes the initiative. Black's piece configuration in the center takes a severe beating.

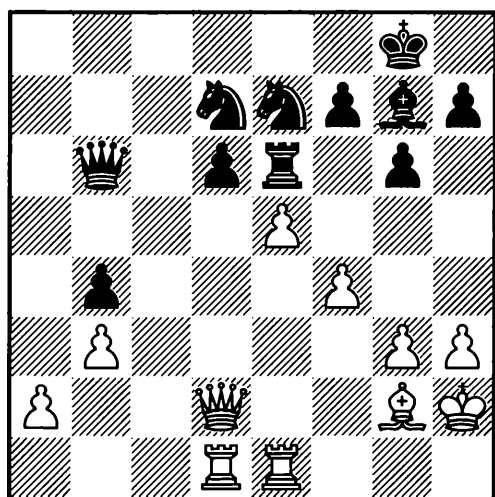
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23...♖e7 24.♗xb4?!

A poor judgment by White. The hidden energy of Black's position will emerge in the thick of the ensuing complications. 24.a3!, hitting Black's pawn chain another time, would have left White with substantial prospects for the advantage. The second player is tied down to the defense of his misshapen conglomeration of pieces in the center. The continuation 24...bxa3 25.♗xa3 would have left White poised to play ♗a3-c4.

24...cxb4 25.♕xb6 ♖xb6+ 26.♔h2



26...♗xe5!

Better than ditching the weak d-pawn with 26...d5 27.♕xd5 ♗xd5 28.♖xd5.

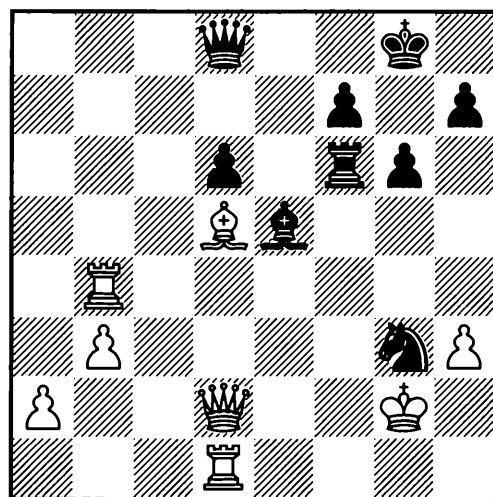
27.fxe5

White's kingside pawn shelter soon disintegrates. 27.♗e4, simply ignoring the piece sacrifice, would have been similar after 27...d5! 28.♗xb4 ♖c7 29.fxe5 ♕xe5 with an eye to ...♕xg3+.

27...♕xe5 28.♗e4 ♗f5 29.♗xb4 ♖d8 30.♕d5 ♗xg3

Threatening the double check ...♗f1+.

31.♔g2 ♗f6



Taking stock, we see that Black has a knight and pawn for his lost rook. White has two connected passed pawns on the queenside, but they are not far advanced and pose no problem to Black yet. Meanwhile, White's lack of pawn shelter for his king is troubling, considering the nature of opposite-colored bishops in the middlegame, which favor the attacker. There is no immediate way for Black to reach White's king yet, though, so we can only say that the position is unclear.

32.♖e3 ♔g7 33.♕xf7?

At this point, both players were falling into time trouble before the time

control at move 40. White spies a tactic exploiting the position of Black's queen along the d-file, but unfortunately for him it does not work. 33.a4, simply getting the pawns rolling toward promotion on the queenside, would have been a better try.

33...♟f5?!

This isn't bad for Black, but 33...♞a5, attacking White's rook on b4, was far stronger. 34.♞a4 ♟f5 with ideas of ...♞b6 or ...♞c5, threatening ...♟e3+, would have left Black winning.

34.♞xe5 ♞a8+ 35.♞e4 ♞xa2+ 36.♟g1 ♟g3?!

Best was 36...♞a7+ 37.♟h2 ♞f2+ 38.♞g2 ♞xg2+ 39.♟xg2 ♟e3+ 40.♟g3 ♟xd1, when Black is preferable.

37.♞g2?

37.♞e3!, stopping Black's checks along the g1-a7 diagonal, consolidates and allows White to get away with his extra material. The text is a blunder, losing White's queen.

37...♞a7+ 38.♟h2

38.♞bd4 ♟f5 is not much better.

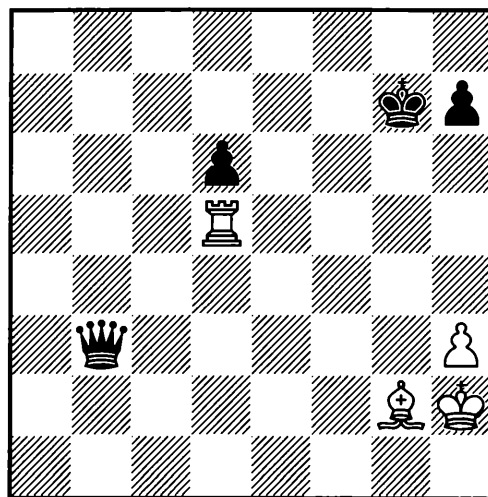
38...♞f2 39.♟d5 ♞e3 40.♞xf2 ♞xf2+ 41.♟g2 ♟f5

Black's advantage should be enough to win here, as his queen and knight work in harmony against the white king. White is desperately trying to hold on.

42.♞f1 ♞d2 43.♞bf4 ♞b2 44.♞xf5

This concession does not help matters. White appears to have a fortress position after this sacrifice, but Black's technique proves too strong.

44...gxf5 45.♞xf5 ♞xb3 46.♟d5



Over the next several moves, Black will work to break down White's control of the fifth rank by slowly depriving the rook of squares.

46...♞e3 47.♞f5 ♟g6 48.♟d5 ♟f7 49.♞h5 h6

With this ingenious move, Black aims to take the g5 square. The white rook heads to the "safe" d5 square next, but White's control over this key blockading square proves illusory.

50.♟d5 ♞e2

Removing White's ability to blockade on d5.

51.♞a5 ♟e6 52.♞a8

White is compelled by *Zugzwang* to leave his post on the fifth rank. 52.♟d5? would now of course lose to 52...♞xg2+, and moving the king to the first row would run into 52...♞e1+, picking up the rook. 52.h4 ♞e1 is of no

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use, either: 53.♖h5 (or 53.♖a4 ♘f5) 53... ♘f7! 54.♖xh6 ♖e5+ 55.♔g1 ♔g7 traps the unfortunate white rook.

52...♖e5+ 53.♔h1 ♖g3 54.♖e8+

White cannot, of course, return to the fifth rank to block the black king. Now, however, the black monarch penetrates all the way to f2.

54...♔f5 55.♖f8+ ♔e5 56.♖e8+ ♔d4 57.♖e4+ ♔d3 58.♖e6 h5 59.♖f6 ♖e5 60.♖f1 ♔e2 61.♖b1 d5

White is hopeless, so the rest is a mopup operation.

62.♖b3 d4 63.♔g1 ♖f5 64.♖b2+ ♔e1 65.♖b8 ♖f2+ 66.♔h1 ♖e3 67.♖b1+ ♔f2 68.♖b2+ ♔g3 69.♔f1 d3 70.♖g2+ ♔h4 71.♔h2 d2 72.♔e2 ♖e5+ 73.♔h1 ♖xe2 0-1

This is an example of the kind of game that Black hopes for when he chooses the Gallagher. Although his position was, at times, on shaky grounds, both sides committed so many inaccuracies that the unsoundness of Black's structure didn't negatively affect his result. Black proved to be the more alert tactician in this battle – and that's what mattered in the end. Note that in hindsight we recommend 15.♔a3 for White, trying to restrain Black's ...b7-b5 rather than encouraging it. In this case, White was probably better off opting for control than for chaos. He did have several chances to gain the upper hand (most notably with either 24.a3! or 37.♖e3!), but Black had his fair share of possible improvements as well.

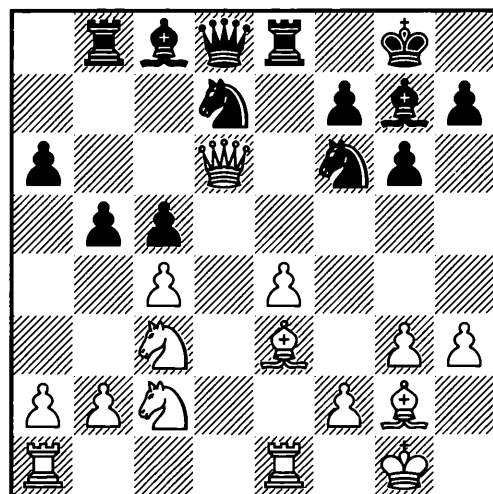
**Ippolito, Dean (2435)
Bates, Richard (2430)**

[E68] London 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♖e8 10.h3 a6 11.♖e1 ♖b8 12.♗e3 c5!? 13.♘c2 b5

Black makes waves on the queenside at all costs. His splashing around on the b-file will not prove nearly as effectual as White's tsunami of piece play crashing against Black's fragile center. It was probably still not too late for Black to transpose back into the lines from the previous game with 13...♘e5 14.♖e2 (14.b3 b5 15.f4 ♘ed7 16.♖xd6 b4 is far less clear) 14...♗e6 15.♔a3, as analyzed above. However, Gallagher Variation advocate Tyler Hughes opines that White should take advantage of Black's inaccurate move order here to play 14.♔a3 ♗e6 15.♖e2 and so forth, not allowing the variation with 14.♖e2 b5!?

14.♖xd6



14...bxc4

The alternative is 14...b4?! 15.♔a4, when here Black has a few dismal-looking lines to choose from:

a) The passive 15...♗f8 16.♖d3 ♖a5 17.b3 ♗b7 18.♗g5 ♗g7 19.♖ad1 ♖bd8

chesstouring.com

20.♖f1 ♜c7 21.♘e3! gave White a clear edge in U.Schulze-Z.Ilić, Bern 1989, since 21...♙xe4? 22.♙xe4 ♞xe4 23.♘d5 would win material for White.

b) 15...♘xe4!? 16.♙xe4! ♞xe4 was L.Verat-L.Aurel, Paris 2004, when here 17.♞ad1! ♜f8 18.♙f4 would have given White a clear edge;

c) 15...♞e6 16.♜d1! gives White a tremendous advantage by keeping his queen out of Black's reach. Now 16...♜a5 17.b3 ♙b7 18.a3 puts Black's formation on the queenside under fire. Note that White's move 16 is an improvement over the game P.Brodowski-K.Junge, Germany 2005: 16.♜d3 ♜a5 17.b3 ♙b7 18.a3!? was similar, but here 18...♙xe4 19.♙xe4 ♘e5! would have complicated matters somewhat.

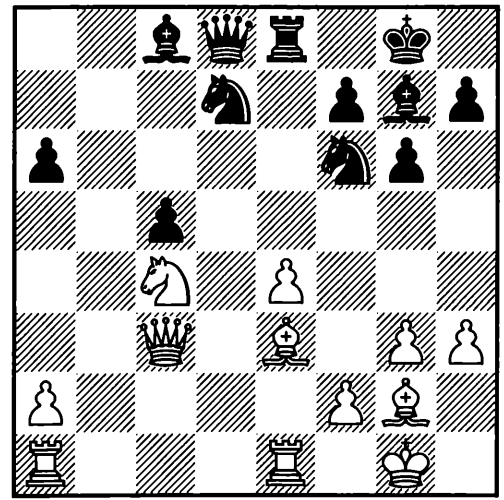
15.♘a3

White is seeking to recapture on c4 with the knight, gaining momentum on the queenside.

15...♞xb2 16.♘xc4 ♞c2

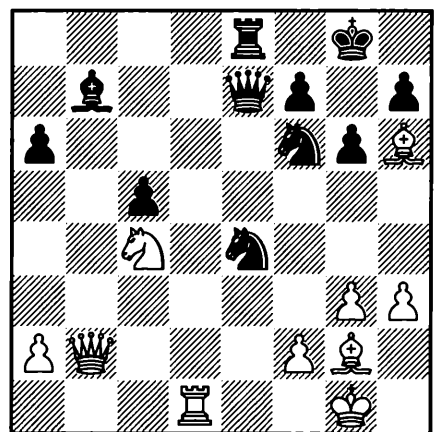
The only move to keep Black in the game. Black plans to sacrifice on c3. 16...♞b4? occurred in D.Ippolito-W.Aramil, Las Vegas 2006. Play continued 17.♜d3 (White's idea is ♘c4-d6) 17...♜e7 18.f4 (18.♞ad1 first is more accurate, since White is winning after 18...♘e5 19.♘xe5 ♜xe5 20.f4 ♜h5 21.e5 ♘d7 22.♘e4 ♘xe5 23.fxe5 ♙xh3 24.♙xc5) 18...♞d8 19.♞ad1 ♙b7 (19...♜e6 was necessary) 20.e5, and White won shortly after 20...♘e8 21.♙xb7 ♞xb7 22.♘a5 c4 23.♜d5 ♞c7 24.♘c6.

17.♜d3 ♞xc3 18.♜xc3



18...♘d5

18...♘xe4!? 19.♜c1 (or 19.♜c2 ♙xa1 20.♞xa1 ♘df6 21.♞d1) 19...♙xa1 20.♜xa1 gives White strong dark-square compensation for his pawn. He has tactical ideas revolving around ♘c4-d6. White's position looks preferable here, for instance 20...♙b7 21.♞d1 (increasing the pressure) 21...♜e7 22.♜b2 ♘df6 (22...♙c6 23.♘d6 looks good for White, who gets two bishops against two knights after 23...♘xd6 24.♙xc6) 23.♙h6:



Black is tied up and will have to play very precisely.

19.♜b3

19.♜d2 would transpose back into the game after 19...♘xe3 20.♜xe3.

19...♘xe3

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19...♙xa1 20.♖xa1 ♜xe3 21.♚xe3 gives White a slightly preferable position. He has pressure against Black's c-pawn and is better coordinated.

20.♚xe3 ♙d4

20...♙xa1 21.♖xa1 would transpose to the note to Black's move 19.

21.♚f4?!

21.♚d2 instead was the way to keep the advantage. Then 21...♙xa1 22.♖xa1 leaves White with a slight pull.

21...♜e5!

With this *intermezzo*, Black equalizes instantly. The idea behind White's move 21 was that 21...♙xa1?! would leave White with a clear advantage after 22.♖xa1, when the queen on f4 puts tremendous pressure on Black's position.

22.♜xe5 ♙xe5 23.♚c1 ♙xa1 24.♚xa1 ♙e6 25.♖c1 1/2-1/2

A draw is a suitable outcome for both sides here. Black must worry about his weak c-pawn being captured, but White, for his part, cannot seriously hope to prove an advantage given the activity of Black's pieces.

Black attempted the ambitious 12...c5!? and 13...b5, allowing his d6-pawn to be taken. White grabbed the d6-pawn with his queen, giving him good chances for advantage. Black had to pull off the tactical trick 16...♖c2 and 17...♖xc3 to stay in the game. Had White reacted correctly on move 21, he could have looked forward to a slight edge in a rather simplified

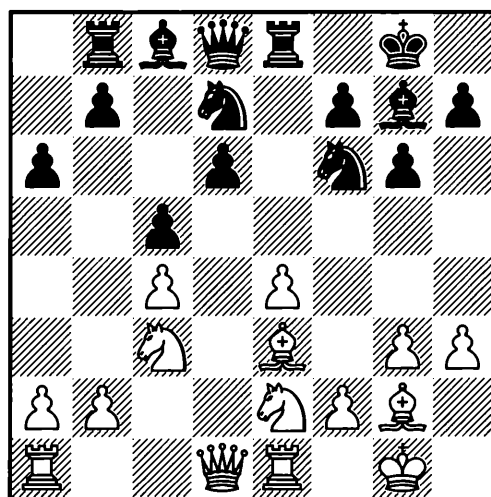
position – exactly the kind of position Black doesn't want in the Gallagher Variation.

Before moving on to 12.♖b1, let's examine one more game in the 12.♙e3 variation. This time, Black mixes systems, playing the aggressive 12...c5!? only to follow it up with the passive 13...♙f8. Wojo shows us how to build White's position against such unassuming play by Black. He locks down on Black's ...b7-b5 punch before it happens and proceeds to set up a bind on both sides of the board.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2570)
Moutousis, Konstantinos (2425)

[E68] Heraklio 1993

1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♜bd7 7.♜c3 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♜xd4 ♖e8 10.h3 a6 11.♙e3 ♖b8 12.♖e1 c5 13.♜de2



Note that we've seen White's knight retreating to c2 in the two previous games, affording him the chance to play ♜c2-a3 at various points to control the b5 square. The text has the advantage of defending the knight on c3 and allowing White to play g3-g4 and

♖e2-g3, but nonetheless it is probably inaccurate. Stronger players these days are more trustful of 13.♗c2.

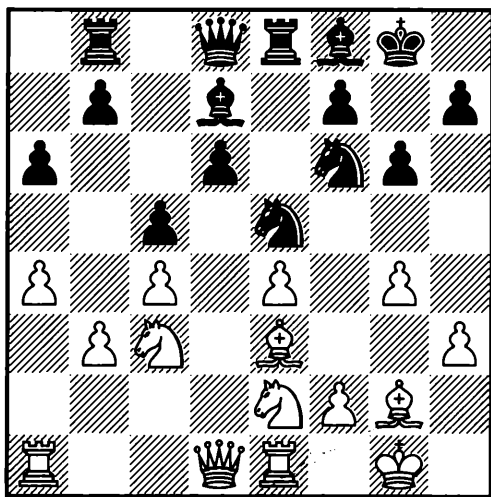
13...♗f8!?

More in the spirit of the Gallagher is 13...♗e5 14.b3 b5 15.f4 ♗ed7 16.♖xd6 b4 17.e5 bxc3, when Gallagher himself gives 18.♗xc3 ♗h5 19.g4 ♗f8 20.♖d2 ♗g7 as unclear. White did pull off a win in P.Skatchkov-I.Bibko, Tomsk 2002, after 21.♗d5, but there is not much practice in this line. Another game (not commonly available in databases, but on file with the authors) is A.Maltese-T. Hughes, Philadelphia 2007, which saw 21.♗e4 ♗e7 22.♖ad1 ♖c7 23.♖f2, when Russian grandmaster Peter Kiriakov believes Black would have been better after 23...♗b7.

14.a4!

White creates a bind on the queenside. This does weaken the b4 square, but here it is more important to stop Black's ...b7-b5 counterplay than it is to fret over such minor details.

14...♗e5 15.b3 ♗d7 16.g4



A good move, seizing space. Now that White has some control over the

queenside, he turns to secure an edge on the kingside.

16...h6 17.♗g3

17.♗f4, with the idea of ♗fd5 at some point, was the alternative.

17...♗c6 18.♖d2 ♗h7 19.f4 ♗ed7 20.a5 b6 21.axb6 ♖xb6 22.♖c2

22.♖a3 might have been slightly more accurate, allowing White's queen to continue pressuring the d6-pawn.

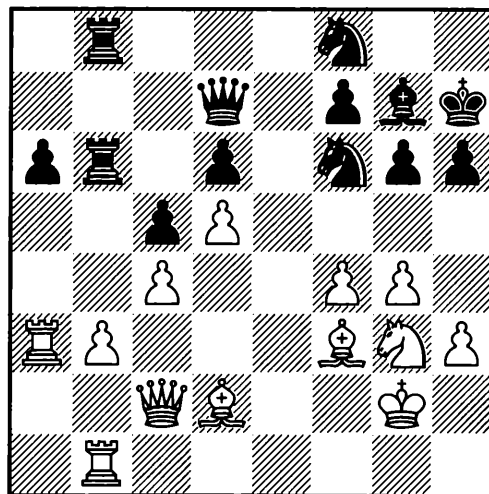
22...♖c7 23.♖a3

This would have been a good time for 23.♗d5, since 23...♗xd5 24.exd5 affords White a nice space advantage. This is eventually the structure we see in the game, though there is some waiting around before then.

23...♖eb8 24.♖b1 ♗g7 25.♗d2 ♖c8 26.♗f3 ♗f8 27.♗d5 ♗xd5

27...♗xd5 28.exd5 ♗d7 doesn't leave the bishop with as much scope as Black would like. Taking on d5 with the bishop is the correct decision.

28.exd5 ♖d7 29.♗g2



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White is clearly better here. Black's only source of counterplay is the b3-pawn, but White has overprotected it. Meanwhile, White can try to wear Black down.

29...♔g8 30.♙a5 ♖6b7 31.♙c3 ♖b6 32.♙a5 ♖6b7 33.♞e1

White is slowly taking squares away from the black queen, which will find itself oddly claustrophobic, even in the middle of the board.

33...♞e8?

Not surprisingly, Black, who is under pressure, errs. This move loses to a nice blow by White. 33...♘6h7!? would have been a way for Black to avoid White's next move.

34.g5!

After this, Black is losing in all lines.

34...♞xe1

The miracle is that 34...♘6h7 35.♙g4! traps Black's queen. Black will have to give up at least a piece to prevent the simple ♙xd7.

35.gxf6!

A strong *intermezzo*. 35.♙xe1 hxg5 36.fxg5 ♘6h7 would have allowed Black to hold on.

35...♞e3 36.fxg7 ♘h7 37.♙c3 ♖b8 38.♞xa6

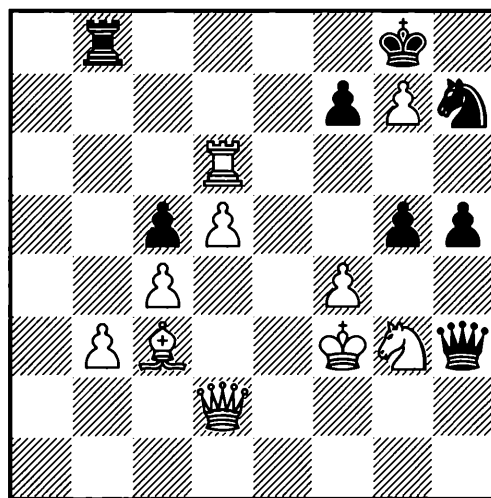
White has an overwhelming material advantage. The pawn on g7 is a bone in the throat of the monarch on g8, too. Black's only hope is a last-ditch

attempt at kingside counterplay, taking advantage of White's slightly damaged pawn shield there.

38...h5 39.♞d2 ♞xf3!?

It's now or never. 39...♞be8 40.♞a8! would allow White to successfully simplify.

40.♔xf3 ♞xh3 41.♞xd6 g5



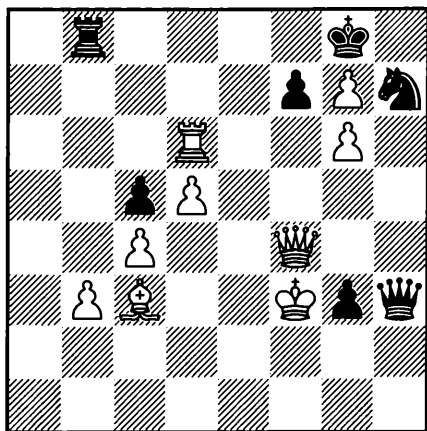
42.fxg5?

After this inaccuracy, Black is fully back in the game. The problem with this capture is that Black will be able to play a timely ...♘xg5+ in some lines. Amazingly, 42.f5!, shutting Black down on the g5 square, would have made enough of a difference to change the result of the game: 42...h4 43.♞g2 g4+ 44.♔f2 hxg3+ 45.♞xg3 ♞h1 runs into 46.♞h6!, winning for White, and 42...g4+ 43.♔f4 h4 44.♞e3 hxg3 allows White to win with the beautiful 45.♞e6!. Wojo likely did not see the idea of ♞d6-e6, and without this resource, it is far more difficult to prove a win after 42.f5.

42...h4 43.♞f4 hxg3 44.♞d7

This looks impressive from a tactical standpoint, but it allows Black to

draw by perpetual check. 44.g6 is no better:



Black manages a draw with 44... ♖f1+ (44...fxg6? 45.♙xg6 g2+ 46.♔f2 ♜a8 is too slow for Black in view of 47.♜a6! ♜xa6 48.♙b8+) 45.♔xg3 ♜g1+ (45...♙d3+ 46.♔h4 fxg6 47.♙xg6 ♜a8 48.♜a6 ♜d8 49.♙e5 again leaves Black with nothing) 46.♔f3 ♕g5+,

when now 47.♔e2 ♜e8+ 48.♔d2 ♜e1+ 49.♔c2 ♜e2+ 50.♔d2 ♜xd2+ 51.♙xd2 ♜xd2+ 52.♔xd2 ♕e4+ 53.♔d3 ♕xd6 54.gxf7+ ♔xg7 55.♔c3 ♔xf7 56.b4 is a completely drawn ending.

44... ♖f1+

Black's best option. He could have also tried 44... ♕xg5+!? 45.♙xg5 g2+ 46.♔f2 ♜xc3 47.♜d8+ ♜xd8 48.♙xd8+ ♔xg7 with a probable draw, but Black is just relieved to get his perpetual.

45.♔xg3 ♜g1+ 46.♔h4 ♜h1+ 47.♔g3 ♜g1+ 48.♔h4 ♜h1+ 49.♔g3 ♜g1+ 50.♔h4 1/2-1/2

An incredible swindle by the talented Greek.

Black's weak move 13 allowed White to set up an impressive bind on the queenside with 14.a4! and 15.b3. Black did manage to pry open the b-file, but White's b3-pawn could easily be overprotected. White was able to go on about his business expanding on the kingside and putting pressure on Black's a-pawn. After 27.♕d5 ♕xd5 28.exd5, the resulting structure greatly favored White. Moutousis's 33... ♜e8? should have cost him the game, but in the end he swindled Wojo out of the full point.

Conclusion: White can play ♕c1-e3 (on either move 11 or move 12) to good effect. Black can choose from either the line 12...c5!? 13.♕c2 b5 14.♙xd6, which favors White, or the more popular 12...♕e5, which runs into our restraining idea 13.♙e2 c5 14.♕c2 ♕e6 15.♕a3. The main strength of the Gallagher is its shock value, so education is the best means for players of White to combat it. A prepared player of White has nothing to fear and can look forward to making Black's play look suspect.

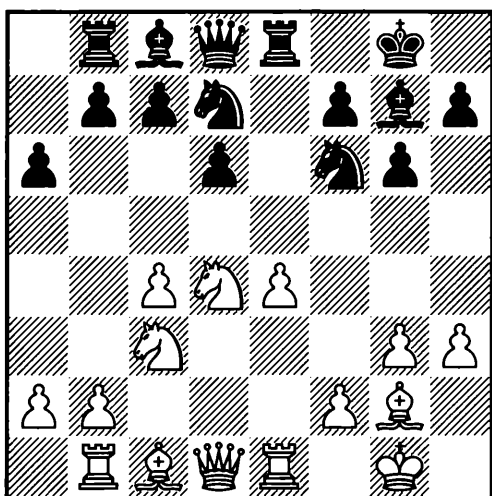
A Simpler Solution: Restraining Black with 12.♖b1

Equally good for White is the simple 12.♖b1 (from the diagram at the start of the chapter) instead of 12.♕e3. We've seen this quiet rook shift before in several of the games from Chapter 1. As usual, White is aiming to sidestep Black's numerous tactical tricks. He anticipates the opening of the long a1-h8 diagonal and prepares to play b2-b3 and a2-a4. The plan for White is quite similar to that in Wojtkiewicz-Moutousis above: he is playing to restrain Black's counterplay. The approach has been shown to work well, as Black's attempts to play a quick ...b7-b5 have been refuted. The next few games show this little move – which is nowadays the main line of the Gallagher Variation – in action.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2630) Shibut, Macon (2323)

[E68] Springfield (Virginia) 2005

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 d6 3.d4 g6 4.g3
♟g7 5.♟g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♟bd7 7.♟c3
e5 8.e4 a6 9.♟e1 ♟b8 10.h3 exd4
11.♟xd4 ♟e8 12.♖b1



Gallagher gives this move an exclamation point in his book *Starting Out*:

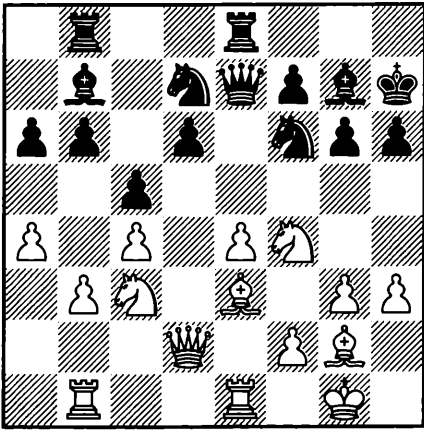
The King's Indian. This move has recently started developing a reasonably large body of theory around it as more players realize the pluses of this move.

Note that 12.a4!? is an even more direct approach to stop Black's ...b7-b5. This approach has been ventured by the likes of Kasparov, Karpov, and Bareev, but is not written about much in King's Indian books, so players looking for something original may want to give it a try. White weakens the b4 square but plans on simply enjoying his space advantage regardless.

12...♟e5

Black's most popular choice. 12...c5 13.♟c2 b5?! 14.♟xd6 b4 15.♟a4, as in M.Marin-J.Ibanez Aullana, 2002, gives White pressure against Black's c5 pawn. Another mediocre idea for Black is 12...♟c5, when 13.b4 ♟e6 14.♟e3 ♟xd4 15.♟xd4 ♟e6 16.♟d5 c6 17.♟e3 gave White an advantage in P.Kaczorowski-J.Novak, corr. 1999.

But 12...h6!? is an interesting waiting move. Essentially, Black counters White's slight improvement with 12.♖b1 with one of his own. Now 13.♟e3 ♟h7 (13...c5 14.♟f3 b5 15.♟xd6 b4 16.♟d5 ♟xe4 17.♟c7! left Black's c5-pawn weak in the ending that occurred in P.Nikolić-L.van Wely, Hoogovens 1993, after 17...♟b7 18.♟xd8 ♟bxd8 19.♟c7 ♟f8 20.♟d2 ♟xd2 21.♟xd2 ♟xg2 22.♟xg2 ♟e5 23.♟e3 ♟c8 24.♟d5) 14.b3 c5 15.♟de2 ♟e7 (Black avoids sacrificing the d6-pawn) 16.a4 b6 17.♟d2 ♟b7 18.♟f4! gave White the edge in L.Vogt-J.Gallagher, Switzerland 2001:

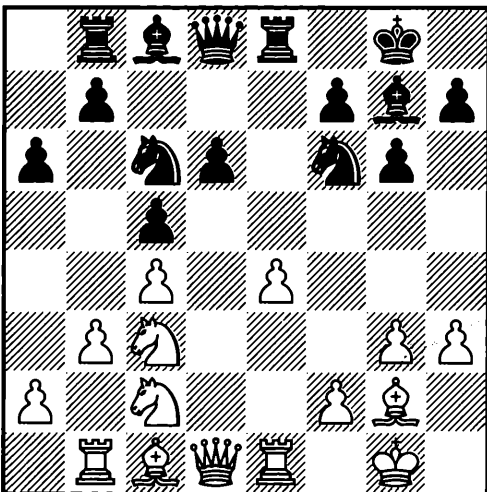


Play continued 18...♖xe4 19.♗xe4 ♕xe4 20.♕xe4 ♜xe4 21.♕xc5 ♖e5! (barely holding on for Black) 22.♗xe4 ♖f3+ 23.♔g2 ♖xd2 24.♗xe8 ♗xe8 25.♗d1, when White managed to squeeze a win from this ending.

13.b3 c5

A few other moves have been tried for Black here, but none of them are very testing. White simply keeps his slight advantage on 13...♕d7 14.f4 ♖c6 15.♖xc6 ♕xc6 16.♕b2, when 16...♗e7 17.♖d5 ♕xd5 18.cxd5 with the idea of e4-e5 was powerful for White in T.Welin-J.Benjamin, Reykjavík 1986. Also not challenging is 13...♖fd7, when White can simply play 14.f4 ♖c6 15.♕e3, as in D.Rogozenco-L.Vajda, Bucharest 1999.

14.♖c2 ♖c6



Black regroups, taking aim at the d4 square. 14...b5?! is covered in the following game. 14...♕e6!? is given by Janjgava, but recently 15.f4 ♖c6 16.♕b2 has given Black headaches. The game A.Delchev-J.Gallagher, Crete 2007, continued 16...h5 17.♖d5 ♖h7!? 18.♕xg7 ♔xg7 19.♜d2 b5 20.b4! with an initiative for White on the queenside.

15.a4

The familiar restraining move. White drains the life out of Black's ...a7-a6 and ...♗b8 setup, and looks to strangle his opponent.

Alternatively, 15.f4!? ♖h5 16.♜d3 is an interesting continuation given by Janjgava. He stops here with the evaluation "plus-over-equal," but 16...♖d4 is interesting, since 17.g4? ♖xc2 18.♜xc2 ♕d4+ 19.♔h2 ♕xg4! wins for Black. Instead, 17.♔h2 b5 18.♕e3 ♖xc2 19.♜xc2 with an eye toward ♖c3-d5 seems to give White a slight plus. Gallagher's suggestion of 15...♕e6 16.♜d3 b5! 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♖xb5 d5, with counterplay, looks like a big improvement for Black. Hence, we recommend the more conservative text move.

15...♕e6

Gallagher awards this move an exclamation point. Black is trying to develop normally and pretend that his d6-pawn isn't as weak as it looks.

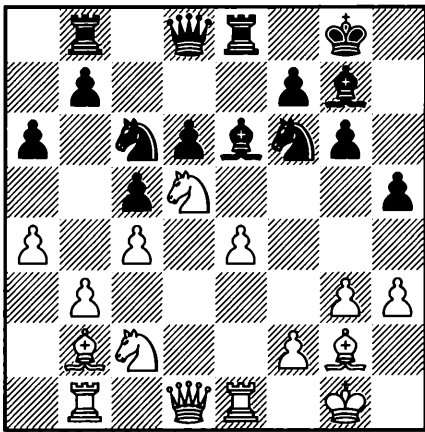
16.♕b2

16.♕g5 is best met by 16...h6, since 16...♜d7?! 17.♖d5! gave White a big edge in P.Schlösser-T.Lang, Pardubice 2008, after 17...♕xd5 18.cxd5.

THE GALLAGHER VARIATION

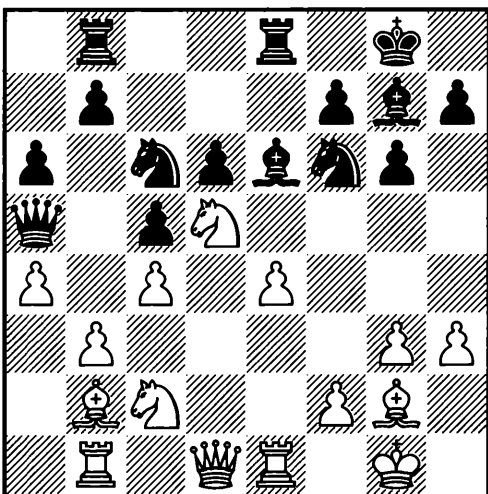
16...♖a5!?

16...h5 is considered best for Black by theory, when 17.f4 ♖h7 18.♗d5 gets complicated after 18...♙xb2 19.♙xb2 h4 20.g4 b5 (20...g5!? 21.♗ce3 with the idea of swinging the rook on b2 over to f2 looks promising for White) 21.axb5 axb5 22.cxb5 ♙xb5. But White can just try 17.♗d5, when he seems to hold a slight advantage anyway:



The online blitz game “Alexwojt”-“Topchess2,” playchess.com server 2005, saw Black lose material after 17...b5? 18.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 19.♙xf6 ♖xf6 20.♖xd6 ♖c3 21.♖xc6.

17.♗d5



The most straightforward approach. White occupies the key d5 square without further ado. 17.♗e3 first was also good.

17...♙xd5

Otherwise, White might reinforce the steed with ♗ce3.

18.cxd5

18.exd5 was also possible, but after 18...♙xe1+ 19.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 20.♙xe1 ♗a5 21.♙c3 b6 (not 21...♗xb3? 22.♙b1 ♗d4 23.♗xd4 cxd4 24.♙xd4 with advantage to White) 22.♙b1 ♙e8 23.♙f1 ♗d7 24.♙d2 (preserving the bishop pair) 24...♗e5, White will have to solve the problem of how to overprotect his b-pawn before he can go about gaining space and putting pressure on Black’s queenside. 25.♗e1 f5 26.f4 ♗d7 27.♙f3 with the idea of maneuvering the bishop to c2 is a start, but White will have to work very hard to prove anything here.

18...♗e5

18...♗b4 was Black’s other option. Black chooses to relocate the knight to d7 rather than leave it stranded on the queenside, but the text is rather passive, so moving into b4 was probably to be preferred.

19.f4 ♗ed7 20.♙h2 h5 21.♗e3

21.e5! ♗h7 22.e6, striking before Black organizes a counterattack on the queenside, was appropriate here. White, in a manner quite typical of Wojo, prefers to prepare the e4-e5 break first.

21...b5 22.axb5 axb5 23.♖c2 ♖c7

Retreating the queen seems passive, so perhaps 23...♙a8 immediately was the right idea.

24.♖bd1 ♜a8?

This has the drawback of placing the rook along the h1-a8 diagonal. Now, Wojo can play e4-e5 with full confidence. It is hard to recommend much else here for Black, however, since 24...h4!? 25.g4 doesn't seem to help him at all. His position is rapidly becoming cramped.

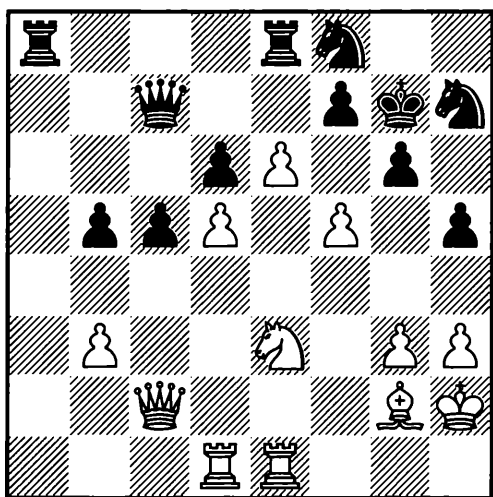
25.e5 ♘h7

Of course, 25...dxe5 26.d6 drops at least an exchange.

26.e6

With the e6-pawn serving as a spearhead, White can organize a king-side assault.

26...♘df8 27.♙xg7 ♜xg7 28.f5



White's pawn storm makes an impressive picture.

28...♜a7 29.exf7

This lays waste to Black's king's pawn shelter and essentially wins a piece, all in the same move.

29...♜xf7 30.fxg6+ ♘xg6 31.♙e4 ♘e5

31...♜g8 32.♜f1+ ♘f6 33.♜f2 leaves Black helpless against White's plan to double on the f-file. The rest needs no comment.

32.♙xh7 ♘f3+ 33.♜g2 ♘xe1+ 34.♜xe1 ♜e5 35.♜g6+ ♜e7 36.♘f5+ ♜d7 37.♜g7+ ♜c8 38.♜f8+ ♜d7 39.♜xe5 dxe5 40.♜e7+ ♜c8 41.♘d6+ 1-0

White's 12.♜b1, 13.b3, and 15.a4 worked to create a queenside bind that took considerable effort for Black to break down. Black did eventually achieve the ...b7-b5 push, but even though his counterplay was certainly legitimate, it was nothing for White to lose sleep over. After White stuck his knight on d5, Black felt compelled to swap his bishop for it. White could have gained the advantage on move 18 by recapturing with either the c-pawn or the e-pawn, but Wojo preferred the more aggressive 18.cxd5. This paid off when he broke in the center with 25.e5, after which White was practically winning.

This final game illustrates why Black's attempt 14...b5?! is dubious against the 12.♜b1 system. White easily comes out on top in every line.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2552) Bereolos, Peter (2303)

[E68] Chicago 2006

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.d4 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5 8.e4 a6 9.♜e1 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♜e8 11.h3 ♜b8 12.♜b1 ♘e5 13.b3 c5 14.♘c2 b5?!

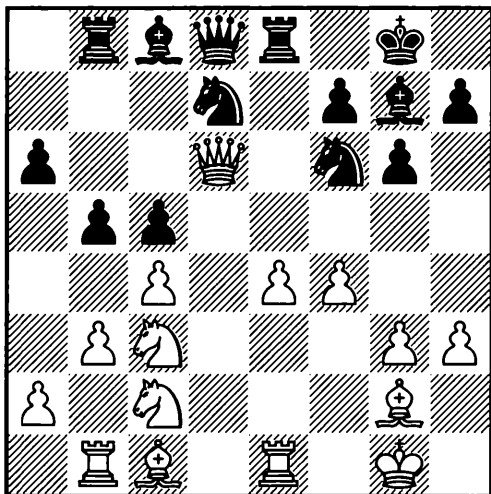
This is no good here. White simply wins a very important pawn.

THE GALLAGHER VARIATION

15.f4 ♖ed7

15...♗c6?? 16.e5 wins for White.

16.♖xd6



16...♖a5

16...b4 17.♗a4 still leaves White up a very important pawn on e4. Black didn't last long in J.Hjartarson-T. Hillarp Persson, Reykjavík 1997, after 17...♗h5 18.g4 ♕f8 19.♖d3 ♗g7 20.♕e3 ♖c7 21.♖bd1 ♗e6 22.♖d2 h6 23.f5.

16...bxc4 is best met by 17.e5!, which gave White a crushing advantage in G.Kacheishvili-V.Berlinsky, Istanbul 2000: 17...cxb3 18.♖xb3 ♖xb3 19.axb3 ♕e6 20.♖d3 ♗e8 21.♗e3 ♖b6 22.♗e4 and so forth. Finally, 16...♗h5, a novelty, may be Black's best try, but 17.♗e2 with an eye toward e4-e5 next still gives White a big edge.

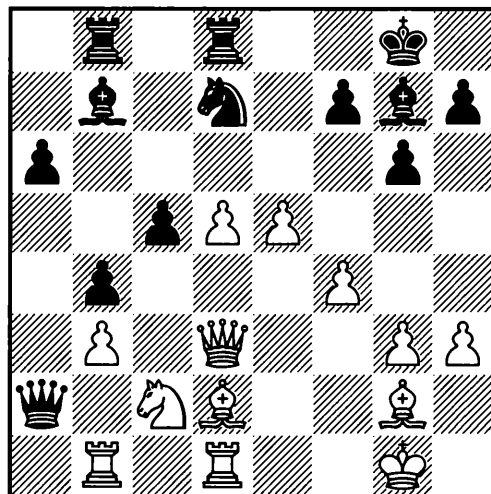
17.♖d3

After this, Black eventually does win the a2-pawn – although he certainly never equalizes. 17.b4!? cxb4 18.♖xb4 is interesting, but White likely felt that the opening of files would favor Black.

17...♖d8 18.♖d1 ♕b7 19.♕d2 b4

19...♗b6 20.♗d5 ♖xa2 also regains the pawn, but the black a-pawn is not worth nearly as much as the white e-pawn. White would maintain a huge advantage.

20.♗d5 ♗xd5 21.cxd5



The correct recapture. White builds a fluid pawn center on d5 and e5. 21.exd5 ♖xa2 instead would greatly limit White's options.

21...♖xa2 22.e5 ♖a5

White was ready to play ♖b1-a1, so this retreat is necessary.

23.♗e3 ♖b5 24.♖c2

24.♖xb5 axb5 25.♖bc1 followed by d5-d6 was also a reasonable approach. The text moves keeps a clear advantage for White, however.

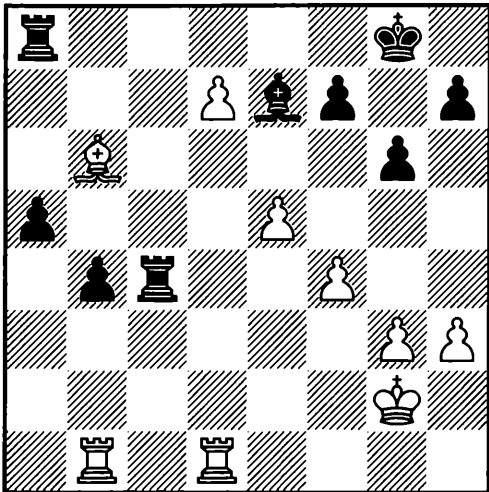
24...♗b6 25.♕e1 ♖bc8 26.♕f2 c4

26...a5 was the other way to create counterplay, but White's advanced pawn center should once again prove more valuable than Black's open files on the flank.

27.bxc4 ♗xc4 28.♖e2 ♕f8 29.♗xc4 ♖xc4 30.♖xc4 ♖xc4 31.d6

This endgame is winning for White. The pawn on d6 is too strong for Black to successfully organize any sort of counterplay.

31...♙xg2 32.♔xg2 a5 33.♙b6 ♖a8 34.d7 ♙e7



35.d8♖+!?

This would have been a good moment for 35.♖bc1, trying to get more for his passed d-pawn than just a minor piece. Then 35...♖c3 (35...♖xc1 36.♖xc1 with an eye toward ♖c8+ or) 36.♙d4! ♖xc1 37.♖xc1 ♖d8 38.♖c8 b3 39.♙b6 ♖f8 40.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 41.♙c5! would end Black's resistance. After the text, Black is able to drag the game out.

35...♙xd8 36.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 37.♙xd8 a4 38.♙e7 b3 39.♖d1

White is completely winning, but Black's two connected passed pawns on the queenside give him every reason to play on.

39...♖c2+ 40.♔f3 ♖c3+ 41.♔e2 f5 42.♙a3 ♔f7 43.♖d7+ ♔e8 44.♖d3

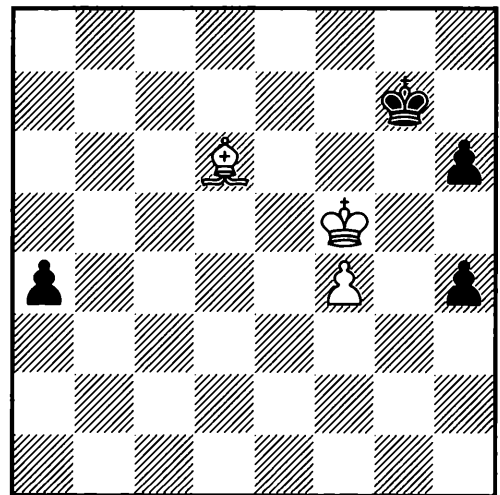
44.e6 ♖c6 45.♖e7+ ♔d8 46.♔d3 with the idea of marching the white

king up the board was another route to victory.

44...♖c2+ 45.♖d2 ♖c3 46.e6 ♖xg3 47.e7 ♖g2+ 48.♔e3 ♖xd2 49.♔xd2 ♔f7 50.♔d3 h6 51.h4 ♔e8 52.♔d4 b2 53.♙xb2 ♔xe7 54.♔e5

Black has one last trick to try in this ending.

54...♔f7 55.♙a3 ♔g7 56.♙c5 ♔f7 57.♙d6 ♔g7 58.♔e6 g5 59.♔xf5 gxh4



60.♔e6!

With this, White wins. As far as we know, Wojo wrote only one note to this game. In it, he gave the flawed line 60.♔g4 h3 61.♔xh3 ♔g6 62.♔g4 h5+ 63.♔g3 ♔f5 with a draw for Black. While it is true that 60.♔g4? is only good enough for a draw, after the erroneous 60...h3?, White has 61.♙e5+! ♔f7 62.f5 with a win, as White's f-pawn is too far advanced for Black to effectively blockade it. So instead Black must play 60...h5+!, dislodging White's king first and allowing Black to play ...♔f6, stopping f4-f5.

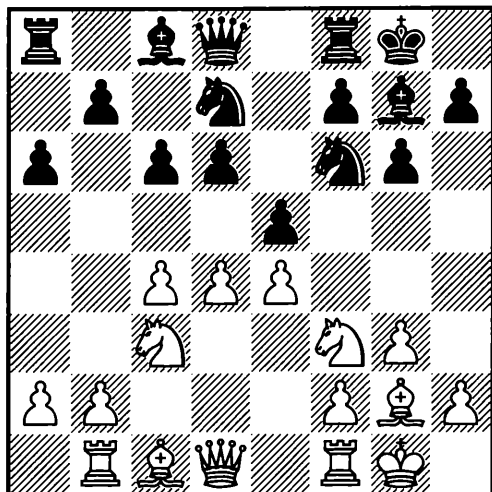
60...h3 61.f5 a3 62.f6+ ♔g6 63.f7 a2 64.f8♖ a1♖ 65.♖f5+ 1-0

Black's 14...b5?! backfired terribly. White simply grabbed the pawn on d6 with 15.f4 ♖ed7 16.♙xd6, after which Black was struggling to prove any kind of compensation. Although he eventually won White's a-pawn, White's presence in the center was overwhelming. Eventually, White was able to trade queens and go on to promote his d-pawn. The game went on a lot longer than it had to, but the win was never in doubt for White.

Conclusion: Players looking to emulate Wojo as White can choose between either 12.♙e3 or 12.♖b1. The former allows Black to play ...b7-b5 early, leading to complications in which White is for choice. The second frustrates Black by denying him the option of a playable ...b7-b5. White can focus on outplaying Black positionally, as in Wojtkiewicz-Shibut above. Against either line, Black is struggling to prove equality – though one might opine that the Gallagher Variation's aggressive ...c7-c5 is a better try for Black than playing passively with ...c7-c6, as we saw in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4

Black's ...b7-b5 Strike



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5
8.e4 c6 9.♙b1 a6 (and other tries
for Black)

So far, we've looked at the classical "Zürich 1953" structures that arise after Black's early pawn exchange on d4, those that arise from White's d4-d5 push, and the offbeat Gallagher Variation. Before we can head with confidence into Chapter 5, which puts everything together to form a complete repertoire against Black's 6... ♘bd7 and 7...e5, we must examine one more of Black's attempts for counterplay: organizing the ...b7-b5 push without ever playing ...exd4. These approaches have the advantage for Black of not conceding the center, but at the same time, they are risky from the second player's point of view. The ...b7-b5 punch can often be met with a timely c4-c5 from White, attacking Black's center and simply bypassing any activity for Black's pieces that ...b7-b5 has generated. Of course, such a c4-c5 counterstrike isn't always possible (or desirable) for White, so we also examine in this chapter the structures that would arise after White's capture c4xd5.

Countering Black's ...b7-b5 by Undermining His Center: White's c4-c5 Break

One of the reasons Black so rarely tries to get away with playing for ...b7-b5 is that, often, White can simply undermine Black's pawn chain on d6 and e5. This is especially true when Black has played ...c7-c6 to support the ...b7-b5 push. Certain tactical themes are common here, and are illustrated in the next two games. The first game features Black taking his time to organize the

...b7-b5 thrust, while the second game shows him playing it earlier.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2554)
Dougherty, Michael (2320)

[E69] Philadelphia 2002

1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.♘c3
♘f6 5.g3 0-0 6.♗g2 c6 7.0-0 ♘bd7
8.e4 e5 9.♙b1 a5

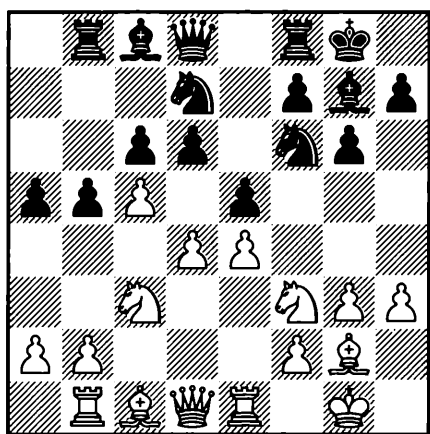
This move does not make it obvious by any means that Black hopes to play ...b7-b5. But, oddly enough, the pawn's being on a5 rather than a6 makes little difference in this particular game – White's tactical tricks would still apply.

10.h3 ♖b8!?

This seems to have been a novelty at the time of the game. It has not been tried again since, probably for good reason. Playing both ...a7-a5 and ...b7-b5 seems too ambitious. 10...♖e8 11.♖e1 exd4 12.♟xd4 ♟c5 is more common, but White scores over 70% here, just as he does from almost any other position from Chapter 1.

11.♖e1 ♖e8

Black will have to build up patiently before playing the ...b7-b5 break. 11...b5 12.c5! and suddenly Black in trouble:



The following variations illustrate tactical themes that are typical for White's reaction c4-c5 to Black's ...b7-b5.

a) 12...dxc5 13.dxe5 ♟e8 14.♟g5 ♞b6 (14...f6?! 15.exf6 ♟xf6 16.♟f4 ♞a8 17.e5 is powerful for White) 15.♟e7, trapping Black's rook on f8, is a tactic

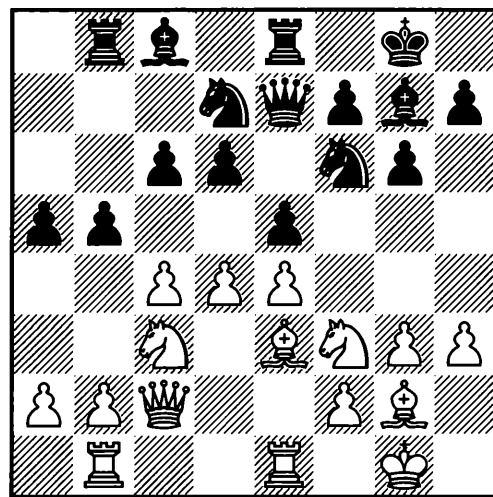
we'll see cropping up again in variations to the next game.

b) 12...exd4 13.♟xd4 ♟b7 14.cxd6, with e4-e5 in the works, looks most unpromising for Black.

c) 12...b4 13.♟a4 d5 14.exd5 ♟xd5 15.dxe5 is problematic for Black since he will have trouble regaining the pawn on e5. Meanwhile, White can simply get ready to put pressure on the queenside with b2-b3, ♟f3-d4, and so on.

d) 12...♟e8 13.cxd6 ♟xd6 14.♟g5 ♞e8 (14...♞b6 15.♟e7 and 14...f6 15.dxe5 are bad for Black) 15.♟xe5 ♟xe5 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟h6 wins material for White.

12.♟e3 ♞e7 13.♞c2 b5?!



Black tries to make use of his move ...♖b8, but White has a powerful reply. Otherwise, 13...exd4 14.♟xd4 ♟c5 15.♖bd1 would have assured White's usual advantage, as 15...♟fxe4?! 16.♟xe4 ♟xe4 17.♟xe4 ♞xe4 18.♟d2! uses a familiar tactical theme from Chapter 1 to win Black's queen.

14.c5!

This is strong. White's pieces are active whereas Black's are uncoordinated.

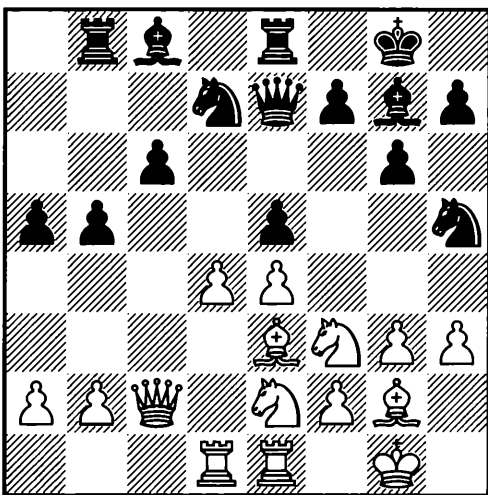
14...♘h5

It is hard to recommend much else. 14...exd4 15.cxd6 ♖xd6 16.♙xd4 gives White the potential to play the devastating e4-e5, and 14...dxc5 15.dxe5 ♘h5 (of course not 15...♘xe5? 16.♘xe5 ♖xe5 17.♙f4) 16.g4 traps Black's knight.

15.cxd6 ♖xd6 16.♙bd1

White's nearly symmetrical piece setup is harmonious. With his next move, he focuses on hitting Black's weakness on c6.

16...♖e7 17.♘e2!



This takes away the f4 square from Black's knight on h5. In addition to having to defend his pawn on c6, Black must reckon with g3-g4 from White.

17...exd4

No better is 17...♙b7, when White wins a pawn with 18.g4, forcing 18...♘f4 (18...♘f6 would leave Black losing material on the h2-b8 diagonal) 19.♘xf4 ♙xf4. After the text, Black cannot defend his c6-pawn.

18.♘exd4 ♙b7 19.♘xc6 ♙xc6 20.♖xc6

White has won a clear pawn.

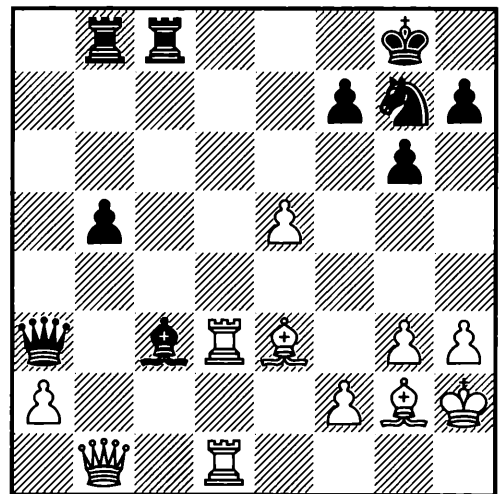
20...♘e5 21.♘xe5 ♙xe5 22.♙e2 ♖b4

22...♙ec8 23.♖d7 is of little help to Black either.

23.♖c1

The queen retreat was not necessary, but it does simplify White's life a lot. Now he can just focus on doubling his rooks.

23...♙ed8 24.♙ed2 ♙dc8 25.♖b1 a4 26.♙h2 a3 27.bxa3 ♖xa3 28.♙d3 ♙c3 29.e5 ♘g7



White's idea with 29.e5 was that 29...b4 could have been met with 30.♙d5, halting Black's attempts at counterplay. Black is lost.

30.♙d5 b4 31.♙b3 ♘e6 32.♙d7

White concedes the e5-pawn, but by this point it doesn't really matter. Wojo is playing for mate.

32...♙xe5 33.♖e4 ♖b2

33...♙g7 runs into the beautiful variation 34.♙xe6 (34.♙xf7 also works)

34...fxe6 35.♔xe6+ (or 35.♖xg7+)
 35...♕h8 36.♗e7 ♖g8 37.♗xg7+! ♖xg7
 38.♗d8+ ♖xd8 39.♗xd8+ with mate to
 follow.

34.♗7d2 ♗c3 35.♗c2 1-0

The queen is trapped, so Black resigns.

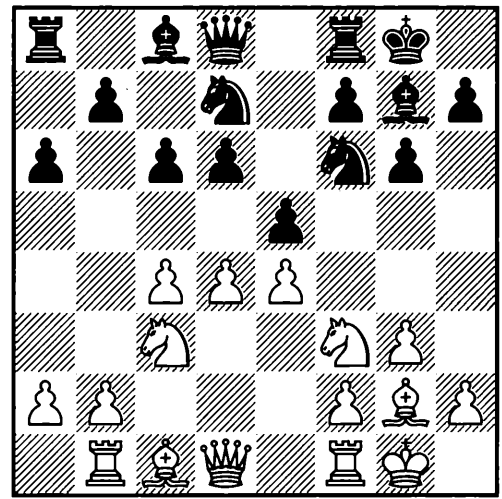
Black invested a lot of time developing his pieces and preparing for the ...b7-b5 strike, but White didn't have any trouble organizing his forces behind the c4-c5 counter. The blow 14.c5! was effective enough to bring Black's position to the verge of collapse. Black could come up with nothing better than to give up his c6-pawn.

In the next game, Black plays ...b5 much earlier. For the most part, the very same tactical ideas that worked for White in the note to Black's move 11 in the previous game also work here. Black's play in this game is more accurate, however, so the variations are somewhat sharper. We would like to thank an anonymous donor for providing us with the score of this game – which, to our knowledge, is not found in any database – and some of Wojo's own notes and ideas.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2570)
Altounian, Lev (2457)

[E68] Los Angeles 2005

1.♟f3 d6 2.d4 ♟f6 3.c4 g6 4.g3 ♟g7 5.♟g2 0-0 6.♟c3 ♟bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.♖b1 a6



Black signals his intention to play ...b7-b5. This is a particularly good idea against White's 9.♖b1, as the rook now does little to contribute to the fight from the b1 square. White should not feel his previous move was an error, however, as he still has ample resources to deal with Black's early queenside thrust.

10.h3

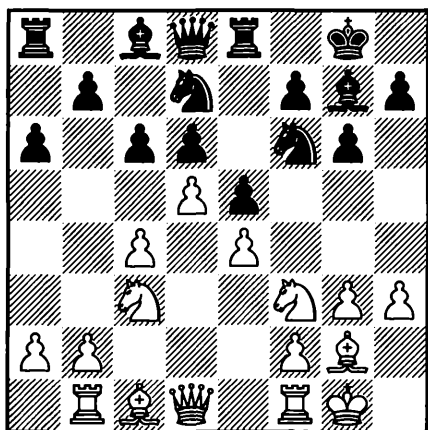
This quiet move is overlooked by Janjgava, who gives only 10.dxe5, 10.♗c2, and 10.♟e3 here. The text has a much more ambitious idea in mind than any of these three moves. The value of it is that, before White can think about playing the c4-c5 break, it is important for him to take the g4 square away from Black's knight. For instance, slightly inferior is the move order 10.♖e1 b5 11.c5!?, as 11...dxc5 12.dxe5?! could then be met by 12...♟g4, ganging up on White's e5-pawn. Of course, White could (and should) play instead 12.♟xe5, when 12...♟b7 (worse for Black is 12...♟xe5!? 13.dxe5 ♟g4 14.♗xd8 ♖xd8 15.f4, with an edge to White since his kingside pawns seem to restrain Black's pieces quite nicely) 13.♟xd7 ♟xd7 14.♟e3 cxd4 (14...c4, ceding the center to White, is less

good) 15.♔xd4 ♖e5 16.♗e2 ♜e7, as was seen in A.O’Kelly-A.Suetin, La Habana 1968, when here 17.♜c2 would have left the game in balance.

Otherwise, 10.♜c2 b5 11.♞d1 ♜e7 12.b3 is a solid alternative for White, but this approach is far less promising since Black has succeeded in gaining space on the queenside.

10...b5!?

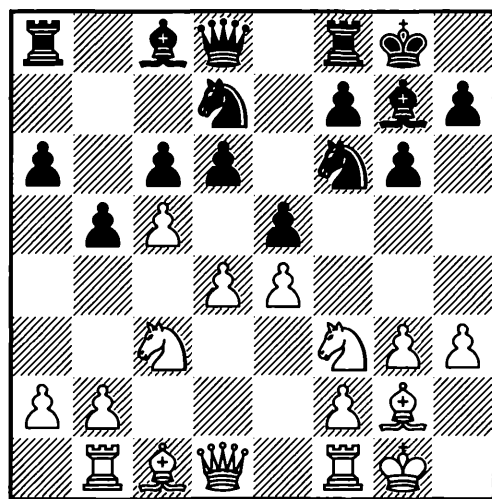
Allowing White’s next move. 10...♞e8 is Black’s other choice. Then 11.d5, aiming for the kinds of positions analyzed in Chapter 2, seems reasonable:



Black can either take on d5 or push past here. 11...cxd5 12.cxd5 b5 was seen in J.Horváth-A.Suetin, Bern 2000, when here 13.a3 with the idea of ♔c1-e3 and ♗f3-d2 seems natural for White. He aims to play b2-b4 at some point and land a knight on a5. The alternative 11...c5 12.a4 ♜e7 13.♔e3 ♜f8 14.♜d2 ♗b6 15.b3 left White with a sizeable space advantage in T.Balogh-A.Lanc, Slovakia 2002, particularly after White expanded on the kingside: 15...a5 16.♗e1 ♔d7 17.♗d3 ♗h5 18.g4 ♗f6 19.f4 and so forth.

11.c5!?

The Wojo approach, aiming for messy complications.



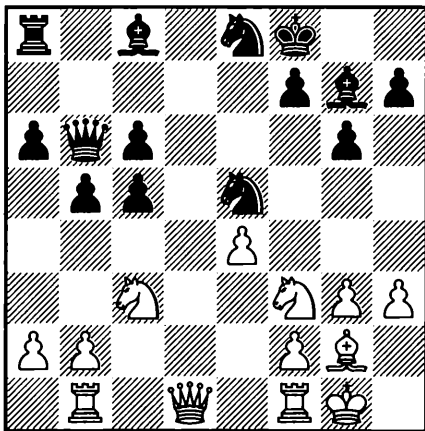
11.cxb5 was J.Ehlvest-T.Radjabov, Moscow 2001, in which 11...cxb5 (11...axb5 aims for a position similar to Ippolito-Hughes below) 12.a3 ♔b7 13.d5 ♞c8 14.♔e3 ♗b6 15.♗d2 ♗fd7 16.♜e2 was played. Then Black could have played 16...f5 and had no problems, a benefit of his rook being on f8 rather than e8.

11...b4

Black’s most common continuation, but not a particularly good one. Locking up the queenside like this spoils most of the point of Black’s ...b7-b5 – that is, to gain open lines on that side of the board for counterplay. Now, he will be left with just weaknesses there.

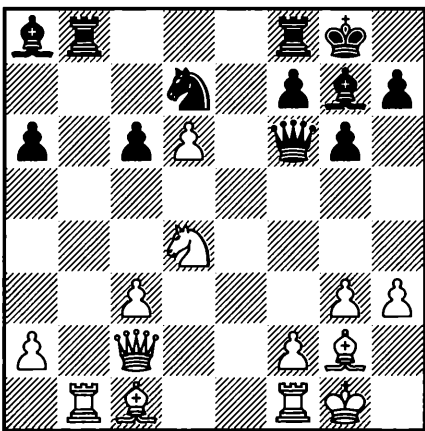
Meanwhile, thanks to White’s move h2-h3, 11...dxc5?! can be met by 12.dxe5 ♗e8 13.♔g5 with the idea of ♔e7, trapping Black’s rook on f8. This is certainly not the end of matters, since Black has some compensation for the exchange in the form of his queenside pawn conglomerate, but White seems preferable at the very least. 13...♜b6 (13...♜c7 would run into 14.♔e7 ♗xe5 15.♔xc5, when Black loses an important pawn, and 13...f6 14.exf6 gives White a tremendous initiative on the kingside) 14.♔e7 ♗xe5 15.♔xf8 ♗xf8 and White will look to restrain Black on the

queenside while making something out of his kingside pawn majority:



After 16.dxe5 exd5, moves like ♖c2 and b2-b3 will be in order. Then ♜h2, f2-f4, and so on can be played.

Meanwhile, 11...exd4 12.dxd4 leads to a rich struggle full of tactics. There is little theory here, but one example line: 12...♙b7 13.cxd6 b4 (less accurate is 13...c5 14.dxc2 b4, since White has 15.d5) 14.♖b3! (the piece sacrifice 14.f4!? was tried in G.Prakken-K.Berbatov, France 2009) 14...♜b8 (or 14...c5 15.dxf3 dxe4 16.dxe4 exd4 17.g5) 15.e5! bxc3 (not 15...dxe5 16.♖xb4) 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.bxc3 ♙a8 18.♖c2:



18...♜xb1 19.♖xb1 c5 (19...♖xd6 20.♜d1 may give White a tiny pull) 20.♙xa8 cxd4 21.♖e4 ♖xd6 (or 21...dxc3 22.♜d1) 22.♙f4 ♖b6 23.cxd4 exd4 should eventually leave Black with equality. Further tests are needed in this line, but for now White looks to have the slightly better prospects on the whole.

12.dxa4

White's upper hand in this position stems from the fact that, as the center disintegrates, Black finds himself with a weak c6-pawn. Black's next move is an attempt to plug up the h1-a8 diagonal.

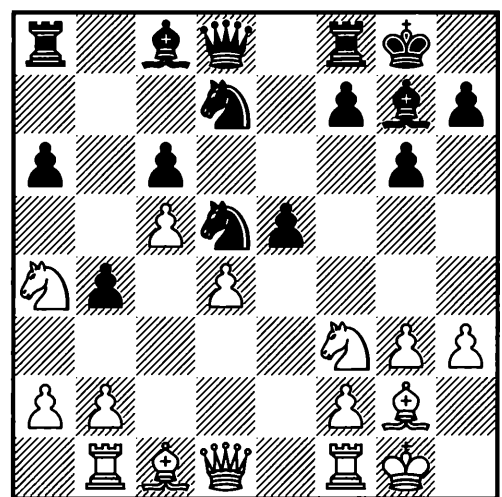
12...d5

12...dxe4 13.cxd6 dxd6 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.dxe5 exd5 16.♙h6 leaves White with the initiative.

13.exd5

White rips the h1-a8 diagonal back open. Both 13.dxe5 dxe4 and; 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.dxe5 dxe4 allow Black to successfully block White's play on the long diagonal.

13...dxd5



13...e4? 14.dxc6! exf3 15.♖xf3 is winning for White.

14.♜e1

In his notes, Wojo gave the line 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.dxe5 exd5 16.♙h6 ♜e8 17.dxb6 dxb6 18.♖xd8 ♜xd8 19.cxb6 ♙d4 20.♙xc6 ♜b8 21.♙f4 for White, the idea being 21...♜xb6 22.♙c7 ♜xc6 23.♙xd8, winning the exchange. This is

undoubtedly an improvement over the text, but Wojo's move here is quite logical, adding to the pressure on Black's imploding center.

14...♖e8

Of course, 14...exd4 15.♟xd4 just helps White get to the c6-pawn. 15...♙b7? 16.♙xd5 cxd5 17.c6 is a problem for Black.

15.dxe5 ♟xe5 16.♟xe5

Wojo gives 16.♙g5? ♟xf3+ 17.♙xf3 ♖xe1+ 18.♖xe1 ♗xg5 19.♖e8+ ♙f8 20.♖xc6 ♖f5!, winning for Black.

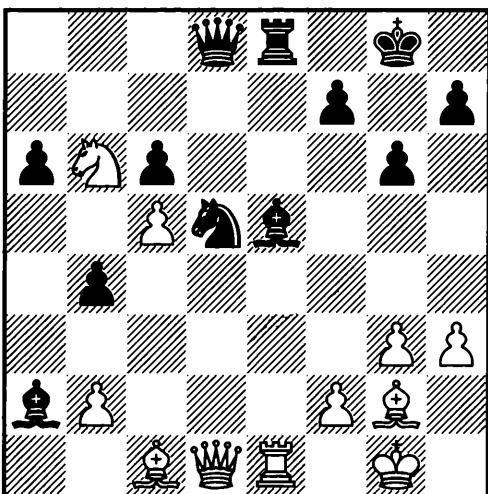
16...♙xe5 17.♟b6 ♙f5

After 17...♟xb6, Wojo planned 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 and here either 19.♖xe5 with the idea of 19...♖d1+? 20.♞h2 ♟d5 21.♖e8+ ♟g7 22.♙h6+ or just 19.cxb6, with good prospects to reach a winning ending.

18.♟xa8

Wojo considered here 18.♟xd5 cxd5 (18...♙xb1 19.♟xb4 is good for White), when Black is okay thanks to his powerful bishop pair.

18...♙xb1 19.♟b6 ♙xa2



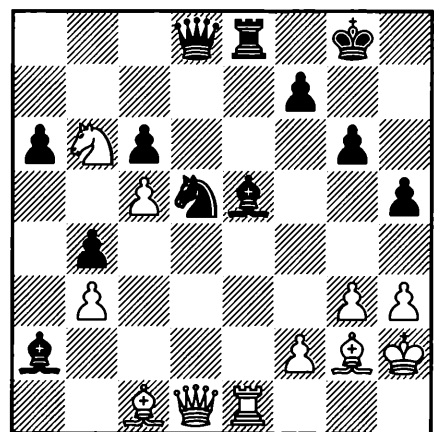
Forced. Black has to reinforce the d5 square. Wojo analyzed 19...♟xb6? 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.cxb6, winning for White.

20.♞h2!?

White sidesteps some of Black's tactical tricks and maintains the tension, waiting for Black – who is somewhat tied down – to err. The position is about even with exact play, but it is much easier for Black to make a tactical mistake. Looking at the lines 20.♖a4?! ♙d4! 21.♖xe8+ (or 21.♖d1 ♖f6) 21...♖xe8 and 20.b3 ♟c3 21.♖xd8 ♖xd8 eventually led White to play the text move.

20...♖e6

20...h5, with the idea of ...h5-h4, is favored here by the computer. Then 21.b3 threatens to trap Black's bishop on a2. White seems for choice here:



a) 21...♟xb6? 22.♖xe5! ♖xd1 23.♖xe8+ ♟g7 (23...♞h7 24.♙b2) 24.♙b2+ f6 25.cxb6 and White is winning, given how little Black can do to stop White from promoting his pawn after 25...♖d7 26.♖a8.

b) 21...h4?! 22.♟xd5 cxd5 23.♙xd5 is good for White, since Black's bishop on a2 is severely misplaced.

c) 21...♙xb3! is Black's saving move, as 22.♚xb3 ♙xg3+ 23.♚xg3 ♜xe1 24.♙g5 leaves the board in a mess. White's two bishops seem stronger than Black's rook and three pawns here, given that White will likely pick off Black's extras on the queenside. The position is still extremely sharp, however. Something similar to this occurs in the game.

21.b3

21.f4!, with the idea of 21...♙f6 22.♜xe6 fxe6 23.♚a4, was likely stronger: 23...♞xb6 24.cxb6 ♙d5 25.♚xa6 gives White a strong passed b-pawn.

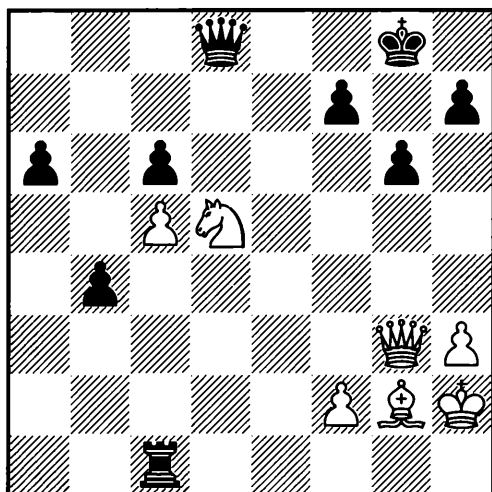
21...♙xb3

A familiar idea. Wojo noted that 21...♚e8? wouldn't have worked for Black, as 22.♞xd5 ♙xg3+ 23.fxg3 ♜xe1 24.♞f6+ ♖h8 25.♚d4 wins for White.

22.♚xb3 ♙xg3+ 23.♚xg3 ♜xe1 24.♞xd5

Wojo gave the line 24.♙g5 f6 25.♞xd5 fxg5 without comment. Presumably, he thought Black was fine here.

24...♜xc1



25.♚d6!

25.♞xb4 ♜xc5 26.♞xc6 is not favorable for White. Black has an outside passed pawn on the queenside and a more solid pawn shield around his king.

25...♚h4??

A terrible blunder from Altounian. 25...♚xd6+ 26.cxd6 of course wins for White, as Black cannot stop the d-pawn from promoting. But 25...♚f8 was absolutely necessary here, when 26.♞f6+ ♖g7 27.♚e5 ♚xc5 leaves White with nothing better than to take a draw by perpetual check with 28.♞d5+ ♖g8 29.♞f6+.

26.♚b8+ ♖g7 27.♚e5+ ♖g8

27...f6 28.♚e7+ ♖h6 29.♚f8+ ♖g5 30.♚xf6+ also wins for White.

28.♞f6+ ♖f8

Wojo gave the line 28...♖g7 29.♞g4+ ♖f8 (or 29...♖g8 30.♚d4! ♚g5 31.♞f6+) 30.♙xc6 as one of his ideas.

29.♚e8+

Faster is 29.♞d7+ with mate in three.

29...♖g7 30.♚g8+ ♖h6

30...♖xf6 31.♚d8+ wins the black queen.

31.♚xh7+ ♖g5 32.♞e4+ ♚xe4 33.♙xe4 1-0

White's 11.c5!? in this game was an ambitious attempt to play for the advantage. It worked well in this game, and Wojo handled the ensuing complications more skillfully than did his opponent. White's position was, throughout, much easier to play. Black would have likely been better off going into the little-explored line 11...exd4, since in the game the continuation with 11...b4 didn't work out for him. As for White, he should have played the improvement 14.dxe5, which leaves him with a much larger advantage than he got after the reasonable (but not as forcing) 14.♖e1. Around move 20, the position was filled with tension. Black was the first to crack, and the careless 25...♜h4?? cost him the game.

Conclusion: White can often effectively meet Black's ...b7-b5 with c4-c5. Players of White should familiarize themselves with the recurring tactical themes that come up in these positions (as demonstrated in the two games in this section) and try to spot opportunities to get in c4-c5 in their own games.

A Maneuvering Game: White's c4xb5

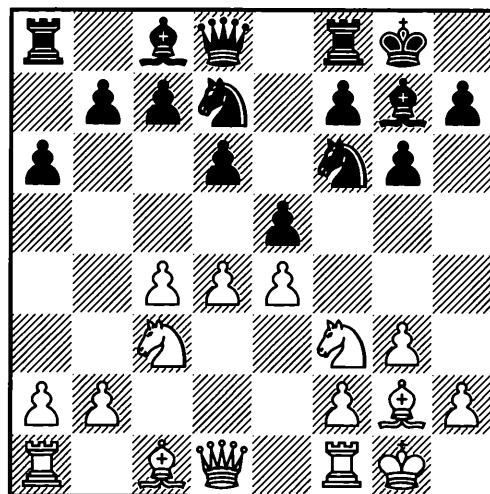
Of course, White will not always have the opportunity to meet ...b7-b5 with the c4-c5 push. In this section, we look at what happens when White reacts to ...b7-b5 by simply playing c4xb5, restraining Black's queenside pawns, and continuing his development in the center. In general, White reacts to Black's ...c6xb5 by playing d4xe5 and opening up lines in the center. He hopes to take control of the open d- and c-files before Black does, and to prove that Black's pawns on a6 and b5 are a weakness rather than a strength. And when Black plays ...a6xb5, recapturing toward the center, White looks to put pressure on Black's pawn center as in the illustrative game below. With enough maneuvering, White can often get an advantage this way – though perhaps not as large an edge as he aims for with the c4-c5 push.

Ippolito, Dean (2455)

Hughes, Tyler (2278)

[E69] Indianapolis 2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3
e5 8.e4 a6

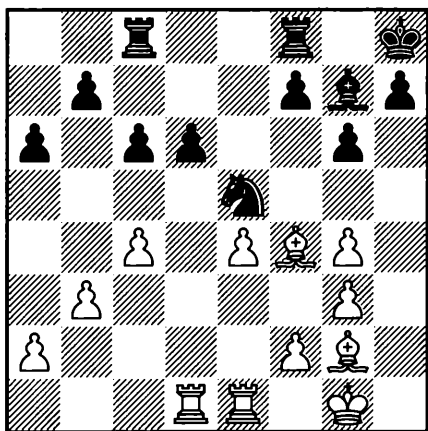


A move order that Wojo himself sometimes used as Black.

9.h3

The more cautious 9.♖e1 was Wojo's normal move. The point is that Black no longer has the move 9...b5 since White's knight won't be pinned along the f1-a6 diagonal and he has adequately defended the e4-pawn.

But 9...exd4 10.♗xd4 ♘g4!? is an interesting try for Black. Now the critical line is 11.h3 ♖f6 12.hxg4 (12.♗f3 ♗ge5 13.♗d5 ♖d8 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.♗e3 ♖e6 16.♖c2 was P.Horváth-H. Kotz, Austria 2005, but here Black can look for ways to organize ...♗e5-c6-d4 with adequate counterplay) 12...♖xd4 13.♗d5 c6 14.♗e7+ ♔h8, when White's new move 15.♙f4! (15.♖xd4 ♙xd4 16.♙e3 ♙xe3 17.♖xe3 ♗e5 18.♗xc8 ♖axc8 19.b3 c5 was only good enough for White to draw in P.Tregubov-J. Gallagher, 2002, given in Gallagher's *Play the King's Indian*) grants White a slight endgame advantage after 15...♖xd1 (15...♖xb2 16.♖b1! ♖xa2 17.♖xd6 gives White more than full compensation for his pawn) 16.♖axd1 ♗e5 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8 18.b3:



White won in P.Tregubov-M. Aguetz, France 2009, after a long battle. Some months later, in A.Cioara-G.Grigore, Romania 2006, Black eventually held a draw. Whether or not theory ultimately decides this is "too drawish," White seems to have the upper hand here.

9...b5 10.♙e3!?

A novelty, but not necessarily an improvement on modern theory. More normal (and probably better) is 10.♖c2, when here 10...c6 11.♗d1 ♖e7 12.c5!, as in the previous games, is strong: 12...dxc5 13.dxe5 ♗e8 (13...♗xe5 14.♗xe5 ♖xe5 15.♙f4 with ideas of e4-e5 or ♙f4-d6xc5 was trouble for Black in A.Braun-R.Polzin, Germany 2008) 14.♙g5 ♖e6 15.♗e2! was difficult for Black in S.Bromberger-S.Solonar, Nuremberg 2007.

Note that if Black doesn't play 10...c6, his alternatives are the rather poor: for instance, he could try 10...bxc4?! 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♙e3 ♖e7 13.♗a4 ♖b4 14.♗d2, which was very good for White in B.Avrkh-A.Tsanis, Athens 2005, or 10...b4 11.♗d5 exd4 12.♗xd4 ♙b7 13.♙g5, which also gave White the advantage in R.Markus-J.Gallagher, Croatia 2010.

10...c6

This somewhat passive move allows White to get an edge. Black has played ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 early, so he should try to make something of this rather than transposing back into ...c7-c6 positions. Of course, 10...b4 11.♗d5 is good for White since 11...♗xe4 is easily met by 12.dxe5. Instead, 10...bxc4!? was more interesting, since 11.♗d2?! ♗g4! 12.hxg4 exd4 13.♙xd4 ♙xd4 14.♗xc4 is unclear. But the solid 11.♖e2 would keep White in control.

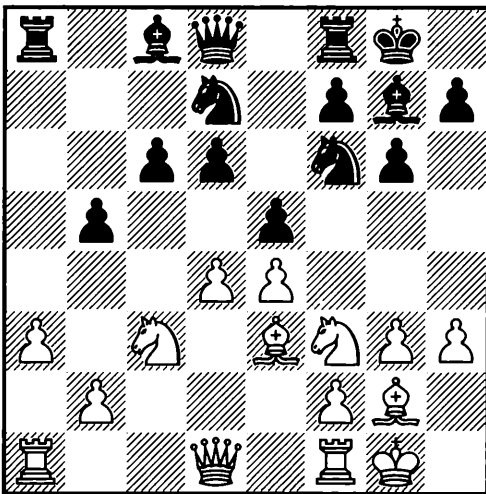
So that leaves 10...♙b7 as Black's best try to make something of having omitted ...c7-c6. Then 11.♖c2 exd4 12.♗xd4 c5 would enter a decent version of the Gallagher Variation for

Black, as White's queen is on c2 and cannot take the d6-pawn, and 11.dxe5 ♖xe4 would enter complications that don't necessarily seem bad for Black. Many of White's pieces are caught in the central crossfire.

11.cxb5 axb5

11...cxb5 here is best met by 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 (or 12...dxe5 13.♖b3 ♙b7 14.♞fd1 and so on) 13.♖xe5 dxe5 14.♞c1 with a pull for White, as Black's queenside pawns are more of a weakness than a source of activity. White aims for ♖d1-b3, ♞fd1, a2-a4, and perhaps ♖c3-d5.

12.a3



This little move stops Black's ...b5-b4 ideas and allows White to get on with his development. We now enter a structure not uncommon to the variations in which Black plays ...c7-c6, ...a7-a6, and ...b7-b5. Both sides have fairly harmonious development here, so the main battle will be over who has the better structure. Black has more pawns in the center, but White's are more advanced. Eventually, Black will have to concede the center with ...exd4, at which point his potentially weak d6-pawn will once again become

the center of attention. If White can put enough pressure on the center, perhaps he will be able to tie Black down to d6.

12...♞e7

12...♞a5 is the other way to develop the queen, but then Black must contend with 13.b4, just gaining time.

13.♞c2 exd4

On 13...♙b7, White might decide to play 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.♞ac1 followed by ♞fd1. White's advantage would be slight here, though.

14.♖xd4 ♙b7 15.♞ad1

A positional innovation, so to speak. Although this specific position has not been reached in any of the games in our database, this exact pawn structure certainly has. In most of those games, White chose to put his king's rook instead of his queen's rook on d1. But this leaves White in less of a position to expand with f2-f4 and ♙e3-f2, as he does in this game.

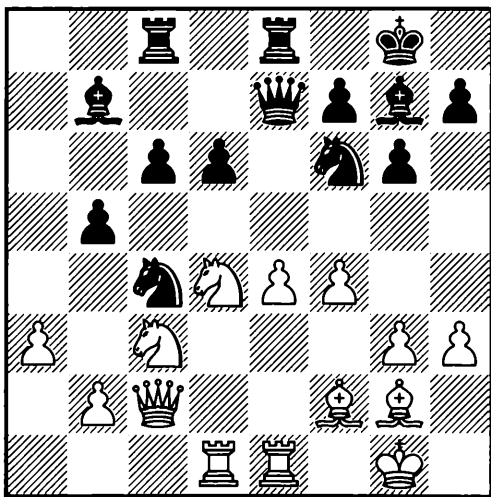
15...♞fe8 16.♞fe1 ♖e5

The natural continuation for Black, sending the knight to c4.

17.f4 ♖c4 18.♙f2

Of course this is better than 18.♙c1, which is much less flexible. The bishop is well placed on f2, where it shores up the white kingside. After the text, Black is under heavy pressure.

18...♞ac8



18...Rc8 would have avoided the possibility mentioned in the note to White's next move.

19. Nxb3!?

White embarks on an instructive tour around the queenside with his knight. We've seen this kind of thing before from Ståhlberg-Boleslavsky in Chapter 1: in order to coordinate an attack against the d6-pawn, White must first find somewhere to place his prized knight on d4. But better was the immediate 19.a4!, breaking up Black's queenside pawns. Black is tactically vulnerable given the loose placement of his knight on c4, so now 19...bxa4? 20.Nxa4 Qa6 21.b3 Qa5 22.Nb6 Rxc7 23.Wa2 wins a piece for White. The alternative 19...b4 20.Na2 Qa5 21.Nxb4! c5 22.Nd5 Qxd5 23.exd5 Wd7 24.Nb5 leaves White a pawn to the good.

19... Nd7

Anticipating White's Nb3-d2, Black heads to b6 to bolster his other knight on c4.

20. Nd2 Ndb6 21. Ndb1!

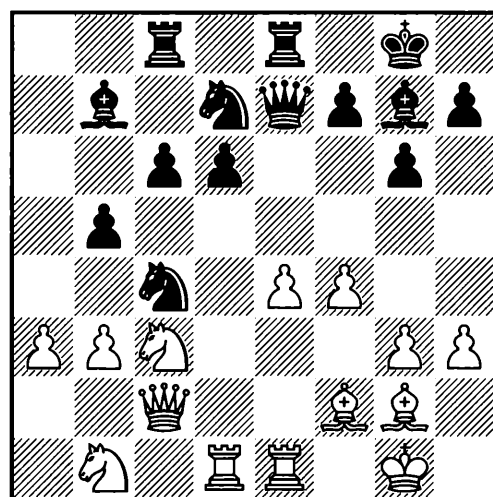
The dramatic conclusion of White's knight walk. White has succeeded in

getting his d4-knight out of the way and can now focus on attacking the black d-pawn. The threat now is b2-b3, dislodging Black's knight from c4.

21... Nd7

Ironically, this is Black's only real option. White's threat of b2-b3 compels Black to retreat his knight on b6.

22. b3



Of course, 22.Nd2 would repeat the position, but White is playing for a win.

22... Nxa3?

This tactical shot actually drops a pawn for Black. 22...Ncb6 was absolutely necessary. Then White could choose between continuing to pile up on the d6-pawn with 23.Wd3 or creating an outside passed pawn with 23.a4!? b4 24.Na2 c5 25.a5 Qa8 26.Nd2 followed by Nc4.

23. Nxa3 b4 24. Nc4 Qxc3 25. Nxd6 Qxe1 26. Qxe1!

The point of White's move 22, as now White successfully wins a pawn. No other capture would have been satisfactory here.

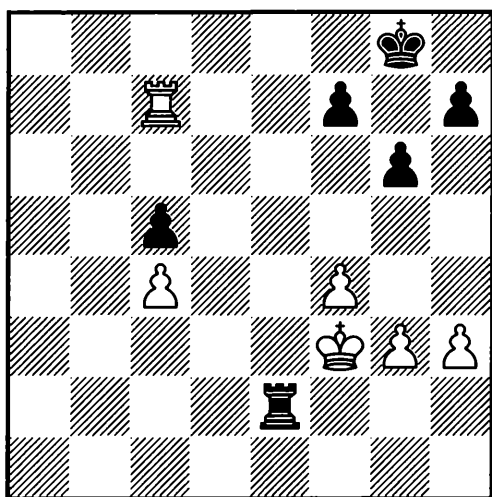
26...♖b8 27.♗xe8 ♖xe8 28.♙xb4

The black queen is overloaded.

28...♖xb4 29.♖xd7 c5 30.♖c4

This transposes to a better rook-and-pawn ending for White.

30...♖xc4 31.bxc4 ♙xe4 32.♖c7 ♙xg2 33.♙xg2 ♖e2+ 34.♙f3



33...♖h2

34...♖c2 35.♖xc5 ♖c3+ 36.♙g4 ♙g7, hoping to restrain White's king from getting to the queenside, was a better try.

35.♖xc5 h5

35...♖xh3? 36.♙g2 ♖h6 37.♖d5 leaves Black's rook caged in helplessly.

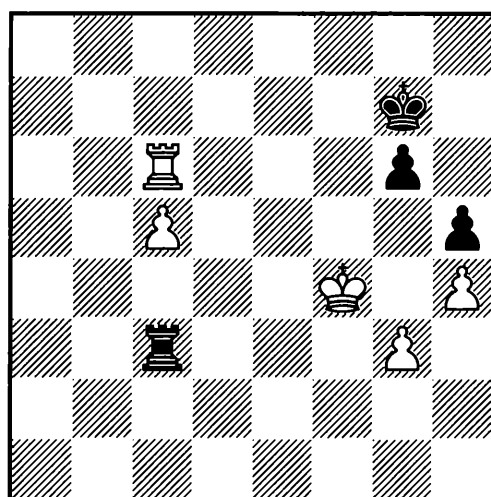
36.f5

A key move, trading off some of the kingside pawns. White's idea is to take care of business on the kingside before deserting his remaining pawns there and using the king to promote his passed c-pawn.

36...♙g7 37.h4 ♖c2 38.fxg6 fxg6

If White's bishop pawn were instead a rook or knight pawn, Black's drawing chances would increase dramatically. Here, however, the white king can both threaten to help the passed pawn promote and defend the white kingside pawns at the same time.

39.♙f4 ♖c3 40.♖c7+ ♙f6 41.♖c6+ ♙g7 42.c5



42...♖c4+

42...♙f7 43.♖c8 ♙e6 44.c6, with an eye toward picking off the black kingside pawns, should also be losing for Black.

43.♙e5 ♖c3 44.♖c7+ ♙h6 45.c6 ♖xg3 46.♖d7 ♖c3 47.c7 g5 48.♙d5!

With this, White threatens ♖d6+ and ♖c6, "building a bridge," as they say.

48...♖d3+

There was no alternative.

49.♙c4

BLACK'S ...b7-b5 STRIKE

White did not have to choose this route if he did not want to. 49.♔c6 ♖c3+ 50.♔b5 ♖b3+ 51.♔c4 ♖b1 52.hxg5+ ♔xg5 53.♞d3 would also have afforded him a win.

49...♞xd7 50.c8♞

Thanks to the presence of his h-pawn, White does not have to play out the queen-versus-rook endgame here.

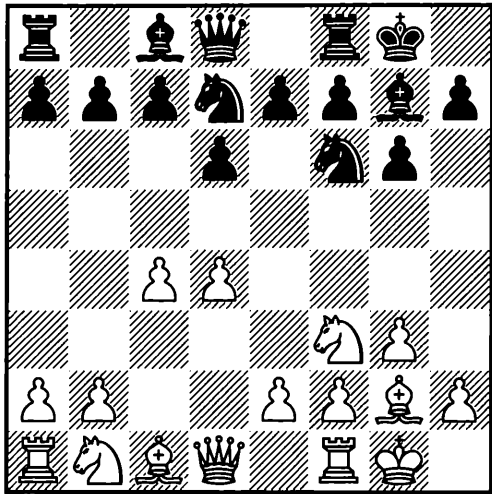
50...♞g7 51.♞h8+ ♔g6 52.hxg5 ♞f7 53.♞h6+ ♔f5 54.g6 1-0

White met Black's ambitious ...b7-b5 quietly, simply taking with c4xb5 and seeing what advantage he could get out of the resulting structure. He was able to restrain Black's queenside play with 12.a3. Black did generate some piece play with the maneuver ...♞d7-e5-c4, but White was able to use a creative knight walk with ♞d4-b3-d2-b1(!) to dislodge Black's stallion anchored on c4. In the end, Black cracked under the pressure and lost a pawn in the ensuing tactics. White converted to a winning rook-and-pawn ending.

Conclusion: In this chapter, we have gone over a number of ways for White to handle Black's attempts at...b7-b5. Players of White should absorb the material in this chapter in preparation for the discussion of specific move orders in the next one.

Chapter 5

Putting It All Together



1. d3 f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 g7 4. g2
0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 b7

Over the course of the past four chapters, we have examined a myriad strategies for both White and Black in the Fianchetto King's Indian. So far, we have focused on lines where Black plays ...b7 in an attempt to play for ...e7-e5. We have critiqued the old "Zürich 1953" structures featuring ...e7-e5xd4, ...d7-c5, and ...a7-a5 by Black; shed light on the positions involving White's d4-d5 push; analyzed two strong approaches for White against the dreaded Gallagher Variation; and explored Black's attempts at an early ...b7-b5. By now, the reader may well have lost track of all our recommendations, or be confused as to which sections of opening analysis are actually pertinent to the Wojo repertoire.

The purpose of this chapter is to cover specific move-order options for both sides and to clarify our recommendations. We start with a move-by-move recap of the Fianchetto King's Indian with ...b7, pointing the reader to specific sections of analysis from previous chapters, and then proceed to fill in any holes in the repertoire not covered in later sections. Upon finishing this chapter, the reader should feel fully prepared to tackle this common move (6...b7) and to successfully navigate Black's various other move orders.

Reaching the Positions from Part I: A Move-by-Move Analysis

Let's start by analyzing the moves that lead up to the positions covered in Chapter 1. Move orders in the King's Indian tend to be highly flexible for both sides, so it is important that White be able to spot move orders from Black

that may signal his intent to head for specific variations.

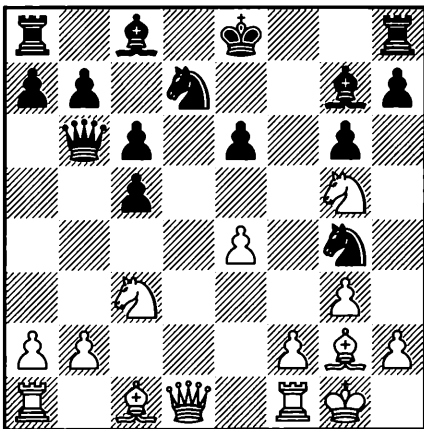
1. d3 f6

Of course, 1...g6 is another possibility that can lead to King's Indian

positions. After 2.c4 ♖g7 3.d4 d6, Black is ready to meet 4.g3 with the immediate 4...e5!?. Hence, Wojo usually played 4.♘c3 instead, after which Black has some interesting possibilities like 4...♖g4, 4...♘d7, 4...♘c6, and 4...e5. We'll be examining such move orders in Volume III, as the starting position for this volume is the position after White's move 6.

2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♖g7 4.♖g2 0-0

Black has no special options available to him by delaying castling: 4...d6 5.d4 ♘bd7 6.0-0 e5 7.♘c3 c6 8.e4 and Black will have to castle sooner or later. 8...♝b6!? might be playable, but it has never been tried. White could play simply and get the advantage with 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♝e2 0-0 11.♖e3, which is also certainly good enough for a slight pull, but even more promising now would be 9.c5!? 9...dxc5 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.e6 fxe6 12.♘g5:



For instance, White gets the advantage after either 12...♘de5 13.f4 c4+ 14.♔h1 ♘f2+ 15.♙xf2 ♝xf2 16.fxe5, with the better pieces for White, or 12...♘df6 13.♝e2 with an eye toward e4-e5.

5.d4

5.0-0 also works, though Wojo preferred the text.

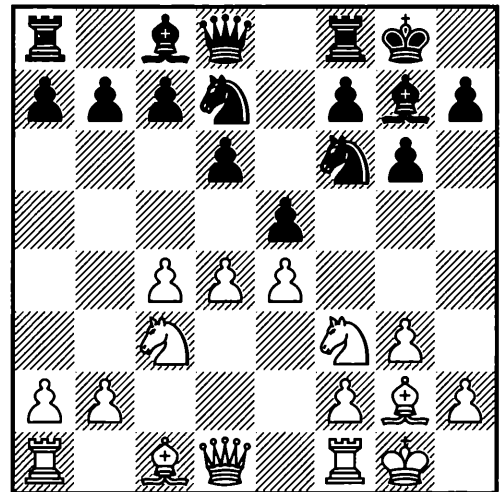
5...d6

5...c6 was met by Wojo with 6.♘c3 d5 7.♝b3, which falls under the scope of the Grünfeld Defense. We'll be covering this in our third and final volume of this series. Meanwhile, 6...d6 transposes to the next note.

6.0-0 ♘bd7

6...♘c6 is the subject of Part II of this book, whereas 6...c5 here would transpose to Part III. Meanwhile, 6...c6 can lead to some of the miscellaneous lines covered in Part III, but it may also transpose back into material from Part I after 7.♘c3 ♘bd7 8.e4 e5.

7.♘c3 e5 8.e4



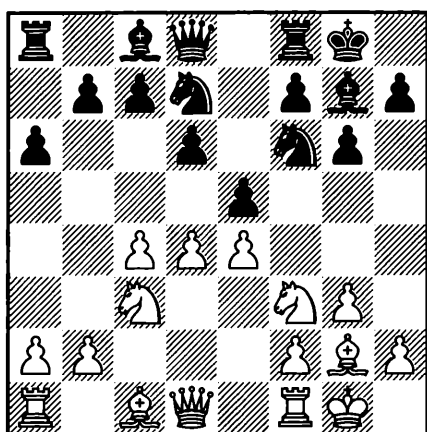
Note that we prefer this to 8.♝c2, known as the Romanishin Variation. It is not entirely clear yet that the white queen should go to c2, as in many of the lines from Chapter 3 (the Gallagher Variation), it was good for him to have the option of ♝xd6.

8.h3 was a move order occasionally used by Wojo, but he fared better with the text, which is more flexible. The only real difference is that after 8.h3, White has fewer options available after

8...c6 9.e4, when Black can play into the line with 9...♖b6.

8...c6

All of Black's other options are signals of his possible intent to enter the Gallagher Variation. After 8...a6, White has two choices that we can recommend:



a) 9.h3 b5, when here we recommend 10.♖c2, as analyzed in the notes to Ippolito-Hughes from Chapter 4. Of course, with 9...exd4, Black would steer toward the Gallagher.

b) Wojo's choice of 9.♗e1, when the line 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘g4!? (10...♗b8 or 10...♗e8 would again head for the Gallagher) 11.h3 ♖f6 12.hxg4 ♖xd4 13.♘d5 c6 14.♘e7+ ♘h8 15.♗f4 also seems to favor White. Players interested in pursuing this route should combine their own homework with our notes on this position, again found in the notes to Ippolito-Hughes.

Meanwhile, 8...♗e8 holds no surprises, as White can simply play 9.h3 and plan on transposing comfortably into one of the other variations. 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 11.♗e1 a5 12.♗b1 was Wojo's idea, explained fully in the notes to Ståhlberg-Boleslavsky from Chapter 1.

Finally, 8...exd4 should also just transpose to something else after 9.♘xd4. The independent try 9...♘e5!? came up in A.Wojtkiewicz-M.Brooks, Oklahoma 2004, but 10.b3 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗d7 12.♗e3 ♘c6 13.♖d2 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗c6 15.♗fe1 ♘d7 16.♗xg7 ♘xg7 17.f4 left White much better. His space advantage hasn't been greatly diminished by the trading of minor pieces.

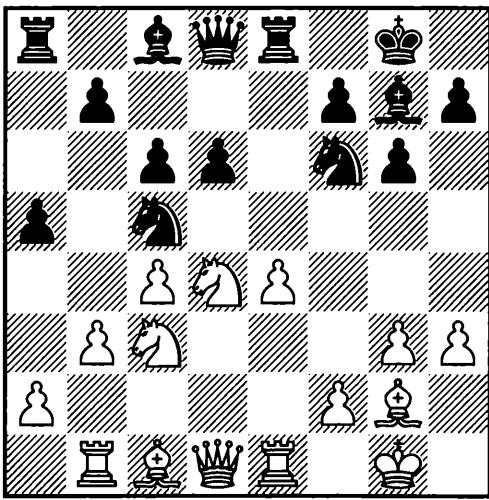
9.♗b1

Wojo scored nearly 90% with this move, compared with just under 70% with 9.h3. In this chapter we will examine one of Dean's ideas, 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♗b1!?, for those players who still want to play the natural 9.h3. The advantage of holding off on the subtle ♗a1-b1 rook slide is that White may be able to save a tempo later on by not having "wasted" his ninth move. A good example of this occurs in the line 8.h3 a6 9.♗e3 b5 10.c5!, which is a big improvement for White over Wojtkiewicz-Altounian from Chapter 4.

9...a5

The alternatives 9...♗e8 10.h3 exd4 11.♘xd4 and 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 can generally be thought of as leading to the same sort of position as the text, which is Black's most commonly played option. A move which does have some independent value is 9...a6, preparing the ...b7-b5 strike. Here we recommend 10.h3, with 10...b5 11.c5!? being the line covered in Wojtkiewicz-Altounian, as mentioned in the previous note.

10.h3 exd4 11.♘xd4 ♗e8 12.♗e1 ♘c5 13.b3



From this point out, knowledge of actual theory is of minimal importance.

White has already achieved everything he wanted out of the opening. If the first player has a strong command of the topics covered in Chapter 1, his chances here are excellent. Those looking for more detail on lines covered from this position can find it in the index to this book. Key games we have analyzed stemming from the diagram above include Wojtkiewicz-Shulman, Wojtkiewicz-N.Rogers, and Wojtkiewicz-Bauer, all of which can be found in the first chapter.

An Added Weapon for the Repertoire: 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♗b1!?

For those readers who are tactically minded and are interested in employing some original analysis in their games, we have included in this chapter our analysis on a sort of hybrid between Wojo's two moves after 8...c6, the traditional main line with 9.h3 and his "secret weapon" 9.♗b1. Author Dean Ippolito has combined the two approaches by playing the little-known idea 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♗b1!? for White, achieving great success in tournament play. Since this move has received scant attention in the past, the material in this section constitutes part of our contribution to opening theory. Of course, it is not necessary for readers to adopt this move order if they are comfortable with Wojo's 9.♗b1, which gives White the upper hand and scored phenomenally for him in practice. Nevertheless, from a tactical standpoint, this section is useful to everyone who plays the Fianchetto King's Indian. Many lines involving Black's early queen sorties with ...♗d8-b6-b4 are discussed.

More often than not, Black sees the move 10.♗b1 and heads back into the types of positions found in Chapter 1 in order to avoid sharp lines he is unprepared to face. This simply hands the advantage to White, as Black's queen on b6 is often misplaced. The correct way for Black to handle a move like 10.♗b1 is to challenge it immediately. In the first game, we examine the tactical challenge 10...exd4 11.♗xd4 ♗xe4. Our analysis shows White getting a powerful initiative here. In the second game, we look at the better 10...♗b4! for Black. Here, the second player comes closer to equality.

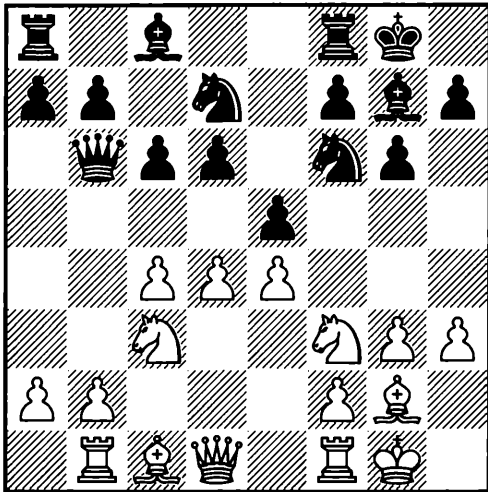
This first game we present is taken from the 1993 Girls' U18 European Championship. The ratings of the players are a bit lower than usual for such a theoretically important game, but considering the nature of such prestigious junior championships, we can speculate that both players were well prepared in the opening.

Lymar, Irina (2275)

Dworakowska, Joanna (2120)

[E69] Czech Republic 1993

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3
e5 8.h3 c6 9.e4 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♖b6
10.♗b1!?



The point of this rare move is to simply play ♗e3 next. If Black wants to avoid a loss of time with his queen, he will have to justify his last move somehow, typically by playing the queen to b4. As we know from the final section of Chapter 1 (on queen sorties), this can often be a risky idea. In the notes to this game and the next, several thematic ideas for trapping Black's queen appear.

10...exd4

10...♖b4 is critical here; we examine it in the next game. The text is Black's most common response. Black's other alternatives are quite harmless:

a) 10...♗e8 11.♗e3 ♖b4 12.♘d2! exd4 13.♗xd4, with the idea of a2-a3, leaves White better.

b) 10...♘e8 11.♗e3 ♖b4 12.b3! is an ingenious little idea, as 12...♖xc3? (better is 12...exd4 13.♗xd4 with a slight

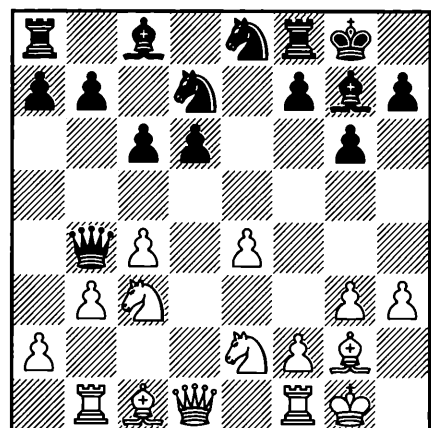
edge for White) 13.♗d2 ♖d3 14.♗e1 with the idea of ♗f1, trapping the black queen, is good for White.

c) 10...a5 is best met by the simple 11.♗e3, as 11...♖a6 12.b3 b5 13.cxb5 cxb5 14.a4! bxa4 (or 14...b4 15.♘b5) 15.bxa4 ♗b7 16.d5 ♗ac8 17.♖b3 was pleasant for White in J.Szmetan-L. Lucena, Brasília 1969. And if 11...♖b4, White can simply play 12.dxe5 dxe5 (or 12...♘xe5 13.♘xe5 dxe5 14.♘a4 heading for b6) 13.♖e2 with a slight pull.

11.♘xd4 ♘xe4

Black's most direct attempt to take advantage of White's slow move 10. With this, he tries to prove that the white knight on d4 is tactically vulnerable. White, for his part, will try to show that the coordination of Black's pieces will be disrupted by the capture on d4. Less critical tries for Black here are:

a) 11...♖b4 12.♘de2!, which gives White the idea of simply a2-a3 and b2-b3 next. Then 12...♘e8!? (12...♖xc4 13.♖xd6 gave White the edge in K.Anuszkiewicz-T.Jakubowski, Poland 2000) 13.b3! is one very common idea for playing against Black's vulnerable queen:

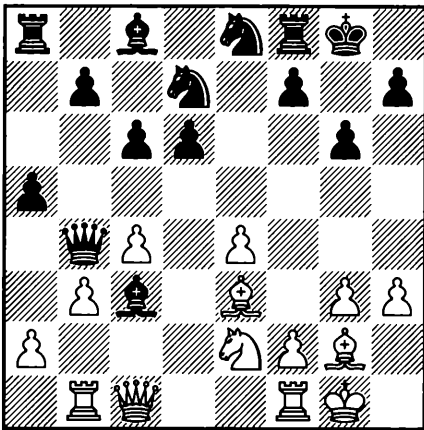


13...♗xc3 14.a3 ♖a5 15.b4 ♖a6 (15...♖e5 16.♖d3 ♗xb4 17.axb4 gives White full compensation thanks to his com-

mand of the dark squares) 16.♖xc3 ♜xc4 17.♖a4! gave White compensation in D.Ippolito-A.Fishbein, Philadelphia 2008, after 17...♜e6 18.♙h6 ♜g7 19.♜d4 f6 20.♞fd1.

b) 11...♜e8 12.♜de2 ♜b4 transposes back to the previous note.

c) Similar is 11...a5 12.♙e3 ♜b4 (not 12...♜c5? 13.e5!) 13.♜de2!, which once again gives White good play against Black's queen on b4, for instance 13...♜e8 (13...♜xc4 14.♜xd6 gives White the initiative) 14.b3 ♙xc3?! 15.♜c1:



White is temporarily down a full piece, but the idea of a2-a3, trapping the black queen, gives White a clear advantage here.

d) White manages a normal advantage after 11...♞e8 12.♙e3, for instance 12...♜a6!? 13.b3 and so on.

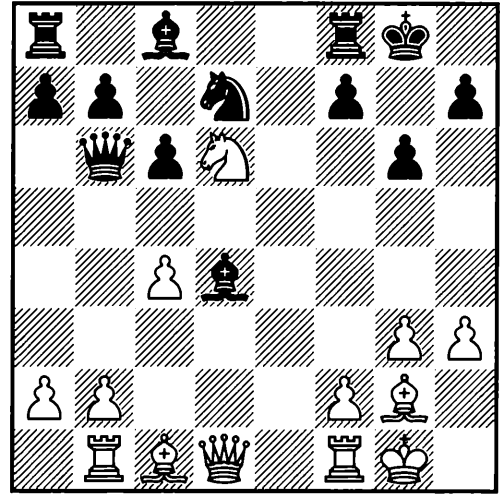
e) 11...♜g4 would be well met by 12.♜de2 ♜ge5 13.b3, with ♙a3 or ♙e3 on the way.

f) 11...♜c5 12.♙e3 ♜b4 13.♞e1 ♞e8 (13...♜xc4? 14.♙f1 ♜b4 15.♜c2 with b2-b4 to follow wins for White) 14.a3 ♜a5 15.b4 ♜xa3 16.♜cb5! cxb5 17.♜xb5 ♜a2 18.bxc5 ♜xe4 19.♜c7 was winning for White in J.Szmetan-G.González, Mar del Plata 1979.

12.♜xe4 ♙xd4

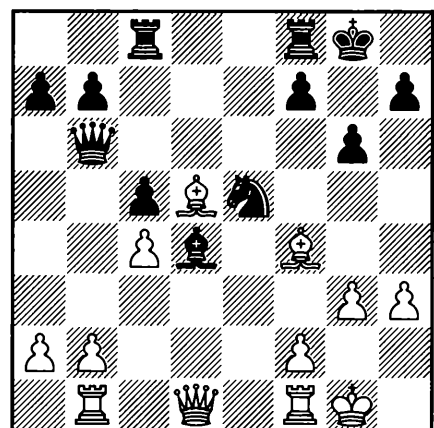
The critical try for Black in this variation. 12...♜xd4 is easily met by 13.♜xd4 ♙xd4 14.♞d1 ♙g7 15.♜xd6 with a slight plus.

13.♜xd6



13...♜e5?!

This is Black's most popular response here, but according to our analysis, it is dubious. Black's minor pieces will prove too loose in the ensuing tactics. Best here is the solid 13...c5, which should be met with 14.♙f4 with the idea of ♜b5. Then 14...♜e5 (14...♞d8 was played in E.Lommatzsch-L. Mittag, corr. 1984, but now 15.♜f3 targeting b7 would have given White a clear advantage) 15.♜xc8 ♞axc8 16.♙d5 leaves White with the two bishops and a slight pull:



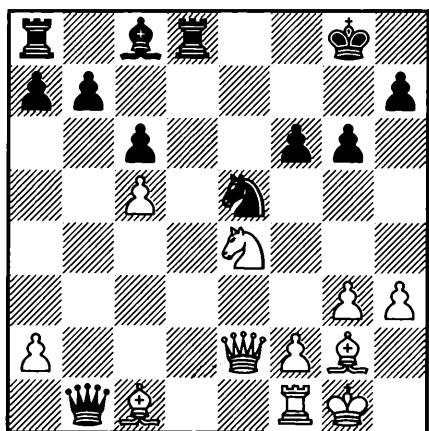
13...♖d8 14.b4 c5? (14...♗e5 transposes to the note to Black's move 14) can be met with 15.bxc5!, winning: 15...♞xb1 (15...♞xc5 16.♗xf7! ♜xf7 17.♞b5 allows White to regain the piece with a winning advantage.) 16.♞xd4 allows White possibilities of ♖b2 or ♖h6 on the following move.

14.b4

This position is trickier for Black than it looks at first glance. His bishop on d4 is in some danger, and, should it fall, Black runs the risk of getting mated on the dark squares around his king. The coordination of Black's forces seems superficial here, as his queen, dark-squared bishop, and knight on e5 are not functioning in harmony against any particular element of White's camp.

14...c5

14...♖d8?! can be met with 15.c5!, when 15...♖xc5 16.bxc5 ♞xb1 (16...♞xc5? 17.♗e4 wins for White) 17.♞e2, when White has a decisive attack for his sacrificed material. 17...f6 (17...♗d7? 18.♖h6 ♞b4 19.♞e7 ♞f8 20.♖xf8 ♗xf8 21.♞xf7+ leads to mate) 18.♗e4 and here:



a) 18...♜g7?? 19.♖h6+ drops Black's queen.

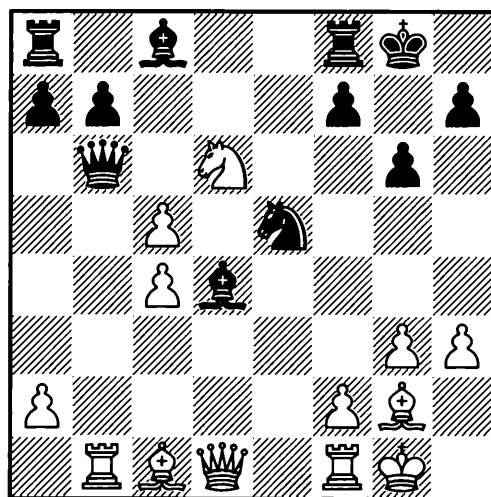
b) 18...♗d7? 19.♖h6 with ♗xf6+ and ♞e7 to come, for instance, 19...♞b5 20.♗xf6+ ♜f7 (or 20...♗xf6 21.♞e7) 21.♖d5+ cxd5 22.♞xb5 ♗xf6 23.♞e1 and White wins.

c) 18...♗d3 19.♖g5! ♞b2 20.♞xb2 ♗xb2 21.♖xf6 wins material for White.

d) 18...♜f7 19.♗xf6! ♗d3 (not 19...♜xf6? 20.♖g5+) 20.♗d5! and here either 20...cxd5 21.♖g5 or 20...♞e8 21.♖e3 are strong for White.

The text move is only slightly better. White's piece activity is already too much for Black to handle.

15.bxc5!



A powerful blow whose value is confirmed by the *Rybka 4* chess engine. Thanks to this move, the entire line with 10...exd4 must be evaluated in White's favor.

15...♞xc5?

Necessary is 15...♖xf2+, when here 16.♞xf2 ♞xb1 17.♞d2! gives White ample compensation for the exchange. If Black does nothing – for instance, if he plays a move like 17...a5 – the point is that White has 18.♞f1! ♞d3 19.♞xd3 ♗xd3 20.♖h6 ♞d8 (20...♖e6 21.♖xf8 ♜xf8 22.♖xb7 ♞d8 is a much better

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try for Black to hold on) 21.♖xf7 with a crushing attack. Meanwhile, a more constructive attempt such as 17...♙d7 would run into 18.♙e4 ♖a1 19.♗h2 with the threat of ♙b2.

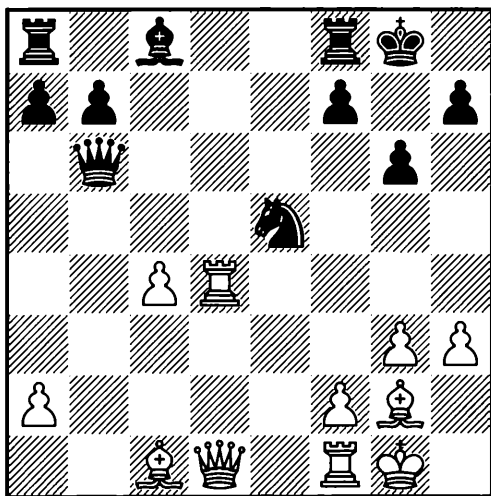
16.♙b5!?

16.♙b5!, trapping the bishop on d4, would have won instantly after 16...♖d8 17.♙e3. White still has a tremendous advantage after the text.

16...♖xd6 17.♖d5 ♖b6

White wins after 17...♖f6 18.♖xd4 ♗f3+ 19.♙xf3 ♖xf3 20.♙h6 ♖f6 21.g4! (defending h3 and stopping any ideas of ...♙f5) 21...♖e8 with the cute tactic 22.♖f5!.

18.♖xd4



18...♙xh3?!

After this, White is winning. 18...♙e6 was probably a better attempt to hold on, but White still has a possibly decisive initiative after 19.♙h6, for instance 19...♖fd8 20.c5! ♖c7 21.♙xb7!.

19.♖d6

Of course not 19.♙xh3?? ♖xd4! 20.♖xd4 ♗f3+, winning for Black.

19...♙g4 20.♖d5 ♗f3+

Essentially forced. 20...♗c6 21.♖g5! ♙f5 22.♖f6 wins for White.

21.♙xf3 ♙xf3 22.♖e5!

The only move that gives White the victory. Now Black will be mated on the dark squares.

22...♖fe8

22...♙c6 23.♖f6 would also lose for Black.

23.♖f6 ♖c5 24.♙b2 ♗f8 25.♖d7 1-0

There is no way for Black to avoid mate.

Black's early 13...♗e5?! got her into considerable trouble. The capture of White's knight on d4 left the black pieces poorly coordinated, and bringing the d7-knight into the center like this only worsened matters. White eliminated Black's dark-squared bishop and proceeded to go about mating her opponent in classic fashion.

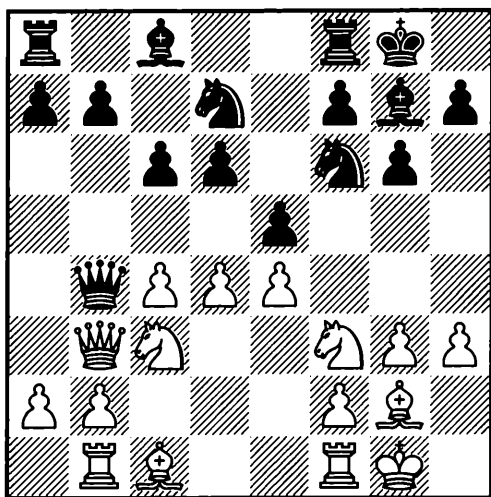
The next game, which is highly obscure, sees White getting the better side of a rather peaceful ending.

Ruiz

García, L.A.

[E69] Onix Tournament (Colombia) 1980

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.♗f3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.♙g2 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♖b1 ♖b4 11.♖b3!?

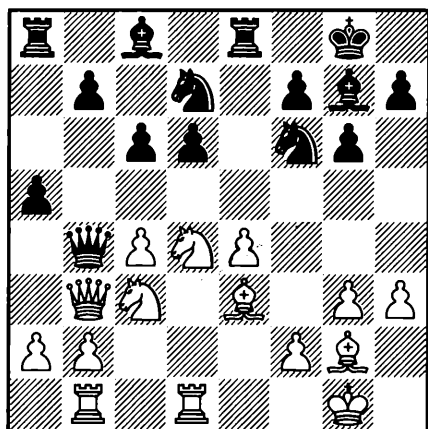


White has no way to exploit Black's early sortie here, so he does the next-best thing: he simply swaps off the queens, forcing Black to lose time. White will have a slight edge in the coming queenless middlegame.

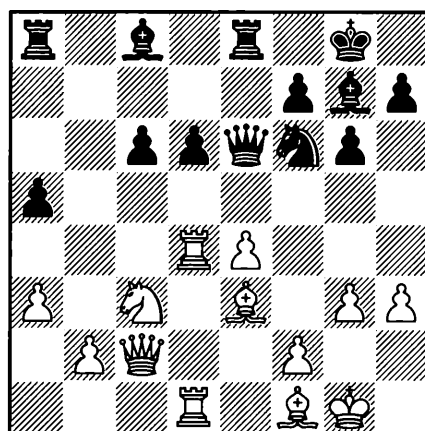
The more common 11.dxe5 does not seem to promise White any chance at an edge if Black plays accurately. Best for Black is 11...dxe5! (worse is 11...dxe5 12.Qe2, when White has a pull) 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Qd3 (13.Qe2 e6 is now a problem for White) 13...e6 14.b3 Bfd8 15.Qc2 b5 with full counterplay.

11...Qxb3

Black takes the opportunity to double White's b-pawns. 11...a5, anchoring the queen on b4, is another interesting possibility. We recommend 12.Bd1!?, reinforcing the d4-pawn. Then play might continue 12...exd4 13.dxd4 Re8 14.e3, when we now examine two choices for Black:

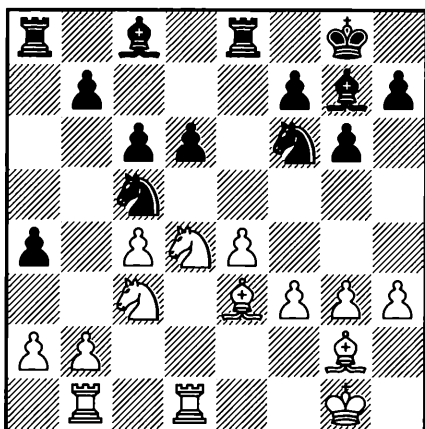


a) 14...dxc5 15.Qc2 Qxc4 16.a3! gives White too much play against Black's nearly trapped queen. For instance, 16...de6 (16...Qa6 17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 de6 19.dxb3 is very uncomfortable for Black) 17.dxc6! bxc6 (17...Qxc6 18.e5 Qc7 19.exf6 gxf6 20.Bbc1 gives White full compensation, and 17...e6 18.d4 g4 19.hxg4 dxd4 20.Qd2 db3 21.Qd5 leaves White with a structural advantage) 18.e6 d4 (forced, as Black's queen was trapped) 19.Rxd4 Qe6 20.Bbd1 leaves White with the advantage:



White has managed to play precisely in order to gain the upper hand.

b) 14...Qxb3 seems much safer. 15.dxb3 (15.axb3 dxc5 16.f3 is also possible, but as we'll see in the notes to the main game, White would rather play his bishop to f4) 15...a4 16.d4 (16.dxc1? e8 is another try for White) 16...dxc5 17.f3 and White has a somewhat more pleasant endgame:



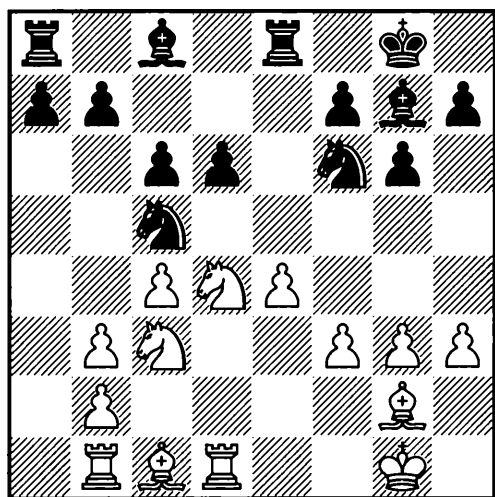
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Black is probably okay here, but he still has to contend with his weak d6-pawn and White's space advantage in the center. White can play ♖f2, ♕f1 (to defend c4), and play on either the queenside with b2-b4 or on the kingside by advancing his majority there.

12.axb3

It looks odd here for White to have his rook on b1 hemmed in by two pawns on b2 and b3, but Black has lost some time as well. His queen has moved three times (...♕d8-b6-b4-b3) only to be traded off for White's, which moved just once (♕d1-b3). It is fair to say White has a slight edge here thanks to his extra space.

12...exd4 13.♗xd4 ♗c5 14.♖d1 ♕e8 15.f3



15...♗h5!?

15...a5 would have left the black knight anchored on c5, but 16.♕f4 ♕f8 17.♖a1 would then threaten b3-b4.

16.♗f2

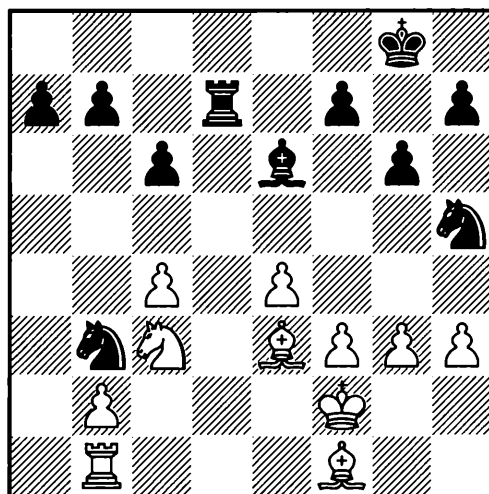
White plays patiently, but he would have been better off trying to take the initiative immediately. Black has not

yet developed here, so 16.b4 was a better try for the advantage. Then 16...♗e6 (16...♕xd4+ 17.♖xd4 ♗e6 18.♖xd6 ♗xg3 19.♕e3 is a clear advantage for White thanks to his two bishops) 17.♗de2 ♕f8 18.♕e3 leaves White in control.

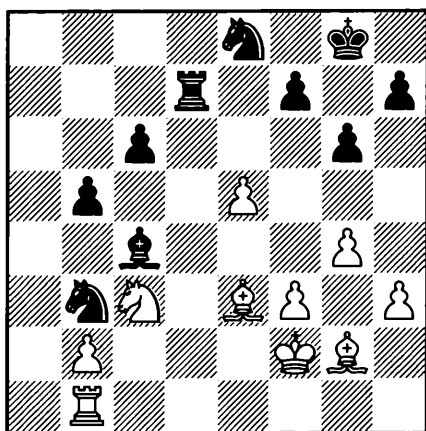
16...♕xd4+

Black seizes upon the chance to liquidate the pieces. This has the downside of giving White the two bishops, which will provide the first player with the opportunity to put pressure on Black's queenside pawns, particularly a7. 16...a5 17.g4 ♗f6 18.♕f4 would again give White a pull.

17.♖xd4 ♗xb3 18.♖xd6 ♕e6 19.♕f1 ♖ad8 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♕e3 ♖d7!? 1/2-1/2



Here the players agreed to a draw, but White could have used his two bishops to play on. For instance, play might continue 22.g4 ♗f6 (22...♗g7 23.♕xa7 b5 24.♖d1! ♖xd1 25.♗xd1 ♕xc4 26.♕xc4 bxc4 27.♗e3 will leave White a pawn up) 23.e5 ♗e8 24.♕xa7 b5 25.♕e3 ♕xc4 26.♕g2 (26.♕xc4 bxc4 27.♗a4 ♖e7 28.f4 f6 gives Black a chance to liquidate more of the position) and White, who has preserved his bishop pair, has chances to play f3-f4 and ♗c3-e4:



Black may hold this to a draw, but it is unlikely he will be able to make much of his queenside majority given White's central presence and piece activity. Thus, White seems to have the lion's share of the winning chances.

Black's 10...♔b4 is considered the critical response to White's 10.♕b1. Yet, in this game, White was able to simply take all the fun out of the position for Black with the simple 11.♔b3. White was slightly better in the queenless middlegame, but in this particular instance, he preferred to take an early draw rather than play on.

Conclusion: With 10.♕b1!?, White isn't guaranteed a large advantage. What this move does do, however, is give players of White a valuable surprise weapon that may make many players of Black uncomfortable. The second player has a choice between embarking on risky variations that leave his queen misplaced (such as those in Lymar-Dworakowska above) or entering a quiet endgame that gives White the better chances (such as in Ruiz-García). Only players who would rather play 9.h3 than Wojo's 9.♕b1 need devote much time to this section.

Summing Up: Useful Pointers

- Players of White should become as familiar as possible with the various pawn structures that arise from the ...♖bd7 Fianchetto King's Indian. Knowledge of plans and pawn structures is, as a rule, far more important than memorized lines – for players of either side.
- In the old “Zürich 1953” structures, Black's d6-pawn is a key weakness. White has various ways to win the pawn, including tricks involving ♖d4-b5 or ♗g5-e7.
- To pile up on the d6-pawn in these structures, White's plan is often to play his knight on d4 back to e2. This usually avoids the clunky knight maneuvers of the old days, such as Ståhlberg-Boleslavsky from Chapter 1.
- White can avoid trouble along the a1-h8 diagonal by removing his pieces from it. Moves like ♗a1-b1, b2-b3, and ♖d4-e2 work to do this.
- In the “Zürich 1953” structures, White's bishop generally belongs on e3 or f4, not on b2. Placing it along the a1-h8 diagonal just gives Black additional tactical opportunities and encourages him to play ...h7-h5-h4.
- If Black ventures a queen sortie with ...♔d8-b6-b4, he may be step-

ping into harm's way. White should look for various tactical ideas to trap Black's queen or exploit its presence.

- If Black delays playing ...e5xd4, White should consider playing d4-d5. This is particularly true if Black has made a weakening move on the queenside such as ...b7-b6.
- When White plays d4-d5, he tries to make use of his queenside space. White often prepares the b2-(b3)-b4 push. He hopes to eventually break through on the queenside with decisive effect.
- Black's best response to White's d4-d5 is generally to play ...c6xd5 at some point and open lines on the queenside. When committing to the d4-d5 push, players of White should carefully evaluate how much counterplay Black will be able to get with ...c6xd5, ...♘d7-c5, ...a7-a5, and so on. If there is any doubt on White's part as to whether or not he will be better after Black's capture on d5, he should probably look for a way to keep the tension in the center (like h2-h3, ♖a1-b1, or ♙c1-e3) rather than commit to d4-d5 right away.
- It's worth knowing a bit of theory in the Gallagher Variation. Although the Gallagher Variation will probably never be "busted," White's chances are excellent if he handles the opening appropriately.
- When Black delays ...e5xd4 and plays for the ...b7-b5 thrust, White should look for a way to meet Black's queenside counterplay with

c4-c5(!), counterattacking in the center. If this c4-c5 break is effective, it can completely undermine Black's pawn center.

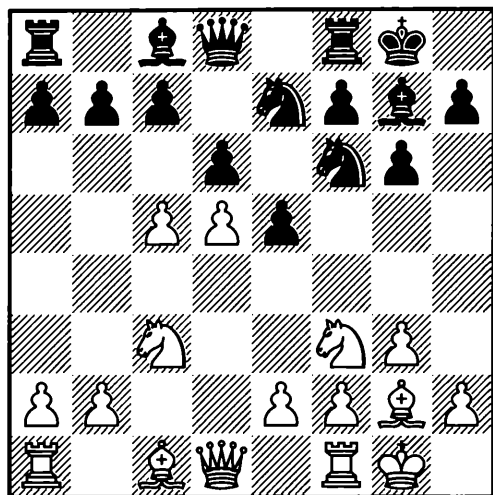
- If White can't meet ...b7-b5 with an effective c4-c5, he should consider c4xb5 and playing for a much smaller advantage. The structure after ...a6xb5 favors him slightly since he has more access to the open lines in the center, while the structure after ...c6xb5 may give the first player a little pull after a pawn exchange on e5 (so long as White is slightly ahead in development).
- Because move orders are so tricky, players of White may sometimes be caught off-guard by Black's various ways to reach the different Fianchetto King's Indian structures. Again, most players should focus on extending their knowledge of typical plans for both sides rather than trying to figure out what move orders to play. We do give our move-order recommendations here in this chapter and in the chapters to come, however.
- Finally, classic games such as Ståhlberg-Boleslavsky from Chapter 1 and Sherwin-Fischer from Chapter 2 are useful examples to study. Any game that is from a bygone era of chess history, however, is often outdated with regard not just to opening theory but also to the execution of specific strategies for both sides. Readers shouldn't be intimidated by famous games that feature wins or draws for Black – instead, they should look to find out what modern improvements have been made to White's play.

Part II

The Fianchetto King's Indian in Modern Times: Black Develops with ...b8-c6

Chapter 6

Meeting Black's ...e7-e5 With an Early c4-c5



1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2
0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Nc3 e5
8. d5 Nxe7 9. c5!?

In Part II of this book, we will cover the lines with Black's 6... Nc6, which lead to different types of positions than the lines with 6... Nbd7. This chapter and the next are devoted to the variation 7. Nc3 e5, Black's attempt to treat White's kingside fianchetto in the same manner that he would treat the Classical King's Indian with 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 0-0 5. Nf3 d6 6. Be2 – that is, with 6... e5 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. d5 Nxe7, the so-called Mar del Plata Variation. There are several disadvantages to this approach for Black, however. White's fianchetto formation on the kingside is too solid for Black to successfully hope to launch an all-out pawn assault with ...f7-f5, ...g6-g5, ...h7-(h6)-h5, and so on. In addition, White often has better control of the key e4 square here than he would in the Mar del Plata Variation.

We will begin our examination of the line 6... Nc6 7. Nc3 e5 with a high-scoring Wojo weapon, the aggressive 8. d5 Nxe7 9. c5!?. With this early pawn break, White strikes at Black's c7-d6-e5 chain before Black has a chance either to grab some space of his own on the queenside (with ...a7-a5, for instance) or to start counterplay on the kingside (with ...Nf6-e8 and ...f7-f5). Wojo played this line primarily to reach the position that occurs after 9... Nxe8 10. cxd6 cxd6!?, which gives White a free hand to attack the queenside with Qd1-b3, a2-a4-a5, and Nf3-d2-c4. Black's other try, 10... Nxd6, is thought to give him a much better shot at equality. However, since over a third of the games in the database after 9. c5 feature Black playing the risky 10... cxd6, Wojo figured he would score (relatively) easy victories with White in this line a high percentage of the time. We'll begin by looking at the positions that Wojo aimed for when he played 9. c5.

Meeting Black's ...c7xd6: White's Queenside Piece Play

After Wojo's weapon 9.c5!?, Black's most common response is 9...♘e8 10.cxd6 cxd6!?. This recapture gives White easy play on the queenside. Essentially, he gets to play a "super-improved" version of the well-known Mar del Plata Variation – that is, he gets to have his fianchetto formation on the kingside, reducing the effectiveness of Black's attacking plans there, while having an accelerated queenside attack, since the c-file has already been cracked open and the support structure for Black's d6-pawn has already been destroyed. In practice, White scores well over 60% after Black's 10...cxd6. For Wojo, this figure was even higher.

This introductory game is a clear-cut demonstration of how White can develop strong queenside play. Black's kingside play is shown to be ineffective, as his pawn storm with ...f7-f5-f4 and ...g6-g5-g4 proves only to further compromise the second player's position.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2540)
Ristoja, Thomas W. (2245)

[E62] Jyväskylä 1991

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
 4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♘c3 ♘c6
 7.0-0 e5

Other seventh moves for Black, including 7...a6, the Panno Variation, are covered later in Part II.

8.d5 ♘e7 9.c5!?

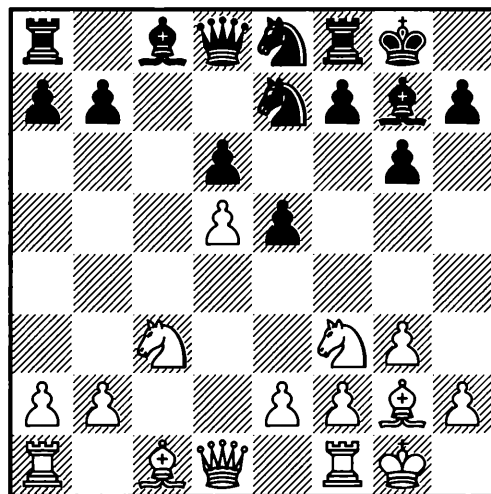
Many of the players who play similarly to Wojo frequently play this move. Grandmasters Ehlvest and Vaganian

have used it multiple times, as has IM Michal Konopka, another Catalan adherent with a repertoire designed for easily destroying club players. The more solid main line with 9.e4 is the subject of the next chapter. Although Wojo himself preferred the tricky 9.c5!?, it is worth noting that his protégé Kamil Miton plays 9.e4.

9...♘e8 10.cxd6

Obviously, White's intention is not to support his c5-pawn. Instead, he wants to exchange it as quickly as possible, compromising Black's queenside defenses.

10...cxd6!?



Janjgava claims that this move "is just bad, since White has achieved the opening of the c-file without loss of time..." Black will also suffer from having a weak d6-pawn. Yet this move is more common than the theory-approved 10...♘xd6, which we will examine in a later section of this chapter. It is not absolutely clear that the text move – which has been played frequently by Belarusian GM Viktor Kupreichik – is a mistake, since play in the middlegame

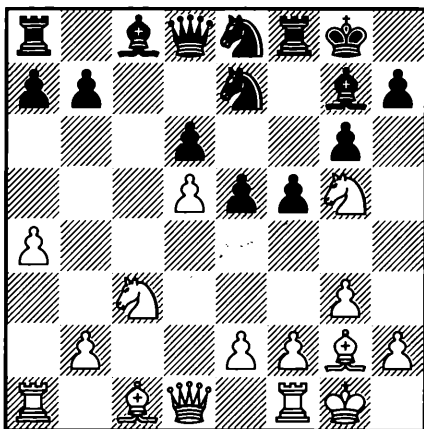
often becomes quite complex and Black often has reasonable chances of getting his kingside pawn storm to work. Recapturing with 10...cxd6 is also perhaps more in the spirit of the King's Indian Defense than 10...dxd6 is, since Black hopes (perhaps against the odds) to start shoving his f-, g-, and h-pawns down the board against White's king.

11.a4

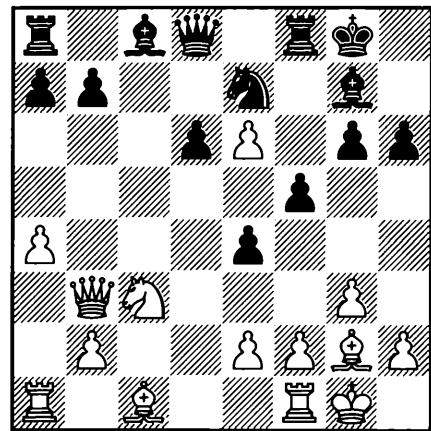
White begins to stake out territory on the queenside. Sometimes, White plays the pawn all the way to a5 in an effort to gain space. We recommend the move order with the immediate 11.♞b3, however, to avoid the possibility mentioned in the note to Black's next move.

11...h6

Black can also try playing for ...f7-f5 without this preparatory move. 11...f5!? here looks to be Black's best move. Now 12.♘g5 is considered the critical try, taking advantage of Black's omission; if instead 12.♘d2, then 12...g5 13.♘c4 ♘g6 is fine for Black, who has saved time by not having to play ...h7-h6. One example: 14.♙d2 ♜f7 15.♞c1 g4 16.♞b3 h5 17.♘b5 ♙f8 allowed Black to efficiently organize his kingside in C.McNab-V.Kupreichik, Denmark 1992. Returning to 12.♘g5:



12...♘c7 (12...♘f6 13.♞b3 h6 was seen in D.Lopushnoy-A.Shchupaleev, Russia 1999, when after 14.♘e6 ♙xe6 15.dxe6 d5 16.♞d1 e4 17.♞xb7, White was up a pawn and had the bishop pair. Black sacrificed his a7-pawn with 17...♞b8?! and was lost after 18.♞xa7 ♞b6 19.a5 ♞xe6 20.♙e3 g5 21.a6 and so on.) 13.♞b3 h6 14.♘e6 ♘xe6 15.dxe6, when here Kupreichik's move 15...e4 may give Black equality:



a) 16.f3 d5 17.fxe4 dxe4 (17...fxe4 18.♞xf8+ ♔xf8 19.♙e3 seems to give White the initiative) 18.♞d1 ♞b6+ 19.♞xb6 axb6 looks good for Black, who has the more solid pawn structure.

b) 16.♞d1 d5 17.f3 ♙xe6 18.♞xb7?! (18.fxe4 fxe4 19.♘xe4, with at best a very slight initiative for White, was preferable) d4 19.fxe4 ♞b8 20.♞xa7 was seen in A.Greenfeld-V.Kupreichik, Yugoslavia 1989, but here 20...♘c6! would have devastated White after 21.♞c5 ♘a5 22.♞b1 ♘b3 23.♞a3 dxc3! 24.♞xd8 ♞bxd8 25.bxc3 ♞d1+ 26.♔f2 fxe4+ 27.♙f4 e3+! 28.♔xe3 ♞xb1 and so on. Instead, Kupreichik played 20...♙b3?! and went on to lose, relegating the move 15...e4 to obscurity.

For this reason, we recommend that White play 11.♞b3 immediately, as seen in Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer below. In fact, it is entirely possible that after 11.a4 f5, White's best option is just

to play 12.♖b3. Perhaps Black would have nothing better there than 12...h6, which transposes back into the line with 11.♖b3.

12.♘d2

The white knight is headed to c4, piling up on the weak d6-pawn.

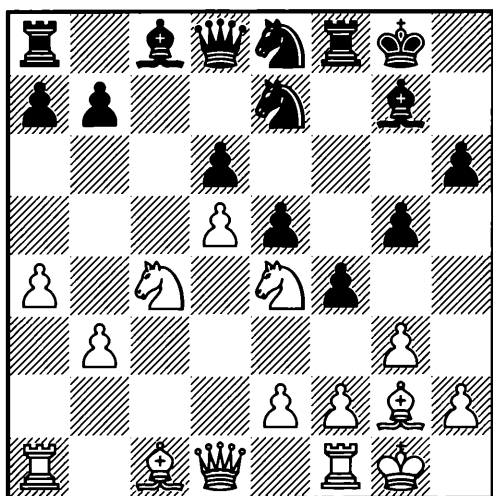
12...f5 13.♘c4 f4?!

The more common 13...g5 is seen in Wojtkiewicz-Kretchetov below. This gives White the e4 square too early in the middlegame. At the very least, Black should wait until White has played ♘c3-b5. That way, White would have to waste two moves to go back and play ♘b5-c3-e4.

14.♘e4

White takes advantage of Black's concession of e4. Note that now both of his knights attack the black pawn on d6.

14...g5 15.b3



Although White often elects to play ♖b3 and ♙c1-d2-b4 instead of b2-b3 and ♙c1-a3, in this case he senses that Black is going to blow a fuse on the

kingside. Thus, he leaves the queen on d1 to take advantage of Black's self-created weaknesses on the light squares.

15...g4

Black wastes no time in throwing his pawns at White's king. 15...♘f5 was met by 16.e3, loosening up Black's grip on the kingside, in C.Bielicki-H. Filgueira, Buenos Aires 1992. The game saw White tighten his grip on the position with 16...♘f6 17.♙a3 ♘xe4 18.♙xe4 ♖f6 19.♖c1 and go on to win.

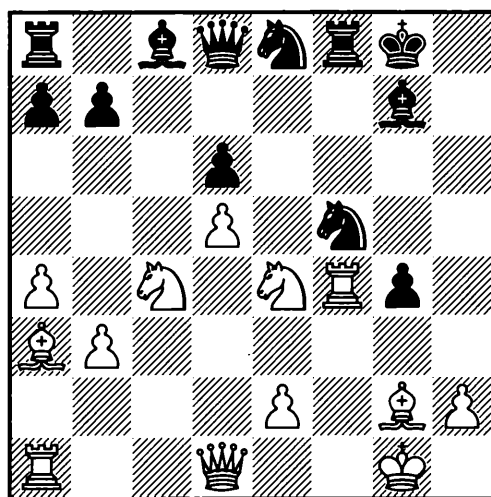
16.♙a3 ♘f5 17.f3!

Black is so far behind in development by this point that he will not be able to maintain his attacking posture on the kingside for long.

17...h5

17...gxf3, admitting that the attack was premature, was probably preferable. White can recapture on f3 with either the pawn or the bishop and have the better chances; Black's pieces are tied down to defending his d6-pawn. After the text move, Black drops a pawn.

18.fxg4 hxg4 19.gxf4 exf4 20.♖xf4!



White offers the exchange, but Black cannot accept it.

20...♘h4

Equally bad is 20...♙xa1 21.♖xa1, when White has tremendous compensation. Black's king is open and he will struggle to defend his weak d6- and g4-pawns.

21.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 22.♖d2 ♘xg2 23.♖xg2 ♕f5 24.♖f4

Black's position on the kingside has been damaged beyond repair. He will suffer from poor king safety the rest of the game.

24...♕xe4+ 25.♖xe4 ♖g5 26.♖e6+ ♖h8 27.♖f1 ♕g7 28.♖f7

28.♕xd6 was likely faster.

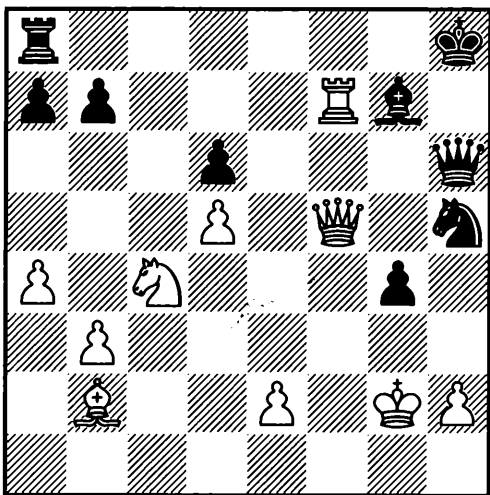
28...♘f6

Black's counterplay runs out after 28...♖h5 29.♘xd6 ♖h3+ 30.♖h1.

29.♕b2 ♘h5 30.♖f5 ♖h6

30...♖xf5 31.♖xf5 would trap Black's knight on h5.

31.♕c1



A decisive deflection sacrifice.

31...♖xc1 32.♖xh5+ ♖g8 33.♖f5

Threatening ♖f7+. 33.♖g6 would also have left Black in a hopeless position, for instance, 33...♖c3 34.♘xd6 ♖e5 35.♘e4, winning.

33...♖f8 34.♘xd6 ♖xf5 35.♖xf5

The rest of the game shows how well White's queen and knight can work together against Black's exposed king.

35...♖d1 36.♖e6+ ♖h7 37.♖e4+ ♖g8 38.♘f5 ♖xb3 39.d6 ♕f8 40.d7 ♖h3+ 41.♖g1 ♕c5+ 42.e3 1-0

There is no way to stop White from queening without Black's getting mated.

After the often-criticized 10... cxd6!? – Black's most common continuation after Wojo's 9.c5!? – Black was unable to get a strong kingside attack by thrusting his f-, g-, and h-pawns down the board. Although such an attack might work in a "normal" King's Indian Defense position, here it ended up just exposing Black's king, not White's. White piled up on the d6-pawn with typical maneuvers like a2-a4, ♘f3-d2-c4, b2-b3 with ♕c1-a3, and ♘c3-e4, tying Black down. Eventually, White cracked the kingside with 17.f3! and spent the second half of the game performing a mopup operation. The biggest problem for Black in this game was probably that he ceded the e4 square to White so early on; the rest of the games in this chapter feature Black waiting to commit to ..f5-f4.

The next game contains many similar elements to this first one, including an attack on Black's exposed king led by the white queen. The player of the black pieces is significantly stronger in this game, however, so the middlegame is much more complex.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2560) Nijboer, Friso (2530)

[E62] Wijk aan Zee 1994

1.♟f3 d6 2.d4 g6 3.c4 ♟g7 4.♟c3
♟f6 5.g3 0-0 6.♟g2 ♟c6 7.0-0 e5
8.d5 ♟e7 9.c5 ♟e8 10.cxd6 cxd6
11.♞b3

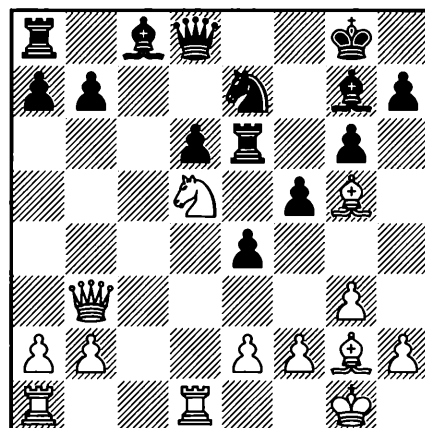
Wojo normally just played 11.a4 here, as in the previous game. But perhaps against such a strong opponent, Wojo was more wary of allowing Black the possibility of an early ...f7-f5.

The text precludes the possibility of b2-b3 and ♟c1-a3 and also takes the queen away from the action on the kingside, but this is a small price to pay for forcing Black to waste a tempo on ...h7-h6. For this reason, we recommend the text move.

11...h6

Here, this preparatory move is absolutely necessary. 11...f5?! 12.♟g5 is simply good for White, as the position of his queen on b3 is advantageous. 12...♟c7 13.♞d1 ♞f6 was V.Bukal-I. Vukić, Croatia 1995, when here 14.♟e6! would have given White a tremendous position, for instance, 14...♟xe6 15.dxe6 e4 (alternatives are 15...♟xe6 16.♞xb7 e4 17.♟f4 d5 18.♞ac1, with a big advantage for the first player, and 15...h6 16.♟e3 e4 17.♞d2 ♞xe6 18.♞ad1 ♟h7 19.♟c5, which also looks good for

White) 16.♟g5 ♞xe6 (16...♟xe6 17.♞xb7 ♞b8 18.♞a6! ♞b6 19.♞xa7 ♞f7 20.♞d2 followed by ♞ad1 leaves White up a pawn) 17.♟d5:

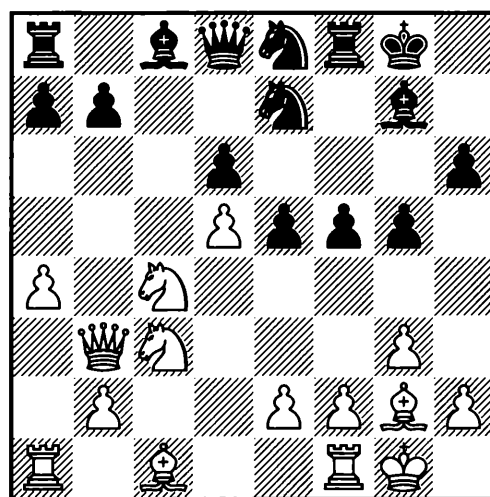


White plans to play ♞ac1 or ♞a3 before winning his material back with ♟xe7+.

12.a4 f5 13.♟d2 g5

13...f4?! immediately would weaken the e4 square, just as in the previous game. Because Black's idea is ...♟e7-f5-d4, however, targeting the e2-pawn, White should not be in a rush to occupy the center with 14.♟e4. Instead, he is better off playing 14.♟c4 ♟f5 15.e3, stopping Black's counterplay and chiseling away at his kingside pawn chain. After 15...g5, White can then respond with 16.♟e4.

14.♟c4



14...g4

Once again, Black throws his king-side pawns down the board. Black played in a more restrained fashion in L.Ortega-E.Leuthgens, Italy 1993, with 14...♟g6 15.♞d2 ♜f7 16.♜b5 ♞f8, but this just let White focus on building his queenside play. The game continued 17.♞b4 h5 18.♞a3 ♜f6 19.♞ac1 h4 20.a5, when Black blundered with 20...♞d7?, allowing 21.♜xa7! ♜xa7 22.♜b6 ♞b5 23.♞xc8. White went on to win.

15.♞d1

15.f3, breaking up the kingside pawns, was certainly possible here. 15...gxf3 16.♞xf3 would allow White to keep a nice edge. With the text, White has a particular idea in mind.

15...f4 16.♜e4

Just as in the previous game, White takes advantage of the weakening of the e4 square.

16...♜f5

Alternatively, 16...fxg3 17.fxg3 (this pawn formation looks harder for Black to crack open than the one after 17.hxg3) 17...♜f5 18.♞d3, followed by b2-b3 and ♞c1-a3, looks comfortable for White.

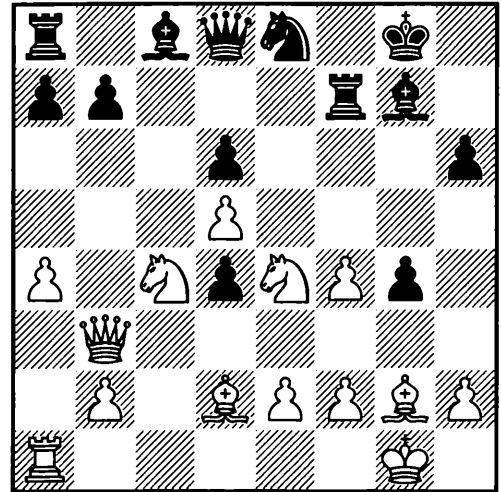
17.gxf4!? ♜d4

Far worse is 17...exf4?! 18.♞xf4 ♜d4 19.♞xd4 (not 19.♞e3 ♜xe2+) 19...♞xd4 20.♞xh6, when Black's king is open.

18.♞xd4

The point. This is a powerful

exchange sacrifice, giving White a monopoly on play in the center.

18...exd4 19.♞d2 ♜f7**20.e3**

20.♞c1, just continuing to build up White's position, was also possible.

20...♞f5 21.♜g3 dxe3 22.fxe3 ♞h7 23.e4

White's strong pawn center and superior piece mobility fully compensate for his material. Black's bishop on h7 will find itself shut out of the game after White's f4-f5 push, and the d6-pawn will remain a weakness throughout the middlegame.

23...♞c8 24.♞e3 ♜fc7 25.♞f1 ♜h8 26.♞e1 ♜f6 27.f5 h5

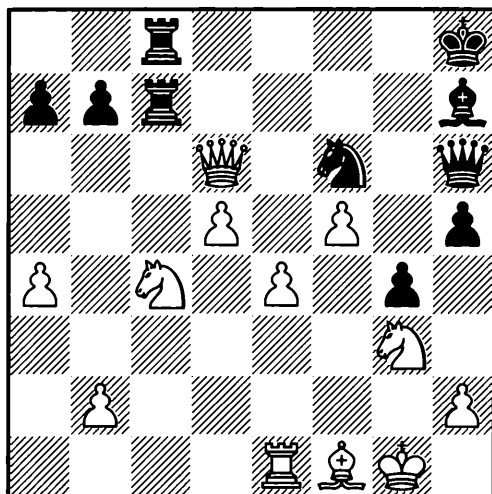
Black continues to look for counter-play, but of course, this pawn push has the usual drawback: it weakens Black's kingside further.

28.♞g5 ♞f8 29.♞b4 ♞h6?!

This was probably the result of time trouble. Black cedes the weak d6-pawn without further ado. 29...♞d7, clinging

to the pawn, was a better attempt to hold the position.

30. ♖xh6 ♜xh6

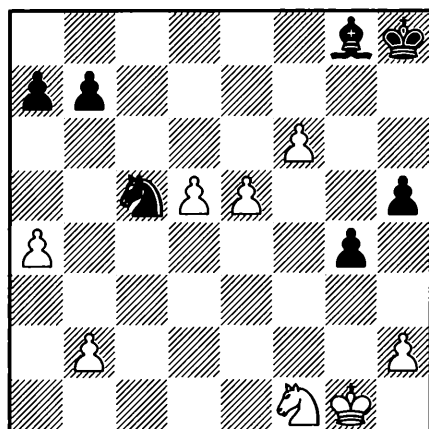


31. ♜xd6?

This allows Black to get at least a draw, if not more. 31. ♖xd6 instead was correct. For instance, 31... ♜f8? 32. e5 ♖xd5 33. ♜d4 would lose for Black, and 31... ♜f8 32. ♖b5 ♖d7 (or 32... ♜c2 33. ♖d4! and ♖e6) 33. ♜d4 with the idea of ♖b5-c3 and e4-e5 would be powerful for White.

31... ♜g7?

31... ♜xc4 here was necessary. Then 32. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 33. e5?! ♜c1! would give White trouble, as 34. ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ (34... ♜e3+ 35. ♖g2 ♜f3+ 36. ♖g1 ♜e3+ leads to a draw) 35. ♖f1 ♖e4 36. ♜f8+ ♖g8 37. f6 ♜c5+ 38. ♜xc5 ♖xc5 would give Black the better ending:



White will likely win back his piece with e5-e6 and f6-f7, but Black will be better positioned after that. So White must play 33. ♜e5 instead, when 33... h4! 34. ♖h5 ♜c1 should again allow Black a draw by perpetual check.

32. e5

Now White is winning.

32... ♖e8 33. f6! ♜g5

33... ♖xd6 34. fxe7+ ♖xe7 35. ♖xd6 leaves White up substantial material.

34. ♜f8+ ♖g8 35. ♖e4 ♜f4

35... ♜h4 36. ♜e3 ♜xc4, trying to get counterplay against White's king, would lose to 37. ♜h6+ ♖h7 38. f7.

36. e6 ♖h7 37. f7 ♜g7 38. fxe8 ♜+ ♜xe8 1-0

Black resigned before White could play 39. ♜xf4.

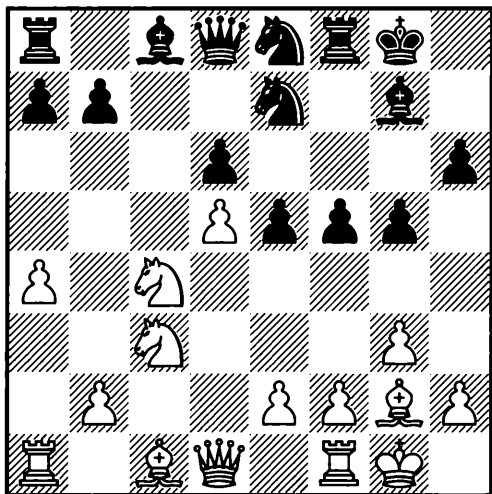
This game saw White play our recommended move 11. ♜b3, which forces Black to play the preparatory 11... h6 before venturing ...f7-f5, but has the drawback of taking the queen away from the action on the kingside. White sacrificed an exchange for a pawn in order to break up Black's kingside play, and the result was that Black's king was left without pawn cover. This eventually proved the decisive factor, though not without some serious errors from both sides during the time-pressure phase around move 30. White had the better chances throughout most of the game, but it was hardly one-sided.

The next game features several instructive inaccuracies. White ever so slightly misplays his attack on the queenside early on, making moves that give Black several counterattacking resources later in the game. To make matters worse, White does nothing at all to stop Black from conjuring up an attack on the kingside, and he later suffers mightily for it.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2572)
Kretchetov, Alexandre (2300)

[E62] San Francisco 2001

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 e5
 8.d5 ♘e7 9.c5 ♘e8 10.cxd6 cxd6
 11.a4 h6 12.♘d2 f5 13.♘c4 g5



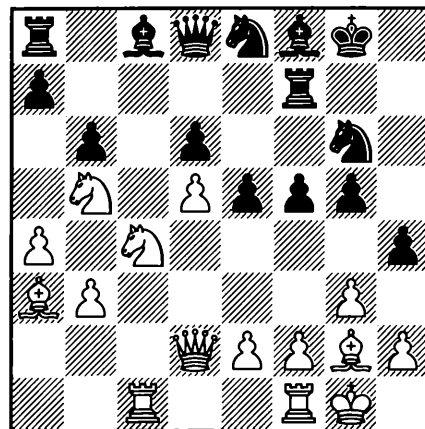
The text is far more common than 13...f4, which we saw in Wojtkiewicz-Ristoja above.

14.♗d2

This move has several advantages for White. It keeps the b3 square open for the queen, but also wastes no time in preparing ♘c3-b5 and ♗d2-b4. Note that 14.♞b3 would transpose back into Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer above. Moving the queen to b3 immediately scores the

best for White in practice, but the text also looks accurate.

J.Ehlvest-D.Werner, France 1993, saw 14.b3 with the idea of ♗a3 instead. The game continued 14...♘g6 15.♗a3 ♜f7 16.♞c1 ♗f8 17.♞d2 h5 18.♘b5 h4 (18...a6 would allow 19.♘c3 followed by a4-a5 and ♘b6) 19.♞a5!? b6 20.♞d2:

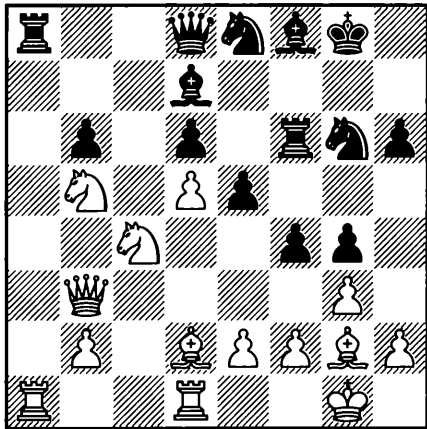


Here Black erred with 20...♗a6?, allowing 21.♘cxd6! ♘xd6 22.♗xd6 ♗xb5 (22...♗xd6 23.♘xd6 ♞xd6 24.♞c6 wins the knight on g6 for White) 23.♗xf8. Then play continued 23...hxc3 24.♗h6 gxh2+ 25.♖h1 ♗d7 26.♗xg5 ♞e8 27.d6 e4 28.♞c7 ♞e6 and White, with his powerful bishop pair, went on to win after breaking up Black's center with 29.f3.

In a later game, Black tried instead 20...♞g7, when matters were a little less clear in E.Bayer-D.Werner, Germany 1998. White might have tried here 21.♘c3!? g4 22.♘a2 with an eye toward bringing the knight to c6 via b4, but Black is holding after 22...a5. Perhaps White's move 19 was not the most accurate, since White should be trying to provoke...a7-a6, not ...b7-b6. In any case, the plan with b2-b3 and ♗c1-a3 has never been as popular as the text move.

14...♞f7

Black tries to remain flexible on the kingside. He does not commit his pawns to any specific formation just yet. M.Draško-I.Sofronie, Yugoslavia 2004, continued 14...g4 15.♘b5 ♘g6 16.♙b3 f4 17.♙b4 ♖f6 18.♗fd1 ♙f8 19.♗ac1 ♘h8, when here 20.♙a5 b6 21.♙d2 ♘g6 22.a5 ♙d7 23.axb6 axb6 24.♗a1 gave White the better chances:

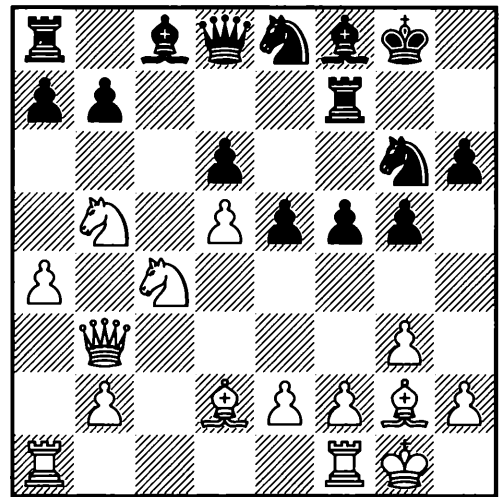


The rest of the game is instructive in that it shows how White can go wrong. Play continued 24...♗xa1 25.♗xa1 ♖f7 26.♙e1 (a good move, guarding the tender f2-pawn) 26...h5 27.♘c3 b5 (practically forced) 28.♘xb5 h4 29.♘c3 hxg3 30.hxg3 f3 31.exf3 gxf3 32.♙h1 ♙g5, when White needed to play 33.♘e4 ♙g4 34.♘cd2, holding his kingside together. Black will have a hard time breaking through, giving his opponent time to consolidate and start counterattacking along the seventh rank. Instead, White played 33.♗a7?! ♘f4 34.♗xd7 ♗xd7 35.♘e4 ♘e2+ 36.♙f1 ♙g6 37.♙xf3 ♘d4, when Black was doing fine. After some further errors on White's part, Black went on to win.

15.♘b5

15.♙b3 instead would transpose to Lempert-Hennigan below. Either move seems fine, and to some extent, the move orders are interchangeable.

15...♘g6 16.♙b3 ♙f8



17.♙e3?!

Most of White's difficulties later on in this game can be blamed on this move, which wastes time. The bishop will be forced to relocate eventually when Black plays ...f5-f4. 17.♙b4 instead looks more accurate. 17.♗ac1, simply continuing the pressure, was also good. After either of these two moves, White can eventually pile up on d6 by playing ♙a3 at some point, a maneuver that would be pointless after the text.

17...a6

This is the move that White was hoping to provoke. 17...b6 might put up a more stubborn resistance on the queenside, though here White could proceed with 18.a5, opening lines further.

18.♘c3

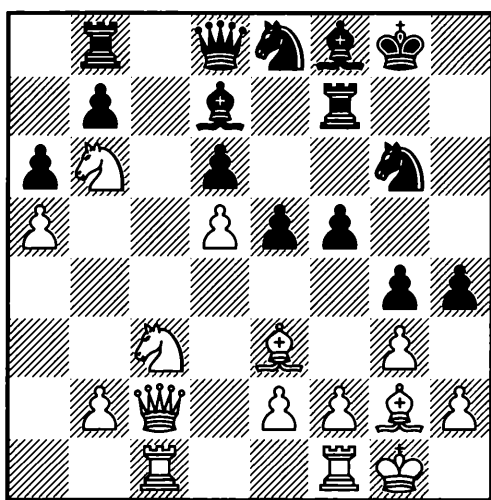
White is not in a hurry to occupy the b6 square. 18.♙b6 ♙e7 19.♘c3 is certainly not better than the text move, as it is White's knight, not his bishop, that is headed for b6.

18...h5 19.♖ac1 h4

19...f4 20.♕d2 followed by ♖c3-e4 by White was Black's other option. In this game, Black chooses not to weaken his e4 square.

20.♗c2

White prevents ...f5-f4 by Black, doubles on the c-file, and prepares b2-b4-b5 at some point.

20...g4 21.a5 ♕d7 22.♖b6 ♜b8**23.♖xd7**

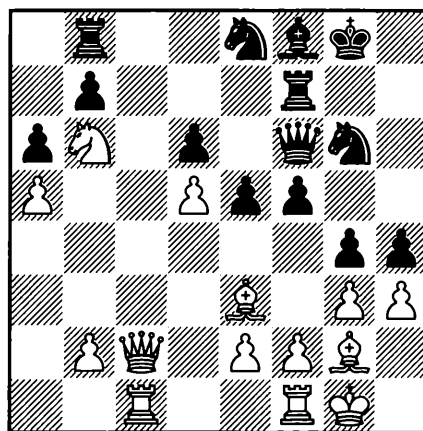
This move is straightforward, but White's haste to exchange pieces feels unjustified. 23.b4 first, to avoid the possibility mentioned in the note to Black's move 24, was more accurate. 23.f3, breaking open the kingside, was also preferable. White can win the two bishops with ♖xd7 later on in the process of tearing apart Black's kingside formation. With the text move White wins the bishop pair, but he also loses time. He will have to invest two more moves with ♖c3-a4-b6 to get another knight to the b6 outpost.

23...♗xd7 24.♖a4 ♗d8

After this move, it becomes clear that White has made some progress. He has won the bishop pair, reducing the chances that Black's attack on the kingside will be effective. He also has provoked weaknesses in Black's queenside and is prepared to invade along the c-file. 24...♗b5 instead was the way to go, since 25.♕d2 would drop the e2-pawn after 25...h3 26.♕h1 ♗xe2. White might have been planning 25.f3 or 25.h3 instead, breaking open the kingside to exploit his two bishops. White would then have the initiative, but his grip on the position would also be loosening up at the same time.

25.♖b6 ♗f6 26.♕d2

This is a key moment in the game. White's play is natural enough, but his advantage is slipping away. *Rybka 4* suggests instead 26.h3!?, when White hopes to use his two bishops and lead in development to crack open Black's kingside, wresting back the initiative on that side of the board:



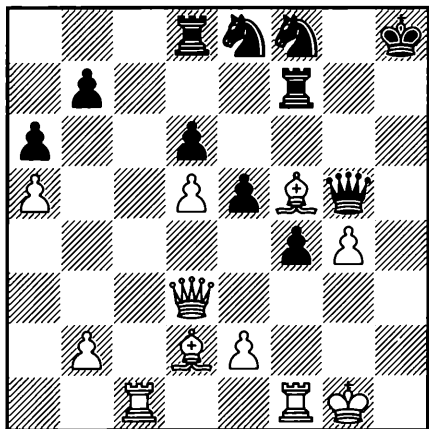
This computer-found strike is particularly instructive because it shows how White can fight to break up Black's kingside pawns. However, it seems unlikely that any non-silicon player would ever venture the move, since human intuition senses that Black will (at least at this point in time) benefit more from

the opening of the kingside than White will. The reason for this is simple: Black currently has more pieces amassed on the kingside than White does.

After more extensive analysis, *Rybka* eventually downgrades White from having a clear advantage after 26.h3!? to having a very slight one at best. Three possible options for Black all seem to lead to a playable game for the second player here, though White may still be able to claim the better chances:

a) 26...gxh3 27.♙xh3 e4 28.♖g2 ♜e5 (28...f4? 29.♙e6! wins for White) 29.♞d2 ♞g6 30.♙g5 hxg3 (30...♙e7 31.♙xe7 ♞xe7 32.♞f4) 31.fxg3 with an eye to ♞f4 would allow White good chances on the kingside.

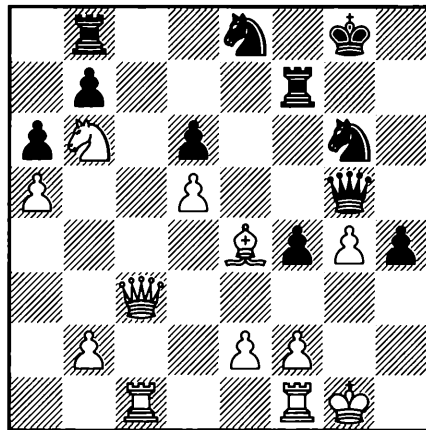
b) 26...hxg3 27.fxg3 f4 28.♙d2 gxh3 29.♙xh3 ♞g5 30.♞d3 ♞h7 31.♙e6+ ♜h8 32.♜d7 ♞d8 33.♜xf8 ♜xf8 34.♙f5 ♞f7 35.g4 with perhaps very slightly better chances for White:



For instance, play might continue 35...♜g7 36.♞h3+ ♜g8 37.♙e4 ♜f5!? 38.♙xf5 ♞xf5 39.e3 with a pull for White.

c) 26...f4 27.gxf4 exf4 28.♙d4! ♞g5 (or 28...♜e5 29.hxg4) 29.hxg4 ♙g7 30.♙xg7 ♜xg7 (or 30...♜xg7 31.♜c4 ♜f5 32.♜h2, and here 32...♞xg4? 33.♙f3 ♞g5 34.♜xd6! ♜xd6 35.♞g1

wins for White, so Black must play 32...♜d4 33.♞d3 with a slight initiative for White) 31.♞c3+ ♜g8 32.♙e4:



32...♜f6 (opening the g-file with 32...♞xg4+ 33.♜h2 only seems to help White, for instance 33...f3 34.exf3 ♞f4+ 35.♜h3! ♜e5 36.♞g1+ ♜f8 37.♞e3 and so on) 33.♙xg6 ♞xg6 34.f3 and White is up a pawn, but the position remains unclear, given Black's superior control of the dark squares.

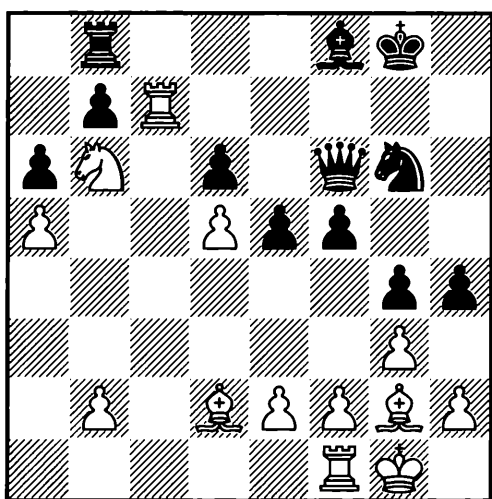
In sum, two arguments can be made about the position before White's move 26. One can argue either that the first player should avoid putting too much stock in computer evaluations and rely more on intuition, citing as evidence how bizarre and dangerous the above lines are; or, one can claim that White still has an advantage if he plays precisely, and that he should indeed venture the risky 26.h3!?. Although it is difficult to know for sure which argument is better, what is clear is that, by this point in the game, it seems that White has already played a few too many fishy moves to count on having an easy edge.

26...♜c7 27.♞xc7?!

The black knight was coming to b5, so White decides it is time to sacrifice his queen for strong positional

compensation on the queenside. Unfortunately for White, however, Black's kingside attack is now able to pick up steam. 27.f3, cracking open the kingside, was again possible, but after 27...hxg3 28.hxg3 gxf3 29.♙xf3 ♖b5, Black is getting some counterplay. White certainly does not seem worse here, however, so this was probably preferable to the text.

27...♙xc7 28.♙xc7



In exchange for his lost point of material, White has well-placed pieces. He has control of the seventh rank, the two bishops, and strong pressure on the queenside. It is difficult to gauge how much, if any, of his original advantage he retains here, as White – being the stronger player – outplays his opponent from this point onward. Over the next several moves, it becomes apparent that Black now has his fair share of the chances, so it is entirely possible that White really does not have enough compensation for his queen here.

28...♙d8!?

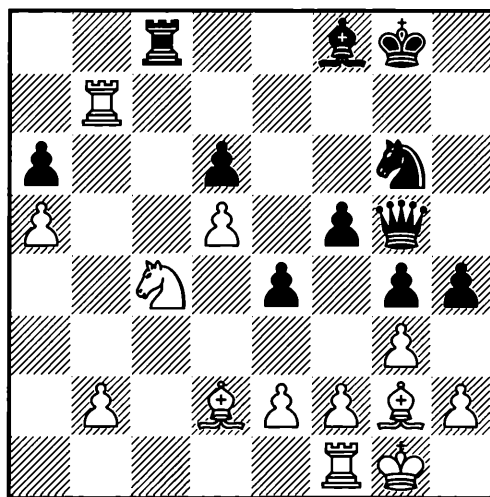
Black sacrifices the b7-pawn. 28...h3 29.♙h1 e4!, shutting out the White light-squared bishop, was probably the most accurate approach. Now

after 30.♖d7 ♜f7 31.♙fc1 ♙e8!, Black is absolutely okay, since 32.♙xb7?? ♖e5 would win the d7-knight for Black.

29.♙xb7 e4 30.♙c3 ♜g5 31.♖c4?!

This retreat hands the initiative back to Black. 31.♙a7, continuing the rampage on the queenside, might run into 31...hxg3 32.hxg3 e3 with counterplay. But 31.♖d7, threatening ♖f6+, might have been another way for White to play. White would then at least keep the initiative.

31...♙c8 32.♙d2



The point of White's previous move, but there is a flaw in his plan. Alternatively, 32.b3 h3 33.♙h1 ♖e7 was bad for White, since he has no way to defend his d-pawn: 34.♙d1 ♖xd5 35.♙xd5?? ♜c1+ leads to mate.

32...♜f6?!

After this retreat, White is fine. 32...f4! instead would have given White fits. The knight on c4 is hanging, but Black is also threatening to grab the pawn on d5. 33.♖b6 ♙c2 34.♙xf4 ♖xf4 35.gxf4 ♜xf4 would have left Black with the upper hand thanks to his kingside possibilities and better mobility.

33.♘e3

White has now succeeded in re-positioning his pieces, so it is only a matter of time before Black's kingside pawns are found to be weak rather than strong.

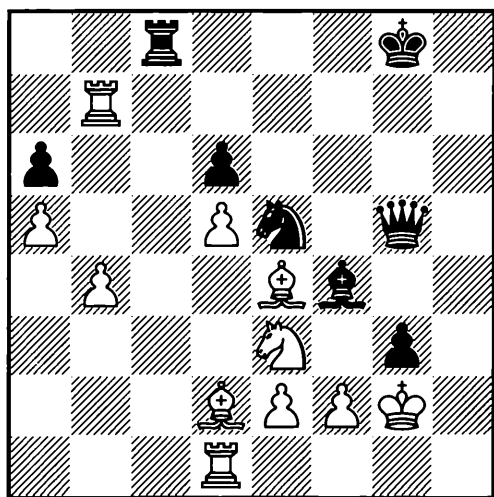
33...hxf3 34.hxf3 ♘e5 35.b4 ♙h6 36.♞d1

36.♘xf5 was also possible, since 36...♙xd2? 37.♘e7+ would win for White. Instead, 36...♞xf5 37.♙xh6 ♘f7 38.♙f4 ♞xd5 is Black's best.

36...f4

Black correctly decides it is time to strike. If he sits around forever, White – who holds several positional trumps, such as his superior standing on the queenside – will be able to slowly make progress.

37.gxf4 ♙xf4 38.♙xe4 ♞g5 39.♔g2 g3



40.♘f5!

White's only move to defend against Black's numerous threats.

40...♙xd2??

Black reacts incorrectly. The text is a blunder. Correct was 40...gxf2+ first, since after 41.♔xf2, Black has two options:

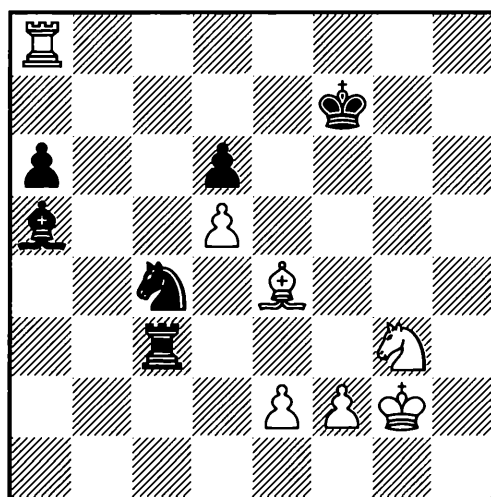
a) 41...♙xd2 42.♞g7+ ♞xg7 43.♘xg7 ♙xb4 44.♘f5, with a slight advantage for White.

b) 41...♘g4+ would lead to a draw by perpetual check after 42.♔f3 ♘h2+ 43.♔f2 ♘g4+, as 44.♔f1?? ♙xd2 45.♞g7+ ♞xg7 46.♘xg7 ♘e3+ or 44.♔e1?? ♙xd2+ 45.♞xd2 ♔f8!! both win for Black. In the latter case, Black's subtle king move would leave White unable to deal with the threats against his own king.

41.♞g7+ ♞xg7 42.♘xg7 ♙xb4 43.♘f5

Now White is winning. He threatens ♘e7+, winning the rook on c8, so Black is unable to deal with the threat against his g3-pawn.

43...♞c3 44.♘xg3 ♘c4 45.♞b1 ♙xa5 46.♞b8+ ♔f7 47.♞a8



White mops up the black pawns.

47...♙b6 48.♞xa6 ♙c5 49.♙f5 ♘e5 50.♘e4 ♞c1 51.♘xd6+ 1-0

Black, having lost all hope, resigns.

White played a few fishy moves in the middlegame and ended up getting into considerable trouble. His advantage on the queenside started slipping away thanks to choices like 17.♔e3?! and 23.♖xd7, and since he never challenged Black's supremacy on the kingside (26.h3!? of 27.f3 were two such tries), the second player eventually did stir up a tremendous attack against White's king. The game took a bizarre turn after 27.♔xc7?!, a queen sacrifice that, in hindsight, is objectively bad for White. Wojo did manage to outplay his weaker opponent in the end, eventually capitalizing on Black's failure to find a perpetual check on move 40. This game should serve as a warning to all players of the white pieces not to automatically ignore Black's kingside pawn march.

By this point, we've invested a lot of time looking over different piece configurations that White and Black can adopt after 10...cxd6!?. We've seen White play (after a2-a4 and ♖f3-d2-c4) the maneuver b2-b3 and ♔c1-a3, allowing his queen to keep an eye on the kingside. We've also seen White play for ♔c1-d2-b4 and ♔d1-b3-a3, piling up on the d6-pawn. In some of the games, Black ceded the e4 square to White, allowing ♖c3-e4 – something which was generally a mistake for Black. We've also seen him play slowly with ...h7-h6, ...f7-f5, ...g6-g5, ...♖f8-f7, ...♔g7-f8, ...g5-g4, ...h6-h5-h4, and so on. The purpose of the final game for this section is to tie everything together while introducing one last idea that White can employ – marching his a-pawn straight to a6.

Lempert, Igor (2510) Hennigan, Michael (2410)

[E62] Cappelle-la-Grande 1995

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♔g7 4.♔g2 0-0 5.♖c3 d6 6.♖f3 ♖c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♖e7 9.c5 ♖e8 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.♔b3

Our recommended move, since, as we've pointed out, 11.a4 f5 12.♖g5 ♖c7 13.♔b3 h6 14.♖e6 ♖xe6 15.dxe6 e4 is not promising for White. See the note to Black's move 11 in Wojtkiewicz-Ristoja above.

11...h6 12.♖d2

12.a4 was seen in Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer above. The text seems essentially equivalent.

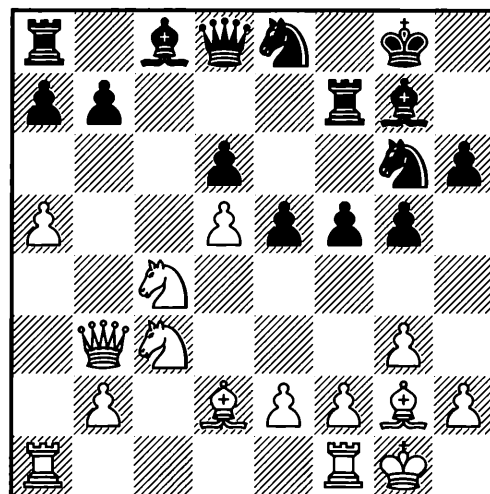
12...f5 13.♖c4 g5 14.♔d2 ♖f7

14...g4 15.a4 would be similar to the Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer game. The text shows Black playing more patiently.

15.a4

We have now transposed back into the game Ortega-Luethgens, elaborated upon in the note to Black's move 14 in Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer.

15...♖g6 16.a5!?



16.♘b5, the move played in the aforementioned game Ortega-Luethgens, was a move more in Wojo's style, but Lempert's idea of just marching the a-pawn down the board also deserves attention. Ortega's move, which has the idea of ♕d2-b4 and ♖b3-a3, appears stronger at first glance, but both plans appear to set Black considerable problems.

16...♕f8 17.a6!?

A good idea. Rather than using artificial-looking moves to provoke a weakness from Black on the queenside, White simply attacks directly. This has the advantage of not losing any time with awkward maneuvers like ♕d2-e3, as we saw in Wojtkiewicz-Kretchetov above.

17...b6

17...bxa6 18.♘a5 would allow White's knight to come to the c6 square.

18.♘b5

White now has a powerful bind on the queenside and will have a free hand to pile up on the d6-pawn.

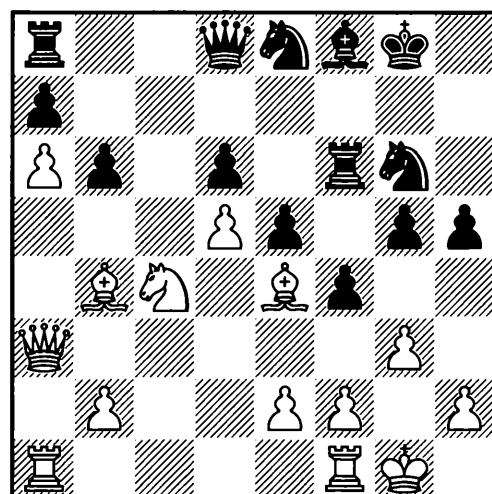
18...h5

18...♘c7 was a better try here, trying to free up Black's position a bit.

19.♕b4 f4?!

19...g4 was the alternative way to proceed on the kingside. The text has the usual disadvantage of weakening the e4 square. White capitalizes accordingly.

20.♖a3 ♜f6 21.♘c3 ♕f5 22.♘e4 ♕xe4 23.♕xe4



White's light-square dominance will now prove telling, as Black's kingside pawns are on dark squares. The attack on Black's king will slip around from behind.

23...♘h8 24.♜ac1 ♖d7 25.♘d2

Clearing the c-file and preparing to transfer the knight to the ever-powerful e4 square.

25...♘f7 26.♜c6 h4 27.♖d3 hxc3 28.hxc3 ♖h3 29.♕g2 ♖h5 30.♜fc1 g4

30...♜h6 31.♘e4 would leave Black with little attack to speak of on the kingside.

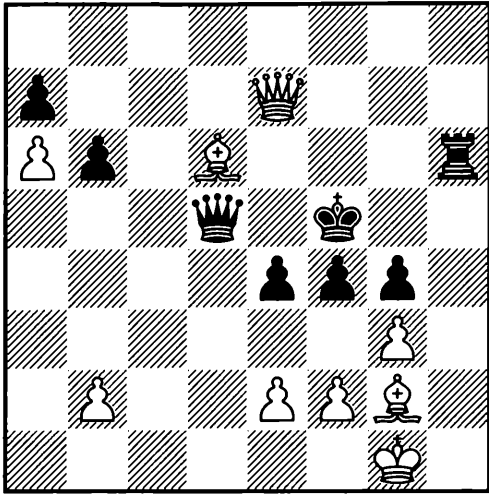
31.♘e4 ♜h6 32.♜c8

At this point, White is winning. He is crashing through on the queenside, wreaking havoc and destruction on Black's forces.

32...♜xc8 33.♜xc8 ♘f6 34.♘d6 ♘xd6 35.♕xd6 e4

Desperation.

36. ♖xf8+ ♔g7 37. ♚c3 ♚xd5
 38. ♚c7+ ♔g6 39. ♖xf6+ ♔xf6
 40. ♚e7+ ♔f5



41. ♕xe4+

41. ♚d7+! ♚e6 42. ♚b5+ ♔g6
 43. ♕xf4 was more accurate, as White

has threats on g5 as well as on e4 after
 43... ♖h5 44. ♚b4.

41... ♚xe4 42. ♚f7+ ♖f6 43. ♚h7+
 ♖g6 44. ♕xf4

White is still winning here, thanks
 to Black's exposed king. Once again, it
 is White, not Black, who gets to play
 for a mating attack.

44... ♚b1+ 45. ♔h2 ♚e1 46. ♔g2
 ♚b4

This loses instantly, but there is
 nothing else to recommend.

47. ♚h5+ ♔f6 48. ♕e5+ ♔f7
 49. ♚f5+ 1-0

Another plan White can choose in these positions is to ram the a-pawn up the board to a6. It worked particularly well in this case since Black mishandled things on the kingside with 19...f4?!, weakening the light squares.

Conclusion: When Black plays 10...cxd6, he is looking to launch a kingside pawn storm. White's plan should be to launch a piece attack on the queenside, piling up on the weak black d6-pawn and provoking weaknesses like ...a7-a6 or ...b7-b6 on the queenside. When Black advances his kingside pawns past the fifth rank, White may look for a way to crack them open with a well-timed e2-e3, f2-f3, or even h2-h3. Black, meanwhile, must strike a delicate balance between playing his kingside attack "too fast" with a premature ...f5-f4 – which cedes the e4 square – and playing it too slowly, allowing White enough time to tie him down to the d6-pawn with ♕c1-d2-b4 and ♚d1-b3-a3.

Although it is unlikely that any opening theoretician will recommend 10...cxd6 for Black any time soon, players of the white pieces should be careful before labeling the move a mistake. As we've seen, Black gets his fair share of the chances (or even more) in many lines. White's best choice seems to be 11. ♚b3, with three model games for White being Wojtkiewicz-Nijboer, Ortega-Luethgens, and Lempert-Hennigan.

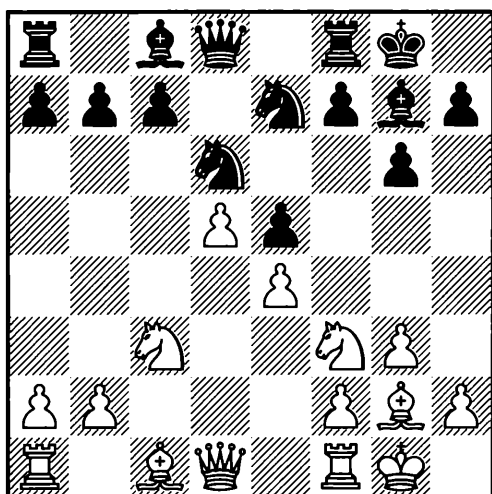
Black Recaptures Correctly: Meeting 10...♟xd6

Although the risky 10...cxd6 is Black's most common tenth move, the alternative 10...♟xd6 is thought to be Black's best try for equality against Wojo's 9.c5. Black looks to attack in the center with ...c7-c6, aiming for a dynamic position in the center that looks more like a Grünfeld than a King's Indian Defense. Wojo encountered the theoretically "correct" 10...♟xd6 infrequently and did not have anything very convincing to offer against it. In this section, we first look at Wojo's idea – 11.e4 c6 12.♞e1 – and then offer our own solution for White with 12.dxc6, which seems to give the first player at least a very slight advantage. This first game shows how Wojo often struggled to get an advantage with his treatment of 10...♟xd6.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2460)
Markzon, Gregory (2240)

[E62] Philadelphia 1989

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♟g7 4.♟g2
 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♟c6 7.♟c3 e5
 8.d5 ♟e7 9.c5 ♟e8 10.cxd6 ♟xd6
 11.e4



11.♞b3 has also been tried, but Wojo relied on the text move. After the normal 11...h6, White plays 12.e4, transposing to the lines discussed in the next note.

11...c6

This is considered by theory to be Black's best choice, attacking White's strong pawn chain in the center at its head. 11...h6, stopping any ideas of ♟g5 from White, is also a good try for equality. Wojo's move here was again 12.♞e1!?, for instance, his online blitz game "Alexwojt-Normal23," 2005, saw 12...♟h7!? 13.h4!? ♟g4? 14.♟g5+ hxg5 15.♞xg4 gxh4 16.♞xh4+ ♟g8 17.♟g5 f6 18.♟e3 with a clear advantage for White. Instead, though, the obvious 12...c6 equalizes: 13.b3 cxd5 14.♟xd5 ♟xd5 15.♞xd5 ♟e6 gave Black no problems in N.Krogius-J.Durão, Sochi 1997.

So responding to 11...h6 with 12.♞b3 might be a better try, as now 12...c6 can be met with 13.dxc6 ♟xc6 (or 13...♟e6 14.♞a3) 14.♞d1 ♟e6 15.♞a3 ♟d4 16.♟xd4 exd4 17.♟d5 ♟xd5 18.exd5, when White hopes to make something out of his bishop pair. Meanwhile, the risky 12...f5 13.♞e1 g5!? 14.exf5 ♞xf5 15.h3 ♞f8 16.♟b5! ♟xb5 17.d6+ ♞f7 18.dxe7 gave White the initiative in D.Fridman-S.Siebrecht, Germany 2001. Janjgava recommends 12...♟h8 for Black, though here 13.♞e1 ♟d7 14.♟d2 ♞e8 15.♞ac1 was a tad better for White in O.Romanishin-F.Lucas, Berlin 1990.

Otherwise, 11...c5 12.dxc6 ♟xc6 13.♟g5 transposes to the next game, and 11...♟g4 12.h3 ♟xf3 13.♟xf3 f5

14.♙g2 ♚d7 15.h4 b5 16.exf5 ♜exf5
17.a4 b4 18.♞e4 gave White the two
bishops and a comfortable position in
R.Keene-M.Brodie, Havirov 1967.

12.♞e1

12.dxc6, which gives White a slight
advantage, is covered in the next two
games. The text attempts to keep the
game from petering out too quickly,
but it isn't particularly good. Its main
benefit was probably just that it takes
Black out of book.

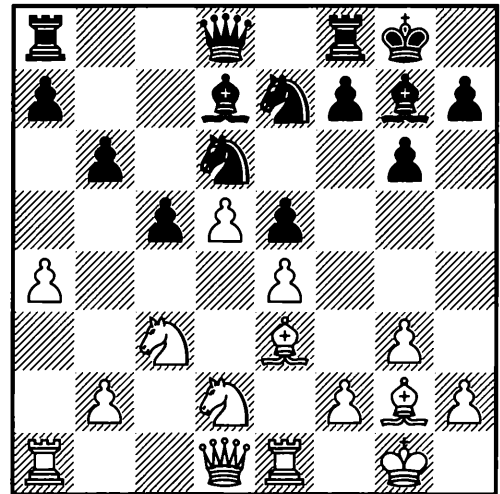
12...c5!?

Black thinks he is being tricky
by playing the...c7-c5 push in two
moves, since White cannot now take
en passant. In reality, by closing the
position, he is just handing White a
space advantage. Black's position is
not bad after the text move – in fact, it
bears a striking resemblance to some
Grünfeld structures that are quite
playable for the second player. Black
had a much better option in 12...cxd5,
however. Then 13.exd5 ♙g4, seen in
F.Fernández López-A.García Luque,
2000, gives Black no problems. 14.♚a4
♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♞ef5 16.♙g2 ♚b6 17.♞b1
♞ac8 18.♞e4 ♞c4 generated sufficient
piece activity for Black to more than
compensate him for the bishop pair.
The text move passes up this oppor-
tunity to play actively along the c-file.

13.a4 ♙d7 14.♙e3 b6 15.♞d2

White regroups and prepares for
f2-f4. Black's well-placed blockading
knight on d6 – which controls a large
swath of the center and both flanks – is
the centerpiece of his position, so the

middlegame battle will rage on both
sides of the board.



White will seek to gain space and
stomp out Black's attempts at coun-
terplay, but here this is far easier said
than done. White's space advantage
does leave him slightly better, however,
particularly given the number of pieces
on the board.

15...♞ec8!?

15...♞h8, when the knight on e7
might instead go to g8, was worth
considering. 15...f5 immediately was
also possible.

16.♞b1 a5!?

This attempt to lock up the
queenside probably does Black more
harm than good. White was not threat-
ening much of anything in that sector
yet, so it would have been better for
Black to continue focusing on the
kingside or else to play something less
weakening, such as 16...♚e7. If 17.a5!?,
then 17...♞b5 18.♞xb5 ♙xb5 with
...♞d6 to follow looks fine for Black.

17.f4 f6 18.♞f1

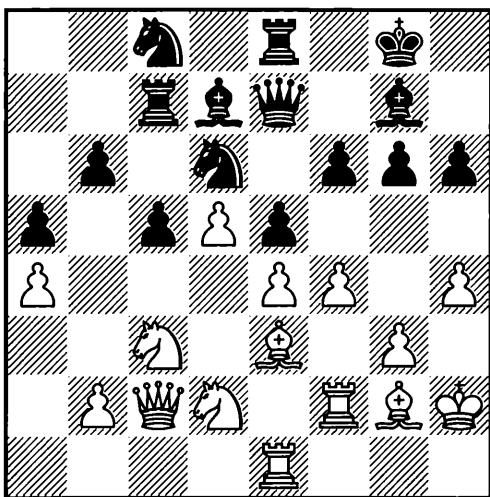
This is better than 18.fxe5 fxe5
19.♞f1, which has less bite. White aims

to keep the maximum amount of tension in the center.

18...♖e7 19.♗c2 ♖a7 20.♞be1 h6 21.h4!?

Wojo again opts to keep the tension. He could instead have taken even more space with 21.f5, but White is aiming for a more fluid structure. This involves taking some risks. The text move weakens the g4 square.

21...♞c7 22.♞f2 ♞e8 23.♔h2



23...f5

A well-timed strike by Black. Poor was 23...exf4 24.♙xf4 g5?, since White can penetrate Black's kingside with 25.hxg5 fxg5 (or 25...hxg5 26.♙xd6 ♘xd6 27.e5! fxe5 28.♗g6) 26.♙xd6 ♘xd6 27.e5! ♙xe5 28.♞xe5! ♗xe5 29.♗g6+ ♔h8 30.♗xh6+ ♔g8 31.♘ce4, winning.

24.fxe5 ♙xe5 25.♘f3 ♙xc3

Black is forced to part with his dark-squared bishop, since 25...♙g7? would be awful for Black after 26.e5.

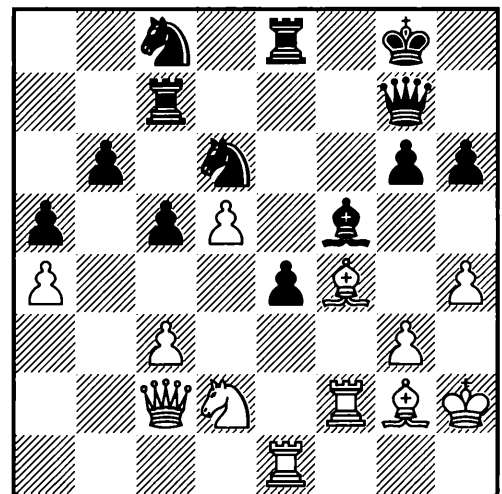
26.bxc3 fxe4

26...♗xe4 was the alternative, when avoiding the queen trade with 27.♗c1 (not 27.♙xh6? ♗xc2 28.♞xe8+ ♙xe8 29.♞xc2 ♙xa4) 27...♗xa4 28.♙xh6 gives White compensation on the dark squares. For instance, play might continue 28...♞xe1 29.♗xe1 ♘e4 30.♔g1! (a computer move, avoiding problems with...♘e4xf2-g4+; 30.♙f4 is also possible) 30...♘cd6 (30...♘xf2?? 31.♗e5) 31.♙f4 with ♘g5 to follow.

27.♙f4

The straightforward 27.♘d2 would also have worked.

27...♗g7 28.♘d2 ♙f5



29.♙e3

Incredibly, 29.♘xe4 was actually an option for White, since 29...♞ce7 could have been met by 30.♙xd6 ♘xd6 31.♘xd6 ♞xe1 (or 31...♙xc2? 32.♘xe8 ♗h7 33.♘f6+) 32.♘xe8 ♞xe8 with a clear advantage for White thanks to his passed d-pawn. After the text move, White's advantage deteriorates.

29...♞ce7 30.♗b3 ♔h7 31.♘c4 ♘xc4 32.♗xc4 ♘d6 33.♗b3 ♞b7

In hindsight, there was no need for Black to defend the b-pawn. 33...♖f7!, immediately heading for e5, was more efficient since 34.♔xb6 ♔xc3 would have handed Black the initiative.

34.♕f4 ♖f7 35.g4

White no longer has the initiative, so he must play aggressively to wrestle it back from Black.

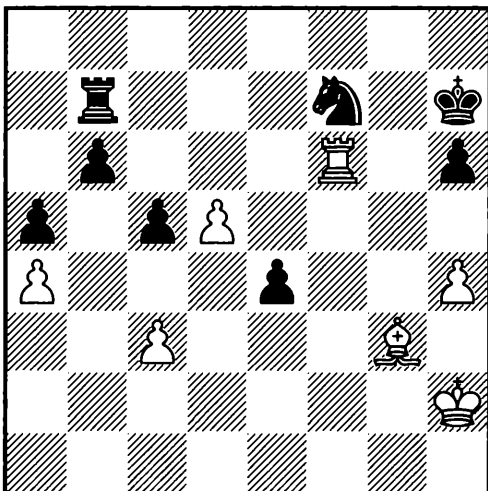
35...♕xg4

Declining the offer with 35...♕d7 would have been dangerous for Black after 36.♕xe4 ♖e5 37.♕xe5 ♔xe5+ 38.♔g2 ♔g7 39.d6.

36.♖xe4 ♖xe4 37.♕xe4 ♕f5

37...♖e7 38.♔b1 and 37...♖e5 38.d6 are risky for Black, so the text move seems appropriate. Black seeks to trade off one of White's powerful bishops.

38.♕xf5 gxf5 39.♔c2 ♔g4 40.♕g3 ♔e4 41.♔xe4 fxe4 42.♖f6



White has the slightest of advantages in this ending thanks to his having a bishop and rook against a knight and rook. The pawn situation is still

sufficiently messy, however, for Black to create strong counterplay.

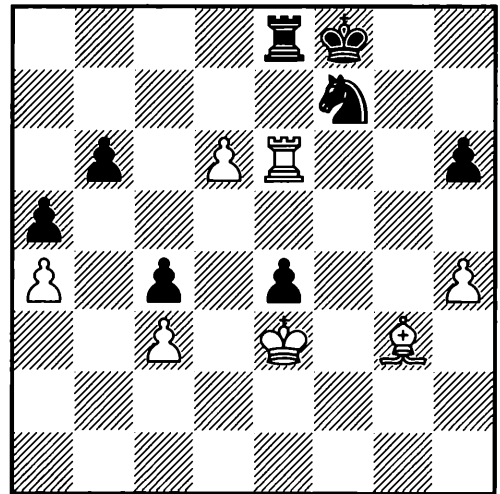
42...c4!?

Black's best was 42...♔g7 43.♖e6 b5 44.axb5 ♖xb5 45.♖xe4 c4 46.d6 ♖d5 with a probable draw.

43.d6 ♖d7?!

43...b5 again was stronger: 44.axb5 ♔g7 45.♖e6 ♖xb5 46.♖xe4 ♖d5 47.♖xc4 ♖xd6 is drawn. After the text, White's hopes of playing for a win are revived.

44.♖e6 ♖d8 45.♔g2 ♔g7 46.♔f2 ♔f8 47.♔e3 ♖e8



48.♖f6?!

48.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 49.♔xe4 allows Black to draw with 49...b5! 50.axb5 a4 51.b6 ♖d8 52.♕f4 a3 53.♕c1 a2 54.♕b2 ♔d7 55.♔d5 ♖b7 56.♔xc4 ♖xd6+ 57.♔b3 h5 58.♔xa2 ♖f5 and so on. But 48.♖xe4 was a better try for the win, for instance 48...♖xe4+ (48...b5? 49.axb5 a4 50.d7 ♖xe4+ 51.♔xe4 a3 runs into 52.d8♔+ ♖xd8 53.♕d6+) 49.♔xe4 ♔e8 50.♔d5 ♔d7 51.h5 and Black is in *Zugzwang*.

48...♔g7 49.♖f5

49.d7 ♖d8 50.♗xb6 ♗xd7 51.♕xe4 would also have kept some edge for White, for instance, 51...♗d3 52.♕f2.

49...♗d8 50.♗d5

Better here was 50.♕f4!, with the idea of ♗b5 next. Then 50...♘xd6 51.♗d5 ♘f7 52.♗xd8 ♘xd8 53.♕c7 would have given White a winning bishop-versus-knight ending. After the text, Black is able to battle his way to a draw.

50...♕f6 51.♗b5 ♗b8 52.♕xe4 ♕e6 53.♕d4

53.d7 was the last chance for White to fight for the advantage, since 53...♗b7 54.♗b2 ♕xd7 (or 54...h5 55.d8♖ ♘xd8 56.♗b5) 55.♕d5 would have kept the game alive.

53...♗g8 54.♕f4 ♗g4 55.♕e3 ♗xh4 56.♗xb6 ♗h3+ 57.♕e4 ♗h4 1/2-1/2

White's d-pawn isn't going anywhere, so the first player has no advantage. By this point Black, who has been tortured enough, is more than happy to make peace and agree to the draw.

In this game, we saw Black play the superior 10...♘xd6. Wojo's 12.♗e1 doesn't promise an advantage after 12...cxd5, so we cover the more standard 12.dxc6 in the next game. Black's 12...c5!? gave White chances for the advantage again in a complex middle-game. 21.h4!? was perhaps too risky, but it is difficult to say for sure. Black certainly wasn't in any serious trouble until his 43...♗d7?!, passing up a clear draw. White almost managed to win after that, but he made some errors

(such as missing 48.♗xe4) that threw away his endgame edge.

The next game begins our coverage of 12.dxc6, which seems to promise White a slight edge. After 12...♘xc6 13.♕g5, Black has two moves – 13...♕f6 and 13...f6 – and we provide one illustrative game for each.

Flumbort, András (2471) Sikula, Vaszilij (2419)

[E62] Hungary, 2004

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♕g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♕g2 d6 6.d4 ♘c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♘e7 9.c5 ♘e8 10.cxd6 ♘xd6 11.e4 c6 12.dxc6

This is White's only sure route to a slight advantage.

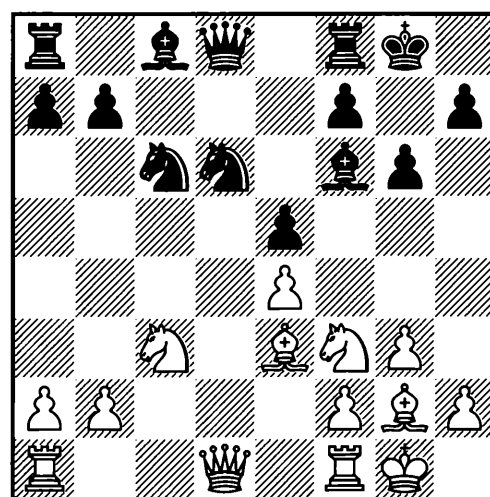
12...♘xc6 13.♕g5

The point. White is able to harass Black with this move, which lures the bishop on g7 out in front of Black's f-pawn.

13...♕f6

13...f6 is covered in the next game.

14.♕e3



14.♙xf6 ♖xf6 15.h3 has also been tried in a handful of games, but after 15...♞d8 16.♗e2 ♙e6 17.♞fd1 the game is only level. After 17...♞d7 18.♞d2 ♞ad8 19.♞ad1 ♗g7 20.b3, the players agreed to a draw in A.Adorján-J.Polgár, Budapest 1991.

14...♞c4

Black's most common move. 14...♙g4 15.h3 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 (16.♗xf3 ♞d4 17.♙xd4 exd4 18.♞d5 ♙g7 19.♞ac1 is also a slight pull for White) 16...♞d4 17.♞d5 was a little better for White in B.Egdell-M.Bertel, correspondence 2001.

15.♙c5 ♙e7

15...♗xd1?! 16.♞fxd1 ♞e8 17.b3 b6 18.♞d5! ♙d8 19.♞ac1 bxc5 20.♞xc4 gave White a clear advantage in R.Dzindzichashvili-J.Pope, Las Vegas 1992.

16.♙xe7 ♗xe7 17.♞d5

With this move, White achieves his slight pull. It will prove much more difficult for Black to get a knight to d4 than it was for White to get one to d5.

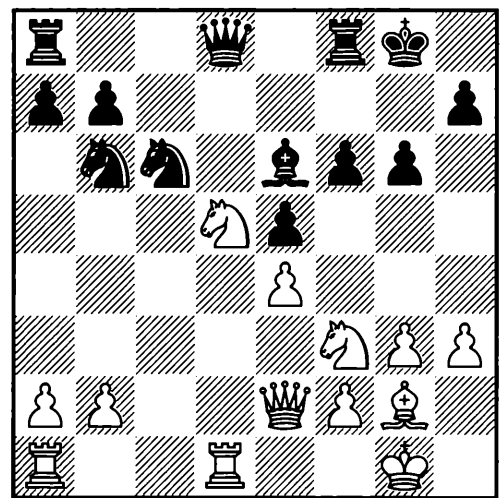
17...♗d8 18.h3

Best, as White stops Black's ideas of ...♙c8-g4xf3 followed by ...♞c6-d4. 18.♞c1 could be met by 18...♞d6 (not 18...♞b6 19.♞d2! followed by ♞b3, leaving White in the driver's seat; 18...♞xb2? is of course not possible because of 19.♗b3) 19.♗d3 ♙g4 with a playable game for Black. Meanwhile, 18.♗b3 ♞d6 (18...♞b6 runs into 19.♞fd1) 19.♞fd1 ♙g4 20.h3 ♙xf3 21.♗xf3 would also allow Black reasonable chances of keeping White at bay.

18...♙e6

18...f5?! seems too risky, since 19.♗e2 ♙e6 (or 19...fxe4 20.♗xe4 ♙e6 21.♞ad1) 20.♞ad1 fxe4 21.♗xe4 ♞xb2 22.♞xe5 ♙f5 23.♗e2 ♞xd1 24.♞xc6 bxc6 25.♞e7+ leaves Black's king dangerously exposed, ensuring White full compensation.

19.♗e2 ♞b6 20.♞fd1 f6



21.♗b5!?

White tickles Black's queenside. 21.a4 immediately was more direct.

21...♞f7 22.♞d2 ♞d7 23.♞ad1 ♙g7 24.a4 ♞c8??

24...♞c8 was necessary here. The text allows a nice shot by White.

25.♗c5

Second best. 25.♞xf6!! ♙xf6 26.♞xd7 ♙xd7 27.♗xb7, forking Black's rook on a8 and bishop on d7, would have won spectacularly for White. The text allows White to continue building his slight advantage.

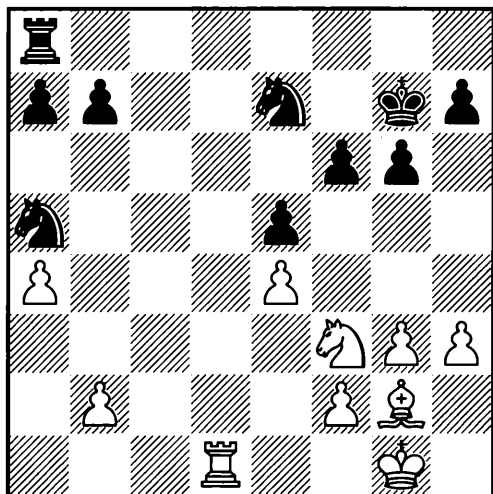
25...♗a5?!

Black is quick to err a second time, however, and this time White capitalizes.

26. ♖f4!

The move Black overlooked.

26... ♜e7 27. ♖xe6+ ♜xe6 28. ♞d7+ ♜e7 29. ♚xa5 ♖xa5 30. ♞xe7+ ♖xe7



31. ♞d7?!

White falters again. He needed to reverse the moves here. 31.b4 first would have kept up the pressure: 31... ♖ac6 32. ♞d7 ♖f7 33. ♞xb7 and White wins a pawn.

31... ♖f7 32. b4 ♖e6!

White overlooked this *intermezzo*.

33. ♞d1

33. ♞c7 ♖d6 is no better.

33... ♖ac6?!

33... ♖c4 was more accurate, since 34. ♖f1 ♖d6 would have been absolutely fine for Black.

34. ♖f1!

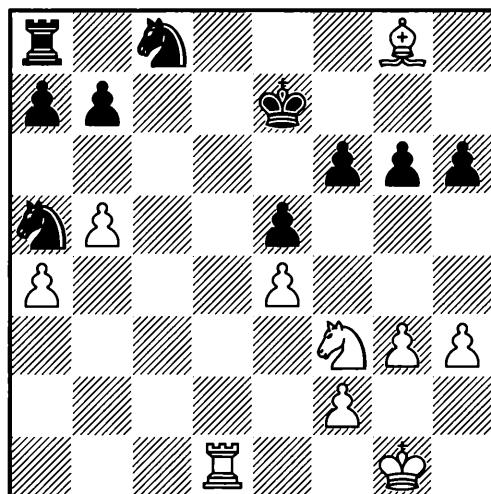
After this, White can start piecing his original advantage back together.

He threatens checkmate in the middle of the board.

34... ♖c8?!

34... ♖g8, to prevent White's move 37, was preferable. 35. ♖c4+ ♖e7 36. b5 ♖a5 could then only be met by 37. ♖d5 or something similarly less destructive than bringing the bishop to g8. After the text, Black appears to be losing.

35. ♖c4+ ♖e7 36. b5 ♖a5 37. ♖g8 h6



Black's pieces are now scattered across the board, allowing White to mop up. It is incredible how quickly Black's position deteriorated after White's move 34.

38. ♖h4 ♖f8 39. ♖h7 ♖e7 40. ♖xg6 ♞c8

40... ♖xg6 41. ♖xg6+ ♖f7 42. ♖h4 with ♖f5 to follow was no better.

41. ♖f5 ♞c7 42. ♞d8+ ♖g7 43. ♖e6 ♖c4 44. ♞a8 ♖d2 45. ♞xa7 ♖xe4 46. a5 ♖g5 47. a6 e4

47... ♖xe6 48. axb7 also loses for Black.

48. axb7 1-0

With 12.dxc6 and 13.♔g5, White got a slight advantage that he carried into the endgame, despite missing the tactical shot 25.♕xf6. Although there were several inaccuracies in this game, Black had the more difficult position to play. White was never in any danger of losing, but Black was teetering on the edge throughout.

The next game features 13...f6 by Black.

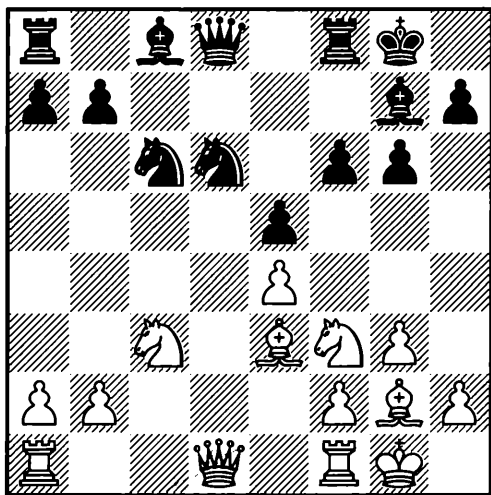
Ivkov, Borislav
Ujtumen, Tudev

[E62] Palma de Mallorca 1970

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♕c3 ♔g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♔g2 d6 6.♕f3 ♕c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♕e7 9.c5 ♕e8 10.cxd6 ♕xd6 11.e4 c6 12.dxc6 ♕xc6 13.♔g5 f6

Black's other option on move 13. Black avoids blocking his f-pawn and hopes to carry out the maneuver ...♔c8-e6 followed by ...♖f8-f7-d7. The move likely deserves a label of "dubious" based on just this game.

14.♔e3



14.♖b3+ is the alternative, but this only helps Black to play his plan

after 14...♖f7 15.♔e3 ♖e8! followed by ...♔c8-e6. 16.♕d2 ♔e6 17.♕d5 ♖d8 18.♖ac1 ♖fd7 19.♔h3 was seen in B.Schneider-P.Held, Germany 1993, when here 19...f5 20.f3 ♖f7 instead of 19...♕h8?? 20.♕xf6! would have been good for Black.

14...♕c4

Now 14...♖f7 could be met with 15.♖d5!? ♕h8 16.♖ad1 ♖d7 17.♖b3, when White has disrupted Black's development by preventing the maneuver involving ...♖d8-e8 and ...♔c8-e6.

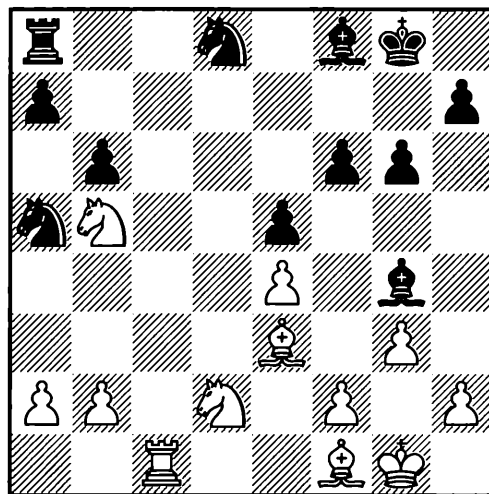
15.♔c5 ♖xd1

15...♖f7 16.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 17.b3 would also give White a slightly better queenless middlegame. For Black this would have been preferable to the text, however.

16.♖fxd1 ♖d8

The alternative was 16...♕xb2 17.♖db1 ♕d3 18.♔xf8, which allows White to win the exchange for a pawn.

17.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 18.♔f1 ♕a5 19.♕b5 ♔g4 20.♕d2 b6 21.♔e3 ♔f8 22.♖c1



White has emerged with a clear advantage. Black's pieces are, once again, scattered across the board. Meanwhile, his rook on a8 is tied down to the a7-pawn.

22...♙e7 23.♞c7 ♜ac6 24.♙c4+ ♜f8 25.f3

White could have also won with 25.♞xc6 ♜xc6 26.♙h6+ ♜e8 27.♜c7+ ♜d7 28.♜xa8 ♜c8 29.a3!, when 29...♜b7 is met with 30.♙d5 ♙d7 31.b4 b5 (or 31...a6 32.♜c4) 32.♜b3 ♜xa8 33.♜a5. The text move is even more direct.

25...♙h3

25...♙c8 26.♙d5 ♙b7 27.♞xb7 ♜xb7 28.♙h6+ ♜e8 29.♙xc6+ ♜f7 30.♙xb7 would have been a massacre for the black army.

26.g4?!

26.♞xc6 ♜xc6 27.♜c7, threatening mate with ♙h6, was better. The text is still good enough to win for White.

26...f5 27.♙h6+ ♜e8 28.♙d5 a6 29.♜c3 ♙c5+?

29...♞b8 30.♙xc6+ ♜xc6 31.♞xc6 (or 31.♜d5 ♙c5+ 32.♙e3 ♙xe3+ 33.♜xe3 ♜e7) 31...♜d7 32.♜d5 ♜xc6 33.♜xe7+ ♜d7 34.♜d5 ♜e6 puts up a more stubborn resistance, though White is still winning. After the text, White goes up an entire piece. The rest needs no comment.

30.♜h1 ♞a7 31.♙xc6+ ♜xc6 32.♞xc6 fxg4 33.♜d5 ♞f7 34.♞f6 gxf3 35.♜xf3 ♞d7 36.♜xe5 ♞d8 37.♜f3 ♙e6 38.♜c7+ 1-0

This game makes 13...f6 looks dubious. If White doesn't allow Black to play his plan of ...♙c8-e6 and ...♞f8-f7-d7 and instead steers toward a favorable queenless middlegame, he should get an advantage. It is hard to say exactly what Black did wrong in this game, but 13...f6 and 15...♞xd1 were probably both errors.

Conclusion: White can count on only a slight advantage against the theory-approved recapture 10...♜xd6. We recommend 11.e4, when the normal 11...c6 can be met by 12.dxc6 ♜xc6 13.♙g5, which seems to give White a reasonable pull. If Black tries the more conservative 11...h6 instead, 12.♞b3 (analyzed in Wojtkiewicz-Markzon above) is also a reasonable try for the advantage. Wojo didn't score particularly well against 10...♜xd6, and it is because of this very move that we have decided to also cover White's alternative 9.e4 in the next chapter.

Black's Other Tries

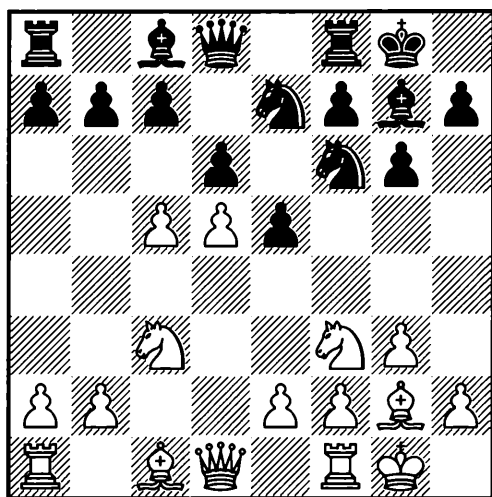
In this final section, we analyze the odds and ends of this system – Black's alternatives on move 9. The first game goes over the tricky 9...e4!?, a poor move that gives White the initiative, and the second game covers everything else.

Konopka, Michal (2480)

Arwanitakis, Michael (2155)

[E62] Graz 1999

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♜c6
7.♜c3 e5 8.d5 ♜e7 9.c5

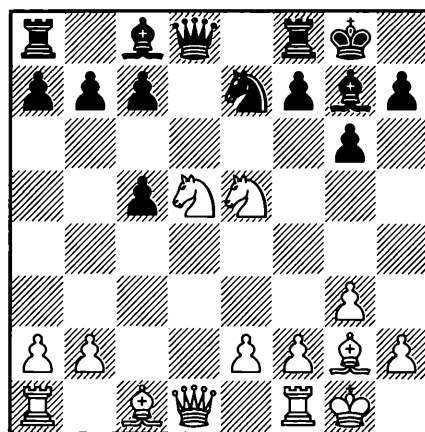


9...e4!?

A rare move played to confuse White. Black hopes to initiate a tactical battle in the center, but White will be better positioned to take advantage of the open lines. 9...dxc5 is a worse form of the same idea. Now White should play 10.♜xe5, when Black's tactical option 10...♜fxd5?! is bad. Wojo's own playchess.com 2005 online blitz game "Alexwojt"-"Ringmaster" saw 11.♜xf7!? ♜xc3, when 12.♞xd8 ♞xd8 13.♜xd8 ♜xe2+ 14.♞h1 c6 15.♞e1 ♜xc1 16.♞xe7! ♗xb2 17.♞b1 left White winning, for example, Black's 17...

♜d3 should have been met with 18.♗f1 ♜xf2+ 19.♞g2 ♗d4 20.♗c4+ ♞h8 21.♞e8+ ♞g7 22.♗e6 with a crushing initiative. (The actual game saw 18.f4?! c4 19.♗f1 ♗f6 20.♞e8+ ♞g7 21.♜xb7 ♞h6?? 22.♜d6 ♗d4 23.♞xc8 1-0.)

But far stronger than 11.♜xf7!? is the simple 11.♜xd5, which gives White a clear advantage. There are two lines:



a) 11...♗xe5 12.♗g5 f6 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♜xf6+ ♞g7 15.♜e4 is given by Janjgava as a clear advantage for White. Meanwhile, 10...♜f5 11.♜c4 ♞b8 (11...♜d6 looks better) 12.a4 with the idea of e2-e4 and so on left White somewhat better in J.Fieandt-H.Ruotanen, Finland 1997.

b) 11...♜xd5 12.♜xf7 ♞xf7 13.♗xd5+ ♞e8 14.♞b3 left White with a clear advantage thanks to Black's poor king placement in I.Fáncsy-S.Deák, Hungary 1994.

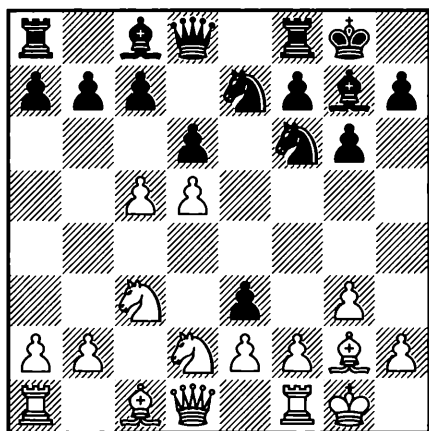
10.♜d2?!

The text is not the most accurate, since it allows the possibility of 10...e3!, discussed in the note to Black's next move. Best is 10.♜g5, which avoids it. Meanwhile, 10.cxd6!? is playable but scores poorly for White in practice, for instance 10...♞xd6 11.♜g5 ♜fxd5

(or 11...dxd5 12.dgxe4 ♖e5 13.dxf6+ dxf6 14.♗f4 ♕a5 15.♗b3 c6 16.♞fd1 ♕a6! with ...♗e6 to follow, equalizing) 12.dgxe4 ♖e5, when Black had plenty of activity in R.Vaganian-E.Gufeld, Moscow 1972. Here, best for White would have been 13.♗b3 c6 14.♞d1, with perhaps a tiny bit of pressure after 14...b6 15.♗d2 ♗e6 16.♗a3.

10...dxc5

Black misses an important opportunity. 10...e3! would have spoiled White's pawn structure and given Black a good game. For instance, White now has two obvious choices:



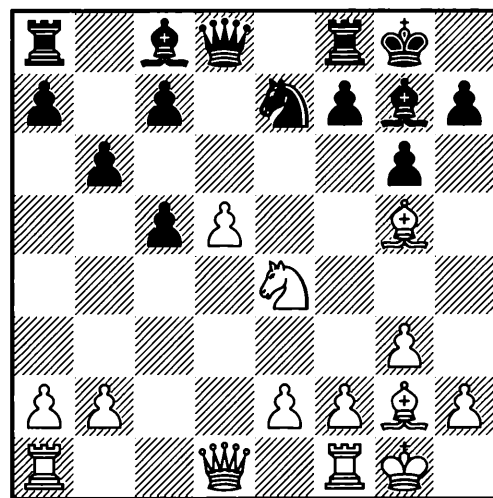
a) 11.cxd6 does not seem good, as Black has at least two clear routes to equality. He can play 11...exf2+ 12.♞xf2 ♕xd6 (slightly worse for Black is 12...cxd6 13.h3 dxf5 14.dxf1 d7 15.e4 de7 16.♗e3 de5 17.♗b3, with ideas of dc3-b5) 13.♗b3 df5, which gives him plenty of activity. Black's other try is 11...dxd5 12.♗xd5 dxd5 13.dxd5 exd2 14.♗xd2 ♕xd6 15.♗f4 ♗e5 16.♗xe5 ♕xe5, which leaves him with no problems.

b) 11.fxe3 is a better attempt for White. But now 11...df5 (11...dxc5!? 12.e4 dg4 13.dxf3 followed by ♗c1-f4 gives White a slight initiative) 12.dxb3 dg4 13.♗d3 dxc5 (13...de5 14.♗e4 ♞e8 15.♗a4 gives White play on the

queenside) 14.dxc5 ♞e8 seems to give Black full compensation for his pawn. For instance, 15.d5e4 ♗d7 16.♞f4 de5 17.♗d1 and here 17...dc4 18.♗d3 de5 would give Black at least a draw by repetition.

It is for this reason that 10.dg5, not 10.d2?!, is played.

11.dxe4 dxe4 12.dxe4 b6 13.♗g5!



The most dangerous move, playing on the dark squares. 13.d6 cxd6 14.dxd6 is given by Janjgava as a slight advantage for White, but here Black might try the powerful exchange sacrifice 14...♗e6!. Accepting the sacrifice is dangerous for White after 15.♗xa8 ♕xa8, when Black threatens both ...♞d8 and ...♗h3.

13...♞b8

Grabbing the b2-pawn is dangerous, as 13...♗xb2 14.♗b3! would give White good chances on the dark squares. For instance, play might continue 14...♗g7 (14...♗xa1 15.♞xa1 leaves Black on the verge of collapse, facing threats of d5-d6, df6+, ♗b2, ♗h6, and so on) 15.♞ad1 with ideas of d5-d6 or ♗g5-f6.

14.♗f6?!

Too hasty. 14.♖b3, making provisions to defend the d5-pawn and stopping ...f7-f5 tries from Black, was more accurate. White can always play ♔f6 next move. The text should throw away White's advantage.

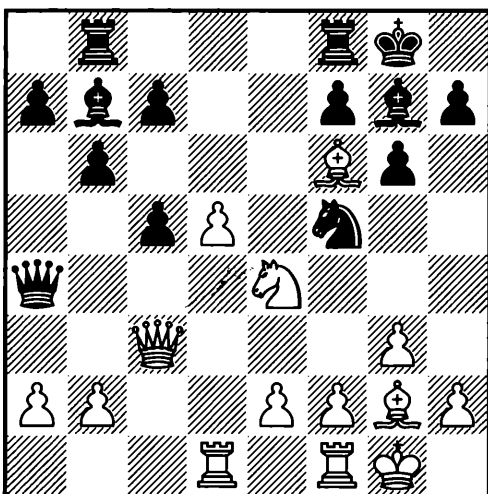
14...♙b7?!

Black returns the favor. 14...♙xf6! 15.♗xf6+ ♕g7 should equalize for Black, since 16.♗e4 ♖xd5 (16...♗xd5!? is also possible) 17.♖xd5 ♗xd5 18.♗xc5 bxc5 19.♙xd5 ♖xb2 leaves him worry-free. Perhaps White's idea was to play 16.♖b3, when 16...♗xf6?? 17.♖c3+ ♕g5 18.♖g7 would put Black's king in a mating net. But 16...♖d6 17.♗e4 ♖xd5 leaves White with nothing better than 18.♖xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xc5, transposing back into the previous line.

15.♖d2 ♖d7

Of course, the d-pawn could not have been taken without Black's losing a piece. But now White now has a significant advantage, since Black's pileup on the d5-pawn has failed. White possesses the only center pawns on the board and the dark squares around Black's king are weak. Add in the first player's initiative, and White is nearly winning.

16.♖ad1 ♗f5 17.♖c3 ♖a4



18.b3

18.♙xg7 immediately would have won material after 18...♗xg7 19.♗f6+ ♕h8 20.b3! ♖xa2 21.♖d2 ♖a3 22.♖a1 ♖b4 23.♖xb4 cxb4 24.♗d7, forking Black's rooks. Black's c7-pawn will fall quickly, leaving no doubt about the game's result: for instance, 24...a5 25.♖c1! would end matters.

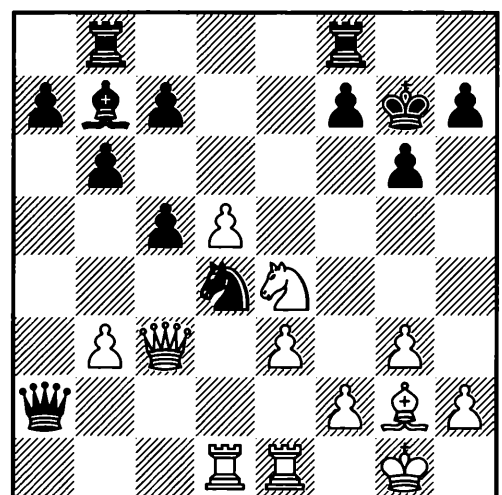
18...♖xa2 19.♖fe1

It was still not too late for White to play 19.♙xg7 ♗xg7 20.♗f6+, transposing back into the note to his move 18. White is still winning after the text, however, because his initiative in the center and against Black's king is so overwhelming.

19...♗d4

Black's last attempt to complicate. White was threatening, among other things, ♖d1-a1, trapping Black's queen.

20.♙xg7 ♕xg7 21.e3



21...f5

21...♖xb3 22.exd4 ♖xc3 23.♗xc3 c4 would have given Black three connected passed pawns on the queenside,

but after 24.♖e7 ♜fc8 25.♙h3 ♜f8 26.d6 ♜d8 27.♜xc7 ♜xd6 28.♜xc4 it is obvious that White will triumph.

22.♜xc5

Even simpler than 22.exd4 fxe4 23.dxc5+.

22...bxc5 23.exd4 c4

23...cxd4 24.♖e7+ ♜f6 25.♞xc7 loses for Black.

24.♖e7+ ♜f7 25.♜xf7+ ♜xf7 26.bxc4

26.♞xc4, threatening d5-d6 with check, was faster. The rest requires no comment.

26...♖e8 27.♞a1 ♞e2 28.♙f3 ♞e7 29.♜xa7 ♙c8 30.c5 ♞e1+ 31.♞xe1 ♜xe1+ 32.♜g2 ♖e7 33.♙d1 h6 34.♙b3 ♜f6 35.♞a1 ♙d7 36.♞a7 ♙e8 37.♞a6+ ♜g7 38.♖e6 ♜f8 39.♜xe7 ♜xe7 40.f4 g5 41.♜f2 ♙h5 42.♜e3 ♙e8 43.♜d3 ♙b5+ 44.♙c4 ♙d7 45.♜c3 ♙e8 46.♜b4 1-0

Black's 9...e4!? is an interesting but ultimately bad attempt to mix things up. With Konopka's 13.♙g5!, White is able to create strong play on the dark squares. Although his next move, 14.♙f6?!, was an inaccuracy, his opponent did not find the right path and soon White was back on top. The weaknesses around Black's king, combined with White's initiative in the center, proved too much for Black's position to handle.

This final game tackles all of Black's move 9 alternatives.

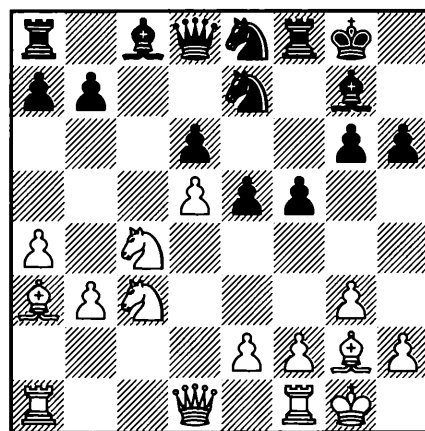
Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2570) Mohrholz, Stefan (1923)

[E62] Duisburg 1999

1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 ♜c6 7.♜c3 e5 8.d5 ♜e7 9.c5 ♙g4

Black's fourth most popular move here, behind 9...♜e8, 9...♜d7, and 9...e4. To its credit, the text is likely sounder than the latter two. Black's two other noteworthy tries are knight moves:

a) 9...♜d7 is an inferior retreat to the normal 9...♜e8. For instance, 9...♜d7 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.a4 does not permit Black to carry out his normal kingside plans: 11...h6 (11...f5 12.♜g5 ♜f6 13.♞b3 transposes back into Lopushnoy-Shchupaleev, analyzed in the note to Black's move 11 in Wojtkiewicz-Ristoja above) 12.♜d2 f5 13.♜c4 ♜f6 14.b3! (better here than 14.♞b3) 14...♜e8 15.♙a3 and Black was already completely tied to his d6-pawn in B.Schneider-G.Schlichtmann, Cologne 1989:



Black has wasted several moves with his knight just to put it back on e8. The game continued 15...♜f6 16.♜c1 g5 17.♞d2 g4 18.♜fd1 ♜g6 19.♜c2 ♙f8

20.♖dc1 ♜f7 21.♟b5, when Black was in serious trouble.

b) 9...♟h5!? is an interesting, seldom-played try. Here 10.cxd6 cxd6 11.e4 seems the appropriate reaction, following the rule of thumb that an attack on one of the flanks should be met with action in the center. The idea is that 11...f5!? can now be met with 12.exf5 ♟xf5 13.♟g5, with an advantage for White. D.Menéndez-S.Dias, corr. 2000, saw 13...♞d7 14.♞b3 ♜ac8 15.♟e6 ♜f7 16.♟e3 b6 17.♜ad1, when White was better placed. Meanwhile, the preparatory 11...h6 might run into the quiet 12.h3!?, when Black is unable to carry out his plan with 12...f5 after all, thanks to 13.exf5 gxf5 (not 13...♟xf5?? 14.g4) 14.♟xe5 ♟xg3 15.fxg3 dxe5 (or 15...♟xe5 16.♟xh6) 16.♞b3 with a big initiative for White.

10.cxd6 cxd6 11.a4

11.♞b3 is a more reliable alternative. Then 11...♞d7 12.e4 ♜fc8 (12...♜fb8 13.a4 ♟h3 14.♟d2 ♟h6 15.♟c4 ♟xc1 16.♜axc1 ♟xg2 17.♟xg2 ♟h5 was seen in M.Stangl-Tong Yuanming, Beijing 1995, when here 18.♟b5 ♟c8 19.♞a3 would have given Black problems) 13.♟e3 b6 14.♟d2 left White with a nice edge in E.Geller-M.Cuéllar, Bogotá 1978.

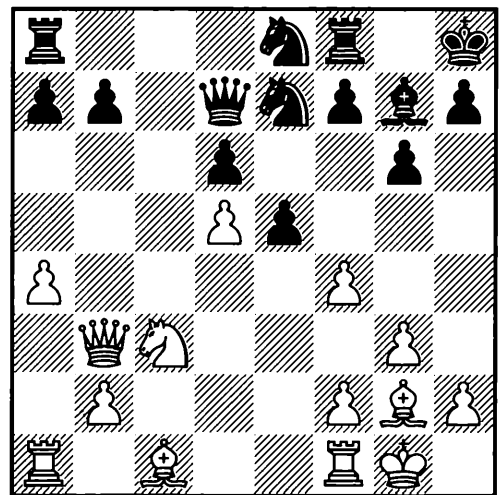
11...♟e8

This idea does not fit particularly well with ...♟g4. Yet the active 11...♟f5!? could have been comfortably met by 12.♟d2 ♟d4 13.♟b3, preserving White's edge. This was likely still preferable to the text, however.

12.♞b3 ♟xf3 13.exf3!?

13.♟xf3 was also perfectly fine. Wojo's move is an enterprising attempt to open the position faster for his newly gained bishop pair. It is often said, however, that when one side wins the bishop pair, he should open the position gradually rather than all at once. That way, he can avoid falling behind in development. White could have benefited from a slower approach here, since most of his advantage is wiped out over the next few moves. The text has the big drawback of ceding the d4 square.

13...♞d7 14.f4 ♟h8 15.fxe5!?



Taking things a bit slower with 15.♜e1 was preferable. White should spend some time building up his position. After 15...♟f5 16.a5 ♟d4 17.♞a4 ♞xa4 18.♜xa4 f5 19.♜d1 followed by ♟e3, White's two bishops leave him for choice.

15...dxe5 16.f4 ♟d6 17.fxe5 ♟xe5 18.♟h6 ♟d4+?!

The bishop is not particularly well placed on d4. The simple 18...♜fe8 would likely have given Black good counterplay, as White's d5-pawn is firmly blockaded and Black's kingside dark squares are not

particularly weak, given his firmly anchored bishop on e5.

19.♔h1 ♕g7

19...♖fe8 could now be met by 20.♕f4, taking control of the important h2-b8 diagonal.

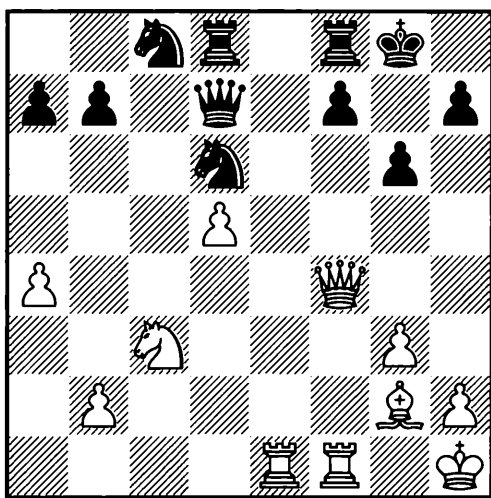
20.♕xg7+

20.♕f4 was a good alternative, but White is hoping to take advantage of the weakened dark squares around the black king.

20...♔xg7 21.♖b4

Establishing White's command of the dark squares.

21...♔g8 22.♖f4 ♖ad8 23.♖ae1 ♜ec8



By this point, White has managed to achieve a very nice position. Over the next several moves, he goes after Black's king, which is – oddly enough – the only weak point in Black's position, other than perhaps the redundant knight on c8.

24.h4 ♖de8 25.♔h2 ♖xe1 26.♖xe1 ♖e8 27.♕h3 f5

White successfully induces a weakness from Black on the kingside.

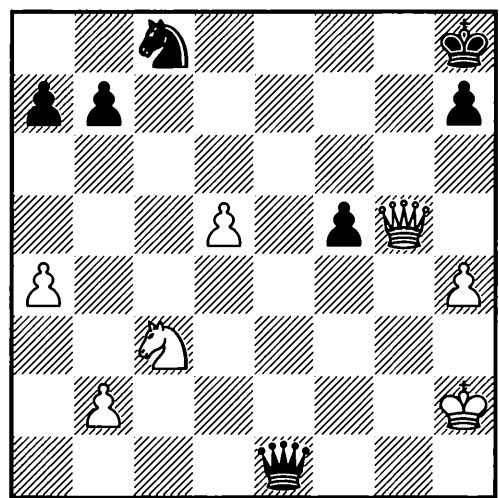
28.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29.g4!

A strong move, prying the black kingside open further. It is odd that White, who has fewer pawns to shelter his king than Black, is able to take the initiative in this way. Black's inactive knight on c8 is a major culprit here.

29...♖e1!?

29...♖f7 would have provided a more stubborn defense of Black's kingside. 30.gxf5 ♜xf5 31.♕xf5 ♖xf5 32.♖xf5 gxf5 33.♔g3 ♔f7 34.♔f4 ♔f6 looks drawish, so perhaps 30.♔g3!? was White's plan.

30.gxf5 ♜xf5 31.♕xf5 gxf5 32.♖g5+ ♔h8



33.♖d8+

With this move, White essentially agrees to a draw. 33.♖xf5 was a valid try for a win, however, since 33... ♖xh4+ 34.♔g2 ♜e7 (not 34...♖d8?! 35.♜e4) 35.♖e5+ ♔g8 36.♖b8+ ♔f7 37.♖xb7 would have given White a powerful passed d-pawn. Both kings are completely exposed to the wrath

of the queens here, so it is probable that Black would be able to produce a perpetual check at some point. The white king has a nice hiding spot on a2, however, so there is still plenty of room for Black to go wrong.

33...♔g7 34.♚xc8

White tires of the fighting and forces Black's hand.

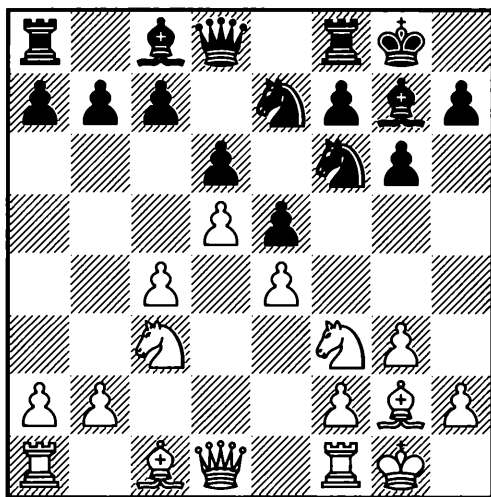
34...♚f2+ 35.♔h3 ♚f3+ 1/2-1/2

Black's 9...♔g4 appears playable, but it is a sideline for a good reason – it isn't connected to any particular plan. It allows Black to swap one pair of minor pieces by ceding the bishop pair with ...♔xf3, but there are not many positive aspects to this. In this game, White rushed things too much to fully exploit his bishop pair. Had he tried to open the position more gradually, the result would likely have been different.

Conclusion: Black's move 9 sidelines aren't particularly troublesome. 9...e4!? is tricky but a bit unsound, while 9...♔g4 and 9...♖d7 are inferior moves that should not give White much difficulty. Finally, 9...♖h5!? is an interesting idea that has not been tried much in practice. The only real obstacle for White in the entire 9.c5 line is 9...♖e8 10.cxd6 ♖xd6, however, so getting an advantage against anything else shouldn't prove too hard.

Chapter 7

Meeting Black's ...e7-e5 with 9.e4



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 e5
8.d5 ♘e7 9.e4

In the previous chapter, we examined Wojo's approach to handling Black's 6...♘c6 and 7...e5, the line 8.d5 ♘e7 9.c5. In this chapter we cover the move 9.e4, which scores slightly better for White in practice. White's queenside ideas are essentially the same: he will seek to target Black's d6-pawn after an eventual c4-c5 push followed by exchanging with c4xd6. Black will almost certainly not have the option of recapturing on d6 with the knight, but because play for both sides progresses less rapidly here than after 9.c5, he will have more time to organize an effective defense for his d6-pawn. Thus, White is playing for longterm positional pressure rather than for a quick queenside knockout.

In the past, 9.e4 has often been used to preface the plan ♘f3-e1-d3 and f2-f4. Particularly against 9...♘e7, the move 10.♘e1 is considered the main line. With a few specific exceptions, we prefer to meet most of Black's ideas with expansion on the queenside, a plan which both of the authors have used in tournament play to good effect. With our recommendation of 10.b4, the battle is usually fairly quiet until around move twenty or so when the pace of the game picks up a bit. One side or the other will generally have deviated from what little theory exists before any critical point in the middlegame is reached, so knowledge of plans, tactics, and ideas will trump theoretical knowledge in this line. The first game presented below shows how closely the key maneuvers for White after 10.b4 resemble those from the previous chapter.

Black Plays Against White's Queenside Offensive with 10...a5

In the previous chapter, Black was unable to prevent White's immediate 9.c5. After the quieter 9.e4, however, Black has ample time to prepare for White's eventual c4-c5 advance. After 9...♞d7 (preventing c4-c5) 10.b4, Black often tries the 10...a5 strike to stake out some space of his own on the queenside. The result is usually a small but indisputable positional advantage for White, who has very little to fear from an all-out assault on the kingside by Black. One good way for White to handle Black's delayed ...f7-f5 push is illustrated in the following game.

Pigusov, Evgeny (2520)
Loginov, Valery (2355)

[E62] Sverdlovsk 1987

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♞c6
 7.♞c3 e5 8.d5 ♞e7 9.e4

The advantage of this move over 9.c5 is that it gives White a more secure footing in the center. The attacks for both sides develop at a much slower rate here than they do after the immediate 9.c5. White can meet Black's ...f7-f5 with the exchange e4xf5, preventing an all-out pawn assault by the second player on the kingside. Black, on the other hand, has more time to organize a defense for his d6-pawn. It will be several more moves before White achieves c4-c5. Thus, the text is not meant to efficiently take down weaker players, but rather to slowly grind down opponents of equal or higher strength.

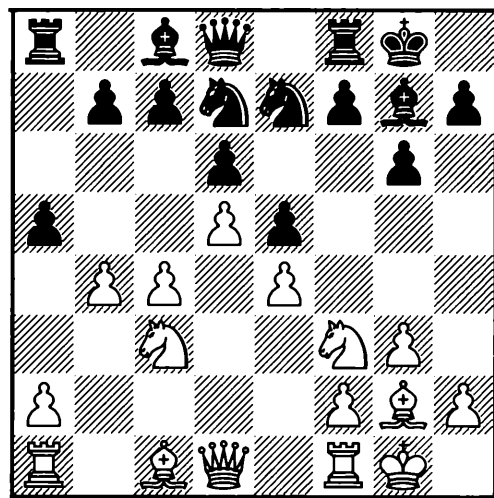
9...♞d7

Black's most popular try, but 9...♞e8, analyzed in Geller-Uhlmann, below, is also common. 9...♚h8 and others are covered in Tregubov-Lalić toward the end of this chapter.

10.b4

10.♞e1, aiming to play ♞d3 and f2-f4, is the main line but we prefer immediate expansion on the queenside. Playing in the center has not been shown to give White the advantage: 10...f5 11.♞d3 ♞f6 (11...h6!? is also interesting) 12.♙g5 h6 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.f4 exf4 15.♞xf4 ♙e5 is one line that comes close to equality for Black.

10...a5

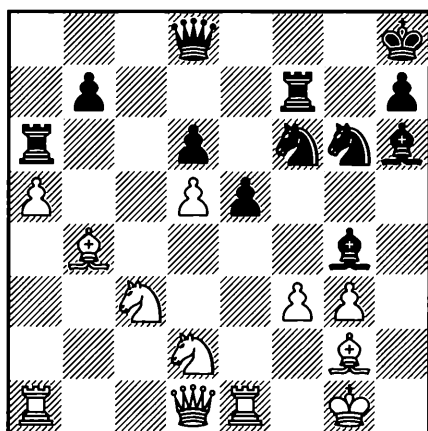


Again Black's most common move. He can play for the immediate 10...f5, which we analyze in Najdorf-Fischer below, or try 10...♚h8!?, which we cover in Spassov-Baljon.

11.♙a3

This move may look odd at first glance, but conventional wisdom

holds that this is better than 11.bxa5 ♖xa5, when Black can retreat his rook to a6, defending the d6-pawn. 12.a4 ♖h8 13.♗a3 ♗h6 14.♘d2 f5 15.♗b4 ♖a6!, seen in V.Tukmakov-V.Loginov, Sverdlovsk 1987, was a “tempo up” for Black compared to the main game. The phrase “tempo up” is in quotation marks because it is questionable that the rook is really that much better placed on a6 than it is on a8. The game itself is probably the most compelling evidence for either case; after 16.a5 ♖f7 17.♘b3 ♘f6 18.exf5 gxf5 19.c5 ♘g6 20.♖e1 f4 21.cxd6 cxd6 22.♘d2 fxe3 23.hxe3 ♗g4, White would have been doing well after the simple 24.f3:



White has ideas of ♘de4 or ♘c4. Note that although loosening up the kingside pawns seems risky, it is probably justified here. Instead, White played 24.♖c2 and was taken down after 24...♖c8 25.♘de4 ♘xe4 26.♗xe4 ♘h4! 27.gxh4 ♖g7! 28.♖f1 ♖c4+ 29.♖d3 ♖xb4.

Thus, even though White is probably fine after 11.bxa5, White almost always prefers the text instead. The slightly awkward-looking 11.♗a3 does just as good a job of preparing c4-c5. In general, if Black refuses to play ...a5xb4, then White will simply play ♘f3-d2-b3, forcing the issue without loss of time.

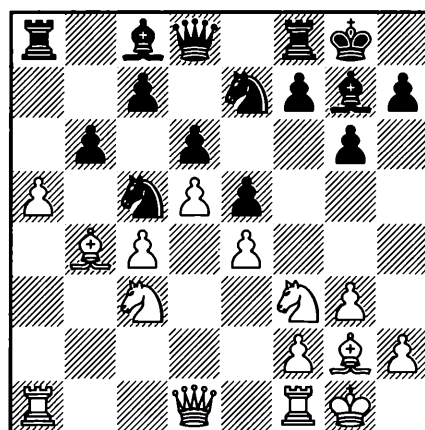
11...axb4

11...b6, trying to maintain the tension, is featured in the game Horváth-Hazai below. Meanwhile, 11...♗h6 has no real advantage over the text after 12.♘d2 ♖h8 13.♘b3 axb4 14.♗xb4. Now 14...f5 15.c5 (15.exf5 gxf5 16.c5 is similar to the main game) 15...♘f6 16.♘d2 ♖f7 17.♖e1 ♘e8 18.♘c4 ♘g8 19.a4 gave White an advantage in L.Janjgava-G.Timoshchenko, Riga 1998.

12.♗xb4 ♗h6

Getting the dark-squared bishop outside the pawn chain has several advantages for Black. From h6, the bishop prevents White from placing a rook on c1, a fact which can make his attack on the queenside slightly awkward at times. The bishop also supports the ...g6-g5 thrust, which will come in handy after Black pushes his f-pawn to f4.

Black has several alternatives, of course. 12...h6 13.a4 f5 is seen in Miton-Annaberdiev below, while 12...b6, trying to prevent White from taking total control on the queenside, is best met with 13.a4 ♘c5 14.a5. Black has tried two moves here:



a) 14...♗a6 is reasonable, when 15.axb6 cxb6 16.♖e2 ♖c7 17.♖a3 ♗b7

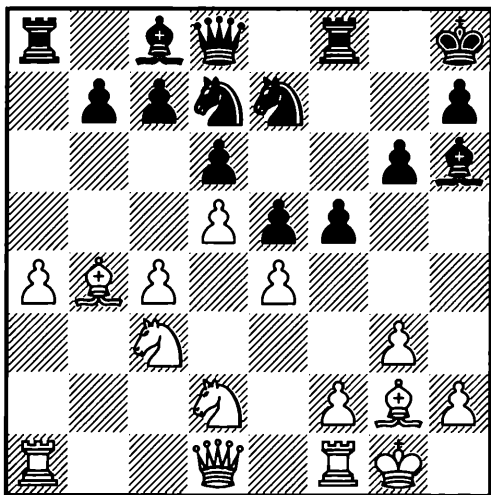
18.♠b5 ♖d7 19.♗fa1 gave White a slight advantage in E.Gufeld-M.Dvoretsky, Vilnius 1975.

b) 14...f5 15.axb6 ♗xa1 16.♗xa1 cxb6 17.♙xc5 bxc5 18.♗a7 fxe4 19.♠xe4 ♙f5 20.♠fg5 gave White a clear advantage in D.Bunzmann-R.Ciaffone, Germany 1999.

13.a4 ♖h8

13...f5 will resemble the game, for instance 14.a5 ♖h8 15.♠d2 ♠g8!? 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♠b3 with c4-c5 to follow. Blocking the queenside with 13...b6 also gives White an edge after 14.a5 ♙a6 15.♗e2.

14.♠d2 f5



15.♠b3

15.exf5 first is more accurate. Then 15...gxf5 (or 15...♠xf5 16.♠de4 ♠d4 17.♠b5 ♠xb5 18.cxb5 with a big edge for White) 16.♠b3 is similar to the game, but White avoids the possibility of Black's recapturing on f5 with the bishop on c8, as seen in the note to Black's move 16.

15...♠f6

On 15...f4, White keeps the upper hand with 16.c5 ♠f6 17.♠b5.

16.exf5

Necessary, since 16.c5 would be met with 16...fxe4, making the waters murky.

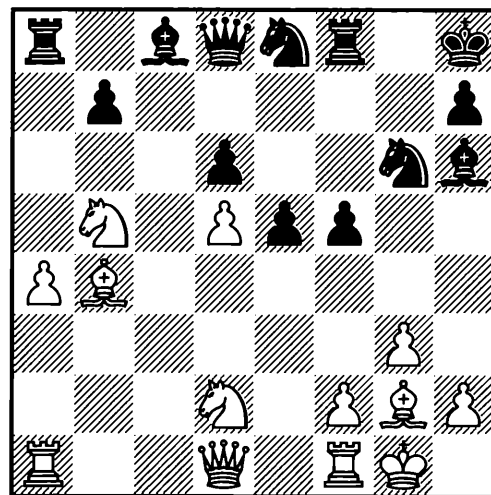
16...gxf5

Here, the famous quip about "every Russian schoolboy" knowing to recapture on f5 with the pawn in these positions is misleading. Black should take the opportunity to play 16...♙xf5!, when his bishops exert some influence over the queenside. Then 17.c5 ♖d7 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.♠d2 (or 19.♠b5 ♗a6) 19...♙g4 20.♗c2 ♠f5 gives Black counterplay, but 20.♗e1 with ♠c4 to follow should give White a slight edge.

17.c5 ♠g6

The knight does little on g6, so 17...f4 18.a5 ♠f5 was preferable. After the text, White can simply continue with his plan of developing an attack on Black's d6-pawn.

18.cxd6 cxd6 19.♠b5 ♠e8 20.♠d2



Note how similar the maneuvers White is playing here are to those in the previous chapter. White has achieved a clear advantage, especially considering Black's complete inability to generate counterplay on the kingside.

20...♖a6 21.♖e1 ♜f7 22.♘c4 f4

Black finally makes this important push – which, just as in the previous chapter, cedes the e4 square.

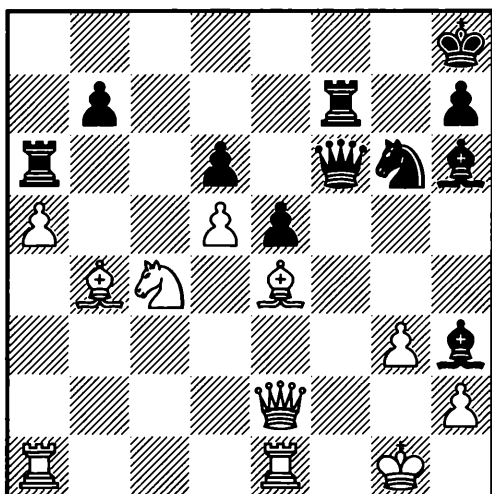
23.♘c3

Investing two moves to relocate the white knight to e4 makes sense. The alternative was 23.♗b3, aiming to target the d6-pawn once again with the thematic ♗a3.

23...♙f6 24.♘e4 ♘xe4 25.♙xe4 fxe3

25...♙f5 26.♗d3 ♙xe4 27.♗xe4 would also be good for White, who dominates the board.

26.fxe3 ♙d7 27.a5 ♗f6 28.♗e2 ♙h3



29.♙xd6!?

Differently from the 9.c5 ♘e8

10.cxd6 cxd6 lines from the previous chapter, here it is not uncommon for White to attempt such tactical blows on the d6 square. In the last chapter, White could often just pile up and win the d6-pawn; in these lines, however, Black has time to organize a sufficient defense. Thus, the first player has to look for something a bit more sophisticated if he hopes to “cash in.” In this case, the text move nearly backfires. 29.♖a3, planning ♖c3 or ♖f3, was a quieter move. White's clear advantage would then be beyond dispute. The text is much riskier.

29...♖xd6 30.♘xd6 ♗xd6 31.♗h5

The point. White forks Black's bishops.

31...♙d2 32.♙xg6!?

32.♗xh3 ♙xe1 33.♖xe1 would have left White with better defense for his d5-pawn, but the text – which rids Black of his powerful queen-and-knight combination – seems correct from a positional standpoint. It is not necessarily accurate, however.

32...♗xg6

32...♗c5+! 33.♙h1 ♗xd5+ 34.♖e4 (34.♙e4?? ♙xe1! 35.♖xe1 ♗xe4+ 36.♖xe4 ♖f1#) 34...♙d7! is a computer-found line that would have given Black strong counterplay. He threatens ...♙c6. Loginov understandably misses this sequence.

33.♗xh3 ♙xe1 34.♖xe1

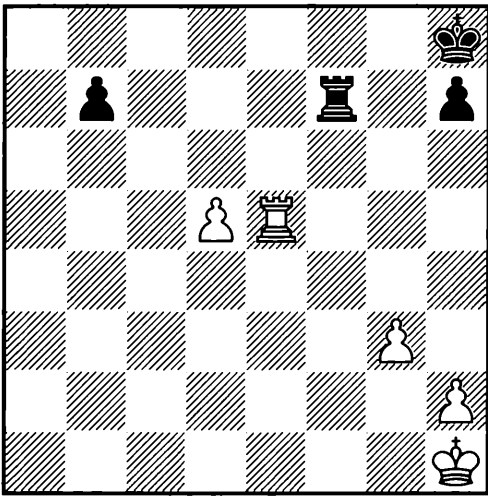
34.♗c8+ to cover the c2 square was better, for instance 34...♙g7 35.♖xe1

♖d3 36.♗g4+ ♔f8 37.♗b4+ ♔g7 38.d6
and so on.

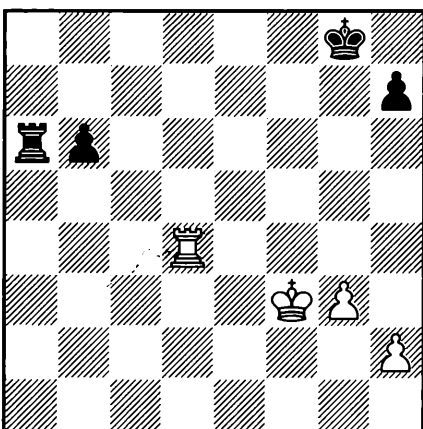
**34...♗c2 35.♗g2 ♖c5+ 36.♔h1
♗xa5**

36...♗d4 was more stubborn.

**37.♗e4 ♖c7 38.♗xe5+ ♖xe5
39.♗xe5**



White has surprisingly good winning chances in this rook ending, particularly considering that his opponent was still two years away from getting his IM title. Master-level players below 2400 or so often display much less skill in their handling of such rook-and-pawn endings, which look elementary at first sight but are in fact difficult to play correctly. Consider the following similar position, which occurred in one of the authors' games, M.Stryjecki-J. Hilton, Cincinnati 2009:



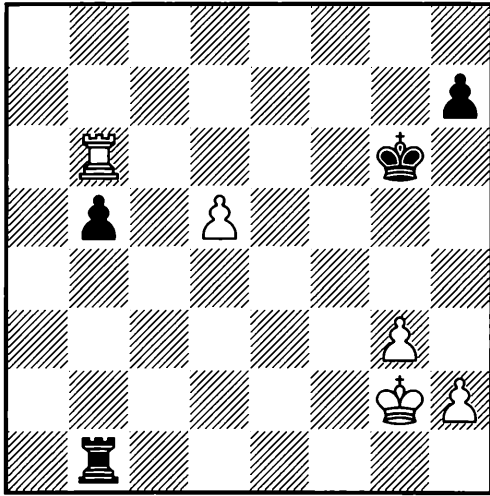
Even without the d5-pawn, White – an IM rated well over 2400 FIDE – managed to get the upper hand after Black, the weaker player, mishandled the position. With 44...♖a8 45.♗b4 ♗f8+ 46.♔e4 ♗f6, Black could have secured the draw by defending along the sixth rank. Instead, things turned sour after 44...b5?! 45.♗d8+ ♔g7 46.♗b8 ♖a2 47.h4 ♗b2 48.♔f4, when White was able to start making headway on the kingside. Black barely managed to hold the draw with 48... b4 49.♔g5 b3 50.♗b7+ ♔g8 51.♔h6 ♗b1 52.g4 b2 53.♔h5 (53.♗b8+ ♔f7 54.h5 ♗g1 55.♗b7+ ♔f8 56.♗xb2 ♗xg4 is also drawn) 53...♔f8 54.♔g5 ♔g8 55.h5 ♔f8 56.♔h6 ♗g1 57.♗b8+ ♔f7 58.♗xb2 ♗xg4, transposing to an easy theoretical draw after 59.♔xh7.

Given Black's difficulties even when White doesn't have an extra pawn on d5, he will suffer all the more in the main game. With correct play, however, he may still have been able to hold the draw.

39...b5?

This is a mistake here for the same reasons as it was in Stryjecki-Hilton above. The white rook is able to sneak behind Black's b-pawn, allowing the first player to generate kingside play laterally by moving his rook up and down the b-file. With 39...♔g7, Black would have had much better drawing chances, for instance 40.♔g2 b5 41.d6 ♗d7 42.♗xb5 ♗xd6 and so on. Now his position gets even harder.

**40.♗e8+ ♔g7 41.♗b8 ♗f1+
42.♔g2 ♗b1 43.♗b7+ ♔g6 44.♗b6+**



44...♔f7

44...♔f5!? held out some hope for a draw, but does not necessarily seem better than the text move. One possible line: 45.♖h6 ♕d1 (45...b4 is also plausible) 46.♖xh7 ♖xd5 47.♖h5+ (47. h4 may be an even better winning try) 47...♔e4 48.♖xd5 ♔xd5 49.♔f3 ♔d4 50.h4 b4 51.♔e2 ♔c3 52.h5 b3 53.h6 b2 54.h7 b1♖ 55.h8♖+ ♔c4, when the queen-and-pawn ending is theoretically drawn. Of course, defending this is still quite miserable for Black.

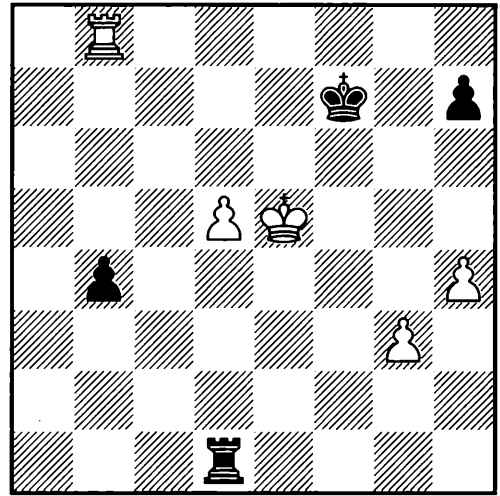
45.♔f3 b4 46.♔f4 ♖h1

On 46...b3, White could have switched things up and gone after Black's kingside pawn with 47.♔g5.

47.♖b7+ ♔g6 48.♖b8 ♔f7 49.h4

49.♖xb4?! is worse, since after 49... ♖xh2 50.♔e5 ♖e2+ 51.♖e4 ♖g2 Black has good drawing chances, for instance 52.♖h4 ♖xg3 53.♖xh7+ ♔e8 54.♔d6 ♖a3 55.♖h8+ ♔f7 56.♖c8 ♖d3! with a theoretical draw: 57.♔c6 ♔e7 58.♖c7+ ♔d8 59.♖h7 ♖d1 60.♔d6 ♔e8 61.♖h8+ ♔f7 and White gets nowhere.

49...♖d1 50.♔e5



50...♖g1?

The losing move. 50...♖e1+, forcing the white king in front of the d-pawn, looks like Black's only try. Then 51.♔d6 (51.♔f5!? heading for the kingside is also good) 51...♖b1 52.♖b7+ ♔g6 53.♔e7 b3 54.d6 h5 55.d7 ♖e1+ 56.♔d8 ♖e3 57.♔c8 ♖c3+ 58.♖c7 ♖xc7+ 59.♔xc7 b2 60.d8♖ b1♖ 61.♖g5+ ♔h7 62.♖xh5+ is a draw according to the tablebases, but Black will undoubtedly have to suffer for it.

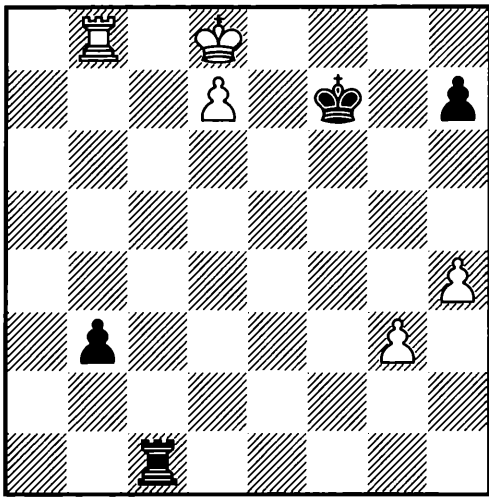
**51.♖b7+ ♔e8 52.♖b8+ ♔f7
53.♖b7+ ♔e8 54.♖b8+**

White repeats moves a few times before going in for the kill.

54...♔f7 55.d6?!

55.♖xb4 was much simpler, for instance 55...♖xg3 56.♖b7+ ♔e8 (56... ♔g8 57.d6 also wins for White) 57.♖xh7 with an easy win. After the text, White must play with great accuracy in some lines to get the full point.

**55...♖e1+ 56.♔d5 ♖d1+ 57.♔c6
♖c1+ 58.♔d7 ♖b1 59.♔c7 b3 60.d7
♖c1+ 61.♔d8**



61...Rc3

61...Rb1 puts up a much stiffer resistance, but would still lose after the beautiful 62.g4 b2 63.g5 c7 (or 63...c6 64.c8 e1+ 65.c8 d1 66.Rxb2 Rxd7 67.Rb6+ c5 68.c8, when White penetrates) 64.h5 c7 65.g6+ hxg6 66.h6! g5 67.h7 c7 68.h8 R+ c8 69.c8! (69.c7+? c7 70.d8 R c1+ 71.c7 R d1+ 72.c7 Rxd8 73.c8 d6 is drawn) 69...Rd1+ 70.c7+ h7 71.Rh8+ c8 72.d8 R+ h7 73.Rg8+ h6 74.Rg6#.

62.g4

The rest is easy.

62...Rd3 63.Rb6 Rh3 64.g5 Rxh4 65.Rf6+ c7 66.c7 Re4+ 67.Re6 Rxe6+ 68.cxe6 b2 1-0

Black resigns, as 69.d8 R b1 R 70.Rf6+ c8 71.Rf7+ h8 72.Rf8 is mate.

With 10.b4, White played for slow and steady middlegame pressure on the queenside. Although he didn't achieve the c4-c5 push until move 17, he was still able to follow it up with

strong pressure against Black's d6-pawn. His 29.Qxd6!? cashed in on this weakness a bit too early, and his advantage almost evaporated. He still managed to carry some of it into the rook-and-pawn ending, however, where he outplayed his lower-rated opponent.

We continue our coverage of the move 11...axb4 in the next game, which features Wojo's protégé Kamil Miton handling the white pieces. Black manages to get a playable game, but he is still subjected to considerable pressure, and this proves too challenging for him to handle.

Miton, Kamil (2564)

Annaberdiev, Meilis (2305)

[E62] India 2002

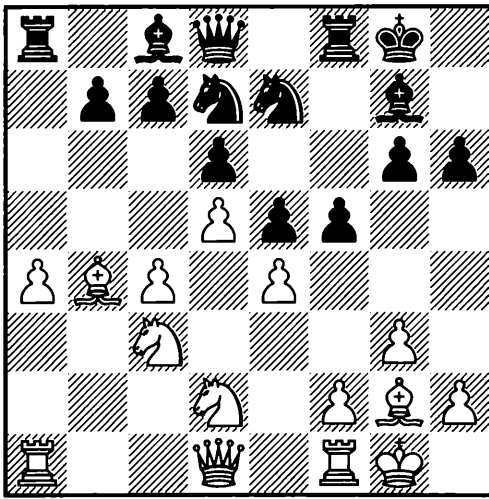
1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 g7 4.g3 0-0 5.Qg2 d6 6.0-0 c6 7.Qc3 e5 8.d5 Qe7 9.e4 d7 10.b4 a5 11.Qa3 axb4 12.Qxb4 h6

This is the obvious alternative to 12...Qh6, which we saw in the previous game. White's plans on the queenside remain unchanged.

13.a4

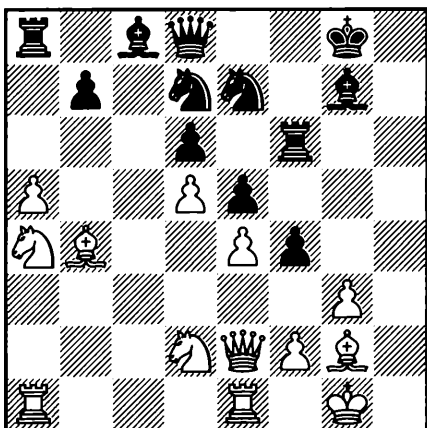
White anticipates Black's ...b7-b6, blocking the queenside, and prepares to run his own pawn up the board to a5. 13.Qd2 has also been tried, when 13..f5 14.a4 simply transposed in A.Vaulin-A. Kretchetov, St. Petersburg 1996.

13...f5 14.Qd2



14...b6

Best. Attempts to immediately attack on the kingside seem to backfire. 14...g5!? 15.a5 ♖f6 16.c5 fxe4 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♗dxe4 ♗f5 19.♗a4 ♗xe4 20.♕xe4 ♗d4 21.♗b6 was better for White in L.Spassov-X.Durán Albareda, Manresa 1996. Meanwhile, the aggressive 14...f4 15.a5 g5 16.♗a4 g4 17.♖e1 was the continuation of the aforementioned game Vaulin-Kretchetov. After 17...h5 18.c5 h4 19.cxd6 cxd6, White could have played 20.♗c4!?, since Black will be too slow in generating an attack down the h-file with 20...f3 21.♕f1 hxc3 22.hxc3 ♗g6 23.♗xd6 ♗g5 24.♖c1 and so forth. In the game, White played 20.♗xg4 and was still a full pawn up after 20...hxc3 21.hxc3 ♖f6 22.♗e2:



Although the game was eventually drawn, White was clearly better through most of the game.

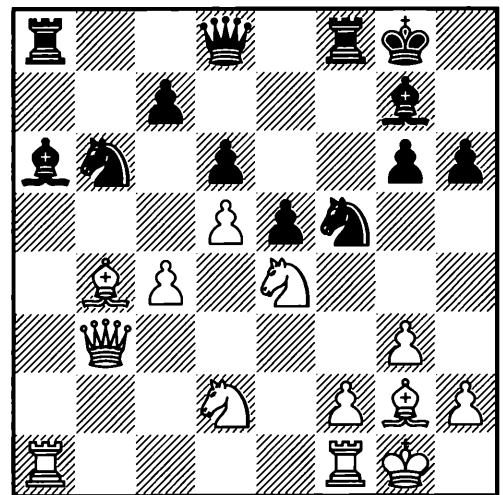
15.a5 ♕a6

Or 15...♗c5 16.♗e2, when it is worth pointing out that 16...♗a6? doesn't work in view of 17.axb6 cxb6 18.♗b5, taking advantage of the pin along the a-file.

16.axb6 ♗xb6 17.♗b3 fxe4

Black does not get nearly enough counterplay after 17...f4?! 18.♖a2, when White has ideas of ♖fa1 with c4-c5 to follow. 18...♗d7, trying to stop c4-c5, would then be met with 19.♖fa1 ♕b7 20.c5 (20.♕xd6 is weaker) 20...♖xa2 21.♖xa2 and Black is helpless to stop c5-c6 in view of 21...dxc5 22.d6+.

18.♗cxe4 ♗f5

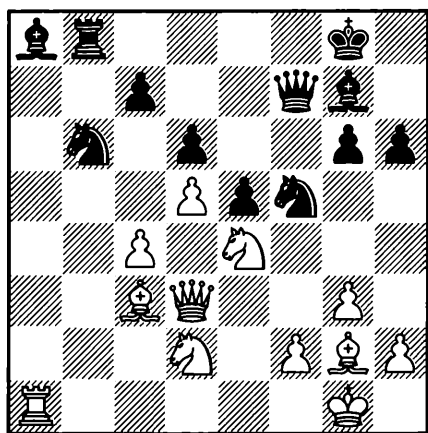


Black now targets the d4 square. White's slight superiority in this position stems from his control of e4 and his grip on the light squares. Nevertheless, Black has achieved a playable game.

19.♕c3

White might have prefaced this with 19.♗d3 first, for instance 19...♗e7 20.♖fb1 (20.♖a5 is also good) 20...♗f7 (better than the other defense against

White's Rxa6 and c4-c5 , $20...\text{Nd7}$ $21.\text{Ra5}$ (now $21.\text{Rxa6 Rxa6}$ $22.\text{c5 dxc5}$ is complicated) $21...\text{Rfb8}$ ($21...\text{Bb7?!}$ $22.\text{Rxa8 Rxa8}$ $23.\text{Qxd6!}$ wins a pawn) $22.\text{Rba1 Bb7}$ $23.\text{Rxa8 Qxa8}$ ($23...\text{Rxa8}$ $24.\text{Rxa8+ Qxa8}$ $25.\text{Qa5!}$ and Wa3 targets d6) $24.\text{Qc3}$ and White maintains his slight plus:



He has ideas of Ra7 , Qa5 , or a well-timed c4-c5 . The text detracts slightly from White's piece coordination on the queenside, but is by no means an inaccuracy.

19...We7

$19...\text{Nd4}$ $20.\text{Qxd4 exd4}$ $21.\text{Qh3}$ is favorable for White.

20.Rfe1 Rfb8 21.Qf1 Wf8 22.Wc2 Bh8?

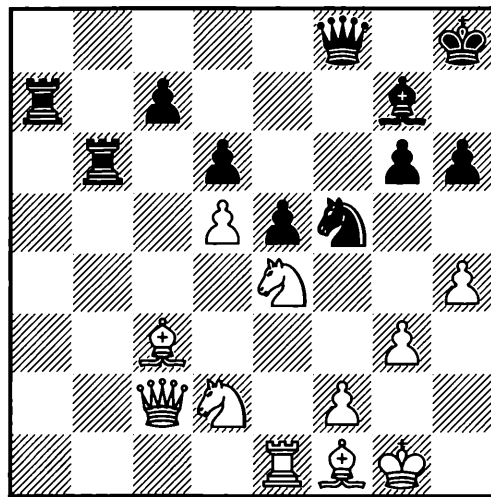
$22...\text{Qc8}$ or $22...\text{Bb7}$ was necessary here. The text is a major oversight.

23.Rxa6

The text gives White a tremendous advantage, but $23.\text{c5}$ may have been even stronger. $23...\text{Qxf1}$ $24.\text{cxb6 Qa6}$ $25.\text{bxc7}$ with Qa5 to follow would have been quite unpleasant for Black. The text has the advantage of being somewhat more clearcut. Miton likely

decided that the text move was good enough for the win and didn't want to bother with the messier $23.\text{c5}$.

23...Rxa6 24.c5 Ra7 25.cxb6 Rxb6 26.h4



White now has a bishop and knight for a rook and pawn, which in most cases is a material advantage. The current position is certainly no exception. White will have play against Black's weak pawns and his four minor pieces will dominate the center. Eventually, as often happens with this particular material imbalance in the middlegame, White will be able to stir up a mating attack against the black king.

26...Wf7

Black defends his loose g6 -pawn. $26...\text{Nd4}$ $27.\text{Qxd4 exd4}$ is worth considering, but now White has the stunning $28.\text{Ng5! hxc5}$ $29.\text{Wxc6}$, when the dual threats of Qf1-d3 and Re1-e8 will prove decisive.

27.Nc4 Rb8 28.Rd1 Rba8

$28...\text{Nd4}$ was again an idea, though $29.\text{Qxd4 exd4}$ $30.\text{Ned2}$ would once again allow White to target the b1-h7 diagonal.

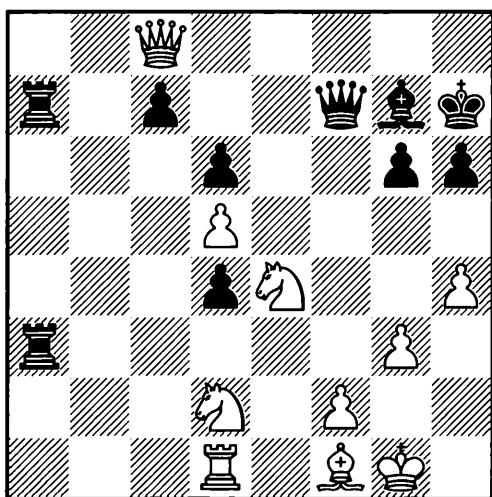
29. ♖b3 ♘d4

Black, at a loss for anything better to do, finally decides to give this move a try.

30. ♙xd4 exd4 31. ♘cd2 ♖a3

31... ♖a5 would hardly threaten anything, since ... ♖xd5 could always be met with ♙c4. 32. ♖c1 would continue White's pressure.

32. ♖b7 ♖8a7 33. ♖c8+ ♔h7



34. h5!

A well-timed strike, once again emphasizing White's control of the light squares.

34... ♖a1

34... gxf5 35. ♙h3 also looked troublesome for Black.

35. ♖xa1 ♖xa1 36. ♔g2 ♖xd5

36... gxf5 37. ♙d3 would leave Black with no good defense to double check and mate with ♘f6. White's attack now becomes overwhelming.

37. ♙c4 ♖a8 38. hxf6+ ♔xf6 39. ♖e6+ ♔h7 40. ♘f3

White unpins his knight on e4, threatening once again to bring the stallion to f6.

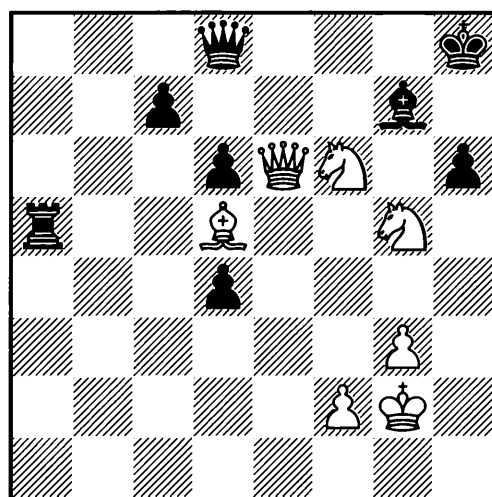
40... ♖a5 41. ♘f6+ ♔h8

41... ♙xf6 42. ♖xf6 is crushing, for instance 42... ♖e8 (what else?) 43. ♙d3+ ♔g8 44. ♙g6 ♖d7 (44... ♖f8? 45. ♙h7+!) 45. ♘d4 with ♘f5 or ♘e6 to follow.

42. ♙d5

The elegant 42. ♘e8 is even stronger.

42... ♖d8 43. ♘g5



A beautiful sight. All of White's minor pieces work together in harmony against the black king.

43... ♖xd5 44. ♘f7# 1-0

Black's 14...b6, which forced White to spend additional time and energy playing a4-a5xb6, was a reasonable idea. Black achieved a playable game by around move 20, though he certainly didn't have anything special. White continued to pressure Black until the second player blundered with 22... ♔h8?, allowing 23. ♖xa6 and 24.c5. He was eventually able to

use his material advantage of bishop and knight against rook and pawn to conjure up a mating attack against Black's poorly defended king.

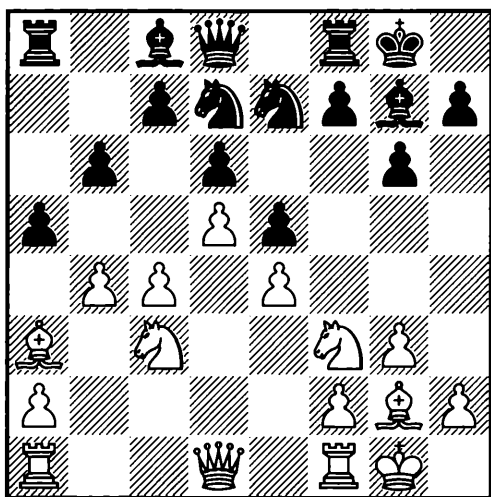
In the next game, Black does a much better job of plugging up all the holes in his queenside. Some creativity is needed on White's part to break through.

Horváth, József (2480)

Hazai, László (2460)

[E62] Budapest 1992

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.♗c3 ♗c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♗e7 9.e4 ♗d7 10.b4 a5 11.♗a3 b6



Black hopes to delay White's play on the queenside by refusing to capture on b4. White should now force the issue anyway by taking on a5.

12.♗d2

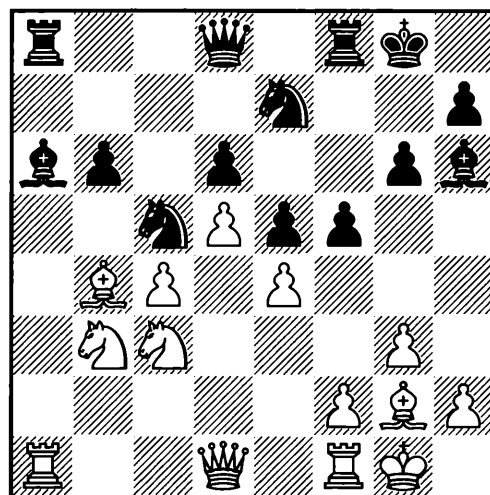
Not best. 12.bxa5 is called for here, since 12...♖xa5 13.♗b4 ♖a6!? isn't as good as in the aforementioned Tukmakov-Loginov game (see the note to White's move 11 in Pigusov-Loginov above), given the presence of the black pawn on b6. The rook will likely just be cut off from action on the kingside now.

14.a4 ♗c5 15.a5 would keep a slight edge for White thanks to the opening of lines on the queenside. Meanwhile, of course, 13...♖a8 14.a4 f5 15.a5 would just transpose back into the mentioned note.

12...axb4 13.♗xb4 f5

13...c5! here was Black's big chance to exploit White's move 12, since 14.dxc6 ♗c5 (not 14...♗xc6? 15.♗xd6) 15.♗d5 ♗xc6 would have allowed Black to develop smoothly. 16.♗c3 ♗a4, winning the dark-squared bishop for the knight, would then be a headache for White. After the text, the game returns to normal, with White having a nice edge.

14.a4 ♗c5 15.a5 ♗h6 16.♗b3 ♗a6 17.axb6 cxb6



An interesting crossroads has been reached. Black has managed to do an excellent job of holding White back on the queenside. So how should White continue? If he is to have any way forward here, it must start with removing Black's powerful knight on c5.

18.♗xc5

18.♗xc5 was the self-evident alternative, when now 18...bxc5 is natural,

since 18...dxc5!? 19.d6 gives White the initiative heading into the complications. So after 19...bxc5, play continues 19.♔a5 ♖d7 20.♗d3 ♜fb8 21.♞a2 followed by doubling on the a-file. Black looks reasonably solid here, so the more adventurous text move is probably the better of the two choices.

18...bxc5 19.♔xc5

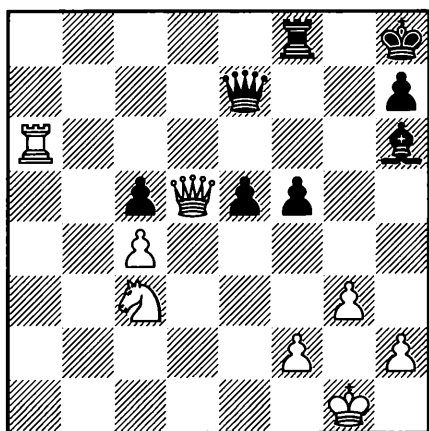
The point. After White's next move, the black knight on e7 cannot flee in view of ♗d5+.

19...dxc5 20.d6 ♔b7?!

20...f4 21.dxe7 ♗xe7 22.♔d5 wasn't pleasant for Black either, but was probably preferable to the text.

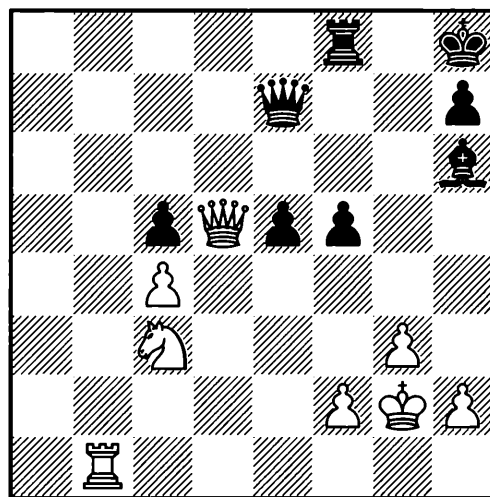
21.♞xa8

More accurate was the move order 21.dxe7 ♗xe7 22.exf5, since 22...♞xa1 (22...♔xg2 23.♔xg2 ♞xa1 24.♗d5+ ♔h8 25.♞xa1 gxf5 26.♞a6 ♞d8 27.♞a7! ♞xd5 28.♞xe7 ♞d4 29.♔d5 is similar) 23.♔d5+! ♔xd5 24.♗xd5+ ♔h8 25.♞xa1 gxf5 26.♞a6 is good for White:



26...♞d8 27.♞a7! ♞xd5 28.♞xe7 ♞d4 29.♔d5 leaves Black struggling.

21...♔xa8 22.dxe7 ♗xe7 23.exf5 ♔xg2 24.♔xg2 gxf5 25.♗d5+ ♔h8 26.♞b1



White has emerged with a sizeable advantage. His well-placed pieces are ready to attack Black's weak c- and e-pawns. Over the next few moves, Black tries to generate a counterattack against White's king in order to save himself.

26...e4 27.♞b7 ♗f6 28.♔b5

White decides to cash out for a draw. 28.♔e2 was a good move, since 28...f4 could be met with the sneaky 29.♗xe4 f3+ 30.♔h3! winning a pawn and avoiding all Black's tricks. But 28.♗d7 was probably the most accurate move for White of all, as now 28...♗g6 29.♗e7 f4 can be met with 30.♔xe4 f3+ 31.♔g1, for instance 31...♞e8 32.♗xe8+! ♗xe8 33.♞xh7+! ♔xh7 34.♔f6+ ♔g6 35.♔xe8 with a winning ending. Instead, the text move is designed to generate a quick draw by repetition.

28...f4 29.♔d6

29.♗xe4 with the idea of 29...f3+ 30.♔h3 was still possible, but this is not what White had in mind with his move 28.

29...fxg3 30.♔f7+ ♔g7 31.♔e5+ ♔h8 32.♔f7+ ♔g7 33.♔e5+ ♔h8 34.♔f7+ 1/2-1/2

Black's 11...b6 may be a move worth repeating. White needs to play 12.bxa5, which at the very worst just leads back to the main lines for Black after 12...♞xa5 13.♙b4 ♞a8. In this game, Black would have done well with 13...c5! instead of the normal-looking 13...f5. Regardless, the second player did an excellent job fighting for space on the queenside. Eventually, if White wanted to make any headway, he had to capture Black's knight on c5. This did lead to a very nice advantage for the first player, which he fell short of converting.

Conclusion: After Black's try 10...a5, White does well to respond with 11.♙a3. He aims to slowly build up on the queenside with ♖f3-d2-b3, a2-a4-a5, and c4-c5. If Black lets White have his way, as in the first game (Pigusov-Loginov), White's plan is to pile up on d6, just as in the previous chapter. If instead Black correctly decides to invest time blocking the queenside with ...b7-b6, ...♞d7-c5, and so on – as in the latter two games – White gets slight but lasting positional pressure on that side of the board.

Black's Early ...f7-f5 Strike: White's ♖f3-g5-e6

In the previous section, we saw Black taking deliberate measures against White's queenside play with 10...a5. In this section, we'll look at games in which the second player prefers instead to get things rolling on the kingside with 10...f5 (after either 9...♞d7 or 9...♞e8), omitting any preparatory move to prevent ♖f3-g5-e6 from White. We examine the consequences for both sides when White is allowed to penetrate to the e6 square, leading to complications – which are usually favorable for White, who is able to generate strong play in the center with pawn breaks such as e4xf5, d5x(♙)c6 and b4-b5, c4-c5, and so on. White's idea is almost always to rip open the h1-a8 diagonal for his prized bishop on g2. Even if White loses material in the process, if his bishop on g2 becomes the most powerful minor piece on the board, then he is almost always assured full compensation for a pawn or two – particularly if Black's counterpart bishop on g7 is blocked in by

his e5-pawn. The following game is an excellent illustration of just such a scenario. The legendary grandmaster Efim Geller sacrifices a pawn to maximize the potential of his g2-bishop, gaining longterm positional compensation.

Geller, Efim
Uhlmann, Wolfgang

[E62] Stockholm 1962

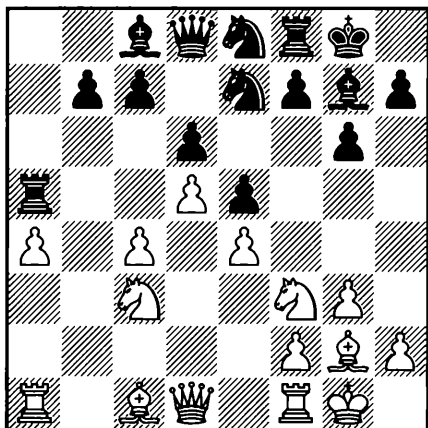
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d6 5.♖f3 0-0 6.0-0 ♖c6 7.♖c3 e5 8.d5 ♖e7 9.e4 ♞e8

The advantage of this retreat over 9...♞d7 is that the black bishop on c8 still guards the e6 square, allowing Black to play ...f7-f5 next without the preparatory ...h7-h6.

10.b4 f5

10...a5, as we saw in the previous section, is of course also possible here. Now 11.♙a3!? is poor in view of 11...

axb4 12.♔xb4 c5! (an idea we've seen before) 13.dxc6 ♖xc6 14.a3 ♕e6 with equality according to Janjgava. So instead the natural 11.bxa5 is played. 11...♞xa5 12.a4 and here:



a) 12...♖h8 13.♔a3 ♕h6 14.♗d2 f5 15.♔b4 ♞a6 16.a5 ♞f7 17.c5 looks similar to Pigusov-Loginov from the first section. White's knight is headed to c4 and Black will likely suffer from problems with his d6-pawn. On the plus side for him, however, he does have his rook on a6.

b) 12...♔g4 should be met by 13.♞b3, stepping out of the pin, and here 13...♔xf3?!, ceding the two bishops, was played in G.Zaichik-I.Bitansky, Israel 1998. That game continued 14.♔xf3 b6 15.♔d2 f5 (15...♞a6 16.♔g2 ♞a8 17.♗b5 is an advantage for White) 16.♗b5 ♞a8 (16...♞a6 looks better) 17.a5 bxa5 18.♞xa5 ♞b8 (18...c5 19.♞fa1 ♞xa5 20.♔xa5 ♞d7 21.♔c3 gives White strong play on the seventh rank with ♞a1-a7) 19.♞a7 fxe4 (not 19...c6?? 20.♔a5; 19...♗c8 20.♞a6 is a slight edge for White) 20.♔xe4 ♗f5 21.♞d3, when White had a clear advantage. But of course Black would have been better off trying to block the queenside with 13...b6, with one possible line here being 14.♔a3 (14.♔d2 is also good, for instance 14...♞a6 15.♗e1) 14...♞a8 15.♔b4 c5 16.♔a3 ♔d7 (or 16...f5 17.♗g5) 17.♞fb1 ♞a6 18.♗b5 with a long struggle ahead.

c) 12...f5 13.♗g5 b6 14.♔d2 ♕f6 (14...f4!? or 14...♞a8!? may be better) 15.exf5 ♔xg5 16.♔xg5 ♔xf5 17.f4 gave White a clear advantage in M.Filip-W. Uhlmann, Stockholm 1962.

d) 12...b6 13.♔a3 h6 14.♔b4 ♞a6 15.♞b3 is a slight advantage for White.

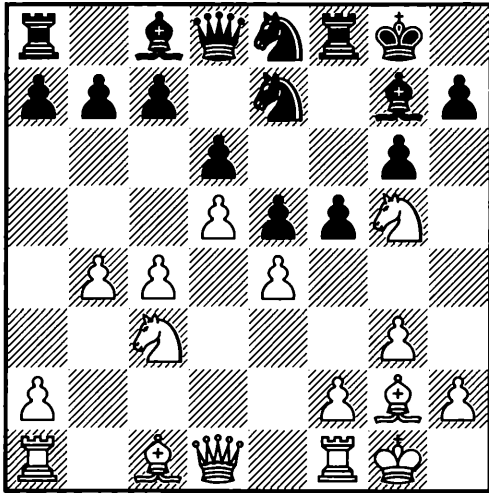
e) 12...♔d7!? 13.♔a3 b6 14.♞b3 ♞c8 15.♞fb1 f5 (15...♔h3 makes little sense, as swapping bishops on g2 only helps White to invade the queenside light squares) 16.♔b4 with an eye toward a4-a5 gave White an edge in D.Ippolito-E. Pedersen, Illinois 1994.

So besides the 10...a5 strike, what are Black's other options on move 10? The preparatory 10...h6 is certainly playable, though one of the main benefits of putting the black knight on e8 rather than d7 is that White's ♗f3-g5-e6 invasion is less dangerous in view of ...♔xe6. Thus, it appears that Black is mixing plans, especially as now the immediate 11.c5!? is playable. Striking on the kingside gets Black nowhere in view of 11...f5 12.♗d2 f4 13.♗c4 g5 14.a4 and here either 14...♗g6 15.♔a3 g4 16.♞e1 with an advantage for White in N.Davies-L.Ravi, India 1997, or 14...g4 15.f3! with the initiative in P.Bielak-A.Szczepaniak, corr. 1992. So Black does better to play 11...a5 12.♔a3 axb4 13.♔xb4 f5 (or even 13...dxc5!?) with reasonable counterplay, but certainly not enough for equality.

Finally, 10...c6!? was met by 11.♔e3 cxd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.♞xd5 ♗f6 14.♞d3, with a more pleasant position for White in A.Vaulin-A.Purtov, Hungary 1992. Thus, after this rather exhaustive analysis, we can conclude that Black's retreat of the knight to e8 on move 9 is most strongly connected

with the idea of playing 10..f5. Nothing else really makes sense for Black, since if he had wanted to play 10...a5 or 10...h6, he would have played 9...♖d7, and if he had wanted to play 10...c6, he could have done it on move 9 instead. We return to the main game.

11.♘g5

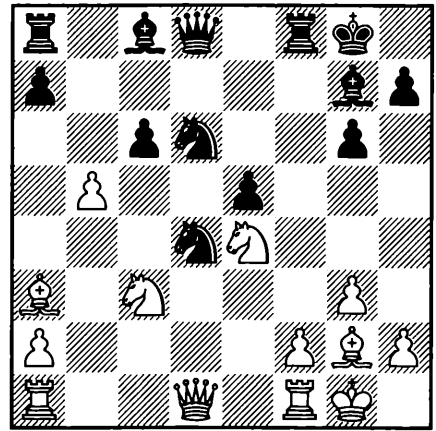


The principled reaction, taking advantage of Black's omission of ...h7-h6. White aims to throw his knight into the e6 square, creating favorable complications in the center. Black will be forced to part with his light-squared bishop with ...♘c8x(♘)e6, allowing White (after recapturing with d5xe6) to rip open the h1-a8 diagonal for his prized Wojo bishop on g2. Black will of course be able to rally his forces and eliminate the bold white pawn on e6, but the first player will have every possible form of compensation: the two bishops, active piece play, a safer king, and a space advantage.

11...h6

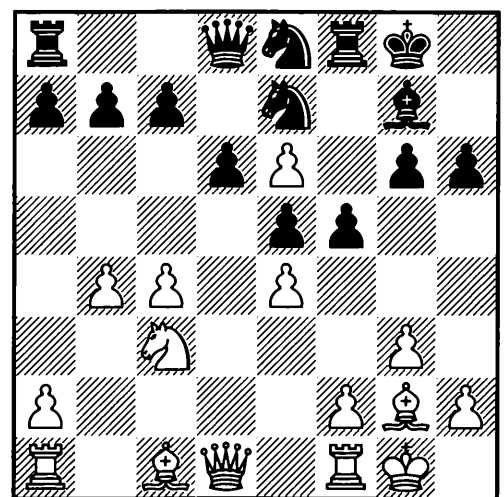
Taking up the challenge. A somewhat better path for Black is 11...♘f6 12.♙a3, which we cover in the next game. Meanwhile, 11...c6!? led to complications favoring White in

L.Portisch-I.Johannsson, Halle 1963, after 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.c5 fxe4 (13...d5 14.exd5 e4 15.d6 ♙xc3 16.dxe7 ♚xd1 17.exf8♚+ ♜xf8 18.♞xd1 ♙xa1 19.♘h7+ leaves White a pawn to the good) 14.cxd6 ♘xd6 15.b5! ♘ef5 (15...♘xb5 16.♘xb5 cxb5 17.♙a3 is strong for White) 16.♘gxe4 ♘d4 17.♙a3:



Black's pieces are rather tied up here, whereas White's dominate the board. Grandmaster Portisch defeated his opponent in short order.

12.♘e6 ♙xe6 13.dxe6

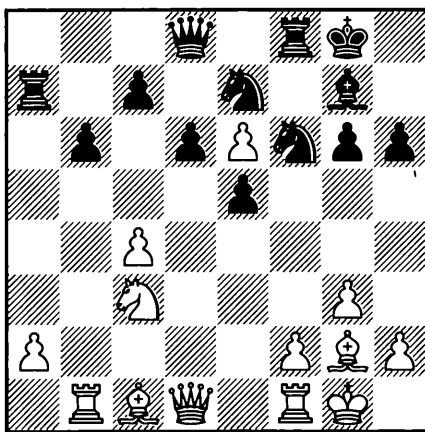


13...c6

13...♚c8? would be a poor choice here in view of 14.♘d5, when Black has tactical issues: 14...♚xe6 15.♘xe7+ ♚xe7 16.exf5 e4 runs into 17.♚d5+ ♜h8 18.♚xb7 ♞d8 (not 18...♘f6 19.fxg6) 19.♞b1 gxf5 20.♙e3, with a big initiative

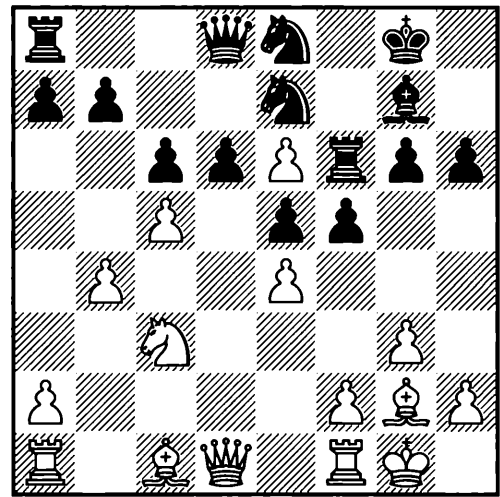
for White thanks to his two bishops and queenside play.

Meanwhile, the capture 13...fxe4!? can be met with 14.b5!, which maintains a large advantage for White along the h1-a8 diagonal. White is more active. 14...a6 (also possible are 14...♖c8 15.♘d5 ♖xe6 16.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♙xe4 and 14...c6 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.♘xe4 ♘f5 17.♖a4 ♖c8 18.♙a3) 15.bxa6 ♖xa6 16.♖b1 (16.♙xe4!? c6 17.♖b1 is also good for White) 16...b6 (16...♖c8 17.♙xe4 c6 18.♖b3 b6 19.♙e3 ♖xe6 20.♙xb6 ♘f6 21.♙d3 gives White a slight pull thanks to his bishop pair) 17.♙xe4 ♘f6 (17...♖c8 18.♘d5 ♖xe6 19.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 20.♙xg6 ♖xa2 21.c5! ♖e6 22.cxb6 cxb6 23.♙c2 gives White powerful threats) 18.♙b7 ♖a7 19.♙g2 leaves White dominating on the light squares in a messy position:



The main problem for Black here is that his queen's rook is in a jam. He cannot play ...c7-c6 to free it, as that would damage his queenside pawn structure too much considering White's powerful bishop pair. But something like 19...♘f5 would allow White to start playing against the troubled rook with 20.♘b5 ♖a5 21.a4 threatening ♙c1-d2 and ♙g2-b7.

14.c5 ♖f6



The only move ever tried for Black. 14...d5 gives White a slight plus after 15.exd5 e4 16.d6! ♙xc3 17.♙xh6 ♙g7 18.♙xg7 ♘xg7 19.♖b3 (19.f3, given by Janjgava, is also good) ♖f6 20.dxe7 ♖xe7 21.♖fd1 with the idea of ♙g2-f1-c4 and ♖d1-d6; 14...fxe4 15.cxd6 ♘xd6 (or 15...♖xd6 16.♖xd6 ♘xd6 17.♘xe4) 16.♘xe4 gives White an active game. He may lose the e6-pawn, but he will have compensation in the form of the two bishops.

15.♙a3

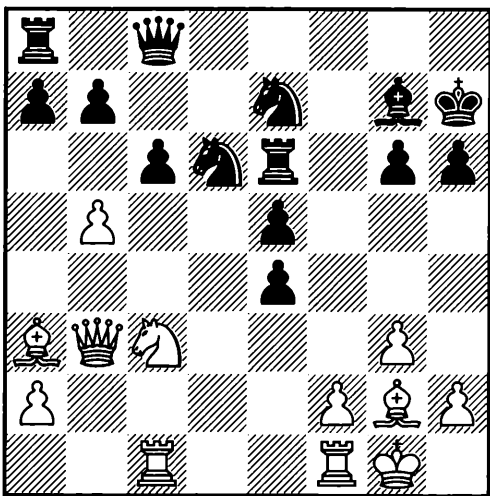
White prepares b4-b5. The immediate 15.b5!? is also possible, since Black's attempt to punish White's omission of ♙a3 with 15...dxc5 fails after 16.bxc6 bxc6 (16...♘xc6 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♖b3 with an eye to ♘d5 is unpleasant for Black) 17.♖b1 ♖xe6 18.♖b3 ♖d7? 19.♘a4. But White also maintains a sizeable initiative after Black's other tries: 15...cxb5 16.♙a3 dxc5 17.♙xc5 ♖xd1 18.♖fxd1 ♖xe6 19.♖d7 gives White strong compensation once again, and 15...♖xe6 16.bxc6 bxc6 (16...♘xc6 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♙d5) 17.♖b3 ♖c8 18.♙a3 puts Black under heavy pressure just as in the game. There is no reason for White to push b4-b5 immediately, however, and it makes sense for him to spend a few moves building

up his forces on the queenside before delivering this blow. Black can only wait in anticipation and try to make a few good preparatory moves.

15...♖xe6

15...dxc5 16.♔d7!? was seen in O.Ilić-B.Todorović, Yugoslavia 1989, when White was slightly better after 16...♗c7 17.♖fd1 ♗xe6 18.♔xb7 ♗d4 19.bxc5 ♖b8 20.♔a6 ♔c7 21.♖ab1, with pressure. White managed to lose his advantage fairly quickly here with poor play, however, so perhaps the alternative 16.bxc5 is worth considering. For instance, White is doing well after 16...♖xe6 (also possible are 16...♔c8 17.♖b1 and 16...♗c7?! 17.♖b1 ♔c8 18.♔d7) 17.♖b1 ♔c8 18.♖b3 followed by ♔c2 and ♖fb1. It seems hard to believe that Black will be able to defend his weak points at b7 and f5 in view of moves like ♗g2-h3 from White, so Black will have to concede the center with ...f5xe4, allowing ♗c3xe4 with a powerful centralized knight.

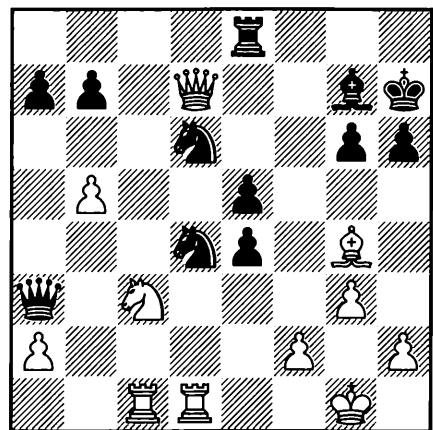
16.♔b3 ♔c8 17.b5 ♗h7 18.♖ac1 fxe4 19.cxd6 ♗xd6



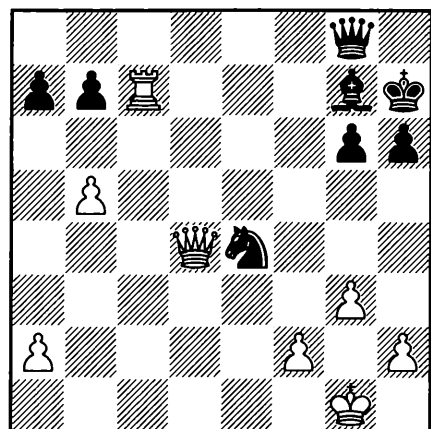
20.♗xd6

This is White's simplest option, but it is possible that he would have done

even better to keep things complicated for the time being. One good option is 20.♗h3!?, hoping to make something of White's bishop pair. After 20...♗ef5 (20...♗df5 21.♗xe4 simply leaves White with excellent compensation) 21.♖fd1 c5 (stopping the threat of ♗xd6) 22.♗xc5 ♔xc5 23.♔xe6, White is up material and seems to have good chances of seizing the initiative. For instance, 23...♗d4 (23...e3?! 24.♗e4 exf2+ 25.♗xf2 is good for White) 24.♔e7! (the problem with 24.♔d7?! is 24...♔a3 25.♗g4 h5 26.♗b1 ♔b2 27.♖c7 ♗e8!) 24...♖e8 (not 24...♔a3? 25.♗xe4) 25.♔d7 ♔a3 26.♗g4! with ♗b1 and ♖c7 to follow:

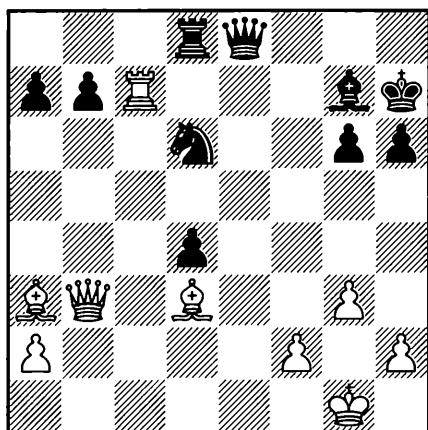


Then 26...♖f8 (26...h5 27.♗b1 ♔b2 28.♖c7 now leaves Black with no good defense, as 26...♖g8 29.♔xd6 hxg4 30.♔a3 leaves White winning) 27.♗xe4! ♗xe4 28.♖c7 ♖g8 29.♖xd4! exd4 30.♗e6 ♔f8 31.♗xg8+ ♔xg8 32.♔xd4 is strong for White:



Black is tied down and will lose his queenside pawns. Of course, such analysis is greatly facilitated by the use of computers. It would be difficult for even a world-class player like Geller to play so accurately for White here, so the text makes more sense from a human standpoint.

The deceptively straightforward 20.bxc6 is another move that – particularly with the help of a computer – looks good. White must still play accurately, however: 20...♖xc6 21.♗fd1 ♖d4 (21...♖f5 22.♖xe4 ♖fd4 is met with 23.♗xd4! exd4 24.♕h3, winning) 22.♗xd4 exd4 23.♖xe4 ♗xe4 24.♕xe4! (24.♗xc8 ♗e1+ 25.♕f1 ♗xc8 26.♕xd6 ♗cc1 27.♗f7 ♗xf1+ 28.♔g2 is messy) 24...♗e8 25.♕d3 ♗d8 (or 25...♖f5 26.♗xb7) 26.♗c7 and so on gives White excellent compensation for the pawn:



White's two bishops and safer king will be telling factors here. Once again, however, the text requires White to calculate far fewer variations.

20...♗xd6 21.♖xe4 ♗d4 22.♖c5

White's pawn minus matters little here considering the presence of opposite-colored bishops. His superior pawn shelter around his king and his strong initiative on the queenside give him more than enough compensation. An evaluation of "plus-over-equal" is

more than fair here. Janjgava goes as far as to say White has a clear advantage.

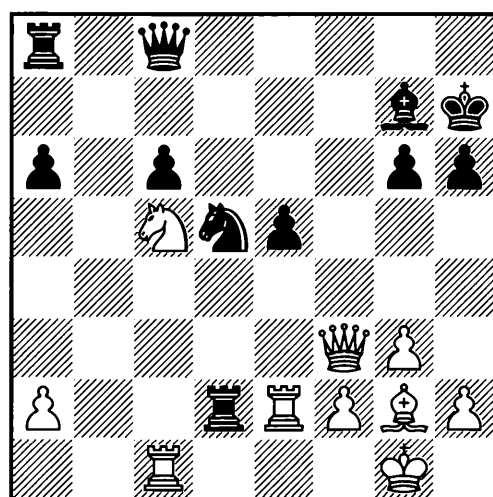
22...a5

Black is burdened by the fact that he has little to do but defend. 22...♖d5 was another possibility, but after 23.♗fe1, it is difficult for Black to even come up with a good move.

23.bxa6 bxa6 24.♗fe1

24.♖e6!?, preparing to trade the bishop on g7, was possible here since 24...♗b8 25.♖xd4 ♗xb3 26.♖xb3 would undoubtedly give White the better chances. And Black's defense 24...♗d6 would run into 25.♖xg7 ♔xg7 26.♗c5 ♗e6 27.♗b2 with good play for White. The text simply maintains the status quo, where the first player enjoys full compensation and gets to put steady pressure on his opponent.

24...♖d5 25.♗f3 ♗d2 26.♗e2



26...♗xe2

26...♗d4, keeping the rooks on, was Black's other option, but perhaps he feared 27.♗f7. The white queen is difficult to force out of the black camp:

27...♖g8, for instance, is smitten by 28.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 (28...♖xg8 29.♘xa6 also looks good for White) 29.♘b3!, winning the c6-pawn.

27.♖xe2 a5 28.h4

White prepares for ♕e4 and h4-h5. Black spends the next several moves trying to organize a defense.

28...♔h8 29.♕e4 ♘e7 30.♖d1 ♖e8 31.♖c2 ♖f7 32.♖d6

32.♖d7 and 32.♘b7 were other good moves. When playing the text, however, it is likely that Geller had seen through the fog to move 38 or so and had already concluded he would be better.

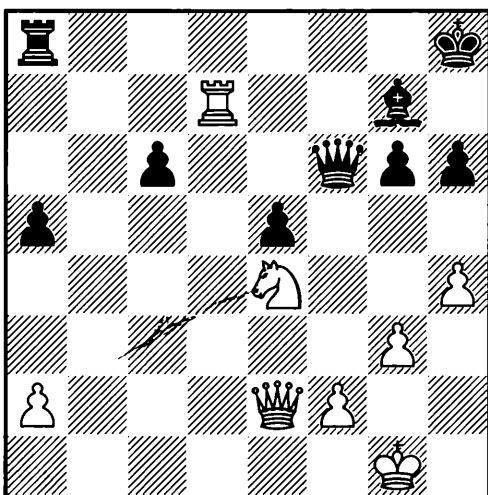
32...♘f5 33.♖d7 ♖f6 34.♖c4

A nice blow, threatening ♖f7. Black seems obliged to play his next move, after which White can renew his threats against the weak pawn on c6.

34...♘d6 35.♖e2 ♘xe4

Now on 35...♘f5 again, White might try 36.♖f3.

36.♘xe4



36...♖e6

It would make more sense to play 36...♖f5, since White really has nothing better than 37.♖d6, when 37...♖b8 38.♖xc6 would be similar to the game, but a tempo up for Black. This would not particularly help him, though, as he has few active moves. Meanwhile, the try 37...♖c8?! would likely lead to a loss for Black after 38.♖a6, for instance 38...c5 39.♖b7 c4 40.♖d7 ♖g8 41.♖f7 ♖e6 42.♘f6 ♖c8 43.♖xg7 ♖xf6 44.♖f7.

37.♖d6 ♖f5 38.♖xc6 ♖b8 39.♖c2 g5!?

Black further weakens his own king position in the hope of playing ...g5-g4. On 39...♖b4 White would have likely played 40.♖c4, allowing him to maintain his powerful queen-and-knight versus queen-and-bishop material balance. 40...♖xc4 41.♖xc4 ♔h7 42.♔g2 ♖d7 43.a4 and so on would permit White to eventually target the a5-pawn.

40.hxg5 hxg5 41.♖e2 ♖b1+?!

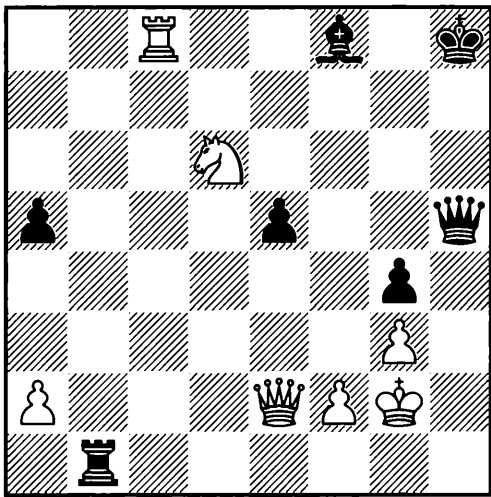
Almost certainly an inaccuracy, as it is Black's back rank, not White's, which needs defending. 41...g4 would have been a better try, for instance 42.♘d6 ♖h7 and here the defensive (not 42...♖h5 43.♖c2, when White defends everything) 43.♖c1 is necessary since Black threatened ...♖b1.

42.♔g2 g4 43.♘d6

Now White is very close to winning.

43...♖h5 44.♖c8+ ♕f8

44...♔h7 45.♖c2+ ♖g6 46.♘f5 would be strong for White.



45. ♖xe5+!

A cute tactic that does Black in. The ending that follows will be very difficult for the second player to defend.

45... ♖xe5 46. ♖f7+ ♔g7

46... ♔h7 47. ♖xe5 ♕g7 48. ♖xg4 ♖b2
49. a4 ♖b4 was slightly more accurate.

**47. ♖xe5 ♖b2 48. ♖c7+ ♔g8
49. ♖xg4**

49. a4! would have allowed White to win easily in view of 49... ♖b4 50. ♖c4!, when White will just be left with two extra pawns.

**49... ♕b4 50. a4 ♖a2 51. ♖f6+ ♔f8
52. ♖c4 ♖xa4 53. ♖d5 ♔f7 54. ♖e4
♔g6**

This allows White's next two moves, but of course Black was already losing.

55. ♖e7+ ♔g5 56. ♖c6 1-0

White is threatening to simply play ♖xa5, winning Black's last remaining pawn.

When Black permits – or even encourages – White's ♖f3-g5-e6

hop with 10...f5 and 11...h6, White gets powerful play along the h1-a8 diagonal. Although Black will likely win the newly created white pawn on e6, the first player gets more than his fair share of compensation. In this game, White's king on g1 was safer than Black's king on h7 thanks to the solid f2-g3-h2 shield. White showed considerable understanding of piece coordination and different material imbalances throughout the middle-game: first, he went for an opposite-colored bishop situation where his pawn minus mattered little; then, he used the powerful queen-and-knight versus queen-and-bishop material imbalance to launch a final assault on the ill-fated black monarch. He eventually traded his attack for material gain and converted a pawn-up ending.

The next game shows Black playing better with the more logical 11... ♖f6. Although the game is from 1959, it still represents the closest that theory has to “best play” for both sides after 10...f5. Fischer's handling of the black pieces is quite accurate, and he emerges out of the opening with just a slight disadvantage. It is surprising that more players have not copied Fischer's move order. After all, White doesn't get to play ♖g5-e6 here, which as we saw in the previous game gives him powerful piece play.

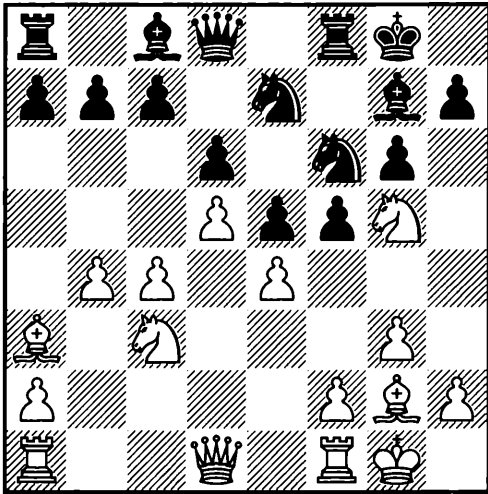
**Najdorf, Miguel
Fischer, Robert James**

[E62] Mar del Plata 1959

**1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♕g7
4. ♕g2 0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 ♖c6
7. ♖c3 e5 8. d5 ♖e7 9. e4 ♖d7**

9...♖e8 would match the same move order as the previous game, but simply transposes after 10.b4 f5 11.♗g5 ♗f6.

10.b4 f5 11.♗g5 ♗f6 12.♙a3



This is probably White's best try for the advantage, preparing the ♗g5-e6 jump. The bishop will not stay on a3 long, but the point is to force Black's hand in the center. As soon as Black relieves the pawn tension with ...f5xe4, White will look to play the bishop back to b2.

Going right ahead with 12.♗e6!? ♙xe6 13.dxe6 c6 is less clear than the text but is also a good option for White. 14.b5, with chances along the h1-a8 diagonal, is now probably best. Instead, Ippolito-West, New York 2000, saw the inferior 14.♖b3 fxe4 15.♗xe4, when 15...♗f5 with the idea of ...♗d4 would have been unclear. White's prospects for future compensation for his e6-pawn are worse here than normal, given how well Black's pieces are coordinated.

12...fxe4

The only way to stop White's ♗g5-e6. Worse is 12...h6 13.♗e6 ♙xe6

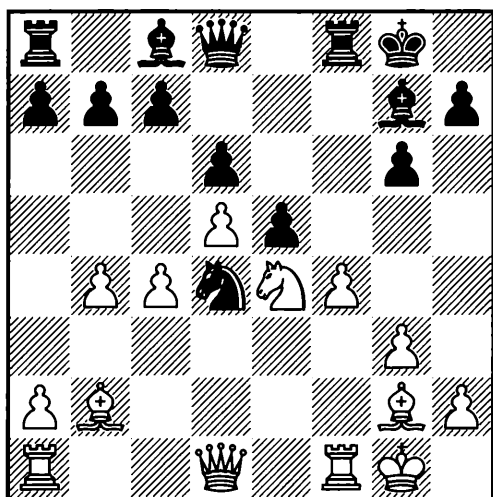
14.dxe6 c6?! 15.b5, when White had a clear advantage in M.Neumann-P. Reintjes, Germany 1997. After 15...♗e8 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.♖b1 ♖b8 18.♖a4 (18. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 19.c5 dxc5 20.♙xc5 with the idea of ♖d7 is also very strong) 18... ♖xb1 19.♖xb1 ♖c7 20.♖a6 f4 21.♖b7 ♖c8 22.♖xa7, White soon won.

13.♗cxe4 ♗f5 14.♙b2

Janjgava gives 14.c5!? instead as plus-over-equal, but this is hardly as convincing as the text. 14...♗d4 15.♙b2 a5 (15...♗xd5?! 16.♗xd6 is good for White) 16.cxd6 (16.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 17.♗e4 ♖e7 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.bxa5 ♖xa5 20.♙c3 ♖a6 is similar) 16...♗xe4 17.♗xe4 cxd6 18.bxa5 (18.♙xd4 exd4 19.b5 ♙f5 with the idea of taking on e4 looks more equal than anything else) 18...♖xa5 19.♙c3 ♖a6 20.♙b4 may give White some pressure against d6, but the game is better.

Meanwhile, 14.♖d3 is slightly less precise. White already knows his bishop is retreating to b2, but his queen has plenty of other good squares. The game F.Agrain-C.Brophy, corr. 1997, went thus: 14...♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗d4 16.♙b2 c6 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.f4 (18. ♙xd4!? exd4 19.b5 cxb5 20.cxb5 with a blockade in the center and play on the queenside is more ambitious) 18... ♖b8 19.♙c3 d5 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.fxe5 ♖xf1+ 22.♖xf1 (22.♙xf1 dxe4 23.♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 24.♙xd4 ♖xb4 25.♙c3 ♖b6 26.♖e1 was a more accurate way to handle the transition to the drawish ending) 22...dxe4 23.♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 24.♙xd4 ♖xb4 25.♙xa7 ♙xe5 and the game was eventually drawn.

14...♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗d4 16.f4



16...♙f5

White also gets a slight advantage after 16...a5 17.a3 axb4 (or 17...♞e7 18.♞e1) 18.axb4 ♞xa1 19.♙xa1 ♙f5 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.c5 with a mobilized center. It is also worth noting that computers like *Fritz* and *Rybka* like meeting the ...a7-a5 thrust with the “anti-positional” move 17.b5!? for White. It’s entirely possible that White can get away with ceding the important c5 square here for the sake of getting a space advantage: 17...♙f5 18.♞d2 with ♞ae1 to follow looks promising for White despite the slight structural damage to his queenside pawns. For the time being, anyway, the action will take place in the center, where White is well placed.

17.♞d2 c5

White was getting ready to play a pawn to c5 himself, so this strike in the center by Black seems justified. It is easy to build up White’s position by playing moves like ♞ae1 and c4-c5, but Black, who has less space, must play actively if he wants to make headway here.

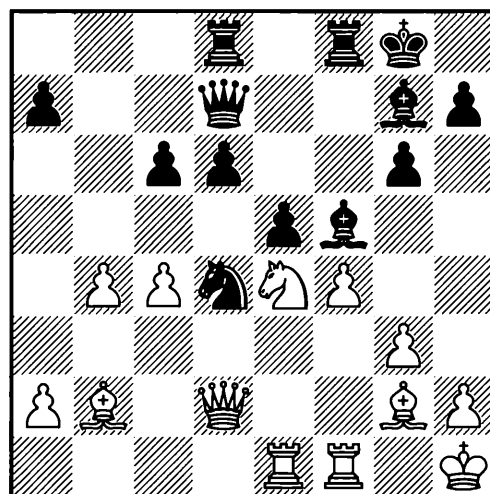
18.dxc6

This seems best. 18.fxe5 ♙xe4 19.♙xe4 ♙xe5 doesn’t promise White anything. 18.bxc5 ♙xe4 19.♙xe4 dxc5 20.♙xd4 exd4 (20...cxd4?! 21.f5 would start an attack against Black’s king) 21.♞d3 may give White a tiny pull since he has the half-open b-file and ideas of cracking open the black monarch’s fortress with f4-f5. The text is somewhat more ambitious.

18...bxc6 19.♙h1!?

19.♞ae1 immediately was just fine, since Black has no threats of 19...♞b6 thanks to 20.♙xd4 exd4 21.♙xd6. Then 19...♞d7 as in the game could be met with 20.a4, expanding on the queenside and preparing b4-b5.

19...♞d7 20.♞ae1 ♞ad8



21.fxe5!?

White releases the tension in the center a bit early. Building the position up a little with the more fluid 21.a4 first seems warranted. After the game move, Black has equalized, but certainly not more.

21...dxe5 22.c5 ♞e6 23.♙d6 ♙b5 24.♞e3 ♙xd6 25.cxd6 ♞xd6

25...♖xd6 would allow 26.♖xa7, with some play left in the game. With the text, both sides race for the draw.

26.♙xe5 ♙xe5 27.♖xe5 ♖xe5 28.♞xe5 ♙e6

Black must trade off pieces before White begins to pile up on the weak c-pawn.

29.♞xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♙f3 ♙xa2 31.♞a5 ♙d5 32.♙xd5 cxd5 33.♞xa7 d4 34.♔g2 d3 35.♞a1 1/2-1/2

Each side will win the other's passed pawn, so the game is drawn.

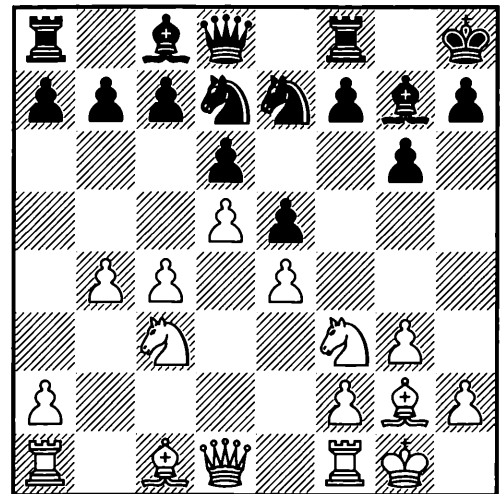
Black emerged from the opening only slightly worse and then proceeded to equalize throughout the short-lived middlegame. The key points for players of White to look for improvements occur at moves 19 and 21. Other than these two moves, the game seems absolutely flawless. White is better in this variation, but Black is certainly holding.

The final game of this section covers some of Black's more obscure move 10 options after 9...♘d7 10.b4. It features ♘f3-g5-e6 in very much the same spirit as in Geller-Uhlmann above, but Black is a player of a lower caliber, so the game ends more quickly accordingly. Although the play is not that accurate – it was played in the tenth round of a 13-round event – the game is instructive because it shows how quickly Black's position can go downhill if he is not attentive to White's threats. There are several sacrificial opportunities for White that are worth noting as well.

**Spassov, Liuben (2470)
Baljon, Christofoor (2255)**

[E62] Amsterdam 1979

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.d4 ♙g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 e5 8.d5 ♘e7 9.e4 ♘d7 10.b4 ♔h8!?



This move has been played a handful of times in practice. Besides 10...a5 and the immediate 10...f5, which we have already analyzed, Black's other major option is the preparatory 10...h6. Now 11.♘d2 f5 12.exf5 gxf5 13.♙b2 ♘f6 (13...♘g6 14.♖c2 ♘f6 15.c5 was good for White in F.Sarran-D.Beer, corr. 1987) 14.c5 ♞f7 15.♘c4 ♘g6 16.c6!? has been tried a handful of times in practice, but the more sane 16.♞c1 looks best.

10...b6 was tried in one game, K.Gasser-H.Skibbe, Liechtenstein Open 1995, and here we recommend 11.a4 with ♙a3 and c4-c5 to follow. Then Black would be well advised to play 11...a5, halting White's queenside play for a few moves, when White could respond 12.bxa5 ♞xa5 13.♘d2 f5 14.♘b3, with a position similar to those analyzed in the previous section. Alternatively, 12.♙a3 axb4 13.♙xb4 is also a position we have seen before.

11. ♖c2

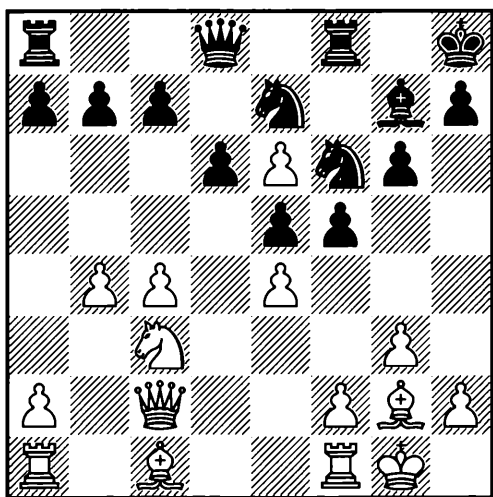
A fair move, putting White's house in order on the queenside. 11.a4 with an eye toward ♟a3 was a good alternative, and perhaps a bit more in keeping with the spirit of the previous games in this chapter. We prefer this idea to the text, which is a rather nonchalant developing move.

11...f5

11...a5 12.bxa5 ♖xa5 13.a4 was of course the other way for Black to go. With the text, Black makes his decision, and there is no going back.

12. ♘g5 ♙f6 13. ♙e6

This is White's most ambitious try. 13.♟b2 or 13.a4 or some other waiting move was of course possible, but Black is prepared to play ...f5xe4 and ...♙e7-f5-d4, so it makes sense for White to act immediately here.

13...♟xe6 14.dxe6**14...♙c6?!**

Black heads for d4, but this is rather slow. Better was 14...fxe4, for instance

15.♙xe4 ♖c8 (15...♙f5 16.♙g5 ♙d4 17.♖d3) 16.♙xf6 ♖xf6 17.♖e4 ♖xe6 (or 17...c6 18.♟g5 ♖xe6 19.♖ad1 with compensation for White) 18.♟e3. 14...c6 was also possible, i.e. 15.♖d1 fxe4 16.♙xe4 ♙xe4 17.♖xe4 ♙f5 (17...♖f6? 18.♟g5 ♖xe6 19.♟h3) 18.b5 with a slight initiative for White in the ensuing complications.

15.exf5 ♙d4 16. ♖d3

16.♖a4, defending the b4-pawn, was perhaps even stronger. 16...gxf5 17.♟xb7 might then be problematic for Black.

16...gxf5

16...♙xf5 17.♖b1 (preparing to take on b7) 17...c6 18.b5 gives White the initiative.

17.♟e3 c5

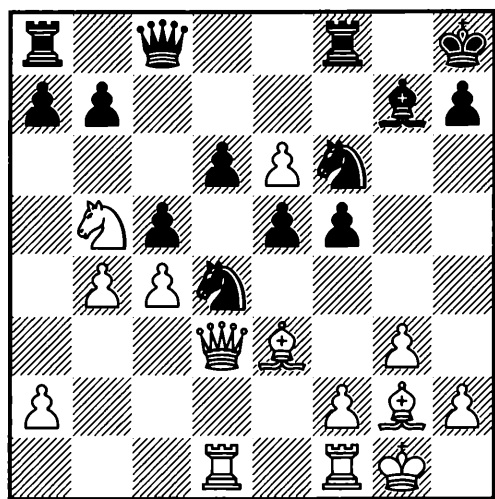
Black anchors his knight on d4. 17...♙xe6 18.♖xf5 ♖e7 (18...♙d5 19.♖xe6 ♙xc3 20.♖ae1 with the initiative for White) 19.♖d3 leaves White better thanks to his two bishops on an open board. The text leaves Black with some problems defending his d6-pawn. White's two bishops and better structure give him a clear advantage.

18.♖ad1 ♖c8

18...cxb4? is just bad after 19.♟xd4 exd4 20.♙b5.

19.♙b5!

White plays aggressively against Black's knight on d4 while targeting the pawn on d6.



19...dxe8

19...d8 20.bxc5 dxc5 21.♙xd4 followed by ♜xf5 would win a pawn for White.

20.♙d5?!

Better was 20.e7 ♜f7 21.bxc5 dxc5 22.♙g5, since something like 22...h6 23.♙h4 e4 24.♜e3 ♜e6 25.♙xd4 cxd4 26.♜xd4! ♙xd4 27.♜xd4+ ♙g8 28.♜b1 b6 29.♜b5 gives White excellent compensation for the exchange. The text lets up the pressure, allowing Black to stir up counterplay on the kingside, particularly with the move ...f5-f4.

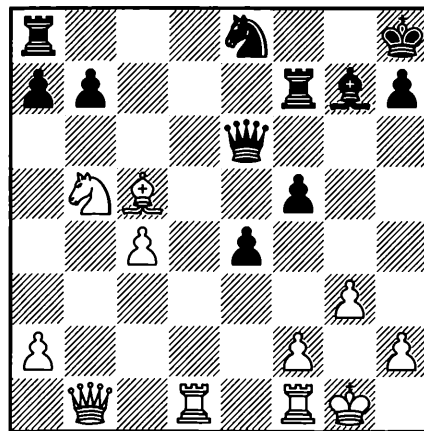
20...e4

20...♙xe6 would have let Black back into the game after 21.♙xe6 (21.f4 with compensation is likely best) 21...♜xe6 22.bxc5 f4 followed by ...d6xc5. Both players seem to have overlooked this, but Black's move in the game is actually quite good in any case.

21.♜b1 ♙f3+?

Black's situation deteriorates rapidly after this. Necessary was 21...♙xe6, when it is unclear whether or not White can keep the initiative with the obvious

22.bxc5 dxc5 23.♙xe6 ♜xe6 24.♙xc5 in view of 24...♜f7 with ...f5-f4 to follow:



After the text, Black's pieces are uncoordinated, and he loses quickly.

22.♙g2 ♙e5

22...cxb4 23.♜xb4, letting White target the d6-pawn, is no better.

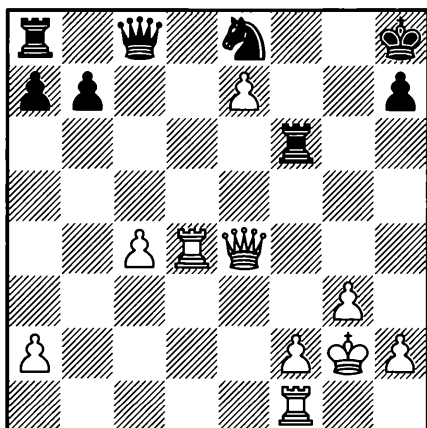
23.bxc5

23.♙xd6!! wins in even quicker fashion. Black has two options: 23...♙xd6 24.bxc5 ♙xc4 25.♙xc4, which simply leaves White up a pawn with a winning game, or 23...♙xd6 24.bxc5 ♙xc5 (24...♙c7 25.♙xb7 ♜b8 26.c6 gives White an overwhelming advantage) 25.♙xb7, which nets large quantities of material for White after 25...♜xe6 26.♙xc5.

23...dxc5 24.♙a3

A reasonable move, targeting b7 and preparing to meet 24...♜b8 with 25.♜b5 and then ♜d7. But better was the computer-found 24.e7 ♜f6 25.♙xe4! fxe4 26.♜xe4 (not the immediate 26.♜d8? ♜g4 27.♜xa8 ♙h4+ 28.♙g1 ♙f3+ with a draw by perpetual check) 26...♙d4 (26...♙d6 27.♙xd6 ♙xd6 28.♜xd6 ♜xd6 29.♜xf3 should

win for White) 27.♖xd4 cxd4 28.♗xd4 ♖xd4 29.♗xd4, which gives White three pawns for his piece and a crushing attack:



The line makes perfect sense: White has a lot of potential energy in his position, but it will take a sacrifice like the bold 25.♗xe4! to release it.

24...♖d6

24...♗b8 might have been preferred, since 25.♗b5 b6 26.♗d7 ♗xd7 27.exd7 ♖c7 might not have been so bad for the second player after all.

25.♖b5!

White realizes that he could have done better than 24.♖a3 and makes amends. Black is now more or less forced to go back to e8.

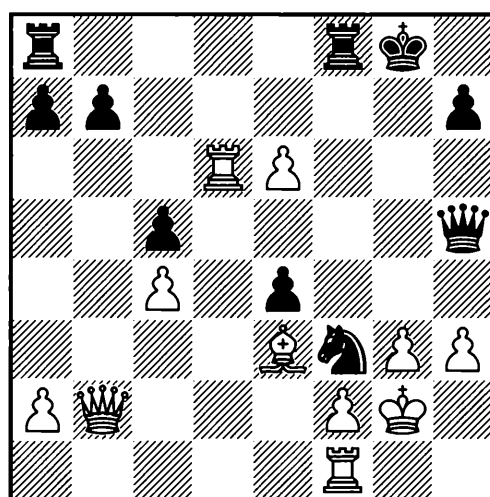
25...♗e8

Black picks this over repeating moves with 25...♖e8, which would allow the line with 26.e7 ♗f6 27.♗xe4.

26.♖xd6 ♗xd6 27.♗xe4!

White has finally worked up the nerve to play this move, which this time around is not a sacrifice at all, but rather a simple tactical exercise.

27...fxe4 28.♗xd6 ♗h5 29.♗b2+ ♖g8 30.h3 ♖e5



30...b6 31.♗fd1 and soon would continue White's complete dominance of the board. The text drops more material.

31.♗d5 ♗f5 32.♗xe5!

Simple but sweet.

32...♗xe5 33.g4 1-0

This game featured several inaccuracies from both sides and is not very useful from a theoretical standpoint. Black's 10...♖h8!? is a rare move, and the simple 11.a4 is probably more useful than Spassov's 11.♗c2. The game is important, however, because it explores several interesting ideas. The potential of White's e-pawn to advance to e7 at moves 20 or 24; White's sacrificial ideas such as 23.♖xd6!! or 24.e7 ♗f6 25.♗xe4!; and Black's possibilities involving the ...f5-f4 push are all key because they illustrate important themes. With a knowledge of these possibilities, it will be much harder for players of White to "cash in" on having generated an initiative from ♖f3-g5-e6.

Conclusion: When Black plays 10...f5 and allows 11.♘g5, he is taking a calculated risk. If Black plays solidly with 11...♙f6 as in Najdorf-Fischer above, he will be okay, and White will be left with only a slight advantage. If he plays recklessly, however, and allows White to just play ♘g5-e6 “for free” (say with 11...h6), White will be able to create a tremendous initiative by unleashing the power of his bishop on g2.

Black Plays ...c6xd5 in Response to White's d4-d5, Revisited

In addition to playing on the queenside with 10...a5 or playing on the kingside with 10...f5, Black has one final option: to play in the center with ...c7-c6. After Black exchanges with ...c6xd5, there arises a structure identical to that explored in the section, “Black Plays ...c6xd5 in Response to White's d4-d5” from Chapter 2. In this case, however, White often has time to play for ♙f3-e1-d3 and f2-f4, adding a completely new twist to these familiar positions. The center opens quickly and play is relatively more dynamic, with White often getting more of an initiative than we saw back in Chapter 2. We now examine two games in this vein. Note that there is not a well-developed body of theory based around the move 9...c6 (or playing ...c7-c6 at some other point), so the purpose of the next two games is only to illustrate some ideas and make a few recommendations. If there ever were much theory regarding 9...c6, all that remains of it now are a handful of games from Grandmaster William Lombardy from the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Tregubov, Pavel (2620)
Lalić, Bogdan (2520)

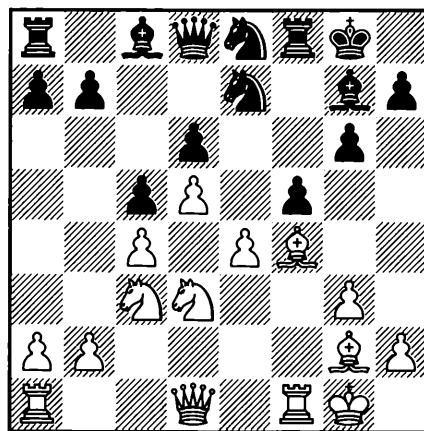
[E62] Italy 2000

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
 0-0 5.♙c3 d6 6.♙f3 ♙c6 7.0-0 e5
 8.d5 ♙e7 9.e4 ♙h8

A somewhat inferior move order. Eventually, this game will transpose back into the line 9...c6 10.♙e1 cxd5 11.cxd5 ♙d7 12.♙d3 and now 12...♙h8!?

For lack of a better moment to discuss Black's other obscure move 9 options, here they are. Some of them resemble other positions we have previously discussed.

a) 9...c5 is an attempt to reach a position similar to those we studied in the section, “Black Reacts to d4-d5 by Locking the Center with ...c6-c5” in Chapter 2. White does well here with 10.♙e1. A quick theoretical survey is as follows. 10...♙e8 (10...♙d7 11.♙d3 f5 12.f4 is good for White, see for instance T.Banusz-N.Karišik, Montenegro 2009, and 10...a6 11.♙d3 ♗b8 12.a4 b6 13.f4 also favored White in B.Striepens-H.Kohlmann, corr. 1996) 11.♙d3 f5 12.f4 exf4 13.♙xf4:



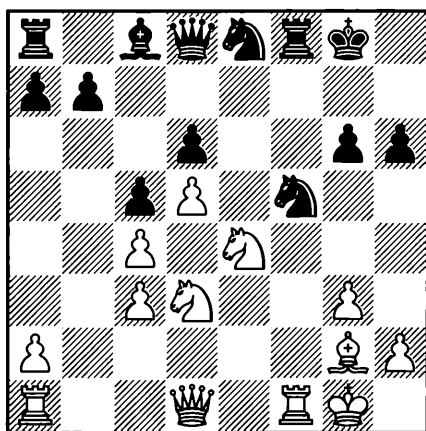
A critical moment for Black, who

must tread carefully. None of his options is particularly good:

a1) 13...♙xc3 14.bxc3 fxe4 15.♙xe4 leaves White for choice thanks to his bishop pair and extra space. Note that White might want to avoid 15.♘f2!?, when 15...♙xf4! 16.gxf4 e3 17.♘e4 ♘f5 muddies the waters somewhat.

a2) 13...h6 was played in H.Baumgartner-E.Walther, Vienna 1972. Simplest now is just 14.♙d2!, anticipating Black's ...g6-g5 and leaving White prepared to take the center with ♙e2, ♘h1, ♙ae1, and so on.

a3) 13...fxe4 is considered critical, but now White gets a big advantage. 14.♘xe4 h6 (14...♘f5 15.♙d2 is an advantage for White) 15.♙d2! (once again anticipating ...g6-g5) 15...♘f5 (15...♙xf1+ 16.♙xf1 ♘f5 17.♙e1 was good for White in V.Filippov-V.Loginov, Elista 2001) 16.♙c3 ♙xc3 (16...♘d4?! 17.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 18.b4 b6 19.♘f4 gives White a clear advantage) 17.bxc3! (taking control of d4):



17...♘eg7?! (17...♘f6 18.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 19.♙d2 ♘g7 20.♙e4 with the idea of ♙f2, ♙af1, and ♘f4 is good for White) 18.♙d2 g5 (18...♘h7? is bad after 19.g4 ♘h4 20.♙xf8 ♙xf8 21.♙f1 ♙e7 22.♘f6+ ♘h8 23.♙xh6#, and 18...h5 runs into 19.h3, when White's idea of g3-g4 is strong) and here 19.g4! would have

been crushing for White in M.Marin-J.Gonzales, Spain 1995, in view of 19...♘h4 20.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 21.♙f1 ♙e7 22.♙e2! ♘h8 23.♙f6. White played 19.h4 instead and still went on to win.

b) 9...♙g4 is a decent move for Black that isn't played much because of 10.♙b3!, when Black has to make some sort of concession to defend the queenside. 10...♙c8 11.♘e1 ♙h3 12.♘d3 ♙xg2 13.♘xg2 b6 14.♙c2 ♘h5 15.♙d2 f5 16.f3 a5 17.a3 h6 18.b4 was good for White in M.Illescas Córdoba-J.Polgar, Moscow 1994.

c) 9...a5 prevents White's idea of b2-b4, but White should do just fine with 10.♘e1 ♘d7 (10...♘e8 11.♘d3 f5 12.f3 is similar) 11.♘d3 f5 12.f3 with a solid game and a clear plan on the queenside with a2-a3, ♙a1-b1 and b2-b4. 12...b6 13.♙b1 ♙a6 14.b3 ♘h8 15.♙d2 was good for White in V.Malaniuk-S.Voitsekhovsky, Moscow 1996.

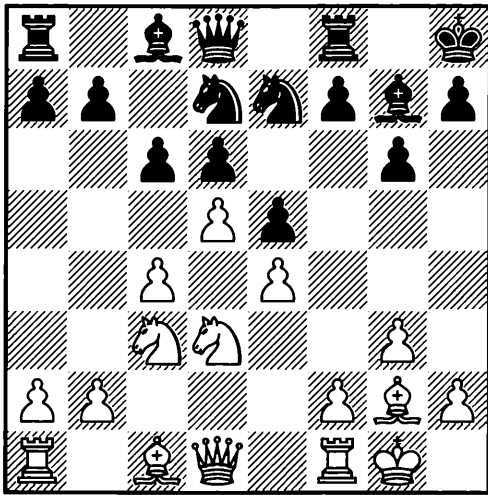
d) 9...b6 10.♙b1 a5 11.a3 ♙d7 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♙c8 14.c5 was a clear advantage for White in T.Petrosian-V.Panov, Moscow 1950.

e) 9...♘h5!? 10.♘e1 (10.b4 is also possible, for instance 10...f5 11.♘g5) 10...♙d7 11.♘d3 f5 12.exf5 ♙xf5 13.f4 should have given White an edge in B.Villegas-M.Czerniak, La Plata 1944, after 13...♙xd3 14.♙xd3 exf4 15.g4! (15.♙xf4 ♘xf4 16.♙xf4 ♙xf4 17.gxf4 ♙f8 was better for Black in the game) 15...♘f6 16.♙xf4 with a nice initiative thanks to the two bishops. Black can do nothing to exploit the loose white g4-pawn: 16...♙h6? 17.♙xf6 wins for White and 16...g5 17.♙f1 ♘xg4 18.♙xg5 only helps the first player.

10.♘e1

Here it would be fine for White to continue with 10.b4, since 10... ♖d7 would transpose to Spassov-Baljon above. This leaves 10... ♖fg8!? as Black's only move of independent significance, when 11.a4 f5 12.♖a3 was good for White in J.Horváth-G.Kosztolánczi, Hungary 1995. Then 12...f4?! (12...h6 is undoubtedly better) 13.gxf4 exf4 14.♖e2 g5 15.♖xg5 ♖g6 16.♖f3 ♗g4 17.♔c2 ♖h6 18.♗h1 ♔e7 19.♖e1 ♗f7 20.f3 left White up a pawn and winning.

10... ♖d7 11.♖d3 c6



11...f5 here was likely better, though 12.f4 would still give White an edge.

12.♗h1

Stepping off the g1-a7 diagonal is sometimes a good idea for White if he is preparing the f2-f4 strike, as Black may entertain ideas of ...c6xd5 and ...b7-b5!? at some point, hoping to meet ♖c3xb5 with the fork ...♔d8-b6+.

12...cxd5 13.cxd5 f5

A familiar-looking structure from Chapter 2 has been reached, but this time White's knight is already on d3,

so he has the opportunity to break up the center with f2-f4.

14.f4 exf4?!

Ceding the center immediately helps White's development. It would have made more sense for Black to stay put and make some sort of useful waiting move, perhaps 14...b6!?, opening up the possibility of ...♗c8-a6. Then it would be up to White to release the tension. 15.fxe5 (15.♖b4!? with the idea of e4xf5 and ♖b4-c6 would be a less orthodox approach) 15...♖xe5 16.♖xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗f4 ♗a6 18.♗f2 would still leave Black under pressure, but his tactical difficulties would not be so problematic as in the game.

15.♗xf4 fxe4

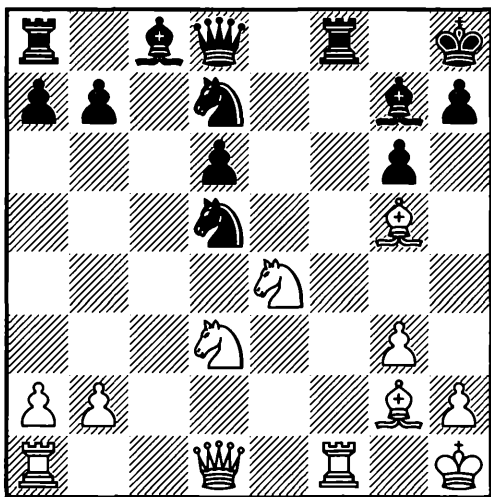
Black aims for a total opening of the center. This, of course, does not favor him. White's lead in development will make Black's life difficult. The alternative 15...♖e5 16.♖xe5 dxe5 17.♗e3 would leave White in command, however.

16.♖xe4

Of course White avoids 16.♗xe4 ♖f6, gaining time for Black. The text is a pawn sacrifice, but the opening of the h1-a8 diagonal automatically gives White compensation.

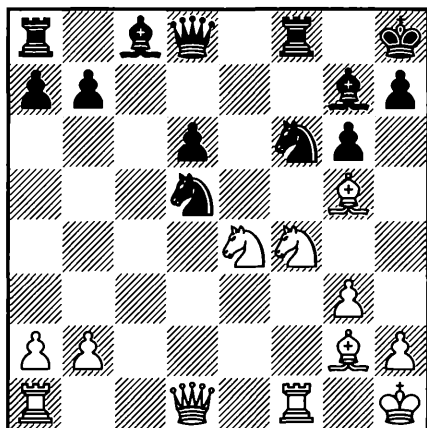
16...♖xd5 17.♗g5!

Keeping Black on his toes. 17.♖xd6 ♖xf4 18.♗xf4 would give up most of White's advantage. There is simply no reason for him to cede the bishop pair.



17...Qb6

17...d7f6 was one of Black's alternatives. White plays 18.f4! here, continuing to attack Black's loose pieces in the center. White's activity is enough to give him a significant advantage:



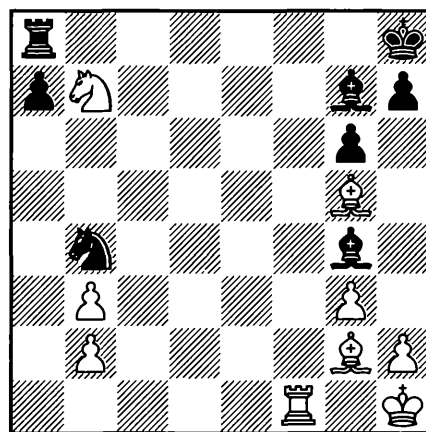
a) 18...dxf4?! turns out poorly for Black after 19.fxf4 f5 (not 19...xe4? 20.fxd8 fxf4 21.Qd5 d2+ 22.g1 when d6 falls) 20.fxf6 h6 (20...fxf6 21.fxf6+ fxf6 22.g4 with the idea of Qd4 wins) 21.fxf5! h5 (21...gxf5 22.f4! wins, for instance 22...Qb6 23.fxd6 h5 24.Qh5+ g8 25.f5+) 22.f5 f6 23.Qg4 with a clear advantage for White, who has the safer king.

b) 18...e3? is an oversight in view of 19.f5+ h5 20.f3.

c) 18...b6? 19.f6 f6 20.f6+ f6 21.Qd4 g7 22.fae1 gives White a

winning attack, so long as he sees 22...h6 (22...f5? 23.f6+ is the problem) 23.f3! with the idea of f3-e5 or g3-g4-g5.

d) 18...g4! is Black's best try. 19.Qb3 Qb6 20.f5 Qxb3 21.fxb3 f5 22.f6 fxf1+ 23.fxf1 b4 gives Black some chances of holding on, though White still has a clear edge in this ending after 24.fxb7 thanks to the power of his pieces:



One graphic illustration: 24...xb2? loses to 25.f6 f8 26.f4! with the idea of 26...f8 27.f5+ or 26...b6 27.f7+ g7 (27...g8 28.f6+ and the bishop on g4 leaves the board) 28.f6+ g8 29.f5 f5 30.f4, winning.

Meanwhile, returning to move 17, Black might also have tried inserting 17...f1+ 18.f1. Now 18...d7f6 19.f4 still gives White a big edge, so 18...f8 looks like Black's best option. 19.f8+ f8 20.f6! then allows White to keep a persistent initiative.

18.Qe2?!

18.Qb3, aiming to trade queens, was best. Black's activity would then be completely neutralized. Now 18...d7f6 19.Qb6 f6 20.f6, targeting the b7-pawn, leaves White with a

clear advantage. After the text, which does not immediately challenge Black in the tactics, the second player might engineer a way to seize the initiative.

18...♖xf1+

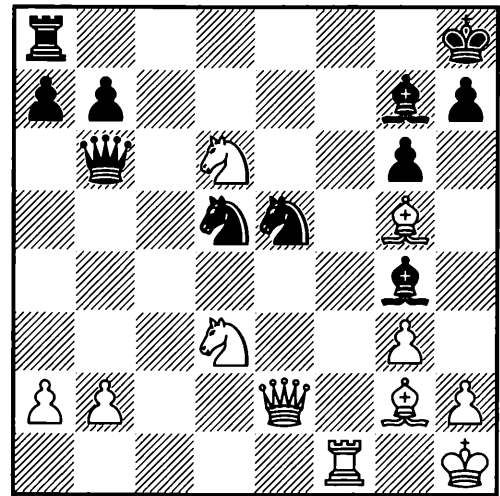
Not best, but certainly not losing. Regardless, bringing the white queen's rook to the kingside only helps the first player amplify his initiative, so it is not a good idea. Instead, the aggressive 18...h6! 19.♔f4 (19.♙d2 ♕7f6 leaves White with compensation, but not more) 19...♕xf4 20.♙xf4 d5 21.♕c3 ♕f6 22.♕xd5 ♕xd5 23.♙xd5 ♙h3 24.♖fe1 ♖ad8 would at least equalize for Black. But 20...♕e5!? may even be good enough to give Black a little more than that, for instance 21.♙d2 ♕c4 22.♙d5 ♙c6 23.♙xc6 bxc6 24.♕xd6 ♖xf4! 25.♕xc8 ♖xf1+ 26.♙xf1 ♙xb2 with an extra pawn for the second player.

19.♖xf1 ♕e5?

After this, Black's game goes downhill. Had he inserted 19...h6 first, he would have been fine. Now 20.♙d2 ♕e5 21.♕xe5 dxe5 22.♕c3 ♕xc3 23.♙xc3 ♙c7 leaves Black almost equal, so best is 20.♙c1 20...♕e5 21.♕xd6!, when Black still holds: 21...♙xd6 22.♕xe5 ♙xe5 23.♖e1 ♙g7 24.♙d3 ♙f5 25.♙xd5 is only a very slight initiative for White.

20.♕xd6 ♙g4?

The losing move, allowing White to win with a nice combination. 20...♙xd6 21.♕xe5 ♙xe5 (not 21...♙xe5? 22.♖f8+ ♕g7 23.♖d8 was unpleasant for Black, but was certainly preferable to the text after 23...♙g4 24.♖xd6 ♙xe2 25.♖d7+ ♕h8 26.♙xd5 ♙xb2.



21.♕xe5!

A flashy queen sacrifice. Nothing else was good enough for White.

**21...♙xe2 22.♕ef7+ ♕g8
23.♕h6+ ♙h6**

Of course not 23...♕h8 24.♕df7#.

24.♙xd5+ ♕h8

24...♕g7 runs into mate after either 25.♖f7+ ♕h8 26.♙f6+ ♙g7 27.♙xg7+ ♕g8 28.♖xb7#, or 25...♕g8 26.♖xb7+ ♕h8 27.♙f6+ ♙g7 28.♙xg7#.

25.♕f7+ ♕g7

Black prefers to be mated than allow 25...♕g8 26.♕xh6+ ♕g7 27.♖f7+ ♕h8 28.♙f6+ ♙xf6 29.♖xf6, leaving White up a clear piece.

26.♙xh6+ ♕g8 27.♕d8+ 1-0

Mate with ♖f8 is to follow.

Black's plan or ...c7-c6xd5 was well met by White's maneuver ♕f3-e1-d3 and f2-f4. Throughout this short game, the main theme was White's piece activity versus Black's few chances to

hold things together in the center. Black's rush to open the game with 14...exf4?! was unjustified, though after the slip 18.♔e2?!, he would definitely have still been in the game had he chosen 18...h6. After the tactically flawed idea of 19...♘e5?, Black wound up on the wrong side of a mating attack – there just weren't enough pieces defending his king. Overall, the specifics of this game are probably of little theoretical consequence, since the move 9...♖h8 (or 12...♖h8!? in case of 9...c6 10.♘e1 cxd5 11.cxd5 ♘d7 12.♘d3) is not a very logical option for Black. What is important, however, is the idea that White is often able to engineer the ♘f3-e1-d3 and f2-f4 plan in these positions. This game featured several good tactical ideas for White that might come up again (albeit in slightly different forms) in the future.

The next game features a more accurate interpretation of the ...c7-c6xd5 idea for Black. Consequently, White gets a smaller edge and does not achieve f2-f4 until the middlegame.

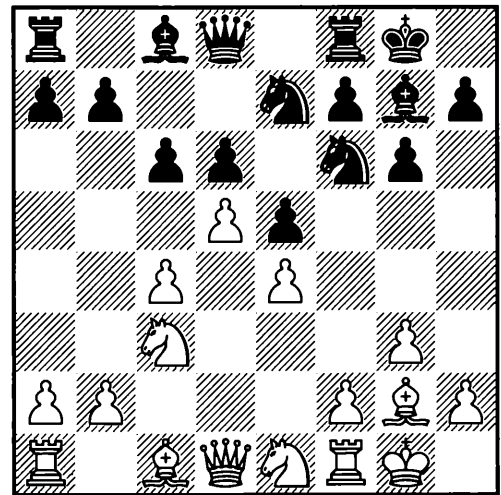
Panno, Oscar
Lombardy, William

[E62] Munich 1958

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘f3 d6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.g3 0-0 6.♗g2 ♘c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♘e1

Again, a slightly different move order than we're used to, but 9.e4 c6 10.♘e1 – our recommendation against the move 9...c6 – would transpose.

9...c6 10.e4



10...cxd5

10...♘h5!? has also been tried a couple of times. The idea is that 11.♘d3 cxd5 12.cxd5 f5 13.f3 b5!? gives Black some space, so a good approach for White is to just keep expanding on the queenside with 11.a4!, as in R.Hübner-A.Balshan, Graz 1972. That game continued 11...cxd5 (11...c5!? 12.a5 with the plan of ♗d2, ♘d3, and b2-b4 looks good for White) 12.cxd5 ♗d7 13.b3 ♗e8?! 14.♘d3 f5 15.♘b2, when White was able to carry out his typical plan of targeting the weak black pawn on d6.

Meanwhile, 10...b5!? 11.cxb5 cxb5 12.♘xb5 ♗a6 13.a4 ♔d7 14.♗e3 ♖fb8 15.♘d3 ♗xb5 16.axb5 ♖xb5 17.♔d2 left White with a slight pull in Prins-Klausner, corr. 1985.

11.cxd5 ♘e8

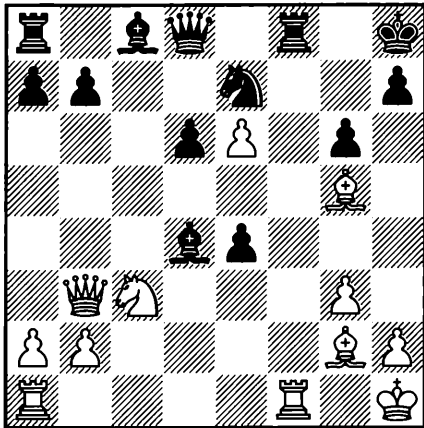
11...♘h5 12.a4 would transpose to the previous note, while 11...♘d7 is interchangeable with the text after 12.♘d3 f5 13.f3 ♘f6.

12.♘d3 f5 13.f3

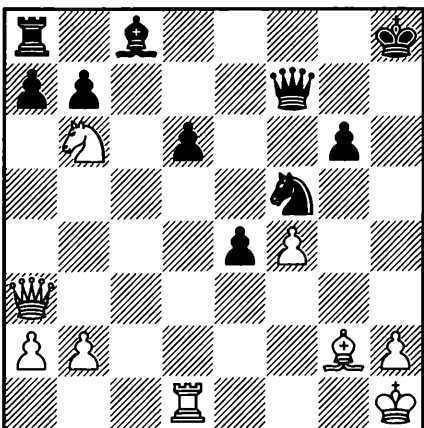
13.f4!? is certainly possible here, since either 13...fxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘xd5 15.♘g5 or 13...exf4 14.♘xf4 ought to

give White a slight initiative. Instead, White prefers to just keep a simple space advantage.

13.♖b3 was featured in the 1994 correspondence game J.Weber-C.Felicio and also seems good. White hopes to perhaps omit f2-f3 and just carry on with applying pressure to Black's position. After 13...♗h8?! 14.f4, White was simply better: 14...exf4 15.♘xf4 (15.♙xf4, as in the previous game, is also good) 15...♙d4+ 16.♖h1 ♘c7 17.♗e6 ♗xe6 18.dxe6 fxe4 19.♙g5 left Black in ruins:



The second player now had to deal with the threat of ♗c3-d5 somehow, so he played the only move, 19...h6. White won the game quickly after 20.♙xh6 ♗xf1+ 21.♗xf1 ♗f5 22.♙f4 ♗e7 23.♗d5 (23.g4 ♗h4 24.♙xe4 ♙xe6 25.♗d5 was quite powerful) 23...♗xe6 24.♗d1 ♙e5 (24...♙g7 25.♗a3 is no better) 25.♗a3 ♙xf4 26.gxf4 ♗f7 (White threatened ♗d5-c7) 27.♗b6!:



(27.♙xe4 ♙e6 would have let up the pressure) 27...axb6 28.♗xa8 ♗c4 29.♗a3 ♙d7 30.♗c3+ ♗xc3 31.bxc3 ♙c6 32.♙h3 d5 33.♙xf5 gxf5 34.♖g1 ♖g7 35.♖f2 ♖f6 36.♖e3 1-0.

Thus, it is possible that Weber's approach with 13.♖b3 is the best. Obviously, Black has better than 13...♗h8?!, for instance 13...fxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗f5 15.♙g5 ♗a5 with the idea of ...♗d4 was one example of a better try. Regardless, White might still keep some advantage here, and since the text move 13.f3 is rather passive, it is well worth trying to look for something more dynamic.

13...♗f6 14.♖b3

A good move, pressuring Black's queenside. Black's options for further expansion on the kingside are limited – he will not, for instance, achieve ...f5-f4 at any point – so the queen's wing has temporarily become the most important theater of battle.

14...b5!?

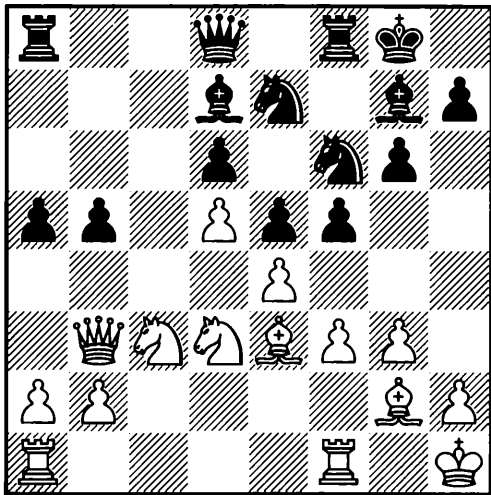
This move was likely Lombardy's own invention. He repeated it in 1960 when facing Pal Benko in that year's U.S. Championship.

15.♖h1

15.♗xb5? ♗b8 is bad for White, but he certainly could have gotten away with 15.♗xe5 dxe5 16.d6+ ♖h8 17.dxe7 ♗xe7 18.♗xb5, pocketing a pawn, had he wanted to. Black would have a fair amount of compensation here in the form of open lines, so Panno passes up this opportunity.

The immediate 15.♖d1 was played in P.Benko-W.Lombardy, New York 1960, but Black equalized quickly with 15...♗d7 16.♗1f2 fxe4 17.fxe4 ♖b6. After 18.h3 ♗h8 19.♗h2 ♜ac8 20.♗d2 ♜c4, the players agreed to a draw.

15...♗d7 16.♗e3 a5



Model play by Black, who is playing aggressively to take space on the queenside. Although he hasn't quite equalized, he has certainly survived the opening and has a decent middlegame.

17.a3 ♗h8 18.♜ac1 ♜b8 19.♗d1

White wants to have the possibility of invading along the c-file, so he swings his queen's knight to the king-side. 19.♗e2 was another good option for accomplishing this.

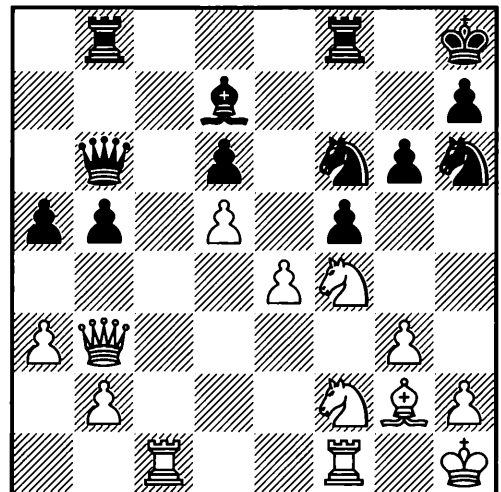
19...♗eg8

Black prepares the trade of dark-squared bishops, which makes sense here considering that Black will never really be able to open up any new possibilities for his blocked-in Indian bishop on g7. Trading one set of rooks with 19...fxe4 20.fxe4 ♗g4 21.♜xf8+ ♗xf8 22.♗g1 ♗h6 23.♜c2 would preserve a slight space advantage for White.

20.♗1f2 ♗h6 21.♗xh6 ♗xh6 22.f4

A good decision, since this break is certainly better played in a delayed fashion than never at all. With this, White – who is slightly, but not much, better coordinated than his opponent – is able to obtain some miniscule prospects for a slight advantage. Black has played well enough up to this point, however, that he will be able to hold the draw without too much problem.

22...exf4 23.♗xf4 ♖b6



23...fxe4 24.♗xe4 ♗xe4 25.♗xe4 ♗g4 with an eye toward ...♗g4-e5 was also good enough for Black to keep his army organized and working together.

24.♖c3

A solid move that eventually peters out to a draw. 24.♗e6!? was an ambitious attempt that seems to have passed its prime. 24...♗xe6 25.dxe6 ♜be8 keeps the game alive but Black is unlikely to have any major headaches here, considering his adequate development.

24...♜bc8 25.♖d2 ♜xc1 26.♜xc1

26.♟xg6+ was also possible, but 26...♘g7 27.♞xf8 ♜xf1+ 28.♞xf1 ♘xf8 29.♞xh6+ ♘f7 30.♞h3 ♞d4! is fine for Black.

26...♞hg4 27.♞xg4 ♞xg4 28.h3 ♞f2+

28...♞e3!? 29.♞c2 ♞xd2 30.♞xd2 wouldn't have left White with much

advantage, but the text is the surest way for Black to draw.

29.♘h2 ♞xe4 30.♞xe4 fxe4 31.♞xg6+

White has nothing better.

31...hxg6 32.♞h6+ ♘g8 33.♞xg6+ ♘h8 1/2–1/2

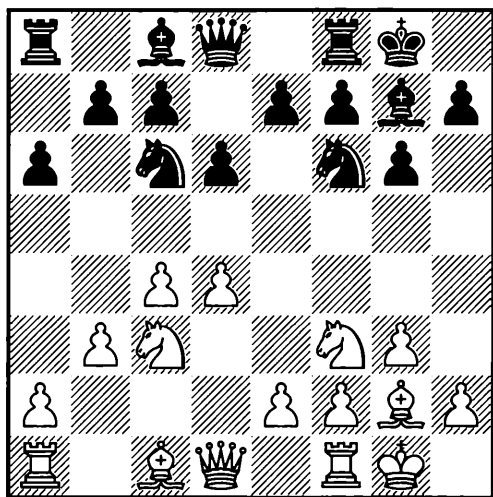
Black played well in this game and was happy with a draw. His play wasn't too passive – for instance, he took a few risks to get space on the queenside, particularly 14...b5!? – but he wasn't overly aggressive either. In general, White enjoyed a slight advantage throughout the game. Perhaps 19.♞d1 was the reason that Black ultimately managed to equalize, and 19.♞e2 should have been preferred, but it is of course almost impossible to know for sure. Then again, perhaps White should have taken the pawn with 15.♞xe5 and sought an advantage that way. Regardless, it stands to reason that players of White should look to Weber's 13.♞b3 as a possible improvement on the old 13.f3, which is good enough for a slight pull but doesn't promise a big edge.

Conclusion: Black's idea of ...c7-c6xd5 can either end in disaster for the second player or result in a perfectly reasonable game, depending on how carefully he treads. Overall, because players of Black have generally failed to play well, in practice White has tended to score victories like the Tregubov-Lalić and Weber-Felicio games above. But, as Lombardy shows us, Black can achieve a reasonable game if he doesn't waste moves (for instance, 9...♘h8 in Tregubov-Lalić) and takes his fair share of queenside space. From a theoretical standpoint, however, Lombardy's 9...c6 is so rare nowadays that White shouldn't lose any sleep about having to face it. Even if Black manages to hold the draw sometimes, just as he did in our previous discussion of this structure with ...c7-c6xd5 in Chapter 2, White will still win enough games to achieve a good score against this line.

In this chapter, we have seen White achieve a lot of nice, slow positional victories. The move 9.e4 has a better reputation than Wojo's 9.c5, even if it is much less efficient at destroying weaker players. Players of White who face grandmasters regularly in tournament play will probably lean toward the more mainstream 9.e4, but when it comes to winning weekend Swisses, Wojo's 9.c5 gets the job done.

Chapter 8

The Panno Variation with 8.b3



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6
8.b3

The Panno Variation with the tricky 7...a6 is not much seen below master level. The idea behind the move is simple enough: Black wants to play ...♞a8-b8 and ...b7-b5, evacuating the h1-a8 diagonal and launching a counterattack on the queenside. Yet because the Panno Variation has developed such an intimidating body of theory around it and is generally seen as a “masters only” line, the move 7...a6 is played only rarely by club players. This makes little sense since the idea behind Black’s seventh move is not difficult to understand, and so club players could undoubtedly score well with it by counting on their opponents to be unprepared – which (at club level, anyhow) they almost invariably are. Regardless, for those whose main concern is beating players below 2200, only a quick pass through the current chapter should really be necessary. Those playing at a higher level, however, will find in-depth theoretical coverage of 8.b3 – a move that Wojo used with excellent results (by which we mean 80% or more) – in these pages.

With 8.b3, White fortifies his queenside against Black’s impending ...b7-b5 strike by shoring up his c4-pawn. He also prepares to contest Black’s control of the a1-h8 diagonal by developing his dark-squared bishop to b2. The fight for the long a1-h8 diagonal is significant, since White’s main plan in this position is to hit Black in the center with a timely d4-d5 punch, gaining space and disrupting the flow of Black’s play. Ultimately, White aims to create a bind in the center with d4-d5 and ♘f3-d4. Then, if the c-file becomes a half-open file after Black’s ...b7-b5, White can put pressure on Black’s backward c7-pawn.

The battle in the opening generally revolves around how Black counters White’s efforts to create a bind with d4-d5. Will he try to run his b-pawn all the way to b4 and put pressure on the queenside by taking control of the c3 and a3

squares? Will he play in less committal fashion with ...♠f6-e4 (or ...♠f6-d7, or even ...♠f6-h5) and ...f7-f5, transposing to a position similar to a Leningrad Dutch? Or will he find a way to achieve the ...e7-e5 or ...c7-c5 breaks? In all of these cases, White's main task is to stay flexible and find a way to put pressure on Black's position. It is hard to prescribe a universal method for doing this – White reacts somewhat differently against each of Black's tries. Luckily, however, every one of White's ideas falls into the "common sense" range of thought. Most readers who have made it this far in this book should be able to quickly grasp the point of White's play in each line.

White's 9.♠d5!: Generating Activity in the Center

After 8.b3 ♖b8, White should generate activity in the center with the aggressive 9.♠d5!, which is his best try for the advantage. White "threatens" the sequence ♠d5x(♠)f6 followed by ♗c1-h6 after Black recaptures ...♗g7x(♠)f6. He also clears the a1-h8 diagonal in preparation for a quick d4-d5 and ♠f3-d4. Black must react to White's ninth move precisely, and it is generally thought that 9...♠h5 (the main line) or 9...e6!? (an interesting sideline) are his only good options. The next few games are meant to illustrate some of White's ideas after 9.♠d5 and show why Black's other move 9 responses are inferior. This first game is a clearcut example of how White can obtain a structural advantage in the center if Black is not careful.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2543)
Lemos, Damián (2206)

[E63] Buenos Aires 2003

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.d4
 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♠c6 7.♠c3 a6

When Black plays this, he is almost certainly aiming to play the Panno

Variation with 8...♖b8. There are few other good options for him after this move.

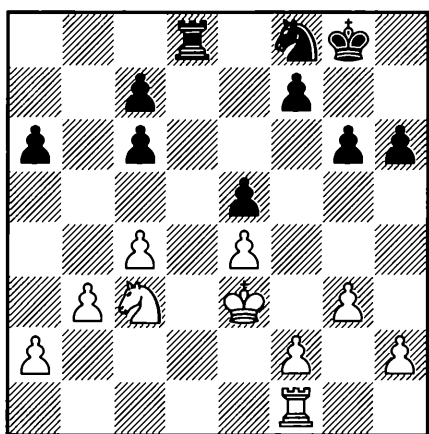
8.b3

Wojo's pet variation against the Panno.

8...♖b8

Black rarely plays anything else, since this is the only move fully consistent with his previous one. The game A.Wojtkiewicz-B.Miljanić, Internet 2004, saw 8...e5, which leads to a pleasant queenless middlegame for White after 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♗a3 ♖e8 11.♖xd8 ♖xd8 12.♖ad1. The game continued with the most common move, 12...♗f5, when here Wojo's 13.♠g5 scores well for White. White clears the h1-a8 diagonal and plays for control of e4 and d5. After 13...h6 Wojo chose 14.♗xc6!? bxc6 15.♠f3, and the game went 15...♠d7 (15...♠e4 is more testing) 16.e4 (16.♠g2 first looks more accurate) 16...♗g4 (16...♗h3 was better) 17.♠g2 ♗f8 18.♗xf8 ♠xf8 19.♖xd8 ♗xf3+ 20.♠xf3 ♖xd8 21.♠e3:

THE PANNO VARIATION WITH 8.b3



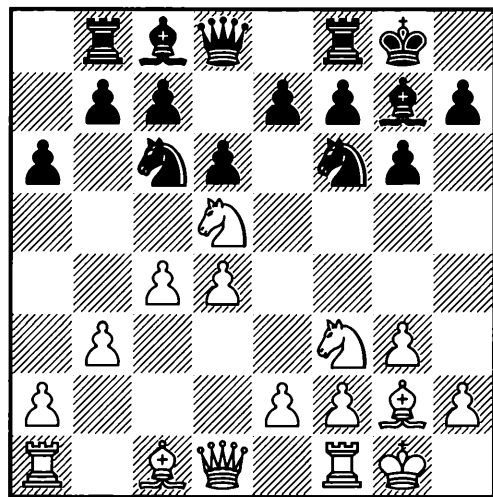
Here, White was better thanks to his superior king position and Black's damaged queenside pawn structure. He has ideas of f2-f4 and ♖c3-a4-c5. Note that a reasonable alternative to giving up the bishop pair was 14. ♖ge4, for instance 14... ♖xe4 15. ♖xe4 ♖d4 16. e3 ♖e2+ 17. ♔h1 ♖xd1 18. ♖xd1 ♖xe4 19. ♖xe4 ♖c3 20. ♖xb7 ♖b8 21. ♖d3 e4 22. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 23. ♖xe4 ♖d8 24. ♖d5 c6 25. ♖xc6 ♖d2 26. ♔g2 ♖xa2 27. ♖c5 was eventually won by White in J. Petrov-H. Stević, Croatia 1993.

Meanwhile, 8... ♖f5 9. ♖b2 ♖e4 is an attempt to play like the Larsen System with 7... ♖f5 and 8... ♖e4 (covered in Volume III of this book) without giving White the chance to play our move 8. ♖b3. The plan of occupying the e4 square isn't particularly consistent with 7... a6, however. 10. ♖d5 seems sufficient for the advantage: 10... ♖d7 (10... g5?! 11. ♖d2 ♖c5 12. b4 ♖d7 13. ♖b3 ♖g6 14. b5 axb5 15. cxb5 ♖a5 16. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 17. a4 was much better for White in D. Poldauf-R. Schöne, Rostock 1986) 11. ♖c2 f5 12. ♖ad1 e6 13. ♖c3 ♖xc3 14. ♖xc3 resulted in a Leningrad Dutch-like structure in B. Grachev-T. Mănescu, Budva 2003, which, as we'll see in some later games in this chapter, generally favors White.

Finally, 8... ♖d7 is an inaccurate move order for Black. 9. ♖b2 ♖b8 10. ♖c1 b5 can now be met by 11. ♖d5, which is similar to the more usual variations but

gives White an even stronger initiative, since now the "normal" 11... ♖h5!? – generally Black's best response to a ♖c3-d5 incursion by White – looks a bit suspicious. 12. ♖d2 e6 13. ♖e3 ♖e7 14. d5 e5 15. c5 was better for White in V. Burmakin-B. Vigh, Austria 1999.

9. ♖d5!



9. ♖b2 is more common but sets Black few problems. 9... b5 10. cxb5 axb5 11. ♖c1 (11. d5 ♖a5 12. ♖d4 b4 13. ♖a4 e5 is thought to give Black the initiative) 11... b4 12. ♖a4 ♖a5 13. ♖c2 c6 14. ♖e1 ♖a6 15. ♖d3 ♖b5 16. ♖b1 ♖d5 17. e4 ♖c7 18. ♖fd1 ♖d7 is approximately equal according to Bologan. This seems reasonable, as Black has completed his development and has ample space on the queenside. White's knight on a4 looks suspicious.

With the text, White tries to generate an initiative in the center before Black has time to successfully strike on the queenside. The point is to generate immediate activity. Over the course of the next few games, many of the ideas behind 9. ♖d5 will be revealed.

9... e5?!

An awkward-looking strike in the center, especially considering the pres-

ence of the powerful white knight on d5. After this, White simply gets the upper hand without much of a fight. As we'll see in later games, 9...♖h5 with the idea of ...e7-e6, kicking out White's knight on d5, is the main line here.

10.dxe5 ♖xd5

10...dxe5 11.♗g5 would make Black, who cannot break the pin on his knight, very uncomfortable. 10...♖xe5 11.♗g5 c6 12.♖xf6+ ♗xf6 13.♗xf6 ♖xf6 14.♖d2 followed by ♗a1-d1 gives White a slight advantage thanks to his pressure against the d6-pawn.

11.cxd5 ♖xe5 12.♖d4

White's pressure in this game will stem from his firm grip on the d5 square and his well-placed knight on d4. He has the simple plan of developing with ♗b2, ♗c1, ♖d2, and so on, when Black's c7-pawn is a liability and White is always threatening to overrun Black in the center with f2-f4 and e2-e4.

12...c5!?

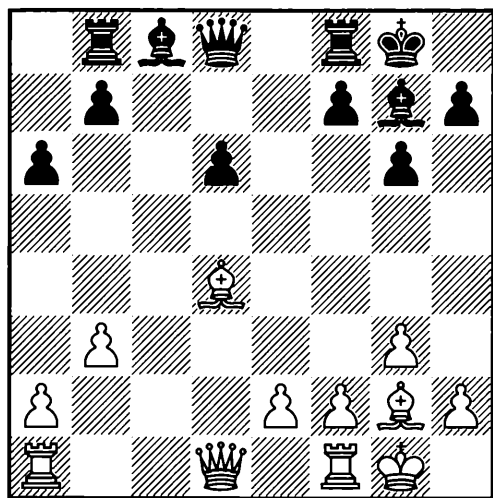
Black senses that his c-pawn will be vulnerable and looks to remedy the situation. If he simply develops with 12...♗e8 13.♗b2 ♗d7, he lacks any real plan other than moving his c-pawn after 14.♗c1. So the only question is whether Black should push his pawn immediately, as in the game, or continue to try to wait indefinitely. Both are rather bleak prospects for Black.

13.dxc6 ♖xc6 14.♗b2 ♖xd4

More often than not, swapping pieces for its own sake is a bad strate-

gy. Black is trading down to his doom here; keeping some tension in the position with 14...d5 was a better idea. For instance, after 15.♗c1 ♖b6 16.♖xc6 bxc6 17.♗xg7 ♖xg7, Black's "hanging pawns" on c6 and d5 look slightly more tenable than his isolani in the game.

15.♗xd4



15...♗xd4

Black trades unnecessarily once again. 15...♗e5 was a more stubborn way to play. Now, White will dominate the board.

16.♖xd4 ♖e7 17.e3 ♗e6 18.♗fd1 ♗fd8 19.♗d2 ♗bc8 20.♗ad1 d5

The rest of this game is executed by White in textbook fashion. Against anyone under 2400, Wojo usually won these kinds of isolated d-pawn positions for White with very little effort. The trick here is to keep control of the dark squares. Black is playing for light-square control, but there is really not that much he can do with this against White's own light-squared bishop. Meanwhile, if White controls the dark squares, Black cannot fight him on that color complex.

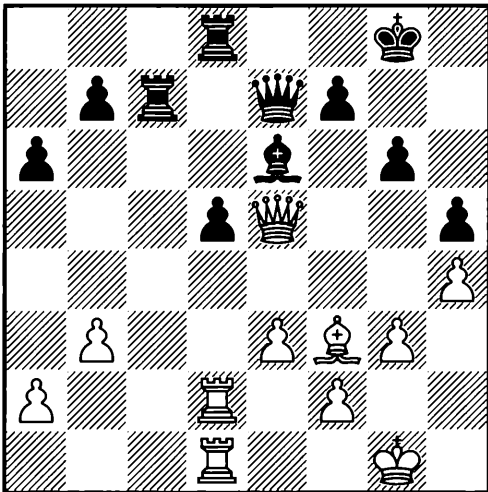
21.h4

A good move, taking control of g5, another dark square. White has ideas of ♟f3 and h4-h5, cracking open the h-file, so Black's next move makes sense.

21...h5 22.♟f3

Another common move for White in these types of positions. White is just slowly improving his position and creeping up the board. At some point, ♔g2 will follow.

22...♞c7 23.♞e5



Provoking Black's next move, which weakens up the squares around the black king. At this moment, it was also possible to play 23.e4, for instance 23...♞cd7 24.exd5 ♟xd5 25.♟xd5 ♞xd5 26.♞xd5 ♞xd5 27.♞xd5 with a clear advantage for White. With the text, Wojo prefers to keep the clear advantage he already has, however. Since he knows he will be able to beat his opponent without doing anything unusual, he decides to just continue on autopilot.

23...f6 24.♞b2 ♞cd7 25.♞d4 ♔g7 26.b4

Again, White takes control of another dark square – this time, c5.

26...♟f7 27.♞d2 ♟e6 28.a4 ♔h7 29.a5

Now White controls b6. With the queenside dark squares firmly in his grip, White will be able to break through on that side. Meanwhile, Black can find nothing better to do than to sit around and nervously shuffle his pieces.

29...♔g7 30.♞c1 ♟f7 31.♞c5 ♟e6 32.♞c3 ♟f7 33.♟e2

White has achieved an ideal position for each of his pieces. The next step is to pry open the queenside with b4-b5.

33...♞e6

It is worth noting that, at least from this point onward, it is unclear from just a cursory perusing of databases what the actual moves of this game were. Some give 33...♟e6 as Black's move, and then 34.b5 axb5, when now 35.♟xb5, rather than the move played (35.♞xb5), wins for White. What follows is a rather creative merging of move orders for which the authors beg indulgence. For move 33, we're sticking with the move 33...♞e6, which was given in *The Week in Chess* #459 shortly after the game was played.

34.b5 axb5 35.♞xb5 ♞d6

But here 35...♞c7 is the move given in *The Week in Chess*. This would, of course, hang a full rook in plain sight. It therefore seems more likely that the text was played first, though this is pure speculation. The rest of the moves are contrived to reach the game's known end position.

36. ♖f3

White is now very close to winning the d5-pawn. All he needs to do is find a way to target b7, d5, and f6 all at the same time and Black will no longer be able to defend.

36... ♜c7 37. ♚b2

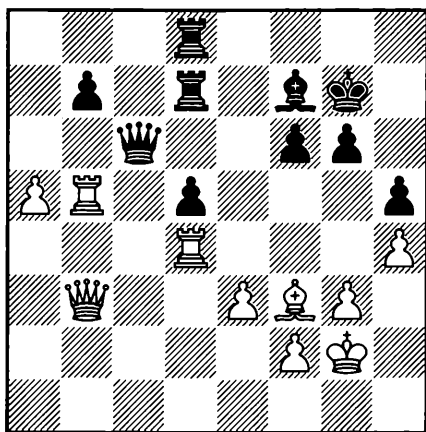
A good choice, keeping an eye on the f6-pawn. White has ideas of ♜b6.

37... ♚c6

Necessary to defend b7, but now Black's queen is on an uncomfortable square.

38. ♚b3 ♜dd7

38... ♜cd7 was more stubborn. But 39. ♖g2! nearly puts Black in *Zugzwang*:



a) 39... ♖e6 40. ♜b6 loses a piece for Black.

b) 39... ♚c7 or any such similar queen move allows 40. ♖xd5. For instance, 40... ♖xd5+ 41. ♜dxd5 ♜xd5 42. ♜xd5 ♚c6 43. e4 should leave White with a winning ending.

c) 39... f5 and 39... g5 both seriously damage the integrity of Black's pawn shield around his king.

d) 39... ♜d6 drops the b-pawn after 40. ♜xb7.

39. ♖xd5 1-0

Perhaps more moves were played from this point, but all the databases stop here. It is not unreasonable to guess that Black might have flagged just before move 40. In any case, White has finally won the d5-pawn, so the rest should just be a matter of technique.

Black's 9...e5?! was a poor reaction to the active 9. ♖d5. White simply focused on building up a strong position in the center around his d5-pawn and eventually obtained a structural advantage after Black broke with 12... c5!?. After that, it was just a matter of slowly grinding Black down on the dark squares. Eventually, White won Black's isolated d-pawn.

The next game is similar in that Black gets a bad game after failing to play according to theory. White's ideas here are straightforward: he simply focuses on developing rapidly and putting pressure on the (soon-to-be) half-open c-file.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2550)
Höpfel, Thomas (2220)

[E63] Regensburg 1996

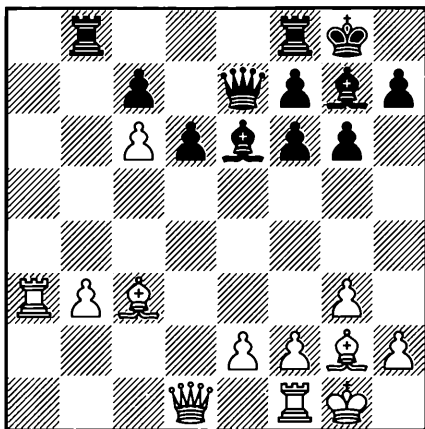
1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♖g7
4. ♖g2 0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 ♖c6
7. ♖c3 a6 8. b3 ♜b8 9. ♖d5 b5

Black's fourth most common move here, behind 9... ♖h5, 9...e6!?, and 9... ♖g4. This is a natural-looking continuation for Black, carrying out the plan he began with 7...a6, but in the present

situation it is too slow. Black should instead be focusing on matters in the center. With his next move, White obtains a strong initiative.

10. ♖xf6+ ♗xf6

The crude 10...exf6 actually scores better. Here White gets an advantage with 11.cxb5 axb5 12.d5 ♖e7 (12... ♖e5?! 13. ♖d4 ♗d7 was M.Ianovsky-E.Cuberli, Buenos Aires 2004, when 14.f4! ♖g4 15.h3 ♖h6 16.g4 followed by e2-e4 would have given White a tremendous advantage) 13. ♖d4 (13. ♗b2 ♗b7 14.e4, as in K.Richardson-P. Borman, England 2007, is also good for White) 13... ♗d7 14. ♖c6!?, played in M.Grabarczyk-R.Chervatenko, Pardubice 1994. After 14... ♖xc6 15.dxc6 ♗e7 16. ♗b2 b4 17.a4 bxa3 18. ♖xa3 ♗e6 19. ♗c3, White focused on making progress on the queenside by marching his b-pawn up the board:



White's advantage here is slight, but the pawn on c6 is a bone in Black's throat. The game continued 19... ♖b5 20.b4 f5 21. ♗d3 ♖fb8 22. ♗d2 ♗e5 23. ♖b1 ♗e8 24. ♖a7 ♗d8 25. ♖c1 ♖5b6 26. ♖a5 ♗f6 27.b5, when White achieved a powerful bind and went on to win.

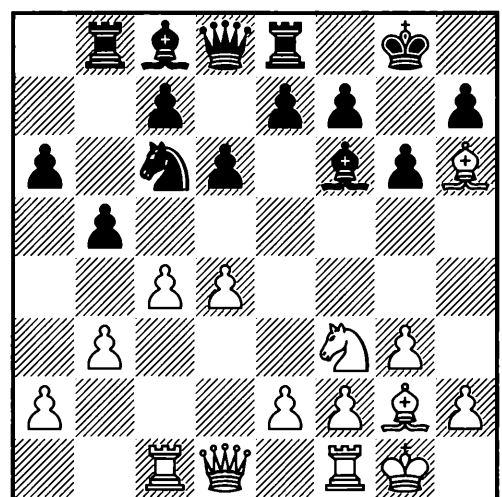
Note that 11... ♖xb5 was seen in A.Wojtkiewicz-E.Bannon, Philadelphia 2001. This recapture also proved unsatisfactory for Black, as he lost

material with the bad 12.d5 ♖e7 13. ♖d4 ♖xd5?! (13... ♖b8 was better, when 14. ♗b2 ♗b7 15. ♖c2 gives White good pressure). White went on to win after 14. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 15. ♖c6 ♖c3 16. ♗d3 ♗e8 17. ♗xc3 f5 18. ♖d4 c5 19. ♗e3.

11. ♗h6 ♖e8

Black almost always prefers this to 11... ♗g7, which gives up his important dark-squared bishop. After 12. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 13.d5, White has a powerful position in the center. For instance, P.Schlösser-P.Herejk, Germany 2001, saw 13... ♖a5?! (13... ♖e5 14. ♖xe5 dxe5 15.cxb5 axb5 16. ♖c1 gives White a clear advantage thanks to his better pawn structure and control of the dark squares, but the text is worse) 14.cxb5 axb5? (14... ♖xb5 15. ♖d4 is unpleasant for Black) 15. ♗d4+ ♖g8 16. ♗a7, when White won a full piece.

12. ♖c1



The main line for White, who will now benefit from the c-file. He threatens to take on b5.

12... ♗d7

Black's most common move. 12... bxc4 has also been tried, but after

13.♖xc4, White gets a clear advantage. For instance, 13...♔d7 (13...♔a5 14.♖c1 ♔d7 15.♗d2 c6 16.e4 ♗b6 17.e5 ♔g7 18.♖fe1 gave White the initiative in E.Mochalov-S.Slugin, Minsk 1996) 14.♗d2 ♔a7 15.♖fc1 ♖b6 16.e4 ♖c6 17.♖xc6 ♔xc6 18.d5 ♔b8 19.♔e3 and so on was excellent for White in O.Romanishin-A.Kveinys, Germany 1994.

12...e5 is another move that Black sometimes tries, but here 13.dxe5 ♔xe5 14.♔xe5 (14.c5 immediately is also good) 14...♔xe5 (14...♖xe5 15.♔f4 ♖e8 16.c5 gave White pressure in A.Panchenko-H.Knuth, Germany 1993) 15.c5 ♗e7 16.cxd6 gives White a slight initiative, for instance 16...♔xd6 (16...♗xd6 17.♗xd6 ♔xd6 18.e3 with a tiny endgame pull thanks to White's pressure on the c-file) 17.♗d4 ♔e5 18.♗a7.

13.♗d2 e5

13...bxc4 14.♖xc4 simply transposes into the previous note. 13...♔a7!?, aiming to play ...c7-c6 and blunt the c-file, was tried in Zhu Chen-Z.Tan, China 2008, but 14.♖fd1 bxc4 15.♖xc4 c6 16.♔e5! gave White the bishop pair after 16...♖c8 17.♔xd7 ♗xd7.

14.dxe5

The easiest and most direct way for White to achieve an advantage. White takes on e5 and prepares the c4-c5 push, opening the c-file to put pressure on Black's c7-pawn. Black's queenside pawn structure comes under siege.

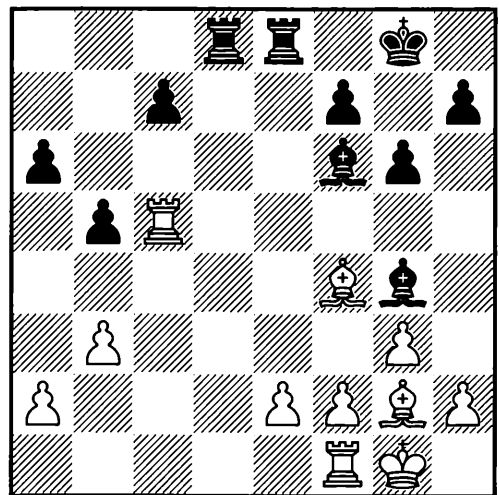
14...♔xe5 15.♔xe5 ♖xe5 16.♔f4 ♖e8

16...♖h5!?, aiming to prevent White's c4-c5, is easily met by 17.♔f3 ♖f5 18.♖fd1 and so on. White plans e2-e4 or c4-c5 at the right moment.

17.c5 dxc5

This gives White the half-open c-file, but Black has nothing better. 17...♔g4 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.e3 would leave Black with a vulnerable isolated d-pawn, just as we saw in the previous game. For instance, 19...♔e5 (or 19...♖b6 20.h3 ♔e6 21.♖fd1 ♔e7 22.g4, making room for the bishop on f4 to stay on the h2-b8 diagonal) 20.♔c6 ♖e7 21.♔g5 f6 22.♔h6 leaves White in the driver's seat. After the text, White tries to pick off Black's exposed c-pawn.

18.♖xc5 ♔g4 19.♗xd8 ♖bxd8



20.e3?!

20.e4, allowing the white bishop on f4 to keep an eye on the d2 square, was better. Wojo prefers to keep the white pawn formation intact and not block the h1-a8 diagonal. Black now has good chances for counterplay along the second rank, however, so the text should be considered an inaccuracy.

20...♖d2 21.a4 ♖b2

21...b4 was an interesting try. Now 22.♙xc7 ♜b2 (22...♙e6 is good, too) 23.♞c4 ♙e2 24.♞xb4 ♙xf1 25.♙xf1 may be a bit better for White but doesn't promise him anything, but 22.♙d5 instead seems to preserve White's pull.

22.axb5

22.♞xc7 immediately was possible, as 22...♞xb3? 23.♙d5 would win for White. Instead, Black would likely have responded 22...♙e6 23.♞a7 b4! with compensation for his pawn.

22...axb5 23.♙d5

Here, however, 23.♙c6 was more precise. Then 23...♞e7 24.♙xb5 ♞xb3 may still eventually result in White's winning the black c-pawn.

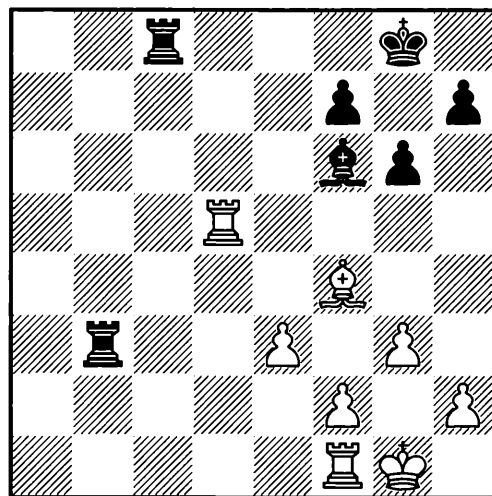
23...♙e6?

A careless error that essentially costs Black the game. With 23...b4, Black would have been fine, for instance 24.♞xc7 ♙e6 and Black will win the pawn on b3, or 24.e4 ♞c8, when now 25.♙xc7? would run into 25...♙h3 26.♞d1 ♙d4!, winning for Black. With the text move, Black grossly overestimates his drawing chances down a pawn.

24.♞xb5 ♙xd5 25.♞xd5 ♞xb3 26.♙xc7

Although technically speaking this endgame may be a draw, Black's chances here are poor. The key for White is to advance his pawns and create a weakness in Black's formation.

26...♞c8 27.♙f4



27...♙g7?!

27...h5 was likely necessary here. The text allows White to advance his kingside pawns too easily.

28.g4!

Best. Black's situation on the kingside is now difficult. Over the next several moves, White slowly improves his position.

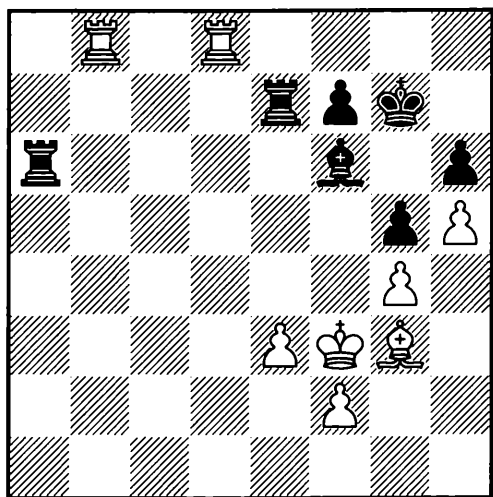
28...h6 29.♙g2 ♞c4 30.♙f3 ♞bb4 31.h3 ♞b7 32.♞fd1 ♞c2 33.♙g3 ♞e7

It would have been better for Black to make the concession of playing 33...g5 immediately rather than wait for White to play h3-h4 first.

34.h4 g5?!

Here, this strike is bad. Now it is likely that White is winning. 34...♞a2 or some other waiting move would have been met by 35.h5, cracking open Black's pawn formation, but 35...♞c2 36.hxg6 ♙xg6 or even 36...fxg6 would have maintained some drawing chances for Black.

35.h5 ♞c4 36.♞f5 ♞c6 37.♞b1 ♞a6 38.♞d5 ♞c6 39.♞b8 ♞a6 40.♞dd8



40...Rc6??

A blunder, but Black was in dire straits by this point. 40...Kh7, covering the h8 square, would have held out longer.

41.Rh8 1-0

Black can do little to stop White's threat of mate.

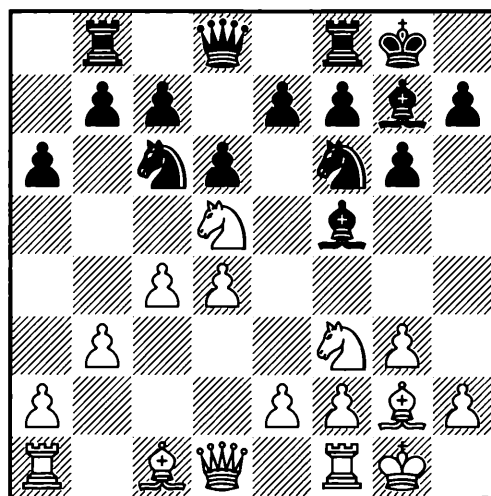
While Black's 9...b5 may look logical, it ignores the activity that White generates in the center with 9. Nd5. White was able to play 10. Nxf6+ Bxf6 11. Bh6 followed by 12. Rc1, putting pressure along the c-file. This pressure eventually led to the loss of the c-pawn for Black in the endgame, but not after a few inaccuracies by both sides – most notably 20.e3?! by White, allowing Black to penetrate to the second rank, and the horrendous 23...Be6? by Black. Although the ensuing rook-and-bishop ending was not lost for Black, he made some instructive mistakes, allowing White to gain space on the kingside and penetrate there. Had Black played 27...h5, he would have been much more likely to hold the draw.

The final game in this section is not, at the time of writing, available in any database. The authors would like to thank tournament organizer Michael Atkins for preserving it. It was played in Round 4 of the 2002 Virginia Open in Fredericksburg.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2535)
Fink Jr., Stanley (2166)

[E63] Virginia 2002

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7
 4. Bg2 0-0 5. d4 d6 6. 0-0 Nc6
 7. Nc3 a6 8. b3 Bb8 9. Nd5 Bf5



An uncommon move. Black aims to play ...Bf5-e4, countering the power of White's bishop on g2. In this game, White meets this move with the same sequence as in the last game: he takes on f6, plays Bc1-h6, and then looks to create trouble for Black in the center. As we'll see in the note to White's next move, he can also simply keep the tension with Bc1-b2. This may be even stronger, since Black's plan of ...Bf5-e4 can always be met by Bg2-h3 at some point, essentially winning the bishop pair by forcing Black to play ...Be4xf3.

10. Nxf6+

10.♘b2 is given by Janjgava, who cites Adorján-Pérez, Dubai 1986: 10...e6 11.♗e3 ♘e4 12.♖c1 ♗d7 13.♘h3 (stepping off the h1-a8 diagonal with the idea of ♗f3-d2) 13...♘xf3 14.exf3 e5 15.dxe5 ♗cxe5 16.♖c2 f5 17.f4 with a clear advantage for White. And if Black tries 10...b5!?, White should be better after 11.♖c1, for instance, 11...b4 occurred in M.Misojčić-D.Šimić, Serbia 2008, when here 12.♗e3 ♘e4 13.d5 ♗a5 14.♘h3 would have given White a big advantage. Thus, Janjgava's line with 10.♘b2 may be more accurate than the text. Unlike in the previous game, when Black had already committed to ...b7-b5, there is less tension here. Therefore, it makes sense for White to avoid immediate exchanges and preserve what tension there is.

10...♘xf6

10...exf6 is well met by 11.d5 ♗e5 12.♗d4, for instance 12...♘c8 (12...♘d7 13.f4 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗h6 15.g4 leaves Black's knight on h6 stuck) 13.♘b2 f5 14.♗d2 with pressure for White. He plans e2-e4 in the near future.

11.♘h6 ♖e8 12.d5

12.♖c1, as in the last game, was also possible here. Wojo prefers to take immediate action in the center.

12...♗e5 13.♗d4

13.♗xe5 ♘xe5 14.e4 ♘d7 15.♖c1, leaving White with a space advantage, was also possible. The text is somewhat more enterprising.

13...♘d7

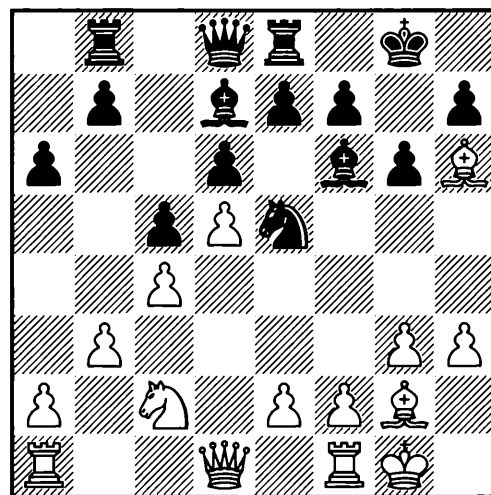
13...♗c8!? 14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 occurred in S.Kolthoff-T.Hartling, Germany 2000.

Then 15.♘d2 (15.♖c1 is also possible, for instance 15...g5 16.f4 ♗g6 17.♘xg5 ♘xg5 18.fxg5 ♗xg5 19.♗d4 with chances for both sides) 15...c5 16.dxc6 ♗xc6 17.♖b1 left White a tiny bit better thanks to his bishop pair.

14.h3

A good move, shoring up the g4 square in preparation for a kingside assault. Black now tries to take space on the queenside. His next move is necessary to stay in the game.

14...c5 15.♗c2



15.dxc6 ♗xc6 (not 15...bxc6? 16.f4) 16.♘e3 ♗a5 would be fine for Black, who has an active game.

15...♘c8

Black anticipates the f2-f4 push.

16.♖b1 ♗c7

16...b5 immediately was better. Then 17.♗e3 (17.f4 ♗d7 18.♗d2 bxc4 19.bxc4 ♗b6 gives Black counterplay) 17...♗a5 18.♗c2 is about equal. White has more space in the center but Black has adequate counterplay on the queenside. After the text, White builds up an initiative with a quick f2-f4.

17.♚d2 ♘f5?

17...b5 18.♞e3 (again, 18.f4 is met by 18...♞d7 19.e4 bxc4 20.bxc4 ♞b6 with counterplay) is not as strong here for Black as in the previous note since he cannot play ...♚d8-a5. Regardless, this was better than the move Black played, which is flawed.

18.f4

Now Black is in serious trouble.

18...♙xc2

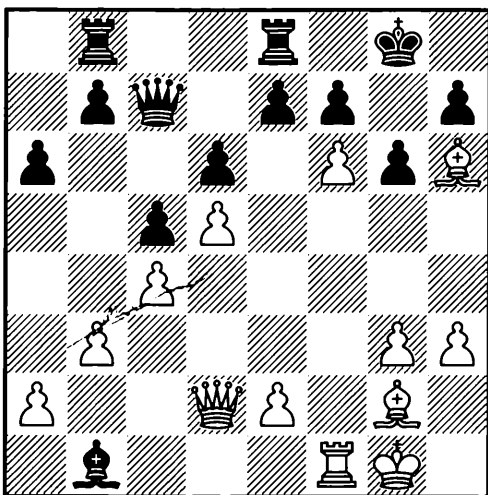
Of course not 18...♞d7? 19.e4, winning for White.

19.fxe5!

Black had likely underestimated this move when playing 17...♙f5. After 19.♚xc2 ♞d7, on the other hand, Black would have been fine.

19...♙xb1

19...♙xe5 would also be bad for Black after 20.♚xc2 ♙xg3. Black is down a piece for two pawns and is almost certainly losing. 21.h4! ♙xh4 22.♚c3 f6 23.♚h3 would finish the job.

20.exf6

The point. Now Black's bishop on b1 is trapped, allowing White to win two bishops for a rook and a pawn – which, in this case, proves decisive.

20...exf6

20...♙f5 wouldn't help in view of 21.♙xf5.

21.♙xb1 ♚e7 22.e4 b5 23.♙c1 a5 24.cxb5 ♙xb5 25.♚d3 ♙b4 26.♙d2

White invites the black rook to invade the d4 square, where it may eventually be trapped.

26...♙d4 27.♚c2 f5 28.exf5 ♚e2 29.♙xa5

29.♙f4, targeting the black pawn on d6 and providing some extra protection for the loose white pawn on g3, was probably even stronger.

29...♚e3+

29...♙d3 was another try. After 30.fxg6 hxg6 31.♙h2, it seems that 31...♙xd5 32.♙h1 ♙f5 33.♚xe2 ♙xe2 34.♙c7 d5 35.♙d6 is winning for White, but 31...♙ee3 would keep Black fighting for a while.

30.♙h2 ♙a8?!

30...♙d3, forcing 31.♙e1, was necessary, though by this point White is winning in any case.

31.♙e1

Forcing the trade of queens, after which White has a winning ending.

31...♚d3 32.♚xd3 ♙xd3 33.♙e4 ♙d4 34.♙c3

Finally, the black rook is trapped on d4.

Of course, 36..♖xd5 is not possible in view of 37.♗e8#.

34...♖xa2+ 35.♔g1 gxf5 36.♙xf5
♖a3

37.♙xd4 cxd4 38.♖b1 ♔g7
39.♔f2 ♔f6 40.♙xh7 1-0

In this game, Black tried 9...♙f5, which is certainly a better move than either 9...e5 or 9...b5. White reacted with 10.♘xf6+, 11.♙h6, and 12.d5, developing rapidly and gaining space in the center, but this released a lot of the tension from the position. Black probably would have been fine if not for 17...♙f5?, which eventually lost him the game. Thus, Janjgava's recommendation of 10.♙b2, maintaining the tension, looks stronger: White can look forward to winning the bishop pair after Black carries out his plan of ...♙f5-e4xf3.

Conclusion: After 8.b3 ♖b8 9.♘d5!, White seeks to create immediate play in the center. In this section, we examined responses that might be typical of a player of the black pieces encountering the 8.b3 system for the first time – and all of them led to comfortable advantages for White. In Wojtkiewicz-Lemos, Black's 9...e5?! ceded the d5 square and left White with the better game. The immediate 9...b5 didn't fare well for Black in Wojtkiewicz-Höpfl thanks to White's strong pressure on the c-file. What these two moves have in common is that they ignore White's play in the center. (Instead, Black should take time out to reckon with White's knight on d5.) Black did a bit better with 9...♙f5 in Wojtkiewicz-Fink, but this move also seems second-rate at best. In the next two sections, we will examine better approaches for Black – ones that address the situation in the center.

The Main Line with 9...♘h5

As we saw in the previous section, Black gets into trouble if he tries to meet White's aggressive 9.♘d5 with a nonchalant developing move. What is required of him is to play pugnaciously, and the main line for Black with 9...♘h5(!) does just that. Black avoids trades and seeks to mix things up, producing a complicated middlegame struggle. He will kick White's knight out of the center with ...e7-e6 and look to create counterplay with either ...b7-b5 or ...f7-f5.

The downside of Black's strategy with 9...♘h5, however, is that he must

play precisely to avoid being worse. By virtue of adopting the King's Indian Defense in the first place, he has already granted White a nice pawn center; now that he is attempting some suspicious-looking maneuvers on both flanks, he needs to be even more careful. If he fails to generate sufficient counterplay, he will simply be overrun in the center. This is exactly what happens in the first game we examine in this section.

Finally, it is worth noting that because this main line with 9...♘h5 is so

complex, we have provided a variety of different responses for White to choose from. The purpose of this is twofold. First, players of White will be able to select whichever line most appeals to them – those looking for the sharpest theoretical approach will find it in Georgiev-Radjabov below, whereas those looking for quieter play with perhaps a modest advantage will benefit most from the other games. Second, the fact that we have provided a variety of lines in this volume will make it harder for players of Black to prepare for our readers. Although it is by no means certain that Black can equalize against any of the three ways for White to play we have analyzed here at length, those who play 9...♘h5 tend to be well prepared theoretically. The point of this book is to make their task harder, not easier. With that said, let's take a look at what happens when a player of the black pieces who *isn't* well prepared tries to handle this sharp opening.

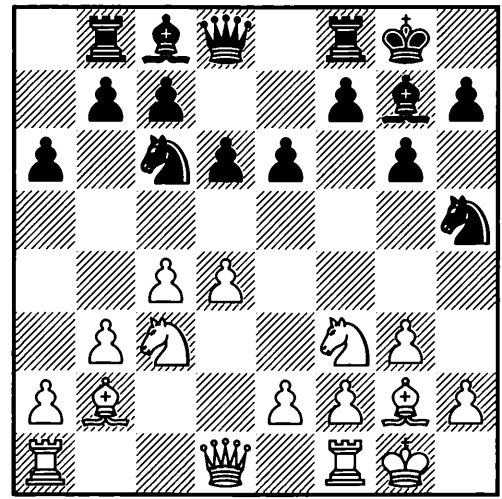
Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2530)
Jaracz, Paweł (2410)

[E63] Warsaw 1995

1.♘f3 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.c4 g6 4.g3
♙g7 5.♙g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6
8.b3 ♗b8 9.♘d5 ♘h5

Black's most common move, avoiding trades in order to keep the game complicated. Although moving the knight to the edge of the board may look strange at first glance, Black prepares to play ...e7-e6 with a gain of time.

10.♙b2 e6 11.♘c3



11.♘f4?! is thought to be inferior since it compromises White's king's position (especially the h4 square) after 11...♘xf4 12.gxf4. After 12...b5 13.♗c1 ♘e7 14.♙d2 ♙b7 15.♗fd1 bxc4 16.♗xc4 ♘d5 17.♗dc1 h6, seen in both V.Tukmakov-A.Istrăţescu, Biel 1994, and G.Schwartzman-A.Istrăţescu, Bucharest 1994, Black had more than adequate counterplay. He can play on the kingside with ...♙d8-h4, ...f7-f5, and ...g6-g5.

But 11.♘e3 is a worthy alternative that leads to a rather pleasant game for White. Indian GM Pentala Harikrishna demonstrated the best way for White to handle this line. Instead of trying to play for a quick d4-d5 or c4-c5, as many others had done before him, he played to simply expand on the queenside with b3-b4 in the game P.Harikrishna-Z.Efimenko, Dubai 2004. The game saw 11...♘e7 (this cautious approach is considered best by Bologan) 12.♗c1 b6 (12...♙d7 is thought to be more accurate) 13.♙c2 ♙b7 14.♗fd1 ♘f6 15.b4! ♙e4 16.♙c3 b5 17.d5 e5, when White got a clear advantage after 18.♙h3 bxc4 19.♙xc4 ♗b5 20.a4 ♙xd5 21.♘xd5 ♗xd5 22.♘d2. Black's rook on d5 was misplaced and White's two bishops were strong. Although the move 11.♘e3 is outside the scope of this book, as Wojo always preferred to retreat his knight to c3, positional players might want to investigate it on their own.

11...♟e7?!

Anticipating White's d4-d5 break in the center and trying to stay flexible. Black plans ...b7-b6, ...♙c8-b7, and ...f7-f5. 11...b5 is the main line here, and for good reason. White's last move has blocked the c-file, so Black no longer needs to fear pressure on his c7-pawn via a quick ♜c1. Thus, he should strike. The text is too passive and allows White to take the upper hand on the queenside and in the center.

Meanwhile, 11...f5 occurred in A.Wojtkiewicz-R.Barcenilla, Internet 2004, when White got the advantage with 12.d5!, striking in the center. After 12...exd5 (12...♟e7 13.dxe6 ♟c6 14.♚d2 h6 15.♟d5 ♙xe6 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7 17.♟d4 ♟xd4 18.♚xd4+ ♜h7 19.♞fd1 left White on top in Z.Izoria-N.Kabanov, St. Petersburg 2002) 13.cxd5 ♟e5 14.♟d4 ♚e7 15.e3 ♞f7 16.♚d2 ♟f6 17.♞ac1 ♙d7 18.♞c2 c5 (Black anticipates White's pressure along the c-file and lashes out) 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.♞d1 d5 21.♟a4 ♟e4 22.♚c1 ♞e8 23.♟c5 ♟xc5 24.♞xc5 h5 25.h4, White had a clear advantage thanks to his well-placed pieces and Black's compromised pawn structure on the queenside.

Finally, 11...e5 can be met by 12.dxe5 ♟xe5 (on 12...dxe5 White can proceed with 13.♙a3 ♞e8 14.♚xd8 ♞xd8 15.♞ad1 ♙f5 16.♟g5 and so on) 13.♚d2, for instance 13...♟f6 14.♞fd1 ♟xf3+ 15.♙xf3 ♙g4 16.♙g2 ♚e7 17.h3 ♙e6 18.♟d5 ♚d8 19.♞ac1 occurred in C.Neidhardt-C. Richter, Germany 2004, with an advantage for White.

12.a4!

With this, White prevents Black's chances for counterplay on the queenside with ...b7-b5. Now that

that flank has been locked down, White will be able to focus on matters in the center.

12...f5

12...♙d7, preparing ...b7-b5 again, might well have been preferable. White can now play either 13.e4 b5 14.axb5 axb5 15.cxb5 ♙xb5 16.♟xb5 ♞xb5, winning the bishop pair, or 13.a5, limiting Black's options on the queenside further.

13.e4

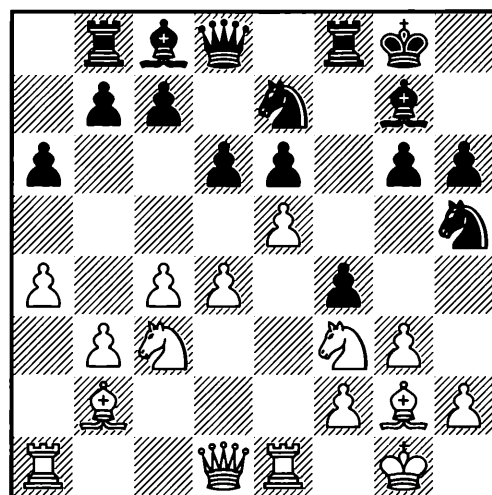
Black's pieces are placed somewhat passively, so it is difficult for him to respond to this simple advance in the center.

13...h6

13...fxe4 14.♟xe4 ♟f6 was probably a sounder idea.

14.♞e1 f4?!

Again, Black was better off playing 14...fxe4 15.♟xe4 ♟f6. After the text, White is able to strike directly at the heart of Black's position in the center.

15.e5!

Black's punishment for playing so slowly and for failing to take enough space in the center. White threatens g3-g4, trapping Black's knight on h5.

15...fxg3 16.hxg3 ♖c6

16...♙d7 or any other developing move might easily also have been met by 17.♙a3, putting Black under decisive pressure.

17.♙a3 ♜f7

A good defensive try, preparing to hold the d6-pawn with ...♙f8.

18.exd6 cxd6 19.♖e4 ♙f8 20.♚d3

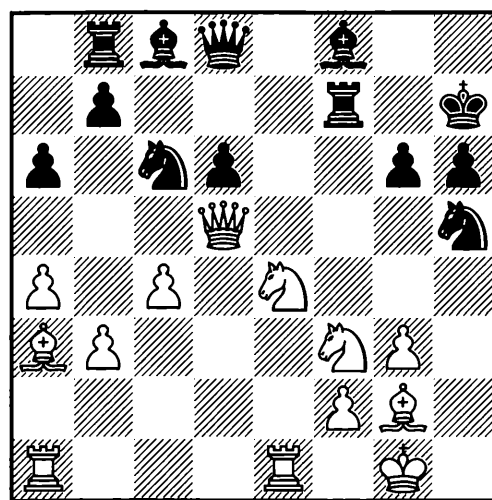
Forcing Black to watch his loose pawn on g6. 20.d5 immediately was also good, for instance 20...♖e5 21.♖xd6 ♖xf3+ 22.♙xf3 ♙xd6 23.♙xd6 ♚xd6 24.dxe6 is losing for Black, and 20...exd5 21.cxd5 (21.♚xd5 ♖f6 22.♖xf6+ ♚xf6 allows Black to keep holding on) 21...♖e5 22.♖xe5 dxe5 23.♙b2 ♙g7 24.♜c1, and White has a tremendous advantage thanks to his well-organized forces and passed d-pawn. The text gains time and is therefore slightly stronger.

20...♗h7 21.d5

Now Black's position, which was hanging by a thread, unravels completely.

21...exd5 22.♚xd5

Now Black's d-pawn will fall right into White's hands. Here this is stronger than 22.cxd5 ♖e5 23.♖xe5 dxe5 24.♙b2 ♙g7 25.♜ac1 ♙f5 and so on.



22...♜f5 23.♚d2 d5

There was nothing better. The pawn was already lost.

24.♙xf8 dxe4

24...♜xf8 25.cxd5 ♖e7 26.♖e5 is completely hopeless for Black.

25.♚xd8 ♖xd8 26.♙d6

Black loses the exchange.

26...exf3 27.♙xb8 ♖c6 28.♙h3 ♖xb8

28...♜f8 29.♙d6 ♜d8 30.♙xc8 ♜xc8 31.♜e3, allowing White to pick off Black's f-pawn, also loses for Black in short order.

29.♜e8 ♖xg3

Desperation.

30.fxg3 1-0

Black's plan of ...♖e7 and ...f7-f5 proved too slow in this game. White clamped down on the b5 square with 12.a4! and then proceeded to advance in the center with his e-pawn. By move

13, Black was already struggling. His d6- and e6-pawns came under heavy fire and he lost quickly. Black never succeeded in developing his pieces; his bishop on c8 never moved, and his rook on b8 didn't see the light of day, either.

With the next game, we begin to examine some true main-line material with 11...b5 from Black. We examine one of Wojo's interesting but rarely seen ideas for White – the simple 12.cxb5 followed by 13.e4, taking control of the center. The game was played in an online FIDE qualifier at the rate of G/25 plus a ten-second increment.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2568) Curtacci, Sergio

[E63] Internet 2001

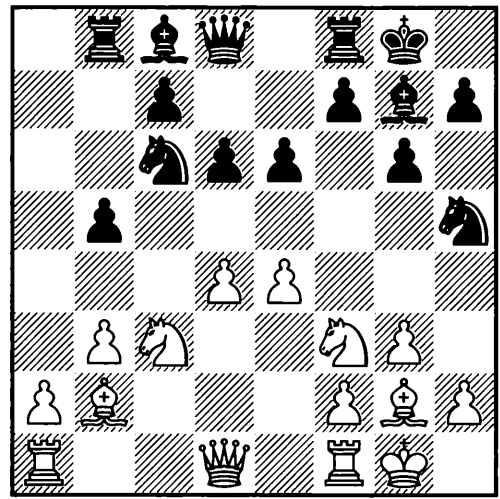
1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♜c6
7.♜c3 a6 8.b3 ♞b8 9.♜d5 ♜h5
10.♗b2 e6 11.♜c3 b5

This time Black elects the correct plan, taking advantage of the clogged-up c-file and striking immediately on the queenside.

12.cxb5

12.d5, White's sharpest (and most theoretically challenging) approach is given in the next game, Georgiev-Radjabov. In this game, Wojo chooses a less complicated line. 12.♞b1!? is an interesting sideline explored in Burmakin-Komljenović below.

12...axb5 13.e4



This rare move seems best. The more common 13.♞c1 looks inferior, since 13...♗a6! looks precise here to keep the tension. Now 14.♞d2 b4 15.♜b1 (or 15.♜a4 ♗b5 with equal chances) 15...♜e7 16.♜e1 (the maneuver ♜f3-e1-d3 is typical in these structures) 16...c5 17.dxc5 dxc5 18.♗xg7 ♜xg7 19.♜d3 ♗xd3 20.♞xd3 ♞xd3 21.exd3 ♞b5 left Black better in O.Romanishin-V.Milov, Biel 1996. With the text, White simply takes control of the center.

13...b4 14.♜a4

The usefulness (or uselessness) of White's knight on a4 in these types of positions is often the subject of much debate. From a4, the white knight controls the c5 square, stopping any ideas of ...c7-c5 and making it easier for White to pile up on Black's c7-pawn. It also blocks the a-file, hiding White's own weakness on a2. The downside of this move, of course, is that the lonesome knight may find itself simply sitting and watching the action from the bench. And if Black is able to play ...♗c8-a6-b5, the second player will have the option of altering the pawn structure on the queenside by way of ...♗b5x(♜)a4. (Note that this is not always favorable for him: Black cedes the bishop pair and gives White a passed

a-pawn.) As for now, the jury is still out as to whether it is generally better for White to play ♖c3-a4 or retreat the knight to either b1 or e2 in these types of positions. When given the choice, Wojo usually put his knight on a4, because if Black slips up, White will dominate the queenside thanks to his control of c5.

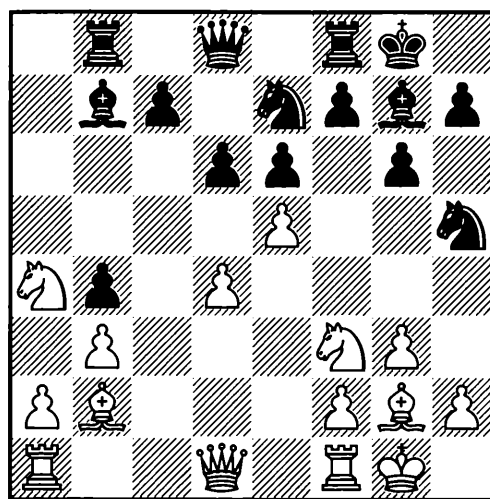
The alternative 14.♗e2 was played in P.Stempin-J.Moingt, Paris 1990, when now 14...♗f6 15.♖c2 ♕d7 (15...♕b7 looks like a slightly better place for the bishop, for instance 16.♗d2 ♖d7 17.♗fc1 with a2-a4 to follow looks like just a minimal edge for White) 16.♗fe1 ♖c8 17.♗f4 ♖a6!? 18.d5! ♗e7 19.dxe6 fxe6 20.♗g5 e5 21.♗fe6 ♗fc8 22.♕f1 ♖a5 23.♕c4 led to a clear advantage for White. That said, Black played some strange moves (like ...♖d8-c8-a6, sidelining the queen) to reach this point.

14...♕b7 15.e5!?

White could easily have waited to play this move. The less direct 15.♗e1 first was also good, for instance 15...♗f6 16.♗c1 and so on. White can play ♖d2 or ♖c2 and he retains the option of striking with either d4-d5 or e4-e5. The advantage of the text is that it keeps Black's knight on h5 from re-entering the game, but the downside is that White loses control of the d5 square. Hence, this is a case of giving squares to get squares.

15...♗e7

Best. Black immediately seeks to take control of d5. He also plans ...♕c6, targeting the knight on a4.



16.♗e1 ♖d7 17.♗c1 ♕c6 18.♗d2

A move directed against Black's active bishop on c6. White also plans ♗e4 or ♗c4.

18...♕xg2

18...♕xa4?! would have been a poor choice here, since after 19.bxa4, Black has no way of exploiting the weak white a-pawn. Black's kingside pieces are locked in and White's bishop on g2 is now uncontested. After 19...d5 20.a5 ♗a8 21.♗b3, White is clearly better.

19.♕xg2 dxe5?!

Releasing the tension in the center is tempting but inaccurate. 19...♗d5 immediately instead was better. Then 20.♗e4 could be met with 20...f5 21.exf6 ♗hxf6, when Black has gotten his knight on h5 back into the game. Thus the patient 20.♗c2 is probably White's best, simply looking to play ♖f3, ♗e4, and so on (perhaps he will play ♕b2-c1, re-routing his bishop), with chances for both sides.

20.dxe5 ♗d5 21.♗e4

Now White has the advantage thanks to his control over the c5

square. Over the next several moves, Black comes under heavy pressure.

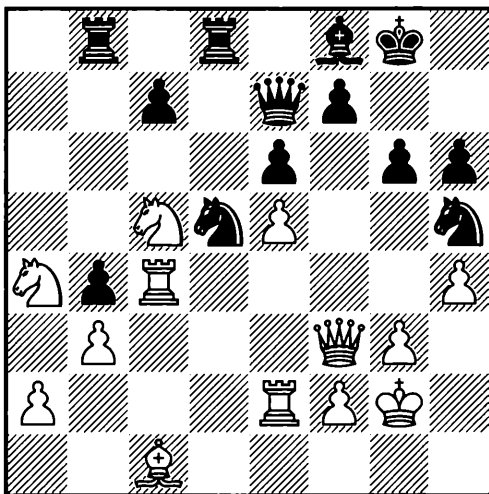
21...♖fd8 22.♗f3 ♕e7 23.♞c6 ♞a8 24.♞e2 ♞a7 25.♞c4 ♞aa8 26.h4

26.♞d4, with the idea of ♖a4-c5, was another idea. White is looking to create problems for his opponent on the kingside. Meanwhile, it is hard to find a real source of counterplay for Black, who is tied up on both sides of the board.

26...♞a7 27.♖g5

Provoking Black into making a weakness on the kingside.

27...h6 28.♖e4 ♞aa8 29.♖ec5 ♞f8 30.♞c1 ♞ab8



31.g4

White takes action. Simply continuing to build up the pressure with 31.♞ec2 was also good, as White threatens ♖a6. But the text seems stronger, as Black's fortress on the kingside quickly deteriorates.

31...♖g7 32.♞xh6 ♗xh4 33.♞c1 ♞a8

White keeps the advantage after 33...♖b6 34.♖xb6 ♖d1 35.♗h3 ♞g1+ 36.♔xg1 ♗xh3 37.♖bd7, for instance 37...♞a8? (37...♞xc5 38.♖xb8 ♗g3+ 39.♔f1 ♗h3+ 40.♔e1 is Black's best chance) 38.♖f6+ ♔h8 39.♖ce4 followed by ♖g5, winning for White.

34.♖e4 ♗h8 35.♞g5

35.♞e1 with the idea of ♞h1, trapping the black queen, was faster. 35...♖e8 36.♞h1 ♗g7 37.g5! (with the idea of ♖f6+) 37...♗xe5 38.♞b2 finishes the job.

35...♖e8 36.♞xd8 ♞xd8 37.g5 ♖g7 38.♖f6+ ♖xf6 39.gxf6 ♖f5 40.♗h3 ♗xh3+ 41.♔xh3 c6 42.♞e1 ♖d2 43.♞xc6 ♞xa2

43...♞xf2 44.♞c8 is no better.

44.♞c8 ♖d2 45.♞ec1

White now threatens 46.♞xf8+ followed by 47.♞c8+.

45...♞d3+ 46.♔h2 ♖g7 47.♞b8 1-0

Even stronger than 47.fxg7. Black is now helpless to prevent White from doubling along the eighth rank.

In this game, Wojo handled Black's ...b7-b5 push with a simple-looking remedy: 12.cxb5 and 13.e4. He was able to use his control of the center to sideline Black's knight on h5 with 15.e5!?. A major theme was the presence of White's knight on a4, which can prove either a strength or a weakness for the first player in these types of positions. It would not be farfetched to say that Black lost because he mishandled the position with 19...dxe5?!,

ceding the c5 square and allowing White's a4-knight to participate actively in the game. In sum, although the move 13.e4 hasn't been examined much by theory (neither Bologan nor Janjgava mentions it in their works on the King's Indian), it appears to be a plausible try for the advantage.

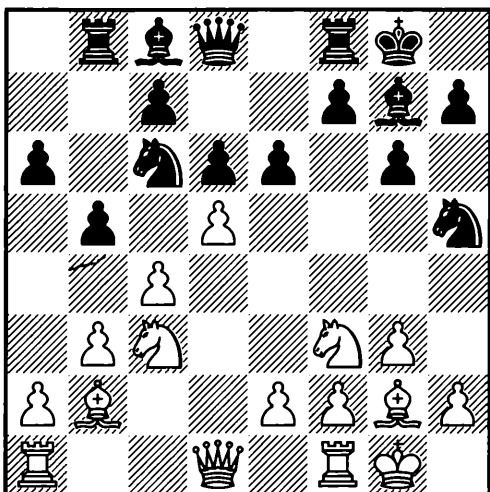
In the next game we continue looking at various ideas for White. This time, we examine what is considered the most theoretically testing way for White to play against 9...♘h5. Note that this does not necessarily mean that the approach in the following game is the "best" one for White – currently, Black seems to be achieving satisfactory scores in this line. And according to the Wojo philosophy behind our repertoire choices, the "best" line is the one that will yield the highest score in practice. With our suggested improvement on move 20, however, it does appear that White still has good prospects for advantage here.

Georgiev, Kiril (2654)

Radjabov, Teimour (2610)

[E63] Sarajevo 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6
8.b3 ♝b8 9.♘d5 ♘h5 10.♗b2 e6
11.♘c3 b5 12.d5



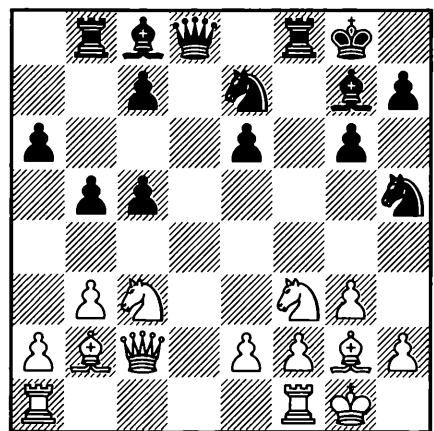
In general, Wojo preferred this to 12.cxb5, as in the last game. White rips open the center. 12.♝b1!? is examined in the next game.

12...♘e7

12...exd5? relieves the tension in White's favor. After 13.cxd5 ♘e7 14.♘d4, White has a clear advantage thanks to his control of the center and Black's weak c6 square. Meanwhile, 12...♘a5 has been tried a handful of times but without great success. After 13.dxe6 ♗xe6 14.cxb5 axb5 we reach a position similar to that in the game, but here Black's knight on a5 is not participating in the battle for d5. 15.♝c2 ♘f6 (15...b4 as in the game looks better) 16.♘g5 ♗f5 17.e4 ♗d7 18.♘f3 ♝e8 19.♝fe1 b4 20.♘d5 ♘xd5 21.exd5 ♗f5 22.♝d2 was good for White in J.Ehlvest-V.Bologan, Vermont 1999.

13.dxe6 ♗xe6

13...fxe6 is given as dubious by GM Andrei Istrățescu after 14.c5! dxc5 15.♝c2. White has broken up Black's pawn structure and will generate a nice initiative, for instance:



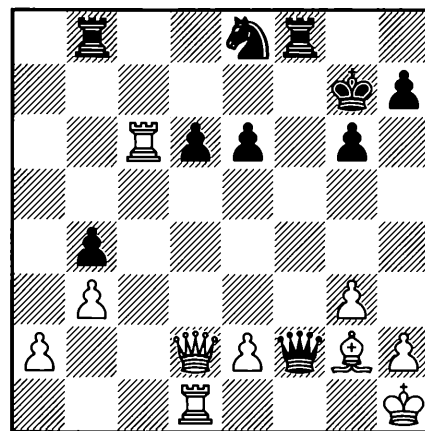
a) 15...♗b7 16.♘d1! ♝d6 (16...c4 17.bxc4 b4 18.♗xg7 ♘xg7 19.♘b2 c5 20.♘d3 ♝c7 21.♝b2 ♝f5 22.♝ad1 left White for choice in M.Grabarczyk-M.

Zulfugarli, Poland 1999) 17. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 18. ♖c1 ♜ef5 19. ♗xc5 ♙xf3 20. ♙xf3 ♜d4 21. ♜e3 ♜e8 22. ♖fd1 ♜xf3+ 23. exf3 ♗xc5 24. ♖xc5 ♖xf3 25. ♖c6 gave White a clear advantage in A.Karpov-A.Shirov, Amber Rapid 1999, according to Bologan.

b) 15... ♜c6 16. ♖ad1 (16. ♜e4 ♜d4 17. ♜xd4 cxd4 occurred in A.Wojtkiewicz-A.Shabalov, Washington 1998, and here 18. ♖ac1 ♖f7 19. f4! would have left White with more than enough compensation for his pawn) 16... ♜d4 17. ♜xd4 cxd4 18. e3 e5 19. exd4 ♙f5 (19... exd4 20. ♜d5 ♙g4 21. ♖d2 d3 22. ♗xd3 ♙xb2 23. ♖xb2 c6 24. ♗e4 was a small advantage for White in Ki.Georgiev-D.Antić, Montenegro 2001, according to Bologan) and here Bologan gives 20. ♗c1!? exd4 21. ♜d5 with an advantage for White. We carry his analysis a few moves further: 21... d3 22. ♖fe1 ♖f7 and here either 23. ♙a3!? or 23. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 24. ♗c6 look good for White, who has gained strong piece play in exchange for his temporary pawn sacrifice.

14. cxb5 axb5 15. ♗d2 b4

Best. After 15... ♜f6 White can try 16. ♜g5. For instance, 16... b4 (16... ♙d7 17. b4! gives White a slight advantage) 17. ♜ce4 ♜ed5 18. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6, and here IM László Hazai says in *ChessBase Magazine* #67 that White could have gained the initiative in A.Wojtkiewicz-A.Istrăţescu, Poland 1998, after 19. ♜xe6 fxe6 20. ♖ac1 c5 21. ♖fd1 ♜e8 22. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 23. ♖xc5! ♗f6 24. ♖c6 ♗xf2+ 25. ♜h1. Black's pieces are not well coordinated, leaving him with no way to follow up on his kingside invasion:



But instead of this, Wojo's 19. ♖ac1 left things unclear after 19... ♙d7, and after some poor maneuvering with a rook along the fourth rank, White went on to lose the game.

16. ♜e4

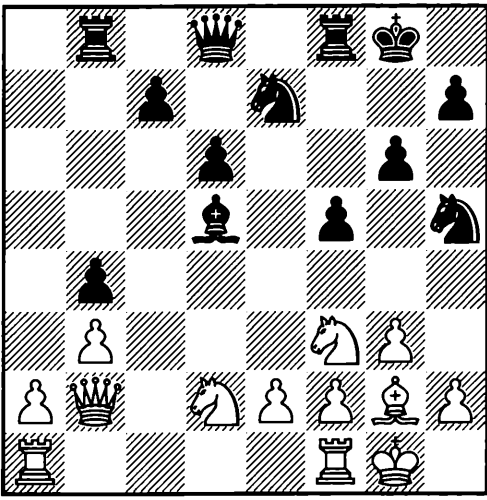
Better than 16. ♜a4 ♙d5, when the white knight on a4 is sitting on the sidelines. That said, if White plans ♙xg7 and ♜a4-b2-c4, it might not matter that much in any case.

16... ♙xb2 17. ♗xb2 ♙d5

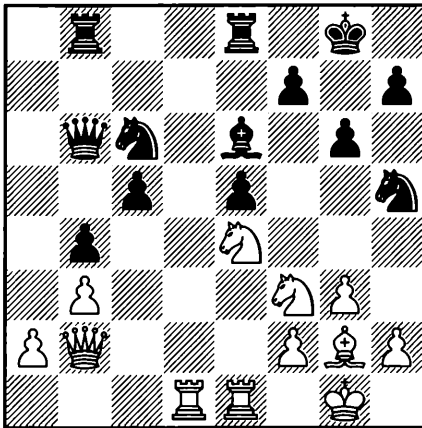
17... f5 is similar to the text but gives White the additional option of 18. ♜eg5!?. Then G.Lambert-J.Barnett, 2001, saw 18... ♙d5 19. ♜d4 ♗d7 20. e4 fxe4 21. ♜xe4 ♙xe4 22. ♙xe4 ♜f6 23. ♙g2 c5 24. ♜e2 ♖be8 25. a3 bxa3 26. ♖xa3 ♜c6 27. ♜f4 ♜e4 with equality. But perhaps White could have tried the move recommended by *Rybka* 4, 19. ♖fe1, which also aims to break open the center with e2-e4. The point is 19... ♜f6 20. ♜d2!, when Black cannot play 20... ♙xg2? in view of 21. ♜e6.

18. ♜ed2 f5

Radjabov's improvement on the game O.Cvitan-V.Tkachiev, Croatia 1999.



That game saw 18...c5 19.e4 (19. ♖ac1 also looks good, for instance 19... ♙b7 20. ♖fd1 ♜d5 21. ♜c4 with pressure) 19... ♙e6 20. ♖ad1 ♜c6 21. ♖fe1 ♖e8 22.e5 dxe5 (22...d5!? 23. ♜e4 allows White to penetrate to d6) 23. ♜e4 (23. ♜c4 ♙c7 24. ♜cxe5 ♜xe5 25. ♜xe5 also gives White a slight edge) 23... ♙b6:

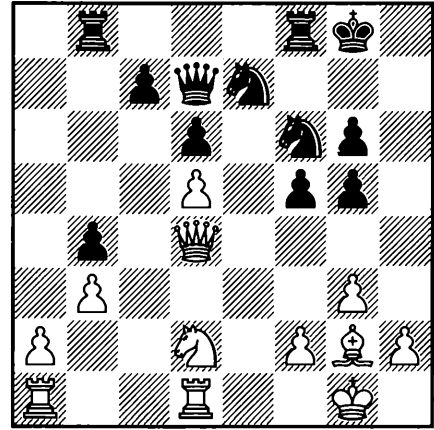


Here White failed to find the strong 24. ♙c1!, when 24...c4 25. ♙h6 would give White strong attacking chances on the dark squares. Instead, White played 24. ♜d6 and the players agreed to a draw after 24... ♖ed8 25. ♜xe5 ♜d4 26. ♜dc4 ♙xc4 27. ♜xc4 ♙f6 28. ♖e5 ♖e8.

19. ♖fd1 ♜f6 20. ♖ac1

This turns out to be too slow to set Black many problems. Our suggested improvement is 20. ♜g5!?, aiming once more for the e2-e4 break. Now 20...

♙d7 (20... ♙xg2? runs into 21. ♜e6) 21.e4 h6! (the only real test, as 21... fxe4 22. ♜dxe4 ♜xe4 23. ♜xe4 ♙xe4 24. ♙xe4 gives White good prospects for long-term pressure against Black's pawn center) 22.exd5 hxg5 23. ♙d4 leaves White better, for instance:



a) 23...f4?! damages Black's pawn structure on the kingside too much after 24. ♜e4.

b) 23... ♙b5 24. ♜f3 g4?! 25. ♜g5 is a clear advantage for White.

c) 23...g4!? 24. ♜f1 followed by ♖ac1 and ♜e3 gives White pressure.

d) 23... ♖b5 24. ♙f1 (24. ♜c4!? ♜exd5 25.a4 ♜c3 26. ♖e1 ♖c5 27.a5 is an interesting pawn sacrifice that seems to give White good chances thanks to his passed a-pawn) 24... ♖bb8 25. ♙c4 leaves White in the driver's seat thanks to his grip on d5.

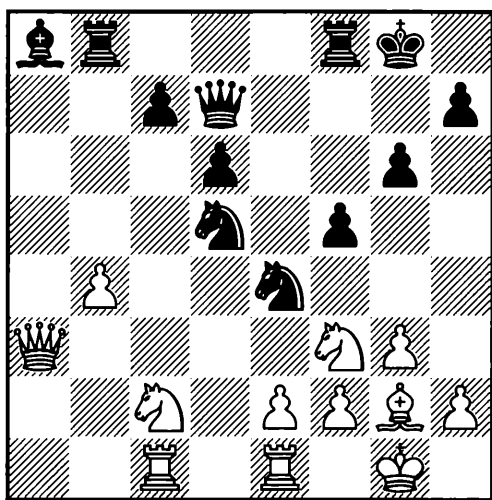
Over the next several moves, White looks to develop pressure on the queenside. He cedes control of the e4 square to Black, however, and this eventually allows the second player to create strong and lasting counterplay against White's king.

20... ♙d7 21. ♜c4 ♜e4 22. ♜e3

**♙a8 23.a3 ♖c3 24.♞d2 ♖e4 25.♞dd1
♖c3 26.♞e1 ♖e4 27.♖c2!?**

27.axb4 ♞xb4 28.♞c4 was a more forceful way for White to proceed. Then Black would not have time for ...f5-f4, for instance, 28...♞fb8 29.♞xb4 ♞xb4 30.♖d2 with equal chances.

27...bxa3 28.♞xa3 ♖d5 29.b4



29...♞fe8

After 29...f4! 30.♖e5 (30.♖fd4 fxg3 31.hxg3 ♖xf2 32.♞f1 c5! gives Black strong counterplay) 30...dxe5 (or 30...♞g7 31.♙xe4 ♞xe5 32.♙f3) 31.♙xe4, White's position looks preferable at first glance. Black's pieces might be subject to pins (such as ♞e1-d1) and his king seems exposed. But the position is probably about level here after 31...♖f6 32.♞b3+ ♖h8 33.♙xa8 ♞xa8, when Black has ideas of ...♞d7-h3 and ...♖f6-g4. And after the even more aggressive 31...fxg3 32.hxg3 ♖f4!, Black may even be better: 33.♙xa8 ♖h3+ 34.♖h2 ♞xa8 35.♞b3+ ♖h8 36.f3 ♖g5 37.g4 leaves White's kingside seriously compromised. From these lines, we can already start to draw conclusions about White's play so far – he hasn't played actively enough, and now Black enjoys strong attacking chances. After the

text, much of Black's strategy from this point forward revolves around putting pressure on White's e2-pawn.

30.♖fd4 c5!?

White was threatening to step up the pressure on Black's queenside with b4-b5, but with this move Black agrees to go down a pawn. He will have compensation in the form of an attack against White's king.

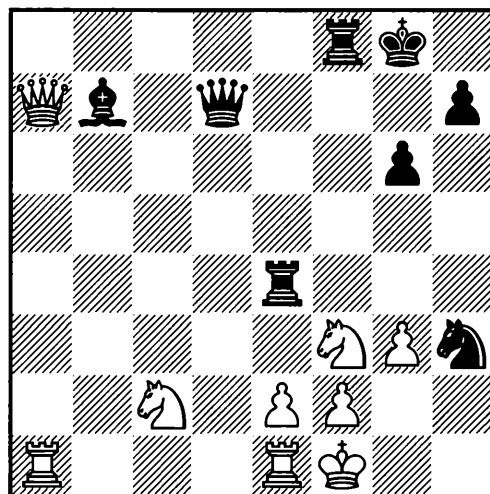
**31.♙xe4 ♞xe4 32.bxc5 dxc5
33.♞xc5 f4 34.♞a1 fxg3 35.hxg3
♖f4**

The point of Black's pawn sacrifice, but with 34.♞a1, White set up a nice defensive resource.

36.♞a7!

36.gxf4?? ♞g4+ 37.♖f1 ♞h3+ 38.♖g1 ♞xf4 would lose for White, for instance 39.f3 ♞g3+ 40.♖f1 ♞g4 with mate to follow.

**36...♖h3+ 37.♖f1 ♞f8 38.♖f3
♙b7**



Black might also have tried 38...♞xa7 39.♞xa7 g5, continuing to make threats against White's kingside,

though White defends easily after 40.♖eal.

39.♘a2+

With this, White winds up having to cash out for a draw. Instead, however, he could have tried for more with 39.♖ab1, for instance 39...♗f7 40.♘e3 and White has consolidated his advantage, since the otherwise dangerous exchange sacrifice 40...♗xe3 would run into 41.♘xe3 here. Perhaps White was only trying to repeat moves before the time control.

39...♙d5 40.♘a7 ♘xa7

White probably expected 40...♙b7, repeating moves. But the text is much stronger for Black.

41.♗xa7 ♙c4

The point. White is now completely tied up and must now force a draw.

42.♔g2

42.♘e3?? ♗xf3 43.♘xc4 ♗xf2 is mate.

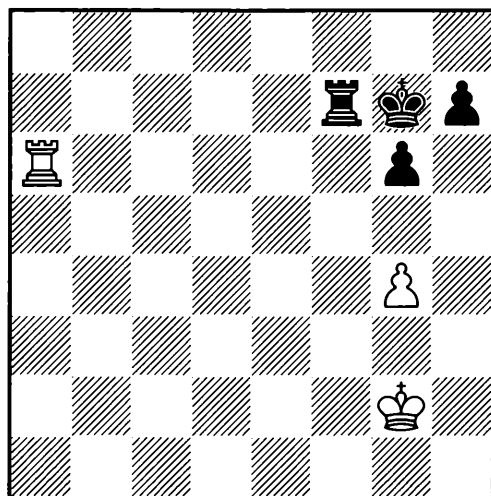
42...♙xe2 43.♗xe2

43.♗a3, keeping the material balance, was of course playable, but the text is simplest.

43...♗xe2 44.♘cd4 ♗xf2+ 45.♔xh3 ♗2xf3 46.♘xf3 ♗xf3 47.♔g2

A theoretical draw has been reached. Black will not be able to make any real progress here.

47...♗f7 48.♗a6 ♔g7 49.g4



A good move, taking space and limiting Black's options. Radjabov decides not to play on too much longer.

49...g5 50.♔g3 h6 51.♗a4 ♗b7 52.♗a6 ♗e7 53.♔f3 ♗f7+ 54.♔g3 ♗f6 55.♗a7+ ♔g6 56.♔g2 ♗b6 57.♗a5 ♔f6 58.♔g3 ♔e6 1/2-1/2

This matchup between two world-class GMs is perhaps the most important game (in the eyes of opening theory, anyhow) in the entire 8.b3 Panno. After White's aggressive 12.d5 ♘e7 13.dxe6, tournament practice has made it clear that Black should prefer 13...♙xe6 14.cxb5 over 13...fxe6 14.c5!. Our big improvement for White comes in as late as move 20, when we believe that 20.♘g5!? would have given White good prospects for the advantage. Georgiev's plan of putting pressure on the queenside with ♗ac1, ♘d2-c4, and a2-a3 proved too slow; although he would have gotten the upper hand had he found 39.♖ab1, in general, Black had good attacking chances against White's king throughout the game.

Finally, in the last game of this section, we provide a "no theory" alterna-

tive for those who would just like to keep a slight advantage without facing the complications of the previous two games.

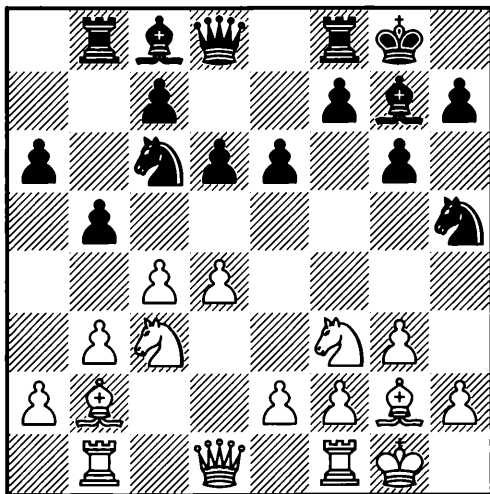
Burmakin, Vladimir (2611)
Komljenović, Davor (2482)

[E63] Seville 2008

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 g6 3.c4 ♕g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♕g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♗c3 a6 8.♗d5

An unusual move order, but perhaps White is trying to confuse his weaker opponent.

8...♗h5 9.b3 ♖b8 10.♕b2 e6 11.♗c3 b5 12.♖b1!?



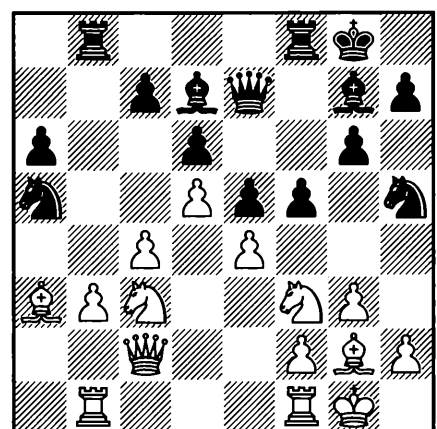
This rare move allows White to maintain a small advantage. White's idea is simply to preserve his pawns on c4 and d4 by guarding against Black's possibility of opening the b-file with ...b5xc4. It leads to far fewer complications than the immediate 12.d5 and should serve as an excellent surprise weapon.

12...bxc4

Bologan recommends 12...♗f6, giving the line 13.♖c2 bxc4 14.bxc4 ♕d7

15.e3 as being a slight plus for the first player. Perhaps White will be able to organize something along the lines of ♕b2-a3, ♖c2-e2, and d4-d5 followed by c4-c5 at a favorable moment. But White might also consider the more aggressive 15.e4, gaining space in the center and entertaining ideas of d4-d5 or perhaps even e4-e5 after sufficient preparation. 15...e5 could be met by 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♖fd1, with some pressure thanks to the idea of ♗d5, and 15...♖e7 16.h3 (a preparatory move for e4-e5, stopping ideas of ...♗f6-g4) also looks good for White.

Perhaps 12...b4!?, gaining space on the queenside, is Black's best response. White now has to choose between 13.♗a4 and 13.♗e4, each of which lands the white knight on a somewhat inconvenient square. Although 13.♗a4 puts White's knight on the rim, here it seems like the better try for the advantage since White may be able to get e2-e4 in quickly. For instance, after 13...♖e7 14.e4 e5 15.d5 ♗a5 16.a3 bxa3 (16...♕d7 17.axb4 ♕xa4 18.bxa4 ♖xb4 19.♕c3 ♖xb1 20.♖xb1 ♗xc4 21.a5 with the idea of ♖b4, trapping Black's knight, gives White a clear advantage) 17.♕xa3 (17.♕c3 ♗b7 18.♖a1, when White achieves b3-b4 easily, may be even more accurate) 17...♕d7 18.♗c3 f5 19.♖c2, White holds a slight advantage:



The position here looks like it could have been taken from the previous chapter: White is struggling for c4-c5 (with or without the move b3-b4 first) in the near future, whereas Black has some slow but ever-present pressure on the kingside. Note that White may not be able to organize the b3-b4 push via ♖f3-d2 because Black always has the idea of ...♗g7-h6. Instead, however, he can certainly play ♔c2-a2 (defending the c4-pawn) as a way of preparing this time-gaining thrust.

13.bxc4 ♖a5

A poor move, but such a reaction is typical of players facing an unfamiliar opening line. Black has opened the b-file and cleared the h1-a8 diagonal of pieces, but from here he fails to come up with a constructive plan. Attacking White's c4-pawn will not work, as it is hard to organize Black's pieces around such an offensive. 13...♖f6, adopting a waiting strategy in the center, would have been a better way to handle the position. Regardless, White is slightly better.

14.♔d3 e5?

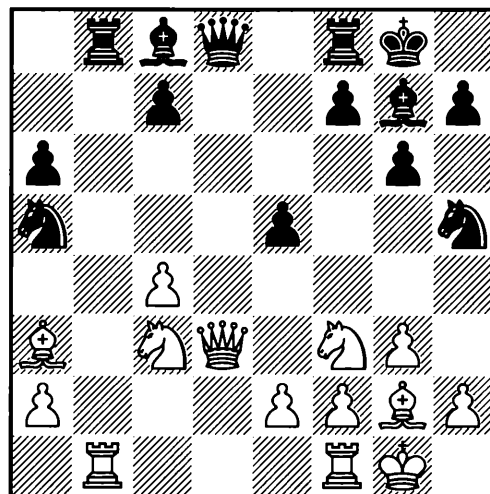
Again, 14...♖f6 was superior. After the text, Black's knights are flailing on both sides of the board.

15.dxe5 dxe5

15...♗e6 would be met by 16.♖d5. Trading queens with 16...♔xd3 17.exd3

♗xb1 18.♗xb1 ♗d8 19.♖d5 would also leave Black in a tight spot.

16.♗a3



Now both of Black's rooks are attacked.

16...♗f5

After 16...♗xb1 17.♔xb1!, White gets a tremendous initiative with 17...♗e8 18.♗d1 ♗d7 (not 18...♔f6? 19.♖d5 ♗c6 20.♖e7+ or 19...♔e6 20.♖xc7) 19.♔d3 ♖f6 20.♖g5!, for instance 20...♔c8 21.♖d5 with threats everywhere against Black's loose pieces.

17.♗xb8

After this, White is essentially winning.

17...♔xb8 18.e4 ♗d8 19.♖d5 ♗e6 20.♗b1 1-0

Black's resignation is justified here, as both 20...♔a8 21.♔c3 ♖c6 22.♖xc7 and 20...♖b7? 21.♗xb7 ♔xb7 22.♖e7+ ♖h8 23.♔xd8+ are losing for him.

Although White's 12.♖b1 is a move almost completely unexplored by theory, it appears promising. It is unlikely that Black has any clear-cut route to equality here, though he certainly has better than what he played in this game. That said, 12.♖b1 has ample surprise value and many players will handle the position poorly from the perspective of the second player, as Black did in this game. We recommend 12.♖b1 as a first-rate alternative to our main move, the critical 12.d5.

Conclusion: Black's 9...♠h5 is considered the main line for a good reason. Black aims to create a complicated middlegame by keeping the pieces on the board and generating counterplay on both flanks. That said, Black must be well prepared theoretically to play this line. If he isn't, he will be butchered as in Wojtkiewicz-Jaracz above. If he is well prepared, however, White may find he has a difficult task ahead of him.

After 10.♗b2 e6 11.♠c3 b5, we have provided three different options for White to choose from. Our first option, 12.cxb5 axb5 13.e4, has been overlooked by theory and seems to give White good play in the center. It was used to good effect by Wojo in Wojtkiewicz-Curtacci and makes sense strategically: White looks to play on the dark squares and play against Black's knight on h5 with the e4-e5 push. Our second option is 12.cxb5 axb5 13.dxe6, which is considered the most testing line by current theory. Readers who feel comfortable with the murky positions that can arise here will undoubtedly benefit from our idea of 20.♠g5!?, improving on Georgiev's play against Radjabov and offering White good prospects. Finally, those looking for a surprise weapon or a theoretical shortcut will like 12.♖b1!?. Although this move is extremely rare, it deserves more attention than it has received thus far – there certainly is no quick path to equality here for Black, who may be frustrated by his inability to generate counterplay.

Black Expels White's Knight with 9...e6!?

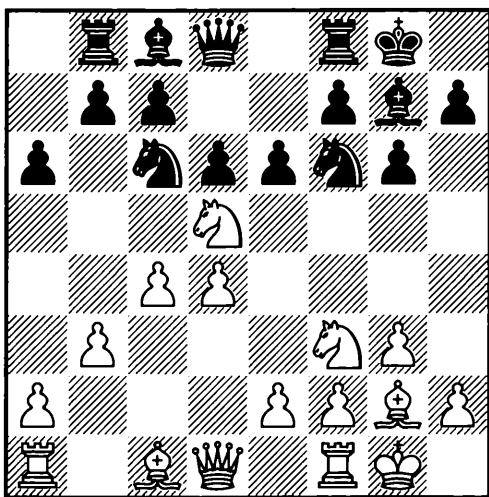
Perhaps Black's most obvious response to 9.♠d5 is just to expel White's knight with the immediate 9...e6!?. This move kills two birds with one stone: it puts the question to the steed on d5 while bolstering Black's fortifications in the center. Of course, the move also has its drawbacks – Black hinders the development of his light-squared bishop and accepts a rather passive position with pawns on d6 and e6. On the whole, however, practice has shown the move

9...e6!? to be a reasonable try. The games in this section illustrate our approach to tackling this sideline.

Bu Xiangzhi (2691)
Bologan, Viktor (2663)

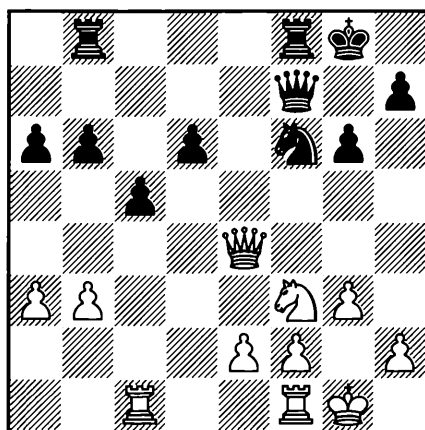
[E63] Gibraltar 2008

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
 4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♠c6
 7.♠c3 a6 8.b3 ♖b8 9.♠d5 e6!?



10. dxe3+

Best. Wojo once played 10. dxe3!? against GM Viktor Bologan, who equalized easily with 10... dxe7 11. b2 b6 (a good idea, fianchettoing both bishops) 12. c1 b7 13. d2 e4 14. c2 f5. Black has plenty of space here and has developed comfortably. The game continued 15. d1 c6 16. d5 b4 17. b1 xb2 18. b2 exd5 19. a3 c6 20. cxd5 e7 21. d4 exd5 22. e3 d7 23. dxd5 dxd5 24. c2 f7 25. xe4 fxe4 26. xe4, A. Wojtkiewicz-V. Bologan, Bastia 1999, when here Bologan gives 26... c5 27. f3 f6 as equal:

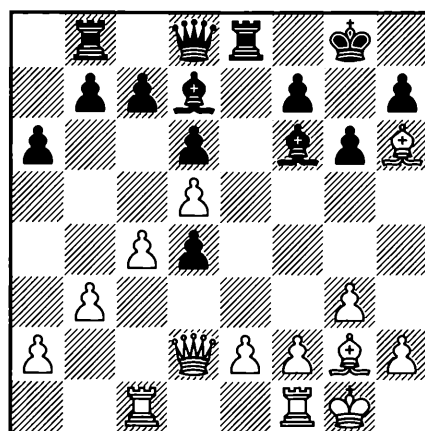


His assessment seems accurate: after 28. d3 Be8, Black is fully mobilized. White needs to be careful. Although Wojo did eventually win the game after some errors by Black, we by no means recommend the move

10. dxe3!?, which makes Black's life too easy.

10... Bxf6

At first glance, it seems that the point of this recapture is to avoid 10... Bxf6 11. h6, which, as we saw in the first section of the chapter, often allows White to develop rapidly. Here, however, Black should actually be just fine after 11... Be8 (11... g7 12. Bxg7 Bxg7 13. d5 e7 14. c1 e5 15. c5 is better for White, see for instance R. Ruck-H. Wohlfahrt, Austria 2000) 12. c1 e5 13. d5 d4! (13... dxe7 14. e4 c5 was seen in the blitz game E. Bacrot-V. Anand, Moscow 2007, and here 15. d2 with the idea of f3-g5 and f2-f4 would have given White the better chances) 14. dxd4 exd4 15. d2 d7:



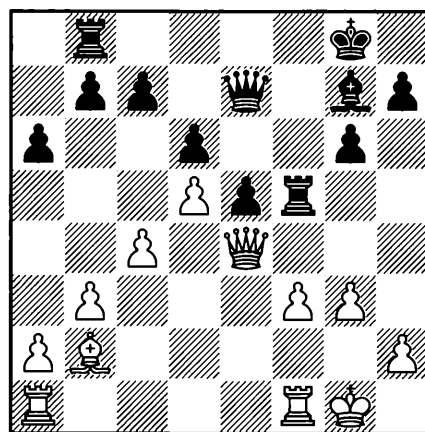
White has no way to trade off Black's dark-squared bishop and pile up on the loose d4-pawn. The situation here is quite different from that in the next game, Slipak-Iermito below, so Black has roughly equalized.

Thus, White should simply keep the tension with 11. b2. The benefit of this move is that White takes control of the d4 square, stopping Black's ideas of ...e6-e5 and ...dxc6-d4. If Black does nothing, White will simply play e2-e4

and expand in the center. So Black tried 11...b5 in B.Abramović-M.Dragović, Budva 1996, but now White took control of the c-file with 12.♖c1. Black had just enough time to put together a defensive formation with 12...♙b7 13.♔d2 (13.e4!? as also possible, for instance 13...bxc4 14.♖xc4 d5 15.exd5 exd5 16.♖a4 with pressure) 13...♞e7 (stopping e2-e4 and anticipating White's d4-d5 strike) 14.♖fd1 ♔d7, but White still held all the trumps with his space advantage and pressure in the center. The game continued 15.h4!? ♙g7 16.d5! e5 (Black likely feared 16...♙xb2 17.♔xb2 exd5 18.cxd5 ♙xd5 19.♔f6 ♖be8 20.h5, with full compensation for White) 17.e4 f5 18.♞g5 ♙h6 19.c5 ♙c8 20.f4!, when White's advantage was crushing.

11.♙g5

11.♙b2 is given as the main line here by Bologan and is more common than the text, which aims to displace Black's queen. White also gets a slight advantage with this move. Play continues 11...♔e7 (11...e5 12.d5 ♞d8 13.c5! ♔e7 14.cxd6 cxd6 15.♖c1 f5 16.♔c2 ♞f7 17.♔c7 gave White the advantage in both A.Adorján-S.Bouaziz, Hungary 1987, and M.Konopka-D.Kubečka, Czech Republic 2006) 12.e4 e5 13.d5 ♞d8 14.♞d2! (14.♔d2 is inferior according to Bologan after 14...f5 15.exf5 gxf5, when White does not have the chance to play f2-f4) 14...f5 15.exf5 ♙xf5 (now 15...gxf5 can be met with 16.f4, as in K.Supatashvili-A.Fedorov, Georgia 2002) 16.♞e4 ♞f7 17.♔d2 ♙xe4 18.♙xe4 ♞g5 19.♔e2 ♞xe4 20.♔xe4 ♖f5 21.f3, and here Bologan gives White as having a "minimal edge":



While it is true that White's chances are preferable here thanks to his space advantage, it is not exactly clear how either side will proceed. White can play ♖a1-e1 and then make several little waiting moves like ♞g1-g2, a2-a4, h2-h4, ♙b2-c3, and so on, but Black's structure is solid and difficult to break down. When White achieves the c4-c5 break, Black will likely be able to invade on the light squares with his queen via ...♔d7 and ...♔b5 or ...♔a4. For this reason, we prefer the text move, which is more direct and leads to a small but clear-cut endgame plus for White – something more in the style of Wojo's White repertoire. That said, Bologan's suggestion of 11.♙b2 is an absolutely legitimate try for the advantage, and we could just as easily have recommended this line against 9...e6!?

11...♔f5

Forced. Black's queen is somewhat awkward on f5.

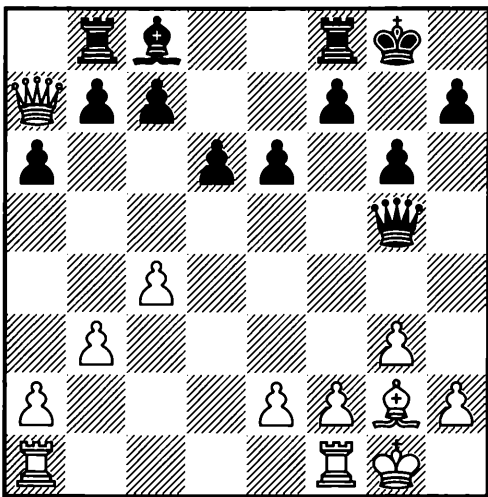
12.♔d2

Stopping ...h7-h6 from Black, among other things. Ideally, White would like to play ♖f1-e1 and e2-e4 here, though of course Black will take action to prevent him from making such progress.

12...♟xd4

The move recommended by Bologan. Black simplifies the game, eventually allowing White to damage Black's pawn structure on the queenside. The inferior alternative 12...e5 is the subject of the next game, and the move 12...♞a5 is examined there as well.

13.♟xd4 ♟xd4 14.♞xd4 ♞xg5
15.♞a7

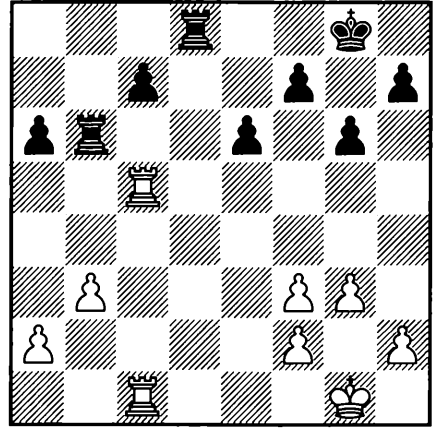


With this move, White regains his lost pawn and attacks Black's queenside. From a theoretical standpoint, Black is fine here, but in practice White has scored very well. In order to alleviate the pressure on Black's queenside, Black will have to make some sort of positional concession.

15...♟d7 16.♟xb7 a5

The main line, saving Black's a-pawn. 16...♞a5 was played in G.Zaichik-J.Langreck, Philadelphia 2003. 17.♟f3 (17.♞xa6 ♞xa6 18.♟xa6 ♞b6 is drawish according to Bologan; 17.♞fd1 ♞b4 18.♟g2 ♞a5 19.♞d3 is given by Bologan as equal, but White can probably fight for the advantage nonetheless with 19.♞ac1 instead, preparing ♞c1-c2 and a well-timed c4-c5 strike) 17...

♞b6 18.♞xb6 ♞xb6 19.c5! then gave White a slight edge after 19...dxc5 20.♞ac1 ♟c6 21.♞xc5 ♟xf3 22.exf3 ♞d8 23.♞fc1, though the game was eventually drawn:



Black's split queenside pawns make his position unappealing here. If White wants to try for more, though, 17.♞fd1 is the way to go.

17.♞fd1

Stopping the maneuver ...♞g5-c5 in view of the pin along the d-file. Also good is the retreat 17.♟f3, which has been played a couple of times. Then 17...♞c5 (Black must defend the pawn on c7) 18.♞xc5 dxc5 19.♞fd1 ♞fd8 transposes back to the game.

17...♞fd8

Black defends the bishop on d7 so as to prepare once again the queen trade with ...♞g5-c5.

18.♟f3

18.♟g2 with the idea of f2-f4 at some point is also possible, but after 18...♞c5 19.♞xc5 dxc5 20.f4, Black has good drawing chances with 20...♟e8 21.♟f2 ♟f8 22.♟e3 ♟e7 23.♞d3 f6 24.♞ad1 ♞d6, and so on. It is hard for White

to take advantage of Black's damaged pawn structure on the queenside here.

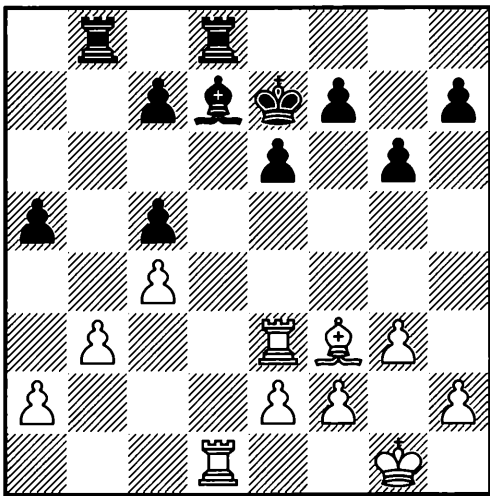
18...♔c5

Black carries out his plan. This move is necessary here in view of the pressure on Black's c7-pawn. For instance, 18...♞dc8? would simply be met by 19.c5, winning the pawn on a5.

19.♞xc5 dxc5

This position is given as equal by Bologan, but White has all the winning chances. He can play on the open d-file and attempt to make headway against Black's weak c5-pawn. His next few moves are particularly instructive.

20.♞d3 ♖f8 21.♞ad1 ♖e7 22.♞e3



Pinning Black's e-pawn and preparing ♞d1-d5, attacking the weak c5-pawn.

22...a4?

An incredible blunder. Black misses White's next move entirely. Instead, 22...♞e8 was preferable, when now 23.♞d5 ♞xd5 24.cxd5 ♞d7 25.dxe6 ♞xe6 26.♞d5 would have given White only the tiniest plus in the ensuing

rook-and-pawn ending. With correct play, Black should draw. But after the text move, White is suddenly close to winning.

It is worth noting that Bologan is not the only strong player to have fallen for this trick. Three months later, in B.Bogosavljević-M.Miljković, Serbia 2008, White played 21.♞e3 f6 22.♞d1 and achieved the same result after 22...♖e7? 23.♞d5. Miroslav Miljković is a strong IM with a FIDE rating well above 2400, so it is interesting that he, too, could miss the point of White's play.

23.♞d5

Now White simply wins a pawn. Converting the advantage takes fifty more moves, but Bu Xiangzhi, who was on a winning streak in the Gibraltar Masters tournament, is up to the task.

23...axb3 24.axb3 ♞a8 25.♞xc5 ♞a7 26.♞d3

The next step of White's plan will be to take space on the kingside.

26...♞b8 27.e4 f6 28.e5 f5

28...fxe5 29.♞xe5, saddling Black with a weak pawn on e6, was probably even worse for the second player than the text.

29.g4 fxg4

Other moves would have been met with g4xf5 by White, when Black would have had to play either ...g6xf5, leaving his h7-pawn isolated, or...e6xf5, giving White a protected passed pawn on e5.

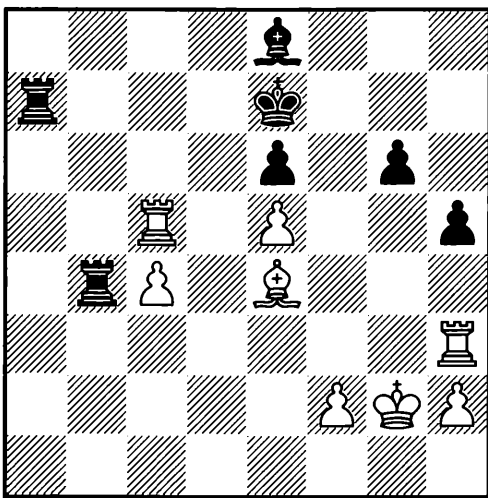
30.♞xg4 ♞f8 31.b4 c6

Otherwise, White intended ♔g4-f3-c6.

32.♔f3 ♖b8 33.♔xc6 ♖xb4 34.♖h3 h5 35.♔e4

White keeps up the pressure. Black's situation is becoming more and more uncomfortable.

35...♔e8 36.♖g2



36...g5

36...♖b2, with the idea of doubling on the second rank, might have been a more stubborn defense, but things would likely not have been much different: 37.♖g3 ♖aa2 38.♖f3 would leave Black uncomfortable in view of White's upcoming h2-h4, fixing the pawn on g6. After the text, White continues to crack Black's kingside open.

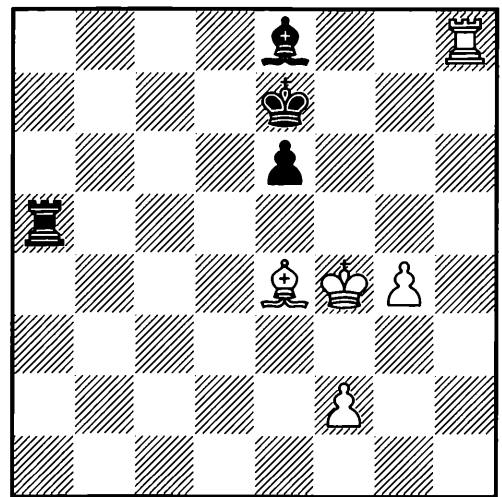
37.♖g3 g4 38.h3 ♖d7

38...gxf3+ 39.♔xf3! (allowing White to maintain the threat of ♖g7+) 39...♖a2 40.♖c7+ would win for White, for instance, 40...♔d8 41.♖cg7 (White threatens ♖g8 and ♔g6) 41...♖e2 42.♖d3+ ♔c8 43.♔f3 ♖xe5 44.♖g8 and so on. White now wins a second pawn, although only temporarily.

39.hxg4 ♖d4 40.♔f3 h4

Tough resistance by Black. 40...hxg4 41.♖xg4 ♖xg4+ 42.♔xg4 is also a winning ending for White. With the text, Black hopes to keep all the pawns on one side of the board, improving his drawing chances. He also manages to win the white pawn on e5.

41.♖h3 ♖bxc4 42.♖xc4 ♖xc4 43.♖xh4 ♖c5 44.♖h7+ ♔f8 45.♖h8+ ♔e7 46.♖h7+ ♔f8 47.♖g3 ♖xe5 48.♔f4 ♖a5 49.♖h8+ ♔e7 50.♔e4



White is winning, but the win will take some time. He needs to slowly make progress with his g-pawn.

50...♖a4 51.♖h7+ ♔f8 52.f3 ♔g6

Otherwise, White would have played g4-g5 anyway.

53.♖b7 ♔xe4 54.fxe4 ♖a5 55.g5 ♖c5 56.g6 ♖h5 57.♖h7 ♖a5 58.e5

Locking Black out of the kingside.

58...♔g8 59.♖d7 ♖b5 60.♖a7 ♖b1

60...♖c5 runs into 61.♔g5! ♖xe5+ 62.♔h6! ♖f5 63.♖a8+ ♖f8 64.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 65.♔h7, winning for White.

61.♔g5 ♖f1 62.♖f7 ♖g1+ 63.♔f6
 ♖f1+ 64.♔xe6 ♖g1 65.♔f6 ♖f1+
 66.♔e7 ♖g1 67.e6 ♖xg6 68.♖f1

White reaches a well-known winning position. The rest is easy.

68...♔g7 69.♔d7 ♖g2 70.e7
 ♖d2+ 71.♔e8 ♖a2 72.♖g1+ ♔h7
 73.♖e1 1-0

Black can do nothing to stop White from moving his king away from e8 and queening his e-pawn.

Black's 9...e6!? worked well in this game up to a point. White went for the line we recommend, 11.♕g5, which generally leads to a tiny but pleasant endgame advantage for White. Black defended well and was close to equalizing until he blundered on move 22, allowing White to win his c5-pawn in broad daylight. From that point on, the rest of the game was a matter of technique. In practice, White scores well by simply heading for this objectively very drawish endgame. But if he wants to play for more, he can of course try Bologan's own suggestion of 11.♕b2, which also seems to lead to a slight plus for White.

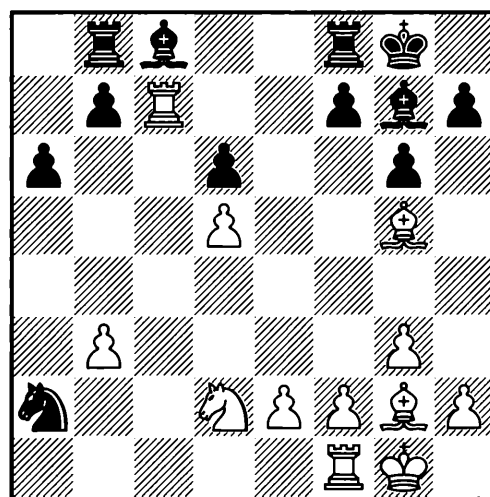
The next game covers Black's move 12 alternatives.

Slipak, Sergio (2468)
Iermito, Sebastián (2438)

[E63] Argentina 2009

1.d4 ♔f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♕g2
 0-0 5.♔c3 d6 6.♔f3 ♔c6 7.0-0 a6
 8.b3 ♖b8 9.♔d5 e6 10.♔xf6+ ♖xf6
 11.♕g5 ♖f5 12.♖d2 e5?!

A rather awkward blow at White's center. It is for good reason that 12...♔xd4, as we saw in the previous game, is usually preferred to this move. Another alternative Black might consider is 12...♖a5!?, aiming to exchange queens immediately. Now 13.♖e3 looks somewhat artificial here, but with 13.♖xa5, White can get the advantage. For instance, after 13...♔xa5 14.♖ac1 ♔c6 (14...♖e8, securing a spot for Black's knight on e7, might run into 15.d5) 15.d5! (15.♖fd1 h6 16.♕e3 is not good for more than a slight pull) 15...exd5 (15...♔d4 16.♔xd4 ♕xd4 17.♖fd1 ♕g7 runs into 18.c5 with a clear advantage for White) 16.cxd5 ♔b4 17.♔d2 ♔xa2 18.♖xc7, White has a slight but definite initiative:



Black's pawn on d6 is weak here and might be attacked with ♔c4 and either ♕f4 or ♕e7.

13.d5 ♔d4

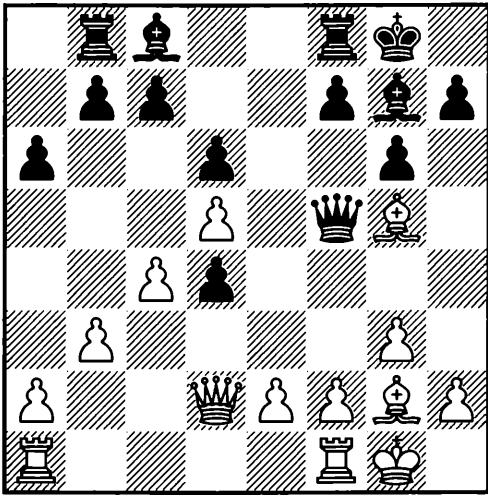
Black's most challenging response. On 13...♔d8, White could prepare c4-c5 with 14.♕e3 and ♖ac1.

14.♔xd4

Best. White's plan after this move is simple: trade dark-squared bish-

ops and win Black's wayward d4-pawn. 14.♔e3?! ran into 14...♖c2! in C.Goldwasser-S.Iermito, Argentina 2008. After 15.♘xd4 ♗xd2 16.♔xd2 exd4 17.♙ac1 ♖e8, Black was fine. White has no good way here of piling up on Black's well-defended d4-pawn.

14...exd4



15.♔h6!

The only move that gives White any advantage. In order to carry out his plan of winning the d4-pawn, he must first trade off Black's Indian bishop. With his next move, Black forces White to waste some time with his queen and begins to organize counterplay against e2. The difference between the two armies here is that White can use his bishop to defend the pawn on e2, whereas Black can do little to defend his d4-pawn.

15...♔xh6 16.♖xh6 ♖e5

16...♖e8 17.♖d2 is similar to the game.

17.♖d2 ♔g4

17...♖e8 is well met by 18.♔f3, for instance 18...g5 19.♙fe1 g4 20.♔g2 and Black has accomplished nothing.

18.♙fe1 ♖fe8 19.♔f1

An inaccuracy. White should keep his king safe and defend the e2-pawn with the bishop. After 19.♔f1!, White would be clearly better, i.e. 19...♖e7 (19...b5 20.♙ac1, with pressure, and 19...c5 20.dxc6 bxc6 21.h3 ♔f5 22.♙ad1 c5 23.e3, breaking up Black's pawn center, both give White the advantage) 20.♙ad1 ♖be8 21.h3 ♔d7 22.♖xd4 ♖h5 23.♔h2 and White is up a pawn. After the text, Black is able to generate counterplay against White's king.

19...♖h5 20.f3 ♖xh2!?

A bold sacrifice which should objectively leave White better. The alternative was to sacrifice only a pawn with 20...♔d7, for instance 21.♔g1 (21.♖xd4 ♖xh2 22.♔f2?? loses to 22...♔h3 23.♙g1 ♔xg2 24.♙xg2 ♖xe2+ 25.♔xe2 ♖xg2+) 21...♖e3 22.♖xd4 ♖be8 with compensation. It is hard for White to make progress against Black's solid control of the e-file, but meanwhile Black might be able to whip up an attack against White's kingside.

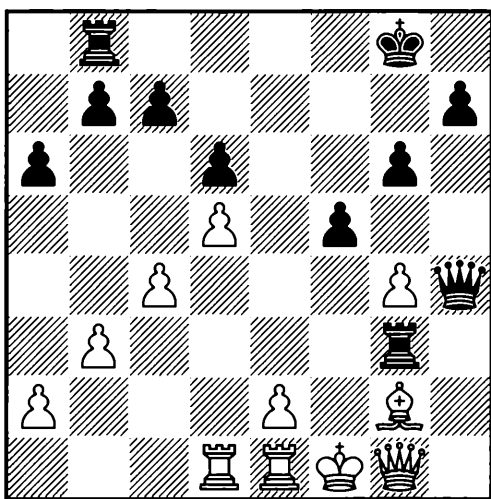
21.fxg4 ♖e3 22.♖xd4 ♖xg3 23.♖g1 ♖h4

23...♖h6!? would be met by 24.e4, when it seems that Black does not quite have enough compensation for his sacrificed piece.

24.♙ad1 f5?!

It would have been preferable to recoup some of the lost material with 24...♙xg4, though after 25.♙d3, White is better.

THE PANNO VARIATION WITH 8.b3



25.g5?!

White sacrifices a pawn to keep the f-file closed, but here this is unjustified. 25.gxf5 looks dangerous for White, but after 25...♖f8 26.♗d3 ♗xf5+ (26...♗xd3 or 27.exd3 ♗xf5+ 28.♕e2 ♖g3 29.♗e4) 27.♗f3, Black can make no more progress. White is now simply up a piece.

25...♗e8

Best. Black clamps down on the e-file before picking off the white g-pawn.

26.♖f2 ♖xg5 27.♗d3 ♗ge3

Shutting the white rook out of the f3 square. White's rook lift has failed, leaving him with little way to make further progress.

28.♗xe3 ♗xe3 29.♗f3 ♖g7 30.♖h2 ♗c3 31.♖f2 ♗e3 32.♖h2 ♗c3 1/2-1/2

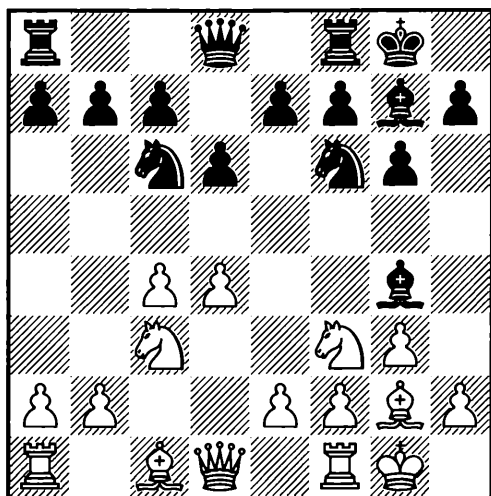
A draw is a reasonable result here, as the battle is locked in a sort of stalemate. White has a piece for two pawns, but there is no good way for him to break through Black's position. Meanwhile, Black has ideas of running his h-pawn down the board or striking at White's queenside with ...b7-b5.

This game saw Black try 12...e5?!, a move which has the potential to land him in a lot of trouble thanks to the weakness of his d-pawn after 13.d5 ♖d4 14.♖xd4 exd5 15.♗h6!. White is able to guard his weak e2-pawn with his bishop, but Black has no direct means of defending his d4-pawn. As such, White could have gained a clear advantage in this game with 19.♗f1 rather than 19.♕f1. After White moved his king, however, Black was able to whip up some counterplay – and after inaccurate play on both sides with 24...f5?! and 25.g5?!, the game was eventually drawn.

Conclusion: Black's 9...e6!? is a reasonable attempt at equality. With our recommended line, 11.♗g5 and 12.♖d2, White can count on getting a pleasant endgame against well-prepared opponents – as in Bu Xiangzhi-Bologan – or getting a much larger advantage against unprepared ones. If White would rather avoid the endgame line, which is objectively quite drawish, he can play Bologan's suggestion of 11.♗b2. Critics of 11.♗g5 will undoubtedly say that White is just playing for tricks with ♗d1-d5x(♖)c5 in the endgame line. But since players such as Bologan and Miljkovic have missed this maneuver from the Black side in the past, the "trick" may prove quite effective in practice.

Chapter 9

The Simagin and Spassky Variations



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 ♗g4
(or 7...♗f5)

We will conclude Part II by examining two lines that feature the move 6...♘c6 without either ...a7-a6 or ...e7-e5 as the follow-up: the Simagin Variation with 7...♗g4, and the Spassky Variation (also known as the Lesser Simagin) with 7...♗f5. Neither of these lines are frequent guests at the club level, but they do come up from time to time in top-level games. Against these early bishop sorties, Wojcik generally stuck to the main lines, which in both cases involve creating a big pawn center with d4-d5, ♘f3-d2, and e2-e4. Black can achieve a playable game, but White always can count on a slight edge.

The Simagin Variation with 7...♗g4

The Simagin Variation is named after Russian Grandmaster Vladimir Simagin, who is remembered for his many important contributions to opening theory. The point of Black's move is often to play a quick ...♗g4xf3 followed by ...♘fd7 and ...e7-e5, striking at the white pawn center. For this reason, the main line for White is the active 8.d5. Black takes space on the queenside with ...c7-c5, and after that, much of the struggle in the middle-game revolves around two things: first, whether or not White will be

able to achieve the e4-e5 push; and second, whether or not Black will be able to generate adequate counterplay on the queenside. Typical maneuvers for Black include ...♘c6-a5, ...a7-a6, ...♗g4-d7, ...♖a8-b8, and ...b7-b5. Maneuvers for White often include – after d4-d5, ♘f3-d2, ♗d1-c2, b2-b3, ♗c1-b2, and e2-e4 – piling up in the center with ♘c3-d1(!)-e3, ♖a1-e1, and f2-f4.

The following game sees White achieve the e4-e5 break with decisive effect. In the notes, however, we discuss all the moments at which Black

might have tried the ...e7-e5 thrust to block up the center. Generally speaking, White can meet ...e7-e5 by either taking *en passant* and hoping to benefit from the open lines in the center (focusing in particular on Black's weak d6-pawn) or by simply continuing to build up with ♖a1-e1 and f2-f4. Both of these approaches are appropriate in some situations but not in others, and it is worth noting when White should employ each one. With that said, let's get to the game.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2560) Docx, Stefan (2270)

[E62] Antwerp 1994

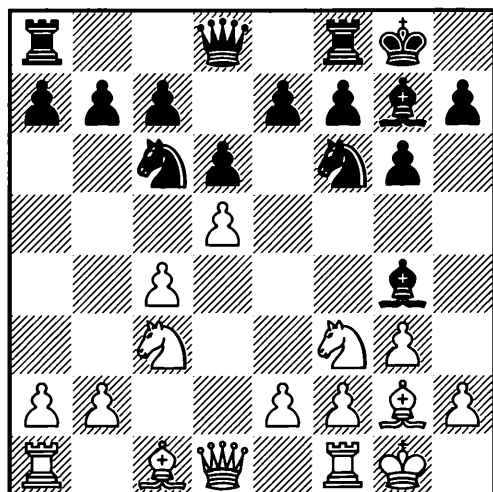
1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♟g7
4.♟g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♟c6

6...♟g4 immediately is an uncommon move covered in Chapter 14. Our focus here in Part II is still on variations that include the development of Black's queen's knight to c6.

7.♟c3 ♟g4

7...♟f5 is the Spassky Variation, covered in the next game. Both moves lead to similar positions.

8.d5



The critical move. White generally aims to play d4-d5, ♟f3-d2, ♖c2, e2-e4 and f2-f4 to create a big center. 8.h3 is a common alternative, but here 8...♟xf3 9.♟xf3 ♟d7 10.e3 e5 is a satisfactory response for Black. White has the bishop pair, but Black is ahead in development and White's achievements in the center have been minimal. White cannot get an advantage with 11.dxe5 because of 11...♟dxe5 12.♟e2 ♖d7 13.♟h2 ♟a5!, when here 14.♖d5 (14.♖c2? ♟exc4 15.b4 ♖f5 16.♖xf5 gxf5 17.bxa5 ♟xc3 18.♖b1 ♟xa5 left Black two pawns up in C.McNab-A.Le Siège, London 1990) 14...b6 15.f4? c6 16.♖e4, as seen in D.Fridman-M.Sočko, Poland 2009, should have been met by 16...♟exc4 17.♟xc4 ♟xc3 18.bxc3 d5 19.♟xd5 cxd5, with a clear advantage for Black. The text is almost certainly a better option for White.

8...♟a5

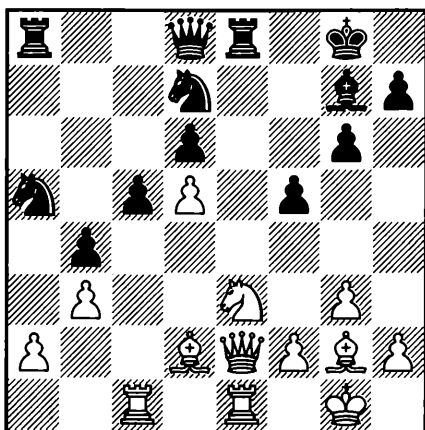
Black has no real alternatives to putting his knight on the rim, but this is all in accordance with his strategy of achieving counterplay on the queenside. 8...♟xf3?! cedes the bishop pair for nothing after 9.exf3 (not 9.♟xf3 ♟e5) 9...♟a5 (9...♟e5 10.♖e2 ♖e8 11.f4 ♟ed7 12.♟e3 a5 13.♟b5 left White with the upper hand in U.Andersson-L.Lucena, Brasília 1981) 10.♖e2 c5 11.♟d2 a6 12.b3 ♖b8 13.f4 and so on, as in Z.Ilinčić-D.Šolak, Yugoslavia 2000.

Meanwhile, 8...♟b8!? 9.h3 ♟xf3 10.exf3 (this opens the e-file and is considered even stronger than the simple 10.♟xf3) 10...c6 (10...e6 11.f4 exd5 12.cxd5 c5 13.dxc6 ♟xc6 14.♟e3 was clearly better for White in A.Alekhine-R.Réti, New York 1924) 11.f4 ♟bd7 12.♟e3 (12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♟xc6 is also strong) 12...cxd5

13.♟xd5 ♟xd5 14.♞xd5 ♞c7 15.♞ab1 gave White the bishop pair and open lines to target Black's queenside pawns in V.Gaprindashvili-S.Mihajlovskij, Turkey 2006.

9.♟d2

The main line. Playing the queen to d3 instead is an interesting sideline that Wojo employed on a few occasions, but in general, he preferred to keep things straightforward with the text. One example of Wojo employing the move 9.♞d3!? was A.Wojtkiewicz-H.Nakamura, Reno 1999, when here 9...c5 10.♟d2 a6 11.e4 ♟d7 12.b3 ♟xf3 13.♞xf3 b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.♞ac1 b4 16.♟d1 e6 led to a sharp position after 17.♟e3 exd5 18.exd5 f5 19.♞e2 ♞e8 20.♞fe1:



White has the two bishops and a space advantage in the center, but Black has plenty of open lines and active play both in the center and on the queenside. Each side has its respective problems: White's rook will likely be stuck on c2 guarding his a2-pawn, but Black's knight on a5 is not proving useful at the moment either. Regardless, after 20...♟f6, aiming for ...♟f6-e4-c3, Black would likely have been fine here. Instead, the young Nakamura got into trouble with 20...♟e5!? 21.h3 ♞d7 22.f4 ♟f7 23.♞d3 ♟d4 24.♟h2

♟b7 25.♞c2 h5 26.♟c4 ♟h6? 27.♞e6!, when White was much better and went on to win.

9...c5

9...c6? loses material for Black after 10.b4, trapping Black's knight on a5, for instance 10...♟xd5 11.cxd5 ♟xc3 12.♞b1 ♟xd2 13.♟xd2 ♟c4 14.♟h6. White threatens ♞d4 next, so Black had no choice but to give up the exchange in B.Avrukh-M.Ezat, Dresden 2008, after 14...♟e5 15.♟xf8 ♞xf8 16.h3 ♟d7 17.♞c1, etc.

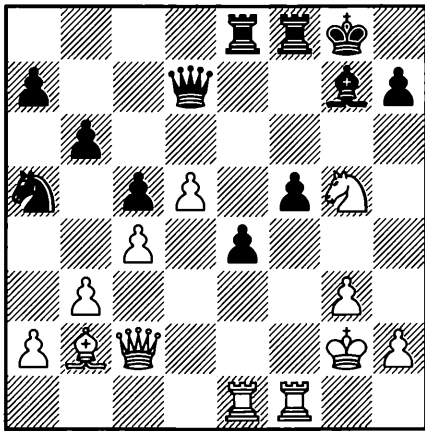
10.♞c2

10.h3 ♟d7 11.♞c2 is about the same, but here Black has the additional option of 11...e5!?. Janjgava gives the following line: 12.dxe6 ♟xe6 (or 12...fxe6 13.♞d3 ♟c6 14.e4 with a bind for White, according to our own analysis) 13.b3 ♞d7 14.♟h2 d5 15.cxd5 ♟xd5 16.♟b2 ♟c6 17.♟xd5 ♟xb2 18.♞xb2 ♟xd5 19.♟e4 with a slight advantage for White. Black is probably fine here, however, after just 19...♟xe4 20.♟xe4 ♞ad8 21.♞ad1 ♞e6 22.♟g2 b6. Black's queen and knight should be easily able to match White's queen and bishop. For this reason, we consider the move 11...e5!? worth avoiding.

10...a6

Now after 10...e5, White continues with 11.b3 ♞d7 12.♟b2 ♟h3 13.♟ce4!, preparing to open the a1-h8 diagonal with f2-f4. The game S.Webb-J.Nicholson, England 1975, continued 13...♟xg2 (13...♟xe4 14.♟xh3 ♞xh3 15.♟xe4, with an eye toward f2-f4, is uncomfortable for Black) 14.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 15.♟xg2 ♟g7 16.f4 f5, when here 17.fxe5

dxe5 18.e4 ♖ae8 19.♗ae1 b6 (with the idea of ...♟a5-b7-d6; instead 19...f4? 20.♞c3! b6 21.gxf4 exf4 22.♞xg7+ ♞xg7 23.♙xg7 is a problem for Black thanks to White's quick e4-e5 to follow) 20.exf5 gxf5 21.♟f3 e4 22.♟g5 would have given White a clear advantage in view of ♟e6:



Thus this simple plan of 13.♟ce4 followed by f2-f4 is enough to discourage Black from playing for the ...e7-e5 push for a few more moves.

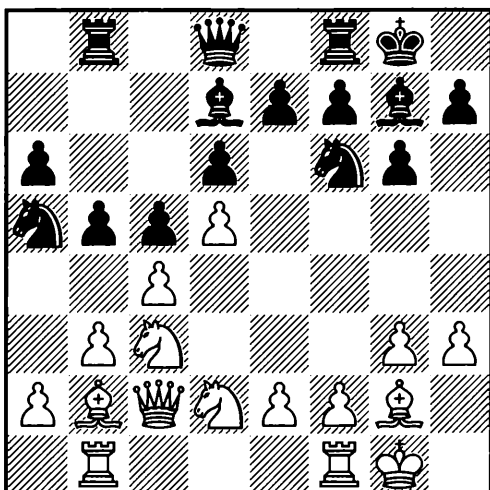
11.h3 ♙d7 12.b3 b5

12...♞b8 13.♙b2 b5 14.♞ab1 simply transposes back into the game.

13.♙b2 ♞b8

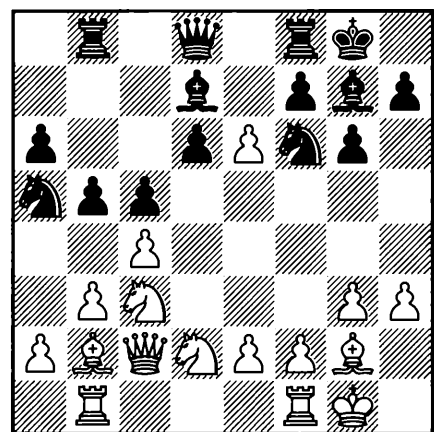
13...bxc4 14.bxc4 ♞b8 15.♞ab1 transposes to the next note.

14.♞ab1



14...♞c7

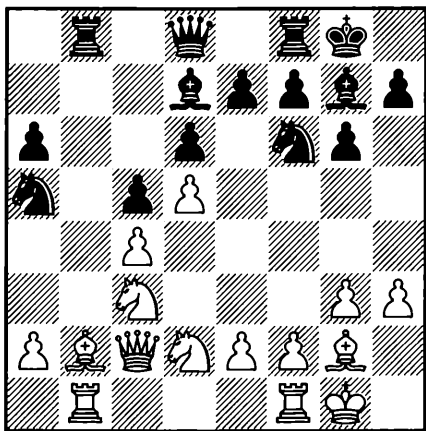
Probably not best. Although the text is certainly playable, Black usually tries a more active approach rather than aiming for a slow build-up on the queenside. Two ideas for Black come to mind here. The first is 14...e5!?, when now White usually takes *en passant* to keep the game from getting too clogged up in the center. After 15.dxe6, Black has two ways to recapture:



a) 15...fxe6 16.♟ce4 gives White pressure, for instance 16...♙c6 17.♞fd1 ♟xe4 18.♟xe4 ♙xb2 19.♞xb2 ♙xe4 20.♞xe4 ♞f6 21.♞c2, when Black's d6- and e6-pawns are weak. Now 21...♞xf2+? would get Black in trouble after 22.♟h2 bxc4 23.bxc4 ♞bd8 24.♞xe6+ ♟h8 25.♞f1 ♞d4 26.♞e7, and so on.

b) 15...♙xe6 is the more common recapture for Black. Now 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♞fd1 ♞e7 18.♟de4 gave White strong pressure in M.Marín-A.Florean, Romania 1996. He won a pawn and had a clear advantage after 18...♟xe4 19.♟xe4 ♟b7 20.♙xg7 ♟xg7 21.♟c3 b4 22.♟d5 ♙xd5 23.♞xd5 ♟d8 24.♞bd1 ♞b6 25.♞d2 ♟e6 26.♞xd6 ♞xd6 27.♞xd6 ♞f6 28.♞a6. Note that these kinds of positions with Black playing ...e7-e5 and White taking *en passant* have some structural similarities to the game Georgiev-Radjabov from the previous chapter.

The second idea that comes to mind for Black here is the immediate 14... bxc4 15.bxc4, opening up the b-file. Here Black has a number of interesting continuations. We give a survey:



a) 15...e5!? can still be met with 16.dxe6, since although Black gains some additional resources along the b-file, White is still doing well: 16... fxe6 (worse is 16... ♗xe6 17. ♖d5 ♖xb2!? 18. ♖xb2 ♖xc4 19. ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 20. ♖xc4 ♗xc4 21. ♖b7, when Black likely does not have enough compensation) 17. ♖ce4 ♖xb2 (or 17... ♖xe4 18. ♖xe4 ♗xb2 19. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 20. ♗xb2 ♖xc4 21. ♗c3 d5 22. ♖xc5, when White can play against Black's pawns on the light squares) 18. ♖xb2 ♖xe4 19. ♗xe4 ♗xb2 20. ♗xb2 ♗c6 21. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 22. ♗b7 ♖d4 23. e3 ♖f5 24. ♖e4 gave White a big initiative in T.Raupp-D.Kukofka, Germany 1982.

b) 15... ♗c7 might offer a transposition back into the game. Now 16. ♗a1 (16.e4 e5 17. ♖e2 ♖b4 18. a3 ♗a4 19. ♗d3 ♖bb8 20. ♗c3 ♖d7 21. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22. ♖b1 was only equal in Ki.Georgiev-V.Milov, Groningen 1997) 16... ♖xb1 17. ♖xb1 ♖b8 18. ♖d1 ♖xb1 19. ♗xb1 ♖e8 20. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 21. e3 ♗b7 22. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 23. ♖b2 was perhaps a tiny bit better for White in A.Marić-K.Szczepkowska, 2009, as after 23... ♖a5 24. f4 ♖e8 25. ♖f2 ♖c7 26. e4 f6 27. e5, she had already

accumulated a tremendous space advantage.

c) 15... ♗c8 16. ♖h2 ♖b4 is an aggressive try for Black and probably his best. Now 17. a3 ♖b8 18. ♖d1 ♗c7 was played in H.Bárez Menéndez-F.de la Paz Perdomo, Spain 2002. Best now is the straightforward 19. e4, for instance 19... ♖b7 20. ♖e3 ♖fb8 21. ♗c3 ♖xb1 22. ♖xb1 ♖xb1 23. ♖xb1 with a slight space advantage for the first player. White has some chances of pulling off a squeeze in the ending. He plans ♖b1-d2 and ♖e3-d1-b2-d3, organizing for an eventual f2-f4, fighting for control of e5. In any case, White's advantage here is relatively small.

15.e4 ♖b7

15...bxc4 16.bxc4 would transpose back into the previous note.

16. ♗a1

The white clergyman steps off the b-file. 16. ♖e2 planning f2-f4 was an equally good alternative. But note that bad here would have been the typical 16. ♖d1?! after 16...bxc4 17.bxc4 ♖fb8, when Black simply has too much pressure along the b-file. White simply cannot afford to place his knight along the first rank and disrupt the coordination of his rooks.

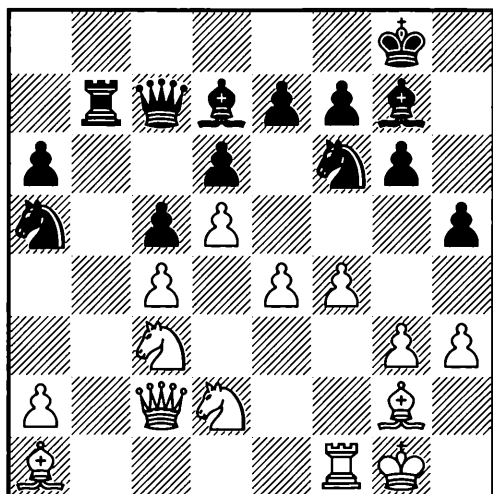
16...bxc4 17.bxc4 ♖fb8 18. ♖xb7

18. ♖e2 immediately was once again also good, but Wojo likely hoped to avoid having to trade off both rooks after 18... ♖xb1 19. ♖xb1 ♖xb1+ 20. ♗xb1. White is better here thanks to his space advantage, but Wojo would prefer to keep one pair of rooks on the board to

THE SIMAGIN AND SPASSKY VARIATIONS

fuel his ambitions in the kingside and the center.

18...♖xb7 19.f4 h5



Black tries to stake out some space for himself on the kingside. It is difficult to come up with a useful move here for the second player, actually. 19...♖h5!? 20.♖e2 ♕xa1 21.♖xa1 ♖b4 22.♖c3 with an eye toward g3-g4 and e4-e5 to follow would certainly not have been an improvement for Black.

20.♖e2

White has a free hand to simply prepare the e4-e5 break.

20...♖e8

What else? White was already close to achieving the e4-e5 push.

21.♕xg7 ♖xg7?!

21...♖xg7 was preferable, so as not to lose time after White's next move.

22.♖c3+ f6?

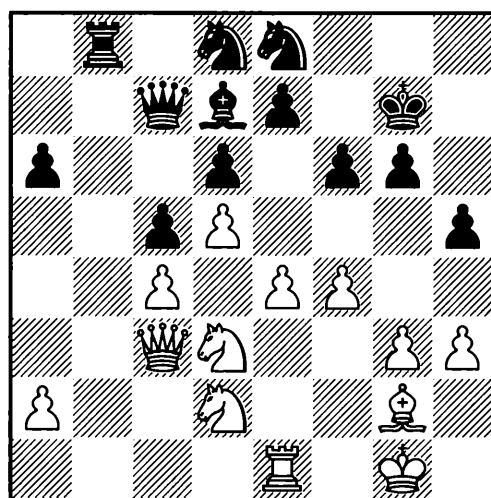
An ugly move that does irreparable damage to Black's kingside. 22...♖g8 was a difficult move to play, but it had to be done. White would then simply

continue as in the game with 23.♖c1 and ♖d3.

23.♖c1

Now the e4-e5 break will come with devastating effect.

23...♖b8 24.♖d3 ♖b7 25.♖b1 ♖d8 26.♖e1



Of course White does not really want to trade rooks – things are going too well in the center and on the kingside.

26...♖f7

26...♖f7 would have put up a more stubborn defense, but after 27.♖f3, Black's prospects are abysmal in any case.

27.e5 ♕f5 28.♖f2 ♕c8 29.g4 hxg4 30.hxg4 ♖b6 31.♖e3

White had a faster win with 31.♖h3! ♖g7 (to prevent ♖h3-h6) 32.exd6 ♖xd6 33.♖e3 ♖f8 34.♖fe4 and ♖xc5.

31...♖a5?

This ends it.

32.exf6 1-0

This game followed the standard main lines for both sides up to around move 14, at which point Black started to play somewhat passively. His counterplay along the b-file simply wasn't enough against White's buildup in the center and on the kingside. Although it is hard to say exactly where Black went wrong, both 21...♙xg7?! and 22...f6? were definitely mistakes.

Conclusion: White can look forward to meeting the Simagin Variation with 8.d5 and 9.♘d2. The “critical position” seems to occur at move 14, when Black has a choice between playing either 14...e5 or 14...bxc4. Capturing *en passant* against the former seems to be a good idea, as White is able to organize strong pressure against Black's weak d-pawn with ♖f1-d1 and ♘d2-e4. And after 14...bxc4 15.bxc4 ♜c8, White can look to play standard maneuvers (such as ♘c3-d1-e3) and hope to grind Black down slowly in the middlegame and endgame. Black's position is tenable but does not look pleasant to play.

Spassky Variation with 7...♙f5

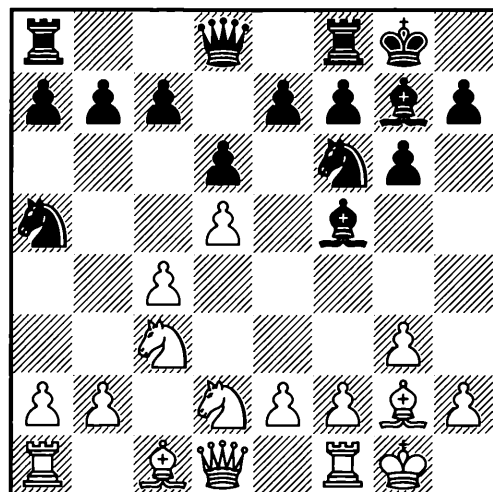
The Spassky Variation with 7...♙f5 can be met similarly to the Simagin Variation. White will simply gain a tempo with e2-e4 this time instead of h2-h3. Of course, this has its pluses and minuses – on the positive side, the move e2-e4 is more useful at first glance, but the downside is that it will be unlikely that White can effectively meet Black's ...e7-e5 push by capturing *en passant*. His bishop on g2 would then be blocked by the e4-pawn and neither of his knights could use the e4 square to attack the black pawn on d6. Thus, in the Spassky Variation, White generally meets Black's ...e7-e5 push by simply continuing to build up on the kingside. This is exactly what happens in our illustrative game.

The Spassky Variation. Black aims to occupy the e4 square in a fashion very similar to what we'll see in Chapter 12, where Black plays 6...c6 and 7...♙f5. Here, however, White will not be playing his queen to b3.

8.d5

Best. White simply follows the same plan as in the previous game and looks to gain a tempo with e2-e4. 8.b3 and 8.♘e1 are quieter alternatives, but 8.♜b3, as we play in Chapter 12, is no good here because Black can simply defend the b7-pawn with 8...♞b8.

8...♘a5 9.♘d2



Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2475)
Reeh, Oliver (2430)

[E62] Ostend 1989

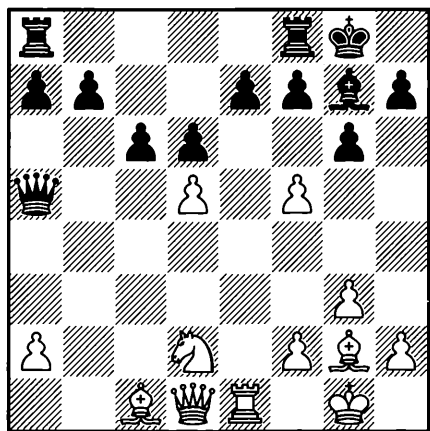
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♘c3 ♘c6
 7.0-0 ♙f5

9.♠d4 is popular here, but Black will gain time on White's knight with the ...c7-c5 strike. For instance, the line 9...♙d7 10.b3 c5 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.♙b2 ♜b8 13.♜b1 c5 14.♠c2 ♠c6 is thought to be fully satisfactory for Black.

9...c5

The alternative 9...c6 has been running into problems lately after 10.b4!, when Black experiences tactical difficulties. After 10...♠xc4 11.♠xc4 ♠xd5 12.♠xd5 ♙xa1 13.♙h6 ♙g7 14.♙xg7 ♖xg7 15.♠de3 ♙e6 16.♜d2, the material imbalance gave the initiative to White in Z.Gyimesi-S.Brenjo, Bosnia 2010: 16...f6 17.♜c1 ♜c8 18.♠a5 with the idea of ♜d4 to follow gave White pressure on Black's queenside.

A more common for Black is the response 10...♠xd5, when then 11.cxd5 ♙xc3 12.e4! gives Black a major headache considering how many of his pieces find themselves *en prise*. 12... ♙xa1 (12...♙d7 13.♜b1 ♙xd2 14.♙xd2 ♠c4 15.♙h6 b5 16.♜d4 f6 17.♙xf8 ♖xf8 18.a4 gave White a material advantage and the initiative in N.Krogius-A. Shagalovich, USSR 1967) 13.exf5 ♙g7 and here best for White is probably 14.bxa5 ♜xa5 (not 14...cxd5? 15.♠b3 e6 16.fxe6 fxe6 17.♠d4) 15.♜e1, when White has the initiative:



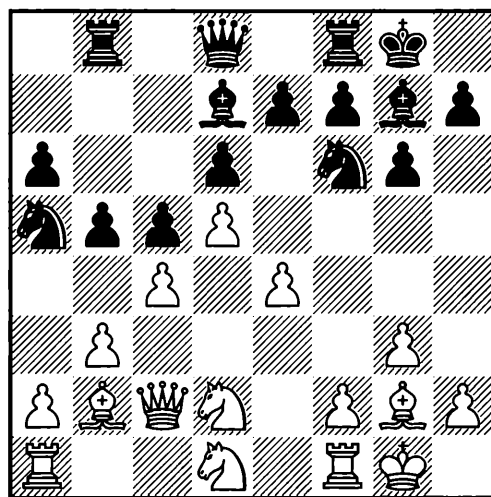
Instead, the rapid game V.Ivanchuk-I.Smirin, Odessa 2007 saw 14.♜e1 cxd5

15.bxa5 gxf5 16.♙xd5 ♜xa5 17.♠c4 ♜c7 18.♙f4 ♜ad8 19.♜b3, which also gave White the initiative, but at a high cost.

10.e4 ♙d7

Black does no better to put his bishop on g4, for instance 10...♙g4 11.♜c2 a6 12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♜b8 14.♜ab1 ♜c8 (to prevent White from gaining further time with h2-h3) 15.♠d1! (preparing ♠e3 with a gain of time) 15... ♙h3 16.♙c3 ♙xg2 17.♖xg2 ♜c7 18.♠e3 e5 19.♜be1 b4 20.♙b2 ♠b7 21.f4 gave White the upper hand in R.Veress-M. Vrbán, Hungary 2009.

11.♜c2 a6 12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♜b8 14.♠d1!?



With this thematic move, White swings his knight over to e3. More common is the simple 14.♜ab1, when 14...e5 15.♠e2 h5 16.♙c3 with the idea of f2-f4 scores well for White, and 14... h5!? 15.♠d1 e5 16.f4 exf4 17.gxf4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♜xb2 19.♜xb2 ♠g4 20.h3 ♙d4+ 21.♖h1 left Black without sufficient compensation in J.Granda Zúñiga-J. Ibarra Jerez, Andorra 2008. Wojo's move is sufficient for an advantage for White, however, so we prefer to keep it as our main recommendation.

14...e5

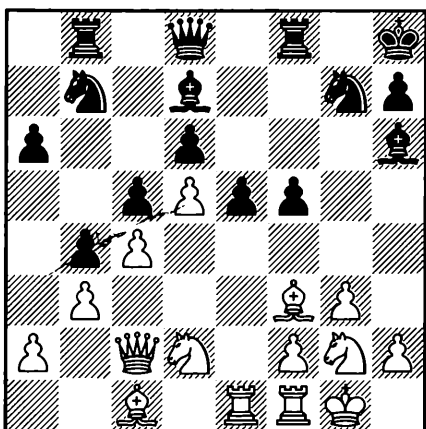
Black has tried a few other moves here. 14...bxc4 15.bxc4 e6 opens lines for Black and is a reasonable try for equality, though after 16.♔c3 exd5 17.exd5 ♖e8 18.♘e3 ♜c7 19.♗ab1, White maintained a nagging edge in N.Kagan-R.Barcelona, Australia 1995. Meanwhile, 14...♜c7 is less good for Black in light of 15.♔c3 ♘e8 16.♘e3, when here 16...♜b6 17.♗ab1 b4 18.♔xg7 ♘xg7 19.f4 e5 20.f5 f6 21.h4 left White clearly better in R.Mascariñas-A. Vaidya, Greece 1984.

15.♘e3

White concentrates on getting ready for the big f2-f4-f5 push. Black would not have many problems after 15.dxe6 ♔xe6 16.♘e3 ♘c6, with an active game for the second player.

15...♘h5

This is inaccurate because Black should play 15...♔h6 first, so that his knight can retreat to the g7 square from h5. For instance, 15...♔h6 was seen in G.Forintos-B.Tóth, Budapest 1971, when here White simply continued with 16.♗ae1. After 16...♘h5 17.♔f3 (just as in the main game, but now Black can retreat to g7) 17...♘g7 18.♔c3 (once again luring Black into playing ...b5-b4) 18...b4 19.♔b2 f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.♘g2 ♘b7 22.♔c1 ♘h8 Black had a playable game. Regardless, White was still for choice:



23.♔d1 (preparing f2-f4, cracking Black's center) 23...f4!? 24.g4 ♔g5 25.♜d3 ♔e8 26.h4 ♔e7 27.h5, and White had a clear advantage thanks to his extra space and control of the e4 square.

It is also worth mentioning that 15...♘g4 has also been tried, when now 16.♘xg4 ♔xg4 17.♗ae1 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♜d7 19.♔c3 ♘b7 20.f4 (20.f3 ♔h3 21.♗b1 is also good for White) 20...exf4 21.♔xg7 ♘xg7 22.gxf4 f6 23.♜c3 successfully prepared the e4-e5 break in M.Umansky-J.Ager, Austria 2000.

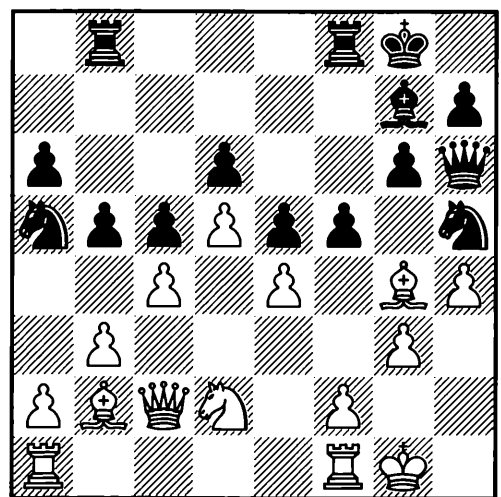
16.♔f3

Now the black knight finds itself embarrassed.

16...♜g5?

Black really had to bite the bullet and play 16...♘f6. As a consolation prize, he can at least say that White's last move wasn't very useful, either. After the text, Black's queen gets chased to the edge of the board.

17.h4 ♜h6 18.♘g4 ♔xg4 19.♔xg4 f5



A truly terrible move, but Black had little choice. White threatened ♔c1.

19...♘f6 would have left Black with an untenable position after 20.♔e2

♠d7 21.cxb5 axb5 22.a4! bxa4 (not 22...b4 23.♙c1, with the unstoppable threat of ♠d2-c4) 23.♞xa4 ♠b7 24.♞a7 and so on.

20.♙h3

White could also win with 20.exf5 gxf5 21.♙xf5, since 21...♞xf5 22.♞xf5 ♞xd2 23.♞e6+ ♠h8 24.♞xd6 ♞e8 25.♞xa6 would have completely wrecked Black's position. Wojo's move is less messy.

20...g5

Black does not even try to save his f5-pawn. No better is 20...f4, in light of 21.♙e6+ ♠h8 22.g4 ♠f6 23.g5 ♞xh4 24.♠f3 ♞h5 25.♠g2, with ♞h1 to follow.

21.hxg5 ♞xg5 22.♠f3 ♞e7 23.♙xf5 bxc4 24.♞d2

The handy *intermezzo* that allows White to win a pawn.

24...♠b7

24...♞b5 25.♙c3 would do little to help Black.

25.bxc4

White is now a clear pawn up and has the bishop pair. The rest is easy.

25...♠d8 26.♙c3 ♠f7 27.♠g2 ♙h6 28.♞e2 ♠g7 29.♙g4 ♞f6 30.♞h1

Or 30.♞ab1 immediately.

30...♞b7 31.♞ab1 ♞fb8 32.♞xb7 ♞xb7 33.♠h4 ♙g5 34.♠f5 h5

Desperation.

35.♠xg7 hxg4 36.♠f5 1-0

Black loses the g4-pawn, so he decides it's time to throw in the towel.

Black faced many difficulties in this game, starting with 16.♙f3. While it is undeniable that Black's 15...♠h5 was premature, practice hasn't been kind to Black after the superior 15...♙h6, either. It is possible that Black would have been better off rejecting the 14...e5 thrust in the first place, as the second player simply never had a chance to create real kingside counterplay at any moment in this game. As it was, Black struggled for a plan and ultimately found a very bad one that involved putting his queen on h6. It is not surprising at all that Black lost material in short order!

Conclusion: The Spassky Variation is quite similar to the Simagin Variation, but likely even more favorable for White. White's extra move e2-e4 appears to be more useful than its h2-h3 counterpart, especially considering that Black has not achieved satisfactory results from the ...e7-e5 push. Meanwhile, Black's old line with 9...c6 has been under heavy theoretical fire lately due to 10.b4. Perhaps Black must look for a better plan around move 14, but White is doing quite well by this point in any case. Wojo's 14.♠d1!? seems good for a solid advantage for the first player.

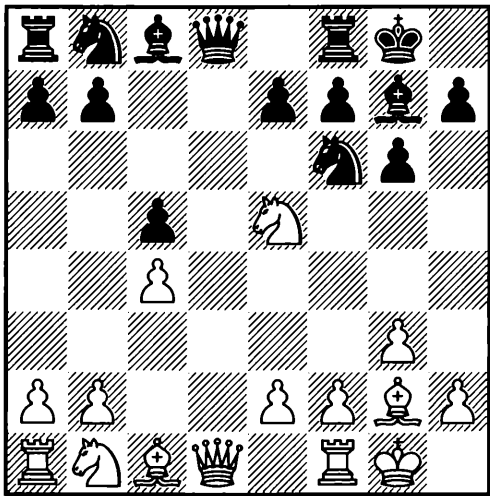
Part III



Black's Other Systems

Chapter 10

The Anti-Yugoslav with 6...c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♘e5!?



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5 dxc5
8.♘e5!?

When Black plays 6...c5, he is aiming for the complications of the Yugoslav Panno Variation that occur after 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘a5. Over the years, a tremendous body of theory has developed around this line, which features the plan of ...a7-a6, ...♖b8, and ...b7-b5. Overall, White's results here have not been that promising. Black generally gets the kind of active, sacrificial play on the queenside and in the center that he wants – something which the database statistics reflect. In many variations, Black has a plus score.

The obvious alternative to the main line with 8.d5 is the capture 8.dxc5, which has a reputation for being tough for Black to defend. After 8...dxc5 9.♗f4, White looks to disrupt Black's play with ♘f3-e5, clearing the h1-a8 diagonal and attacking in the center. Most lines here show White scoring around 60%, which is closer to what we would expect for the first player in a Fianchetto King's Indian line. Nevertheless, the line with 9.♗f4 is not the subject of this chapter, either. Instead, we've selected a Wojo Weapon that seeks to improve on the well-respected 9.♗f4 – the immediate 8.♘e5!?, an innovative move praised by Bronstein in *Zürich 1953*. The point is simple: since the aim of White's 9.♗f4 is to plant the white knight on e5, why not get it in a move earlier, when White doesn't need the extra support? Here, rather than challenging the development of Black's queen's knight, White actually seeks to box it in by preventing it from coming to c6. After 8.♘e5!?, Black's entire queenside appears to be stuck.

With accurate defense, Black is more or less able to extricate himself from his queenside trouble. The key sequence for Black starts with 8...♘fd7!, which

turns out to be an “only move” for the second player here. The uninitiated will be unlikely to find this move for Black (and all the moves needed to follow it up correctly), so players of White can count on scoring a number of easy victories in this line. Wojo himself racked up an impressive 90% here, including quick wins against players in the 2300-2400 range. We’ll start off this chapter with just one such game.

White’s Overwhelming Initiative: When Black Fails to Find 8...♘fd7!

When Black fails to play the accurate 8...♘fd7 – a move most club players (and even some masters) don’t seriously consider for Black at the board – White can almost always build a powerful initiative on the queenside and in the center. The problem for Black is that without 8...♘fd7, he will find himself unable to develop his queenside. His bishop on c8 is stuck defending the pawn on b7, which in turn traps the black rook on a8. If Black develops his queen’s knight to a6, it will be vulnerable tactically there, as the b7-pawn is pinned to the rook on a8 by White’s powerful Wojo bishop on g2. But if Black develops with ...♘bd7, the knight on d7 will further hamper the development of the black bishop on c8. Meanwhile, White can simply increase the pressure on Black’s queenside pawns with ♖e5-d3, ♔b3, ♙e3, ♖fd1, and so on. This is exactly what happens in our first example game.

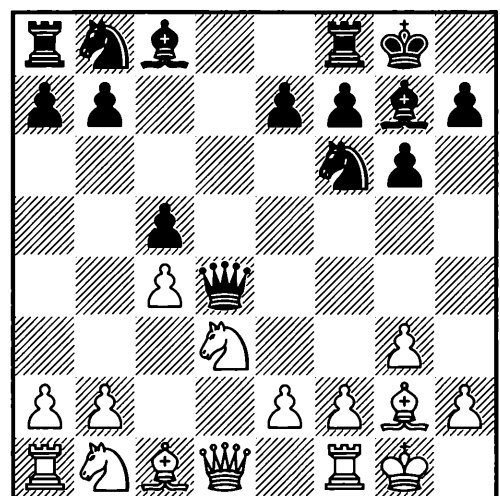
Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2580)
Cosma, Ioan (2365)

[E60] Budapest 1993

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5
dxc5 8.♖e5!? ♔d4!?

This attempt by Black to exploit White’s last move is thought to be ineffective. It does little to help Black develop his queenside pieces.

9.♖d3!

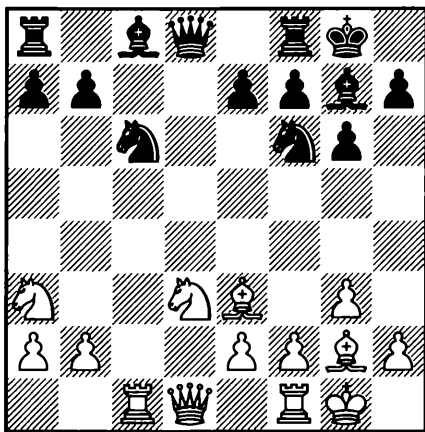


Janjgava gives this move an exclamation point. Black’s queen will now have to run all around the board while White develops his queenside initiative. The text has the benefit of targeting Black’s c5-pawn.

9...♘a6?!

A rather awkward try by Black. Although he may be able to get his queen’s knight out, he is still a long way from being able to develop his entire queenside. Janjgava believes that accepting the pseudo-sacrifice with 9...♔xc4 is the

lesser evil for Black here. Now 10.♘a3 ♖a6 (10...♗d4?! 11.♙e3 ♗d8 12.♘xc5 ♘c6 13.♗xd8 ♙xd8 14.♙fd1 is a clear advantage for White according to Janjgava, whereas 10...♗g4!? 11.h3 ♗h5 12.g4 ♗h4 13.♙f4! followed by ♗d2 gives White tremendous compensation) 11.♘xc5 ♗b6 12.♘d3 ♘c6 13.♙e3 ♗d8 14.♙c1 and so on is given by Janjgava as a slight edge for White:



This is self-evident, as White's pieces all work nicely to target Black's queenside formation.

10.♗b3

A thematic move for White in the 8.♘e5!? line, if not in our entire Fianchetto King's Indian repertoire. Wojo's fondness for putting his queen on b3 is once again vindicated, as Black will now struggle mightily to defend the b7-pawn.

10...e5

Having to play this move, which weakens the d5 square, is rarely a good sign for Black in this line. Regardless, it is hard to come up with anything else – the majority of Black's pieces are completely tied down. 10...♘g4 was tried in A.Ferrara-J.Bravo, Argentina 1998, when here White would have done best to just play 11.♘c3. For instance, 11...

♘e5 12.♙e3 is good for White, as 12...♗xc4?? loses to 13.♘xe5 ♗xb3 14.axb3 ♙xe5 15.♙xa6. Note that the pin of the b7-pawn comes up again and again in this line. A black knight on a6 is never completely safe so long as there is a black rook on a8.

11.♘c3

Once again, all White has to do is develop smoothly and simply here. He is now gunning for the d5 square. 11.♙xb7? was of course not possible thanks to 11...♙b8.

11...♗d6

The queen had to be evacuated, as the White rook is coming to d1.

12.♙d1

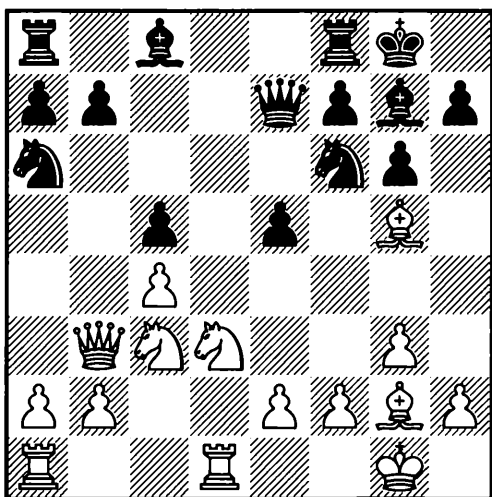
12.♙xb7 was now possible, as 12...♙b8 13.♘b5 would allow White to escape the pin along the b-file and remain a pawn to the good. Wojo prefers to simply develop, however, as his initiative is escalating rapidly.

12...♗e7

12...♙b8, the other way to defend the b7-pawn, might have been met with 13.♘b5 ♗e7 (or 13...♗b6 14.♘xe5) 14.♘xa7.

13.♙g5

Black's position is on the verge of collapse. White's pieces are much better placed, and it will prove impossible for Black to continue defending his b7, c5, and e5-pawns. After Black's next move, White begins a forcing sequence that wins a pawn.



13...♞b8 14.♘d5 ♞e6 15.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 16.♙d5 ♞e7 17.♙xf6 ♞xf6 18.♞c3

Amazingly, Black now has no way to defend his e5-pawn. The superiority of White's development finally bears fruit.

18...♘c7

18...♞e8 wouldn't improve anything for Black after 19.f4.

19.♞xe5 ♞xe5 20.♘xe5 ♘e8

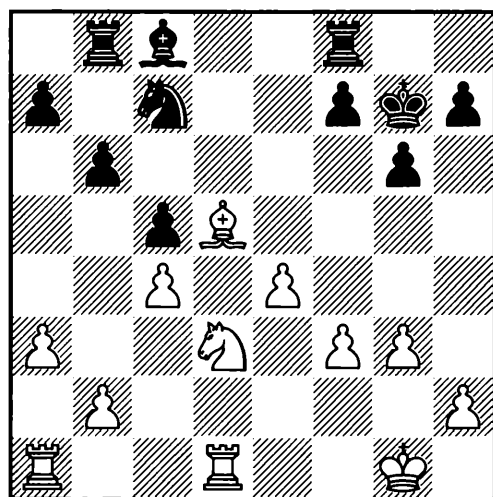
20...♘xd5 is best met by 21.♞xd5, since 21.cxd5 ♞e8 22.f4 f6 would force White to give back his extra pawn.

21.e4

White is now winning easily. The game ends swiftly.

21...♔g7 22.♘d3 b6 23.f3 ♘c7 24.a3

White prepares to open lines on the queenside. Note that Black is still most vulnerable there – his queen's bishop still hasn't left its starting square.



24...a5 25.b4 ♘xd5 26.cxd5 ♙a6

26...axb4 27.axb4 c4 28.♘e5 b5 is hopeless for Black after 29.♔f2, followed by ♔e3 and ♘c6.

27.♘e5 axb4 28.axb4 ♙b5 29.bxc5 bxc5 30.♞dc1 f6 31.♞a7+ ♔g8 32.♘g4 1-0

White was preparing to play ♘g4-h6-f7-d6, mopping up Black's remaining forces on the queenside, so it was time for the second player to call it quits.

This game represents the type of "quick smash" that White can hope for in a certain percentage of his games with 8.♘e5!?. Although Black in this game was an International Master, he didn't know what to do against this Wojo Weapon and his position collapsed quickly. The key points for White in this game were the attack along the h1-a8 diagonal, the development of the queen to b3, the attack on the c5-pawn with ♘e5-d3, and control of the d5 square after 10...e5.

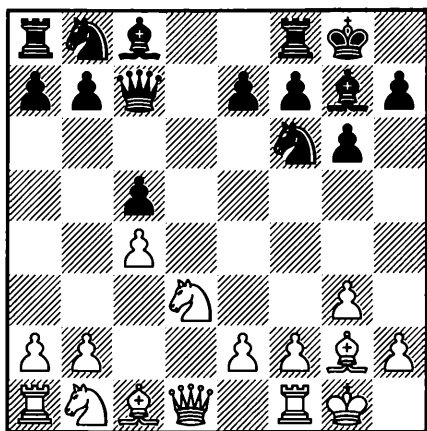
The next game continues along the same lines. Black has no clue what to do against 8.♘e5!? and gets wiped out by White's ambitious plan to control the d5 square, even at the cost of a pawn.

Adorján, András (2525)
Bancod, Ronald

[E60] Manila 1991

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
 4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c5 7.dxc5
 dxc5 8.♠e5 ♠bd7?!

This is a common error by Black here. The queen's knight must eventually go to c6, not to d7, as the text is too passive. Black will have no way to develop his bishop on c8. The alternative 8...♖c7 9.♠d3 ♠bd7 would simply transpose back into the game. Otherwise, after 9.♠d3:



a) 9...♗e6 10.♖b3 ♠c6 (10...♠bd7 11.♗f4 ♖a5 was F.Auer-F.Hölzl, Austria 1997, when here 12.♗d1 instead of 12.♗xb7 ♖ab8! would have left White with a nice pull) 11.♠xc5 ♠d4 12.♠xe6 ♠xe2+ 13.♗h1 fxe6 was seen in G.Arsović-M.Dragović, Yugoslavia 2008, when the improvement 14.♠c3 ♠xc3 15.bxc3 ♠d7 16.♗e3 ought to favor White thanks to his bishop pair.

b) 9...♠c6 10.♠c3 ♖d8 (10...♗f5 11.♗f4 ♖a5 12.♗d2 ♗xd3 13.exd3 ♖c7 14.♗e3 ♖fd8 15.♗xc5 ♠e5 16.d4 ♠xc4 17.♖e2 ♠d6 18.a4!? gave White the initiative in M.Najdorf-I.Boleslavsky, Zürich 1953) 11.♗f4 (a thematic move, provoking ...e7-e5 from Black) 11...e5 12.♗g5 ♠b4 13.♠e4 ♖e7 14.♖b3 ♠xd3 15.exd3 left White with a slight pull

in J.Bolbochán-Z.Milev, Amsterdam 1954.

9.♠d3

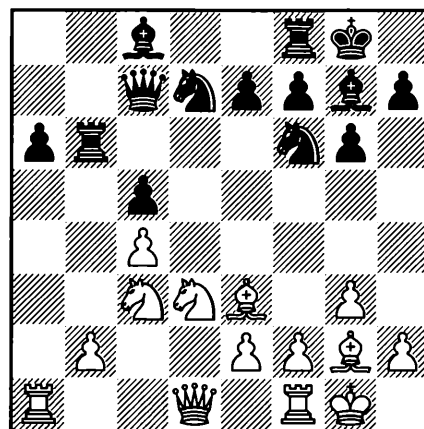
Again, it is good for White to play this move. It would make little sense to trade pieces on d7 here, since Black now struggles to develop his queenside pieces.

9...♖c7 10.♠c3 a6

Stopping ideas of ♠b5 from White. 10...e5 immediately would simply lose a tempo, as White would not have to play ♗f4 to provoke the weakening of the d5 square.

11.♗f4!?

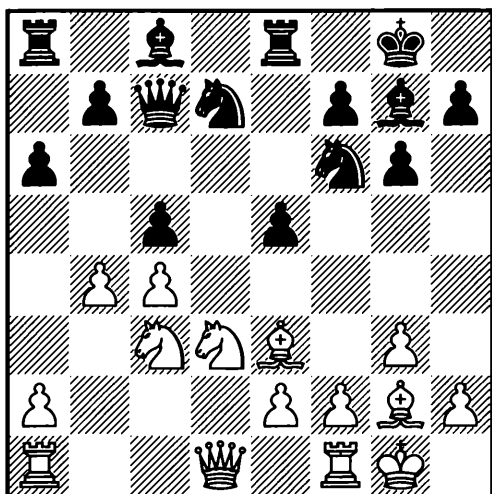
White provokes ...e7-e5 from Black and hopes that the weakness of d5 will be worth the loss of time. Also promising here is 11.a4!, when Black can do little to stop White from playing a4-a5 in the near future. For instance, 11...♖b8 12.a5 b5 13.axb6 ♖xb6 (not 13...♠xb6? 14.♗f4) 14.♗e3 with ♠c3-a4 to follow:



Black's c5-pawn is weak and White's queenside initiative is developing nicely. The text is also good (and certainly thematic), but it's also somewhat messier.

11...e5 12.♙e3 ♜e8?!

This is an inaccuracy. It is better for Black to play 12...♜b8, getting off the h1-a8 diagonal and preparing to meet White's b2-b4 thrust with ...b7-b6. After 13.a4 b6 14.a5 bxa5, as seen in M.Cuéllar - W.Ader Hausman, Bogotá 1958, the computer-recommended 15.♞a4 looks good for a slight edge for White. Regardless, this possibility for Black is the reason we consider 11.a4! to be White's strongest try against Black's opening play here.

13.b4!

White sacrifices a pawn to break open the queenside and gain access to the d5 square. Black is still unable to develop his queen's bishop, so this kind of active play is called for here.

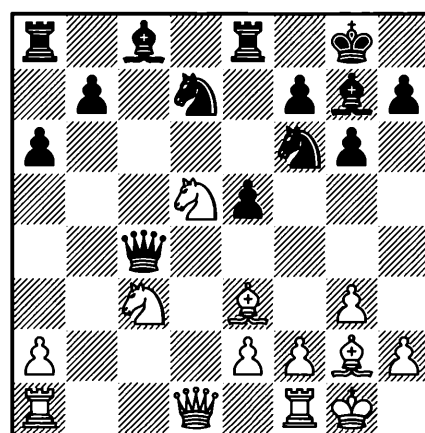
13...cxb4

The alternatives are just as bad. For instance, 13...e4 14.♠xc5 ♠xc5 15.bxc5, with ideas of ♜c1 and ♠d5 to follow, leaves Black a pawn down and suffering, while 13...♠g4 14.♙xc5 e4 15.♠xe4 ♙xa1 (or 15...♠xc5 16.bxc5 ♙xa1 17.♠d6! ♜d8 18.♞xa1 followed by ♠d5) 16.♞xa1 leaves White clearly better. He has two pawns for the exchange

and the dark squares around Black's king are dangerously weak.

14.♠xb4 e4

Black rightly decides that 14...♞xc4?! would be too risky after 15.♠bd5. Although it may not be obvious at first what White's compensation consists of, even a cursory look at a few possible continuations makes it clear. White's initiative on the queenside simply cannot be stopped, and Black will soon prove helpless in view of White's ♠d5-c7 and ♠c3-e4-d6 ideas:



a) 15...♠xd5 16.♠xd5 ♜b8, trying to stop White's idea of ♜c1 followed by ♠c7, runs into 17.♙a7. Now 17...♜a8 18.♜c1 ♞xc1 19.♞xc1 ♜xa7 20.♜d1 with an eye toward ♠e7 tactics leaves Black with poor piece coordination.

b) 15...♠g4 (what else?) 16.♠e4! ♠xe3 17.fxe3! (opening the f-file and maintaining the threat of ♠d6) 17...♜f8 (or 17...♜e6 18.♜c1 ♞xa2 19.♠c7 ♜b8 20.♠xe6 ♞xe6 21.♠g5 ♞b6 22.♞d5, winning for White) 18.♜c1 ♞xa2 19.♠e7+ ♜h8 20.♠xc8 ♜axc8 21.♜xc8 ♜xc8 22.♞xd7 and White wins.

Black does a little better to insert 14...♠g4 first before grabbing the pawn on c4, for instance 15.♙g5 ♞xc4 16.♠bd5 and so on. White still has

more than full compensation for the pawn here, however, and Black will struggle to avoid losing material.

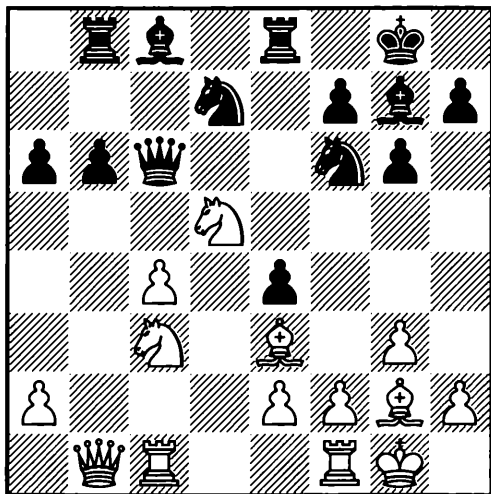
15.♖c1 b6

Once again, 15...♞xc4 16.♜bd5 is simply too risky for Black, who would have no good way of meeting White's threats of a discovered attack with 17.♜xe4 ♞xd5 18.♜xf6+ and 19.♙xd5.

16.♜bd5 ♞c6 17.♞b3

White's initiative grows. Black has almost managed to develop his light-squared bishop, but his b-pawn will pay the price.

17...♞b8 18.♞b1



Targeting the black e4-pawn and winning it. Also good was 18.♞fd1, which looks to simply increase White's initiative.

18...♞xc4

Bad, but Black's position was unraveling quickly in any case. 18...♜c5, trying to maintain Black's position, would not have held after 19.♙xc5 ♞xc5 20.♜xf6+ (20.♜xe4?! ♜xe4 21.♙xe4 ♙g4 offers Black some

compensation) 20...♙xf6 21.♜xe4 ♞e5 22.♜xf6+ ♞xf6 23.e3, with an extra pawn for White.

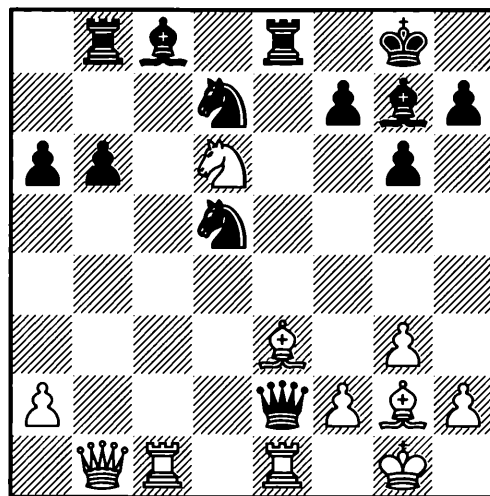
19.♜xe4 ♞xe2

19...♞xd5 20.♜xf6+ ♜xf6 21.♙xd5 would also have lost for Black.

20.♜d6

Even stronger was the immediate 20.♞fe1!, for instance 20...♞b5 (20...♞h5 loses to 21.♜d6 ♜xd5 22.♜xe8, whereas 20...♞xe1+ 21.♞xe1 ♜xd5 22.♜d6 ♜c3 23.♞c2 ♞e6 falls short after 24.♙d2!) 21.♞xb5 axb5 22.♜exf6+ ♜xf6 (or 22...♙xf6 23.♙f4 ♞xe1+ 24.♞xe1, when Black's rook on b8 is trapped) 23.♙g5 ♞xe1+ 24.♞xe1 ♜xd5 25.♞e8+ ♙f8 26.♙h6 with mate to follow.

20...♜xd5 21.♞fe1



More to the point was 21.♙xd5 ♞f8 22.♜xf7 ♞xf7 23.♙xf7+ ♜xf7 24.♞b3+ ♜f8 25.♞e6, threatening to win Black's queen with the check ♙c5. Then 25...♞d3 26.♙f4, with the idea of ♙d6, wins for White.

21...♞h5

Better was 21...♞b2 22.♟xe8 ♟xe3 23.♞xe3 ♞xb1 24.♞xb1 ♟h6, when Black has a pawn and the bishop pair as partial compensation for the exchange.

22.♟xe8 ♟e5

22...♟b7 23.♟xg7 ♟xg7 24.♟d4+ was also grim for Black, but the text loses immediately.

23.♟xg7 ♟f3+ 24.♟xf3 ♞xf3 25.♟d4

White defends the knight on g7 and prepares ♞e4, stopping Black's mate threats on g2. The game is over.

25...f6 26.♞b3 1-0

Black resigns, as 26...♞xb3 27.♞e8+ ♟xg7 28.axb3 leaves him unable to defend his bishop on c8, which still has not moved from its starting square.

Once again, Black elected a sub-optimal setup on the queenside and failed to develop his light-squared bishop. White took the liberty of sacrificing a pawn to open up the game and gain control of the d5 square. His 13.b4! was absolutely justified, given Black's inability to develop his pieces on the queenside. Black spent most of the game just trying to avoid dropping material. Even with less-than-perfect play, White was able to massacre Black's army with tactics.

The last game in this section shows White struggling a little more to get an advantage. Wojo makes a few instructive inaccuracies in the opening and allows Black to equalize.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2540) Pirttimäki, Timo (2295)

[E60] Finland 1991

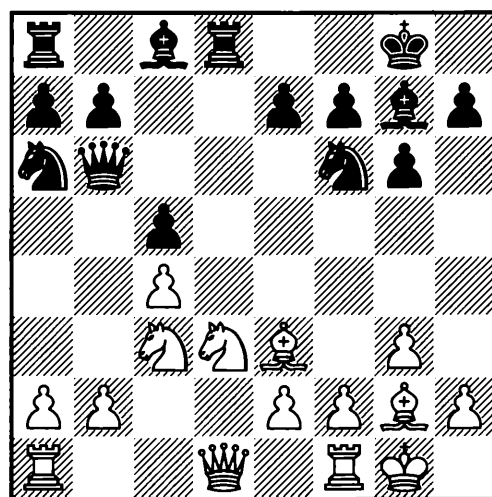
1.♟f3 c5 2.c4 ♟f6 3.g3 g6 4.♟g2 ♟g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.d4 d6 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♟e5 ♞b6!?

A reasonable move, looking to guard the b7- and c5-pawns. Black prepares ...♟a6, after which he should be able to develop his light-squared bishop somewhere along the h3-c8 diagonal. The downside is that the black queen will likely be subject to an attack by White's forces.

9.♟c3 ♞d8

9...♟bd7 is worse, for instance 10.♟d3 (note that this thematic maneuver is good here yet again) 10...e5?! (10...♞d8 11.♞b3!, increasing the pressure on the b7-pawn, gives White a nice pull) 11.♟e3 ♞b8 12.♞c1 ♞a5 13.a3 a6 14.♟xc5 ♟xc5 15.b4 ♞c7 16.♟xc5 left White a pawn up in V.Nebolsina-M. Komiagina, Sochi 2006.

10.♟d3 ♟a6 11.♟e3



This is not White's best try. Oddly enough, Wojo passes up a prime opportunity to play one of his favorite

moves. With 11.♖b3!, White could have secured a lasting advantage. Black cannot seriously consider taking on b3 because his knight on a6 will not be defended when the a-file is opened – the thematic pin of the b7-pawn to the rook on a8 is in full effect here. Meanwhile, White plans ♕e3, ♖b5, and ♗a3, increasing the pressure on Black's position. For instance, 11...♞d7 12.♕g5 f6 13.♕e3 ♜b8 14.♞b5 f5 15.♞ad1 ♞e8 16.♗a3 ♔h8 17.♞xc5 (17.b4 cxb4 18.♞xb4 was perhaps even stronger) 17...♞axc5 18.b4 left White with a clear advantage in A.Lukić-M.Udovčić, Novi Sad 1995.

11...♕f5 12.♞a4?!

After this move, Black equalizes. Again, 12.♖b3 was best here. White keeps the advantage thanks to his pressure on b7, for instance, 12...♕xd3 13.exd3 ♜xd3? 14.♕xb7 winning material for White.

12...♗c7 13.♕f4 ♗c8 14.♖b3

White finally plays this thematic move, but now it is too late. Black is able to neutralize the pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal.

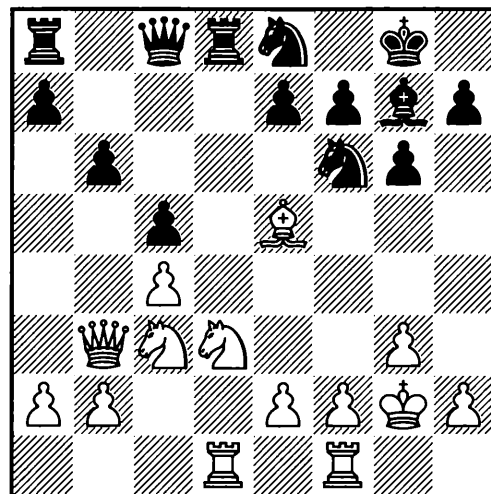
14...♕e4

This is a direct result of White's having moved his queen's knight away from the c3 square. Black has survived the worst of his opening troubles – he has managed to develop his light-squared bishop to the best possible square, challenging White's control of the h1-a8 diagonal.

15.♞ad1 ♕xg2 16.♔xg2 b6 17.♞c3

Bored, the “Don Quixote” knight changes course.

17...♞c7 18.♕e5 ♞ce8!?



Not bad, though one wonders whether 18...♖b7+ 19.♔g1 ♞e6, threatening ...♞e6-h3, would have passed the initiative to Black.

19.♞f4 ♗b7+ 20.♔g1 ♞h5 21.♕xg7 ♞xf4 22.gxf4 ♞xg7

With this, the white pawn structure changes slightly, with no one party being favored over the other too much in the process. If White's kingside pawn shield is damaged slightly, he gains a few dynamic possibilities (such as f4-f5 later on, as we'll see) in return. The position is level.

23.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 24.♞d1 ♞xd1+

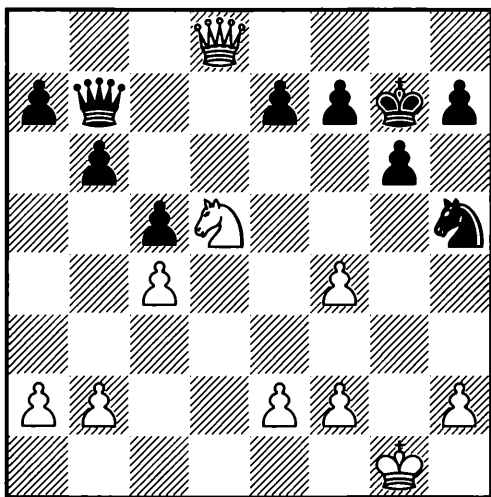
If Black tries to maintain his position on the d-file with 24...♞d7, then 25.♗a4 ♞xd1+ 26.♗xd1 would force a transposition back into the game.

25.♗xd1 ♞h5!?

25...♞f5 is the alternative. Black may not have liked 26.♗d8+ ♔g7 27.♞d5!? ♞d4 28.e3 ♞c6 29.♗e8 e6

30.♗c3, when the position of White's queen on e8 is awkward for both sides. Most likely, however, White would have played the calm 26.e3, which prepares ♖d1-d5. The game should eventually peter out to a draw.

26.♖d8+ ♘g7 27.♗d5



Now this is a strong possibility for White, given the poor placement of Black's knight on h5. Black has not spoiled anything yet, however. The game now heats up as the second player generates counterplay.

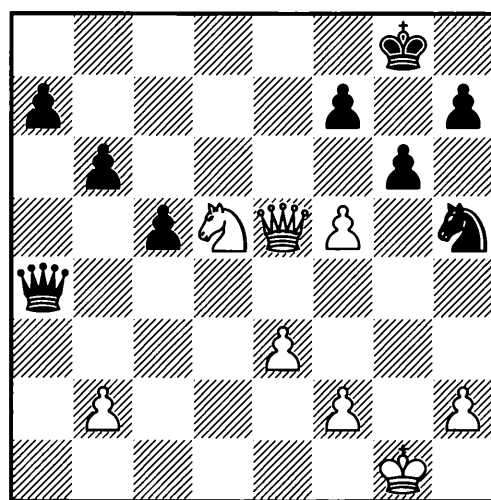
27...♖a6 28.♖xe7 ♖xc4 29.♖e5+ ♘g8 30.e3

A quiet move, shoring up f4 before continuing the assault against Black's king. Note that White is calmly allowing his queenside pawns to be picked off by Black's queen in exchange for time. If White had wanted, he could of course have taken a draw with 30.♖e8+ ♘g7 31.♖e5+. Given the rating difference, however, White almost certainly felt he had something to prove.

30...♖xa2 31.f5

White's threat is to play ♗e7+ followed by f5-f6, locking in Black's king.

31...♖a4?!



Better was the immediate 31...f6!, when now 32.♖e4 (32.♗xf6+? ♗xf6 33.♖xf6 ♖b1+ 34.♘g2 ♖xf5 is good for Black, but 32.♖e6+ ♘g7 33.fxg6 ♖b1+ 34.♘g2 ♖xg6+ 35.♘f3 offers White compensation) 32...♖xb2 33.fxg6 ♘g7 34.♗e7 would allow White's king hunt to continue. Most likely, however, the first player will find nothing better than a perpetual check. The text seeks a perpetual check against White's king involving ...♖d1+ and ...♖g4+, but this proves to be harder for Black to generate than one might think.

32.h3!

Quietly stopping Black's ...♖g4 ideas. White has time to play both attack and defense here.

32...f6

Best, as now 32...♖d1+?! 33.♘g2 gets Black nowhere.

33.♖e6+

Not 33.♗xf6+?! ♗xf6 34.♖xf6 ♖d1+ 35.♘h2 ♖f3, when White has nothing.

33...♘g7 34.♖e7+ ♘g8??

Black falls for White's trap. 34... ♖h6! was the only defense, for instance 35.fxf6 (35.♙xf6 ♖d1+ 36.♖h2 ♙xf6 37.♗xf6 ♗f3 again is fine for Black) 35...♗d1+ 36.♖h2 hxf6 37.♙xf6 ♙xf6 38.♗xf6, and Black has survived to reach a queen-and-pawn ending. White's advantage here, which consists of a passed e-pawn and better king safety, is tiny and difficult to convert.

35.♙c7!

The winning move. Black's king

is now caught in a mating net on the back rank.

35...♗c6

35...♗d1+ loses to 36.♖g2 gxf5 37.♗e8+ ♖g7 38.♙e6+ ♖h6 39.♗f8+ ♖g6 40.♗g8+ ♖h6 41.♙f8, threatening mate on h7.

36.♙e6 ♗c8 37.♙d8 1-0

Black is helpless to stop mate.

Black managed to equalize in this game because he found an effective way to develop his light-squared bishop. White's mistake in the opening was allowing this: had he played ♗b3 on move 11 or 12, he would have been able to put enough pressure on the b7-pawn to prevent Black's ...♙c8-f5-e4 maneuver. Although White did manage to win the game, it required great creativity and a significant number of small errors on Black's part.

Conclusion: If Black fails to meet White's 8.♙e5!? with the accurate 8...♙fd7!, he will have problems developing his queenside. Much of the battle revolves around Black's light-squared bishop. When Black is unable to develop this piece, disaster awaits him, as the first two wins in this section demonstrated. Otherwise, Black has good chances of equalizing. White generally scores over 70% against moves other than 8...♙fd7, however, so in practice the first player can hope to rack up points here, even at the master level.

Black's Equalizing Attempt: 8...♙fd7! with 9.♙xd7

In the previous section, we saw Black struggling mightily to develop his queenside. The key equalizing idea for Black in this line is to play 8...♙fd7! with the idea of meeting 9.♙d3 with 9...♙c6. Then, Black should be able to play one of his knights to e5 at some point, simplifying the position and allowing his light-squared bishop to escape its prison on c8. Wojo's idea was to meet 8...♙fd7 with 9.♙xd7, when the natural recapture 9...♙xd7?! leaves Black no better off in terms of development than

he was in the previous section after 10.♗b3. Thus, 9...♗xd7! is the only way for Black to equalize – and even after that, he must play accurately.

In this book, we will examine both Wojo's 9.♙xd7 and the more ambitious 9.♙d3. This section is devoted to 9.♙xd7, which is a good practical weapon but leads to nothing significant for White from a theoretical standpoint. The next section is devoted to GM Jaan Ehlevest's preference of 9.♙d3, which theory has shown to be

good for a slight pull for the first player. We begin this section with an illustration of what Wojo was hoping for when he ventured 9.♖xd7.

**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2565)
Vombek, Danijel (2300)**

[E60] Slovenia 1997

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5
dxc5 8.♖e5 ♖fd7!

Black finds the correct response. White now has a choice between exchanging on d7 or playing the thematic knight retreat to d3.

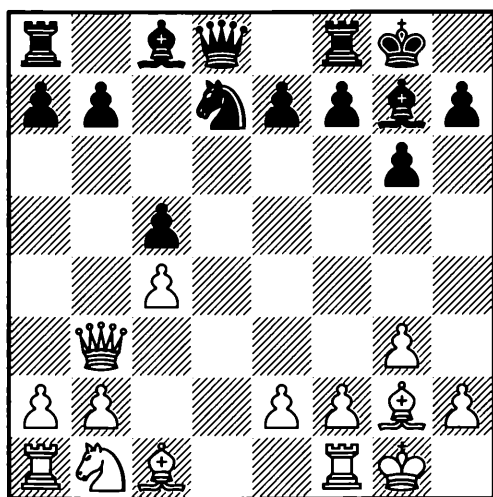
9.♖xd7

In this section, we'll examine Wojo's choice of exchanging on d7. Retreating the knight to d3 is probably somewhat stronger, but the text has one key advantage in that Black must now play a somewhat counter-intuitive move if he wants to equalize.

9...♖xd7?!

This is not it! Necessary here was 9...♗xd7, which we examine in the next game.

10.♗b3

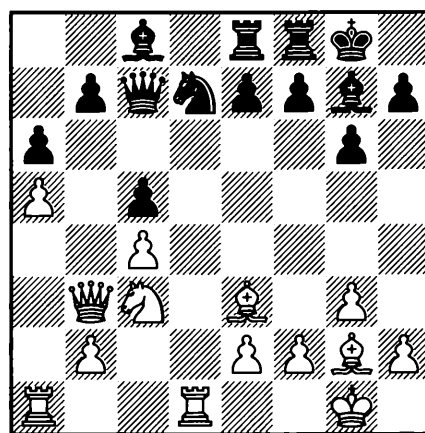


Now, White is simply much better. Black will once again suffer on the queenside as his light-squared bishop is tied to the defense of the b7-pawn.

10...♖e5

Black must move his knight so that he can develop his light-squared bishop. The obvious alternative is 10...♖b6, when here after 11.♗d1, Black has two possibilities. First there is 11...♗c7, when now 12.♗f4 e5 13.♗e3 ♗e6 14.♖a3 ♗ab8?! 15.♖b5 ♗e7 16.♖d6 led to a clear advantage for White in B.Ivkov-B.Milić, Belgrade 1952. But 12.a4! was probably stronger, for instance 12...♗d8 13.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 14.♖a3 and so on. White's queenside development is superior.

The other possibility is to sacrifice the b-pawn with 11...♗d7, when here 12.♗xb7!? ♗b8, with ideas of ...♗a4 or ...♖a4 from Black, is risky for White. So White does best to ignore the pawn sacrifice with the developing move 12.♖c3, when 12...♗c8 13.♖b5!? (13.♗e3 ♗e8 14.♖b5, threatening ♖xa7, gave White the advantage in P.Fröhlich-I.Bjelobrk, corr. 2003.) 13...a6 14.♖c3 ♗c7 15.♗g5 ♗ae8 16.♗e3 ♗c8 17.a4 ♖d7 18.a5 gave White a clear advantage in A.Wojtkiewicz-A.Vouldis, Greece 1993:



White entertains ideas of ♖d5, ♖e4, or ♖a4. Black's c-pawn is weak.

The game ended quickly after 18...
 ♕xc3 (a reasonable concession in view
 of White's threats, but not a pleas-
 ant one for Black) 19.♖xc3 f6 20.♗f4
 ♖d8 21.♗d5+ e6 22.♗g2 b6 23.♞d6
 g5 24.♗e3 ♖c7 25.♞c6 ♖b8 26.♗h3 g4
 27.♗xg4 ♜e5 28.♞xb6 1-0.

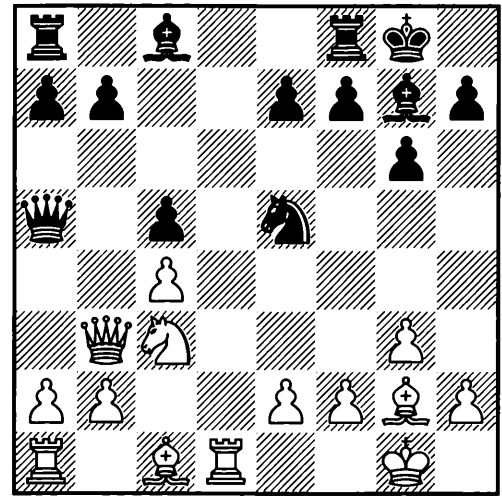
11.♞d1

11.♜c3 is more common, but the
 text may be stronger. Now best for
 Black is 11...♜c6, but after 12.♖b5! ♖d6
 (12...♖b6 13.♜d5 ♖xb5 14.cxb5 ♜d4
 15.♜xe7+ ♜h8 was S.Kustár-D.Raţ,
 Hungary 2000, when here 16.♜xc8
 ♜xe2+ 17.♜h1 ♞axc8 18.♗xb7 ♞b8
 19.♗c6 ♜xc1 20.♞axc1 ♗xb2 21.♞xc5
 would have given White a likely deci-
 sive advantage) 13.♜e4 ♖e5 14.♖xc5
 ♜d4 15.♖xe5 ♜xe2+ 16.♜h1 ♗xe5
 17.♗h6 ♞d8 18.♜c5 White had a nice
 pull in M.Marin-L.Vajda, Romania
 1996.

11...♖a5

11...♖b6 was the other way to go.
 Then A.Barsov-D.Flores, Dresden
 2008, saw White get a slight advantage
 after 12.♜c3 ♗e6 13.♜d5 ♗xd5 14.cxd5,
 giving White the bishop pair in a com-
 plicated middlegame. Alternatively,
 White might have tried 13.♗xb7!?,
 when 13...♞ab8 14.♗d5 also seems to
 give White the edge in view of 14...♖a6
 15.♖a4 ♖xa4 16.♜xa4 ♜xc4 17.♗xe6
 fxe6 18.♞d7! ♜xb2 (18...♞fd8 19.♞xe7
 ♞d1+ 20.♜g2 gets Black nothing, as
 he can neither exploit the pin on the
 first rank nor save his falling pawns)
 19.♗xb2 ♗xb2 20.♞b1 ♗f6 21.♞xb8
 ♞xb8 22.♜xc5, with some winning
 chances in the endgame.

12.♜c3



12...♖b4?

A desperate attempt by Black to
 alleviate the pressure on b7. 12...♜c6,
 blocking the h1-a8 diagonal, was again
 best. After the text, Black's queenside
 pawns fall in short order.

13.♜d5 ♖xc4 14.♜xe7+ ♜h8 15.♜xc8

White captures the Black light-
 squared bishop on its starting square.
 Also good was 15.f4! in light of 15...
 ♖xb3 16.axb3 ♜c6 (or 16...♜g4 17.♜xc8
 ♞axc8 18.h3) 17.♜xc6 bxc6 18.♗xc6
 ♞b8 19.♞xa7, leaving White up mate-
 rial.

15...♞axc8 16.♗f4

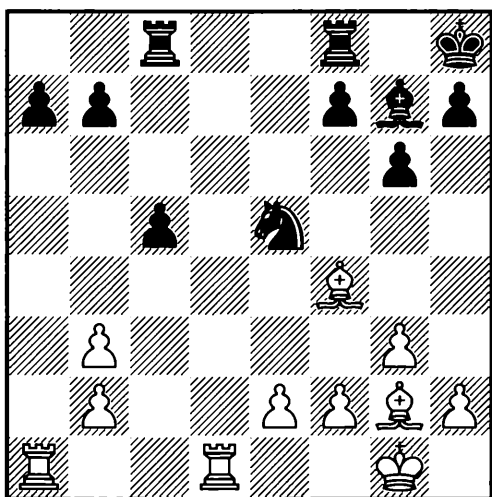
White continues developing. This
 is simpler than 16.f4, when after
 16...♖xb3 17.axb3 ♜c6 18.♗xc6 ♞xc6
 19.♞xa7 ♞b6, the play heats up a bit.
 20.♞d7 ♞b8 21.♞xf7 ♞xb3 22.♞c7 ♗xb2
 23.♗xb2+ ♞xb2 24.♜f1 would still
 leave White with excellent prospects,
 however.

16...♖xb3

A major concession by Black, but
 16...♖xe2? loses to 17.♞e1 ♖h5 18.♞xe5!

♙xe5 19.g4, nabbing the bishop pair. After 19...♚xg4 20.♙xe5+ f6 21.♙d6 ♜fe8 (not 21...♜fd8? 22.♙e7) 22.♚f7, Black is suffering.

17.axb3



Black's queenside pawns are now impossible to save.

17...♖c6

17...b5 was a more interesting try to stay in the game. Then 18.♜xa7 ♖c6 19.♜a6! ought to win for White, for instance, 19...♖d4 20.♙d6 ♖xe2+ 21.♙f1 ♜fe8 (or 21...♖d4 22.♙xf8 ♜xf8 23.♜a8) 22.♙c6 and Black loses material.

18.♙xc6 ♜xc6 19.♜xa7

After this, White is essentially winning. All that remains is to conquer the entire seventh rank.

19...♜b6 20.♜d7 ♜xb3 21.♙d6 ♜c8 22.♜c7!

A nice flourish.

22...♜e8

22...♜xc7? would of course lose to 23.♜a8+ ♙f8 24.♙xf8.

23.♙xc5 ♜xb2 24.♜xf7 ♜b1+ 25.♙g2 ♙g8 26.♜d7 1-0

Black's forces are paralyzed. White will be able to simply defend his e2-pawn before rounding up Black's b-pawn, leaving Black two pawns down.

In this game, Black found the key move 8...♖fd7. But after White exchanged on d7, Black failed to follow up properly. After 9...♖xd7?! 10.♚b3, Black faced many of the same problems as he did in the previous section – that is, he was unable to develop his queenside pieces. His light-squared bishop (always a problem piece for Black in the 8.♖e5!/? line) was captured on its starting square, and Black's queenside pawns fell quickly to White's powerful bishop pair. Although Black was rated over 2300 FIDE, he was, arguably, lost as early as move 12 against this Wojo Weapon.

The next game features the correct 9...♚xd7!, which, with best play, equalizes for Black.

**Álvarez Rodríguez, Rubén
Herráiz Hidalgo, Herminio (2394)**

[E60] San Sebastián 1999

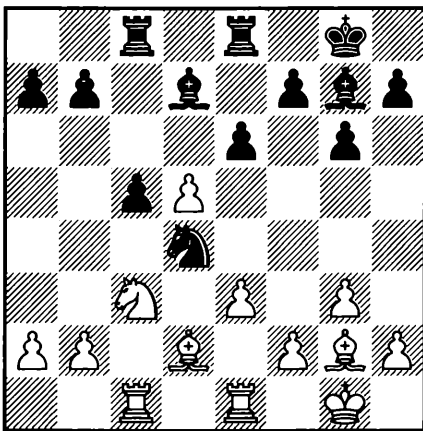
1.d4 ♖f6 2.♖f3 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.c4 c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♖e5 ♖fd7 9.♖xd7 ♚xd7!

It is worth recounting what Bent Larsen and Steffen Zeuthen said of this move in their 1979 book *ZOOM 001*: “The correct answer to 9.♖d7 is ♚d7! [sic]. Everybody knew that in the fifties but in the meantime it has surely been forgotten.” What was true thirty years ago is still true today – only those few

opponents who are familiar with the history of this line are likely to know the correct moves for Black.

10. ♖xd7

10. ♖c3 was Wojo's move here, but after 10... ♖c6 11. ♖d5 (the point) 11... ♖xd5 12. cxd5 ♖d4, Black has equalized. For instance, 13. ♕g5 ♖e8 (13... f6!? 14. ♕f4 ♕d7 15. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 16. ♖fe1 b6 17. e3 ♖b5 18. ♖xb5 ♕xb5 19. e4 ♕d7 20. e5 was just a tad better for White in A. Bulat-M. Bertok, Yugoslavia 1960) 14. ♖ac1 ♕d7 15. ♖fe1 ♖ac8 16. ♕d2 (16. e3!? h6 17. exd4 hxg5 18. dxc5 ♖xc5 19. ♖e4 ♖cc8 20. b3 g4 was more than fine for Black in A. Bulat-S. Gligorić, Yugoslavia 1960) 16... e6 17. e3 was agreed drawn in A. Wojtkiewicz-J. Sprenger, Germany 1998:

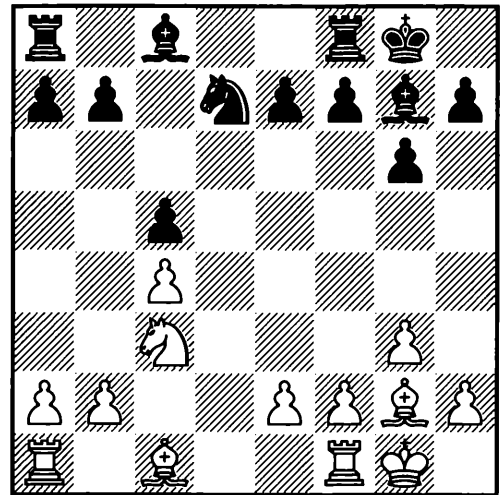


The position is level here after 17... ♖f5 18. b3 (not 18. e4 ♖d4, with counterplay for Black) 18... b6 19. ♖ed1 with ♕e1 to follow. The text is an attempted improvement.

10... ♖xd7 11. ♖c3

White's advantage here is tiny but obvious: Black is still unable – for a few moves, at least – to develop his light-squared bishop. With accurate play, however, Black can make good use of his tactical chances along the

a1-h8 diagonal to equalize here. Over the next few moves, both sides begin to target each other's respective c-pawns.

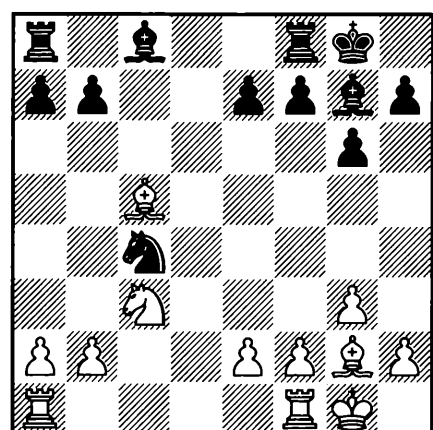


11... ♖b6

It is necessary for Black to move his knight to free up his bishop on c8. 11... ♖e5 was the other way to do this, when 12. ♕e3 ♖xc4 13. ♕xc5 would transpose to the note to Black's move 12. Meanwhile, White is not particularly troubled by 11... ♕xc3!? 12. bxc3, when his two bishops would provide him with more than enough play for his doubled c-pawns. He can play ♕e3, ♖fb1, and a2-a4 to target Black's queenside.

12. ♕e3 ♕d4?!

Although this move has been played three times here, it is not accurate for Black. Better is 12... ♖xc4 13. ♕xc5, when with accurate play Black should be able to weather the storm and reach a drawn ending. We analyze two lines:



a) 13...♗xb2 14.♗d5 ♕g4 (14...♗a4!? 15.♗xe7+ ♖h8 16.♗ac1 ♗xc5 17.♗xc5 ♕e6 18.♕xb7 ♗ab8 19.♕f3 leaves White a pawn up, though Black should probably draw) 15.♗xe7+ ♖h8 16.♕xb7 ♕xe2 (or 16...♗ab8 17.♕c6 ♕xe2 18.♕xa7, again with a miniscule advantage for White) 17.♗c6! (17.♕xa8 ♗xa8 18.♗ab1 ♕xf1 19.♖xf1 a5 is equal) 17...♕xf1 18.♕xf8 ♗xf8 19.♖xf1 a5 20.♗e1 and White has some chances of rounding up Black's a-pawn, for instance 20...a4 21.♕a6! with ♕b5 and ♗e4 or ♗e7 to follow. Of course, that said, White's advantage here will prove difficult to convert.

b) 13...♕e6! 14.♗ac1 ♗ac8 15.♕xa7 (15.♕xe7?! ♗fe8 16.♕h4 h6! gives Black strong counterplay) 15...♗fd8 (15...♗xb2 16.♗d5 ♕xd5 17.♕xd5 b5 18.♕c5 gives White a tiny pull) 16.♗b5!? ♗xb2 (16...♕xb2? 17.♕xb7 ♕xc1 18.♕xc8 ♗xc8 19.♗xc1 leaves White up a pawn) 17.♕xb7 ♗xc1 18.♗xc1 ♕xa2 with a dead-drawn ending.

The text, which leads to immense difficulties for Black, was first played by soon-to-be Grandmaster Aleksandar Matanović against the little-known Croatian master Ante Bulat back in 1953. Apparently, no one has since found the improvement 12...♗xc4.

13.♕xd4 cxd4 14.♗d5 ♗xd5

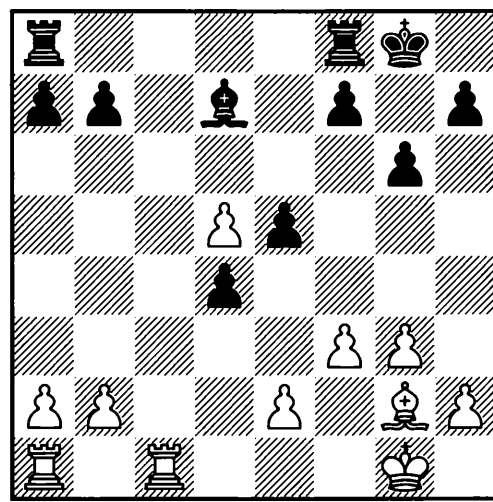
Forced, as 14...e5 15.♗e7+ ♖g7 16.c5 would give White a tremendous initiative on the queenside.

15.cxd5 e5

After this, White is able to take over the c-file. 15...♕g4 was the alternative here. Then 16.f3 ♕d7 17.♗fd1 allows

White to win Black's d4-pawn, but 17...♗ac8 18.♗xd4 (18.♗d2, preparing to organize a long-term siege against Black's d4-pawn, also gives White a nice edge) 18...♗c2 19.♗b4 b5 20.♖f2 a5 21.♗b3 ♗fc8 would give Black some counterplay for his pawn. Of course, White can count on having the advantage here as well, but the text is worse.

16.♗fc1 ♕g4 17.f3 ♕d7?!



17...♕f5 was a better defense, but after either 18.g4 ♕d7 19.♗c7 ♕b5 20.♕f1, with the idea of e2-e4 to follow, or 18.♗c7 ♗fd8 19.g4 ♕d7 20.♖f2, White maintains a clear advantage. After the text, White's advantage is decisive.

18.♗c7 ♕b5 19.♖f2 ♕a6 20.b4

The key move. Black is not able to hold his queenside pawns – one of his most consistent problems in this entire chapter.

20...b6

Sadly necessary, but now Black's a-pawn will fall.

21.a4 ♗ab8 22.f4 ♗fe8 23.♗xa7 ♕b7 24.♗d1 ♗ed8

24...f6 25.a5 bxa5 26.bxa5 is no better. White's passed a-pawn should win the game.

25.fxe5 ♖xd5 26.♞xd4 ♖xg2 27.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 28.♙xg2 ♞d4 29.e6

A good move, trapping Black's king

on the back rank. 29.b5 immediately was, of course, also good for the full point.

29...fxe6 30.b5 g5 31.a5 1-0

Black cannot prevent White from promoting one of his queenside pawns.

Even though Black played the correct moves 8...♞fd7 and 9...♞xd7! in the opening, he still managed to lose this game in short order thanks to the inaccurate 12...♙d4?!. With 12...♞xc4, Black would likely have found a safe path to equality. What is needed for Black is an active approach that targets White's queenside pawns. If Black plays passively, White will be able to seize control of the queenside, as he did in this game.

Conclusion: After 8...♞fd7!, Wojo's pet move 9.♞xd7 is a decent practical try. After 9...♞xd7?! 10.♞b3, White has a clear advantage thanks to Black's inability to develop his dark-squared bishop. But after the correct 9...♞xd7!, Black should be able to equalize with accurate play. Neither Wojo's 10.♞c3 ♞c6 11.♞d5 ♞xd5 12.cxd5 ♞d4 nor our attempted improvement with 10.♞xd7 ♞xd7 11.♞c3 guarantee White a significant advantage. For this reason, we have included the following section on 9.♞d3.

White Meets Black's 8...♞fd7! with 9.♞d3

Although Wojo preferred meeting Black's 8...♞fd7 with 9.♞xd7, the retreat 9.♞d3 is considered stronger by theory. Whereas 9.♞xd7 simply hoped for Black to play 9...♞xd7?!, when Black suffers from his inability to develop his light-squared bishop, the thematic retreat of the knight to d3 actually works to increase the pressure on Black's position. We have seen this move played many times before in this chapter, and the only difference here is that Black has the possibility of playing 9...♞c6 to relieve some of the pressure on his b7-pawn. With this move, Black also looks to play one of his knights to e5

at some point, exchanging pieces and simplifying the position. In this section, we will examine 9.♞d3 over the course of two annotated games – the first featuring 9...♞c6, Black's best try for equality, and the second covering Black's other move 9 options.

**Loginov, Valery (2525)
Rogić, Davor (2435)**

[E60] Berlin (9) 1995

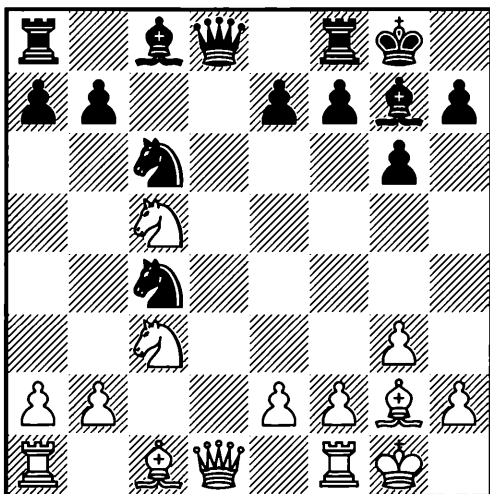
1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.g3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♞e5 ♞fd7 9.♞d3 ♞c6

This is Black's best move, momentarily relieving the pressure on his b7-pawn and preparing to bring one of his knights to e5. Black's other move 9 options are examined in the next game.

10.♞c3 ♞de5

10...♞b6 11.♞xc5 ♞xc4 12.♞a4 ♞b6 13.♞h4 transposes back to the game, whereas 10...♞ce5?! allows White to pile up on the b7-pawn after 11.♞xe5 ♞xe5 12.♞b3, transposing to the note to White's move 11 in Wojtkiewicz-Vombek above.

11.♞xc5 ♞xc4



Both sides have captured each other's respective c-pawns. In his notes to the game F.Ólafsson-R.Byrne, Lugano 1970 – which also saw the line 12.♞a4 ♞b6 13.♞h4 – Bent Larsen writes the following in *ZOOM 001*:

In the position on the diagram [sic] the symmetry is re-established, so White must be better. But these positions are crammed with tricks and traps making it impossible to prove anything. A joker maintains that White is in “zugzwang”. In any case – the text continuation cannot be considered a clear proof. But with

a Queen on h4 there are always plenty of chances.

We agree that White's best here is indeed to swing his queen over to the h4 square via a4. The constant pressure on Black's kingside will be a constant annoyance for the second player, and it is worth noting that White ultimately wins this game in that sector.

12.♞a4 ♞b6 13.♞h4 ♞d4

Again Black's best try. Worse is 13...e5, looking to trade queens, as this blocks Black's g7-bishop and weakens the d5 square. White was better in S.Kustár-T.Besztercsényi, Hungary 1995, after 14.♞g5 f6 15.♞e3 ♞e7 16.♞ac1 ♞d8 17.♞fd1 ♞f5 18.♞d5 ♞xd5 19.♞xd5 and so on.

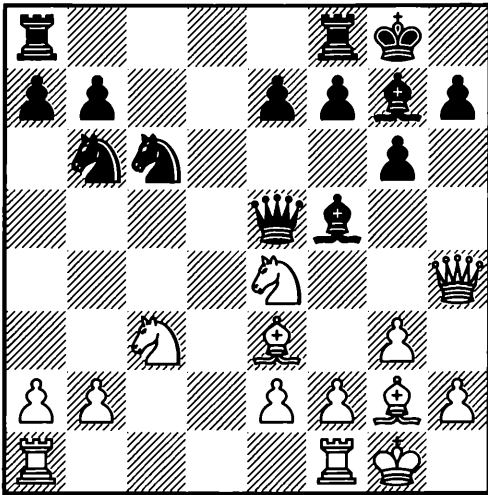
14.♞5e4

Of course White does not want to exchange queens. After the text, the first player hopes to give Black's queen on d4 the runaround.

14...♞f5

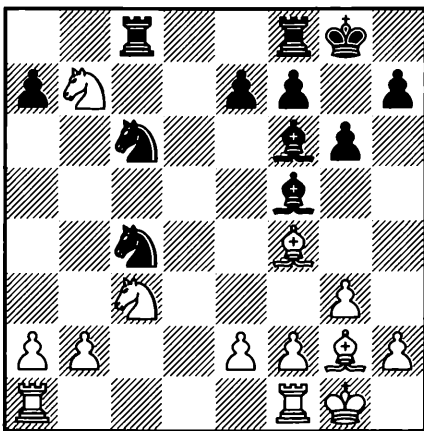
This is considered the main line. The computer move 14...f5?! was seen in D.Baider-M.King, New Zealand 2009, when here 15.♞e3 ♞b4 (or 15...♞c4 16.♞xb6, transposing) 16.♞c5 was played. Here Black blundered with 16...♞a5?, and 17.b4 ♞a6 18.b5 left White winning. But even after the correct 16...♞c4 17.♞xb6 fxe4 (forced in view of ♞f6+, winning Black's queen) 18.♞xe4, White has a strong initiative on the kingside.

15.♞e3 ♞e5



16. B♗ad1!?

A reasonable try for the advantage. White waits to play his knight to c5. After the immediate (and obvious) 16. ♖c5, Black managed to create complications in A.Adly-T.Burg, Netherlands 2008, with 16... ♙f6 17. ♗f4 ♗xf4 18. ♙xf4 ♗ac8 19. ♖xb7 ♖c4:



This type of active approach for Black, taking aim at White's pawns queenside pawns, is highly recommendable for the second player. Although White could have maintained the advantage here with 20. ♖d5 ♙xb2 21. ♗ac1! ♙xc1 22. ♗xc1 e6 (not 22... ♖4e5? 23. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 24. ♖xe7+ or 22... ♖a3? 23. ♗xc6) 23. ♖f6+ ♖g7 24. ♗xc4, this idea would have been difficult to find over the board. From a practical standpoint, going after White's

queenside pawns in this manner is often Black's best bet.

16... B♗fd8

The engines prefer 16... ♙xe4, but giving away the bishop pair like this is obviously a concession.

17. ♖c5

White now can safely claim a slight plus. His pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal is mounting.

17... ♗xd1 18. ♗xd1 ♗c7?!

After this retreat, White takes the initiative. Better was 18... ♙f6 19. ♗f4 ♗xf4 20. ♙xf4 ♖c4, as per Adly-Burg in the note to White's move 16 above. Then 21. ♖xb7 ♖xb2 22. ♗c1 ♗c8 (22... ♖d4 runs into 23. ♖d6 and ♖xf5) 23. ♖d5 ♖d4 24. ♖f1 ♗xc1+ 25. ♙xc1 ♖c4 26. ♖xf6+ exf6 leaves White with only a minuscule edge thanks to his bishop pair. White will need to somehow round up Black's a-pawn in order to obtain any real winning chances here.

19. g4!

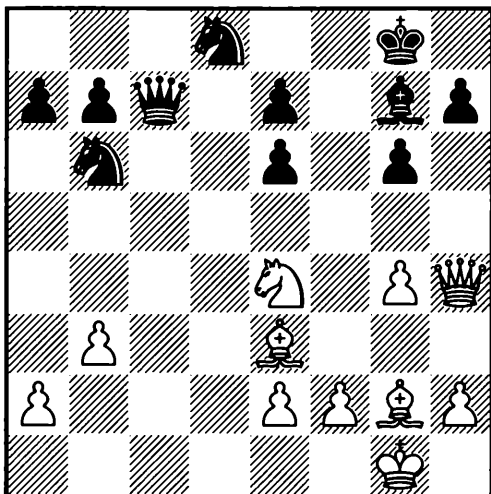
White now begins to set Black considerable difficulties.

19... ♙e6

Black is seemingly compelled to play this move, as 19... ♙c8?? runs into 20. ♖b5. White's advantage now takes a more concrete form in terms of structure and material.

20. ♖xe6 fxe6 21. ♖e4 ♗d8 22. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 23. b3

THE ANTI-YUGOSLAV WITH 6...c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♖e5!?



White takes time out to guard his queenside pawns.

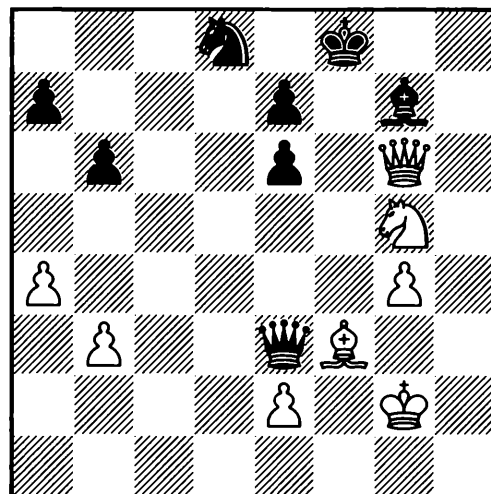
23...♖d5 24.♖g5 ♖xe3!?

24...♖f6 was a safer alternative, but Black would then be quite passive. From a psychological standpoint, the text is more tempting for the second player. Black allows White to create a passed g-pawn but in return gets to check White's king a number of times.

25.♖xh7+ ♖f8 26.fxe3 ♖c5 27.♖xg6 ♖xe3+ 28.♖f1 ♖c1+ 29.♖f2 ♖f4+ 30.♖f3 ♖xh2+ 31.♖f1 ♖e5

Black has not lost material, but he has not gained much over the past five or six moves, either. The bishops of opposite color help White here, as he is attacking Black's king. Black's g7-bishop is tied to its square in view of ♖h7 mate from White. White's next several moves are likely designed to help him reach the time control.

32.♖g2 ♖e3 33.♖h1 ♖c1+ 34.♖h2 ♖e3 35.♖g2 b6 36.♖h1 ♖f4 37.♖g1 ♖c1+ 38.♖f2 ♖f4 39.♖g2 ♖e3 40.a4



White's first order of business is to create a bind on the queenside.

40...♖f4 41.♖h7+ ♖g8 42.♖g5 ♖f8 43.♖f2 ♖h2+ 44.♖f1 ♖f4 45.♖g2 ♖e3 46.b4

After having tortured Black for a few moves, White finally decides to advance another pawn on the queenside.

46...♖f4 47.b5 ♖e3

47...♖xa4? would have lost instantly to 48.♖xe6+ ♖xe6 49.♖xe6 followed by ♖d5.

48.♖h1 ♖c1+ 49.♖h2 ♖f4+ 50.♖h3 ♖e3 51.♖g2 ♖f4 52.♖h7+ ♖g8 53.♖e4!

A strong move, threatening ♖e8+. Black must defend against this, but here he finds himself at an important crossroads. Accurate play is of the essence.

53...♖f7??

Black chooses the wrong way to block the white queen's path to e8. 53...♖f7 was necessary, when here White would continue to torture Black

after 54.♖g5, keeping the queens on the board and eventually planning to invade to c8 via ♖c1. The text allows White to wrap things up quickly.

54.♖xe6 ♖d6 55.♖c8+ ♖d8 56.♖f5

This move is problematic for Black. White is not just satisfied with his extra pawn; he wants to checkmate the black king.

56...♖d2 57.♙d3 ♖c1 58.♖d5

White threatens ♙g6.

58...♖c8 59.♙f5 ♖d8 60.♖a2

Or 60.♖e6 ♖d6 61.♙g5 ♖xe6 62.♙xe6.

60...e5 61.g5 1-0

Black has no good way to free himself from the pin along the a2-g8 diagonal.

At least up until around move 16, this game represents what is considered “best” play for both sides in the entire 8.♙e5 variation. The menacing presence of White’s queen on h4 gives him a slight but persistent advantage. In many lines – indeed, as we saw in this game – White is able to conjure up strong piece play on the kingside. Black’s best chance is to find a way to trade queens, activate his minor pieces, and attack White’s queenside pawns. If the second player can manage to do all three of these things, there is a good chance the game will peter out to a draw. But as we saw in the note to White’s move 16, a clear route to equality still has not been found for

Black. With the improvement 20.♙d5 on the game Adly-Burg, White may still hold a significant advantage.

**Ehlvest, Jaan (2627)
Sepp, Olav (2439)**

[E60] Tallinn 2000

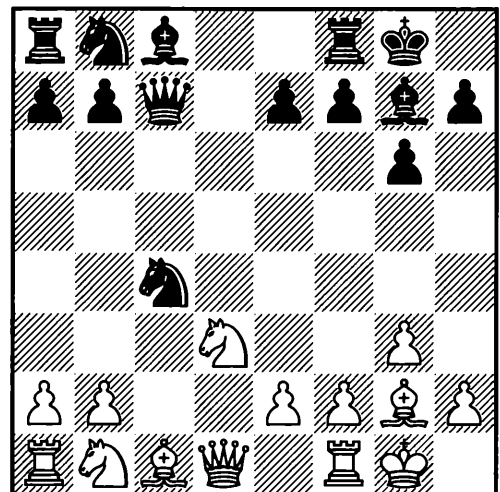
1.♙f3 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♙e5 ♙fd7 9.♙d3 ♙e5!?

The only real alternative to the main line with 9...♙c6, analyzed in the previous game. Bad is 9...♙b6?!, first tested in V.Loginov-O.Loskutov, St. Petersburg 1996. After 10.♙a3 ♙c6 11.♙xc5 ♖xd1 12.♖xd1 ♙a5 13.♖b1 ♙axc4 14.♙xc4 ♙xc4 15.b3 ♙a5 16.♙b2 ♙f5 17.♙xg7 ♙xg7 18.♖bc1, White was clearly better according to Janjgava.

10.♙xc5 ♖c7

The point of Black’s play, gaining time on White’s knight on c5. 10...♖xd1 11.♖xd1 ♙xc4 12.♙d2 ♙d6 13.♙de4 ♙xe4 14.♙xe4 ♙c6 15.♙e3 gave White strong pressure on the queenside in D.Elyakim-Zor, corr. 1990.

11.♙d3 ♙xc4



11...♜xc4 allows White to develop while attacking Black's queen. 12.♘a3 ♜e6 (12...♜g4!? 13.h3 ♜f5 14.♘f4 ♘bc6 15.♘d5 with ideas of e4 and f4 gave White a pull in G.Arsović-M. Maksimović, Serbia 2006) 13.♘b5!? (13.♘f4 is also good) 13...♘a6 14.♘f4 ♜b6 15.a4 ♘c6 16.♙e3 left White with his typical queenside initiative in A.Adly-S.Belkhodja, Libya 2009.

12.♜c2

White's advantage here is once again slight: his knight on d3 is better placed than its pinned counterpart on c4. Over the next few moves, however, White's advantage will grow.

12...♘a6

The first sign that Black's position is somewhat less comfortable than White's. The second player is unable to develop his queen's knight to its natural square on c6.

13.♘c3 ♘d6

Black must retreat his knight from c4 before White has the opportunity to play ♘d5. 13...♘b6 14.♙f4 (14.♙e3 immediately is just as good) 14...e5 15.♙e3 ♙f5 16.♞ac1 ♘b4 17.♜b3 ♘xd3 18.exd3 ♙e6 (not 18...♙xd3?? 19.♘d5) was A.Kolarov-S.Dittmann, Germany 1955, when here 19.♜a3 ♜d7 20.♘e4 still would have kept a slight edge for White. White's active play on the queenside more than compensates for his backward d-pawn.

14.♙f4 ♙f5

Black provokes e2-e4 in the hope of blocking the h1-a8 diagonal.

14...♙e6 would have been met by 15.♞ac1 and so on.

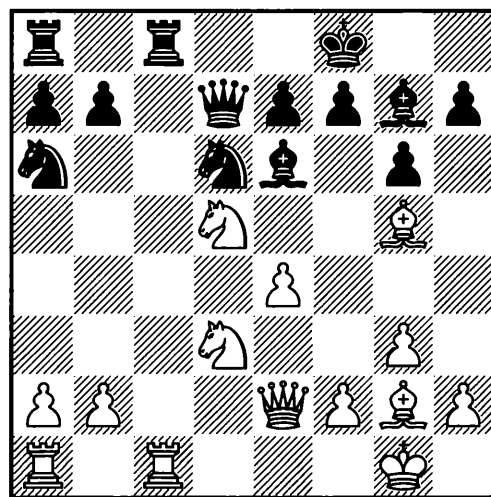
15.e4

Starting with this move, White develops a significant initiative.

15...♙e6 16.♞fc1

White presumably chooses this rook so as to keep the a2-pawn well-defended.

16...♞fc8 17.♜e2 ♜d7 18.♘d5 ♘f8 19.♙g5



The pressure on Black's position is increasing, so he is now forced to cede the bishop pair. The resulting structure gives White excellent chances thanks to his pressure along the e-file and strong d5-pawn. Just as in the last game, the main theater of action will be the kingside.

19...♙xd5 20.exd5 h6 21.♙f4 ♞xc1+ 22.♞xc1 ♞c8 23.♞e1

White correctly avoids swapping rooks in favor of maintaining pressure against Black's position. White's knight is coming to e5, after which Black will be compelled to give up his remain-

ing bishop – and after that, with two bishops against two knights, White's advantage will be tremendous.

**23...♟f5 24.♟e5 ♞xe5 25.♞xe5
♟c7 26.♞d2**

White's two bishops afford him excellent attacking chances against Black's king. White threatens g3-g4 here, so Black will once again be forced to make some type of concession.

26...f6 27.♞c3

Winning a pawn with 27.g4!? fxe5 28.gxf5 g5 29.♞xe5 was also possible, but White prefers to keep his bishop pair.

27...♟b5

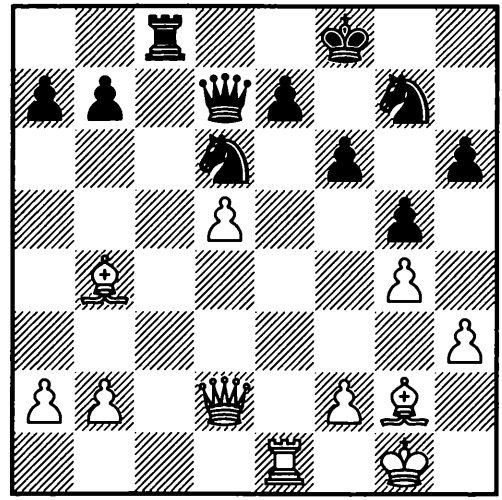
27...♟g7, defending the h6-pawn, was probably necessary here. Then 28.d6!? ♟xd6 29.♞xb7 ♞b8 30.♞g2 would allow White to shift the focus of the game to the queenside, though Ehlvest would likely have wanted to keep his strong d5-pawn.

28.g4 ♟g7 29.♞b4

Strong. Now Black is forced onto the last three ranks.

29...♟d6 30.h3 g5

Black's 9...♟e5!? leads to a position that (at move 12) doesn't look like it should be that much better for White. However, as is often true in openings with symmetrical structures, the fact that the first player has even a tiny initiative is significant. Over the course of this game, White's initiative continued increasing at every juncture along the way. First, he won the bishop pair; then he reached a two-bishops-versus-two-knights middlegame. Finally, he provoked a number of weaknesses in Black's kingside structure and penetrated on the light squares.



An ugly move, allowing White to penetrate on the light squares.

**31.♞d3 h5 32.f3 ♟f7 33.♞h7
hxc4 34.fxc4 ♞c4 35.a3 b6?**

A blunder by Black that loses the game. 35...♞c7, coordinating Black's army, would have allowed the second player to keep fighting.

36.♞f1

White plays ♞g2-f1-d3 with a gain of time, continuing his conquest of the light squares around Black's king.

36...♞f4 37.♞d3 ♞xc4+

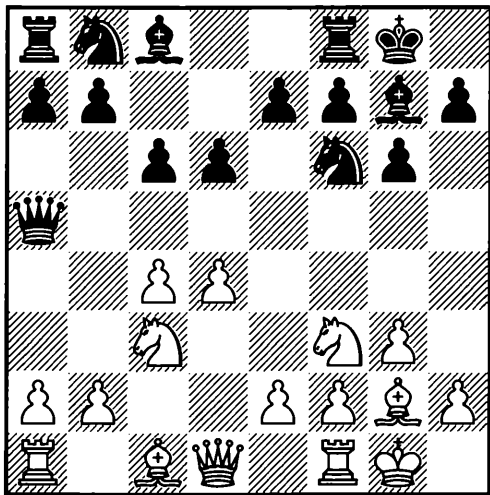
There is nothing better, as White was threatening mate.

**38.hxc4 ♞xc4+ 39.♟f2 ♞f4+
40.♟e2 f5 1-0**

Conclusion: Although it has been known since the 1950s that Black's best response to 8.♖e5!? is 8...♜fd7!, after the thematic retreat 9.♜d3, Black is still struggling to prove that he can equalize. Thus, we recommend Ehlvest's preference of 9.♜d3 instead of Wojo's pet move 9.♜xd7. In practice, the line with 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♖e5 scores up to our expectations. Wojo was able to obtain a score of 90% with it, and it scores around 70% in the databases. This is a far more practical approach for White than heading for the main line with 7.♜c3 ♜c6 8.d5 ♜a5, which gives Black everything to play for.

Chapter 11

Black's Queen Development with 6...c6 and 7...Qa5 (The Kavalek System)



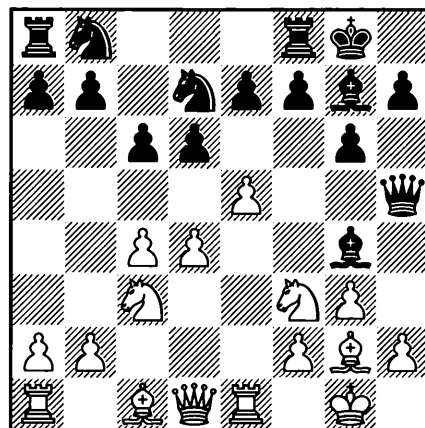
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♘c3 ♚a5

The early development of Black's queen to a5 has a peculiar appeal to it. It is used by players of Black because it appears exotic and obscure enough to be played "for the win," as they say, yet it still falls squarely within the realm of modern theory. In fact, the move 7...♚a5 is the starting point for one of the most heavily analyzed lines in the entire Fianchetto King's Indian. Thus, a titled player playing the black pieces is able to research the line thoroughly at home before springing it on his hapless (i.e., unprepared) club player opponents in tournament practice.

With 7...♚a5, Black hints at the ...♚a5-h5 maneuver while still keeping flexible in the center. The most common move now is 8.h3 for White, taking control over the g4 square (and thus preventing any possible ...♗c8-g4 ideas) and preparing to meeting 8...♚h5?! with the simple 9.g4. Things get heated after 8...♗e6! 9.d5 exd5 10.♘d4 dxc4, however, and the game quickly spirals into a much-ventured, well-documented, and "dynamically equal" chaos. Instead of heading into these lines, Wojto had another critical test of the move 7...♚a5: the simple 8.e4. In this chapter, we lay the groundwork for the reader to share in the development of a powerful system against 7...♚a5 using 8.e4, based on a combination of testing ideas taken from the games of Wojtkiewicz and others.

Countering a Flank Attack in the Center with e4-e5: When Black Insists on 8...♞h5!?

According to principle, the best response to a premature flank attack by one's opponent is to organize a counterstrike in the center. When Black insists on meeting 8.e4 with the cheeky 8...♞h5!?, White can throw a wrench into the coordination of Black's piece attack on the kingside by breaking it up with 9.e5. Practice has shown that Black's pieces are not coordinated well enough to withstand this central thrust; if he avoids trading into a worse endgame, his pieces generally wind up scattered and disorganized. This is exactly what happens in our first example.



11.h3! ♟xh3 12.♟xh3 ♞xh3 13.♞g5 ♞h5 14.♞xh5 gxh5 15.e6 f6 16.exd7 fxg5 17.♞xe7 left White with a big edge, which he successfully converted.

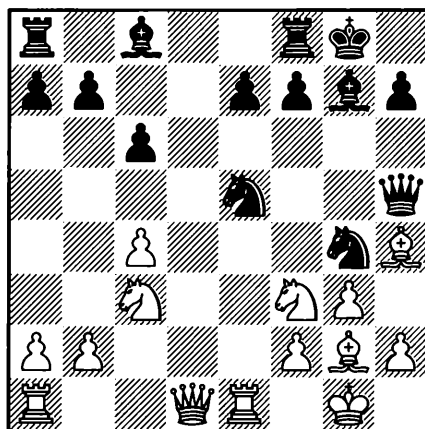
The immediate 9.e5 is in keeping with the same spirit as 9.♞e1. White breaks up the center in order to disrupt Black's rather extravagant kingside piece play.

9...dxe5

The passive 9...♞e8 is examined in the next game.

10.♞xe5

Also possible is 10.dxe5, as seen in A.Wojtkiewicz-J.Fang, Philadelphia 1992. Wojo won the tactical battle that ensued after 10...♞g4 11.♞e1 ♞d7 12.♟f4 g5! 13.♟xg5 ♞dxe5 14.♟h4:



Pigusov, Evgeny (2520)
Zaichik, Gennadi (2500)

[E62] Moscow 1987

1.♞f3 d6 2.d4 ♞f6 3.g3 g6 4.♟g2
♟g7 5.c4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♞c3 ♞a5
8.e4 ♞h5

We cover the main line, 8...♟g4, in the next section.

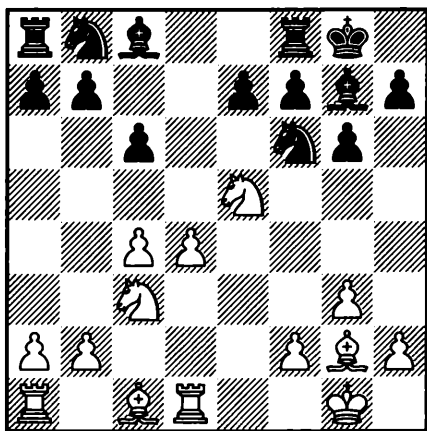
9.e5

Wojo dabbled with some other moves here, but we like 9.e5 the best. White readily agreed to a draw in A.Wojtkiewicz-M.Krasenkow, Poland 1991, after 9.♞g5 ♞xd1 10.♞xd1 1/2-1/2. He was, however, victorious in A.Wojtkiewicz-N.Stanec, Graz 1996 with the alternative 9.♞e1. Then 9...♟g4 (9...e5 is better) 10.e5 ♞fd7:

14...♖f5 15.♙xe7 ♜xf2? (15...♞e8 was better) 16.♜xf2 ♜d3+ 17.♜g1 ♞e8 18.♞e3 ♙d4 19.♞d2, when Black didn't have much to show for his sacrificed material. From the diagram, however, the position is assessed as unclear by GM Lasha Janjgava. After 14...♜xc4, Black has plenty of activity. Hence, the text move is simpler.

10...♜g4!?

More ambitious than the conciliatory 10...♞xd1 11.♞xd1, which gives White a slight edge in all lines. White's ideas here are similar to those in the previous game. Some examples:



a) 11...♜bd7 12.f4 followed by the plan of ♙c1-e3, b2-b3, ♞a1-c1, h2-h3, and so on is good for White.

b) On 11...♜fd7, avoiding exchanges with 12.♜f3 is simplest. White gets a pull after 12...♜b6 13.b3 ♜8d7 14.♙e3 as in R.Tibenský-Z.Hagarová, Slovakia 1998.

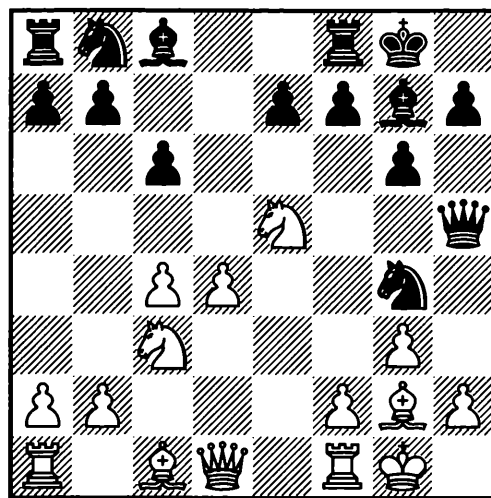
c) 11...♜g4 12.♜f3 ♜d7 (12...e5 13.d5 cxd5 14.cxd5 f5 15.h3 e4 16.hxg4 exf3 17.♙xf3 fxg4 18.♙g2 left White with a strong passed d-pawn in A.Vaulin-B. Gruzmann, Budapest 1992) 13.h3 ♜h6 (13...♜gf6 14.b3 ♞e8 15.♙f4 ♜h5 16.♙c7! left Black uncomfortable in J.Dorfman-S.Desbonnes, France 1997) 14.♙f4 ♞e8 15.♞ac1 f6 16.♞e1 ♜f8 17.d5

♜c5 18.♞cd1 e5 19.♙e3 and White went on to win in D.Blagojević-C.Piasecki, Baden-Baden 1990.

d) On 11...♞d8, the quiet 12.h3 with the idea of ♙c1-e3 gives White a good game.

With that out of the way, let's return to the game.

11.♜f3



Best. White responds soundly to Black's knight sortie, retreating to preserve his control of the center.

11...♜h6?!

This knight move looks awkward, and our analysis shows it to be somewhat dubious. The point is that Black is preparing a handful of maneuvers. He plans to trade White's light-squared bishop with ...♙c8-h3 and aims to strike at White's center with ...♜h6-f5. White's next move, however, reveals the poor coordination of the black pieces.

11...♞d8 is Black's main alternative. Then 12.h3 ♜f6 (12...♜h6 can also be met with 13.♜e2, when 13...e5? runs into 14.g4 and 13...♜d7 can be met with 14.♙g5! ♜e5 15.dxe5! ♞xd1 16.♞axd1 ♙xh3 17.♜f4, when White wins material) 13.♜e2 gives White the initiative, for instance 13...♞a5 14.♞e1

BLACK'S QUEEN DEVELOPMENT WITH 6...c6 AND 7...♖a5

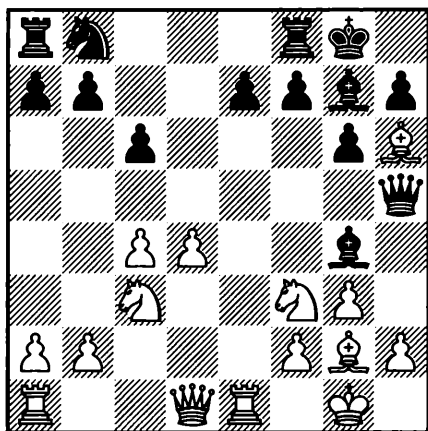
♟e4 15.♜b3 ♟d7 16.♙f4 with a pull in E.Pigusov-I.Smirin, Sverdlovsk 1987.

12.♞e1

Oddly enough, Black has considerable difficulty meeting the simple threat of White taking on e7.

12...♙e6

The pawn sacrifice 12...♙g4 gets Black nowhere after 13.♙xh6 (better than 13.♞xe7?! ♟f5), when both of Black's recaptures look bad:



For instance, 13...♙xh6 14.♞xe7 ♟d7 was V.Bukal-Z.Kožul, 2001, when here 15.h3! ♙xh3 (not 15...♙e6 16.♟e4 ♙g7 17.♟fg5, with an attack for White) 16.♟e5 ♜xd1+ 17.♞xd1 ♟xe5 18.dxe5 ♙g4 19.♞d4 ♙c8 20.♟e4 would have given White a tremendous bind. But the more common 13...♜xh6 runs into 14.♞xe7 ♟d7 15.♜d3 ♞ad8 16.d5, when Black did not have quite enough compensation in P.Vavrák-E.Bakoš, Slovakia 1997.

Best is the passive 12...♞e8, which can be met with 13.♜b3, keeping up the pressure. In the works are moves (listed in no particular order) like ♙c1-g5, ♟c3-e2-f4, ♙c1-f4, ♞a1-d1, and even an opportune h2-h3 and g3-g4.

13.d5

The logical counter to Black's last move.

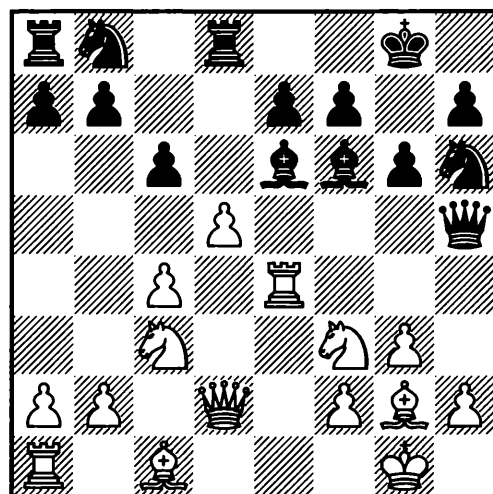
13...♞d8

Of course, 13...♙g4 14.♙xh6 ♙xh6 15.♞xe7 wouldn't help matters for Black.

14.♞e4

An ambitious rook lift. White threatens to win a piece with ♞e4-h4. A plausible alternative was 14.♜b3, but the text seems stronger.

14...♙f6 15.♜d2



15...♙g4

Black was already losing, but this drops a piece. 15...cxd5 16.cxd5 ♙f5 17.♞b4 was also winning for White.

16.♜xh6 ♙xf3 17.♜xh5 ♙xh5 18.g4

Ending the game.

18...♙xc3 19.bxc3 cxd5 20.cxd5 f5 21.♞xe7 1-0

Black's plan with 10...♟g4!? and 11...♟h6?! didn't turn out well. White's

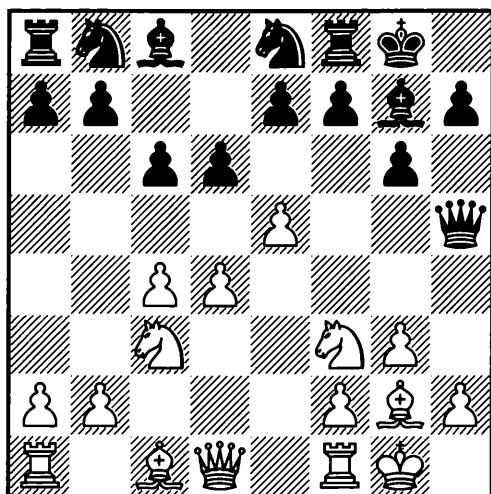
forces were organized and effective in the center, so Black didn't have time for such kingside lollygagging. Black's kingside counterplay was never genuinely threatening for White, so the first player was free to focus on creating strong tactical play based around the open d- and e-files. This led to Black's prompt demise.

Lechtýnský, Jiří (2380)

Kranzl, Peter (2310)

[E62] Linz 1993

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7
4.♕g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♘c3
♖a5 8.e4 ♖h5 9.e5 ♘e8!?



The more critical 9...dxe5 is examined in the next game.

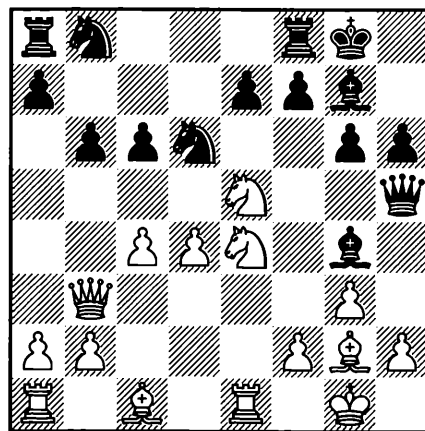
10.♖e1

10.exd6 has been tried a few times, but White prefers to keep the tension.

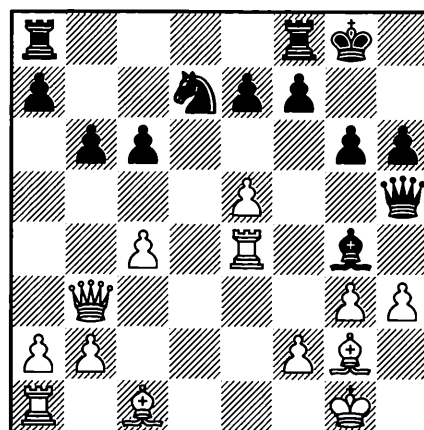
10...dxe5

Trading into the endgame, although quite passive, is perhaps Black's best idea, as 10...♕g4 runs into the strong 11.♖b3!, tested in D.Ippolito-A.Shabalov, Philadelphia 1998. Black is already under pressure here, as White had

the advantage after 11...b6 (11...♕xf3? 12.♕xf3 ♖xf3 13.♖xb7 wins material) 12.♘e4 h6 (12...dxe5 13.♘xe5 ♕xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.♖a3, with control of the dark squares, gives White ample compensation for his pawn) 13.exd6 ♘xd6 (or 13...exd6 14.♕f4) 14.♘e5!:



Note how well-coordinated White's pieces are in relation to Black's. The game continued 14...♕xe5 15.dxe5 ♘xe4 (not 15...♘f5?!, when 16.f3 ♘d4 17.fxg4 ♘xb3 18.gxh5 ♘xa1 19.♕xh6 ♘c2 20.♖d1 ♖e8 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.♘f2 followed by ♕g2-e4 gives White a promising mating net around Black's king) 16.♖xe4 ♘d7 17.h3:



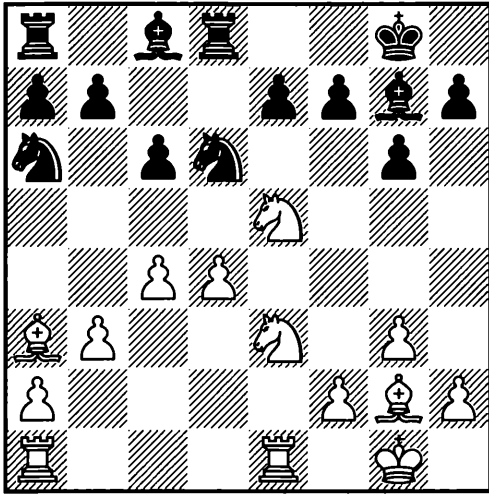
17...♕e6 (17...♕xh3!? 18.♖h4 ♘c5 19.♖c2 ♕f5 20.♖xh5 ♕xc2 21.♖xh6 gives White the two bishops and better game; meanwhile, 17...♘c5? 18.hxg4 ♘xb3 19.axb3! traps Black's queen) 18.g4 ♖h4 19.♖c3 ♘c5 20.♖d4 f6!? (20...♖ad8 was better), when here the simple 21.exf6 ♖xf6 22.♕e3 would have secured White a lasting positional edge.

BLACK'S QUEEN DEVELOPMENT WITH 6...c6 AND 7...♖a5

11.♘xe5 ♜xd1 12.♘xd1

Continuing to exert pressure along the e-file. 12.♞xd1 was possible, but White has a specific setup in mind.

12...♘d6 13.♘e3 ♘a6 14.b3 ♞d8 15.♙a3



White's bishop on a3 and rook on e1 are converging on the e7 square. Black's position is, to say the least, unpleasant.

15...♙f6 16.♞ad1 h5 17.f4

Preparing for the d4-d5 break.

17...♘f5 18.♘xf5 ♙xf5 19.h3

White gradually builds up his advantage. The immediate 19.d5 was also strong, for instance, 19...c5 20.d6! exd6 21.♙xb7 dxe5 (21...♞ab8 22.♙xa6 dxe5 23.♙xc5 also wins a pawn) 22.♙xa8 ♞xa8 23.♞d6 ♘b4 24.♙xb4 ♙e7 25.♙xc5 ♙xd6 26.♙xd6 leaves White a pawn to the good.

19...♘c7 20.♖h2

White is preparing g3-g4 and ♖h2-g3.

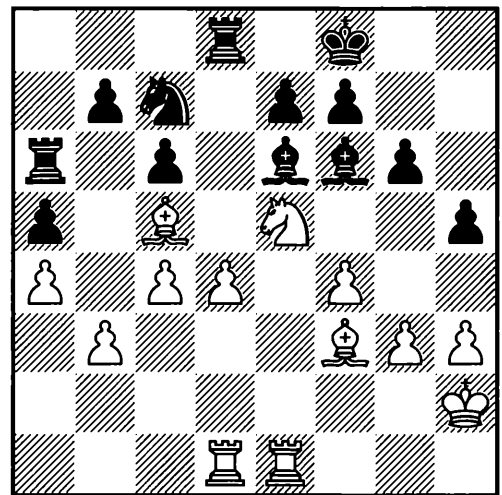
20...♙e6 21.♙f3 a5!?

Black feels the need to grab more space, but this also weakens his b6 square.

22.♙c5

Taking advantage of the newly created hole in Black's queenside.

22...♞a6 23.a4 ♖f8



24.g4

With Black entirely locked down on the queenside, White decides to strike on the kingside.

24...hxc4 25.hxc4 ♙xe5

Otherwise, White would have simply continued his buildup with ♖h2-g3 and so on. This trade does not help Black, who is close to losing here.

26.♞xe5 f6 27.♞e3 ♞d7 28.♖g3 ♞a8

Black has no reasonable defense.

29.♞de1 ♖f7 30.♙b6 1-0

Black can do nothing to stop White from winning a piece, so he resigns.

White created a strong bind in the queenless middlegame that arose after 12.♠xd1. Throughout the game, he played several moves intended to build up his position: 10.♖e1, 14.b3 and 15.♙a3, 16.♖ad1, 17.f4, 19.h3, 20.♔h2, 21.♙f3, and so on. Black never had any real counterplay, meaning that White had a comfortable game throughout. Players of White should look forward to grinding Black down in these types of positions.

Conclusion: When Black insists on playing 8...♞h5, White gets the upper hand without having to do anything out of the ordinary. The strike 9.e5 is based on principle. If Black refuses to trade queens, he will suffer from poorly coordinated pieces and get overrun in the center. If he acquiesces to the queen swap, however, he has dismal prospects for counterplay against White's slow buildup of forces in all sectors of the board.

White's Bishop Pair: Getting the Edge Against ...♙c8-g4

If Black can't get away with taking "advantage" of White's 8.e4 (omitting the move 8.h3) by playing 8...♞h5, he can instead try to do so by playing 8...♙g4. With this move, Black agrees to cede the bishop pair with 9.h3 ♙xf3. What does Black gain by this? First, he relieves some of the cramp in his position, as one of his knights (either the b8 one or the f6 one) will come to d7 without having to block in his light-squared bishop on c8. Second, he weakens White's control of the center slightly by removing a white defender of the d4 and e5 squares. This means that his strike ...c6-c5 may hit White harder. And third, Black hopes to gain time. However White recaptures on f3, he will slightly misplace one of his pieces, and it is likely that he will have to reposition it in the near future.

But do all these pluses for Black really compensate him adequately for the loss of the bishop pair? According to modern practice, the answer is no.

Whether White plays the traditional recapture with 10.♙xf3 (as Wojo did) or opts for the more creative 10.♞xf3 (as detailed in the next section), he can look forward to a comfortable edge. His main task for the next several moves will be deciding how to react to Black's ...c6-c5 or ...e7-e5 counterpunches in the center. Usually, as in the following illustrative game, opting to take space with d4-d5 will provide White the advantage he seeks.

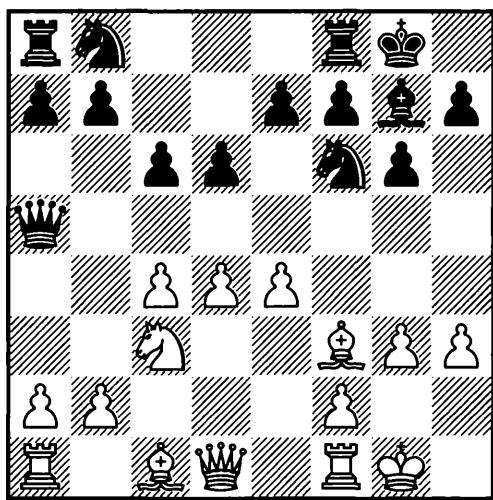
**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2595)
Huss, Rolf (2220)**

[E62] Germany 1998

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
4.♙g2 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♠c3
♞a5 8.e4 ♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♙xf3

The move Wojo played. In the next section, we look at one of Dean's specialties, the lesser-known 10.♞xf3.

BLACK'S QUEEN DEVELOPMENT WITH 6...c6 AND 7...♖a5



10...e5

10...♟fd7 is the main move, which we examine in Wojtkiewicz-de Guzmán below.

10...♟bd7 is met comfortably by 11.♙e3 c5 (or 11...e5 12.d5 with a nice space advantage, for instance 12...cxd5 13.cxd5 ♜fc8 14.♝c1 a6 15.♚d2 ♞c5 16.♝b1 ♚d8 17.♝fc1, V.Tkachiev-C.Bernard, France 1999) 12.dxc5 ♞xc5 13.a3, as in S.Guliev-M.Röder, Macedonia 2001, which went 13...♟cd7 14.♙e2 ♟e5 15.f4 ♞c6 16.b4 ♚d8 17.♝c1 with a clear advantage for White.

11.♙e3 ♟fd7

It is difficult to recommend much else. 11...exd4 12.♙xd4 ♟bd7 13.♝b1 has been played in a handful of games and greatly favors White. Also, 11...♟bd7 12.d5 transposes to the note to Black's move 10 (see Tkachiev-Bernard above), while 11...♚b4 12.♚b3 ♚xb3 13.axb3 leads to a good endgame for White.

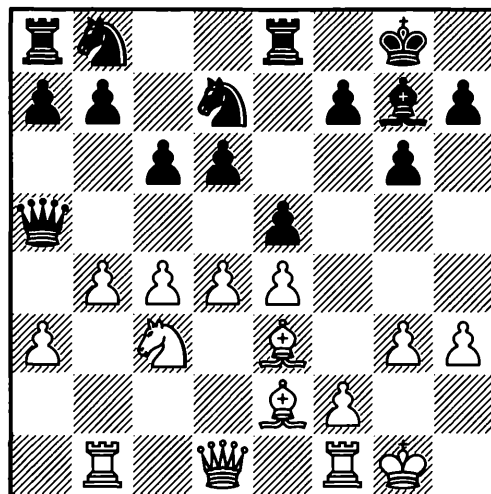
12.♝b1

White is simply preparing to expand on the queenside.

12...♚b4

This "threat" on c4 is met easily. Black ends up wasting time evacuating his queen from this square, as is par for the course with such queen sorties in the Fianchetto King's Indian.

13.♙e2 ♜e8 14.a3 ♚a5 15.b4



15...♚c7

15...♚xa3?! 16.♝b3 ♚xb3 (not 16...♚a6 17.c5) 17.♚xb3 exd4 18.♙xd4 ♙xd4 gives Black some prospects, but 16.d5! ♚xc3 17.♝b3 ♚xb3 18.♚xb3 should give White something close to a winning advantage.

16.d5

From here on out, Black will have a miserably passive game. Locking down the center with d4-d5 was the correct decision – it is time for White to press his space advantage. Black has a cramped game and should now take the opportunity to play 16...c5 while he still can. He has no other useful pawn breaks.

16...♟f6 17.c5

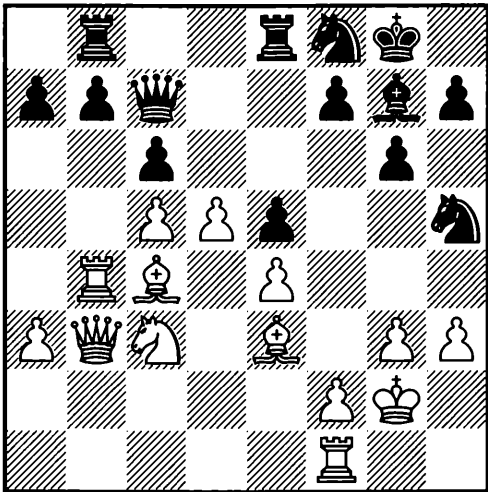
Black has not finished his development yet, so it makes sense for White to strike while the iron is hot.

17...dxc5 18.bxc5

It is best for White to keep his pawn phalanx in the center flexible. Somewhat worse is the committal 18.d6 ♖d7 19.bxc5.

18...♠bd7 19.♙c4

White is eyeing the f7-pawn. His next step will be to line up on the b7-pawn, taking advantage of both of the two tender spots in Black's position.

19...♠f8 20.♙g2 ♠h5 21.♞b4 ♞ab8 22.♞b3**22...a5**

There was not much else to be done; White's positional advantage is too overwhelming at this point.

23.♞b6 ♠d7 24.d6 ♞d8

24...♞c8 25.♙xf7+ ♠h8 26.♙xe8 ♠xb6 27.♙xg6 (adding insult to injury) 27...hxg6 28.♞xb6 is also hopeless for Black.

25.♙xf7+ ♠h8 26.♞xb7 ♞f8 27.♞xb8 ♠xb8 28.♞b1 ♞f6 29.♞e6 1-0

White reacted to Black's ...e7-e5 break by gaining space on the queenside and eventually locking Black down with d4-d5. All in all, Black was unprepared to combat White's simple march on the queenside – without his light-squared bishop, starting a kingside attack would have been futile (or perhaps impossible). His queen was never well placed, either. This win was a routine one for Wojo.

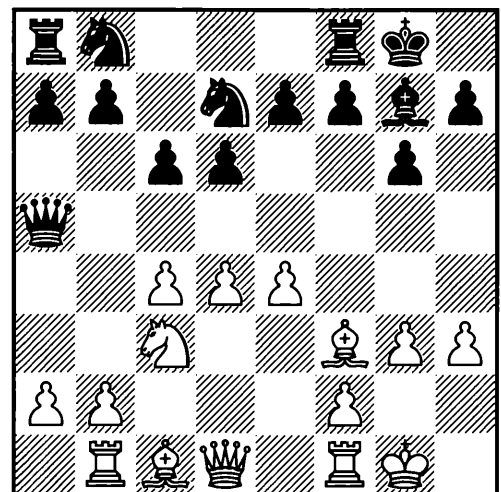
The next game gives us a feel for how Wojo handled Black's other strike, the Benoni-like structures resulting from Black's ...c7-c5.

**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2551)
de Guzmán, Ricardo (2398)**

[E62] Los Angeles 2004

1.♠f3 ♠f6 2.c4 d6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2 ♙g7 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♠c3 ♞a5 8.e4 ♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♙xf3 ♠fd7

The main line. This move is considered stronger than any of Black's other tenth moves, but Wojo's favorite 11.♞b1 causes Black problems.

11.♞b1!?

11.♗e3 is the main line, but the text move has been gaining in popularity in recent years, having been played by GMs like Dautov, Hansen, Kengis, Vaganian, Goldin, Baburin, and others. White steps off the a1-h8 diagonal and prepares the b2-b4 push.

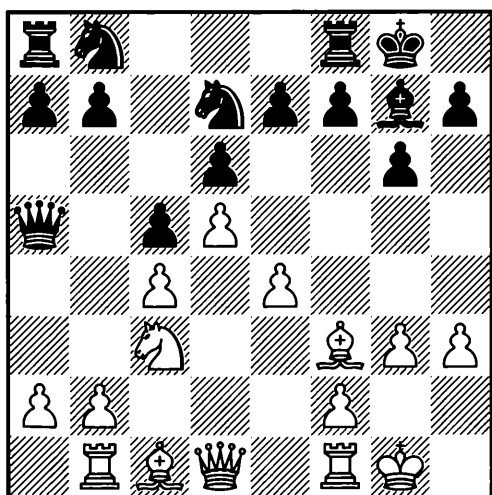
11...c5

The most common try. 11...a6 12.b4 ♖d8 13.♗e3 b5 14.♗e2 bxc4 15.♗xc4 ♘b6 16.♗e2 ♘8d7 17.♖b3 left White with control of the center in C.Hansen-E.Mortensen, Denmark 1998.

Otherwise, 11...♘a6 (to stop b2-b4) 12.a3 c5 13.d5 is rather similar to the game, as 13...♗xc3?! 14.bxc3 ♖xc3 15.♖xb7 gives the initiative to White. This move order might be slightly more accurate, however, since White “wastes” a move with a2-a3.

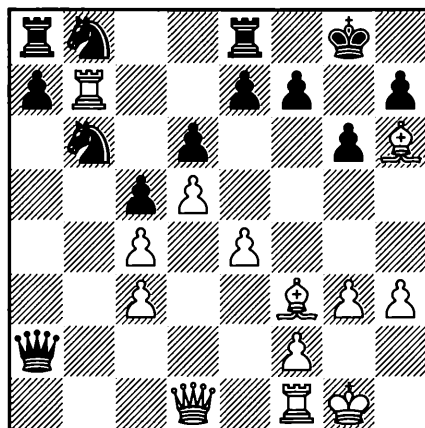
12.d5

Again, this pawn push is the correct response to Black's counterstrike in the center. White takes the space that Black gives him and hopes to make something of it. For now, the idea of White's simply developing with ♖d1-c2, ♗c1-(d2)-e3, ♗f3-e2, f2-f4, and so on is impressive enough.



12...♘a6

12...♗xc3?! led to disaster for Black in A.Wojtkiewicz-G.Binger, Reno 1999, after 13.bxc3 ♖xa2 14.♗h6 ♗e8 15.♖xb7 ♘b6:



16.♖a1! ♖xc4?? (16...♖xa1 17.♖xa1 ♘8d7 18.♖xa7 ♗xa7 19.♖xa7 ♘e5 20.♗e2 would have kept Black kicking) 17.♖xb6 axb6 18.♖xa8 ♖xc3 19.♗e2 ♖b4 20.♖a1 f6 21.♖b1 ♖a5 22.♖b2 1-0.

Taking the other pawn with 13... ♖xc3 fares no better: 14.♗e2 b6 (14... ♘b6 15.♗b2 ♖a5 16.♖c2 was similarly good for White in J.Bernášek-D.Gross, Czech Republic 2004) 15.♗b2 ♖a5 16.♖c2, followed by a kingside pawn storm, gave White ample compensation in R.Stern-P.van der Brink, Netherlands 1993.

13.♗d2 ♖d8

Of course not 13...♗xc3?! 14.♗xc3 ♖xa2? 15.♗e2!, when White plans on trapping the queen.

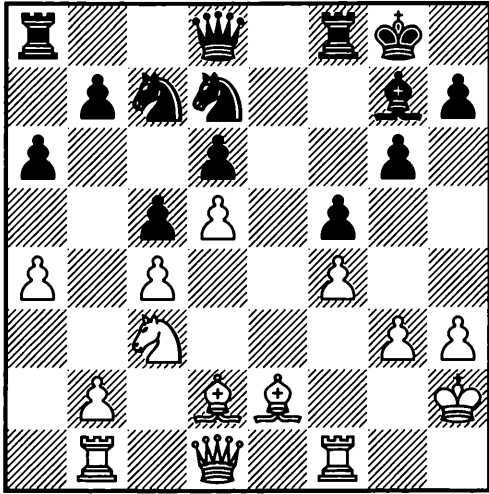
14.♗e2

In the next phase of the game, White begins to take additional space to put a crimp on Black's position.

14...♘c7 15.♗h2 a6 16.a4

Correctly stopping the ...b7-b5 break.

16...e6 17.f4 exd5 18.exd5 f5



These types of structures are generally good for White, who has the freer game. Here, he plans a break with g3-g4, taking advantage of his unopposed light-squared bishop. Because Black is locked down on the queenside, he has no real prospects for counterplay.

19.♔d3 ♖f6 20.a5 ♖f7 21.♗f3 ♜fe8

21...b5 22.axb6 ♞xb6 23.g4 was also good for White.

22.g4 fxg4

Otherwise, White could play g4xf5 and saddle Black with a weak pawn on f5. White would also gain considerable chances on the g-file.

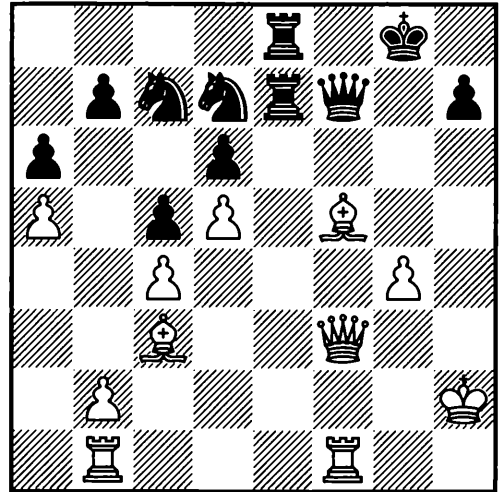
23.hxg4 ♕xc3

Desperation. White was threatening ♜c3-e4, increasing the pressure.

24.♕xc3 ♜e7 25.f5 gxf5

25...♞e5? 26.♕xe5 ♜xe5 27.fxg6 ♜xf3 28.gxh7+ wins for White.

26.♕xf5 ♜ae8



Black gains counterplay down the e-file, but it is not strong enough. White's control of the long diagonal gives him a decisive advantage. Now all he needs is to add more firepower to his attack.

27.♗h3 ♜e2+ 28.♔h1 ♜8e3 29.♜f3 ♜xf3 30.♗xf3 ♜e7 31.♜f1

White has emerged on top, as Black's skirmish down the e-file came to naught.

31...♗f8 32.♗h3 ♜f7 33.g5 1-0

Black resigns, since g5-g6 is threatened and 33...♞e5 runs into 34.♕xh7+.

In this game, White again took space with d4-d5 – only this time, the position resembled a sort of Benoni structure. White's space advantage was tremendous, however, so he had no trouble running Black over on the kingside. It is hard to pinpoint exactly where the game went downhill for the second player, as he made no obvious mistakes. He had the "opportunity" to play 12...♙xc3, but practice has not smiled upon surrendering the dark-squared bishop this way. Thus, it is hard to know what to recommend for Black against 11.♞b1.

Conclusion: Wojo's remedy against 8...♙g4 was to take the bishop pair with 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♙xf3, then look to gain space in the center with d4-d5 ideas. In both of the example games, Black was simply pushed back until his position collapsed. White can look forward to playing against this line with confidence.

A Surprise Weapon: White's 10.♞xf3!?

For those players of White looking to go the extra mile with their opening preparation, we have included in the final section of this chapter a quick survey of White's other recapture on f3 after 8...♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3, the interesting 10.♞xf3!?. Our analysis shows that taking with the queen is just as strong as the 10.♙xf3 main line. Black cannot reach equality here, either – and considering that opponents playing Black are less likely to have seen the move 10.♞xf3 before, they will likely be less prepared for it.

The most important difference between 10.♙xf3 and 10.♞xf3 is that, with the latter, White is piling up on Black's b7-pawn with the ♙g2/♞f3 battery. Should Black carry out his normal plan of ...♞f6-d7 and ...c6-c5, he will have to contend with the possibility of White's playing the break e4-e5, setting the center on fire. Black can start making exchanges with ...c5xd4 or ...d6xe5, but White plans to simply grab the b7-pawn with ♞f3xb7, trapping Black's rook on a8. The following game illustrates this idea.

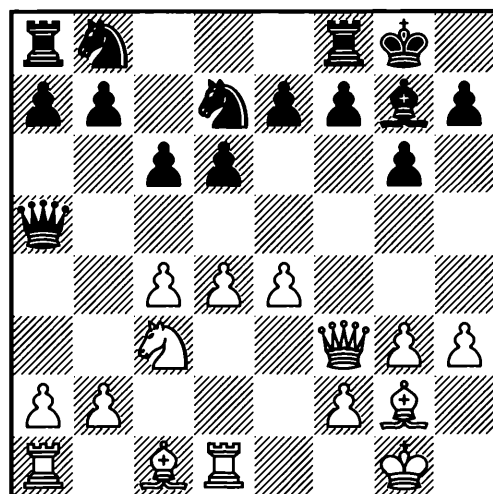
Ippolito, Dean (2280)
Gross, Dan (2150)

[E62] New York 1995

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞f3 ♙g7 4.g3 d6 5.♙g2 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♞c3 ♞a5 8.e4 ♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♞xf3!? ♞fd7

This is the critical line in the 10.♞xf3 variation, but it is also what White wants. We look at Black's move 10 alternatives in the next game.

11.♞d1



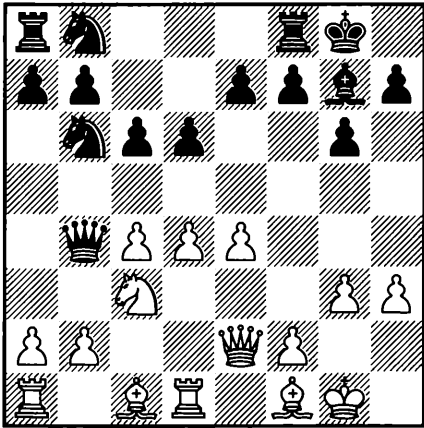
Best. White defends the d4-pawn in a manner that is tactically flexible.

11.♙e3 would run into 11...♚b4 here, causing White difficulties.

11...c5?!

Unfortunately for Black, this runs into a powerful e4-e5 break. Since this is relatively uncharted territory, we provide here a survey of Black's other possible alternatives. This is done more for the sake of the progress of modern theory than it is for anyone to attempt to memorize – players interested in using 10.♚xf3 in their own games will certainly want to run through this analysis, but there is little point in committing it to memory. Without further ado:

a) 11...♘b6?! 12.♚e2 ♚b4 is met comfortably by 13.♙f1. We analyze three lines here:



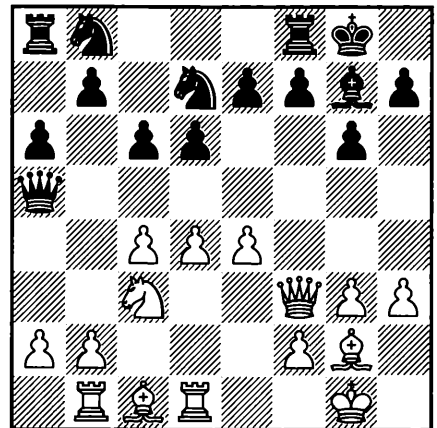
a1) 13...a5? 14.♙d2! ♘6d7 (either 14...♙xd4? 15.♘b5 or 14.♚xb2? 15.♙ab1 wins for White, and 14...♘8d7 15.b3! with the idea of ♘c3-b5 is also strong for the first player) 15.♘b5! ♚xb2 16.♙ab1 ♚xa2 17.♘c3 ♚a3 18.♙a1 ♚b2 19.♙db1 ♚xa1 20.♙xa1 ♙xd4 21.♙a3 left White winning in D.Ippolito-R.Porter, Washington, D.C. 1994.

a2) Another try for Black is 13...c5, but here 14.dxc5! ♚xc5?! (14...dxc5 was a better try, but 15.♘d5 still gives White

the edge) 15.♙e3 ♚b4 16.♙ac1 gave White the upper hand in D.Ippolito-A. Marchione, New Jersey 1994.

a3) Finally, 13...♘8d7 14.♚c2! is uncomfortable for Black, since 14...♘xc4?? 15.a3 wins a piece, and 14...c5 15.a3 ♚a5 16.♙d2 ♚a6 17.dxc5 dxc5 (17...♘xc5 18.b4 is a clear edge for White) 18.♘b5 ♙ad8 19.♙c3 leaves the second player under pressure.

b) 11...a6 is a better try, but now GM Gregory Kaidanov's idea of 12.♙b1! is again good for White:



The idea is that 12...b5 is met by 13.b4 ♚c7 (or 13...♚b6 14.c5) 14.cxb5 axb5 15.e5! dxe5 16.d5! with the initiative, for instance 16...e4 17.♘xe4 ♙xa2 18.♚b3 ♙a6 19.♙f4, whereas 12...c5 13.e5!? cxd4 (13...♘c6!? 14.exd6 exd6 15.dxc5 is also an initiative for White) 14.♚xb7 dxc3 15.bxc3 ♘c6 16.exd6! ♙ab8 (16...exd6 17.♚xc6 ♘e5 18.♚xa8 ♙xa8 19.♙xa8 is a clear advantage for White) 17.♚xc6 ♙xb1 18.dxe7 ♚xc3 19.♚xd7! ♙xc1 20.exf8 ♚+ ♙xf8 21.♙xc1 ♚xc1+ 22.♙h2 leaves White with some endgame chances.

c) 11...♘a6 12.♚e2 ♘c7 13.♙b1 ♘e6 14.♙e3 ♚b4 15.f4!? ♘b6 16.f5 ♘c7 17.♙f1 d5 was seen in V.Miguel Lago-S.Estremera Panos, Mondariz 1995, when here 18.exd5 cxd5 19.c5 would have given White a clear advantage.

d) 11...♞b4?! 12.♞e2 ♠b6 transposes back to note "a" after 11...♠b6?! 12.♞e2 ♞b4.

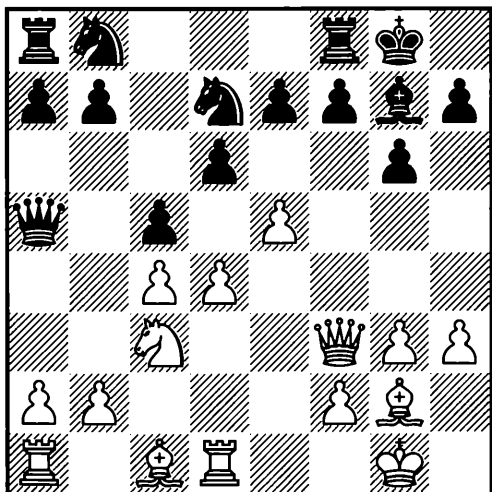
e) 11...♞b6 allows White to just continue developing with 12.b3!, which has the idea of 12...♠xd4 13.♠a4 with the advantage.

f) 11...f5!? is suggested by some chess engines, but it hardly makes sense for Black to play on the kingside when his queen is on a5. The *Rybka 4* engine is properly revolted by this move, suggesting 12.exf5 ♞xf5 13.♞e2 with ♠c1-e3, ♠c3-e4, and h3-h4 on the way, with a clear plus for White.

g) 11...e5 12.♠e3 (12.d5 immediately, as suggested by Janjgava, is also fine) 12...a6 (12...exd4 13.♠xd4 ♠e5 14.♞e2 or 12...♞b6 13.b3! with the idea of ♠c3-a4 maintain White's superior center) 13.♞ab1 b5 14.b4 ♞c7 15.cxb5 axb5 (or 15...cxb5 16.♠d5 ♞b7 17.♞bc1 with the idea of ♞c7) 16.d5! was a clear advantage for White in D.Ippolito-L.Walker, Parsippany 2000. The game continued 16...♠b6 (or 16...cxd5 17.♠xd5! ♞c4 18.♠f1 ♞xa2 19.♠xb5) 17.dxc6 ♞xc6 18.♠xb6 ♞xb6 19.♞e2, winning a pawn for White.

With that, let us return to the game.

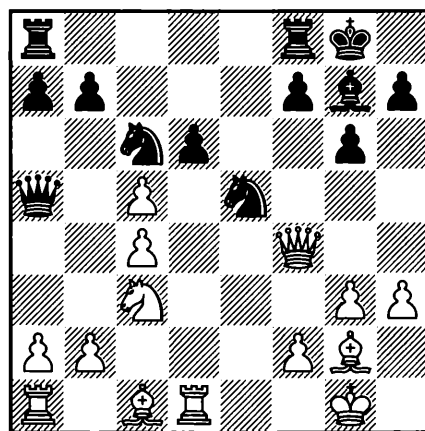
12.e5!



White also has an edge after 12.d5, but 12...♠b6 gives Black counter-chances on the queenside.

12...cxd4?!

Of course Black should not play 12...dxe5?, when 13.♞xb7 cxd4 14.♠d5 leaves Black's rook on a8 trapped. But 12...♠c6! is Black's best chance for counterplay. Now White has 13.exd6 exd6 (13...♠xd4 14.♞xb7 wins for White, for instance 14...♠b6 15.dxe7 ♞fe8 16.♠f4 ♠f6 17.♠d2! with ♠d5, hitting the bishop on f6, to follow, and 13...cxd4 14.dxe7 ♠xe7 15.♠b5 ♠c6 16.♠d6 gives White the initiative) 14.dxc5, when 14...♠de5 can be met with the novelty 15.♞f4!:



White gets a pleasant edge after 15...dxc5 16.♠d5 ♞ad8 17.♠e3 ♠d7 18.♞d2, with the idea of ♞ad1 to follow.

13.♞xb7

13.exd6 dxc3 (or 13...♠c6 14.dxe7 ♠xe7 15.♠b5 ♠c6 16.♠d6, with the initiative) 14.dxe7 ♞e8 15.♞xb7 is somewhat less messy than the game, and possibly more precise.

13...dxc3

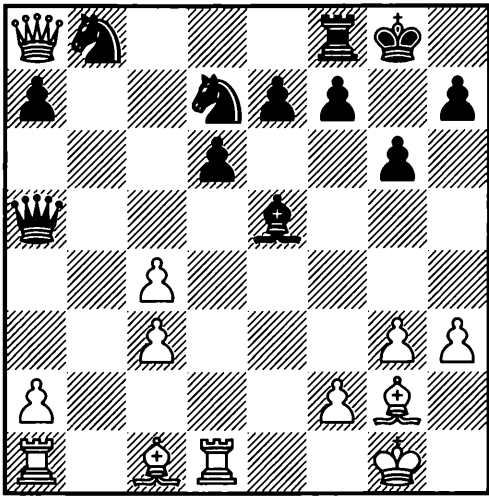
13...♠xe5 14.♠d5 ♠bc6 15.♞b5!

causes Black considerable tactical problems along the h1-a8 diagonal.

14. ♖xa8

While Rome burns, White fiddles.

14... ♗xe5 15. bxc3



White has emerged with a clear advantage. He is up the exchange and has the two bishops.

15... ♖b6

15... ♗xc3 16. ♖b1 (not 16. ♗h6 ♗xa1 17. ♗xf8 ♗f6!) 16... ♗xa2 17. ♗g5 ♗d4 18. ♗xe7 ♗xf2+ 19. ♖h1 ♗e5 (or 19... ♗e8 20. ♗xd6) 20. ♖d3! ♗e8 21. ♗xd6 keeps White's clear advantage.

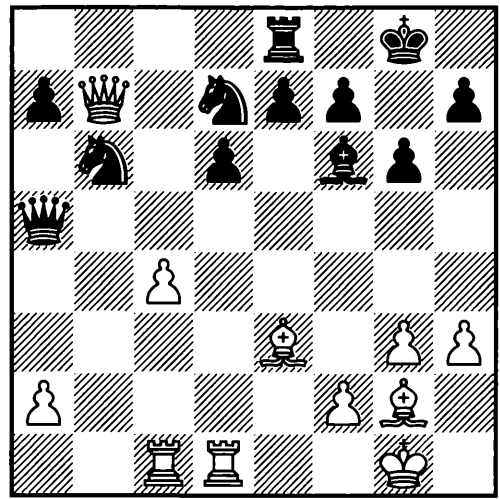
16. ♗b7 ♗xc3 17. ♗h6! ♗e8

17... ♗xa1 18. ♗xf8 would now, of course, leave Black's knight on b8 hanging. Then 18... ♖8d7 19. ♗xe7 wins for White.

18. ♖ac1 ♖8d7

18... ♗f6 19. ♗e3 targets Black's queenside.

19. ♗e3 ♗f6?!



After this, Black is finally losing. His alternatives weren't much better: 19... ♖d8 20. ♗xb6 axb6 21. ♖xc3 ♗xc3 22. ♗c7 wins for White, and 19... ♖b8? 20. ♗xb6 wins for White again. Keeping the game complicated with 19... ♗b2 was Black's best chance. Then 20. ♖c2 ♗xa2 21. ♗c6! (but not 21. ♗c6?! ♖b8) leaves Black unable to handle White's threats, but 20... ♖b8! would keep Black fighting.

20. ♗c6 ♖d8 21. ♗xd7

21. ♗c7? ♖c8 22. ♗xb6 ♖xb6 23. ♗b7 ♗xa2 would help Black turn the tables.

21... ♖xd7

21... ♖xd7? 22. ♗xb6 wins instantly.

22. ♗xa7

22. ♖d5! was more accurate. White threatens ♗c7, so Black must play into the line 22... ♖c5 23. ♗xc5 dxc5 24. ♗b5 ♗c7 25. ♖xc5, when White is winning.

22... ♖c5?!

22... ♗a3, with the idea of 23. ♗c7 ♖a8!, would have kept Black in the game longer.

**23.♙xc5 dxc5 24.♞xd8+ ♚xd8
25.♚b3 ♙d4 26.♞c2 h5 27.h4 ♚d6
28.♞e2 ♜g7 29.a4**

After ensuring the safety of his king-side, White begins pushing the a-pawn.

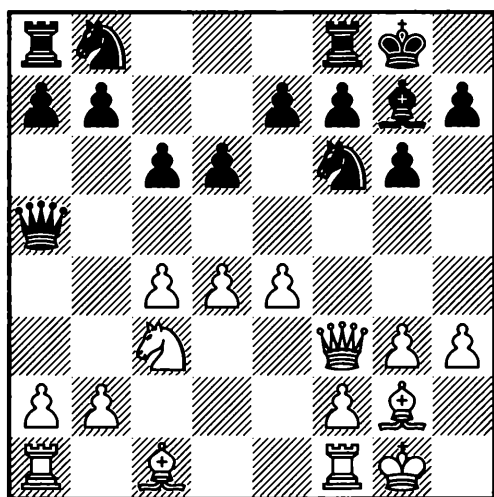
**29...♚c7 30.♜h2 ♙f6 31.♞a2 g5
32.hxg5 ♙xg5 33.a5 h4 34.a6 1-0**

After Black's normal-looking 11...c5, White's 12.e5! led to complications favorable to the first player. Tactically, the position after White's move 12 is challenging for Black, who seems to be losing material right and left. In this game, White won the exchange and eventually traded down material to convert it.

**Ippolito, Dean (2373)
Smith, Bryan (2316)**

[E62] Foxwoods 2000

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.♘c3 c6 7.0-0 ♚a5
8.e4 ♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♚xf3**

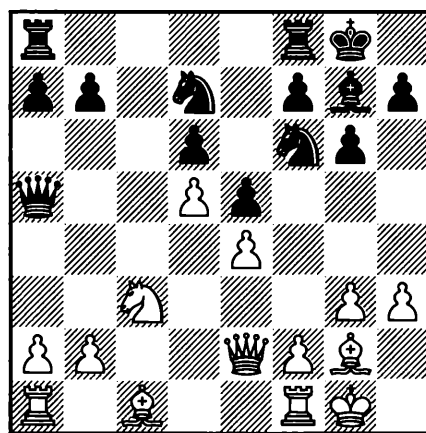


10...♘bd7

This is not particularly good for Black here, since White gains an important tempo over the 10.♙xf3 varia-

tion. White won't have to waste time retreating his bishop to g2, so Black's ...♘d7-e5 ideas don't pack so much of a punch. Alternatively, 10...♚b4?! is possible, but the simple 11.♚e2 ♘fd7 12.♞d1 leaves White better.

Commonly played, then, is 10...e5, another one of Black's tries here. White gets an advantage after either 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.a3 ♘bd7 13.b4 ♚c7 14.♞d1, as in H.Danielsen-K.Berg, Denmark 1995, or 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♘bd7 13.♚e2 (or 13.♙d2 immediately), followed by ♙c1-d2 and ♞f1-c1, resulting in one of the pawn structures with d4-d5 discussed in Chapter 2:



The game M.Marin-B.Badea, Bucharest 1996 – originally analyzed in *Informant* 66 – continued 13...a6 14.♙d2 ♞fc8 15.♞fc1 ♚d8 16.b3 ♞c7, when here White struck upon an interesting plan with 17.♘d1. His idea was to attack Black's d6-pawn with ♘d1-b2-c4 and ♙d2-b4. The plan worked, and White had a clear edge after 17...♞xc1 18.♞xc1 ♞c8 19.♘b2 ♞xc1+ 20.♙xc1 ♙f8 21.♙d2 ♙e7 22.a4 (22.♘c4 was also possible) 22...♘e8 (22...a5 23.♚b5 is good for White) 23.♘c4 ♙g5 24.♙b4 ♚e7 25.h4 ♙h6 26.♙h3, and so on.

11.♚e2!

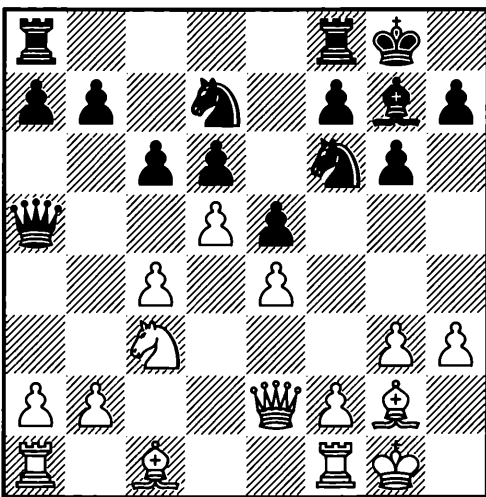
A novelty. White stays flexible and prepares e4-e5. 11.♞d1 was also better

for White in D.Ippolito-A.Grószpéter, Hampstead 1998, but the text is an improvement.

11...e5

11...c5?! would run into 12.e5, taking advantage of Black's uncoordinated knights, while; 11...♘e8 12.♙d1 preserves White's advantage.

12.d5



White correctly decides to lock the center. His pieces are well coordinated, so Black will struggle to gain sufficient counterplay on the queenside.

12...♙fc8

Marginally better is 12...cxd5, when here 13.cxd5 ♙fc8 (or 13...a6 14.♙d2 ♙fc8 15.♙fc1 ♙d8) 14.♙d2 ♙d8 15.♙fc1 would transpose to the line 10...e5 11.d5, mentioned in the note to Black's move 10.

13.♙d2

The immediate 13.dxc6!? bxc6 14.♙d1 is also possible.

13...♙a6

13...♙d8!?, relocating the queen to e7, might have been better. Black's queen will look misplaced in a couple of moves.

14.dxc6 ♙xc6

The resulting structure is good for White, who has the two bishops and play involving the d5 square. The alternative was 14...bxc6, when 15.♙fd1 with b2-b4 and perhaps ♙d2-e3 to follow would have been uncomfortable for Black.

15.b3 ♘c5 16.♙ad1

Keeping the option of kingside play with f2-f4 alive. It will soon be clear as to why White chooses to place his queen's rook, rather than his king's rook, on d1. The impatient 16.♘d5?! ♘xd5 17.cxd5 would throw away much of White's advantage after 17...♙a6.

16...a6 17.♙g5

Looking to increase White's pressure on the d5 square.

17...♙ab8

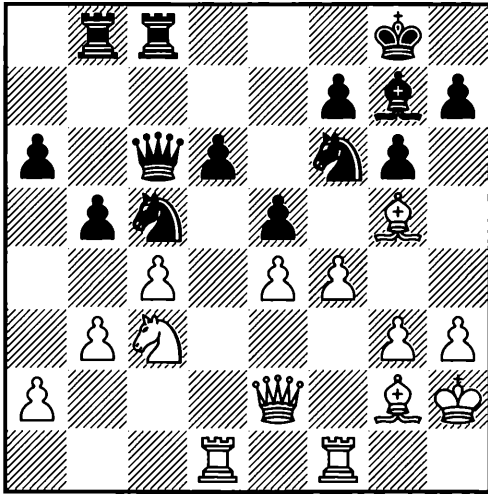
Black is being kept firmly under White's control here, since 17...♘e6?!, attempting to come into d4, would lose to 18.♘d5. The quiet 17...♘cd7 was likely better, but then 18.♙d2 would keep Black under wraps.

18.♙h2

A prophylactic move played before attacking the kingside with f2-f4.

18...b5 19.f4

BLACK'S QUEEN DEVELOPMENT WITH 6...c6 AND 7...♞a5



19...exf4?

The decisive mistake. Black would have been better off playing 19...bxc4 20.fxe5 dxe5, for instance 21.♞f3 cxb3 22.♠d5 ♞xd5 23.♞xf7+ ♠h8 24.exd5 ♞b6. Black has some open lines for

counterplay, though White's strong passed pawn on d5 and his bishop pair leave his position preferable.

Another option for Black was 19...♠cd7 20.fxe5 dxe5, though now 21.♞f2 bxc4? would run into 22.♠d5!, with a decisive advantage for White.

20.♠xf6 ♠xf6 21.e5

With this, White wins a piece.

21...fxg3+ 22.♠h1 ♞e8 23.exf6 ♞xe2 24.♠xe2 bxc4 25.bxc4 ♞b2 26.♠xg3 ♞xa2 27.♞xd6 1-0

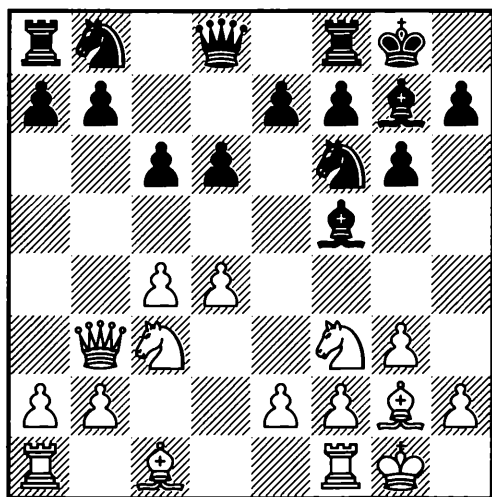
Black has little to show for his lost bishop, so he resigns.

White's accurate 11.♞e2 left him impervious to Black's various tries for counterplay, so Black had to choose the passive 11...e5 over the active 11...c5?!, which would have gotten him in trouble after White's e4-e5 push. After 12.d5 by White, Black was cramped and had few resources available to him. His last chance to stay in the game was on move 19, but his miscalculation cost him dearly. White emerged a full piece ahead.

Conclusion: White's 10.♞xf3!? seems to lead to an advantage for White in all lines, just like the main line with 10.♠xf3. In both of our sample games featuring the former, White won in a sharp tactical battle, so players wishing to surprise their opponents and win faster may well want to study the material presented here on this lesser-known recapture, and possibly combine it with their own homework. After studying this chapter, no player of the white pieces should ever fear Black's 6...c6 and 7...♞a5.

Chapter 12

Black Controls e4 with 6...c6 and 7...♞f5 (The Larsen System)



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♘c3 ♗f5
8.♞b3

One of Black's other attempts after 6...c6 7.♘c3 is to develop his light-squared bishop to f5. Black aims to control (or at least occupy) the e4 square in order to prevent White's e2-e4 push. Wojo's handling of 7...♗f5, the principled 8.♞b3!?, puts pressure on Black's queenside to take advantage of the absence of the black light-squared bishop from that sector of the board. White looks to achieve either a strong queenside piece initiative or pawn play in the center with ♜f1-e1 and e2-e4-(e5).

White's Queenside Piece Play: Targeting Black's a7- and b7-pawns

8.♞b3 often affords White opportunities for piece play on the queenside. Black's pawns on a7 and b7 become targets, and, given Black's slight lag in development, can often prove difficult for the second player to defend. The following two games illustrate the dangers Black faces in this regard. In the following game, GM Alexander Goldin – in his signature positional

chess style – creates problems for his opponent on the queenside.

Goldin, Alexander (2525)
Chiburdanidze, Maia (2495)

[E62] Sochi 1989

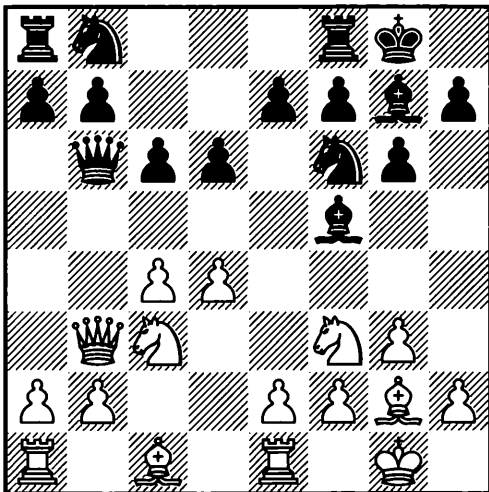
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♘c3
♗f5 8.♞b3!?

The “Wojo Weapon.” This little-known move is less popular than 8.♟h4, 8.b3, 8.♟e1, and 8.♞e1, but packs just as much punch. Black’s light-squared bishop has abandoned the defense of the b7 square, so putting pressure down the b-file makes sense. White is simply looking to develop smoothly, putting his pieces on the best squares.

8...♞b6

The most direct (and most common) way to counter White’s pressure. We examine Black’s alternatives in the next two games.

9.♞e1



Preparing e2-e4. The trade of queens on b3 would only be good for White, who would then have the half-open a-file for his rook.

9...♟fd7!?

A reasonable-looking move which has not been repeated. 9...♟a6, possibly looking to play ...♞b6xb3 and ...♟a6-b4, is more common. We discuss this in the game Dizdar-Miton, below, found later in this chapter.

Less good is the direct attempt to

stop e2-e4 with 9...♟e4. White can play 10.♟h4!, the idea being 10...♟xc3 11.♟xf5. White has no problems maintaining a clear advantage here: 11...gxf5 12.bxc3 ♟d7 (12...♞xb3 13.axb3 ♟d7 14.♟a3 a6 15.♟h3 left Black’s position crumbling in Z.Jaśnikowski-A.Słabek, Kattowice 1995) 13.♞b1 ♞ab8 14.♟g5 ♞fe8 15.♞a3 and Black was under heavy pressure in Z.Jaśnikowski-L.Dworakowski, Słupsk 1992.

Finally, the simple 9...♟bd7 is subdued by way of 10.e4 ♟g4 11.♟e3 ♟xf3 12.♟xf3, gaining the two bishops, and 9...♞xb3 10.axb3 ♟a6 11.e4 is also comfortable for White.

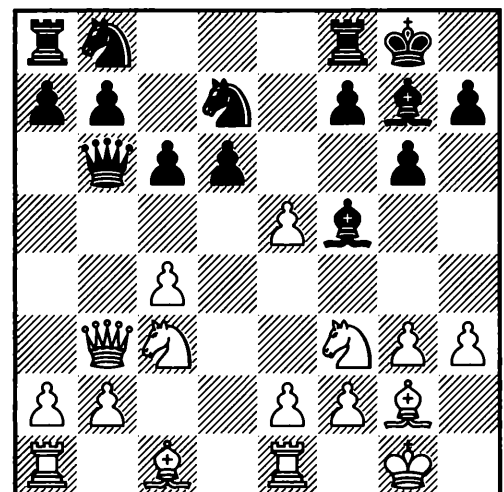
10.h3

Taking advantage of the limited mobility of Black’s light-squared bishop.

10...e5

10...♞xb3 11.axb3 ♟c2 looks annoying at first, but it can be met simply by 12.♟e3!, with ♟f3-d2 to follow. The bishop on c2 will not be able to stay there for long. Of course 12...♟xb3? 13.♟d2 ♟c2 14.♞ec1 ♟f5 15.g4 ♟e6 16.d5 would lose a piece for Black.

11.dxe5



White prepares for play along the g1-a7 diagonal.

11...dxe5?!

11...♘xe5 here was a necessity. 12.♘xe5 dxe5 13.♙e3 ♔c7 14.♖ac1 would then leave White with only a slight pull.

12.♙e3 ♔xb3

Almost forced, as 12...♔c7 13.g4 ♙e6 14.♘g5, winning the bishop pair, would be good for White.

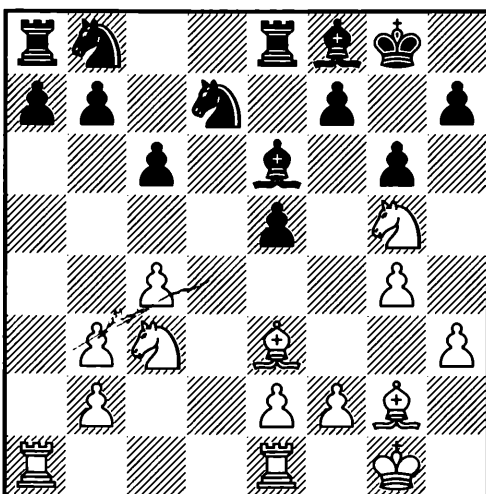
13.axb3 ♗e8

Black is lagging in development, a fact that gives him poor chances in this queenless middlegame. All of White's pieces are extremely active, whereas Black's are passive. It doesn't take long for White to convert his initiative into a more tangible form of advantage. 13...♘a6 looks more natural, but here 14.g4 is just as strong as in the game.

14.g4 ♙e6 15.♘g5

Putting additional pressure on Black and taking the bishop pair.

15...♙f8?!



16.♘b5!

Highlighting Black's difficulties. White is already winning.

16...♘a6 17.♗xa6! bxa6 18.♘c7 ♙b4 19.♗a1 ♘c5 20.♙xc5

Note that White is in no hurry to take either of Black's rooks. He is looking for a way to steer quickly toward a winning endgame.

20...♙xc5 21.♗xa6 ♙b6 22.♘xa8 ♗xa8 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.b4

Accurate to the end. 24.♙xc6, while also winning, might have taken longer. After the text move, White threatens c4-c5, among other things.

24...♙d4 25.e3 ♙xb2 26.♙xc6 ♗c8 27.♙d7 1-0

The point. Black is hopeless to defend her pawns, so she resigns.

After 11...dxe5?!, Black's position went downhill fast. The position that resulted after the exchange of queens with 12...♔xb3 13.axb3 greatly favored White thanks to his queenside pressure. The positioning of White's pieces, particularly his bishops, exerted overwhelming force against Black's queenside pawns. Once the pawns fell, Black was lost.

Just because Black's queenside pawns are weak, however, doesn't necessarily mean that White should be in a hurry to take them. It is important that White play in a deliberate, principled manner, focusing first and foremost on development and preparation for the middlegame. The following game

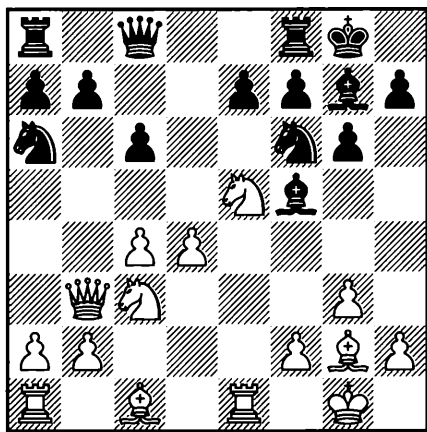
is included as a word of warning and illustrates what can happen if White gets greedy. A young Josh Friedel (now a strong GM, but then just 14 years old) briefly stumbles across the path to victory, nearly defeating Wojo.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2655)
Friedel, Joshua (2202)

[E62] Massachusetts 2001

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 d6 3.d4 g6 4.g3
 ♟g7 5.♟g2 c6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♟c3 ♟f5
 8.♟e1

White mixes things up slightly from his normal move order. 8.♟b3 ♟c8 could transpose back to the game after 9.♟e1 ♟e4?!. Black's other possibility is 9...♟a6 10.e4 ♟g4 11.e5 dxe5 (or 11...♟e8 12.♟f4, with advantage to White, as in J.Jurek-L.Meyer, Odense 1993) 12.♟xe5 ♟f5:



13.♟f4 h6 (13...♟c7 14.d5 gives White a clear advantage) 14.♟ad1 g5 15.♟e3, when White was better in D.Ippolito-B.Finegold, Las Vegas 2006. White plans ♟b3-a3, taking control of the dark squares.

8...♟e4 9.♟b3 ♟c8?!

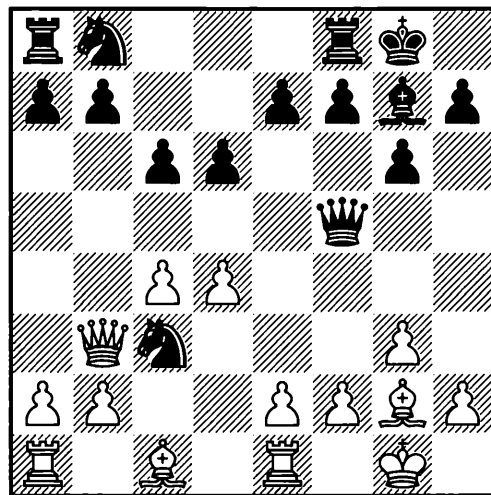
Here either 9...♟b6 or Romanishin's crafty 9...♟xc3 10.bxc3 ♟c8!?

are normal moves for this line. After the text, White has a powerful response.

10.♟h4

The obvious retort. White reclaims control of the e4 square.

10...♟xc3 11.♟xf5 ♟xf5



11...gxf5 was also possible, but the text is fine.

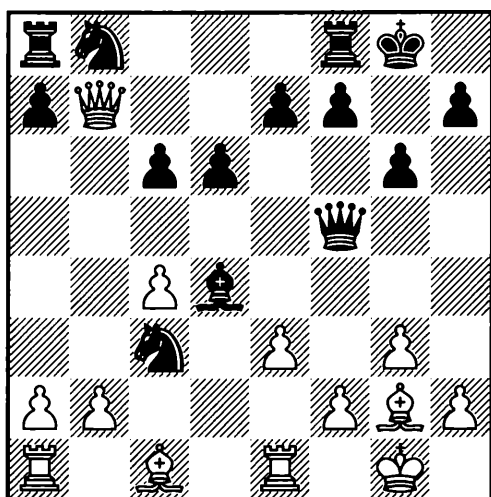
12.♟xb7?

An extremely poor decision, as Black now has the opportunity to develop a powerful, perhaps winning, initiative. 12.bxc3 ♟d7 13.♟b1 is the correct way to obtain a positional advantage, as seen in W.Mażul-M.Szeląg, Poland 1995. White simply targets the queenside pawns and enjoys the bishop pair. The text move does not quite work. White has not finished his development, so this pawn grab is unlikely to succeed.

12...♟xd4

12...♟a4 13.♟xa8 ♟d7, threatening ...♟a4-b6, trapping White's queen, would have made life uncomfortable for the first player. The text is equally good, however.

13.e3



13...♖e4?

From here, the tables turn rapidly. 13...♖b6 14.♙xa8 ♜d7 was the way to keep the momentum going. For instance, 15.♙xc6 (or 15.♙b7 ♜c5) 15...♜e5 16.♙b7 ♜d3 17.♙f1 ♜e2+ 18.♜h1 ♜xf2+ 19.♙xf2 ♙xf2 20.♜d2 ♜xg3+ 21.hxg3 ♙xd2 leaves White decimated.

14.♙f1

Now White, who has everything under control for the moment, enjoys a clear advantage.

14...♜d7 15.exd4

White has emerged with the two bishops and the prospect of winning Black's indefensible c-pawn.

15...♜ef6 16.♙xc6 ♙ac8 17.♙a4 ♙c7 18.b3 ♙b8 19.h3 ♜b6 20.♙a3 ♙c2 21.♜e3

Black sorely misses his own dark-squared bishop.

21...♙d3 22.♙a5 ♙bc8 23.g4 ♙c2 24.♙ad1 1-0

Black gives up, as there is nothing to stop White from converting his advantages.

White's greedy 12.♙xb7? nearly cost him the game. Luckily for Wojo, Black failed to find the best moves, ultimately allowing White to keep the material. Although the b7-pawn is indeed a weakness that White should target, he needs to look around and evaluate his development before grabbing it. The simple 12.bxc3 would have given White a risk-free edge.

Conclusion: White often gets pressure and piece play on the queenside in this line. Grandmasters like Goldin make obtaining and converting this advantage appear effortless: all that is required is for White to make sure he completes his development with speed and accuracy and keep an eye out for tactical shots.

Pawn Play in the Center with e2-e4

When White is allowed to carry out his plan of e2-e4, there are two main possible outcomes. The first is that Black plays passively and allows White to march the pawn all the way up to e5. As we'll see in the following game, this can

have devastating consequences for the second player. The second probable outcome is that Black will hit White's pawn center with either ...c6-c5 or ...e7-e5, in which case White locks the pawn structure in the center with d4-d5.

This gives White ample maneuvering room and allows him to start thinking about expanding with his pawns on the flanks. We look at an example of this in Dizdar-Miton, the second game in this section, below.

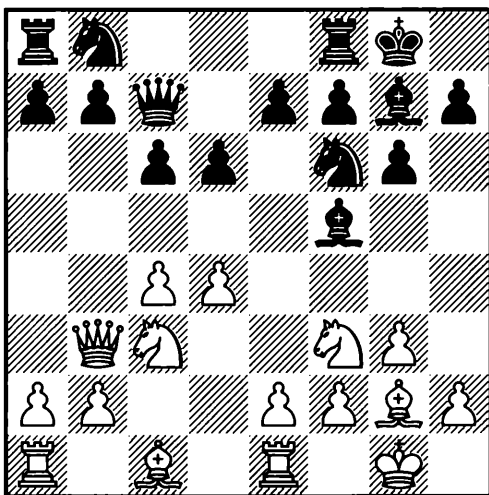
Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2580)
Német, Iván (2415)

[E62] Bern 1993

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
 4.♗g2 0–0 5.d4 d6 6.0–0 c6
 7.♗c3 ♗f5 8.♖b3 ♖c7

Less common than 8...♖c8, examined in the next game, or 8...♖b6, as seen in the last one. Black steps onto the h2-b8 diagonal, something which may cause him problems later on.

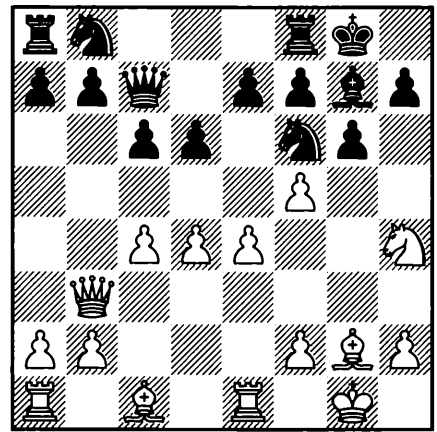
9.♞e1



White, as usual, simply goes about preparing e2-e4.

9...a5

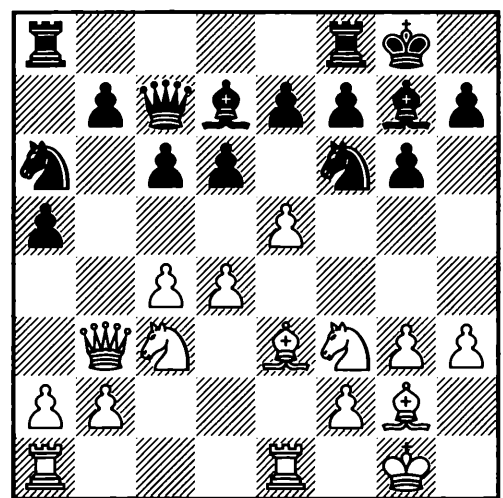
This does little to prevent White's advance in the center. The direct 9...♗e4 runs into 10.g4! ♗xc3 11.gxf5 ♗e4 12.♗h4 ♗f6 13.e4, which gave White a space advantage in J.Levitt-N.Davies, Denmark 1990:



13...♗bd7 14.f4 e5 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.dxe5 ♖a5 (or 16...dxe5 17.f5) 17.♗e3 ♗c5!? 18.exf6! ♗xf6 (18...♗xb3 19.axb3 ♖b4 20.fxg7 would give White three strong minor pieces for the queen) 19.♖c2 ♗xh4 20.♞ed1 and White was better thanks to his bishop pair.

Best is probably 9...e5 10.e4 ♗g4, when White has only a slight pull after 11.d5 or 11.♗e3.

10.e4 ♗g4 11.♗e3 ♗a6 12.h3
 ♗d7 13.e5



This is logical because Black has not been aggressive about taking space in the center. All in all, White is playing with a fair degree of caution. Note all the preparatory moves White has played before achieving this advance: ♖d1-b3, h2-h3, ♞f1-e1, ♗c1-e3, and so on. Black, on the other hand, has been playing almost exclusively on the queenside. Thus, White is fully

coordinated and well prepared for the e4-e5 strike; Black, on the other hand, is not. His knights are in disarray and he has only two or three rows of space in which to maneuver.

13...♖e8 14.♙f4

Adding to Black's dilemmas is the fact that his queen now finds itself a target.

14...♜b8 15.♖e4 c5

Black has to take space, but now his d6-pawn will be weak.

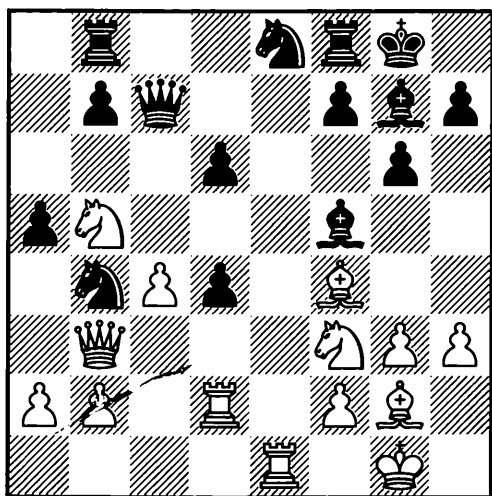
16.exd6 exd6 17.♜ad1 ♙f5 18.♖c3

18.♖xc5 ♖xc5 19.dxc5 ♜xc5 would have left White with a structural advantage, but Wojo correctly decides not to trade pieces.

18...♖b4 19.♜d2 cxd4

Essentially forced, as White's build-up along the d-file was becoming too powerful.

20.♖b5



20...♜c8?

20...♜d7, defending the d6-pawn, was necessary. 21.g4 ♙e6 22.♖fxd4 would then allow White to keep up the pressure.

21.♖xd6

21.a3 ♖c6 22.♖xd6 was perhaps slightly more accurate, preventing the possibility in the note to Black's move 22. Regardless, White is now winning.

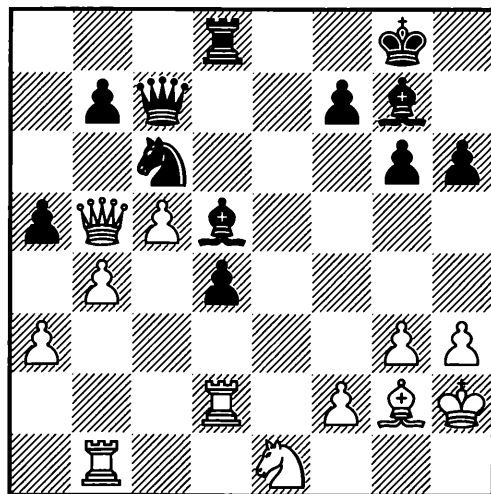
21...♖xd6 22.♙xd6 ♖c6

22...♙h6 23.♜xd4 ♖c2 was probably a better chance, though White is still winning. Meanwhile, 22...♙xh3 23.♙xb8 ♙xg2 24.♖xg2 ♜xb8 25.♖xd4 just leaves White an exchange up.

23.♙xb8 ♜xb8 24.♜b6 ♜d8 25.♜ed1 ♜c8 26.♖h2

White, in addition to being an exchange up, has an impressive bind. Over the next several moves, he works to expand on the queenside.

26...♜d7 27.a3 ♙e6 28.♜b5 h6 29.b4 ♜c7 30.c5 ♙b3 31.♜b1 ♙d5 32.♖e1



Preparing to blockade Black's passed d-pawn with ♖e1-d3. This

maneuver is commonplace in many different Catalan-like openings.

32...♙xg2 33.♙xg2 axb4 34.axb4 ♖e7 35.♖e2 ♖d7 36.♙d3 ♙e7 37.♖f3 ♙d5 38.♙a1 ♖b5 1-0

It is possible that Black ran out of time here, but his position is resignable nonetheless. With the blockade of the d-pawn firmly established, White can simply focus on picking off the b7-pawn.

Black's flank expansion with 9...a5 was a misguided strategy. Wojo simply took space in the center by preparing e2-e4-e5, after which White was clearly better. 20...♖d7 was Black's last chance to prevent White from immediately winning material, but he was already suffering mightily. After White won the exchange, the game was essentially over.

The next game features Black striking back in the center rather than waiting to be run over with e4-e5.

Dizdar, Goran (2548)

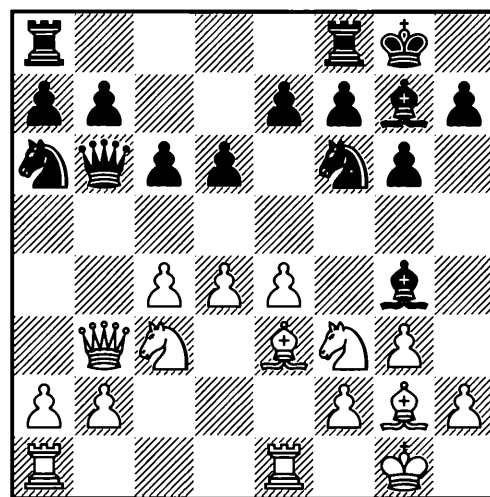
Miton, Kamil (2620)

[E62] Plovdiv 2008

1.♙f3 ♙f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.c4 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♙c3 c6 7.0-0 ♙f5 8.♖b3 ♖b6 9.♙e1

So far, this is all the same as Goldin-Chiburdanidze above. Black's next move is where the game diverges.

9...♙a6 10.e4 ♙g4 11.♙e3



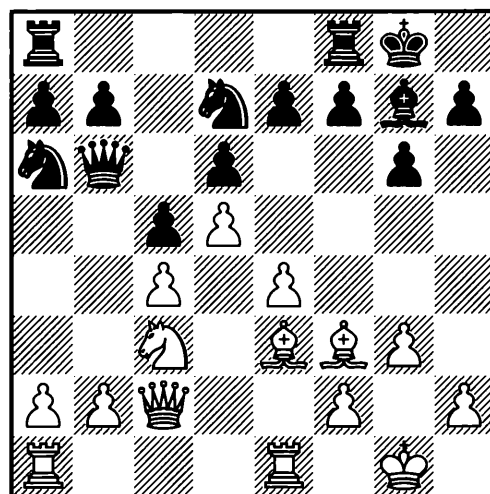
11...♙d7

Black is organizing the ...c6-c5 strike. Instead, 11...♖fe8 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 gave White a slight plus in Z.Jaśnikowski-D.Pędzich, Poland 1991. 11...♖xb3 12.axb3 was agreed drawn in A.Wojtkiewicz-V.Jansa, Hamburg 1995, but White was also slightly better here – this queenless middlegame looks pleasant for White, who has control of the center.

12.♖c2 c5

It makes sense for Black to play this, since he has been preparing to do so for a couple of moves now. 12...♖a5 13.♙d2 e5 14.♙b3 ♖c7 15.h3 exd4 16.♙xd4 ♙e6 17.b3 ♖fe8 18.a3 ♙f8 19.♙ad1 ♙ad8 20.♙h2 ♙c5 21.b4 gave White an advantage in A.Goldin-J. Rukavina, Bern 1991.

13.d5 ♙xf3 14.♙xf3



14...♚d8?!

Too passive. Black's best here is probably 14...♙d4, when 15.♙g2 e6 was now agreed drawn in A.Wojtkiewicz-Ki.Georgiev, Budapest 1993. White would still likely have kept the edge after 16.f4, but things would not have been quite as clear.

Meanwhile, after the quiet 14...♘c7, White's space advantage trumps Black's ideas for counterplay. Play might continue 15.a3 a5 16.♞ab1 ♚a6 17.♙e2 a4 18.♙g2 ♞fb8 19.f4 ♘b6 20.♚d3 ♘c8 21.h4 ♘a7 22.b4 axb3 23.♞xb3 e6 24.h5 exd5 25.exd5, as in E.Vladimirov-A.Sorin, Seville 1990.

15.♚d2

The white queen, having served its purpose on c2, moves toward the kingside. Over the next few moves, however, White spends time preventing Black's play on the queenside before launching a kingside assault.

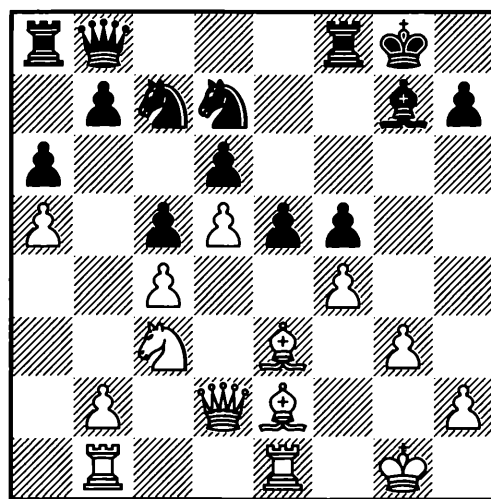
15...♘c7 16.♙e2 a6 17.a4 ♚b8 18.♞ab1 e5 19.a5

19.dxe6 ♘xe6 20.♘d5 was also good, but White prefers to keep the position locked, minimizing Black's chances for counterplay.

19...f5

19...b5 was Black's other logical strike, but White is also better positioned on that half of the board. 20.b4! would have been difficult for Black to contend with.

20.exf5 gxf5 21.f4



White has successfully given Black a weak pawn on f5. This structure is promising for White, as he has a space advantage and two good pawn breaks for which to strive, b2-b4 and g3-g4. During the next phase of the game, White brings his pieces to the kingside.

21...♘e8 22.♘d1

The knight heads to f2, where it will either support the g3-g4 break, head to d3 in conjunction with the b2-b4 break, or attempt to go to e6 via h3 and g5. 22.b4!?, hitting Black on the queenside, was also possible.

22...♘ef6 23.♘f2 exf4

An interesting decision. Black feels he cannot make progress without clearing the e5 square for his knight, but the text precludes the possibility of Black's ever attempting to gain space with the ...e5-e4 push.

24.♙xf4 ♘e5 25.♞f1 ♚c7 26.♞be1 ♞ae8 27.b3

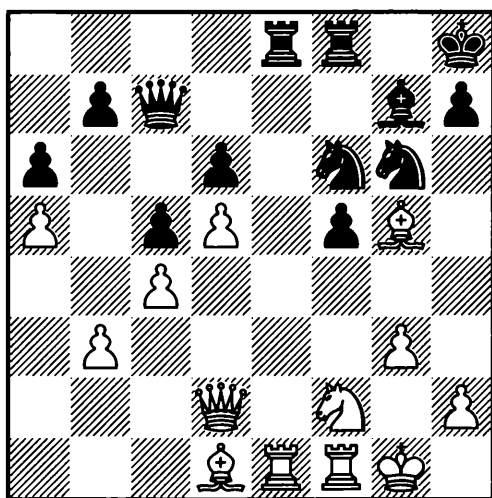
White has decided to play conservatively, focusing his efforts on neutralizing Black's play on the kingside and making headway against his weaknesses there. One of the merits

of Dizdar's handling of this position is that White's setup is more solid now than it would have been had he looked to play b2-b4 earlier.

27...♞h8 28.♞d1

Preparing to target the f5-pawn with ♞d1-c2.

28...♜g6 29.♞g5



29...♞xe1

Played with the idea of Black's next move in mind, but this only helps White convert his advantage. Better was the stubborn 29...♜e5, going back again. Black might have some chances of playing ...b7-b5 in the near future.

30.♞xe1 ♜g4?!

Uncomfortable with his position, Black becomes impatient. This just loses a pawn. 30...♜e5, eyeing the f3 square, would have kept Black better intact. White would have continued to have the advantage, however, as Black is still under pressure.

31.♜xg4 fxg4 32.♞xg4 ♞d4+ 33.♞e3

Simplest.

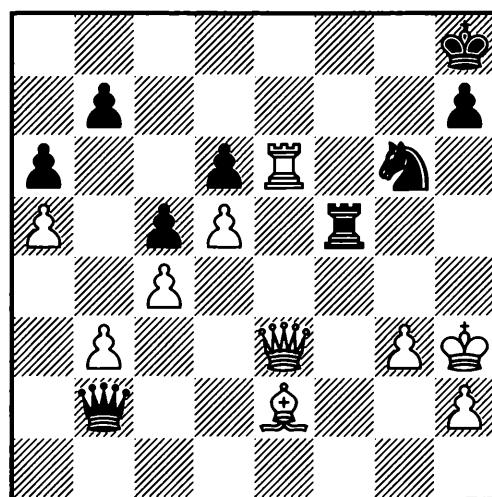
33...♞xe3+ 34.♞xe3

Black was banking on his queen and knight working together well here, but over the next several moves, White proves extremely well coordinated.

34...♞g7 35.♞e2

White is preparing ♞e3-e4 and ♞d2-e3, after which it will be impossible for Black to break through.

35...♜e5 36.♞e4 ♜g6 37.♞g2 ♞f6 38.♞e3 ♞b2 39.♞e6 ♞f5 40.♞h3



The white monarch is surprisingly safe here. 40.♞xd6? ♞e5 would have ruined White's advantage.

40...♞g7

40...♞e5 41.♞xe5 ♞xe5 (not 41...♜xe5? 42.♞h6, penetrating to Black's king) 42.♞xe5+ ♜xe5 43.♞h4 ♞g7 44.♞g5 is a hopeless ending for Black, who cannot hold on to his weak b-, d-, and h-pawns. After the text, the black pawn structure collapses.

41.♖xd6 ♖f7 42.♖e6 ♜b1 43.♙g2
♙f8 44.d6 ♜f5 45.♙d3 ♜g4 46.♙xg6
hxg6 47.♜e4 1-0

A slight inaccuracy at the end, as

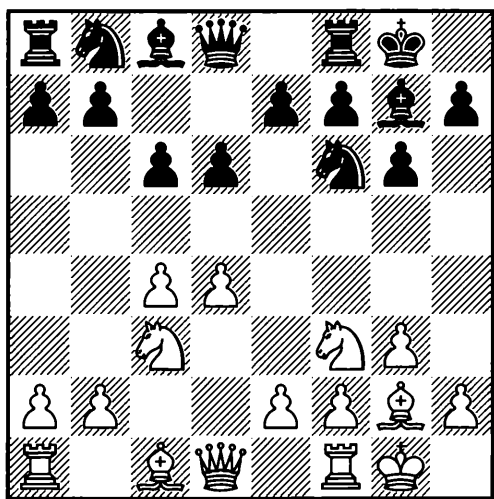
47.♜h6+ ♖g7 48.♜h8+ would have led to a quick mate. But Black, unable to prevent simplification into a lost position, is forced to resign after the text in any case.

White met Black's ...c6-c5 break with d4-d5, locking the center. He was able to establish a bind on the queenside with maneuvers like ♖a1-b1 and a2-a4-a5. He then switched his attention to the kingside, where Black tried to get space with 19...f5. After White took on f5 and locked the pawn into place with f2-f4, however, he was able to just slowly build up his advantage and grind Black down. Black's 30...♘g4?! allowed White to convert his advantage into a material one, ensuring the win.

Conclusion: Taking the center with e2-e4, when possible, affords White excellent play in the center. In many cases, White also gets the two bishops. The position in Dizdar-Miton was eerily similar to the one reached in Wojtkiewicz-de Guzmán from the previous chapter, though this way of handling things with Black seems to lose even more time. Overall, the move 8.♜b3 seems to give White good prospects for the advantage. It is easy to understand from White's point of view but difficult to face from Black's.

Chapter 13

Other Black Tries with ...c7-c6: 7...a6 and 7...♔b6



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 c6 7.♘c3

In the previous two chapters, we examined the tries 7...♔a5 and 7...♗f5, respectively. In this chapter, we complete our coverage of Black's systems with 6...c6 by looking at two other tries for the second player: 7...a6 and 7...♔b6. Both are rare guests in tournament play, lending them some surprise value. While the latter might be easily dealt with over the board – our two recommendations against it, 8.b3 and 8.♔b3, are both obvious enough – the former might easily trip up an unprepared player of the white pieces. Thus we will tackle the ambitious 7...a6 first.

Black Prepares to Strike the Queenside with 7...a6

When Black plays ...c7-c6 and ...a7-a6, he entertains the possibility of a quick ...b7-b5 strike on the queenside. Such an early thrust on the flank by the second player is indeed troublesome for White, who – should he simply continue developing along unassuming lines – would quickly find himself overrun on the queenside. So what is White to do? As we have noted, classical principles tell us that an attack on the

flank is best met by a counterstrike in the center, and as it turns out, this line is certainly no exception. By playing aggressively in the center, White can often get a sizeable advantage against the move 7...a6.

The key to White's plan is to not just occupy the center – as we saw in Chapter 1, for instance – but rather to look to take space there. If Black is intent on playing ...b7-b5 early on,

White must look to counter this with e2-e4-e5. The following game demonstrates how White can generate activity in the middle of the board that far outweighs any gains made by Black on the queenside.

Dorfman, Josif (2540)
Georgiev, Krum (2440)

[E62] Warsaw 1983

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7 4.g3
 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 c6 7.♘c3 a6

The point of this move, of course, is to prepare ...b7-b5 – although as we'll see in Cvitan-Züger below, sometimes Black uses this move as a waiting move before carrying out the plan of ...♙g4, ...♘fd7, and ...c6-c5.

8.e4

White can do little to stop Black's aggression on the queenside, so continuing to attack in the center with e2-e4-e5 is justified.

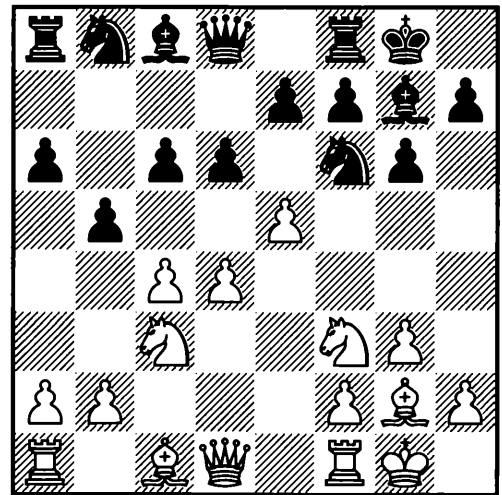
8...b5

Black's most common move. 8...♘fd7, preempting White's e4-e5 punch, is covered in the next game, and after that 8...♙g4 is analyzed in Cvitan-Züger.

Meanwhile, Black gets nothing special after 8...♖c7 9.h3 ♘bd7 10.♖e2 (forcing Black's hand regarding ...e7-e5, as e4-e5 is now coming) 10...e5, for instance, 11.♙e3 b5 12.dxe5! dxe5 13.a3 ♗e8 (13...♘b6 is met by 14.♘xe5!) 14.♗ac1 ♖b7 15.♘d2 left White substantially better in J.Bolbochán-I. Johansson, Moscow 1956. The a5 and c5 squares are holes in Black's

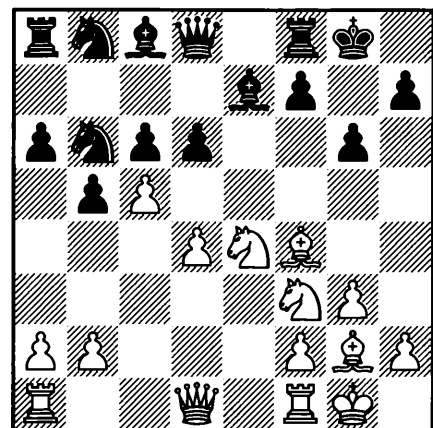
queenside. The immediate 8...e5?! is downright bad for Black, however, after 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♖xd1 11.♗xd1 ♘xe4 12.♘xc6 ♘xc3 (12...♘xc6 13.♙xe4 leaves White up a pawn) 13.♘e7+ ♕h8 14.bxc3 and White had a clear advantage in K.Baumann-B.Hess, Bern 1996.

9.e5



9...♘e8

With this move, Black stays flexible in his development. After 9...♘fd7, White got an advantage in Ki.Georgiev-C.Véron, France 2001, after 10.exd6 exd6 11.♙g5! (11.♙f4 ♘b6 12.c5 dxc5 13.dxc5 ♘c4 14.♖c1 ♙g4 followed by ...♗f6 gives Black adequate counterplay) 11...♙f6 12.♙f4 ♘b6 13.♘e4 (the point of provoking ...♙f6) 13...♙e7 14.c5:



White's attack proved tremendous and Black did not last long: 14...dxc5

15.dxc5 ♖d5 16.♗h6 ♜e8 17.♞e1 ♗e6 18.♜d4 ♗f8 19.♗xf8 ♞xf8 20.♞d2 ♜g7 21.♜xe6+ fxe6 22.♜g5 left Black completely losing. Note that Black might have instead tried 11...♜f6, but then the 12.c5 strike would have left White better in any case.

Meanwhile, 9...dxe5 has been tried a couple of times but after the simple 10.dxe5 (10.♜xe5 bxc4 11.♜xc4 ♗e6 12.♜e5 ♗d5, as seen in E.Mednis-A. Pacis, Manila 1991, leads to a much smaller edge for White) 10...♜g4 11.♗f4 ♜d7 (11...♞xd1 12.♞axd1 bxc4 13.h3 ♜h6 14.g4 is a clear advantage for White) 12.e6! fxe6 13.♜g5, White gets a big edge: 13...♜de5 14.h3 h6 15.hxg4 hxg5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗xc6 ♞xd1 18.♞fxd1 ♞b8 19.c5 and White enjoys a strong passed pawn, among other things.

Finally, 9...♜g4!? is relatively untested. The game J.Kekki-A.Saastamoinen, Pieksämäki 1993, saw 10.exd6 (10.♗f4, trying to transpose with 10...dxe5 11.dxe5 ♜d7 12.e6, might be better) 10...exd6 11.cxb5 axb5 12.♗g5 ♞c7 13.♞c1 b4?! 14.♜d5 ♞a5 15.♜e7+ ♜h8, when here 16.♗f4 would have left White with a tremendous advantage, for instance 16...♞xa2 17.♞a1 ♞xa1 18.♞xa1 ♞xa1 19.♞xa1 ♞d8 20.♜xc8 ♞xc8 21.♗xd6 ♗f8 22.♗xf8 ♞xf8 23.♞a4 b3 24.♞b4 and so on.

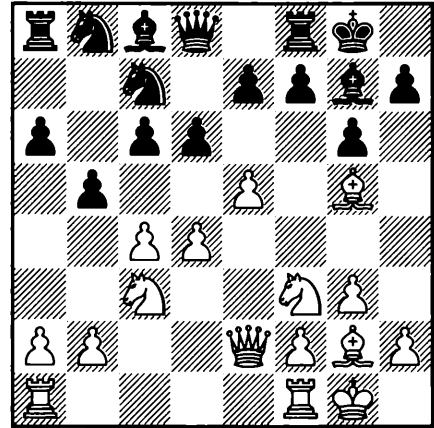
10.♞e2

10.c5!? is an interesting alternative that also seems to give White an edge, but we will concentrate here on the text, which is considered the main line.

10...bxc4

Black relieves the tension on the queenside. 10...♜c7 is equally com-

mon, but now 11.♗g5 is strong for White:



a) 11...♜e6 12.exd6 ♞xd6 13.♗e3 bxc4 (13...b4 14.♜e4 ♞c7 15.d5 ♜d8 16.♗c5 was a huge initiative for White in F.Vareille-C.Lamoureux, Paris 1994) 14.♞ad1 ♗b7 15.♜e5 ♜d7 16.♜xc4 ♞c7 17.d5 gave White the initiative in J.Donner-B.Ivkov, Netherlands 1957.

b) 11...f6!? 12.exf6 exf6 13.♗e3 ♗e6 14.d5 ♗f7 15.♜d4 was better for White in T.Scholseth-T.Thorstensen, Norway 1995.

c) 11...d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♞d2 gave White an attack on the kingside in G.Arsović-Z.Krnić, Serbia 2007, after 13...♗g4 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♞d7 16.♞ac1 ♜c6 17.♞fe1 ♞fc8 18.♜g2 a5 19.♗g4 e6 20.h4 a4 21.h5 and so on.

Otherwise, 10...d5?! 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♜xd5 ♞xd5 13.♜g5 ♞xd4 14.♗xa8 ♞xe5 15.♞xe5 ♗xe5 16.♞e1 left White up the exchange for a pawn in N.Nikolić-M.van Gils, Netherlands 1995, and 10...♗g4 11.♗g5 ♞a7!? 12.♞fe1 d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♞d2 (we saw this maneuver just above) was slightly better for White in M.Medić-Z.Kožul, Croatia 2000.

11.♞xc4 a5

Black looks to develop his light-squared bishop along the f1-a6

diagonal. 11...♙e6 12.♚a4 ♘c7 13.♞e1 h6 14.exd6 exd6 15.♙f4 g5 was seen in both J.Wright-P.Palmo, corr. 1987, and V.Ljavidansky-A.Suetin, Tallinn 1965. Here White gets a slight advantage with the simple 16.♙e3, for instance 16...♘b5 17.♘xb5 cxb5 18.♚d1! ♘d7 19.h4, etc.

11...d5 is playable but White is better after 12.♚a4 ♘c7 13.♙e3 ♘b5 14.♞ac1 thanks to Black's weak pawn on c6, as seen in I.Lempert-V.Kozlov, Moscow 1990. Finally, 11...♘c7 12.exd6 exd6 13.♙g5 ♚d7 14.d5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 cxd5 16.♚xd5 ♙b7 17.♚d2 left White with play against Black's isolated d-pawn in I.Csom-F.Portisch, Budapest 1976.

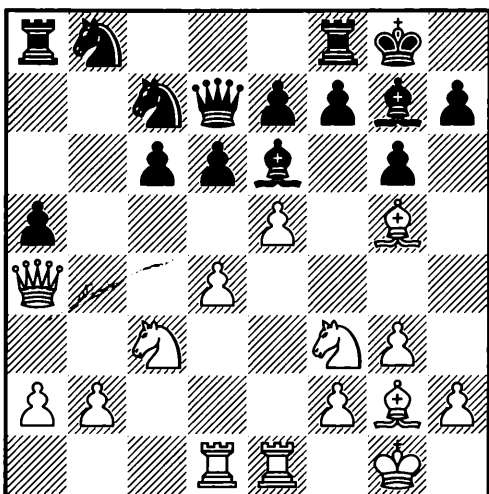
12.♞e1

Reacting to Black's obvious threat of ...♙a6.

12...♙e6

If Black follows through with his plan of 12...♙a6, White is simply better after 13.♚a4 d5 14.♙g5 and so on. The text looks to avoid having to play ...d6-d5 by taking control of the d5 square itself.

13.♚a4 ♘c7 14.♙g5 ♚d7 15.♞ad1



White develops smoothly and logically. His pieces work together in harmony to embarrass Black's weak pawns on a5, c6, d6, and e7. Black is already struggling.

15...♞a7

An awkward rook lift. 15...h6 16.♙c1 ♘d5 was likely better, but even here 17.♘d2 planning ♘de4 and ♚a3, putting pressure on d6, would leave White clearly on top. After the text, White reroutes his king's knight to the queenside in hopes of picking off the black a-pawn.

16.♘d2 ♞b7

16...♘d5 is well met by 17.♘de4, for instance 17...dxe5? 18.♘c5 and so on.

17.♘b3

17.♚a3, putting pressure on the dark squares, was likely an improvement. White would then entertain ideas of ♘de4 or ♙xe7!? followed by e5xd6.

17...♞b4?

It was imperative that Black capture White's menacing knight on b3. 17...♙xb3 18.axb3 ♘e6 19.♙e3 d5 would have allowed Black to organize counterplay on the queenside, for instance 20.♚xa5 (probably not best) 20...♞xb3 21.♞d2 ♚b7 and so on. White would still entertain an advantage thanks to his two bishops, solid center, and extra space, but Black has few weaknesses and plenty of counterchances. After the text, Black's position disintegrates.

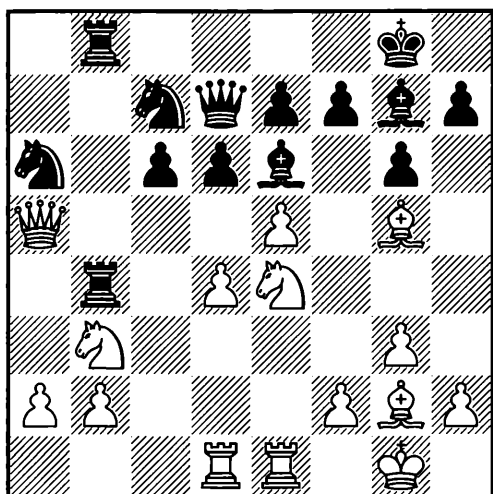
18.♚xa5

White succeeds in picking off Black's weak a-pawn. The second player has little in the way of compensation, but he can console himself by saying that he has "only" lost a rook pawn. There is still more fighting to come in the center.

18...♠ba6 19.♠e4

Also strong was 19.♠xc6! ♞xc6 20.d5 ♠xd5 21.♠xd5 ♠xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞xd5 23.♞xd5 ♠xe5 24.♠xe7, when White is still up a pawn but has reached an ending.

19...♞fb8



20.♠f1?!

It was more accurate for White to insert 20.exd6 exd6 first. Then 21.♠f1 simply leaves White up a pawn, as 21...♠xb3 22.axb3 d5? (or 22...♞xb3 23.♠f4 with a clear advantage for White) would run into 23.♠f6+ ♠xf6 24.♠xf6. After the text, Black has a tactical route to equality.

20...♞a8?

Black returns the favor. 20...♠xb3 was once again necessary, as now 21.axb3 d5! 22.♠xa6 ♠xa6 equalizes

for Black: 23.♠f6+ (23.♞xa6 dxe4 24.♞xe4? loses for White after 24...♞f5) 23...exf6 (now we see why 20.exd6 exd6 would have been more accurate for White) 24.exf6 ♠c7 25.fxg7 ♠e6 26.♠f6 ♞xb3 leaves Black with no problems.

21.♠xe7!

White does not hesitate to capitalize on the energy of his pieces. With this, White wins a second pawn, so the rest is essentially a matter of technique.

21...♞xe7 22.exd6 ♞d8 23.dxc7 ♞xc7 24.♞g5

A good move, fighting for the dark squares.

24...♞c8 25.♞c1 ♞b6 26.♠c4 ♠c7 27.♞e3

27.♞c5, penetrating Black's position, was even stronger.

27...♞b8

27...♠d5 was necessary to keep Black in the game here. After the text, White's domination on the queenside becomes evident.

28.♠ec5 ♠xc4 29.♞xc4 ♠d5

29...♞xa2 would of course lose to 30.♠d7.

30.♞e2 ♞c8 31.♞a4 ♞ab8 32.♞a7 ♠c7 33.♞e7 1-0

Black resigns, as the seventh rank has fallen.

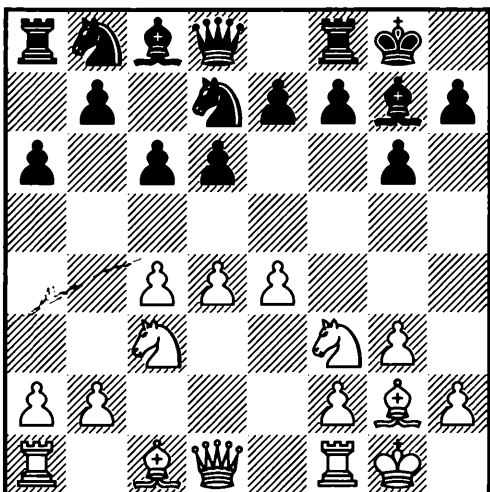
In this game, White effectively met Black's early queenside ambitions by striking in the center with e4-e5. He played actively and looked to put pressure on Black's pawns on d6 and e7; eventually, Black's pawns on a5 and c6 became weak as well. The key to White's handling of this game was his activity in the center and his smooth development. Logical moves like 12.♖e1, 14.♗g5, 15.♖ad1, were enough to generate a lasting advantage. Although both sides committed major inaccuracies on move 20, the overriding theme of this game remains the same – that White's play in the center easily overpowered Black's counterstrikes on the queenside.

The next game covers 8...♟fd7, a move that allows Black to continue focusing on the queenside. Our response is the same: we focus on building an initiative for White in the center. Although White does not achieve e4-e5 immediately, he is able to prepare it with ♖e2 and ♖f1-d1.

Sturua, Zurab (2545) Georgiev, Krum (2510)

[E62] Katterini 1992

1.d4 ♟f6 2.♟f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.♟c3 c6 7.0-0 a6
8.e4 ♟fd7



With this move Black anticipates White's e4-e5 thrust. In an attempt to improve over Black's strategy in the last game – which saw Black play the ugly ...♟f6-e8 – Krum Georgiev decides to bring his king's knight to the queenside. This move is his pet line. Given that Black's last move forces little, White now has a wide variety of setups to choose from. We have picked one that is in keeping with the other two games in this section.

9.♖e2

A move once ventured by Wojo. The idea is twofold: White anticipates Black's ...b7-b5 thrust by guarding the pawn on c4 and prepares to place his heavy pieces behind his pawn center with ♖f1-d1. Although Black's 8...♟fd7 precludes the immediate e4-e5 advance from White, the first player is still maneuvering behind his own lines to prepare this thrust. White scores well here.

9.♗e3 is a major alternative. Then 9...b5 10.cxb5 (10.♟d2!? is another line) 10...axb5 11.b4 ♟b6 12.♟d2 was seen in a game by the same two opponents one decade before: 12...e5 (12...♟8d7 looks better) 13.d5 ♟a4 14.♟db1! left White with the better structure in Z.Sturua-Kr.Georgiev, Yerevan 1982.

9...b5

The only move for Black that carries any theoretical significance. 9...e5 could be easily met by 10.d5, steering the game toward a structure from Chapter 2. In this case, Black's move ...a7-a6 has served only to weaken the b6 square.

10.♖d1

This appears to be White's best move here, continuing to prepare a strike in the center. 10.e5!? proved premature in A.Wojtkiewicz-Kr.Georgiev, Greece 1992, after 10...bxc4 11.exd6 exd6 12.♞xc4 ♖b6, when here the players agreed to a draw. Black's knight maneuver ...♖f6-d7-b6 has come with gain of time.

10...bxc4

In the face of White's mounting pressure along the files in the center, Black decides to relieve some of the pawn tension. The text also hopes to bring the focus of the game back to the queenside. If Black instead tries to occupy the center himself with 10...e5, White is placed well to take advantage of the lines opening in the center: 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♕e3 (inserting 12.♕g5 f6 13.♕e3 first might have been a slight improvement) 12...♞e7 13.a3 ♖c5 14.b4 ♖e6 15.♞ac1 ♗b7 16.c5 ♞e8 17.♞d6 ♖d7 18.♞cd1 ♖df8 19.h4 left White with a clear advantage in M.Marin-B.Badea, Bucharest 1996.

11.♞xc4 a5

In D.Rogozenco-B.Istrate, Romania 1999, Black inserted 11...♖b6 12.♞e2 before playing 12...a5. White's presence in the center left him with easy play on the kingside after 13.♕f4 ♗a6 14.♞c2 e6 15.h4 ♞e7 16.e5! d5 17.h5 and so on. Note the logical progression of White's play: first he reacts to Black's flank attack by preparing the e4-e5 strike in the center, and then he uses the pawn wedge on e5 to generate a kingside attack. This type of plan is rare for White in the Fianchetto King's Indian, but here it is possible thanks to Black's refusal to take space in the center.

12.♞e2 ♗a6 13.♞c2 c5?!

13...♖b6 14.♕f4 would of course transpose to the previous note. The text is more ambitious but fails because Black is simply not prepared to strike in the center. With the text, Black opens the c-file, the d-file, and the h1-a8 diagonal for White's pieces.

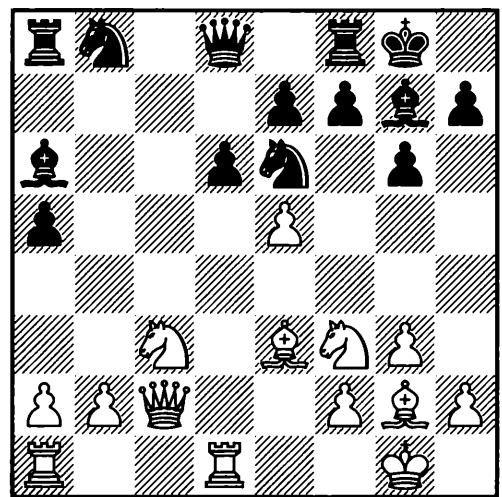
14.dxc5

Principled. White is well situated in the center, allowing him to generate a strong initiative by opening lines there. Note that White still maintains his original plan of breaking with e4-e5.

14...♖xc5 15.♕e3 ♖e6

15...♖bd7 16.e5! would similarly damage Black's structure.

16.e5



White has delayed playing this move for a long time, but now it makes a tremendous impact on the position. As a consequence, Black's coordination is disrupted and his structure in the center is damaged.

16...♖c6 17.exd6 exd6 18.♞d2

White has succeeded in converting his initiative into something more tangible – play against Black’s weak d6-pawn. Black’s position here will prove difficult to handle, especially considering White’s grip on d5.

18...♞c8

It was imperative that Black fight for the d5 square. 18...♞e7 was better, when 19.♞d4 (19.♞ad1?! ♞f5 would allow Black to snag White’s dark-squared bishop) 19...♞c8 20.♞ad1 d5 would have held Black’s position together by a thread. Of course, White would still have a large advantage here, for instance with 21.♞b3 and so on. But after the text, White simply wins the black d6-pawn.

19.♞ad1 ♞b4

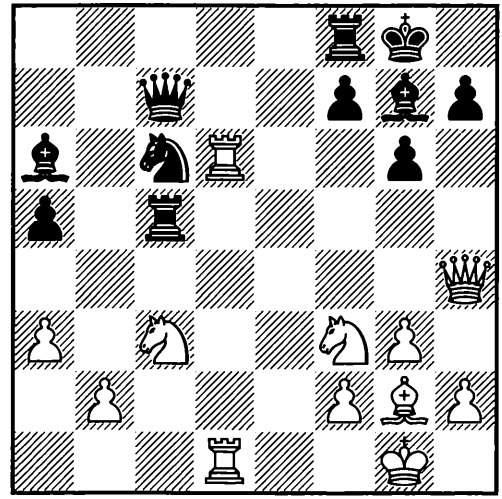
Black is desperate to generate activity but has no targets to attack. White, on the other hand, can pick off Black’s a5- and d6-pawns.

20.♞a4 ♞c5 21.♙xc5 ♞xc5 22.♞xd6 ♞c7 23.a3 ♞c6

The obvious move, keeping everything defended. But 23...♙xc3!? was likely more stubborn, since after 24.axb4 (24.bxc3? ♙b5 is bad for White) 24...♙b5! (saving the bishop on a6) 25.♞xa5 ♞xa5 26.bxa5 ♙xa5, Black has some chances of saving the ending thanks to his bishop pair.

24.♞h4

Targeting the dark squares around the enemy king. Black’s days are numbered.



24...♞c4

24...♙xc3 would now be met by 25.♞g5! h5 (25...♞xg5 26.♞xg5 leaves Black’s minor pieces hanging) 26.bxc3 ♞xc3 27.♞e4, threatening various mates with ♞f6+ and ♞xh5.

25.♞g5 h6 26.♞e3 ♙c8

There was nothing better. White threatened ♙f1, skewering the black rook on c4 and bishop on a6. Black saves his light-squared bishop but is unable to extricate the rook.

27.♙f1 ♞e7

27...♞g4 28.h3 would win material for White.

28.♞b5 ♞f5 29.♞b3 1-0

Black resigns: too many of his pieces are hanging.

White reacted to Black’s 7...a6 and 8...♞fd7 by preparing the e4-e5 strike in the center, just as we saw in Dorfman-Georgiev above. Although he had to wait until move 16 to play this strike, when he finally got to play it, his pieces were well coordinated thanks to his setup with 9.♞e2 and

10.♞d1, which were played with an eye toward opening the center. It is difficult to say exactly where Black went wrong in this game, so it is entirely possible that his entire opening strategy was flawed. If there is one specific move to blame for Black's defeat, however, it is 13...c5?!, which drastically underestimated White's ability to generate an initiative by opening lines.

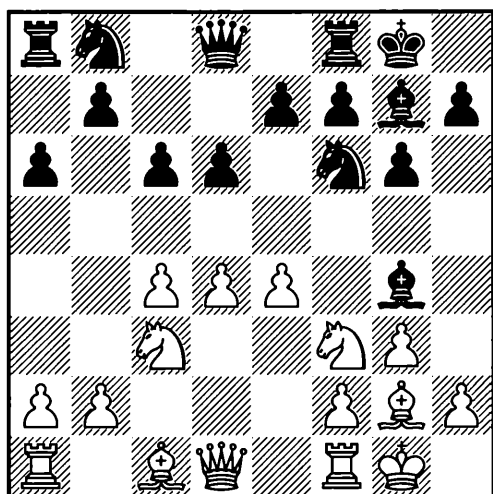
The final game in this section examines Black's third most popular move after 8.e4, the tricky 8...♙g4. This move focuses on development and consequently is better than either 8...b5 or 8...♞fd7. It is far less entertaining, however, and for this reason it has been condemned to relative obscurity.

Cvitan, Ognjen (2500)

Züger, Beat (2445)

[E62] Geneva 1988

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞f3 ♙g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♙g2 c6 6.♞c3 d6 7.0-0 a6
8.e4 ♙g4



An interesting move order that tries to trip White up. For instance, if White continues here with the direct 9.h3, Black can play 9...♙xf3 10.♙xf3 ♞fd7!

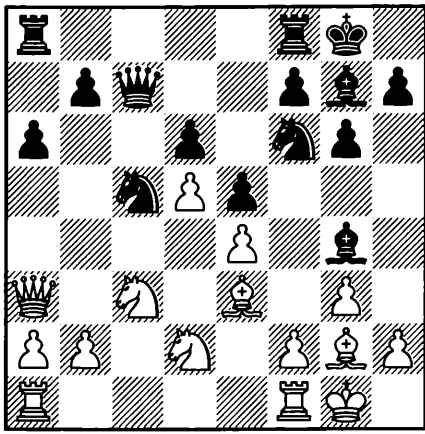
11.♙e3 c5, when Black has strong counterplay against White's center. The game J.Hilton-P.MacIntyre, World Open 2010, continued 12.♞d2?!, when here the improvement 12...♞c6 (12...exd4 13.♙xd4 with an advantage for White was played in the game) 13.d5 ♞d4 would have been better for Black in view of 14.♙g2? ♞e5. Thus White's best is likely 12.d5 b5 13.♙e2, when 13...b4 14.♞a4 ♞b6 15.♞xb6 ♞xb6 16.♞d2 has been played in a handful of games and is about equal. Black has ample space on the queenside. Although the move 9.h3 is tempting – after all, White does well to meet 7...♞a5 8.e4 ♙g4 with 9.h3 – here he must be more sensitive to the flexibility of Black's move order. The text is White's most accurate response.

9.♞b3

The only move to promise White the advantage. Instead of losing time with h2-h3, White steps out of the pin and counterattacks.

9...b5

Black's most common reaction. He can also defend his pawn with the more modest 9...♞c7. Then 10.♙e3 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♞bd7 12.♞c2 c5 13.dxc5 ♞xc5 (13...dxc5 14.♞ad1 ♞fd8 15.♙e2 with the idea of f2-f4 gives White a slight advantage) 14.b3 and so on leaves White with the two bishops and a healthy Maróczy Bind-like position. Note that Black feels compelled to play 10...♙xf3 on move 10 because 10...♞bd7 11.♞d2! was much better for White in V.Tukmakov-F.Jenni, Zürich 2001: 11...e5 12.d5 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♞c5 14.♞a3 was a favorable version for White of the positions studied in Chapter 2:



White will consolidate by playing f2-f3 and ♖a1-c1, gaining time in the process. Here 14...b5?! made things worse for Black after 15.b4 ♜b7 16.♞fc1 ♛d7 17.f3 ♙h3 18.♙xh3 ♛xh3 19.♞d1!, as 19...♞d8 20.♛d3 ♛d7 21.a4 bxa4 22.♞c4 left White close to winning.

10.h3

Now that Black has already committed to ...b7-b5 instead of ...c7-c5, this loss of time is justified. White plans on re-routing his bishop to e2 in order to bolster his c4-pawn. 10.cxb5 axb5 11.♙e3 was played in G.Sargissian-Z. Kožul, Turkey 2007, but here White is somewhat less flexible than he is in the game, as he has already exercised his option of playing c4xb5. Black developed without much difficulty: 11... ♛a5 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♞fd7 14.♞fd1 e6 (a good plan by Black, fixing all of his pawns on the color square opposite of his bishop's) 15.a3 d5 16.♞e2 ♜b6 17.♛c2 ♞c4 18.♙c1 b4 19.a4 ♛b6 20.b3 ♞a5 21.♙e3 ♞d7, and in the middle-game Black's fortress proved solid.

10...♙xf3 11.♙xf3 ♞fd7

Black attacks White's pawn on d4 and prepares to bring his forces to the queenside. 11...♞bd7 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♙e3 ♞b8 14.♞fd1 (14.e5 dxe5 15.♙xc6 looks more accurate) was agreed drawn in R.Buss-R.Foster, Switzerland 2010,

but White was still better thanks to his strong position in the center. He can strike with either d4-d5 or e4-e5.

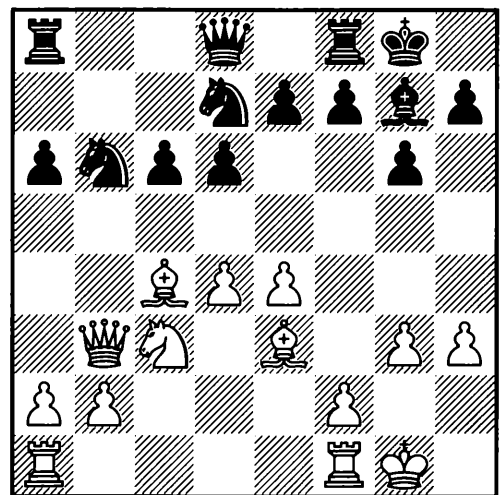
12.♙e3 ♜b6 13.♙e2!?

The point of White's play. Now it is Black who is forced to capture on c4, as otherwise White will entertain ideas of c4-c5. The more direct 13.cxb5 also works for a slight advantage after 13... axb5 14.a4 (14.♙e2, keeping the tension, is also good) 14...bxa4 15.♞xa4 ♞xa4 16.♞xa4, when White has the center and the bishop pair.

13...bxc4

A concession by Black, giving up space on the queenside. Of course, White is also making a concession by giving up the bishop pair.

14.♙xc4 ♞d8d7



Allowing White to maintain the bishop pair is a strange decision. 14... ♞xc4 15.♛xc4, with a more modest advantage for White, was better. White will play ♞f1-d1, ♖a1-c1, ♜g2, and so on, with pressure. After the text, White has too many trumps: he has a nice pawn center and the two bishops, whereas Black has nothing to show on the queenside for his ...b7-b5 thrust.

15.♙e2 c5

Black tries to strike at White's pawn center, but now the first player is able to open up the game with advantage.

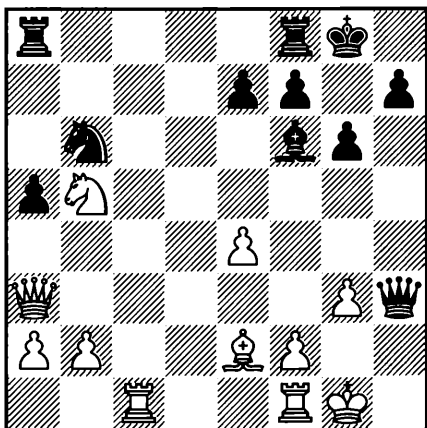
16.dxc5!?

White immediately begins clearing lines in the center. 16.♟fd1, simply maintaining pressure, was also good.

16...♘xc5 17.♚a3 ♜c8?!

Black deems it too dangerous to try 17...♙xc3 18.♚xc3 ♘xe4, when White could choose between 19.♚c6 ♘c5 20.♙xc5 dxc5 21.♚xc5, with a slight pull, or 19.♚d4 ♘c5 20.♟ac1 a5 21.♟fd1, with full compensation for the pawn.

But 17...♚d7, planning ...♘b6-a4, would have allowed Black to fight for the initiative. After 18.♙xc5 (18.♙g2 ♘ba4 gives Black counterplay) 18...dxc5 19.♚xc5 ♙d4 20.♚b4! (prompting Black's next move, which weakens the b5 square) 20...a5 21.♚a3 ♜xh3 22.♘b5 ♙f6 23.♟ac1, the opposite-colored bishop middlegame gives both sides chances:



Black's a5-pawn is a burden on him here, but White is also stuck safeguarding his own pawn on b2. The text allows a nice sequence by White.

18.b4 ♘cd7 19.♟ac1 ♚b7

19...♘c4 20.♚b3 ♘xe3 21.♘d5 ♚d8 22.♚xe3 also leaves White with a strong bind. Black's pawn on a6 is weak, but if he plays 22...a5, then White will have a passed pawn after 23.b5. Black is already in trouble: 23...♘c5?! 24.e5! (24.♟xc5!? dxc5 25.♚xc5 is also good, but the text is better) 24...e6 25.exd6 ♚xd6 26.♟fd1 exd5 27.♚xc5 ♚xc5 28.♟xc5 d4 29.b6 leaves Black hard-pressed to defend on the queenside.

20.♚a5!

White sacrifices a pawn in order to achieve a decisive bind.

20...♙xc3 21.♟xc3 ♚xe4 22.♙d3 ♚b7

22...♚e5 23.♟c7 ♟fb8 24.♟fc1 followed by ♟c1-c6 would leave White with compensation similar to the game. After the text, however, Black is practically losing.

23.♟fc1 ♟fd8

Black cannot meet White's threat of ♟c7 with 23...♟fc8 due to 24.♟xc8+ ♟xc8 25.♟xc8+ ♘xc8 26.♙xa6.

24.♟c6 ♟ab8

What else?

25.♙xa6 ♚a7 26.a4

Considering the power of White's two bishops and his two connected passed pawns on the queenside, the game is over.

26...d5 27.♚b5 e5 28.a5 d4 29.axb6 ♘xb6 30.♙h6 ♘d5 31.♟c8 1-0

This game saw the rare combination of 7...a6 and 8...♘g4 by Black. This is essentially a hybrid system, combining ideas from various lines we've analyzed elsewhere. Executing the maneuvers ...♘fd7 and ...c7-c5, ...b7-b5 and ...♙g4xf3, or both are all possibilities for the second player. With the accurate 9.♚b3, White tries to force Black's hand early on. White managed to get an edge in this game by countering Black's ...b7-b5 with the maneuver ♙g2-f3-e2, though Black had to make a series of rather fishy moves (such as refusing to play the obvious 14...♘xc4) before White was clearly better. Although White can certainly get a slight edge after 9.♚b3, Black's approach in this game deserves more attention than it usually gets.

Conclusion: After Black's 6...c6 and 7...a6, White does well to occupy the center with 8.e4. If Black generates counterplay on the queenside immediately with 8...b5, White must react swiftly in the center with 9.e5 ♘e8 10.♚e2, when White's central initiative greatly outweighs Black's pitiful play on the b-file. Meanwhile, if Black plays the flexible 8...♘fd7 instead, White should still focus on playing the e4-e5 break – however, he should react with less urgency and instead slowly build up his presence along the e- and d-files with ♚e2 and ♖f1-d1 first. Finally, if Black abandons his plan of ...b7-b5 and instead opts for 8...♙g4, White should play 9.♚b3 and look a more modest advantage. In all three cases, White is better.

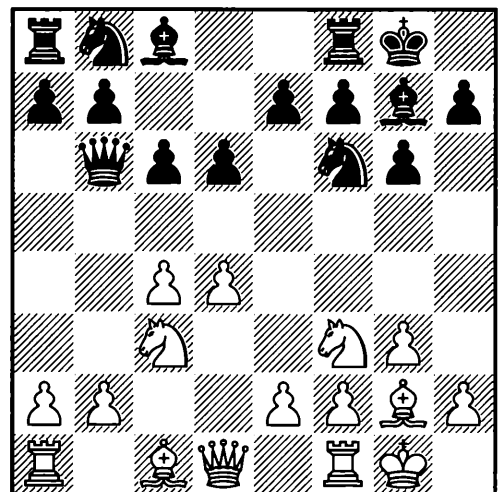
Black's Other Queen Excursion: 7...♚b6!?

Finally, to wrap up our survey of the move 6...c6, we must examine one last queen sortie by Black. The move 7...♚b6!? somewhat resembles the Kavalek System with 7...♚a5 from Chapter 12 in that Black seeks to use his queen to disrupt White's development. Unlike the Kavalek System, however, Black does not have the option of playing ...♚a5-h5, swinging his queen over to the kingside. Instead, he attempts to put pressure on White's queenside pawns on b2 and d4. The problem with this move is that it is highly artificial and packs little real punch. The following game shows how easily White can neutralize Black's supposed counterplay.

Razuvaev, Yuri (2580)
Filippov, Valerij (2455)

[E62] Novgorod 1995

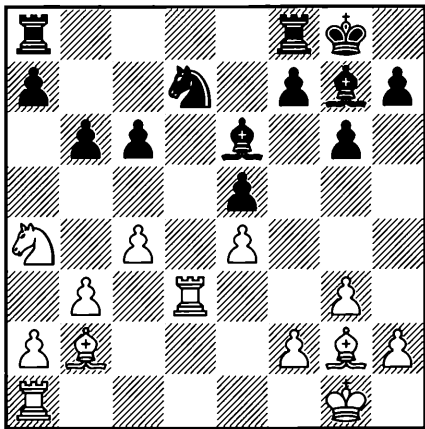
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7
 4.g3 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 c6 7.♘c3
 ♚b6!?



Although this move is occasionally seen in practice, it is difficult to understand exactly what purpose it serves. In all probability, the black queen will have to move again, as b6 is a far-from-ideal square for it.

8.b3

This is White's simplest option, freeing the dark-squared bishop from having to babysit the b2-pawn. 8.♞b3, in the spirit of our system against 7...♙f5, is also playable. Then 8...♙f5 transposes to Goldin-Chiburdanidze from the previous chapter, and 8...♞a6 could be met by 9.e4 ♖bd7 10.♞d1, when 10...e5 11.dxe5 ♜xe5 (11...dxe5 12.h3 ♜c5 13.♞c2 ♞xc4 14.♜xe5 ♞e6 15.f4 ♜h5 16.♜e2! allows White to take the initiative) 12.♜xe5 dxe5 13.♞a4 ♞xa4 14.♜xa4 b6 15.b3 ♙e6 16.♙b2 ♜d7 17.♞d3, doubling on the d-file, gives White a slight pull:



Perhaps White will be able to invade to the d6 square, provoking ...c6-c5 from Black and allowing ♜a4-c3-d5.

That leaves 8...♞xb3 as Black's best option. Now 9.axb3 ♜a6 10.e4 was tested in D.Ippolito-R.Panjwani, Foxwoods 2005. The game continued 10...♜d7 11.♞d1 e5?! (11...♜b4 would have been fine for Black) 12.♙e3 ♞e8 13.d5 ♙f8 14.♞xa6! bxa6 15.dxc6 ♜f6 16.♙g5, when White was left with a

tremendous advantage. An important alternative for White is 10.♙d2, when after 10...♞e8 11.♞fd1 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5, as in H.Hubel-M.Lomineishvili, Russia 1998, White might maintain a slight advantage after a reasonable move like 13.♜g5. Although 8.♞b3 (a move very much in keeping with Wojo's repertoire) definitely leads to an advantage for White, the text seems even stronger.

8...e5

Oddly enough, 8...♞a5!? has also been tried a number of times. Black, having provoked White into playing b2-b3, decides to "transpose" into a Kavalek System where he is able to gain a tempo on White's knight on c3. Theory considers 9.♞d2 best for White, threatening ideas of ♜d5 with a discovered attack against Black's queen. 9...♞h5 10.♞g5 ♞xg5 11.♙xg5 gives White a slight advantage: 11...h6 12.♙d2 ♜a6 13.h3 ♞e8 14.♜e1 e5 15.d5 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♙d7 17.♜c2 b5 18.♞fc1 ♞ec8 19.e4 ♜c5 20.b4 ♜d3 21.♞cb1 a5 22.bxa5 ♞xa5 23.♜b4 ♜xb4 24.♞xb4 was better for White in K.Miton-I.Khairullin, Moscow 2004.

Black's best try here, however, might well be 8...♞a6. This move has only been ventured a couple of times in practice. Now S.Brunello-T.Petrosian, Dresden 2008, saw 9.♙b2 9...b5 10.cxb5 cxb5 11.a4 bxa4 12.♞xa4 ♞b6 13.♜d2 ♙b7 14.♜c4 ♞c7 15.e4 with perhaps a slight advantage for White. Black's structure proved solid here, however, so it is possible that the more ambitious 9.e4!? is in order. Then 9...b5 could be met with 10.e5 ♜e8 11.♙g5, generating an initiative in the center to combat Black's flank action.

9.d5

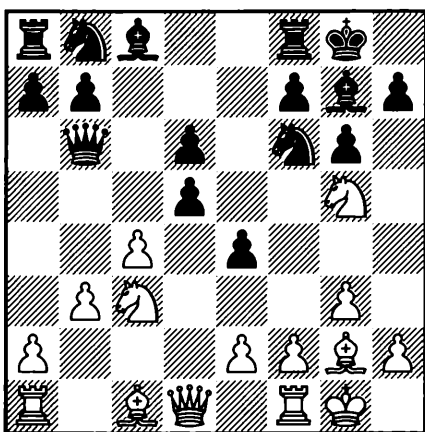
White heads for a position similar to those studied in Chapter 2. It soon becomes evident that Black's queen is misplaced on b6. Of course, 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♖xe5? would run into 10...♗a5, forking White's knights.

9...e4?!

Black's only interesting option. 9...cxd5 10.cxd5 leaves us with a position similar to those studied in Chapter 2, but here Black will have to move his queen again after White's e2-e4 and ♖c1-e3. 10...♖e8 11.e4 ♗d8 12.♖d2 a6 occurred in R.García-F.Fiorito, Argentina 1996, when Janjgava gives 13.a4 intending a4-a5 as being a clear advantage for White. The text leads to a more complicated struggle but is ultimately bad for the second player.

10.♖g5 ♖f5

10...cxd5 is the alternative. Now White has two options:



a) 11.♖e3 ♗a5 12.b4!? (12.♖xd5 ♖xd5 13.cxd5 ♖xa1 14.♗xa1 also gives White compensation) 12...♗xb4 13.♖xd5 ♖xd5 14.♗xd5 ♖xa1 15.♗xa1 ♖c6 16.♖xe4 was unclear in G.Dizdar-J.Horváth, Austria 1998, though White went on to win.

b) The possible improvement 11.cxd5 is given by Jangjava. Now

11...♖f5 12.♖e3 ♗b4 13.♖d4 is better for White, and 11...h6 12.♖gxe4 ♖xe4 13.♖xe4 f5 (or 13...♖xa1 14.♖e3 with a big edge for White) 14.♖e3 ♗d8 15.♖d2 g5 16.♖f3 ♖xa1 17.♗xa1 is given by Janjgava as giving White compensation.

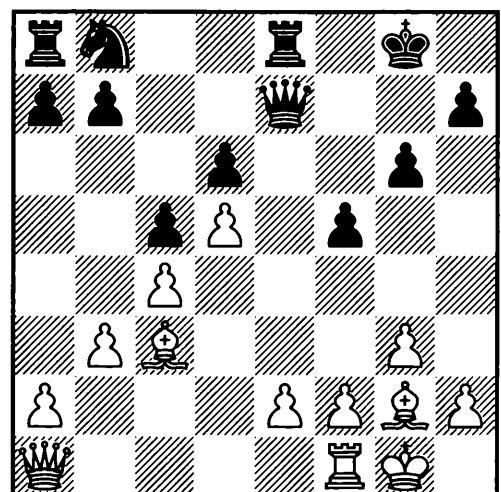
11.♖e3 ♗d8 12.♖gxe4

A good move. White sacrifices the exchange for tremendous compensation on the dark squares. 12.dxc6 first was also possible, when 12...♖xc6 (12...bxc6 13.♖gxe4 ♖xe4 14.♖xe4 ♖xe4 15.♖xe4 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 leaves Black's c- and d-pawns weak) 13.♖gxe4 ♖xe4 14.♖xe4 ♖xe4 15.♖xe4 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 ♗e8 17.♖h6 f6 18.♖d5+ ♖h8 19.e3 gives White a clear advantage. He has given up the exchange for a pawn but has a better pawn structure, the two bishops, and a safer king.

12...♖xe4 13.♖xe4 ♖xe4 14.♖xe4 ♗e7 15.♖g2 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 ♗e8 17.♖d4

This appears to be White's best move, clamping down on the a1-h8 diagonal. If 17.♖h6, Black might try 17...♗e5, inviting White to play a queenless middlegame. After 18.♗xe5 dxe5 19.♗d1, White would still have the advantage, however.

17...c5 18.♖c3 f5



Black considers this move to be a strategic necessity given White's plan of e2-e4, f2-f4, and e4-e5. For instance, 18...♞d7 19.e4 a6 20.f4 b5 21.e5 is dangerous for Black: 21...bxc4 (21...dxe5 22.fxe5 ♞xe5? loses after 23.d6 ♞xd6 24.♙xe5 ♞xe5 25.♙xa8) 22.e6! fxe6 (22...♞f8 23.f5) 23.dxe6 ♞xe6 24.♙h8 and Black will have trouble defending against White's numerous threats. The text does not stop White from striking in the center, however.

19.e4!

White plays this move anyway. Black must take the pawn and allow ♙g2-h3-e6 from White – he has nothing better.

19...fxe4 20.♙h3 ♞f7 21.♙h8 h6

Clearing a spot for the black queen to go to h7, but this weakening of the kingside is fatal. Regardless, it was hard to come up with any better move for Black: 21...♞d7 loses to 22.♙e6 ♞xe6 23.dxe6 ♞xe6 24.♞g7#.

22.♙e6 ♞xe6 23.dxe6 ♞h7 24.♙b2

24.♙f6, hoping to play e6-e7 at some point and save the white e-pawn, would also have been quite effective. 24...♞c6 25.♞d1 ♞f8 26.♞d5! is the point, threatening e6-e7 with check. 26...♞e7 27.♙xe7 ♞xe7 28.♞xe4 would then leave White winning.

24...♞c6 25.♞d1

Just like in so many King's Indian positions, the black d-pawn now falls.

25...♞e8 26.♞xd6 ♞e7 27.♞d5

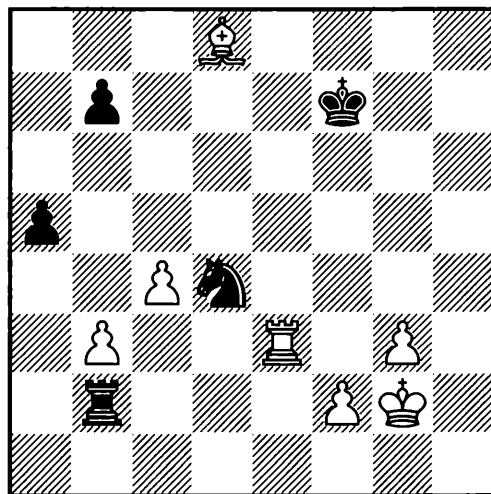
♞xe6 28.♞xc5 ♞d8 29.♞e3 g5 30.♞e1 ♞f7 31.♞g2

White prepares the h2-h4 break by securing his king's position.

31...a5

31...♞d3 loses after 32.♞xd3 exd3 33.♞xe6 ♞xe6 34.♞f3 ♞b4 35.a4 d2 36.♞e2 ♞d3 37.♙d4 ♞c1+ 38.♞xd2 ♞xb3+ 39.♞c3 ♞c1 40.♙xa7 and so on.

32.h4 ♞f5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.♞xe4 ♞xe4+ 35.♞xe4 ♞d2 36.♙c1 ♞xa2 37.♙xg5 ♞b2 38.♞e3 ♞d4 39.♙d8!



A strong move. White sets up a strong response to either capture on b3.

39...♞xb3

39...♞xb3 would run into 40.♞e7+ ♞g6 (40...♞f8 41.♞xb7 a4 42.♞a7 should be winning for White as well) 41.♞xb7 a4 42.c5 a3 43.♞b6+!, the idea being 43...♞f5 44.♙f6 ♞b1 45.c6 a2 46.c7 ♞c1 47.♞xb3 ♞xc7 48.♞f3+, winning for White.

40.♙xa5 ♞xe3 41.fxe3

This ending is hopeless for Black.

41...♖f5 42.♗f3 ♘e6 43.g4 ♗d6
44.c5 ♗f7 45.♙c3 ♗g5+ 46.♗f4
♗h3+ 47.♗g3 ♗g1 48.♙d4

48.♗g2 ♗e2 49.♙b2, trapping
Black's knight, was faster.

48...♗e2+ 49.♗f3 ♗g1+ 50.♗f4

Once again, White could have

played 50.♗g2 ♗e2 51.♙b2, ensnar-
ing Black's knight. The rest needs no
comment.

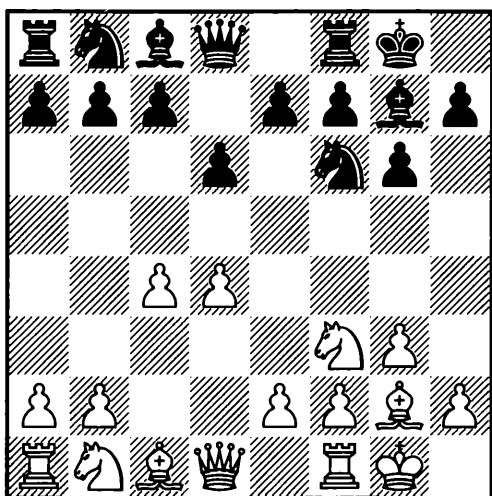
50...♗h3+ 51.♗g3 ♗g5 52.♗h4
♗h7 53.♗h5 ♗f7 54.♗h6 ♗f8
55.♗g5 ♗e6 56.e4 ♗e7 57.♗f5 ♗f7
58.♙f2 ♗g6 59.♙e3 ♗f8 60.g5 ♗g6
61.♙g1 ♗e7+ 62.♗e5 ♗c8 63.♙e3
♗e8 64.♗f6 1-0

This game saw White carry out the simple idea of 8.b3 against Black's 7...♙b6. Black's opening play was quite artificial, combining ...♙b6 with ...e7-e5-e4 – a plan which, although interesting, had little basis in either classical principles or hypermodern theory. At best, it amounted to a rash strike against White's early dominance in the center. White sacrificed an exchange for a pawn and control of the dark squares, leaving Black suffering as early as move 17. The second player managed to defend for a long time but ultimately succumbed under the weight of White's immense pressure.

Conclusion: White can meet Black's 7...♙b6!? with either 8.b3 or 8.♙b3. The former seems to promise White a significant advantage as Black's queen will be misplaced on b6. The latter is fully playable but doesn't guarantee more than a slight plus in the queenless middlegame that follows after 8...♙xb3 9.axb3. For this reason we recommend 8.b3, where, in this game, White was able to sacrifice the exchange for a pawn and obtain tremendous compensation. Black has some other tries early on like 8...♙a5!?, but White shouldn't have any trouble getting an edge there as well.

Chapter 14

Miscellaneous Tries for Black



1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2
0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0

This final chapter deals with miscellaneous tries for Black. Many of them, such as the plan of ...♘bd7 and ...c7-c5, are likely to come up at club level. Others, such as ...♗g4 and ...♖c8, are rare ideas that occasionally serve as the pet systems of titled players. Our aim in this chapter is to provide an example game against each of these attempts.

Note that because these systems for Black tend to be flexible and relatively unassuming, there is rarely a “best” line for White to play against each of them. Although White has the opportunity to shape the course of the opening and middlegame as he sees fit, he rarely seeks to somehow “punish” Black for playing an unorthodox defense. Thus, the example games in this chapter demonstrate a wide variety of ideas for White – from standard plans such as the space-gaining d4-d5 push to Wojo’s bizarre ♘f3-e1-c2(!?) maneuver against Slovakian player Martin Mrva below. All of these examples are very much in the spirit of the Fianchetto King’s Indian, which seeks to gain a positional advantage for White – not to refute Black’s opening play.

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2535)
Nill, Oliver (2055)

[E67] Bad Wörishofen 1998

1.♘f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.♘c3
♘d7 5.g3 ♘gf6 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 c5

Playing ...♘bd7 and ...c7-c5 is a common approach for Black at club level. Generally speaking, players who select this approach as Black tend to

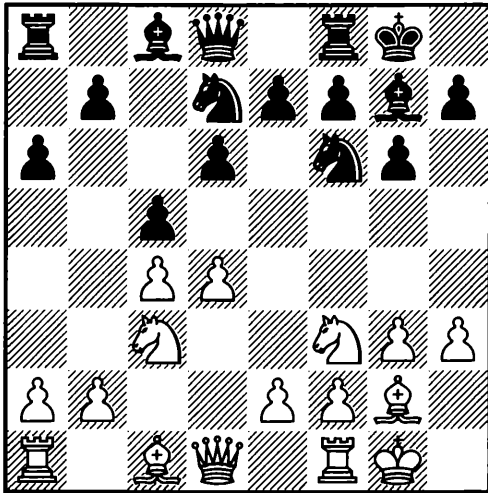
know very little theory and are just looking for a playable game. Wojo’s approach against this move is effective.

8.h3

A good move. White secures the g4 square to avoid ...♘g4 from Black after ♗c1-e3. 8.d5 is the main line, when White is also significantly ahead. Black’s knight on d7 is misplaced,

as it should have gone to c6, as in Part II. 8.b3 and 8.e4 are also good moves here. With the text, White is aiming for a structure similar to a Maróczy Bind. He may choose to omit the move e2-e4, however, in order to keep up the pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal.

8...a6



8...♖b8 is also common. Now 9.♙e3 was seen in M.Ivanov-V.Beketov, Moscow 1996. White had a clear advantage after 9...b6!? (9...a6 10.a4! keeps Black under wraps) 10.♚d2 ♜e8 11.d5 a6 12.a4 ♜f8 13.♞fd1 ♙d7 14.♙h6 ♙h8 15.e4 and so on. Black's pieces were disorganized and White was able to break through in the center later on with f2-f4 and e4-e5.

9.e4

White takes the center. 9.♙e3, as in the previous note, feels like White's most accurate approach, but the text is also good. In the online blitz game A.Wojtkiewicz-B.Lanneau, Dos Hermanas 2004, Wojo chose to play the immediate 9.a4!?. After 9...♖b8 10.♞e1 cxd4 11.♜xd4 ♜c5 12.b3 ♜e6 (12...♙d7 looks better) 13.♙e3 ♚a5 14.♚d2 ♜xd4 15.♙xd4 ♚c7?! (15...♙d7 again was better) 16.a5 ♙d7 17.♙xf6 exf6 18.♜d5 ♚d8

19.♞ad1, White had a clear advantage and went on to win.

9...cxd4

This position really belongs to the Maróczy Bind family, which we will explore in greater depth in Volume III of this series. In this particular line, White gets a nice advantage without too much trouble. 9...♖b8 10.a4 cxd4 11.♜xd4 is similar to the game.

10.♜xd4 ♜e5

10...♚b6 looks tricky but is comfortably met by 11.♜de2, when White will play ♖b1, b3, and ♙e3, gaining time on Black's queen.

11.b3 ♙d7 12.a4

It is necessary for White to clamp down on the b5 square. Although this move cedes the b4 square, stopping Black's queenside counterplay with ...b7-b5 is worth this small concession.

12...♖b8 13.♙e3

White targets b6.

13...♜c6 14.♚d2 ♜e8!?

14...♚a5 looks more normal. Now 15.♞ab1 is a typical move, getting the rook off the a1-h8 diagonal and overprotecting the sensitive b3-pawn. White also teases Black with the idea of b3-b4 in some lines. For instance, 15...♜xd4 16.♙xd4 b5?! 17.b4 ♚d8 18.cxb5 axb5 19.a5 with a clear advantage for White. Instead, 15...♚b4 looks normal, when after 16.♞fd1 White retains pressure against Black's position.

15.♟f d1 ♖c7 16.a5

Taking advantage of Black's last move, which temporarily blocked Black's control of the a5 square.

16...♗e6 17.♗xe6 ♕xe6 18.♖b6 ♜c8 19.♗h2 ♗e5 20.f4

Continuing to build up the pressure with 20.♟a c1 may have been even stronger. After 20...♗d7 21.♗d5 ♕xd5 22.cxd5 ♜e8 23.♕e3, White penetrates on the queenside with moves like ♟c1-c7 and ♜d2-b4.

20...♗d7 21.♕d4 ♕xd4 22.♜xd4 b6?!

22...♜c5, attempting to reclaim control of the dark squares, was necessary from a strategic standpoint. After the text, the game gets messy, but the complications will resolve in White's favor.

23.axb6 ♟xb6

23...♗xb6 was the alternative. Here White can choose between the quiet 24.♜e3 and the more ambitious 24.f5 gxf5 (24...♕d7 25.f6 exf6 26.♜xd6 ♕e6 27.♗d5 ♕xd5 28.exd5 should be winning for White thanks to his connected passed pawns) 25.♟a5! f6 26.exf5 ♕xf5 27.c5, which wreaks havoc on the board.

24.f5 gxf5?

Giving up a piece with 24...♟xb3 25.fxe6 fxe6 was necessary, but of course White ought to be able to win now given his material advantage.

25.exf5 ♕xf5 26.♗d5 1-0

Black resigns, since 26...♜d8 27.♗xb6 ♗xb6 28.♟xa6 is hopeless.

When Black plays for a setup involving ...♗bd7, ...c7-c5, ...a7-a6, and so on, it is likely because he had nothing better prepared against the Fianchetto King's Indian. Many club-level players who don't know much theory as Black opt for this scheme of development, perhaps after coming up with it over the board. Wojo's solution of h2-h3, perhaps e2-e4, and ♕c1-e3 offers a painless way for White to get a slight advantage. He can stop Black's ...b7-b5 ideas with a2-a4 and look forward to occupying the center. The positions that arise here belong to the Maróczy Bind family, which will be explored at length in Volume III of this series.

**Kurajica, Bojan (2480)
Ehlvest, Jaan (2620)**

[E60] Seville 1990

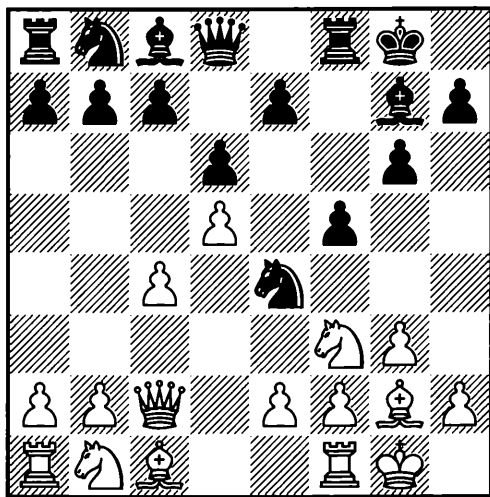
1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 d6 3.g3 g6 4.♕g2 ♕g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 ♗e4!?

With this, Black attempts to roughly transpose to a Leningrad Dutch. Although the Dutch Defense is covered in Volume III, the text move has some interesting peculiarities to it, as we will see. Black commits his knight to the e4 square early and will likely have to move it again, but on the other hand White may have to compromise his own scheme of development by developing his queen's knight to a square other than c3.

7.♜c2

This is considered White's best try.

7...f5 8.d5



Once again White's best option. 8.♖bd2 ♜xd2 9.♙xd2 e5 gives Black good chances for obtaining a comfortable middlegame. He has gotten in ...e7-e5 without any trouble. Meanwhile, 8.♜c3 ♜xc3 9.bxc3 e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♙a3 ♞e8 12.e4 ♜c6 was fine for Black in D.Neelotpal-R.Singh, Mumbai 2009.

8...♜a6 9.♜fd2!?

White loses no time in challenging Black's knight on e4. 9.♜bd2 was also good. The text move aims to bring White's minor pieces to the queenside.

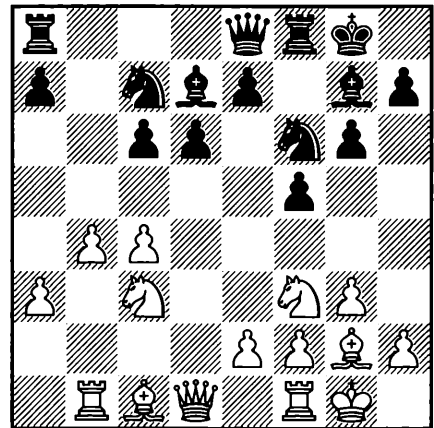
9...♜f6

Of course 9...♜xd2 would just help White develop after either 10.♙xd2 or 10.♜xd2. That Black has lost time with 6...♜e4!? is now apparent. However, White's knight on d2 is not ideally placed, for reasons we discuss in the next note.

10.a3 e5!?

10...♙d7 was likely better here. To understand why, we have to take a moment to visit one of the main lines

of the proper Leningrad Dutch. After 1.d4 f5 2.♜f3 ♜f6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2 ♙g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.♜c3 ♞e8 8.d5 ♜a6 9.♞b1 ♙d7 10.b4 c6 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.a3 ♜c7, the following position is reached:



White scores well here thanks to his pressure on the queenside and his clear plan of breaking through with either b4-b5 or c4-c5. He usually plays for the latter of the two, perhaps even sacrificing a pawn – for instance, 13.♙b2 ♜e6 14.c5! is effective after 14...dxc5?! (14...d5 15.♜e5 with a slight edge for White is best) 15.♜e5 cxb4 16.axb4, with ample compensation for White. With this in mind, let's return to the game position and see why White's setup here is less effective.

Here, after 10...♙d7, play might continue 11.♜c3 c6 12.♞b1 ♜c7 13.dxc6, when Black is fine after either 13...bxc6 14.b4 ♜e6, when White's knight on d2 can't hop to the e5 square, or 13...♙xc6!, which offers Black counterplay. White can likely improve on this with 12.b4 followed by ♙b2, keeping a slight advantage, but Black seems to have achieved the kind of Leningrad Dutch setup he was aiming for back on move 6. After the text, White has a guaranteed slight advantage.

11.dxe6 ♜c5 12.b4 ♜xe6 13.♙b2 f4

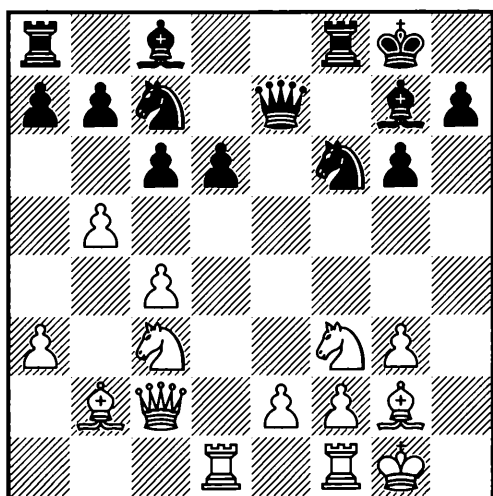
MISCELLANEOUS TRIES FOR BLACK

White's plan was simply to play ♠c3 and ♠d5, so Black tries to generate counterplay on the kingside.

14. ♠f3 ♜e7 15. ♠c3 c6

Prudent. If Black ignores White's idea of ♠d5 and plays 15...a5, then 16. ♠d5 ♠xd5 17. cxd5 ♜xb2 18. ♜xb2 ♠g5 19. ♠xg5 ♜xg5 20. ♞ac1 ♞f7 21. ♞c4 and so on gives White pressure against Black's c7-pawn. After the text, however, Black begins to suffer some problems with his d6-pawn.

16. ♞ad1 fxe3 17. hxe3 ♠c7 18. b5



An excellent move by White, giving up control of c5 but gaining a strong initiative. Black's queenside pawn formation now comes under attack.

18...cxb5

If Black tries to preserve his pawn structure with 18...♜d7, White can still force him to compromise it with 19. ♜d2 ♞ae8 20. ♠d4, for instance, 20...d5 21. cxd5 cxd5 22. a4 and White has good play against Black's isolated queen pawn.

19. cxb5 ♠g4!?

The black knight heads to e5. It is hard to recommend a better move, as Black is already under heavy pressure.

20. ♜b3+ ♜e6 21. ♜b4 ♞ad8 22. ♠h2!?

22. ♠d4, putting the knight in the center of the board rather than at the edge, was more principled. White is trying to simplify, however. The text move succeeds in preserving a slight advantage for White to nurture into the endgame.

22...♠e5

22...♠xh2 23. ♜xh2 would just help White by trading off Black's most active piece.

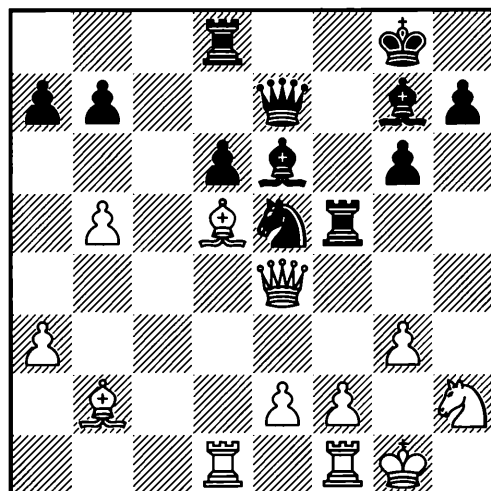
23. ♠d5

The point of White's last move.

23...♠xd5 24. ♜xd5 ♞f5

24...♜xd5 25. ♞xd5 ♜f7 26. e4 would also permit White a slight advantage. Bad now for Black would be 26... ♠f3+?! 27. ♠xf3 ♜xf3 28. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 29. ♜d4+ with advantage to White.

25. ♜e4!



White continues to put pressure on Black's pieces in the center. The second player readily cracks. 25.e4 was the obvious alternative, but after 25...♖h5, White's task is arguably much harder. He has to calculate accurately here to ward off Black's attack.

25...♙xd5 26.♖xd5 ♖f7?!

After this, Black's chances erode quickly. 26...♘f3+ is unappealing here after 27.exf3 ♖xe4 28.fxe4 ♖xd5 29.♙xg7 ♖xb5 30.♙d4, when White has play against Black's king with ♘g4, but 26...♘c6 was probably best here. Then 27.♖xe7 ♘xe7 28.♖xf5 ♘xf5 29.♙xg7 ♘xg7! 30.♖c1 ♘e6 (holding c7) should be a draw. So White would have to play 27.♖d3, when 27...♘e5 28.♙xe5 ♖xe5 gives Black better chances than what he gets in the game thanks to the presence of more pieces on the board.

27.♙xe5 ♖xe5

The alternative was 27...♙xe5 28.♘g4 ♙g7 29.♘e3, with pressure for White.

28.♖xe5 dxe5

28...♙xe5 29.♘f3 also leaves White better.

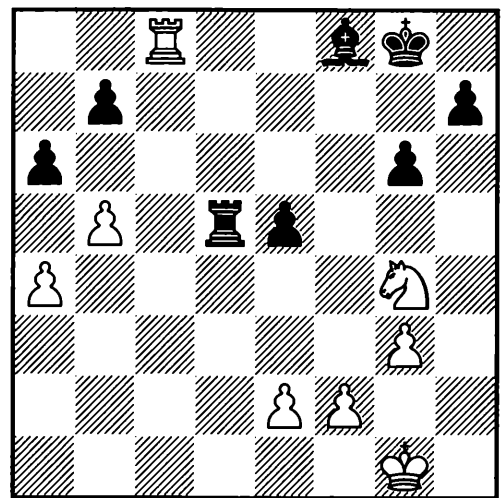
29.♖c1

Black's position is now difficult. White's queen and knight will prove stronger than Black's queen and bishop, but trading queens results in a more-or-less losing endgame for Black. Meanwhile, White will simply look to play moves like ♖g2, ♘f3 or ♘g4, and ♖c5, putting pressure on Black's position.

29...♖d5

Black chooses what he believes to be the lesser of two evils, heading straight for the ending rather than allowing White to slowly improve his position. Yet after White's move 34, it becomes apparent that the text is a mistake.

30.♖xd5+ ♖xd5 31.♖c8+ ♙f8 32.a4 a6 33.♘g4!



Black now has to take time out to deal with White's threats.

33...♖c5

33...♖f7 34.♖c7+ ♖e6 35.♖xb7 axb5 36.axb5 would have at least left Black's king active.

34.♖b8 axb5 35.♖xb7

Threatening mate with ♘f6+. Black is completely lost.

35...♙g7 36.axb5 h5 37.♘e3 ♙f8 38.b6 ♖b5 39.♘c4 ♙c5 40.♖g2 e4 41.♖c7 1-0

Black cannot take the pawn on b6 with 41...♙xb6 in view of 42.♖b7.

Black's 6...♘e4!? is an interesting move that seeks to transpose to a

Leningrad Dutch. Black commits his knight to e4 too early, but in return, he prevents White from developing his queen's knight to c3. Kurajica's plan with 7.♖c2, 8.d5, and 9.♟fd2!? seems good enough for a slight edge for White. Ehvest's idea of 10...e5!? is probably not representative of Black's best play here, but the game is particularly instructive nonetheless. It is hard to say exactly where Black went wrong – he was plagued by a slight problem with his pawn structure throughout the entire game, as often happens in the Leningrad Dutch. Again, a more comprehensive overview of the Dutch will appear in Volume III.

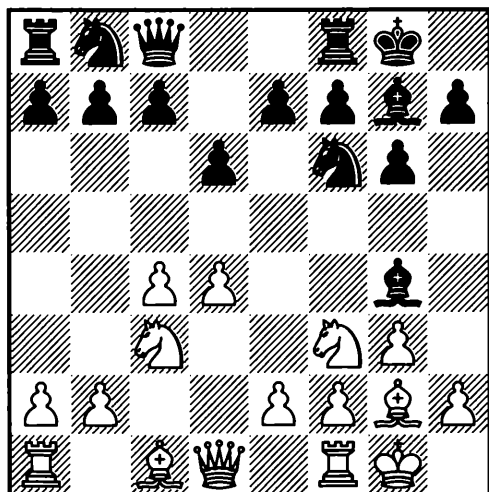
**Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander (2595)
Mrva, Martin (2445)**

[E62] Poland 1998

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♟g7
4.♟g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♟g4

This could, of course, simply transpose to a Simagin after 7.♟c3 ♟c6. Black, however, has something else in mind.

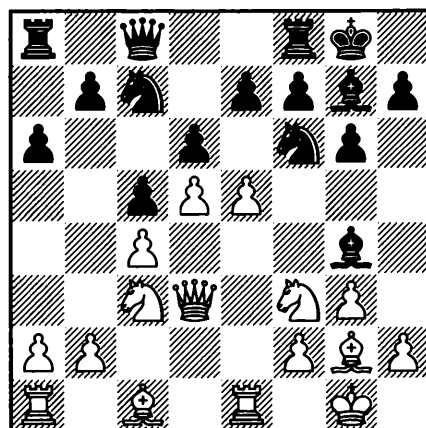
7.♟c3 ♖c8!?



A strange move that nevertheless has enjoyed good results in practice. This is one of the only lines in the Fianchetto King's Indian where Black has a plus score in the databases. Yet this doesn't have much to do with the merits of the move itself, as Black achieves little by lining up along the h3-a8 diagonal. It is hard to believe that investing so many moves to trade off White's light-squared bishop (...♟g4, ...♖c8, ...♟h3, ...♟xg2) will result in full equality for Black.

8.♟e1!?

A novelty, and one that will probably not be repeated often in the future. White's idea is to play against Black's bishop on g4, which may find itself misplaced in some variations. 8.♟e1 is the main line for White and probably his best try for the advantage. He preserves his bishop pair by allowing for the possibility of ♟g2-h1, but more importantly, he prepares to shove his e-pawn up the board, disrupting Black's position. 8...c5 is now Black's idea, but 9.d5 ♟a6 10.e4 ♟c7 11.♖d3 a6 (11...♟d7 12.h3 ♟xf3 13.♖xf3 leaves White with the bishop pair) 12.e5! throws a wrench in Black's plans:



After 12...♟d7 13.exd6 exd6 14.♟e4 ♟f5 15.♟f4 ♟xb2 16.♟ab1 ♟e5 17.♖b3

♙xe4 18.♖xe4 ♜xf3+ 19.♙xf3 ♙e5
20.♙xe5 dxe5 21.♖xe5 left White with
a clear advantage in M.Draško-R. Di
Paolo, Italy 2003.

8...♜c6

8...c5 would still leave White with
the advantage after 9.d5.

9.♜c2

9.f3 ♙h3 10.e4 right away might
have been better, since now we will
spend the next ten moves wondering
why White's knight is on c2. Regard-
less, this is easily good enough for at
least a slight advantage for White.

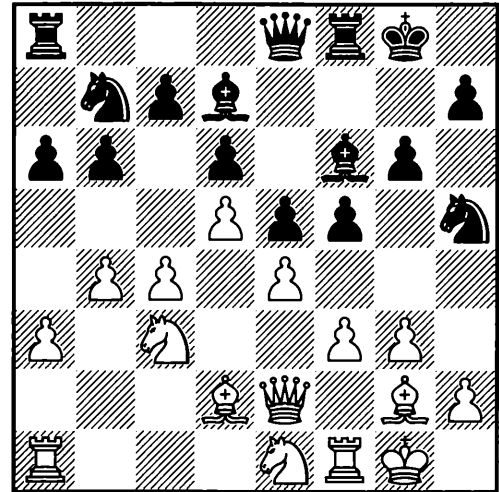
9...e5

One alternative was 9...♙h3, follow-
ing up on Black's move 7. Then 10.e4
♙xg2 11.♜xg2 followed by ♙e3 simply
leaves White in control of the center.
Black will need to be creative here if he
is to obtain any counterplay.

10.d5 ♜a5!?

An odd move, but 10...♜e7 11.f3 ♙h3
12.e4 ♙xg2 13.♜xg2 ♜h5 14.b4 leaves
White better. After 14...f5, Black's
kingside attack will not be dangerous
because he is missing his light-squared
bishop. Thus, he will have little to
sacrifice on the kingside after White
creates a blockade in that sector. For
instance, 15.♖b1 f4 16.g4 ♜f6 17.c5
leaves Black with problems. The point
of the text is to erect a barricade on the
queenside with...b7-b6 similar to that
which we saw in the games Hilton-
Sturt and Wojtkiewicz-Brooks, both
from Chapter 2.

11.b3 b6 12.f3 ♙d7 13.e4 ♜h5
14.♙d2 a6 15.♖e2 ♜b7 16.b4 ♖e8
17.a3 f5 18.♜e1 ♙f6



19.♙h3!?

Yet another strange maneuver from
White. This time, it almost costs him
his advantage. Better was 19.♜d3,
when White plans c4-c5. Black will
never be able to play...g6-g5 without
having to face e4xf5 by White followed
by occupation of the e4 square with
♜c3-e4, but if 19...f4, White defends
easily with the flexible 20.♙e1. White
plans ♙f2 and c4-c5.

19...♜g7 20.♜g2

20.♜d3?? would now lose for White
after 20...fxe4 21.♙xd7 exd3. Thus
White puts the knight on g2 instead,
where its purpose is much less clear.

20...♖e7 21.f4

White strikes, but his pieces aren't
optimally placed, so Black is finally
about equal. White has a slight pull,
but not more.

21...g5??

Black immediately squanders the
fruits of his good fortune. 21...fxe4?!

22.♔xd7 ♖xd7 23.♟xe4 ♞ae8 24.♔c3 would have left White much better, but 21...exf4 22.♟xf4 ♞ae8 23.♞ae1 would only have left White with a minimal advantage. And 21...a5!?, simply adding more tension to the position, might also have left Black about equal. The text is a blunder; Black lashes out tactically rather than focusing on improving the core of his position on the kingside, which is the key to generating play for the second player here.

22.fxg5 ♔xg5 23.♔xg5 ♖xg5 24.♟h4

The g2-knight springs to life. Miraculously, White is now winning. Black's f5-pawn is pinned and there is nothing he can do to save it.

24...a5 25.exf5 ♔xf5

25...axb4 would run into 26.♟e4 ♖h6 27.axb4 with a winning advantage for White, and 25...♟xf5 26.♔xf5 ♔xf5 27.♞xf5! would transpose back to the game.

26.♔xf5 ♟xf5 27.♞xf5!

The winning tactical blow.

27...♞xf5 28.♟e4 axb4

A sad ending for Black. 28...♖h5 was the only way to hold the rook on f5, but then 29.♟f6+! ♞xf6 30.♖xh5 wins the black queen. The rest needs no comment.

29.♟xg5 ♞xg5 30.♖d2 ♞g4 31.♟f5 ♟h8 32.♖d1 ♞xc4 33.axb4 ♞f8 34.♖h5 ♞xb4 35.♖g5 1-0

White managed to get an advantage in this game by meeting Black's 6...♔g4 7.♟c3 ♖c8!? with the odd 8.♟e1!?. He managed to take the center and achieved a position that looked like something from out of Chapter 2. But rather than playing for c4-c5, as was natural, White tried for the f3-f4 break. His 19.♔h3!? followed by 20.♟g2 definitely wasn't accurate, and Black was close to equality around move 20 – but then he blundered with 21...g5?!, throwing everything away. All in all, Wojo's idea of 8.♟e1!? should still give White an advantage, but the main line with 8.♞e1 is probably a better way to go about things for the first player. Luckily, there is not much theory to learn here: the note to move 8 in this game gives everything White needs to know to play 8.♞e1 successfully.

In this final example, a rapid game played by Dean against renowned chess author and trainer Fred Wilson, we explore how White might choose to handle rare lines that catch him by surprise. We show how White, when faced with a rare sideline, might think back to previous chapters of this book for inspiration. The game also features an instructive positional mistake by White on move 17 that is worth understanding.

**Ippolito, Dean (USCF 2540)
Wilson, Fred (USCF 2079)**

[E62] Rapid Game, New Jersey 2010

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟f3 ♔g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♔g2 d6 6.0-0 c6

6...♟a6 first is another way for Black to play this sideline.

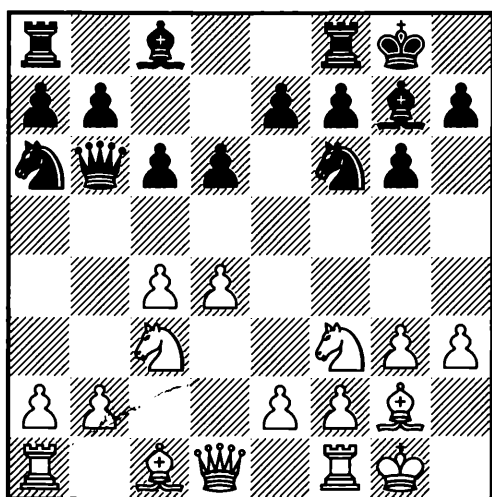
7. ♖c3 ♘a6!?

With this move, Black stays flexible. He does not block his bishop on c8 but rather looks for ways to generate activity on the queenside. The text is almost always followed up by either ... ♗b6 or ... e7-e5, or by a combination of both. King's Indian Defense specialist GM Viktor Bologan has occasionally used this sideline as a surprise weapon, boosting its credibility.

8. h3

This is White's highest-scoring move. The immediate 8. e4 is met by the unusual pawn sacrifice 8... e5!?, when now 9. dxe5 dxe5 10. ♖xe5 ♕e6 gave Black a surprising amount of compensation in R. Hübner-A. Shirov, Netherlands 1997. It is likely that Black's pawn sacrifice is not entirely sound, but since this is exactly the kind of position that the second player is aiming for, it makes sense to look for an edge for White by other means. Dean's choice of 8. h3 is much quieter and looks to prepare e2-e4 rather than rushing into it.

8... ♗b6



Black puts pressure on the d4-pawn. 8... ♖c7 has been tried a few times, but it goes without saying that then 9. e4 just leaves White better. White can either keep developing with an eye toward b2-b4 and expansion on the queenside or try to break with a timely e4-e5 in the center. If Black wants to play for ... b7-b5, the Panno Variation as explored in Chapter 8 or the lines with ... a7-a6 explored in Chapter 4 would be more active options.

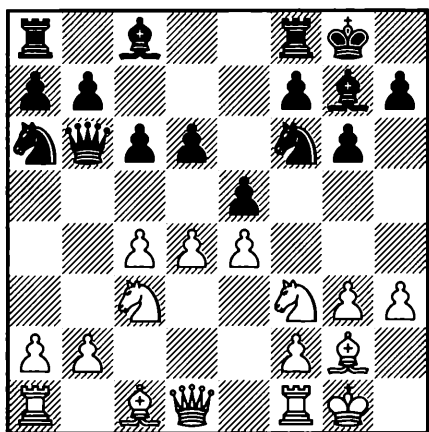
We now reach a crucial turning point in the opening for White, who is by this point already “out of book.” To decide how to deal with this rare sideline, the first player reflects over the other lines explored in the first thirteen chapters and tries to draw analogies to them.

9. b3!?

White tries to blunt the activity of Black's queen just as in the latter half of Chapter 13, in which we explored 7... ♗b6!?. 8. b3. This turns out to be good enough for an advantage in this game, though by opening the a1-h8 diagonal, White is ignoring Black's plan of sacrificing a pawn with ... e7-e5 to generate piece play. In fact, there were plenty of alternatives here for White, many of which lead to a small but clearcut edge. With a general knowledge of all the various themes explored in this book, a player of White should be able to find a reasonable path to the advantage by drawing on material from many different chapters.

For instance, it would be quite reasonable for White to play 9. e4 here with the idea of 9... e5 10. d5, aiming for the kinds of positions analyzed in

Chapter 2. After 10...♖c5 11.♔e2 (11.♕e1!? with ♕d3 to follow may be an improvement) 11...♗d7 12.♗e3 cxd5 13.cxd5 a5 14.♖fc1 ♖fc8 15.♕d2, White had a good position in A.Petrosian-S. Bekker-Jensen, Germany 1999. On the other hand, of course, there are several other moves after 9...e4 e5 that White might be tempted to play that are also based on previously seen material – many of which aren't sufficient for the advantage:



a) 10.♖b1?! might seem plausible to those who remember the section titled “An Added Weapon for the Repertoire: 9.h3 ♖b6 10.♖b1!?” from Chapter 5. Of course, there is an important difference here since Black's queen's knight is on a6 rather than d7. Simple calculation should be enough for White to discard this candidate move: the forcing 10...exd4 11.♕xd4 ♕xe4 12.♕xe4 ♗xd4 13.♕xd6 ♗e6 leaves Black with no problems.

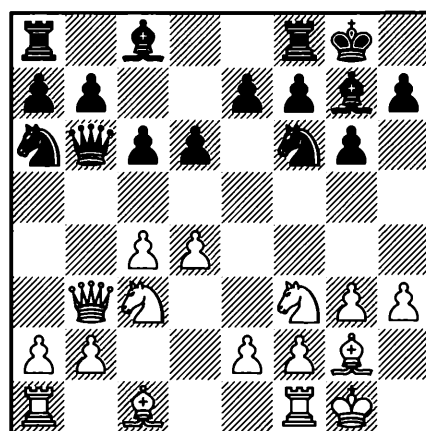
b) 10.♖e1 is another reasonable move that fails to get an advantage for White. Once again, this determination can be made at the board with a little calculation. White just needs to see that 10...exd4 11.♕xd4 ♕g4! is annoying for the first player. Then 12.hxg4 (or 12.♕ce2 ♕e5 13.b3 ♕b4 with the idea of heading to d3) 12...♗xd4 13.♗e3 ♗xe3 14.♖xe3 ♗e6 15.b3 ♖ad8 16.♔e2

♕c5 was unclear in M.Medić-D.Rogić, Bled 1997. Black had strong control of the dark squares and White's space advantage failed to convince.

c) Finally, 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♔e2 (11.♕xe5?! ♕xe4 12.♕xe4 ♗xe5, as in A.Livner-J.Bekker, Sweden 1998, at least equalizes for Black) 11...♕c5!, sacrificing the e5-pawn for active tactical play in the center, is a complicated line that has been analyzed thoroughly by IM Simon Bekker-Jensen of Denmark. White should probably decline the pawn here and play 12.♗e3, after which he still maintains a slight pull on the queenside.

In general, however, someone with a good understanding of Chapter 2 will recognize that the position after 9...e5 calls for the 10.d5 push to shut down Black's pressure against d4 and his activity along the a1-h8 diagonal.

White doesn't have to think all the way back to Part I of the book to find a route to the advantage, however. Instead, he might choose to draw an analogy to Chapter 12 and opt for 9.♖b3, a move that we are quite fond of. White easily keeps a slight advantage here as Black's counterplay has been neutralized:



a) Black's planned 9...e5!? would be easily met by 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗e3!

(11.♖xe5 ♖c5 12.♗xb6 axb6 still gives Black more compensation than we would like) with a pleasant initiative for White.

b) 9...♗xb3 10.axb3 with ♖d1 and e2-e4 looks like a comfortable queenless middlegame for White.

c) 9...♙f5 can be met by 10.♖e1 planning e2-e4.

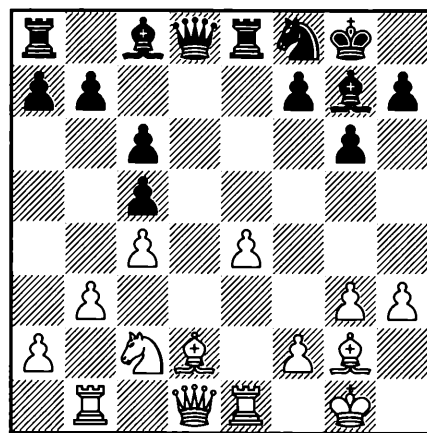
d) Black's best move is probably 9...♙e6, when 10.e4 (10.♖d1 is also good) 10...♗b4 11.d5 cxd5 was seen in I.Lempert-S.Dyachkov, Russia 1995. Here, 12.♗xb4 ♖xb4 13.cxd5 ♙d7 14.♖d1 with the idea of a2-a3, followed by either ♖d4 or ♖f3-e1-d3, would have given White a slight pull. White might also try breaking in the center with e4-e5 within the next few moves, to take the initiative depending on what Black does.

In sum, White has a variety of ways to get the advantage here. The key is to use the material in the previous chapters as a source of inspiration for candidate moves. Then, with a little calculation, it isn't hard to sort out which approaches for White are valid tries for the advantage and which ones will allow Black to equalize by exploiting tactics in the center.

9...♙f5

A new and provocative move. Black's most challenging response is to open the a1-h8 diagonal immediately with 9...e5!, when here White has two choices. 10.e4 is his most obvious move, the idea being that 10...exd4 can be met by 11.♖a4 (not 11.♖xd4? ♖xe4 12.♖xe4 ♗xd4 13.♗xd4 ♙xd4 14.♖b1 ♙f5 with an extra pawn for Black) 11...♗a5 12.♖xd4 with a *Zürich 1953*-like

position similar to those in Chapter 1. The difference here, however, is that Black has gained a significant amount of time given how misplaced the white knight is on a4. The key line is 12...♙e8 13.♖e1 ♖c5 14.♙d2 ♗d8 15.♖xc5 (15.♖c3? isn't possible because of 15...♖fxe4) 15...dxc5 16.♖c2 ♖d7 17.♖b1 (17.f4!? ♙xa1 18.♗xa1 ♖f6! 19.♙c3 ♖h5 20.♖h2 gives White some compensation for the exchange, but is risky considering the tender spots in his kingside) 17...♖f8, when Black has the plan of ...♖f8-e6-d4:



White may be a tad better here thanks to his kingside chances, but it would have made sense for White to have chosen a different move 9 since this structure is unfamiliar and double-edged.

Going back to the position after Black's 9...e5, we can also say that 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♙e3 is tempting but doesn't give White what he wants after 11...♗a5 12.♗c1 (12.♗c2!? ♙f5 13.♗b2 ♖e4 14.♖xe4 ♙xe4 15.♖ad1 ♖ad8 is also about equal) 12...♖c5 13.♗b2 ♖ce4, when Black has already nearly equalized. Now S.Ionov-S.Iskusnyh, Elista 1995 saw 14.♖xe4 ♖xe4 15.♗c2 f5 16.♖ac1 f4, when Black had strong play on the kingside. White failed to make progress on the queenside in this game and lost.

Thus we see that Dean's choice of 9.b3!? was, after the superior response

9...e5!, only good enough to result in the position given in the analysis diagram above. This would have in no way been a disaster, but it is reason enough for us to conclude that either 9.e4 e5 10.d5 or 9.♖b3 would have been more in keeping with our Wojo repertoire.

10.g4

White fights for control of e4. Although this move potentially weakens White's queenside, Black is losing too much time. Soon, White will have full control of the center.

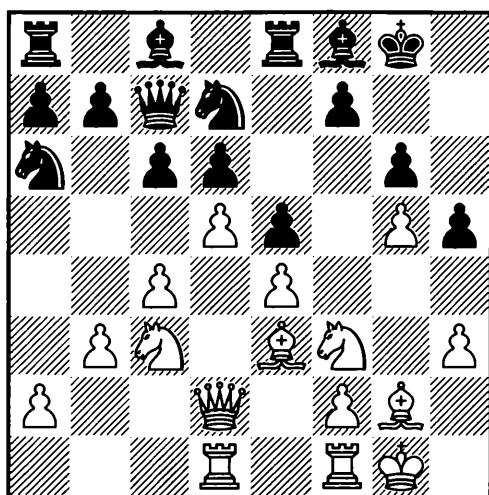
10...♙c8 11.e4 e5 12.♙e3 ♖c7 13.♖d2 h5!?

This move is too ambitious, but Black is trying to justify the time he lost with his light-squared bishop by demonstrating that g3-g4 weakened White's kingside. Better was 13...exd4 14.♙xd4 ♙c5, with a position similar to those in Chapter 1. After the text, White creates an impressive bind.

14.g5 ♙d7 15.♗ad1 ♗e8 16.d5

Excellent timing by White. The d4-d5 push makes sense now that Black has lost time with ...♗e8.

16...♙f8



17.dxc6?

Black is passive, so White decides to open the board. However, ceding White's powerful d5-pawn is senseless. It would have made more sense to keep the center locked with 17.♙e1, as White then plans a2-a3, b3-b4, and ♙e1-d3 with a tremendous advantage.

17...bxc6 18.♙h4

More evidence that White has lost the thread of the position. He should instead anticipate Black's planned maneuver of ...♙a6-c5-e6 with 18.♗b1 ♙ac5 19.b4 ♙e6 20.♗fd1, aiming to tie Black down and prevent him from generating too much activity. Given how solid Black's position is, White may be a bit stuck for a plan, but perhaps after consolidating his position with a2-a3 he could continue with ♙c3-a4, ♗b1-c1, and c4-c5.

18...♙ac5 19.b4 ♙e6

Black has now managed to coordinate his army thanks to White's mistake on move 17. The black pieces, although somewhat cramped, are placed well and stand ready to take control of the dark squares.

20.♗c1 ♙f4!?

A typical pawn sacrifice in such positions. Black will get some compensation on the dark squares. Better, however, was 20...♙b6 first, since now 21.♖d3 (21.♙e2 c5! gives Black the initiative) 21...♙f4 22.♙xf4 exf4 allows Black to play the same idea without sacrificing a pawn.

21.♙xf4 exf4 22.♖xf4 ♙e5 23.♗fd1 ♙b7 24.♙h1

It was stronger to play 24.b5 immediately, fighting for the d5 square and trying to make use of White's active pieces.

24...♖ad8

24...♜xc4? would land Black in trouble after 25.♗d4 ♜b6 26.♜b5 ♞e7 27.♜xd6 and so on.

25.♜e2

Once again, 25.b5 was better.

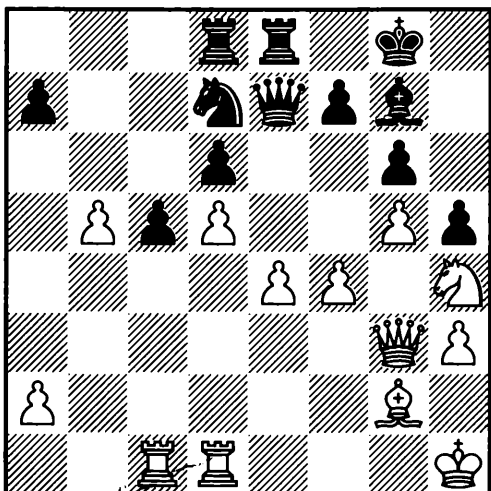
25...♞e7

Preferable is 25...♞b6 26.a3 a5 with tremendous counterplay for Black.

26.♞g3 c5

This allows White to close the game and reduce Black's activity, but 26...d5 instead would have allowed 27.cxd5 cxd5 28.f4 ♜c4 29.f5 with an attack for White.

27.b5 ♜d7 28.♜c3 ♜b6 29.♜d5 ♜xd5 30.cxd5 ♜g7 31.f4 ♜d7?!



Or 31...♞d7 32.f5. At this point, Black's compensation has run dry. The bishops of opposite color still give him chances to save the game, however.

32.e5

White breaks through in the center.

32...♜f8

32...dxe5? 33.d6 ♞f8 34.f5 would have been devastating for Black.

33.♜f3?!

33.e6, continuing the onslaught, was much stronger: 33...f6? 34.gxf6 ♞xf6 35.♜e4 wins for White, while 33...fxe6 34.dxe6 ♜xe6 35.♜d5 ♜h7 36.♜xg6! ♜xg6 37.f5+ ♜xf5 38.♞f1+ ♜g6 39.♜e4 would be mate. White is still clearly better after the text.

33...dxe5 34.fxe5 ♜xe5 35.♜xe5 ♞xe5 36.♞xe5 ♞xe5 37.♞xc5 ♜e6

Worse for Black is 37...♞xg5 38.♞c7.

38.♞c4 ♞xg5 39.♜f3 ♜f8 40.♞c7 ♞f5??

In time pressure, Black makes the last blunder. After 40...♞g3, Black could still save the game: 41.♜g2 ♞a3 42.d6 ♜e6 and the second player is holding.

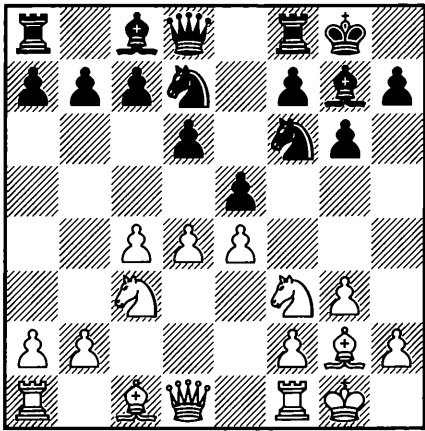
41.♜g2 ♜e6 42.♞xa7 ♜f4 43.b6 ♜g7 44.b7 1-0

Black's 7...♠a6!? is a rare sideline that comes up from time to time. It is worth noting how many different ways there are for White to obtain the advantage against it. Of these, we prefer those that keep some resemblance to the other positions in our Fianchetto King's Indian repertoire. For instance, Dean would have been better off playing 9.♙b3 than 9.b3!?. Experience with certain sets of positions brings about good play, and it is more than likely that White wouldn't have made as many errors in the middlegame had he found a more familiar-looking route to the advantage – particularly since this was a rapid game. That said, it is worth noting White's error on move 17. Giving up White's wedge pawn on d5 was a serious mistake. Later on Black missed an important chance to play 25...♙b6, after which White would have been on the defensive.

Index of Recommended Lines

Classical Fianchetto with ...♘b8-d7 and ...e7-e5 (without the Gallagher Variation)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5
8.e4 (8.h3 97, 8.♚c2 97):



8...c6

8...a6

9.h3 b5 10.♚c2 (10.♙e3!? 91)
10...c6 11.♞d1 91
10...bxc4?! 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♙e3 91
9.♞e1 91, 98
8...♞e8 9.h3
9...exd4 10.♘xd4
10...♘c5 11.♞e1 a5 28, 98
10...c6 11.♙e3 28

9...b6?! 40

8...exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘e5!? 10.b3 98

8...b6?! 41

9.♞b1

9.h3

9...♚b6

10.♞b1!?

10...exd4 11.♘xd4

11...♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♙xd4 13.♘xd6 101

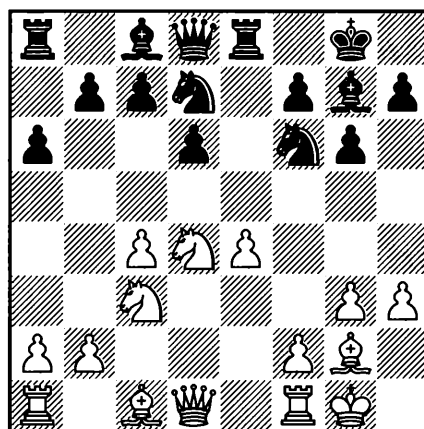
11...♚b4 12.♘de2! 100

INDEX OF RECOMMENDED LINES

- 11...♘e8 12.♘de2 101
 11...a5 12.♙e3 101
 11...♞e8 12.♙e3 101
 11...♘g4 12.♘de2 101
 11...♘c5 12.♙e3 101
 10...♞b4 11.♞b3!? 104
 10...♞e8 11.♙e3 100
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 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♞e8 12.b3 25
11.♞e1 exd4 12.♘xd4 ♘c5 13.b3 ♞e7 (13...♘fd7 14.♙e3 17) **14.♞e2 19**

Gallagher Variation

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e5
8.e4 exd4 (8...♞e8 9.h3 exd4 10.♘xd4 a6 11.♞e1 ♞b8 – see main line) 9.♘xd4
♞e8 10.h3 a6:



11.♖e1

11.♙e3

11...♜b8 12.♖e1

12...c5!? 13.♘c2 (13.♘de2 71)

13...b5 14.♞xd6

14...bxc4 15.♘a3 ♜xb2 16.♘xc4

16...♜c2 17.♞d3 ♜xc3 18.♞xc3

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16...♜b4? 17.♞d3 70

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15...♖e6 16.♞d1! 70

15...♘xe4!? 16.♙xe4 ♜xe4

17.♜ad1! 70

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13...♘e5 14.♘a3 ♙e6 15.♞e2 69

12...♘e5 13.♞e2 (13.b3 64)

13...c5 14.♘c2

14...♙e6 15.♘a3 65

14...b5!? 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♘xb5 65

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11...♘e5!? 64

11...♘c5 64

11...♜b8 12.♜b1

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12.a4!? 75

12...♘e5

12...c5 13.♘c2 b5?! 14.♞xd6 b4 15.♘a4 75

12...♘c5 13.b4 75

12...h6!? 13.♙e3 75

13.b3 c5

13...♙d7 14.f4 76

13...♘fd7 14.f4 76

14.♘c2 ♘c6

14...♙e6 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♙b2 76

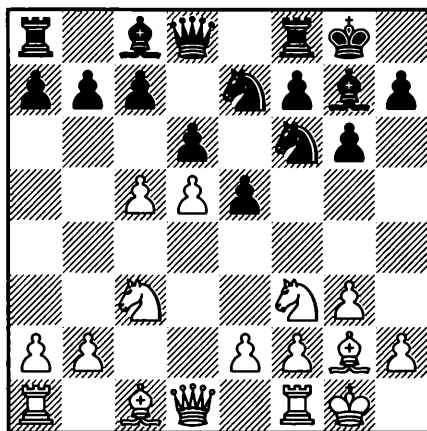
14...b5?! 15.f4 79

15.a4 (15.f4!? 76) 15...♙e6 16.♙b2 h5!? (16...♞a5 17.♘d5 77) 17.♘d5 77

Black's ...♘b8-c6 and ...e7-e5 with Wojo's 9...c5!?

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 e5
8.d5 ♘e7 9.c5!?:

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- 9...dxc5 136
- 9...♖d7 139
- 9...♗g4 139
- 9...♖h5!? 140

10.cxd6 ♖xd6

10...cxd6!?

11.♕b3

11...h6

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13...g5 14.♖c4

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14...♖g6 116

13...f4?! 115

12.♖d2 f5 13.♖c4 g5 14.♗d2 124

11...f5?! 115

11.a4

11...h6 12.♖d2 f5 13.♖c4

13...g5

14.♗d2

14...♖f7 15.♖b5 119

14...g4 119

14.♕b3 – see 11.♕b3

14.b3 118

13...f4?! 113

11...f5!? 112

11.e4 c6

11...h6 127

11...c5 127

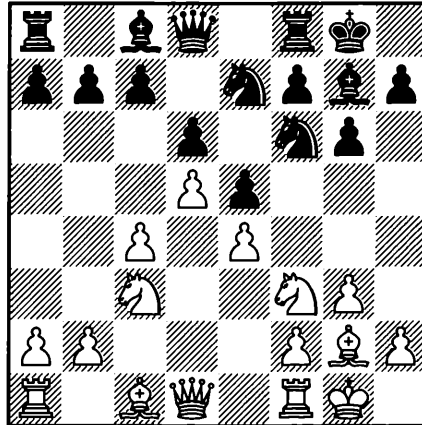
12.dxc6 (12.♖e1 128) 12...♖xc6 13.♗g5

13...♗f6 131

13...f6 134

Black's ...♖b8-c6 and ...e7-e5 with 9.e4

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♗c6 7.♗c3 e5
8.d5 ♗e7 9.e4:



9...♗e8

9...♗d7 10.b4

10...a5 11.♙a3

11...axb4 12.♙xb4

12...h6 13.a4 f5 14.♗d2 151

12...b6 145

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9...♙g4 171

9...a5 171

9...b6 171

9...♗h5!? 171

9...c6 175

10.b4 f5

10...a5 156

10...h6 157

10...c6!? 157

11.♗g5 h6

11...♗f6 164

11...c6!? 158

12.♗e6 ♙xe6 13.dxe6 c6

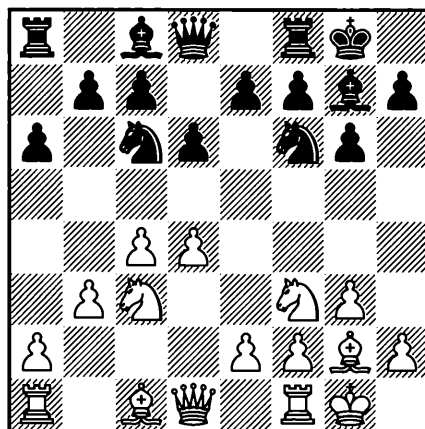
13...fxe4!? 159

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 15...dxc5 160

The Panno Variation

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♘c3 a6 8.b3:



8...♞b8

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8...♙f5 181

8...♙d7 181

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7...♙g4 8.d5
 8...♞a5 9.♞d2 (9.♞d3!? 216)
 9...c5 10.♞c2 (10.h3 216) 10...a6 (10...e5 216) 11.h3
 ♙d7 12.b3
 12...b5 13.♙b2
 13...♞b8 14.♞ab1
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 14...e5!? 217
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 8...♞b8!? 215
 8...♙xf3?! 215
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11.♞c2 a6 12.b3 b5 13.♙b2 ♞b8 14.♞d1!? 14.♞ab1 221
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1.♟f3 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5 dxc5
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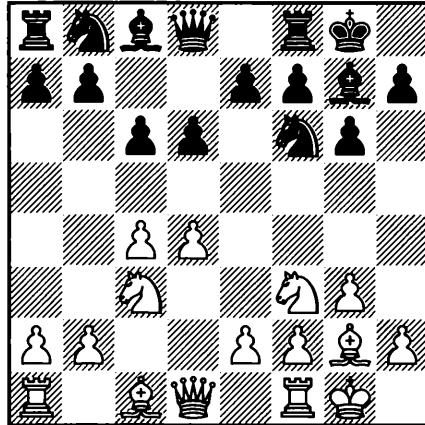
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10...♘b6 11.♘xc5 ♘xc4 – see main line

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7...a6

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8...♚b6 9.♙e1

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7...♚a5 8.e4

8...♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3

10.♙xf3

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10...♘bd7 11.♙e3 257

10.♚xf3

10...♘fd7 11.♙d1

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11...♘a6 12.♚e2 262

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11...♚b6 12.b3! 263

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WOJO'S WEAPONS 2

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IM Dean Ippolito and NM Jonathan Hilton team up again to continue their coverage of the late GM Aleksander Wojtkiewicz's winning repertoire with the White pieces, designed to grind down weaker players while challenging his peers.

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About the Authors

International Master Dean Ippolito, a 10-time All-America Team member and winner of 13 national championship tournaments, has more than twenty years' experience playing Wojtkiewicz's systems. The author of two other books, Dean operates a successful chess teaching company in New Jersey.

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